The northern banks of the Croton River marked the southern outpost line of the Continental Army in Westchester County. At sunrise on May 14, 1781, “about sixty Horse and two hundred foot” of Colonel James Delaney’s Loyalist Westchester Refugees crossed the Croton River at Oblenis Ford and attacked some 50 men of Colonel Christopher Greene’s 1st Rhode Island Regiment at his headquarters in the Davenport House in Westchester County.

Most of the soldiers of the regiment were former African-American slaves recruited when the Rhode Island legislature had voted in February that “every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian man-slave in this State may enlist into either of the said two battalions, to serve during the continuance of the present war with Great Britain.”

Dr. James Thacher reported in his journal that Delaney’s troops “first attacked Colonel Greene’s and Major Flagg’s quarters, and killed the major while in bed. The colonel being badly wounded in the house, was carried into the woods and barbarously murdered. Two subalterns and twenty-seven privates were also killed, and a lieutenant and surgeon, with about twenty men, taken prisoners.” He also explained why the Loyalists had gained such complete surprise: Greene “had taken post in a situation to guard a certain fording-place at Croton river, and had practised the greatest vigilance in the night time, calling off his guards at sunrise, on the idea that the enemy would not presume to cross in the day-time; but the enemy having learned his mode of performing duty, effected their purpose by crossing the ford immediately after the guard had been withdrawn, and the surprise was so complete that no practicable defence could avail them.”

General Washington reported Greene’s losses at Pine’s Bridge as forty-four killed, wounded, and missing. He wrote that “The loss of these two Officers is to be regretted, especially the former, who had upon several occasions distinguished himself, particularly in the defence of the post of Red Bank [opposite Philadelphia] in 1777, when he defeated Count Donop [and his Hessians].”

The enlisted soldiers of Greene’s headquarters detachment had distinguished themselves as well, many choosing to fight to the death rather than lose their newfound freedom. Partisan warfare or petit guerre would remain a staple of the Neutral Ground for the rest of the war.

Peter Pratt’s Inn will host the 225th anniversary of the battle of Pine’s Bridge on June 11, 2006. For details see http://www.prattsinn.com/.

~ Professor Colonel James Johnson (U.S. Army, ret.), PhD Executive Director, Hudson River Valley Institute

### Inside this issue:

- Featured Website ........................................... 2
- Featured Historic Town ................................. 2
- Featured Historic Site ..................................... 3
- Meet the Interns ........................................... 4
- Contact Us ................................................. 5
- Staff Listing ............................................... 5
Featured Historic Town—Monroe

The picturesque town and village of Monroe, New York is located in Orange County, in the lower Hudson Valley. Only 15 minutes away from the United States Military Academy at West Point and within an hour of New York City, Monroe sits in an exceptional location. In the past century, the town continues to flourish, with its proximity to many renowned historical sites and fascinating location, attracting visitors from around the world.

Editor’s Note: This information was extracted from http://www.monroeny.org/Forms&Pubs/history.pdf created by Christa Elise Bolen

~ Christine Caiazzi

Featured Website – Yorktown Historical Society

The Yorktown Historical Society’s website, www.yorktownhistory.org, offers visitors a legion of ways to become involved in local history, including information on how to become a member of the organization as well as access to a quarterly newsletter and events calendar. In addition to these features, the website’s most impressive component is its wealth of online primary sources.

Under the Archives link on the Yorktown Historical Society’s website, a visitor is able to peruse a plethora of transcribed sources, dating as far back as 1780. There are a variety of different types of primary sources within the digital archive, such as census records, newspaper articles, and oral histories. Moreover, there is also a multitude of photographs reflecting different historical moments under the Photo Archives link. Complementing these primary sources are excerpts of secondary sources. These secondary sources help place the town within a historical context, illuminating the important role the area played in American history.

The Yorktown Historical Society’s website contains a wealth of valuable information covering topics and events rooted in and around Yorktown. This is a great site for research and is an excellent tool for keeping up-to-date on events occurring in Yorktown. The website is also easily navigable for individuals of any age.

