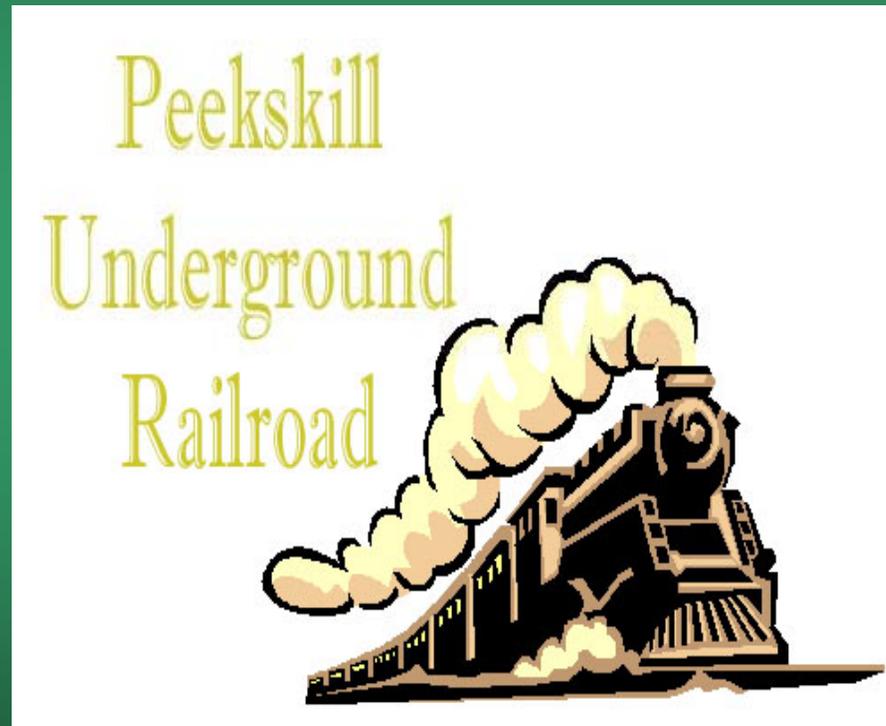


Peekskill, New York



Case Study Agenda

Slide Topic

- Thesis of Case Study
- History of Peekskill
- Geography
- Slavery in the Hudson River Valley
- New York and Slavery during the time of the Underground Railroad
- The Quakers
- The “Safe House”
- Henry Ward Beecher and his Home
- A.M.E. Zion Church
- MacGregory Brook
- Sources

Presenter

Lisa D’aniello
Alison Wallace
Alison Wallace
Shawn Lynch

Shawn Lynch

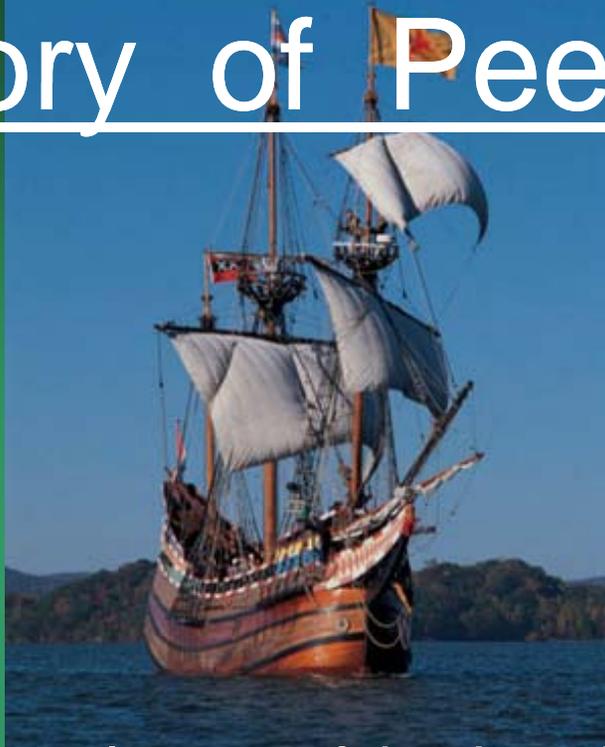
Leanne Schultz
Lisa D’aniello
Leanne Schultz
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Lisa D’aniello

Thesis

Peekskill is the most historically significant place in the Hudson River Valley for understanding the history of slavery and especially the Underground Railroad because of the unique presence of historic Underground Railroad sites.



