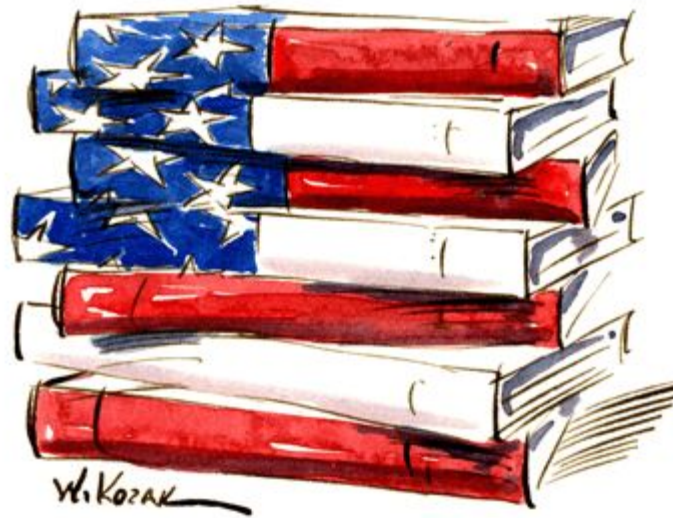


Chapter 3

The Rise of a National Literature



From *An Outline of American Literature* by Peter B. High



The Rise of A National Literature

- Disagreement about how American literature should grow: (p.27)
 1. American Literature still lacked national feeling; needed books which expressed special character of the nation
 2. too young to develop declare its independence from the British literary tradition, still a branch of English culture
 3. The call for a national literature was a mistake; good literature should be universal



The Rise of A National Literature

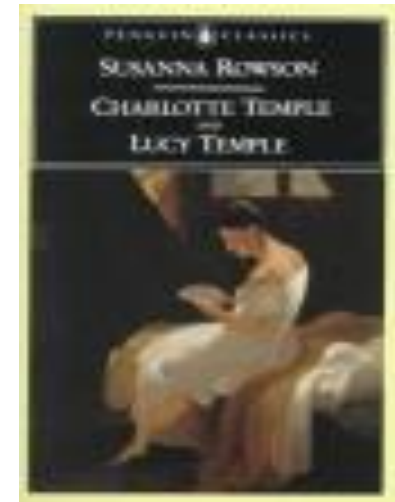
Novel – the first popular literature of the newly independent United States

1. has been considered a dangerous form of literature by the American Puritans who thought novels put immortal ideas into the head of young people
2. spoke directly to ordinary Americans
3. helped Americans see themselves as a single nation



The Rise of Novel

1. suppressed as morally dangerous
2. later novelists filled their novels with moralistic advice and religious sentiments to make them acceptable (p.28)
3. The first American Novel – William Hill Brown’s *Power of Sympathy* (1789)
4. Susanna Rowson’s *Charlotte Temple* (1791)



Hugh Henry Brackenridge

(1748-1816)



1. *Modern Chivalry* (1792-1815) – a series of adventures in which the author makes fun of America’s “backwoods” culture and customs (slavery and sword fights), religious and national groups (the Quakers, the Irish, the Indians). The weaknesses of American democracy are also described.
2. Like Susanna Rowson, he wanted to achieve a reform in morals and manners of the people.



Gilbert Imlay (1754-1828)

Emigrants (1793)

1. English families who moved to America to live in a frontier settlement found happiness in contrast to those who held the false old values of English society were ruined
2. showed American culture to be more natural and simple than the old culture of Europe

Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810)

1. interested in the psychology of horror and the complicated minds (p.29)
2. influenced writers as Hawthorne and Poe
3. *Wieland* (1798), *Ormond* (1799), *Arthur Mervyn* (1799), *Edgar Humtly* (1799)





Royall Tyler

Algerine Captive (1797)

1. the protagonist is made a slave by pirates after his ship that carries black slaves sinks.
2. an attack on the American government for its support of slavery (p.30)





The Period of

“Knickerbockers” (1810-1840)

- the name “Knickerbockers” (p.30-31) comes from Washington Irving’s *A History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809) -- a local history of New York

By the early 1800s -- two hundred years after Henry Hudson arrived -- most New Yorkers knew little about their city's history. Few even knew that Manhattan was once New Amsterdam

