

THE
HUDSON
RIVER
VALLEY
REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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From the Editors

The historical net in this issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* has been cast especially wide, spanning from the early eighteenth century right up to the twenty-first. The range of topics—from linguistics and engineering to urban geography—is also unusually broad. Taken together, these articles comprise a fascinating tapestry that truly represents the diversity of thought and activity that has always been a distinguishing characteristic of life in the Hudson Valley. Such diversity is what continues to make the region a center for creativity and makes *The Hudson River Valley Review* so much fun to edit—and, we hope, fun and informative to read.

Reed Sparling

Christopher Pryslopsi

Letter To the Editors

One note regarding Christopher Pryslopsi's intriguing article on the Orange County Government Center. The description of Goshen's main street as "...an historic island in a growing sea of suburban sprawl with endless stretches of red lights, turning lanes, and big-box retail centers" is quite simply well-over-the-top hyperbole—and not justifiable by any real review of the full Goshen area landscape. As a leading anti-sprawl advocate, I know it when I see it. This hyperbole blemishes the article, regurgitates popular PR/media terminology, and certainly is not based on research or analysis.

Back to Rudolph's design: for now I will stay out of the debate on the merits of this example of modernist architecture or its functional use as a public facility. It is unique, but many of us have our own practical frustrations with the building. Its one element that particularly frustrates me, and many others, is that most of the stairwells were not designed or built wide enough to accommodate two people side-by-side. So when someone goes up or down the stairs, they typically have to wait, or go flat against the wall, to allow another person to go down or up. This just isn't practical in a heavily used public building.

David Church, Commissioner

Orange County Planning Department, Goshen

Call for Essays

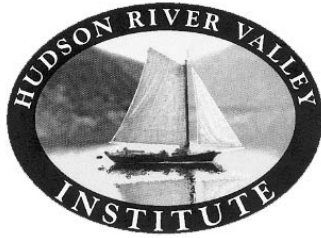
The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself.

Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long, along with a computer disk with a clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. No materials will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. No responsibility is assumed for their loss. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

Under some circumstances, HRVR will accept materials submitted as an e-mail attachment (hrvi@marist.edu). It will not, however, open any attachment that has not been announced and cleared beforehand.

Since HRVR is interdisciplinary in its approach to the region and to regionalism, it will honor the forms of citation appropriate to a particular discipline, provided these are applied consistently and supply full information. Endnotes rather than footnotes are preferred. In matters of style and form, HRVR follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.



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Contributors

Warren F. Broderick is a senior archives and records management specialist at the New York State Archives. He is co-author of *Pottery Works* (1995) as well as numerous journal articles. He is editor of a new edition of Granville Hicks' *Small Town* (2004), published by Fordham University Press.

Dr. Edward Cashin is the director of the Center for the Study of Georgia History, Augusta State University, and president of Historic Augusta. His many publications include *The King's Ranger: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier*, *William Bartram and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* and *Paternalism in a Southern City: Race, Religion, and Gender in Augusta Georgia*, co-edited with Glenn Eskew.

Harvey K. Flad is emeritus professor of Geography at Vassar College. His scholarship has focused on cultural and historic landscapes, conservation history, and environmental and urban planning in America. He has published numerous articles on nineteenth-century landscape design theory and practice, especially on the work of Andrew Jackson Downing. He is the recipient of a Fulbright award and the Russel Wright award for environmental preservation. **Craig M. Dalton** is a 2003 graduate of Vassar College with a B.A. in Geography.

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Louise V. North is an independent researcher associated with the John Jay Homestead State Historical Site, and lives in Yorktown Heights, NY.

Col. Kip P. Nygren is a professor at the United States Military Academy and also head of the Department of Civil & Mechanical Engineering. He holds a Ph.D. from Georgia Tech and has published numerous articles on education and emerging technologies.

Eric J. Roth is the archivist/librarian at the Huguenot Historical Society in New Paltz, and is an adjunct professor of History at the State University of New York at New Paltz. He has published several articles relating to archival management and local history.