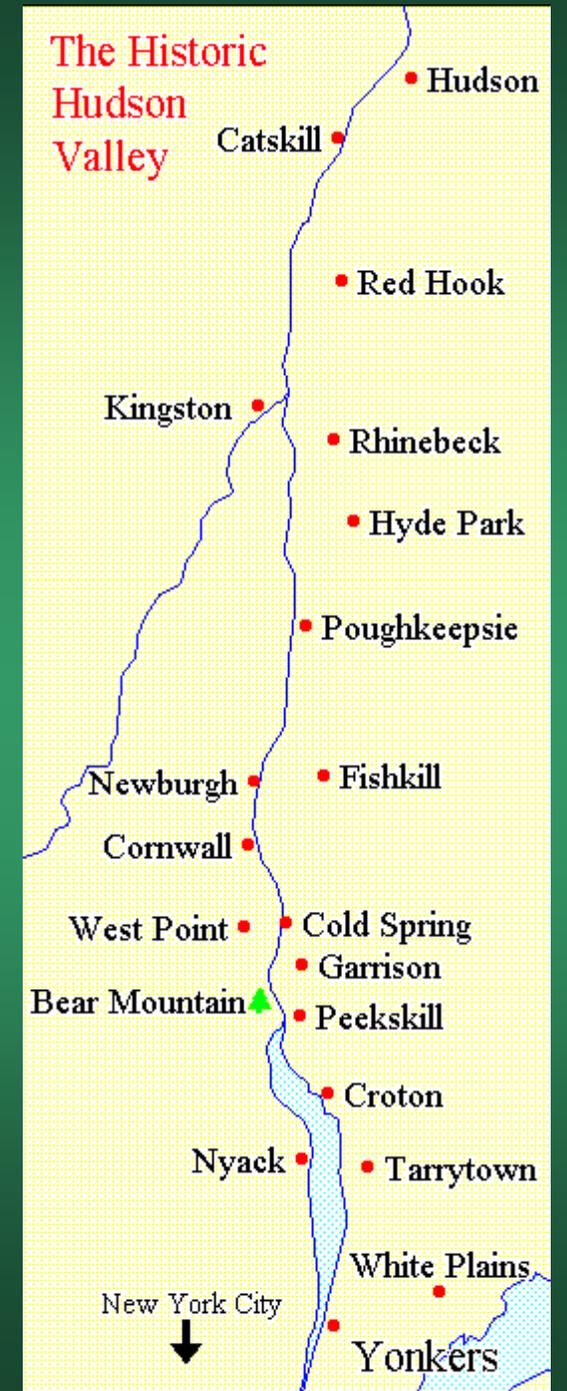
History of Peekskill



- Prior to the European settlement of the Americas, the Kitchawanks, a Native American tribe that was part of the Algonquin nation, inhabited the place now called Peekskill.
- Jan Peeck was the first known European settler in the area in 1654.
- Peekskill developed as an important port city and trading center. It played a vital role in the Revolutionary War.

Geography

- Peekskill is located on the east bank of the river, about 50 miles north of New York City, three miles south of Anthony's Nose.
- The Hudson River widens at Peekskill to form Peekskill Bay. At Anthony's Nose the river becomes narrow and treacherous.
- The location of the city on Peekskill Bay made it a center of commerce between Albany and New York City.



