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NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Sonnenberg

Gardens and Mansion

In 1863, Frederick Ferris Thompson (1836-1899), one of the founders of the First National Bank of the City of New York (now Citibank), and his wife, Mary Clark Thompson (1835-1923), purchased a farmstead in Canandaigua as a summer retreat. They were living in Manhattan at the time, but Mary Thompson, the daughter of New York State Governor Myron H. Clark (1855-1877), grew up in Canandaigua and had strong ties to her hometown.

During the 1880s, the Thompsons began to develop their farm as a country estate, which they called Sonnenberg (German for “sunny hill”). They hired Boston architect Francis Allen (1880-1943), who later became known for his designs for churches,

libraries, and institutional buildings, to plan a main house. Built in 1887, the new residence embodied the popular Queen Anne style and was constructed of the finest materials. The house was enlarged in 1900, also under Allen’s direction.

The expansive grounds and extensive gardens at Sonnenberg reflect Mary Thompson’s great interest in landscape design and gardening. Ernest Bowditch (1850-1919), a talented designer, developed the property’s landscape plan in the early 1900s. Bowditch was known for his designs of residential subdivisions, public parks, and fashionable estates in resort communities. For Sonnenberg, he created a new main entrance and driveway, a deer park, ornamental ponds, greenhouses, and gardens.

The formal gardens are clustered around the main house and display a variety of styles. The elaborate Italian Garden, created in 1902, was designed on axis with the mansion’s principal rooms to connect the house’s interior with the surrounding landscape. The adjacent gardens incorporate various planting schemes, such as a large collection of roses, mature perennials, and an assortment of annual flower arrangements. The Japanese Garden was designed to resemble a miniature mountainous Japanese landscape. The Rock Garden, finished in 1916, is a naturalistic landscape featuring streams, pools, and waterfalls. At the height of its development, Sonnenberg was considered to be the best

example of Bowditch’s work on a private estate.

Mary Thompson was one of the community’s most important philanthropists and civic leaders. She funded the construction of the local hospital and in 1915 donated a portion of the land now included in Clark Reservation State Park in Jamesville in memory of her father. She was interested in

preserving the culture of Native Americans and contributed to the State Museum to support the creation of dioramas depicting the daily life of the Iroquois Nation. When she died in 1923, she left the estate to her nephew, Emory Clark, who sold it to the federal government in 1931. Subsequently, a Veteran’s Administration Hospital

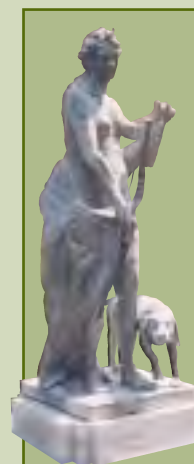


Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion. Courtesy of Bruce Krobeseck.

was built on the adjoining farmland and the mansion was used as a nurses’ residence.

In 1972, the gardens and mansion were transferred by a special act of Congress to the not-for-profit Sonnenberg Gardens Corporation, which opened the property to the public for the first time in 1973. Through the years, the estate has become one of the area’s top tourist attractions, welcoming thousands of visitors each year. In addition to preserving the distinguished estate, the site offers a variety of learning experiences and special programs.

For more information, visit www.sonnenberg.org.



Front and back covers:

The Carshalton Gates at Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park in Oyster Bay were built in 1711 for the lord of the manor of Carshalton, London County, England. The manor was subdivided in the 1890s and the gates were purchased by William Robertson and Mai Rodgers Coe in 1921 for their Long Island estate. The gates were erected in 1926 as part of the property’s new, Olmsted Brothers-designed entrance. The gates were recently restored with the help of a state preservation grant and the generous support of the not-for-profit Planting Fields Foundation.