~Gemma Edwardo and Lauren Santangelo
Just a short ferry ride down the Hudson River, from West Point South Dock, lies Constitution Island. Constitution Island is part of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Originally called Martelaer’s Rock, Constitution Island served as a home to the American army during the Revolutionary War, first becoming fortified with Fort Constitution in 1775.

Since it was strategically located on a sharp curve in the Hudson River, Constitution Island was a prime location for a fortification. This strategic curve also served as the site of the Great Chain, which is one of the island’s most notable features. In 1778, an 80-ton metal chain was forged and stretched across the Hudson River from West Point to Constitution Island. For five years the Great Chain provided protection to the residents of the upper Hudson Valley by making it impossible for the British warships to transgress the colonialists’ battle line.

Constitution Island is also famous for serving as a home to the Warner sisters, who lived on the island during the 19th century. Susan and Anna Warner were prominent literary figures. Anna was celebrated for her short hymn, Jesus Loves Me, and Gardening by Myself, a popular gardening book. Susan is renowned for her novels. Wide, Wide World, published in 1850, was considered to be the nation’s original bestseller. Some of her other novels include Queechy and The Hills of Shatemuc. In addition to writing, both sisters taught Bible classes to West Point cadets for more than forty years.

In order to preserve the island, upon Anna Warner’s death in 1915, the Constitution Island Association was formed. Constitution Island is open seasonally (June 25th to September 25th) to the general public. In order to experience all that the island has to offer, designate at least a few hours to spend there. Guided tours leave West Point South Dock on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM. The tour focuses on the Warner sisters’ house, which remains practically unchanged since their deaths; a replica of Anna’s garden, which has been recreated by the Constitution Island Association; and numerous Revolutionary War fortifications.

~Jessica Campilango

Editor’s Note: For more information visit www.constitutionisland.org/index.htm

Great Estates Consortium Illuminates Laborers’ Toils

When thinking of the Hudson River Valley’s Great Estates, wealth, power and privilege all come to mind. Seldom is servitude brought to the forefront of the discussion. And rarely does it have the chance to overshadow the glitz and glamour that surrounds these Great Estates and the aristocratic families that resided in them. However, on April 1, 2006, the “Below Stairs: In Service to the Great Estates” symposium crossed boundaries and presented a collection of studies based solely on the lives of the servants of these Hudson River Valley Great Estates.

The morning opened with an optional tour of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s home, Springwood. This tour allowed symposium attendees to view the kitchen and the servants’ quarters, the two places that servants spent most of their time. This tour helped set the tone for what would be discussed, more in depth, during the symposium.

Dr. Robin D. Campbell, provided an overview for the day by explaining the hierarchical structure of servitude. She focused on the many myths that surrounded servitude in the 19th century; particularly myths that portrayed servants as “loyal old retainers” or as a “mammy” figure.

The second speaker, Dr. Myra Young Armstead, discussed the role of African Americans in service to the Hudson Valley’s Great Estates. Her study focused on the diary of John Brown, a servant to the Verplanck family who was associated with Mount Gulian.

Following Dr. Armstead, Dr. Margaret Lynch-Brennan, examined the lives of Irish immigrant women as domestic servants (Irish domestics). Dr. Lynch-Brennan highlighted the exchange of “American money” between Irish domestics and their families back home in Ireland.

The fourth speaker, Frank Futral, discussed the role of servants in the Vanderbilt mansion. Furthermore, he revealed that architects considered the design of the servants’ quarters when constructing the Vanderbilt estate.

Closing the day, J. Winthrop Aldrich spoke about his primary account of servitude while growing up on Rokeby, one of the Hudson Valley’s Great Estates. Based on his first hand experience, Aldrich was able to provide the audience with illuminating photographs of servitude.

The “Below Stairs: In Service to the Great Estates” symposium provided a unique opportunity for professors, historians, and interested members of the public to uncover an essential, but generally overlooked, part of our region’s and our nation’s history.

~Jessica Campilango and Gemma Edwardo
Meet the Interns—Adrienne Harris

The Hudson River Valley Institute is pleased to introduce Adrienne Harris as the Fall 2006 Internship Coordinator. In this leadership position, Adrienne will be responsible for ensuring the interns’ successful completion of research as well as acting as the editor of the monthly newsletter. She looks forward to expanding her historical, educational, and leadership skill through this role.

