Guidebook to the Civil War in Ulster County

March Through Ulster County’s History
Welcome to Kingston!

- Head east on Interstate 95
- Take exit 2 toward FDR Dr/Manhattan
- Keep right toward Amsterdam Ave
- Turn right at Amsterdam Ave
- Continue on Interstate 95
- Take NJ-4/I-95 exit
- Take exit 72A to NJ-4 W
- Exit on NJ-17 N
- Merge to I-287 N/NJ-17 N
- Take exit onto I-87N/NY-17N
- Take exit 19 to NY-28/Kingston
The Kingston Senate House Museum also has a large collection of Civil War artifacts. Their collection includes correspondence from General George H. Sharpe, letters from Civil War soldiers to their families in Kingston, uniforms, artillery, regimental posters for the local regiments, the soldiers’ hospital reports, newspapers from the Civil War era, and a collection of Civil War prints by Matthew Brady. The House archives over one-thousand documents from the civil war. One of their unusual collections is an assortment daguerreotypes which are old photographs that were imposed on tin. Their most prized artifact is a piece of black silk from the cloth that covered President Lincoln’s funeral casket. This collection is not currently on display but may still be observed in the museum’s archives.

At the traffic circle, take the 2nd exit onto Washington Ave
Turn left at N Front St
Turn Right at Fair St
Arrive at Senate House Museum
1 Hour 38 Minutes
Founded in 1659 and organized by Dutch settlers, the Old Dutch Church was the only church in Kingston for over 175 years. In 1852, the congregation moved across the street, and the building was eventually sold to the state of New York. During the Civil War, the old church structure (now St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church) housed a field hospital, an armory and drill hall (Old Dutch Church), and was in use from September 1859 to July 1867. The Dominie of the Church strongly supported the Union cause even before the Civil War began (similarly, a former Dominie supported the patriots during American Revolution). The church raised and fielded its own regiment, and many men from the Old Dutch Church congregation were enlisted in the New York 120th Infantry, whose general, George H. Sharpe, was a prominent parishioner of the church. During the war, the men in the armory would cross the street to the church, and chip off pieces of an old cedar post for souvenirs. The flags carried by the regiment are displayed in the narthex of the church.

By the end of the war, General Sharpe was a member of General Ulysses S. Grant's staff. After the Civil War had ended, General Sharpe presented a statue, titled “Patriotism”, to the church in honor of his men in the 120th Infantry. This statue can still be found in the church graveyard, and is the only war monument ever constructed by a general to his men on a plot deeded to the monument itself.
Mt. Zion Cemetery, located on South Wall Street in Kingston, is the second African American Cemetery in Kingston. The earliest documented grave is believed to date back to 1856. A notable number of African American soldiers who served in the Civil War are buried in this cemetery. These men served in the US Colored Troops, the 20th Regiment of Ulster County. The cemetery was designated a Historic Landmark in 1987. Currently this cemetery is going through a restoration process by the Kingston Land Trust. Recently the Kingston Veterans Association and nine Seabess Veterans donated a new sign for the cemetery. This site documents the deaths of the men “whose activities helped determine the course of events in national history during the Civil War.”
Born in Hurley, New York, Dr. Abraham Eltinge Crispell (1823 – 1881) attended medical school at the Berkshire Medical College in Massachusetts, and New York University. After graduating, he moved to Rondout (now part of Kingston) in 1849. In 1853 he was appointed to Surgeon of the 20th Regiment in the 8th Brigade in the 2nd Division of the New York State Militia. During the Civil War, Dr. Crispell was made Brigade Surgeon of volunteers, while serving as a health officer at Hilton Head, South Carolina.

When he returned from the war, Dr. Crispell had his home built in the Italianate style, which was very popular from 1850-1880. A reaction to the formal classical ideas of the Renaissance, known as the Romantic movement, the Italianate style of architecture often has low-pitched roofs and overhanging eaves with decorative brackets beneath them. Dr. Crispell's house can still be found in the Chestnut Street Historic District (which is still home to many historic middle and upper-class homes) in Kingston, New York.
The Bevier House off Route 209 houses the largest collection of Civil War artifacts on public display in Ulster County in their Civil War room. This collection includes war memorabilia, field drums, weapons, swords, guns, ammunition, army uniforms, regiment signs, and several Civil War documents. Artifacts from both Confederate and Union armies can be found here. State Senator George C. Pratt, Commanding Colonel of the 20th Regiment, was the original collector and also the founder of the Ulster County Historical Society established in 1859. The Bevier House is very proud of their collection and the county’s role in the Civil War; in May of 2009, the House held a Civil War Encampment.
Ulster County was established in 1683; however, the Dutch settled in the area in the early 1600s. Kingston in particular was a prominent town in Ulster, especially during the Civil War. However, Ulster County appears to be a relatively small contributor to Civil War history. Despite such accusations, Ulster contributed numerous regiments from Kingston and, in later years, museums were constructed that now house artifacts from and exhibits of this infamous war. Cemeteries memorializing soldiers can be visited today.

The Dutch influence can still be seen in sites such as the Old Dutch Church in Kingston, which played a role in the Civil War. During the war, the old church housed a field hospital, an armory, and drill hall between September 1859 and July 1867. The church raised and fielded its own regiment, the 120th regiment, which was organized in Kingston. The regiment was under command of Colonel George H. Sharpe on July 14, 1862. It was highly involved in the defenses against Washington. During one of these battles, Colonel Sharpe died and Lieutenant Colonel Adam L. Lockwood was given control. General Sharpe’s memorial statue can be found in the graveyard across from the Old Dutch Church. In addition, some of his letters of correspondence, along with other Civil War artifacts, can be found at the Senate House Museum, which is also located in Kingston.