John Evangelist Walsh, former senior editor at *Reader's Digest*, has authored some twenty books of biography and history. One of his two works on Edgar Allen Poe—*Poe the Detective*—received an Edgar Award, and *The Shadows Rise: Abraham Lincoln and the Ann Rutledge Legend*, was a finalist for the prestigious Gettysburg Prize.

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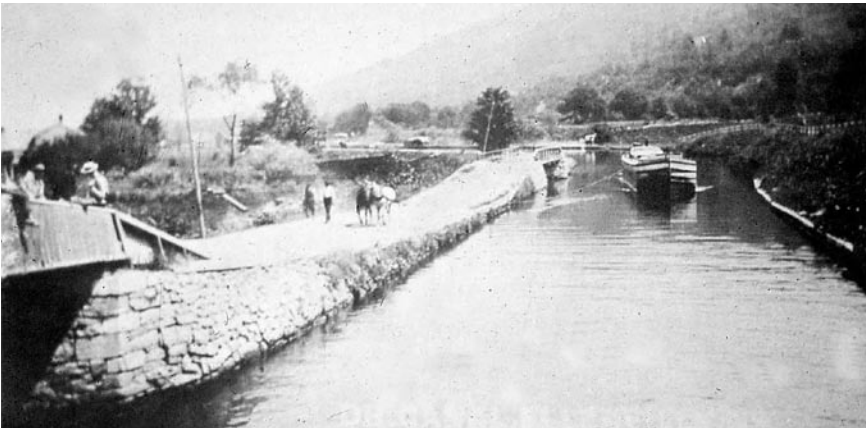
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On the cover: *West Point Looking South* by George Catlin; circa 1828
Courtesy of West Point Museum Art Collection, United States Military Academy



COURTESY OF D&H CANAL MUSEUM

Towboy or hoggee walking along a mule team



COURTESY OF THE NEVERSINK VALLEY AREA MUSEUM

Canal boat



LOUIS V. MILLS

The Shawangunk Ridge as seen from the Towpath of the D&H Canal. The Canal ran for miles along the valley below the ridge, carrying anthracite coal from the Pennsylvania coalfields to the Rondout Basin on the Hudson River below Kingston

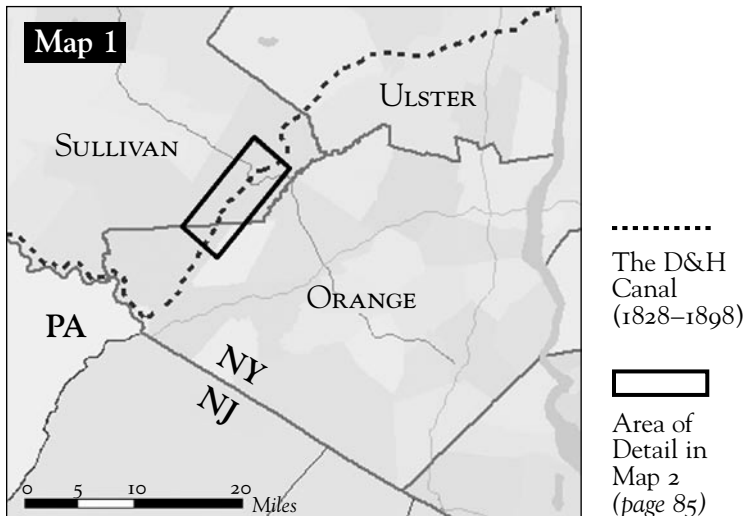
Regional History Forum

Each issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* includes the *Regional History Forum* section. This section highlights historic sites in the valley, exploring their historical significance as well as information for visitors today. Although due attention will be paid to sites of national visibility, HRVR will also highlight sites of regional significance. This issue features the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Canal. Please write us with suggestions for future Forum sections.

