

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

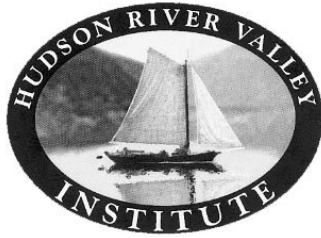
The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself.

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*.



*This issue of The Hudson River Valley Review
has been generously underwritten by the following:*



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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.

Bruce Keith is associate dean for Academic Affairs and professor of Sociology at the United State Military Academy; he has published most recently in *Social Forces and Teaching Sociology*. **James Forest** serves as assistant dean for Academic Assessment and assistant professor of Political Science, and is the director of Terrorism Studies. His publications include: *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training and Root Causes* (three volumes; Praeger Publishers, 2005).

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

This essay is the opening shot for the Hudson River Valley Institute's (HRVI) Patriots' Weekend, 2005, which will commemorate the 225th anniversary of the foiling of the Benedict Arnold-John André Conspiracy. The events, to be held at Tappan and Sleepy Hollow/Tarrytown on October 1-2, will again be funded by the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, in partnership with the Committee on the George Washington Masonic Historic Site at Tappan; the Tappantown Historical Society; the Historical Society, Inc. (serving Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown); and the Brigade of the American Revolution. The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College will host a conference at the college on September 29 and will sponsor two lectures with the help of the Charlotte Cunneen-Hackett Charitable Trust and the M&T Bank Charitable Trust. The HRVI is indebted to John E. Walsh, who will be a speaker both at the Marist conference and at Tappan, for this essay.

John Paulding and the Ten Seconds That Saved the Revolution

John Evangelist Walsh

On a deserted country road just north of Tarrytown on a bright, cool September morning in 1780, two young men stand facing each other. No other moment in American history has been, or can ever be, so crucial. Depending on what happens next between these two strangers, America's Revolutionary War, its brave bid for freedom, will live or die.

For long the true facts about this brief encounter, deliberately distorted by one of the two participants, have been among both the best, and the least known in the country's annals. The following short narrative, the result of a fresh investigation of the original sources, attempts to recover the minute-by-minute story in which occur the most critical ten seconds in our history.

One of the two men is a husky six-footer dressed in a military uniform, and cradling a musket in his left arm. This is John Paulding, age twenty-two, a sergeant in the Westchester Volunteer Militia, part of General Washington's ragtag forces. The other man, slighter of build, is dressed in civilian clothes, and is unarmed. This is John André, age twenty-nine, adjutant general of the British

army, a major in rank, and at the moment operating in disguise as a spy (It was the vengeful André's later insinuating lies about his captor that so badly, and for so long, skewed the truth of the historic meeting.)

Holding out his hand, André shows a pass which identifies him as John Anderson, New York businessman. A small slip of paper, it is signed by the American General Benedict Arnold, commander of the American stronghold at West Point. If Paulding accepts the pass as genuine—there is no obvious reason that he shouldn't—and allows André to continue his journey, the four-year-old rebellion, split in two by the fall of West Point, will shortly afterward almost certainly collapse.

Only minutes before this, André on horseback had been galloping along at his leisure, certain that he'd soon be back in New York City, where the British commander, General Henry Clinton, eagerly waited his return with the plans for the taking of West Point. His clandestine meeting with the traitorous General Arnold, at midnight on the Hudson shore, had gone well. Now it was only a matter of launching the British forces upriver for an attack on the deliberately weakened and unprepared West Point fortifications. General Arnold, it is agreed, will surrender soon after the shooting starts.

Preoccupied as he rode along with thoughts of his reward for his pivotal role in the operation—a dukedom would be the least of it—André had been taken by surprise when three men emerged from the woods on either side of the road to block his path, muskets leveled. Sergeant Paulding, with a small detachment of two other militiamen, Isaac Van Wart and David Williams, had been assigned to watch the main north-south road above Tarrytown, stopping all suspicious persons.

After an initial, confused exchange, André produces the pass. Quickly scanning its few words, Sgt. Paulding appears to be impressed. "We have to be careful, sir," he says apologetically. "There are bad people all around here, Tories and traitors, and such. Please don't be offended."

André smiles. "Of course not," he replies affably as he turns back to his horse, putting a foot in the stirrup to draw himself up into the saddle. Two hours more, he thinks in silent relief. Another two hours riding through safe, open country, and it's all over.

Between André's handing the pass to Paulding, and what Paulding did next, hardly ten seconds passed. In that fleeting interval his soldierly instincts had been stirred (a combat veteran, he'd twice been captured by the British, and had twice escaped). Something was wrong, he felt... André's guarded demeanor, his nervous little laugh...something.

“Not yet, sir,” calls out Paulding as he motions to Van Wart and Williams. “Just a little routine search, if you don’t mind.”

The three march the complaining André into the woods. His overcoat is removed and searched, then his jacket, and his shirt. His shiny black leather boots are pulled off, then his pants. Nothing is found. The annoyed André, sitting on a log, reaches to retrieve his boots.

“Now the stockings,” softly orders Paulding.

Eyes cast down, André sits still, making no move to reach for his woolen, knee-length stockings. Paulding nods to Van Wart and Williams, who kneel and pull down both stockings. As they come off, out from the bottom of each falls a small sheaf of folded paper. Carried in the stockings under the soles of André’s feet, they’d been crumpled and wrinkled by his weight: six sheets of information about the number and disposition of the men and guns at West Point, all bearing the signature of Benedict Arnold.

“Dress him and tie him up,” growls Paulding as he compares the Arnold signatures on pass and papers. “This man’s a spy!”

Ignoring André’s frantic offers of bribery, involving huge sums, the three take him to Dragoon headquarters at North Castle. Ten days later, on October 2, 1780, after a full military trial before a board of American generals that judged him to be “a spy from the enemy,” Major John André was executed by hanging.

*The full story of André’s capture, and of John Paulding’s part in it, his background and subsequent life, as well as those of Isaac Van Wart and David Williams, can be read in the author’s book, *The Execution of Major André* (St. Martin’s Press, 2001). In a review of the book, the Boston Globe said that “Walsh, who is that rarest of literary creatures, a first-rate historical detective and a gripping storyteller, provocatively burrows through centuries of revisionist history to reveal the real heroes and villains of the saga.”*

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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.

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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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