Besides her previous participation with the HRVI, Adrienne is also an assiduous student and an active member of the Marist community. Pursuing a history/secondary education degree with double minors in psychology and women’s studies, Adrienne will be completing her junior year at the end of this semester. She is interested in American social and cultural history, particularly the history of sexuality, women and other minority groups, and social movements.

Although she hopes to eventually obtain her doctorate in women’s history, Adrienne’s main career aspiration is to teach high school history in either her native Connecticut or the Hudson River Valley region. By both teaching at the high school level as well as pursuing a PhD, Adrienne hopes to gain the requisite experience to more fully engage and educate her students.

As a student at Marist College, Adrienne has been involved in several activities. She is very happily a member and officer of the Women’s Rugby team at Marist College as well as an active member of the History Club.

~ Adrienne Harris

Meet the Interns — Matthew Hittenmark

Matthew Blair Hittenmark, originally from New York City, has joined HRVI as an intern for his last semester at Marist College. The focus of Matthew’s research is Robert Fulton’s life and achievements. Besides his independent project, Matthew also composes guidebooks of the Albany Region, which will ultimately be placed on the HRVI’s website, www.hudsonrivervalley.net.

In the Marist community, Matthew has worked closely with all the clubs and organizations on campus, directed Unity day-Earth day celebrations, and organized a fundraiser that yielded over $27,000 for the St. Jude Research Hospital.

Upon graduating in May with a B.A. in History, Matthew will be a third grade teacher in the south Bronx. In addition to his teaching, Matthew will pursue a Masters degree in Public Administration at night.

~Matthew Hittenmark

Marist Summer Writing Institute

From July 31 to August 3, Marist College will host the Summer Writing Institute, featuring workshops in fiction and poetry. The program invites writers from the Hudson River Valley and beyond to come together for an exciting week that will include workshops, informative panel discussions, and a Keynote Reading and Reception with New York State Poet Laureate Billy Collins. The aim of this exceptional program is to enable those with a passion for poetry and/or fiction to engage in their craft as well as hone their skills. Furthermore, it allows those interested in pursuing a writing career to become members of a true community of writers.

For more specific information on this opportunity contact Professor Tommy Zurhellen, Director of the Marist College Summer Writing Institute by email at writing@marist.edu or by telephone at (845) 575-3000 extension 2381. More general information about the program can be found at the Hudson River Valley Institute’s website, http://www.hudsonrivervalley.net

Congratulations to Our Departing Seniors

The Hudson River Valley Institute would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our departing seniors. These individuals have all devoted their time to ensuring the HRVI’s success in present and future endeavors.

The departing seniors’ post-graduate plans vary from attending graduate school to pursuing a career in digital media. We deeply appreciate their commitment to the Institute, and wish them the best of luck in their future plans.

Neil Bhatiya
Steve Burack
Christine Caiaazzi
Daniel Calandro
Jessica Campilango
Matthew Hittenmark

Brian Krummenacker
Megan Lavery
Rory O’Brien
Lauren Santangelo
Rashida Tyler
Jennifer Webber
An interdisciplinary journal dedicated to our region

publishing essays, poems, photographs, paintings, documents, and book and art reviews, ready to consider all forms of intellectual achievement...

As the academic arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College is increasing public awareness about the significance of America’s First River in the history of New York and the United States. Its mission is to study and to promote the Hudson River Valley.

To subscribe or learn more, visit www.hudsonrivervalley.org/hrvr.php or call 845-575-3052

Hudson River Valley Review
Hudson River Valley Institute
Marist College
3399 North Rd.
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-1387
The Hudson River Valley is one of only 27 Congressionally designated National Heritage Areas in the United States. As one of the most important regions in the United States, it is the fountainhead of a truly American identity. Recognizing the area's national value, Congress formed the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in 1996 to recognize, to preserve, to protect, and to interpret the nationally-significant history and resources of the Valley for the benefit of the nation.

As the center for the study of the Hudson River Valley, the Hudson River Valley Institute (HRVI) at Marist College is the central hub for information about the region. HRVI serves heritage tourists, scholars, elementary and secondary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public seeking to know more about the region that Congress called "the Landscape that defined America."

www.hudsonrivervalley.org

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