

HRVI



YOUR GATEWAY TO THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY

Hudson River Valley Institute

The Academic Arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

“Growing Up” in the Hudson Valley

From Field to Table: Agriculture on the Great Estates explored the history of agriculture in the Hudson Valley. Hosted by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, the symposium began with an “optional walking tour” of President Roosevelt’s old tree plantation.

Tour guide Kevin Oldenburg, a young Park Ranger, explained that the President maintained several tree farms and grew 1,000-4,000 different species of experimental trees per year. During World War II, the navy constructed boats from President Roosevelt’s timber and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill received Christmas trees from the Roosevelt tree plantation as Christmas gifts, throughout the course of the war. Wheelchair bound, President Roosevelt bisected this plantation with dirt roads and inspected the fields from the inside of his car.

Roosevelt’s innovations followed decades of historical farm experimentation pioneered by Hudson River Valley farmers. After a continental breakfast and some brief opening remarks, Claremont State Historic Site curator Travis Bowman discussed the role of agriculture in the Hudson Val-

ley during the colonial period. Throughout the eighteenth century, most farmers worked as tenants on the estates of the Claremont and Livingston farms. Disease, alcoholism, and drug addiction ravaged colonial farm families during the cold winter months of the eighteenth century. Until 1751, March marked the beginning of the



year and agricultural season. Hudson River Valley farmers spread manure for four-year crop rotations, farmed commercially viable crops like corn, and raised sheep for wool production. African American slaves served in the households of the Livingston and Claremont families or were rented out to tenants; white laborers or indentured servants worked in the fields.

Slavery was not abolished in

the Hudson Valley until 1799 and remained legal in New York until 1827. As American society progressed, quality of life followed suit. Stanley H. Benham’s pictorial presentation of rural life in the Hudson Valley in the 1800s revealed the ingenuity of rural farmers. Families relied on primitive treadmills, powered by running dogs, to churn butter and wash laundry. They transported turkeys to market in Manhattan by throwing turkey feed (usually corn) over their shoulders from atop a horse headed for the city. And when horses became too expensive to maintain, Hudson Valley farmers turned to motorized tractors.

After a short lunch break, Frank Futral, curator of decorative arts at the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, began the second half of the symposium with a discussion of how wealthy ‘gentlemen’ farmers pioneered farm technology and design. Kevin Oldenburg, the Park Ranger from the tour, presented a lecture about President Roosevelt’s farming techniques.

-Igor Volski

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- *See the new additions to the Preservation League of New York’s “Seven to Save” list on page 4*
- *First ever Barnabas McHenry Hudson River Valley Award given on page 4*
- *Meet more of HRVI’s current interns on page 5*

Featured Historic Website — Preservation League of New York State

For the past thirty-three years, the [Preservation League of New York](#) has been fighting alongside both public and private historical organizations in the communities of New York that are committed to protecting and preserving the historical heritage of New York State. A state agency, the group is dedicated to helping provide financial backing and support to help save the history of New York.

[Past projects](#) for the organization include saving the outbuildings of Camp Sagamore, an Adirondack Great camp and pushing the New York State Historical Preservation Act, both in the early 1980s. More recently, the League played

a strong part in saving Ellis Island in the early 1990s where the buildings on the south side, the hospital, laundry and morgue buildings, were all slated and redeveloped.

The League offers direct [project assistance](#) to non-profit organizations and municipalities and since 1993 has awarded over \$1 million to local preservation projects.

The most current project for the Preservation League of New York involves the preservation of a cement stairwell, now known as the “Survivors’ Stairwell,” is the only remaining above-ground element of the World Trade Center attacks.

The website for the Preservation offers a number of resources for public use including a listing of their [biannual publications](#), which details their latest projects in the local community. They also offer information and details about educational opportunities within the organization, as well as general knowledge of the most endangered properties in New York each year, providing historical information and reasons for preservation of the site.

For more information, please visit their [site](#) or call then at (518) 462-5658.