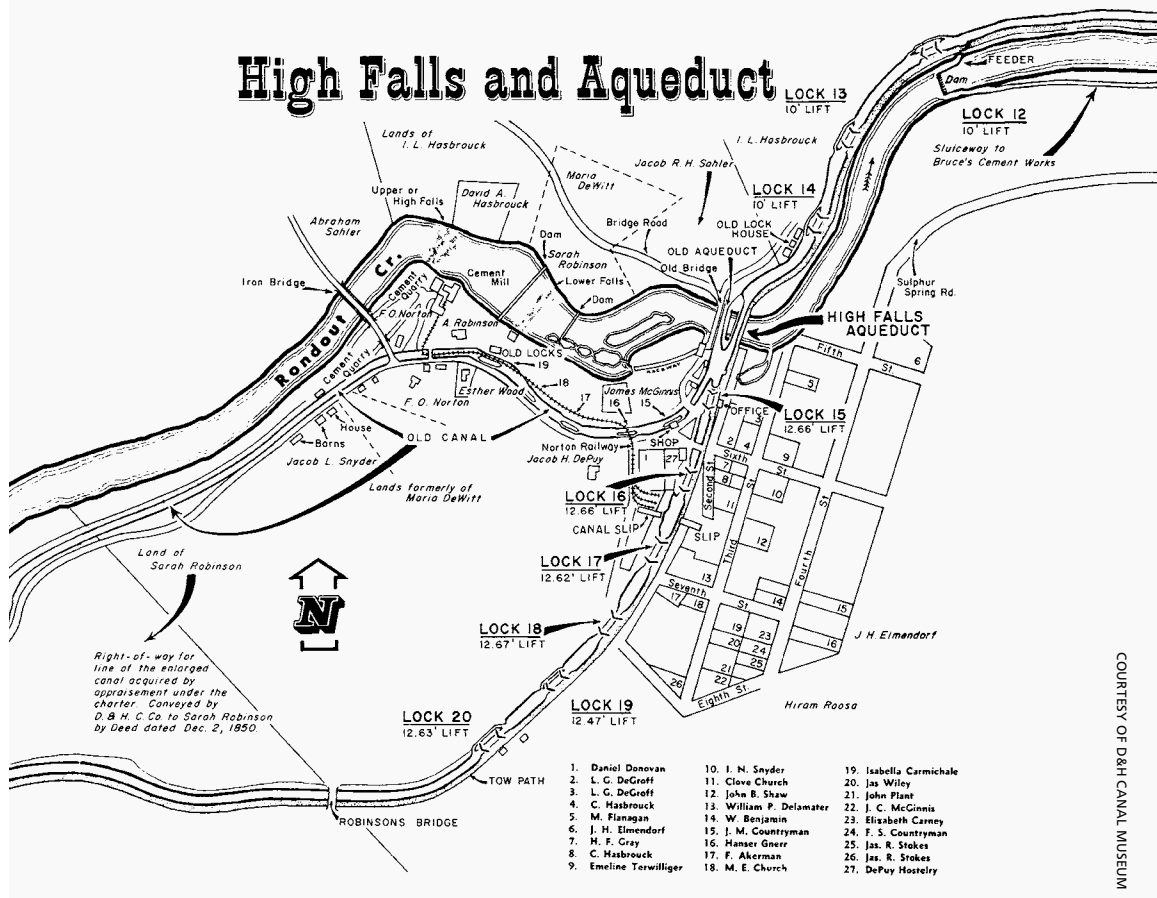
Traveling along the 1825/1828 Delaware & Hudson Canal Towpath

Louis V. Mills

In America, the year 1828 would be as good a date as any to signal the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. The first successful operation of a steam locomotive engine in America (the *Stourbridge Lion*¹) was still a year away, Andrew Jackson was replacing John Quincy Adams in the White House, and the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Canal—108 miles long with 108 locks—was officially opened from Honesdale, Pennsylvania, to the Rondout Creek Basin beside the Hudson River below Kingston.