Slavery in the Hudson River Valley

- Slavery existed in New York during pre-revolution era
 - Often few slaves on an estate
 - Skilled craftsmen or artisans
- Abolition movement began with John Jay and the New York Manumission Society
 - Led by John Jay and Alexander Hamilton
 - Abdicated gradual but complete abolition of slavery
 - Clause in New York Constitution outlawing slavery struck down by Hudson River counties
- Slavery gradually abolished according to 1799 Bill
 - Approx. 20,000 slaves in 1800. Only 55 in 1830
 - July, 4 1827 marked the official end of slavery in New York

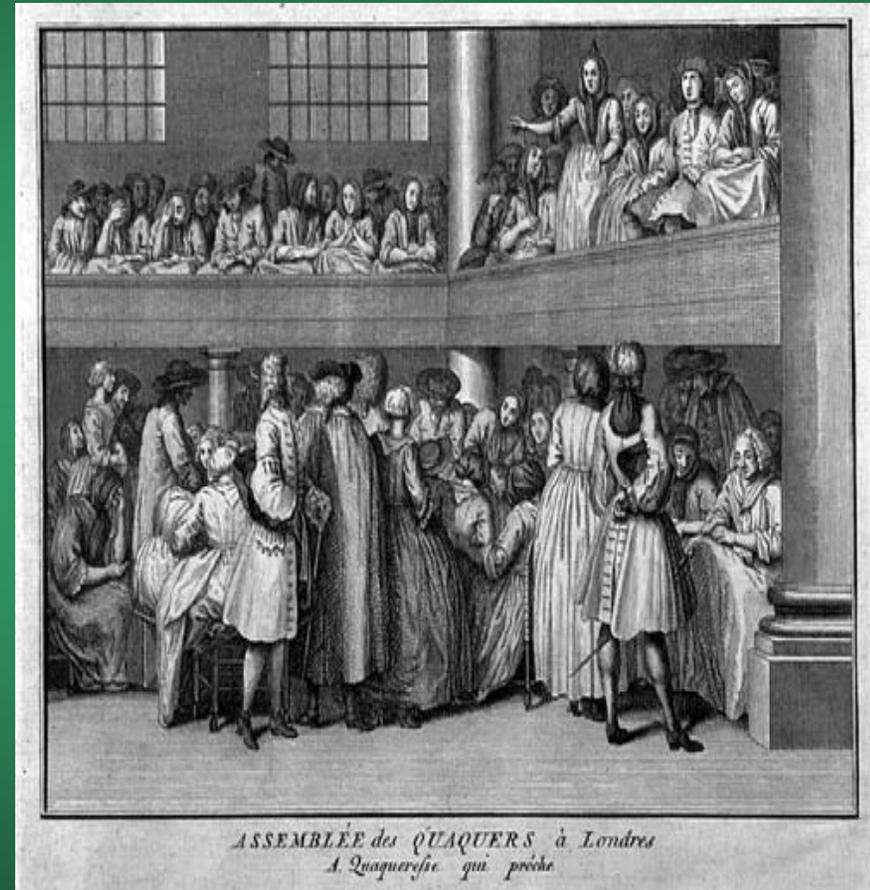
New York and Slavery During the Time of the Underground Railroad



- Primary focus was on fugitive slaves
 - New York had become strong abolitionist state (especially central NY)
 - Prigg vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. States could not limit Fugitive Slave Act
 - Debates with Virginia regarding extradition of fugitive slaves
 - New York and Hudson Valley more important because of its Underground Railroad connections

The Quakers

- A religious group
- Founded by George Fox in 17th century England.
- Humanitarian principles.
- Many, but not all, of them participated in the Underground Railroad.
- One Quaker who was an abolitionist was William Sands.



The “Safe House”

- This house was owned by William Sands.
- It was the first stop on the Underground Railroad.
- Slaves were transported from the Hudson River to this house.
- The house contained a secret stairway with a hidden room.