RJ Langlois

Featured Historic Town — Catskill

Encompassing over sixty-four square miles, the town of Catskill sits in Greene County on the Western shore of the Hudson River. It is known for its breathtaking views of the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains, as well as many tourist attractions. The town was founded in 1788 after it was purchased from Native Americans in 1678.

Year-round the town of Catskill is filled with activities for local residents and tourists alike. The Catskill Mountains provide many hiking trails and the area is also very popular for fly-fishing. Tourists have been flocking to the area since the late 1700s and the early 1800s. During this time Catskill was popular among the wealthy and some believed that the air was so pure in Catskill that it had healing powers.

One of the many gorgeous landmarks in Catskill that attracted artists during the early 1800s was the [Catskill Mountain House](#), which was built by the Catskill Mountain Association in 1823. The Mountain House, perched on the towering banks of the Hudson with breathtaking views of the river and the

mountains, was a popular stop for visitors traveling by steamboat from New York City to Albany and often the starting point for tours throughout the Catskill region. During the early 1900s the aristocratic persona of the Catskill Mountain House began to decline; railroads were repossessed and



none provided a direct route to the Mountain House. Also, Catskill visitors were shifting from society’s elite to a more middle-class, predominantly Jewish, group. In 1963, the Catskill Mountain House was burned to the ground, but its importance to Catskill will always remain due to the numerous visitors and the countless paintings and photographs that captured its

beauty.

In the 1800s, Catskill was home to many famous painters from the Hudson River Valley School, such as Thomas Cole. In 1825 Cole made his first visit to Catskill and permanently settled in the town in 1936 at Cedar Grove, a property which his wife’s family had held since 1797. [Cedar Grove](#), now recognized as a National Historic Site, is located directly on the Hudson River and is known for having one of the best views of the Catskill Mountains. Much of Cole’s vast collection of work is devoted to illustrating the beauty of the Catskill area, including the Town of Catskill. The same can be said for other Hudson River Valley painters, including Frederic Church, (“Scene at Catskill Creek”) and Sanford Gifford (“Kaaterskill Falls”).

The history of Catskill is extensive and centers around the beauty of the area, which sits between the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains. Today, the Town of Catskill is home to around 12,000 people and still attracts tourists for beauty and unique history.

-Maria Zandri

Featured Historic Site — The Irish American Heritage Museum

The [Irish American Heritage Museum](#) in East Durham, New York is committed to the preservation of Irish heritage and contributions made to American society. It actively promotes projects, programs, and resources that seek to spread Irish heritage across the country. The museum has three special missionary statements: the first is to preserve, collect, and present material that is related to the background of the Irish American populace. Second, the institution attempts to ascertain and document Irish and Irish American contributions on a global scale. Finally, it serves as a place of scholarship via its archives and research library in addition to supporting cultural and educational programs pertaining to Irish American heritage.

There are numerous and intriguing exhibits, part of the museum's permanent collection that have toured nationally and even internationally. *The Great Hunger* commemorates the 150th anniversary of the devastating Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s that saw the immigration and death of millions of Irish. This particular exhibit has been noted for its accurate detail of the suffering during this most horrific event in Ireland's history. It also

contains thirty panels spanning approximately 140 feet and has traveled to Massachusetts' [Hatikvah Holocaust Education Center](#), Washington D.C., and Chicago. *Home for the Heart* displays the triumphs and struggles of Irish Americans from the 1600s until the present and has visited New Orleans, Oswego, and



Charlotte. *Presidential Portraits: American Presidents of Irish Decent*, a two-part exhibit, takes a photographic and bibliographic approach to the Irish-American commanders-in-chief. Both editions trace the lives of Irish presidents such as John Adams, Ronald Reagan, Theodore Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy. *Dublin 63* contains fifty-four framed images that give a glimpse into the capital of Ireland during the 1960s. *Dublin '63: Then and Now* compares Dublin of 1963 to 2003 to demonstrate the great social and economic changes

that have affected the city. The Dublin exhibits have been shown at the National Library of Dublin Ireland. *Fire Upon the Hearth* outlines the contributions made by Irish and Irish-American women since the seventeenth century and was recently displayed in the Kerry County Library in Kerry County, Ireland. The final exhibit at the museum is *Go and Preach the Kingdom of God*, which traces religious orders established in the home country that followed the Irish journey for America.