High Falls and Aqueduct



COURTESY OF D&H CANAL MUSEUM

Manville B. Wakefield's map of the D&H Canal in High Falls. It is part of the Wakefield Collection and was originally published in his book *Coal Boats to Tidewater*

The D&H Canal was built in less than three years without modern equipment and principally by newly arrived immigrants from Germany and Ireland. The cost was an astronomically high one million dollars.² The canal provided the essential link in a bulk transportation system that started at the anthracite coal mines near Carbondale, Pennsylvania, and ran to the Hudson River, where the coal and other products could be barged down to the burgeoning city of New York and other East Coast locations. The canal initially paralleled the Lackawaxen River, then crossed the Delaware River on an aqueduct constructed by John Roebling (who built the Brooklyn Bridge many years later). It ran south along the Delaware to Port Jervis, then northeast on the western side of the Shawangunk Ridge, finally terminating at the Rondout Basin.

The coal was brought from the mines to Honesdale over the 1,000-foot Moosic Mountain range on a twelve-mile gravity railroad. At five different locations along the route, the coal cars were hoisted by an endless chain driven by horses (and later by a stationary steam engine) to a higher elevation and then

allowed to coast downhill to the next lift. At Honesdale, the coal was transferred to canal boats.

Anyone interested in spending a few hours absorbing the ambiance of that era and the ingeniousness of the canal system should bicycle or walk westward from the Wurtsboro exit of Route 17 along a stretch of the canal towpath as it travels beside the Bashakill Wetlands on the Orange-Sullivan County border. You eventually arrive in Westbrookville, beside an eighteenth-century frontier



The paymaster's steam launch/yacht going through Lock 17 in High Falls. The paymaster sailed up the canal every month, paying off all of the company employees (such as locktenders and watchmen)

stone fort, and then proceed on to the D&H Canal Museum on the Neversink River in Cuddebackville. Here, the museum, which is housed in an original canal building, looks out on the extant stone abutments that carried the canal boats over the Neversink River on an aqueduct, another of the four along the waterway designed by Roebling. Just east of the abutments, an accurate replica of a canal boat still plies its way along a restored one-mile stretch of the canal.

As in the case of the famed Panama Canal, built over half a century later, changes in the elevation of the land through which the D&H Canal passed were adjusted through a lock system. Solid wooden gates at each end of the lock were opened or closed so water could be added or drained out, bringing about the changing level of the water in the lock. The water came from feeder canals that flowed down from rivers and streams above the canal. Wanaksink Lake, Yankee Lake, and Wolf Pond, all high on the hills in Sullivan County, are illustrative of water sources that were dammed for this purpose in the 1820s and 1830s.

Throughout its length, the canal had to adjust for 1,073 feet of elevation change. Since the canal generally ran near or parallel to rivers, which supplied the water for its operation, the locks were often clustered around waterfalls. In the Ulster County hamlet of High Falls, five locks constructed of precision-cut Shawangunk conglomerate, an indigenous stone, raised and lowered the canal boats sixty-three feet around the falls on the Rondout Creek. The stone was cut so perfectly that no mortar was used in the locks' construction.

A canal boat traveling toward Pennsylvania would enter a lock, then water would fill it, raising the vessel to a higher level. Conversely, boats making their way toward the Rondout Basin would be lowered by emptying the lock. Since this process took considerable time, there were basins near the locks where the



COURTESY OF D&H CANAL MUSEUM

Barges and coal on Island Dock, located in the Rondout area of Kingston

canal boats could wait their turn. In the meanwhile, the canalers could purchase necessary supplies from nearby shops. At lock 51 in Cuddebackville, an enterprising lady sold rice pies for fifteen cents apiece. As a result, this became known as the “pie lock.”

This was the era of the family business and individual entrepreneurship, and each coal boat, usually pulled by a pair of mules (or a lead horse and a mule), was often owned by a single canaler and staffed by his wife and children. These families were frequently short of adequate funds, or even extra food supplies to fall back on in the event of delays. And delays did occur. Floods caused washouts along the canal walls, and winter freezes locked in late-traveling canal boats until the spring thaws. Even more dangerous, there were occasions when brigands from the nearby hills swooped down for an easy theft of coal or lumber from the stranded boats. In one instance, it was said that the raiders even took the canaler’s last dollar until he cried so hard that they took pity on him and gave it back.