Governor's Message



Mary Clark Thompson

New York has one of the oldest and finest state parks and historic sites systems in the country, containing properties of exquisite beauty, fascinating history, and extraordinary recreational value. The development and growth of this remarkable system chronicles a rich heritage of conservation, preservation, and education efforts combined with visionary public policy and exceptional levels of private support. Established in the nineteenth century, the system now contains one hundred seventy parks and thirty-five historic sites, offering rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation to millions of visitors each year. Thanks to the help and cooperation of numerous public and private partners, we continue to expand and improve this remarkable resource for the health and well-being of all New Yorkers.

The origin of the state historic site system dates back to the mid-nineteenth century when the state purchased Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh in 1850 for use as a museum. Today, the state historic sites include a variety of prominent landmarks that interpret the people, places, and events that have helped to shape New York State and the nation, through tours, exhibits, school programs, and special events. Many of the sites also preserve some of our most scenic open spaces and have become popular "parks" within their communities.

Late last year, I had the pleasure of announcing the state's intention to acquire the distinguished Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion in Canandaigua and designate it a state historic park. The fifty-two acre estate, which was developed during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, is one of the region's premier heritage tourism destinations. The estate, which attracts thousands of visitors each year, features an impressive Queen Anne style main house surrounded by a magnificent series of well-preserved, ornamental gardens. The state is entering into a partnership agreement with the property's existing not-for-profit corporation, Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion. The organization will continue to operate the site in coordination with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Increasing support for the preservation of the estate's buildings and landscape is a key component of this new initiative. Several months ago, the state challenged Sonnenberg Gardens to raise \$250,000 toward the site's long-term protection. I am happy to report that through both private and public fund-raising efforts the organization has exceeded that goal. The campaign has demonstrated that the community is committed to safeguarding this valuable local asset.

As the details of the acquisition and partnership agreement are being finalized, I encourage you to



Historic view of Sonnenberg's Italian Garden. Photographs courtesy of Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion.

visit and enjoy the beautiful Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion. This new cooperative venture promises to revitalize the most captivating historic and horticultural treasure in the Finger Lakes region.

George E. Pataki, Governor
State of New York

Short Takes



The excavation for the pergola's foundation. Courtesy of the Martin House Restoration Corporation.



Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1933.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Darwin Martin House

The restoration of Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin D. Martin House in Buffalo is moving forward rapidly. The Martin House Restoration Corporation has begun one of the most progressive segments of the multiple-year project, which involves the reconstruction of three buildings from the original Martin House complex that were demolished in 1960. The reconstruction project will create exact replicas of a 100-foot-long pergola, glass-roofed conservatory, and carriage house and stable. This undertaking is the first attempt to reconstruct entirely demolished Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings in America. The Martin House is widely recognized as one of Wright's signature Prairie Houses. Constructed in 1903-05, the house is one of a group of residences designed in the first few decades of Wright's career that together constitute one his most significant contributions to America architecture. The corporation is overseeing the property's restoration and will operate the site as a museum on behalf of the state. Tours of the Martin House will continue during the restoration and rebuilding process.

For information, call (716)856-3858 or visit www.darwinmartinhouse.org.

Steepletop

Located on a rural hillside in the town of Austerlitz, Steepletop was the home of distinguished American writer Edna St. Vincent Millay from 1925 until her death in 1950. Millay was a talented and immensely popular Pulitzer prize-winning poet and literary figure who became a prominent symbol of progressive thinking during the early twentieth century. Her estate, which is owned by the not-for-profit Edna St. Vincent Millay Society, contains her furnished home, writing cabin, gardens, and grave site and is the property most importantly associated with her life. With funding from the Regional and Community Historic Preservation Benefit Plan*, the Millay society has begun to restore the property's long-neglected landscape. The grant assisted in the rehabilitation of the multiple-level, terraced garden created by Millay and her husband, Eugen Boissevain. The society is embarking on a phased restoration of Steepletop and is committed to the preservation and interpretation of this National Historic Landmark.