During the next few months, the Irish American Heritage Museum will host a number of interesting programs: May 4th through May 6th presents the *Irish in Music* in conjunction with the annual meeting of the New York State Ancient Order of Hibernians. On June 10th, author Cindy Thompson discusses her latest book, [Brigid of Ireland](#). *The History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians* will be shown between July 11th and July 14th; this fascinating group of individuals was created in New York in 1836, providing assistance to Irish Catholic immigrants. Today the organization proudly endorses the motto Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity.

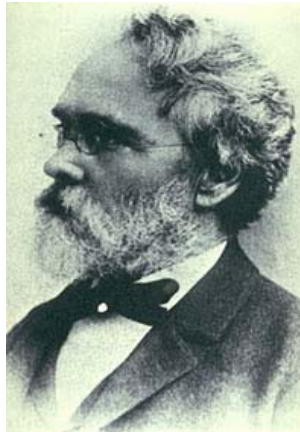
-Paul Contarino

Historic Remembrance — Calvert Vaux

A standard Google image search for "Calvert Vaux" returns, among handfuls of houses and half-familiar landscapes, several varieties of a simple black and white portrait.

Calvert Vaux.

Out of context, his name seems French and exotic. I might have imagined the man in the portrait to be clad in dark clothes, dodging the occasional portrait to slip away on a secret counter-intelligence mission. Instead, he stares off my computer



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screen. He wears spectacles and a dark suit that carries nary a wrinkle. He does not look remarkable, or even notable. But this was a man who co-designed Central Park, the grounds at the White House and the Smithsonian Institute. He was an author, a skilled draftsman, and a founding member of the [American Institute of Architects](#). And there he sits in front of me, another indistinguishable portrait. Calvert Vaux, pronounced "Vawks," was born in London in 1824. His family was of French origin,

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but was well-established in England by the time young Calvert was born. At the age of fifteen, he entered into an apprenticeship under London architect, [Lewis Nockalls Cottingham](#). Cottingham was respected, but not renowned, and his style was Gothicist and mostly unoriginal. Vaux might have well followed suit if he had not crossed paths with [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) in the summer of 1850. Downing was a nationally recognized American landscape gardener and writer in search of an architect to assist him in the opening of his new professional office in Newburgh, NY. An alliance began and Vaux slowly grew into the high-Victorian style for which he would later be recognized.

For two years, Downing and Vaux operated as partners, collecting clients and notoriety. But in 1852, Downing was killed aboard the Hudson River Steamboat, [Henry Clay](#), when it

caught fire. Vaux continued the business for several years before moving to New York City. Five years later, Vaux found himself in the midst of a competition to design Central Park. He elicited the help of [Frederick Law Olmsted](#) in submitting a proposal and their design, "[Greensward](#)," was chosen in 1858. After the construction of Central Park and its widespread popularity, Vaux contributed to designing Brooklyn's Prospect Park, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the American Museum of National History.

In the Hudson River Valley, he would work with Olmsted in the design of Downing Park in Newburgh in tribute to Vaux's friend and first partner in architectural design. Vaux would also go on to work on the design for [Olana](#), the home of Hudson River School painter Frederick

Church. Today, this Persian style house overlooking the Hudson is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Hudson Valley. The grounds at [Wildenstein](#) in Rhinebeck, New York were also constructed as per his artistic architectural vision.

With Vaux's death in 1895, many of his books and records melted into a kind of obscurity. His portrait is still something of an anomaly, betraying the face and the man integral to American architecture for half a century. But as is the case with anyone worth remembering, time is often the patient equalizer. I stare at the portrait, imprinting it, and repeat the name, sans French accent. Calvert Vaux.

