

# Remembering the Revolution

Maj. Gen. Alexander McDougall, commander of the Hudson Highlands, wrote cryptically in his diary on April 30, 1778: "chain put aCross." He was referring to the Great Chain at Fortress West Point. For the rest of the Revolution, the Great Chain was a feature of the Hudson Highlands from spring until fall. (Soldiers removed it before winter to avoid destruction by the freezing river.) Gen. William Heath described it in 1780: "The links of this chain were probably 12 inches wide, and 18 inches long; the iron about 2 inches square. This heavy chain was buoyed up by very large logs, of perhaps 16 or more feet long, a little pointed at the ends, to lessen their opposition to the force of the water on flood and ebb. The logs were placed at short distances from each other, the chain carried over them, and made fast to each by staples, to prevent their shifting; and there were a number of anchors dropped at distances, with cables made fast to the chain, to give it a greater stability." This formidable obstacle, portions of which can be seen at the U.S. Military Academy's Trophy Point, became the centerpiece of the fortifications at West Point.

The Friends of Boscobel and the Hudson River Valley Institute are planning a lecture series about Loyalists in New York during the American Revolution on April 12 and 26 and May 3 at Boscobel Restoration in Garrison, Putnam

County. See [www.boscobel.org/Default.asp](http://www.boscobel.org/Default.asp) or call 845-265-3638, ext.110, for details.

In January, I wrote about Col. Samuel Blachley Webb's Additional Continental Regiment (Connecticut) marching from Fishkill across the ice at Fort Constitution to West Point. Some 60 hardy souls braved the cold on January 25, 2003 to watch reenactors from the 2nd New York, 5th New York, and 5th Connecticut regiments venture out from the shores of Constitution Island onto the frozen Hudson to commemorate the crossing.

The reenactment was a collaborative effort of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, the Hudson River Valley Institute, the Constitution Island Association, the Putnam County Historical Society and Foundry School Museum, and the 5th New York Regiment. A camera crew producing a documentary for PBS about the chaining of the Hudson recorded the event.

For more festivities commemorating the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution in New York, see [www.hudsonrivervalley.net](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.net). Huzzah from the Hudson Highlands!

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