* *The Regional and Community Historic Preservation Benefit Plan was developed in conjunction with the construction of the Athens Generating Company electric generating facility in Greene County. The plan established a fund to provide for the preservation of historic properties in Greene and Columbia counties. For more information, see the Spring/Summer 2003 issue of The Preservationist at www.nysparks.com.*

Preserve America

Ten municipalities in New York State have been designated Preserve America Communities under a federal initiative that recognizes and promotes local efforts to safeguard and rejuvenate historic and cultural resources. The communities include the hamlet of Roxbury; the villages of Brockport, Great Neck Plaza, and Liberty; the cities of Ithaca, Newburgh, Rochester, Saratoga Springs, and Schenectady; and Putnam County, New York's first designated Preserve America Community. Administered by the

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, and Housing and Urban Development, the Preserve America program promises to increase the public's appreciation of the nation's heritage, strengthen regional identities and local pride, expand community participation in preservation, and support the economic vitality of communities across the country.

For information, visit www.preserveamerica.gov.

From The Commissioner

New York State has forged a strong working relationship with the National Park Service to recognize, preserve, and renew our historic and cultural resources. This partnership dates back to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which declared historic preservation to be public policy of the United States and established our core preservation programs, including the National Register of Historic Places. Through the years, we have worked together to assist hundreds of communities to safeguard significant historic places and encourage private investment in preservation.

We have also worked closely with the National Park Service to establish national heritage areas in New York. This federal program was developed to foster cooperative efforts to preserve the history and culture of entire regions.

New York's first heritage area, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, managed by the Hudson River Valley Greenway, was established in 1996.

In 2000, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor was designated to recognize and promote New York's legendary canal system. This heritage area takes its name from New York's first and most important canal. Opened in 1825, the Erie Canal quickly became one of the state's most important commercial transportation routes and played a key role in the growth and development of New York and the upper Midwest during the nineteenth century. The new canalway corridor includes 524 miles of navigable waterways of the New York State Canal System, including the Erie, Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca, and Champlain Canals

and more than 230 communities along the corridor. The heritage corridor initiative will highlight the system's history while furthering education, recreation, and economic development activities.

A twenty-seven-member commission was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to guide the canalway



Commissioner Castro (second from right) is joined (from left to right) by Saratoga Capital District State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission Chair Heather Mabee, State Assemblyman Robert Reilly, Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue, and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Director Frank Dean at the opening of the new visitor center at Peebles Island State Park in Waterford.

initiative. I am honored to be a member of this prestigious group, which is chaired by Eric Mower and made up of federal, state, and local officials as well as interested citizens and organizations. In addition to encouraging public and private partnerships, the commission is overseeing the completion of a management plan that will help to identify, promote, and assist preservation, recreation, education, tourism, and community development efforts along the waterway. Public participation and cooperation have been key components of the planning process, and a small number of local demonstration projects are underway to assess the approaches and recommendations outlined in the draft plan. The results of these studies will be incorporated into the plan and serve as community models.

New York State Parks wholeheartedly supports the goals of the canalway project. This new initiative will help to increase the public's appreciation of the heritage corridor and offer various opportunities to improve and advance its many assets. I am happy to report that Peebles Island State Park in Waterford, home of the State Historic Preservation Office and the Bureau of Historic Sites, is the new administrative headquarters for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. This is particularly appropriate because Peebles Island is located at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and the juncture of the Erie and Champlain Canals. I encourage you to visit the park's new visitor center, located in a recently rehabilitated powerhouse, to learn about the canalway initiative, the surrounding area, and the state's preservation and historic site programs and activities.

Bernadette Castro
Commissioner
State Historic Preservation Officer
Vice Chair, Advisory Council
on Historic Preservation

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation extends its appreciation to Mesick-Cohen-Wilson-Baker Architects, Pleasant Valley Wine Company, Edward E. Cox, Michael T. Dennis, Picotte Companies, and Richard J. Schwartz for their support of the 2004 New York State Historic Preservation Awards program.