-Amanda Hurlburt

Preservation League of NY's "Seven to Save" list

On Wednesday, April 11, 2007, the Preservation League of New York State announced that the Hoyt House (The Point) in Staatsburgh had been added to their 2007 Seven to Save list. The League, the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance, Hudson River Heritage, Hudson River Valley Institute, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation held a press event on the grounds of the estate, within Mills-Norrie State Park.

Jay DiLorenzo, President of The Preservation League, welcomed the guests and explained the history and past successes of their Seven to Save program. J. Winthrop

Wint Aldrich spoke of the grandeur of the Vaux designed house and grounds, as well as the troubling disrepair of the same; he recounted a number of previous state-sponsored and assisted efforts to save this treasure and emphasized the importance of this new designation and the Alliance. Francis Frank Kowsky, author of *Country, Park & City: The Architecture and Life of Calvert Vaux*, provided the context of The Point in Vaux's life and career. And Alan Strauber introduced and explained the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance's role in this ambitious plan for the building's stabilization, restoration, and utilization.

A surprise guest proved to be the descendant of Lydig Hoyt, the man for whom Vaux designed the estate. Gerrit Graham recalled time he spent growing up there in the 1960s, before the State acquired the property. Following these remarks, assembled guests took a short tour of the immediate grounds and outbuildings.

For more information on the estate and the Alliance's effort to save it, please visit: www.calvertvaux.org. Learn more about the Preservation League at: www.preservenys.org.

-Christopher Pryslopski

First Annual Barnabas McHenry Hudson River Valley Award

On Thursday, April 26, a delegation from Marist and the HRVI attended a luncheon to honor W. Barnabas McHenry. The event was hosted by the Open Space Institute, an organization devoted to preserving and protecting scenic and historic spaces along the Eastern Seaboard.

For the past forty years, Mr. McHenry has worked on a number of conservation and preservation projects throughout the Hudson Valley. As general counsel of the Reader's Digest Association, Inc., he was the principal architect of the Wallace Funds, which have contributed of billions of dollars to the arts, education, humanities, health and the environment along the

Hudson River. He continued his commitment to the Hudson River Valley as a Commissioner of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Chairman of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, Co-Chair of the Hudson River Valley Natural Heritage Area, President of Boscobel Restoration, and as a Trustee of the Open Space Institute.

In addition to honoring Mr. McHenry's other accomplishments, the luncheon also commemorated the foundation of the Barnabas McHenry Hudson River Valley Award. This endowment will honor fund projects in the

fields of environmental conservation, historic preservation, and the arts. Among the recipients was Michael Diaz, a graduate of Marist College and a former HRVI intern. Winning the award in historic preservation, Michael will research the experiences of Loyalists in Hudson Valley during the American Revolution. The research will be conducted at Boscobel, the house of States Dyckman, a Loyalist who fled the country only to return after the war.

-Mike Diaz

Meet the Intern — Paul Contarino

Paul Contarino is currently a junior at Marist majoring in history with a minor in the African Diaspora. He previously attended Dutchess Community College, achieving his associates in history, and later chose Marist for the wide range of courses that the history program offered. For approximately the last eight months Paul has worked in the Cannavino Library. Overall, the experience has been positive because of the friendly staff.

This semester Paul interned at the Hudson River Valley Institute. In addition to writing for the monthly newsletter, he completed two major research papers on Hudson River Valley artists Samuel F.B.

Morse and Frederic Edwin Church. The most exciting aspect of the research process was viewing both artists' work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

One of Paul's favorite hobbies is reading; he recently finished *Pyrrhic Victory*, which discussed the French military leading up to the events of World War I. He also likes to complete jigsaw puzzles of various natural settings, recently finishing one of a small village in the Austrian Alps.

For the last few summers Paul has traveled to the Southwest. By far the most fascinating places visited were the Grand

Canyon and Bryce Canyon - their size and exquisite rock formations are simply breathtaking. He even hiked the trails and spent an afternoon in Death Valley when the temperature was 117 degrees!