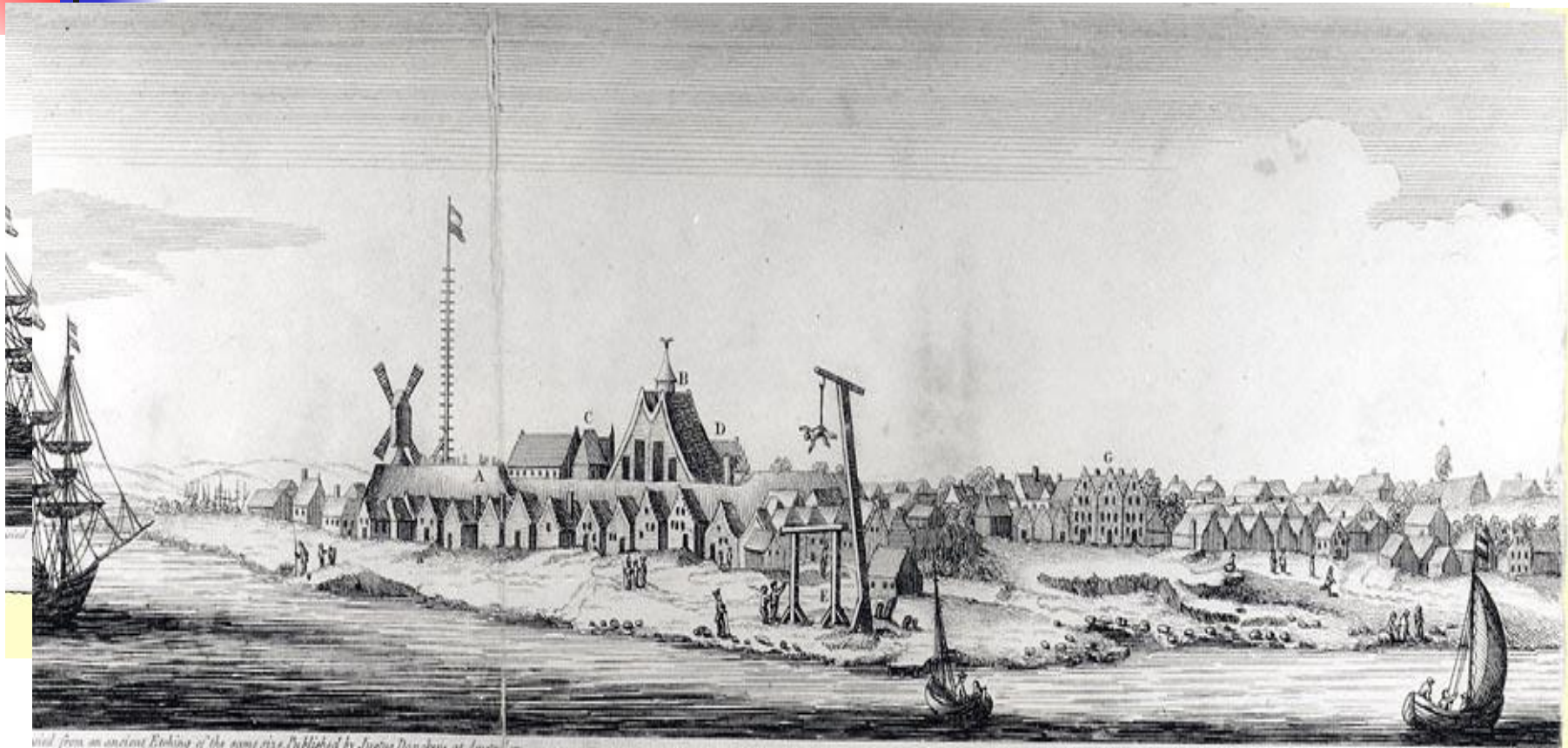
“Diedrich” means “father” in Dutch, and the last name, according to the author's note, meant “to nod or doze over books”



The Period of “Knickerbockers” (1810-1840)

- Took interest in the local history of New York
- Invented many events and legends
- Gave New York City a special local color
- Laughed at the Puritans and early Dutch governors

Knickerbocker's New Amsterdam



Engraved from an ancient Etching of the same place, Published by Justus Danckers at Amsterdam.

- A. The Fort.
- B. Church of St. Nicholas.
- C. The Jail.
- D. Governor's House.

NEW AMSTERDAM (NOW NEW-YORK).

As it appeared about the year 1640, while under the Dutch Government.