TACONIC STATE PARK REGION



A Presidential Pedigree



This portion of a 1941 mural painted by Olin Dows for the Hyde Park Post Office depicts FDR, in a car, reviewing plans for one of his regional building projects. Courtesy of Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (www.feri.org) from the collection of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt accepted the chair of the new Taconic State Park Commission (TSPC) in 1925, he had already formed an opinion about the recreational program that the commission was charged with developing. As Roosevelt conceived it, the central feature would be an eighty-three mile scenic automobile parkway running north-south through the spine of the region's four counties—Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia, and Rensselaer.¹ The new road would extend the route of the Bronx River Parkway north from Westchester into Putnam County, through what Roosevelt described as a very beautiful section of “wild” country that was previously inaccessible, continuing north “approximately mid-way between the Albany Post Road and the Harlem River Valley,” through the Shenandoah Valley and central Dutchess County, over Stissing Mountain, and past Lake Charlotte in Columbia County to Chatham, where one branch would travel northeast to

¹ Today the Taconic region is defined as Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and Columbia Counties. This article primarily chronicles the history of the original region.

² Taconic State Park Commission Minutes, 6.28.25.

³ Unless otherwise noted, Taconic Parkway refers to the portion in Putnam, Dutchess, and Columbia Counties (originally Eastern State Parkway). The Westchester County section (originally Bronx Parkway Extension) was constructed by the Westchester County Park Commission. The two were officially combined as the Taconic State Parkway in 1941.

the Massachusetts border and the other northwest, past Troy, to the Saratoga Battlefield.² Although the official plan stopped there, Roosevelt frequently referred to the final destination as the Canadian border - making this the most ambitious parkway proposal in the state.³

The Taconic park region was established under New York's expanded state park plan of 1924. At the time there were no state parks in the eastern Hudson Valley other than the fledgling Taconic State Park in the northeastern corner of the region. The latter, a 10,000-acre parcel near Copake Falls in Columbia County, was New York's component of a proposed 40,000-acre Tri-State Park, an interstate venture including land in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Tri-State Park, modeled after the Palisades Interstate Park, a successful New York-New Jersey venture, was backed by Robert Moses, chair of the State Council of Parks (SCP). As New York State had authorized purchase of more than 2,000 acres for Taconic



Taconic State Park, undated postcard.

State Park before the TSPC was established, the council anticipated that the new commission would make this park its top priority. Indeed, work at Taconic State Park (which opened in 1927) initially dominated commission activity, with crews clearing roads and trails, developing campsites and picnic areas, and building a bathhouse, a fire observation tower, and a keeper's cottage. Although Moses discussed a parkway with the TSPC at its first meeting, his priority for the eastern Hudson Valley was authorizing the

Westchester County Park Commission to extend the Bronx River Parkway to Peekskill. The Bronx Parkway Extension (BPE) would lead motorists to the new Bear Mountain Bridge, over the Hudson, and into Bear Mountain/Harriman State Parks, thus alleviating the immediate need for a large state park east of the river. It would also complete Moses's planned 100-mile automobile loop from New York City, "a grand circuit...through what is destined to be the world's greatest outer park system."⁴

However, under FDR's leadership, the new commission quickly filed its own regional plan - presenting the SCP with an outline for a parkway north of Peekskill, following FDR's mid-county route, in July 1925. The TSPC's independence brought it into conflict with Moses, a powerful adversary who repeatedly slashed the commission's funding, delaying parkway construction for more than four years. In 1927, after Taconic received an appropriation of \$12,500, far less than any other region, FDR sought Governor Alfred E. Smith's intervention, arguing that "unlike many of the other state Park Commissions, our principal function is the acquisition of the parkway..." The governor, unyielding, informed FDR that his priority was Taconic State Park and advised him to scale back the parkway, which he [Smith] "never thought of...as extending all the way up to Columbia County." FDR countered that "...none of the Commissioners, including myself, would have accepted office if our objective had been merely the development of the Taconic State Park and of another in Putnam County" and asserting that without funding for its entire program, the commission "sees no reason for its continued existence."⁵