Other more general problems affected the operation of the canal. Seagoing boats docking at the Rondout Basin brought infectious germs that swept through the canal workers and nearby residents. In the 1830s and 1840s, cholera epidemics raged throughout the canal region. Further west, above the Port Jervis section at the Delaware crossing, gunfights took place between the canalers, who originally floated their boats across the river behind a crudely built dam of rocks, and the Delaware River raftsmen, who floated their logs downstream to the Philadelphia market.³

These altercations were obviated in the early 1840s by the construction of the aforementioned Roebling Aqueduct, now a national historic monument. It is the oldest existing cable suspension bridge in the United States, and today carries cars, not canal boats, to the opposite shore. (It is well worth a visit.) The aque-

ducts were part of major improvements in both the dimensions and capacity of the canal.

At Eddyville, below Kingston, the canal boats exited Lock No. 1 at tidewater and unloaded their cargo along the banks of the Rondout Creek for transfer to the Hudson River barges. Their work completed, the canalers celebrated in nearby bars before hitching their mules to the “empties” for the return trip to Honesdale.



D&H CANAL MUSEUM

Both of the High Falls aqueducts over Rondout Creek. The 1825 stone one is in the background; the 1847 suspension aqueduct, designed by John Roebling, is in the foreground.

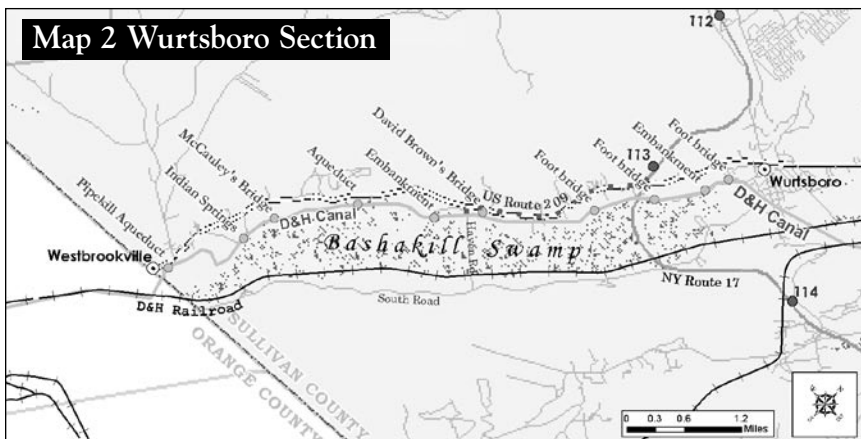
For more than 50 years, hundreds of thousands of tons of coal and other bulk products were shipped annually on the D&H Canal. Inevitably, however, it became a victim of the railroad boom of the late nineteenth century. The canal carried its last boat to tidewater in 1898, and then closed its books forever.

—Louis V. Mills

To experience life on the 1828 D&H Canal towpath...

Keep in mind, as you bicycle or walk along the towpath in the muffled silence of a hundred-year-old forest, that you are traveling at the same rate the canalers did. It took them at least a week—and often as long as ten days—to make the trip from Honesdale to Kingston.

Take Exit 113 (Wurtsboro/Ellenville) off Route 17. Drive west two miles



on Route 209 and turn south on Haven Road. Park at the designated NYS Bashakill Wetlands parking area. Walk or bicycle back to the intersection with Route 209 and follow the dirt road beside it, which runs atop the towpath for three miles to the Westbrookville crossroads and eighteenth-century fort. There are tremendous views all along this stretch, as well as many remnants from the canal, including lock abutments, stone embankments and retaining walls, feeder streams, and bridge structures. Continue on Route 209 for five additional miles to Cuddebackville and the D&H Canal/Neversink River Museum, or cross the wetlands at Westbrookville and return on South Road for three miles to Haven Road.