Although there is some debate, Kingston is considered the first capital of New York State. In 1823, work began on the D&H Canal as way to stimulate the economy and solve the energy crisis created by the War of 1812. The D&H Canal became the support system of the entire Mid-Hudson Valley and caused Ulster County’s population to explode. One important
historical figure born in Ulster County was Sojourner Truth, who recruited black troops for the Union Army and gathered supplies for black regiments. Another important figure was Dr. Abraham Eltinge Crispell, who was appointed to Surgeon of Volunteers of the 20th Regiment in the 8th Brigade in the 2nd Division of the New York State Militia. Dr. Crispell’s house can still be found in the Chestnut Street Historic District in Kingston.

Two regiments of Ulster County fought in the Battle of Bull Run and Gettysburg. The 10th regiment, known as Ulster Guard, was formed by Colonel Pratt after the fall of Fort Sumter. It was mustered out April 29th, 1861 and joined McClellan’s force at Centerville on March 10th. Colonel Pratt led the army at the Battle of Bull Run where he fought till his death. In addition, 323 of his soldiers either died, wounded, or were captured.

Colonel Pratt started the collection of Civil War artifacts that is now housed in the Bevier House in Kingston. The collection includes war memorabilia, field drums, weapons, swords, guns, ammunition, army uniforms, regiment signs, and several Civil War documents. Pratt’s 10th regiment also fought in the battle of Gettysburg from July 1-4, 1863 and served until January 28, 1866. The other Ulster County regiment that contributed to the Battle of Bull Run as well as Gettysburg was the 80th regiment, which was led by Jacob B. Hardenberg. At the second battle of Bull Run, it lost 279 soldiers. In June of 1863 the regiment was closely engaged in Gettysburg, which resulted in 170 killed mostly due to Pickett’s Charge on the last day of battle.

In addition, there were two other important regiments from Ulster that largely contributed to the Civil War. One of these was the 156th regiment. It was organized at Kingston on
November 16, 1862 under the command of Colonel Jacob Sharpe. On December 4, 1862 it
served in Sherman’s division. The 20\textsuperscript{th} colored infantry regiment, which bravely served in the
Civil War, is another. Many men from this regiment were buried at Mt. Zion Cemetery, which
was declared as a Historic Landmark in 1987.

Evidently Civil War history impacted the history of Ulster County. Regiments directly
contributed to the war effort. In addition, cemeteries honor the civil war
soldiers from the county who fought in the war, and museums house
important artifacts from the time, which helps people to continue celebrating
the county’s history today.
Works Cited


Phone call provided information on the Bevier House and their Civil War artifacts.


This source is important because it discusses how and why Truth flees from slavery and describes her talent for giving profound speeches. In addition, it pinpoints one of her contributions to the Civil War as gathering supplies for black regiments.


This is an important source because it recalls how and when Kingston was declared the first state capital of New York. It also explains why that reality was short-lived.

"Dr. Abraham Eltinge Crispell."


Provided images of Dr. Crispell and his grave.


http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:f5bWgZy4hs4J:www.co.ulster.ny.us/pressreleases/01192009SojTruth.pdf+she+recruited+black+troops+for+the+Union+Army,+met+President+Lincoln+and+fought+for+desegregation+of+military+hospitals&hl=en&gl=us
This source is significant because it explains Truth’s early years and her escape from slavery. In addition it defines some of her individual contributions to the Civil War.


http://www.townofrochester.net/Pages/RochesterNY_Historian/full_history (accessed October 10, 2010).

This source is vital because it discusses the Dutch influence in Ulster County as well as when it was chartered. It also provides details about the boundaries and the physical features of the county.


Provided information on Ulster County Regiments.


Provided information on Ulster County Regiments.

Hudson River Valley Heritage, "Civil War Service."


Provided information on African-American regiments from Ulster County.

This source is significant because it explains the history, construction, and importance of the D&H Canal to the Hudson River Valley. It explains the economic importance of the canal and how it caused a boom in Kingston’s industry and Ulster County’s population.

"Long Island & New York - Civil War Information ."


Provided information on Ulster County regiments.

National Register of Historic Places, "Chestnut Street Historic District."


Provided information about Dr. Abraham Eltinge Crispell's house, from this one piece, further research was done.

Old Dutch Church, "Old Dutch Church Heritage Museum."


Provided a detailed history of the Church, with a very useful description of the church's role during the Civil War.

Old Dutch Church, "Old Dutch Church Heritage Museum Gallery."


Provided the images of the Civil War memorial found in the Church's graveyard, of the flags of the New York 120th Infantry, and of its general, George H. Sharpe.


Provided further information about the church's role in the Civil War, including some
details that were not mentioned in the Heritage Museum article.


Provided background for Dr. Crispell's home, which was built in the Italianate style of architecture.


Provided very useful biographical information about Dr. Crispell, including his birth and death dates, general information about his life, and service as a surgeon in the Civil War.


This source explains the construction and significance of the D&H canal, which impacted the history of Ulster County because it provided another means of transportation for seventy years.

Senate House Museum. North Front Street and Clinton Avenue, Kingston. 845-338-2786

Phone call provided information on the Senate House Museum’s Civil War collection.

Van Santvoord, C. "The 120th New York State Volunteers."


Provided information on the members of the 120th regiment.

Werner, James W. "The Old Dutch Church." June 2005.


Provided useful information on history of the Old Dutch Church, as well as interesting
trivia about it during the Civil War.

Mt. Zion Cemetery. South Wall Street,


KingstonLandTrust@gmail.com

Phone call provided information about the cemetery.

"139th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment ."

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/139th_New_York_Volunteer_Infantry_Regiment

ent (accessed Dec 13, 2010).

Provided information on the 139th regiment.