The commission's determination proved unshakable, and its fortunes began to change after FDR was elected governor in 1928.⁶ In 1930, having secured \$400,000 for parkway development, the TSPC reported that, "recognizing the importance and value of the parkway project," it had given precedence to parkway construction for that year.⁷ Work at Taconic State Park, although proceeding, never again

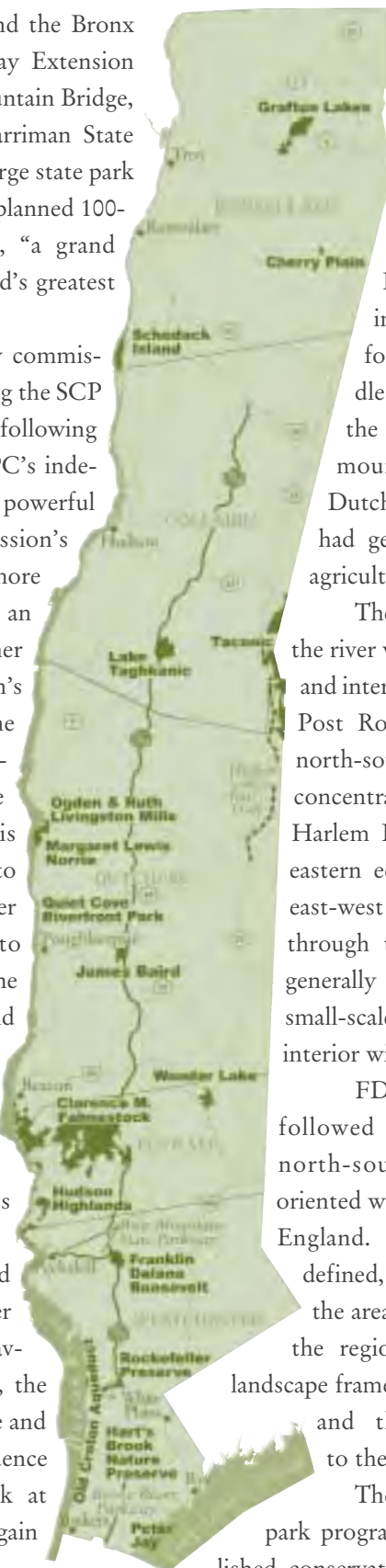
commanded the same attention.

As originally defined, the Taconic region encompassed the eastern Hudson Valley between Westchester and Washington Counties, an area characterized by a diverse landscape and a long history. It included a 100-mile stretch of Hudson River shoreline, broad, flat plains in the river valley, and a series of gentle hills followed by steep mountains from the middle of the region to its eastern border along the state line. Putnam County was the most mountainous and least developed, while Dutchess, Columbia, and Rensselaer Counties had gentler topographies and more consistent agricultural land use.

The earliest, most densely settled areas along the river were distinguished by large country estates and intervening cities and hamlets connected by the Post Road (US Rte. 9), an old and important north-south route. Agricultural development was concentrated in the flats east of the river and in the Harlem River Valley, which defined the region's eastern edge. Before the early twentieth century, east-west travel between NY Rte. 22, the major road through the Harlem Valley, and the Post Road generally followed turnpikes and the network of small-scale farm-to-market roads that connected the interior with Hudson River cities and ports.

FDR's proposed parkway route generally followed the spine of the region, a narrow north-south ridge that divided communities oriented west to the Hudson Valley and east to New England. Historically the mid-section was less defined, less prosperous, and less populated than the areas to the east and west. From this vantage, the region appears as an expansive agricultural landscape framed by the Berkshire Mountains on the east and the imposing Catskill Mountains far to the west.

The TSPC's freedom to develop a regional park program was fostered by the lack of an established conservation or park planning tradition north of



Map overlapping the original (Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia, and Rensselaer) and current (Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and Columbia) Taconic State Park Regions and showing the Taconic State Parkway and Taconic regional state parks.