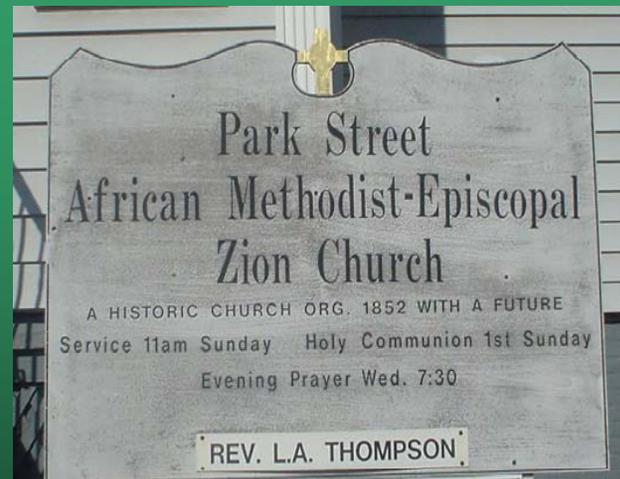
Henry Ward Beecher and his Home



- Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887)
- Abolitionist and preacher.
- Brother to Harriet Beecher Stowe
- Founder of the Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims
- He had a home in Peekskill, New York was an Underground Rail-Road Site containing a tunnel for slaves.

A.M.E. Zion Church

- African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
- Built in the 19th century in Westchester County.
- The church contains a false panel near the pulpit that leads to a small, cramped space for slaves to hide in.
- Some Members Included: Henry Ward Beecher, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass.



MacGregory Brook



- Located in Peekskill, New York
- Runaway slaves traveled by boat up the Hudson River ending in the brook.
- Enabled slaves to travel to the safe house and then to other Underground Railroad stops.

Conclusion



The presence of the Henry Ward Beecher house and Tunnel, the "Safe House", the A.M.E. Zion Church, and MacGregory Brook prove that Underground Railroad Sites existed and still exist in Peekskill, New York, making it a significant place to study for the history of the Underground Railroad.

Annotated Sources

- Curran, John J. "More on Peekskill and Underground Railroad." Peekskill Herald 25 June 1998
- John Curran is a local historian in Peekskill. He is involved in the effort to establish the Underground Railroad Museum. This article gave a lot of information about evidence of the existence of the Underground Railroad in Peekskill.
- Henry Ward Beecher. 2002. October 2004.
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASbeecher.htm>
- This website was a good source of information about Henry Ward Beecher, his views and accomplishments.
- Hirsch Jr., Leo H. (1931). *The Slave in New York*. The Journal of Negro History, 16, 383-414.
- This book was helpful in establishing the role that slavery played in the history of New York State.
- Historic River Towns of Westchester: Peekskill. October 2004.
<http://www.hudsonriver.com/rivertowns/peekskill.htm>
This source was significant in that it provided information about the history of Peekskill.

Annotates Sources (cont'd)

- Local History. October 2004.
http://peekskill.org/Local_History/local_history.htm
- This website is part of the website for the Field Library, the local public library in Peekskill and was helpful when researching the history of the city. The site had links to search back issues of newspapers from Peekskill and document associated with the history of Peekskill.
- Loehr, Melissa A. "Memorandum: Historic Preservation of Underground Railroad Sites in Peekskill, New York." Pace University Law School Historic Preservation Seminar. January 2000.
- This was a project done by a graduate student about the Underground Railroad and contained a summary of all the prior research done on the subject. It was a great resource for information about both the evidence of the existence of the Underground Railroad as well as information about the effort to preserve that evidence.
- McManus, Edgar J. (1966). *History of Negro Slavery in New York*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- This was another book which provided a lot of information about slavery in New York.

Annotated Sources (cont'd)

- “Peekskill Group Makes Plans for Underground Railroad Museum”. Half Moon Press. April 2001 online edition.
<http://www.hudsonriver.com/halfmoonpress/stories/0401undr.htm>
- This article was very important for in our research because it was the first source which we found that discussed plans for an Underground Railroad museum in Peekskill. It also enabled us to contact the people who had organized the proposal for a museum.
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- Peekskill Underground Railroad and Tunnel. 2001. October 2004.
<http://www.freedomtrail.org/regions/peekskillug.htm>
- This website provided information about the history of the Underground Railroad, as well as sites in Peekskill which were associated with the Underground Railroad. It also gave dates and addresses to tour the sites.
- http://americancivilwar.com/women/harriet_tubman.html
- This website provided a biography of Harriet Tubman.
- <http://www.whispersofangels.com/opposing.html>
- This website was helpful in providing an overview of the abolitionist movement, the Quakers, and the history of the Underground Railroad.