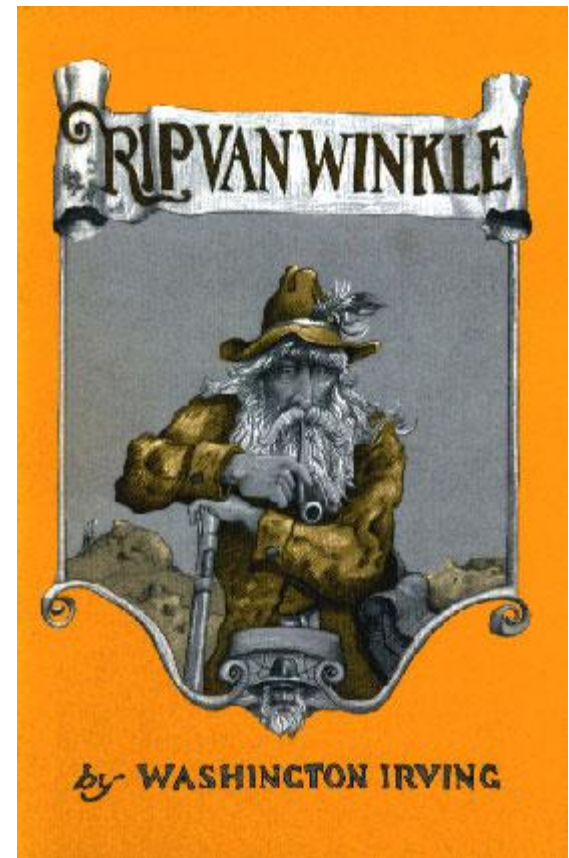


Washington Irving (1783-1859)

- *The Sketch Book* (1819) contains 32 stories two best stories: “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (p.31-32)
- Plots are based on old German folk tales
- Few of the stories are really original; his writing materials come from nations of Europe
- the first American to earn his living through literature
- considered feeling and language as more important elements in his art than story or character
- regarded the story simply “as a frame on which I sketch my materials”



Rip Van Winkle



James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)



- wanted to speak for all America (since Neither Irving nor othe Knickerbockers really tried to speak for the whole country. Their whole world tended to stop at the borders of New York State.) – p.33
- his books contain much thoughtful criticism of American society
- In Europe, Cooper was known as “the American Walter Scott” (who wrote adventure stories filled with historical details)
- considered his works to be completely original
- their characters are “American,” the pioneer, the Indian and the Yankee sailor
- *The Spy* (1821), his first successful novel



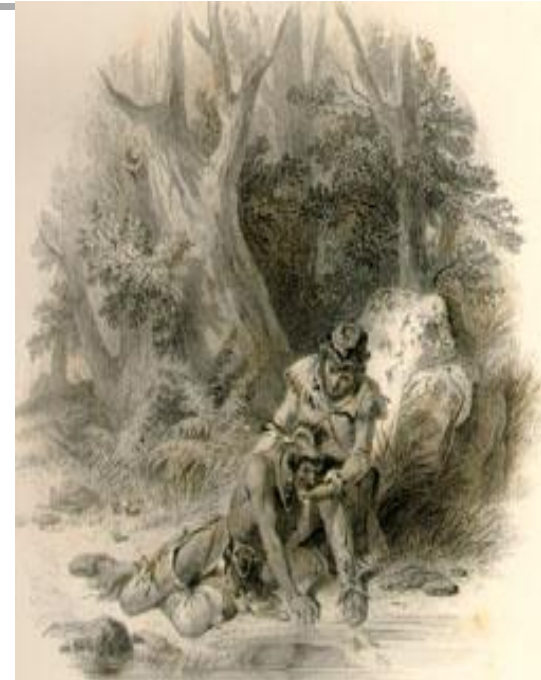
“Leatherstocking” Series

- *The Pioneers* (1823) – p.34-35
 - set in America’s movement westward
 - the main character **Natty Bumppo**, a typical American pioneer figure, a master of all the skills needed to live in the forest, deep love for nature, sympathy for all people, including Indians
 - race conflict between white and Indians
 - Uncas and Chingachgook are Natty’s best Indians friends – noble savages
 - the Indians, dying race, were sacrificed to the advance of white culture

“Leatherstocking” Series

- *The Last of the Monicans* (1826)
- *The Pathfinder* (1840)
- *The Deerslayer* (1841)
- Sea Stories

- civilization over the wilderness
- most successful descriptions are on violent action, night-time terror and mystery
- women characters are weak



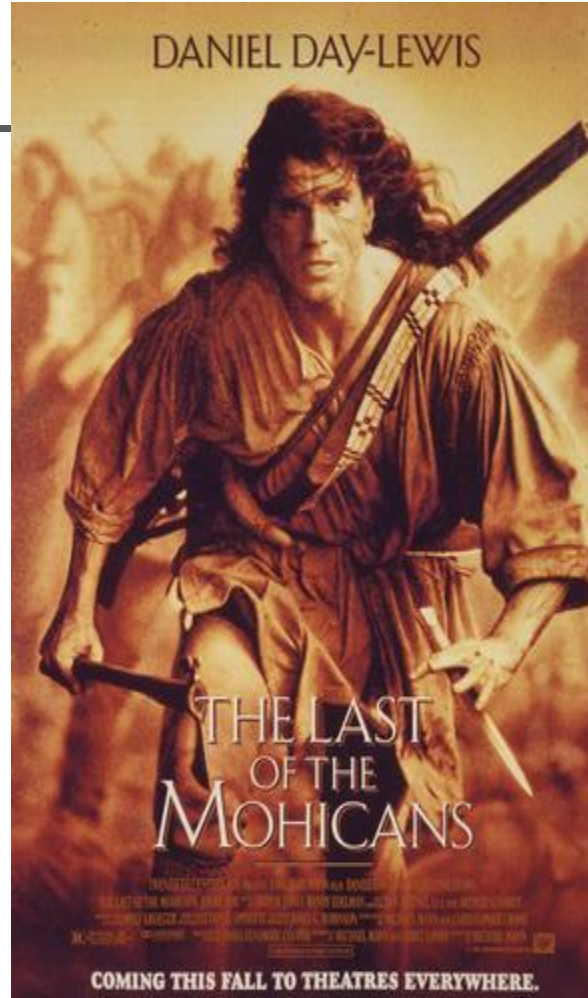
THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