4 New York State Association, *A State Park Plan for New York* (n.p., 1922; rev. 1924), 60.

5 Letters, FDR to Alfred E. Smith, 12.14.27; Smith to FDR, 1.23.28; FDR to Smith 1.30.28.

6 Roosevelt resigned from the TSPC after his election as governor.

7 New York State Conservation Department, *Annual Report*, 1930.



Pelton Pond, Clarence M. Fahnestock Memorial State Park, undated photograph.

Westchester. The earliest significant effort to develop public parkland in the region dates to the early 1920s, when Francis R. Masters, Sr., later a TSPC commissioner, purchased the scenic Bash Bish Falls in Massachusetts. Masters subsequently donated and/or sold the falls and nearby parcels to New York and Massachusetts for the Tri-State Park. When the State Council of Parks was formed in 1924, planning for New York's portion of the park (Taconic State Park) was still in the preliminary stages. Thus, when the TSPC was created, there were no long-established parks or programs to administer and no organizations or administrators to appease. Free to approach regional needs unencumbered, the commission developed its program almost entirely around encouraging and enhancing the experience of pleasure driving.

The commission's approach was unique in the state park system. Despite the priority given to developing an integrated

park and parkway system in the state park plan, most regional commissions concentrated on acquiring parkland—particularly land that was near large populations, of great scenic value, and/or endangered by development—and planned parkways to provide efficient connections between populations and parks. Although other commissions built scenic roads, they were generally perceived as facilitating access to recreational facilities rather than ends in themselves. Patrons could enjoy direct routes and pleasant journeys, thus enhancing their enjoyment of the stunning attractions that awaited them at Jones Beach, Letchworth, or Niagara Falls.

But in the Taconic region, particularly north of the Hudson Highlands, there was no singular scenic wonder to serve as a destination point. Arguably, some of the region's most impressive attractions—the Taconic and Catskill Mountains—were outside its borders, and the long-settled region lacked enormous tracts of undeveloped land suitable for park development—certainly nothing comparable to Bear Mountain/Harriman or Allegany State Parks, each of which then exceeded 35,000 acres of wilderness. Moreover, although the TSPC developed its program primarily to serve metropolitan New Yorkers, much of the region was too distant from the city to make a regional park a practical goal for day trips.

The emphasis on pleasure driving was reinforced by the road's original isolation. The right-of-way cut a completely new path through the region, snaking through sparsely settled terrain and cultivated farmland. The TSPC actively promoted the parkway's potential to relieve congestion on Rtes. 9 and 22,



Bathhouse, Lake Taghkanic State Park, Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Historic American Building Record/Historic American Engineering Record, 1999.

but, ironically, the new road also helped to increase traffic by facilitating development along its right-of-way. The commission made little or no effort to facilitate connections between the



parkway and regional cities such as Poughkeepsie, Hudson, Albany, or Troy and never acted to extend the parkway northeast to Taconic State Park.

Despite its independence, the TSPC developed a plan that followed the principles defined by the SCP, particularly by providing automobile connections between metropolitan New York and scenic areas. And although the parkway absorbed most of the commission's time, energy, and budget over the next forty years, its program expanded to include a number of sizeable and important parks. By 1939, the region boasted five state parks. In addition to Taconic State Park, the TSPC had acquired a riverfront park and FDR's suggestion for "small camping parks" along the right-of-way was realized in the acquisition and development of one substantial park in each county.

