

HRVI



YOUR GATEWAY TO THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY

Hudson River Valley Institute

The Academic Arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

HRVI: Historical Multimedia

HRVI's Library

Hudson River Valley historian Lincoln Diamant has donated over 500 rare and out of print books to the Hudson River Valley Institute. The texts span pre-historical, New Netherland, Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary Hudson River history and explore memorable



HRVI Library
Hudson Valley towns, counties, industry and individuals.

Lincoln Diamant, a former writer for CBS News and commentator for Fox News, is the author of *Chaining the Hudson*, winner of the Westchester Library Association Award, *Defending the Hudson in the American Revolution*; *DIVE! The Story of David Bushnell and His Remarkable 1776 Submarine (and Torpedo)*; *Stamping Our History*; *The Story of the United States Portrayed on its Postage Stamps*; *Yankee Doodle Days*; and *Revolutionary Women*. Mr. Diamant's contributions to Hudson Valley history have enriched the field, and the Hudson River Valley Institute will utilize his

generous donation to continue studying the Valley and its past.

Upcoming Symposium

On Saturday, March 31st, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, the Great Estates Consortium will present *From Field to Table: Agriculture on the Great Estates*. Six speakers will explore the role of agriculture in the Hudson Valley Estates from the 18th century to the present.

The symposium will proceed chronologically, opening with a presentation by curator Travis M. Bowman on subsistence agriculture in colonial Hudson Valley and a pictorial presentation by Stanley H. Benham Jr. on farm life and community. After lunch, curator Frank Futral will expose attendees to the dining habits of true aristocracy, a humbling presentation to be sure. Next, park ranger Kevin Oldenburg will discuss tree farming at President Franklin D. Roosevelt's family estate in Hyde Park and Judith La Belle and Mary Kay Vrba will conclude the symposium with a presentation about agriculture and the preservation of open spaces in the 21st century. The event will take place in the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site.

Lunch, coffee, tea, wine, cheese, a walking tour of the Roosevelt Farm Road, and admission to the Roosevelt Presidential Li-

brary and Museum are all included in the \$55 per person registration fee. Space is limited; visit <http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/presscenter/newsClippings/07GreatEstates.pdf> for more information.

Local History & Music



Folk-rock singer/songwriter Adam Snyder first found success as a member of *Mercury Rev*. In 2001, his solo record on David Gray's UK HT1 label, *Across the Pond*, scored a top 40 single on the UK charts. Snyder's 2007 release "This Town..." is dedicated to Kingston—"The once and future capital of New York" and celebrates his own history with that of the town. Snyder will play two shows in the area this April. For more information or to sample Adam's work, visit his website: <http://www.myspace.com/adamsnyder>.

- Igor Volsky

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Special points of interest:

- New to the Hudson River Valley [site](#) is the *Fallkill Management Plan*.
- Meet more of HRVI's outstanding interns and the office assistant on page 4.

Meet the Historian — Mary Howell

Mary Howell was not always interested in pursuing history for a career. Before becoming the [Columbia County Historian](#), she had taught elementary students in New Jersey and Germantown, New York, with a daily routine that encompassed an entirely different type of schedule. Now, “there is always something to do,” she said of her current position in a phone interview last month. She described some of her duties as county historian; a fair amount of her time is spent answering emails and letters, both local and some from as far as Japan and England. An Englishman once asked about a friend who used to live in Livingston; Mrs. Howell checked town records and asked a great number of people, including the undertaker in Germantown. “I was pleased I could do all that,” she said, describing her job as a form of guidance for people who write to her.

Mrs. Howell graduated from Plattsburgh State College with a degree in education and trained in home economics. As a first-grade teacher in Germantown, she had the opportunity to educate her students about the town’s history and so had invited the Germantown historian to talk to the students. As time would have it, Mrs. Howell came to love history; she retired from teaching after thirty-six years in Germantown’s school system and took the position of Livingston town historian, where she presided for twenty years.

In January 1994, Mrs. Howell was offered the job of Columbia County Historian. Today, she stays busy with her recent research project of the history of the County Courthouse, which is soon to celebrate its centennial. She described how the courthouse has moved five times from where it first started as a local home.

“There is as much going forwards as backwards,” she said of her abundant research on the courthouse.