- **The Last of the Mohicans** is the 1826 sequel to the now less-famous *The Pioneers* (1823) and the prequel to *The Prairie* (1827). It is set at the time of the war between France and England in North America and, as the novel begins, we are already three years into the conflict. At Fort Edward, General Webb receives news of a French attack under Montcalm is coming to Fort William Henry which is only guarded by the small force of the Scotsman Monro. Captain Duncan Heyward is dispatched to take Munro's daughters to that Fort along with the renegade Native American runner Magua, known as Le Renard Subtil (The Cunning Fox). The magnificent Chingachgook whose son is the last of the Mohican tribe, and find that Magua is actually preventing their progress and is allied to the French. Hawkeye (Natty Bumppo, the central character in these 'Leatherstocking Tales') and follow him and his Indian companions as they become involved in the bloody war. Hawkeye is seemingly the last decent white man as he respects the Indians' customs in this exciting adventure story full of battles, captures and rescues .

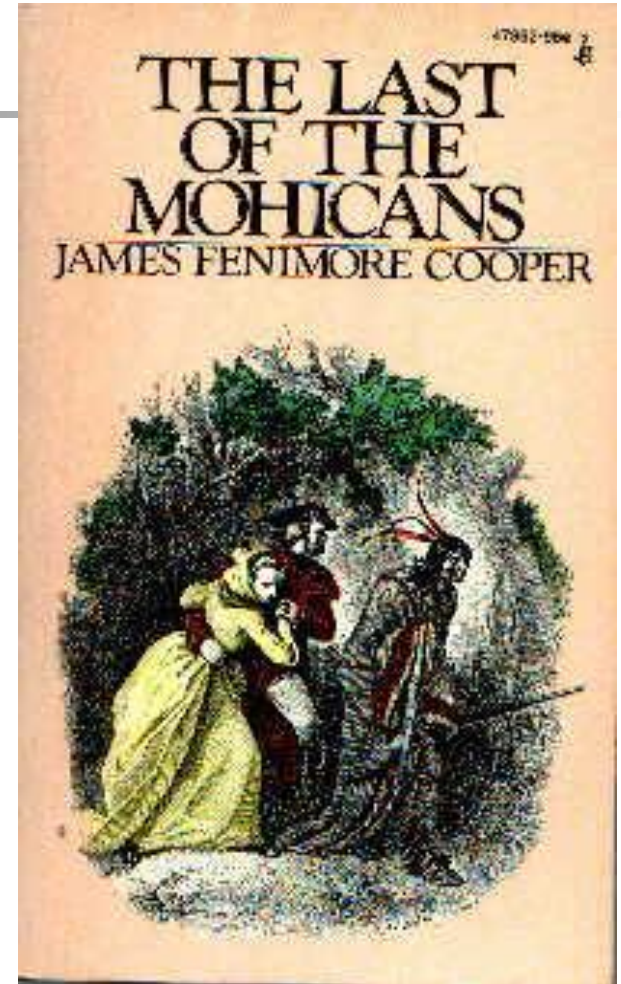
The Last of the Mohicans



Chingachgook



Hawkeye (Nathaniel Bumppo)



William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)



- disliked the old neoclassical style (p.37-38)
 - new poetry should not simply copy the forms and ideas of the ancient classics
 - should break away the old patterns
 - understand the world through his emotions
 - its aim is to find a new higher kind of knowledge
 - nature poetry, paved the way for the Transcendentalists (who believes that man can find truth through his own feeling)
 - a poet with a deep social conscience, fought hard for the rights of the laborer and of blacks, “The Indian Girl’s Lament” and “The African Chief”



Writers in the South



- John Pendleton Kennedy (1795-1870) wrote *Swallow Barn* (1832)
- William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870)
 - *The Yemassee* (1835), his best work
 - interested in Indian society as a whole, their customs and psychology are studied in detail
 - a work of literature and history
 - believed that “it is the artist only who is the true historian”