The histories of the "parkway parks" were tied to that of the road. In 1928, the commission acquired 300 acres of "wild rugged land" near Roaring Brook, in southern Putnam County. Located along the parkway's proposed route, the site was developed as a public campground. Subsequently, FDR approached the Fahnestock family about the donation of a

sizable adjacent parcel. Ernest Fahnestock's 1929 gift of more than 2,000 acres of his family's estate helped to fix the route of the parkway through the center of the county at a time when some commissioners were arguing

for an alternate route slightly to the east along Peekskill Hollow Ridge; it also secured six miles of right-of-way for the parkway, half of its distance through Putnam County. Clarence M. Fahnestock Memorial State Park, which commemorates the donor's brother, a surgeon who died in WWI, provided public access to a large, beautiful tract near the metropolitan area and relieved overcrowding at Bear Mountain/Harriman. The park's popularity facilitated acquisition of adjacent parcels and enhanced prospects of securing funds to extend the parkway, which provided needed access to the park. Fahnestock Park (now 13,000 acres) became the region's largest preserve, notable for extensive hiking trails, including a portion of the Appalachian Trail, the remains of iron mines that once provided ore for the West Point Foundry in nearby Cold Spring, and Canopus Lake, an important attraction created in the 1930s.



Aerial view of clubhouse and golf course, James A. Baird State Park, undated photograph.

Equally important was the acquisition of a 500-acre parcel more than 100 miles north in Columbia County. The land included scenic woodlands and a 255-acre lake with six miles of shore. Lake Charlotte was popular with local families who leased lakeside lots and erected their own cabins. After its owner, D. McRa Livingston, expressed interest in transferring the land, the TSPC arranged a tour with prominent landscape

architect Gilmore Clark and William Welch, chief engineer for the PIPC and a national expert in park development. The group was favorably impressed and, with the blessing of Robert Moses, the commission purchased the parcel

in 1930 for \$25,000. This acquisition proved especially significant because it justified plans to extend the parkway a substantial distance north and held its right-of-way close to FDR's proposed mid-county route. Although Lake Taghkanic State Park, renamed at Livingston's request after an Algonquin Indian word describing the heavily wooded mountains to the east, became a popular attraction in the upper Taconic region, a prolonged and bitter dispute over the state's plan to take the cottages and route the parkway near the lake delayed parkway construction north of Dutchess County for five years. Taghkanic State Park, now 1,569 acres, is notable for its fine collection of stone buildings constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

The commission's plan to establish a park adjacent to the parkway in each county made securing land in Dutchess County a priority. In 1939, the TSPC acquired 580 acres near

The commission developed its program almost entirely around encouraging and enhancing the experience of pleasure driving.



Freedom Plains “in order to route the Taconic...over the location originally selected by the commission....”⁸ The farmland was the gift of James A. Baird, a contractor and engineer whose firm built the Lincoln Memorial. Part of the bequest was used for parkway right-of-way and the rest was developed as James A. Baird State Park, featuring an eighteen-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones and partially constructed by CCC labor. The park opened in 1948, and a pool, bathhouse, and sports complex were completed in 1951.

The region’s first riverfront park was acquired in 1933, when Beatrice Thomson donated 316 acres in the town of Hyde Park. The TSPC announced that development of the new Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park was a priority, describing it as the only available riverfront land between the metropolitan area and Albany that could be developed for park purposes.⁹ Despite this stated urgency, the commission’s annual reports reserved stronger endorsements for the Taconic, declaring in 1932 that it was “urgent” and in 1935 that it was “imperative” to fund continuation of the parkway.¹⁰ While parkway construction advanced rapidly between 1936 and 1939, Norrie did not open until 1937, four years after it was acquired. The following year, Gladys Phipps, Thomson’s twin sister, donated an adjacent parcel of 192 acres, giving the commission a substantial expanse of riverfront. However, the parcel also included a furnished sixty-five-room mansion, home of Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills (Phipps’s and Thomson’s parents), which the commission was required to maintain. Mills Mansion, a 1830s residence enlarged and remodeled by McKim, Mead and White in 1895, is now Staatsburgh State Historic Site.

The commission apparently never considered developing a parkway spur to lure travelers five miles west to the river; however, the prospect did not escape FDR, who, in 1939, sent the commission a proposal (complete with maps) to connect the TSP with his planned presidential library at Hyde Park. After Roosevelt’s death in 1945, the SCP tried unsuccessfully to secure federal funds for the project, but the riverfront parks and the parkway remained in separate spheres.