In addition to her historian position, Mrs. Howell is also a member of the [Columbia County Historical Society](#) where she occasionally writes for the *Columbia County Heritage*, a publication available sporadically throughout the year by the CCHS.

Mrs. Howell noted her favorite site in Columbia County as the Luykas Van Alen building in Kinderhook, a restored house museum that represents 18th-century rural Dutch farm life.

For more information, or to reach Mary Howell, please call (518) 828-3442 or email her at mjh@mh.com.
- RJ Langlois

Featured Historic Town — Ardsley Village

Located in Southern Westchester County, the village of [Ardsley](#) is a small, thriving suburban community. Ardsley’s first inhabitants were the Weckqueskecks, a branch of the Mohican tribe of the Algonquin nation. Until the late 1600s, Ardsley was a successful Native American community. The main road running through town, now Ashford Avenue, served as a travel route for the Native Americans from the Hudson River to the Long Island Sound. By the end of the 1600s, the Native Americans had been pushed out of the area by Dutch and English settlers. It was during this time that most of the land in the area belonged to Frederick Philipse, a wealthy Dutchman. In the late 1700s, after the American Revolution, the land was confiscated by the state due to Philipse’s Loyalist ties. It was then sold mostly to tenant farmers who had been devoted to the Revolution, and the village of Ardsley began to develop.

From the late 1700s until 1883 the village was known as Ashford, New York. Development in Ashford proceeded slowly; however, by the time the Civil War broke out, the village was home to a sawmill, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop and three pickle factories, all which helped the village continue to grow. Development increased quickly in the 1880s when the Putnam Railroad and the Croton Aqueduct were constructed nearby. The town grew as many open plots of land were sold, electric lines were installed and roads were improved. In 1883 the rapidly growing village was renamed Ardsley (because there already existed an Ashford, NY, Post Office), and the first postmaster general of the village was appointed. In 1896 the village became incorporated into the town of Greenburgh.

Development came to a standstill in December of 1914 when a large fire devastated the village. Slowly the village rebuilt, and there was another “boom” in the area after World War I with the addition of the housing communities Ardsley Acres and Beacon Hill. It was at this time that the village’s three schools were built.



www.co.westchester.ny.u

Today the 1.25 square mile village is known for its picturesque setting and “small town” feel. Just over 4,000 residents call Ardsley their home. Located within the village is the [Westchester County Macy Park](#), which features the [Great Hunger Memorial](#), a piece of public art recognizing the historic significance of the famine in Ireland in the 1800s and the effect it had on the United States and Westchester County in particular. On March 4, 2007, the Ardsley Historical Society will host a presentation on the “female Paul Revere,” Sybil Ludington, who made history with her heroic ride to alert local militia that the city of Danbury, CT, was being burned by the British during the American Revolution. The historic atmosphere and quaint environment make this small, river-side town a perfect place to visit.

The Village’s website provides more information at:

<http://www.ardsleyvillage.com/>

- Maria Zandri



www.ardsleyvillage.com

Featured Historic Site — Wilderstein Estate

The Wilderstein estate began with a purchase of a riverfront site by Thomas Holy Suckley in 1852. He then bought another parcel of land, a sheep meadow that was adjacent to his property. Suckley nicknamed the acreage Wilderstein, which is German word for “wild man’s stone,” referring to the Native-American petroglyphs nearby. Today the real estate encompasses approximately forty acres, extending from Morton Road to the Hudson River itself. The Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River Valley provide a picturesque backdrop to the manor, and surrounding greens of cedar and evergreen trees accentuate the light-colored features of the building. Suckley envisioned a house that was destined to be aesthetically pleasing with all of its natural surroundings.

Thomas Suckley’s son, Robert Browne Suckley, remodeled the building’s Italianate villa in 1888. Interestingly he chose a Poughkeepsie architect, Arnout Cannon, to transform the two-story villa into a Queen Anne style country house. In addition to refurbishing the villa, Robert expanded Wilderstein to have a third floor as well as five-story circular tower that provided a spectacular view of the encompassing landscape. Upon entering the interior of the estate, the eyes of the viewer are immediately drawn to the exquisite ground level room designs of mahogany, leather, and stained glass. Amazingly, the ground-

level rooms and the floor itself were completed in just a few months by New York City engineer, Joseph Burr Tiffany. What is also fascinating about the inside of Wilderstein are its thirty rooms; each has a distinctive theme such as the famous Louis XVI, which has been untouched for years. Calvert Vaux used the American Romantic Landscape style to design the grounds outside the home. Vaux’s scheme involved the creation of elaborate walks and trails, as well as decorative trees and ornamental shrubs, which people come to see today.