The town of Mamakating in Sullivan County announced in May 2004 that it had received a \$640,000 grant from New York State to complete the restoration of a six-mile stretch of the D&H Canal towpath as a walking and bicycling trail between Wurtsboro and Phillipsport. A volunteer committee in Cuddebackville hopes to achieve similar results on the Cuddebackville/Port Jervis section of the canal.

Additional Information on the Canal

Much of the background material for this essay came from a lifetime interest in the canal and its environs, and from people who have had a similar interest in its history. It would be impossible to list them all.

The authoritative text on the D&H Canal is the superb *Coal Boats to Tidewater* by Manville B. Wakefield (Grahamsville: Wakefield Press, 1965). The booklet *Stroll, Run, or Bike Along History* by the D&H Canal Transportation Council is excellent and should be available at any of the canal museums.

The historic markers along the canal and nearby roads offer many interesting facts, and the canal museums offer exhibits, publications, and additional hikes.

The Minisink Valley Historical Society

<http://www.minisink.org/delhud.html>

The Minisink Valley Historical Society operates in two locations, the Library Archives of the Port Jervis Library, 138 Pike Street, and Fort Decker, a stone house located on West Main Street in Port Jervis. It also maintains exhibits on the D&H Canal online.

Neversink Valley Area Museum

D&H Canal Park, 26 Hoag Road, Cuddebackville, NY 12729
www.neversinkmuseum.org/field_canal.html

D&H Canal Park and Museum is located along the banks of the beautiful Neversink River in Cuddebackville. The mission of the Museum is to preserve, document, and interpret the history of the Neversink River Valley of Orange County, from its beginnings to the present, through exhibitions, educational programs, and publications for children and adults; and the acquisition, preservation, and restoration of artifacts and historic sites.

In addition to its permanent exhibit, “Black Diamonds and the D&H Canal,” with videos, maps, and a working canal lock model, the museum has a 275-square-foot, full-size canal boat replica with hands-on activities for children. Other exhibits on the Neversink Valley area include a program on the Lenape Native Americans; “The Artistry of the Blacksmith,” with a working blacksmith shop; silent films made in the region; and an interactive exhibit on farming history. The Neversink Valley Area Museum is open April through October, Thursday–Sunday 12-4.

D&H Canal Historical Society

Mohonk Road/Route 6A, High Falls, NY 12440
www.canalmuseum.org

In the hamlet of High Falls in Ulster County, where a flight of five locks compensated for a drop of seventy feet in elevation, a museum and remnants of the old locks tell the story of the waterway, built largely by pick and shovel wielded by immigrants. With maps, colorful dioramas, enlarged photographs, artifacts, and working mod-



els, the Museum of the D&H Canal Historical Society, housed in the former St. John’s Episcopal Church, depicts life along the canal and its related industries.

The purpose of the D & H Canal Historical Society is to preserve, protect and perpetuate the unique history of the Delaware and Hudson Canal, particularly in Ulster County. The society fulfills its mission by: operating its museum in High Falls and maintaining the Five Locks Walk, a National Historic Landmark; preserving the canal locks and environs, and canal-related documents, printed material, pictures, and artifacts; educating its members and the general public

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The Hudson River Valley Institute

The Hudson River Valley Institute serves scholars, historical societies, elementary and secondary school educators, the business community, environmental organizations, and the general public. While conducting its own research, the institute is also an information hub facilitating and disseminating information and research on the Hudson River Valley. To help accomplish this, the institute is taking advantage of Marist's recognized leadership in applying information technology to teaching and learning. Marist College is fully committed to having the Hudson River Valley Institute bring a new level of scholarship and public awareness to bear on the scenic, cultural, economic, and historic resources of the Valley.

Patriots Society

Help tell the story of the Hudson River Valley's rich history and culture by joining the Patriots Society and supporting the exciting work of the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College. Contributions ensure that the scholarly research, electronic archive, public programming, and educational initiatives of the Hudson River Valley Institute are carried on for generations to come. To inaugurate the Patriots Society and to extend the spirit of the Hudson River Valley Institute, each contributor will receive the following:

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- Invitation to Hudson River Valley Institute events

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