The graduate schools that Paul is considering are Columbia, NYU, SUNY Binghamton, Cornell, or even Yale. He'd like to pursue his PhD in history concentrating on the World War I era, focusing on Europe and America. He is particularly interested in the events leading up to the Great War as well as the Paris Peace Conference. Paul hopes to teach at the college level.

-Paul Contarino

Meet the Intern — Maria Zandri

Maria Zandri, a senior at Marist College, is a History and American Studies major. This is her first semester working at the Hudson River Valley Institute — she often wonders why she didn't sign up for an internship earlier! This semester Maria is working on several different projects, including articles for upcoming issues of the Hudson River Valley Review on the Steamboat Bicentennial celebrations at both *Clermont* and *Boscobel*. Maria's other projects include research papers on the Dyckman



family and *Boscobel*, and the Hudson River Valley painter Doris Lee, as well as contributing to the monthly newsletter.

A great deal of Maria's time at Marist has been devoted to the Men's Varsity Crew Team, which just rowed its way to its seventh consecutive MAAC Championship. Maria is also an active member of both the Dean's Circle and the Honors Program at Marist. She also just recently made a presentation at the Celebration of Un-

dergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity (CURSCA) about Eleanor Roosevelt's evolution as a political figure.

After graduation, Maria intends to pursue her Masters degree in Public History at SUNY Albany, in hopes of one day working at a historic site or museum. While she is excited to dive into the next stage of her life, Maria will miss her early-morning wakeups on the Hudson River, her lovable boyfriend, and the many friendships she made over the years.

-Maria Zandri

Meet the Intern — Amanda Hurlburt

Amanda Hurlburt is a junior English major with a concentration in writing. She is pursuing minors in Spanish, Communications, and Studio Art. She can make a pretty decent Panini while reciting a list of the fifty most common prepositions in alphabetical order. In her spare time, she works on her novel. Her current page count is eight, but she has high hopes of finishing chapter one by the end of her undergraduate career. The above picture is of Amanda descending the slide of a children's swing set.

Her favorite sports team is the New York Mets. She wasn't always a baseball fan, but since entering college it has become her favorite sport to watch. Or listen to. Or wear a hat in support. She feels like this is going to be the year that the Mets take the series and she doesn't feel bad for all those other teams that won't rise to greatness this year. Actually, she laughs a little when she thinks about it.

If Amanda could travel through time, she thinks she might like to spend some time in Europe around the turn of the century and a few

weeks, at least, in Italy during the Renaissance. She also loves old Victorian houses and is also fond of buildings from the Arts and Crafts movement. Right now, she's writing a paper on Robert Fulton and the age of steamboats on the Hudson River. Sometimes, when the breeze catches her hair, she imagines herself on the deck of a Day Liner, the river churning below, and the 1860s alive with transit. She has no idea what lies in her future, but she wants to change the world.

-Amanda Hurlburt



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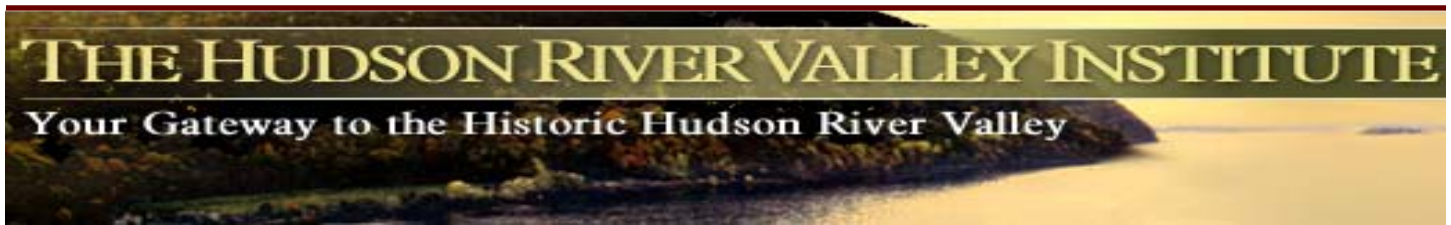
*The Hudson River Valley:
"The Landscape that Defined America"*

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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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