Suckley was a descendant of the Beekman and Livingston families, who also have prominent territories in the Hudson River Valley. Robert left the estate for close to four years (1884-1888). He returned in 1888 after his father’s death and built his own power plant to provide electricity for the house. The Suckleys suffered financial loss following the Panic of 1893 and the number of children placed greater strain on the family. Robert’s daughter, Daisy, (also known as Margaret) was a distant cousin of FDR, who



www.wilderstein.org

accompanied him on trips to Washington and served as secretary at Roosevelt’s library. When she died at Wilderstein in 1991, over 20,000 photographs, 6,000 books, and a manuscript collection measuring over 600 linear feet were uncovered. These manuscripts date back to the 1780s and end with the death of Daisy. Over 10,000 miscellaneous objects were found, including china, pottery, furniture, letters and artwork. It is also interesting to note that Daisy wrote numerous letters to FDR, describing the warm friendship they shared.

Today the property is in the process of receiving another face lift. This year, Sunday July 22nd until Saturday August 4th there will be a number of volunteers helping to improve the various trails around the estate. Restoration will include the repair of the gazebo as well as the painting of furnishings on the veranda. Cataloging of the books found in the home will also be completed during this time. There are plans to construct a multi-use facility out of the 8,000 square foot carriage house constructed in 1888. The main goal at transforming the carriage house is to preserve the collections uncovered in the home and make them accessible to scholars, students, and researchers.

For more information about the Wilderstein Estate please visit:

<http://www.wilderstein.org/about.html>

Featured Historic Website — Albany Institute of History and Art

Older than the Smithsonian Institution and the Metropolitan Museum, the [Albany Institute of History and Art](http://www.albanyinstitute.com) is one of the oldest museums in the country. Its humble origins stem back to the organization of the [Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts and Manufactures](http://www.albanyinstitute.com) in 1791. Today, the Institute’s holdings are considered the best collection documenting the life and culture of the Upper Hudson Valley region from the late 17th century to the present.



www.albanyinstitute.com

The curatorial collections of the AIHA include more than 20,000 objects, including 1,600 paintings, 1,200 ceramic pieces, 4,000 prints, 1,100 drawings, and 500 pieces of furniture. Additionally, the AIHA’s library holdings include over 85,000 photographs, 1,000 linear feet of manuscripts, 140,000 volumes and 125 periodicals. *(Continued on page 4)*

Featured Historic Website — Albany Institute of History and Art

(Continued from page 3)

The majority of the objects in the Institute's permanent collections are from the Albany or New York areas and chronicle the achievements of some of America's most accomplished artists, craftsmen and customers.

Visitors can view Thomas Cole's *Ruined Tower* oil landscape in the permanent Hudson River School Gallery or various examples of the 19th Century American Sculpture of Erastus Dow Palmer, Launt Thompson, and Charles

Calverley in the Sculpture Court. Other continuing exhibitions feature Colonial Albany silver, Limner portraits, branded furniture, ceramics, textiles, and manuscripts. However, the AIHA also has a substantial permanent Ancient Egypt exhibit and a number of temporary exhibitions that fulfill the Institute's promise of being "a Museum for the 21st Century" by providing venues in the form of galleries, museums, libraries, and historical societies. Throughout the website, images and exhibition summaries give the user a

glimpse of the vast holdings available for viewing.

The Institute is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm and Sunday, 12:00-5:00 pm. [Admission for non-members](#) is \$8.00. For more information about admission discounts, guided tours, directions, or parking, please call 518-463-4478 or visit <http://www.albanyinstitute.org/info/index.htm>.

-Amanda Hurlburt

Meet the Intern — Emily Wist

Ironically, Emily joined the Hudson River Valley Institute last September, but due to complications in time-travel, she has just recently arrived to the newsletter. As a second-semester freshman, Emily is still undecided in what she wants to do with the rest of her life but she has a few items on the "to-do" list. Emily wholeheartedly wants to travel to all seven continents (yes, including Antarctica), sky dive, become fluent in Spanish, and more. With that in mind, she finds herself toying with history, Spanish, and fine art, incessantly interrogating each subject with the motive to learn as much as possible before choosing one (or more) to unleash upon the real world.

