

James Fenimore Cooper



Cooper's Footsteps...



Van Wyck House

Thesis Statement

James Fenimore Cooper was one of America's first great novelists because he helped to create a sense of American history through his writings. Cooper was influenced greatly by nature and wrote about it frequently in his novels. Cooper was also influenced by and wrote about places in the Hudson River Valley, such as the Van Wyck House.

Life story

- **born in a rich family**
- **attended Yale but expelled**
- **five years at sea**
- **inherited fortune then a comfortable life**
- **wrote lots of novels because he oneday was disgusted by one novel**

Major works

- "**Leather stocking Tales**" (a series of five novels about the frontier life): The Pioneers, The Prairie, The Last of the Mohicans, The Pathfinder, The Deerslayer
- Central character: Natty Bumppo (several names for same character: Hawk-eye, the Pathfinder, the Deerslayer, Leatherstocking) (a typical frontier man: honest, simple, innocent, generous) (represents brotherhood of man, nature and freedom)
- Theme: modern civilization advancing on the wilderness and the contradiction between them

Features

- **Good at inventing plots (Cooper had never been to the frontier area personally.)**
- **B. Style: powerful, yet clumsy and dreadful**
- **C. Wooden Characters**
- **D. Use of dialect, but not authentic (criticized by Mark Twain)**

Van Wyck House

Fishkill, NY
1732 Dutch Colonial



- Requisitioned by the Continental Army as officers' headquarters.
- Military trials were held here
- Orders for the army were issued from the house.
- Visited by many notables including: Washington, Lafayette, Van Steuben, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay.
- Used by the Quartermaster Department for outfitting Continental troops with clothing.

Thanks for your attention!