When not conducting intense cross-examinations of future educational and career-related options Emily occupies her time with an array of activities. She enjoys painting, watching movies with her friends, sleeping late, singing (semi-out of tune) to whatever Suki (her iPod) decides to play, and is currently attempting to memorize the entirety of the *Avenue Q* soundtrack.

Working at HRVI has allowed Emily to get to know and interact with intelligent and interesting people. She enjoys the atmosphere of Fontaine 304, has learned a lot in a short period of time and proudly wears the room key next to her ID on her key ring. Needless to say Emily will continue to complete any as-

sortment of assignments for the Institute for as long as it decides to keep her around.

- Emily Wist



Meet the Intern — Tracy Dunstan

Tracy Dunstan is a junior at Marist College and is studying history with a concentration in secondary education.



This semester she is an intern with the Hudson River Valley Institute, spending most of her time at Mount Gulian Historical Site in Beacon. There she is transcribing letters received to and sent from Gulian C. Verplanck, a

noted statesman from the Hudson River Valley.

As a native of the Hudson River Valley, born and raised in Fishkill, Tracy has had a long held interest in the area and its history, including dragging her friends and anyone breathing to the Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park or Cold Spring.

One of Tracy's loftier aspirations besides history and teaching, is to one day produce films, and she hopes to work in both fields when she graduates in 2008. She loves movies and can be counted on to state various random facts about them---she kills the competition while playing *Scene*

It. She could list on and on her favorite movies but here are the top three, *The Village* (yes, she knows everyone else hated it but trust her), *The Painted Veil*, and *Titanic*. She also enjoys reading (for history buffs, Ann Rinaldi is great) and writing.

Also in her spare time, Tracy channels her inner pioneer and makes quilts (okay, two) and plays piano and clarinet.

-Tracy Dunstan

Contact Us

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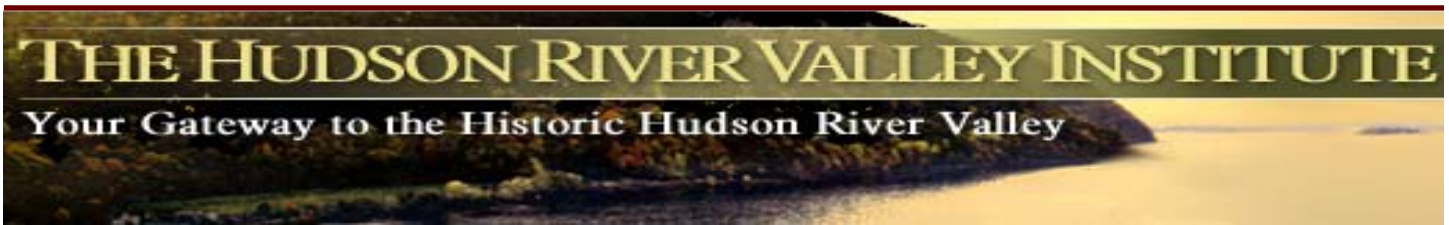
*The Hudson River Valley:
"The Landscape that Defined America"*

www.hudsonrivervalley.org

The Hudson River Valley is one of only 37 Congressionally designated National Heritage Areas in the United States. As one of the most important regions in the United States, it is the fountainhead of a truly American identity. Recognizing the area's national value, Congress formed the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in 1996 to recognize, to preserve, to protect, and to interpret the nationally-significant history and resources of the Valley for the benefit of the nation.

The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College is the academic arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Its mission is to study and to promote the Hudson River Valley and to provide educational resources for heritage tourists, scholars, elementary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public. Its many projects include the publication of the Hudson River Valley Review and the management of a dynamic digital library and leading regional portal site.

As the center for the study of the Hudson River Valley, the Hudson River Valley Institute (HRVI) at Marist College is the central hub for information about the region. HRVI serves heritage tourists, scholars, elementary and secondary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public seeking to know more about the region that Congress called "the Landscape that defined America."



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The newsletter is the production of the interns of HRVI