In 1940, Westchester County was added to the Taconic region, and the TSPC took over administration of the Bronx

Parkway Extension; thereafter, the entire road was known as the Taconic State Parkway. In 1953 the commission acquired Mohansic Park (now Franklin Delano Roosevelt State Park), a 1,100-acre tract near the northern end of the BPE. The park, former state land transferred to the Westchester County Park Commission in 1922, was subsequently developed with a large pool and other features.

The northernmost parks along the right-of-way, in Rensselaer County (now part of the Saratoga-Capital District State Park region), were developed in anticipation of a parkway that never reached them. The TSPC considered eastern Rensselaer County “the most handsome and impressive part of the Taconic Range” (regional manager Paul T. Winslow compared it to England’s Lake District) and remained committed to completing the parkway through that county and beyond, declaring that, because the TSPC’s chief objective had always been to continue

the parkway to the Canadian border, “several of the Commissioners...felt that until this objective has been accomplished the Commission will not have obtained any great achievement.”¹¹ In this the commission was disappointed. Although a route through Rensselaer County was identified, parkway construction stopped just south of the county line. Nevertheless, the acquisition of Cherry Plain State Park (1962, 175 acres) and nearby Grafton Lakes State Park, a picturesque 2,357-acre parcel of former water supply property east of Troy (1968), provided opportunities for picnicking, swimming, and boating in the Albany area.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Taconic regional park program was the independence and self-confidence of its commissioners and, working closely with the region’s professional staff, their significant role in developing and administering the park program. Although they subscribed to the tenets embodied in the state park plan, working with state authorities and drawing upon outside expertise as needed, these commissioners (even FDR) were not among the most

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⁸ New York State Conservation Department, *Annual Report*, 1939.

⁹ New York State Conservation Department, *Annual Report*, 1933.

¹⁰ New York State Conservation Department, *Annual Reports*, 1932, 1935.

¹¹ Taconic State Park Commission Minutes, 10.21.46.



influential members of the State Council of Parks. Nevertheless, the TSPC assumed authority for its park program, making decisions about acquisition, design, construction, and community relations based on its own conception of regional needs. One compelling indication of the commission's independence was its power of design approval. Although the SCP controlled funding and the New York State Department of Public Works took over road design and construction, the TSPC never relinquished its authority to revise or reject plans and recommendations that were not consistent with its ideal.

The TSPC's influential role can be attributed to various factors. The relationship between FDR, other commissioners, and staff was especially significant. As the commission's first chair Roosevelt played a pivotal role in developing and articulating the regional program. FDR had a personal interest in automobile tourism and delighted in taking friends and family on recreational motor tours. He was also a Hudson Valley native who treasured opportunities to return to the region for restorative purposes throughout his public life. Thus, he was well aware of the value a drive in the country might hold for urban residents.

Although he resigned from the TSPC in 1928, Roosevelt remained involved in its activities until his death, and the commission remained fiercely loyal to his vision. Although his ideas were not the only

considerations, FDR's commanding presence during the commission's formative years, specific ideas about the parkway, active efforts to acquire land, personal interaction with public officials, county highway commissions and the press, and involvement in establishing the design vocabulary for bridges and gas stations had a significant effect on the project outcome. The continuity of leadership was also important. Many commissioners had deep associations with regional affairs, a high



Taconic State Parkway, looking north in Columbia County, Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Historic American Building Record/Historic American Engineering Record, 1999.

sense of civic responsibility, and a willingness to give substantial time and resources. Among them, Madison Grant and William White Niles were parkway pioneers instrumental in the development of the Bronx River Parkway. Howland Davis, Francis R. Masters, Jr., and Vanderbilt Webb each served the commission for decades, and the Masters and Webb families were represented by several members.

The TSPC also benefited from the dedication of its staff. Paul T. Winslow, long-time regional manager, and Theodore Bowman, landscape architect, spent almost their entire careers—roughly paralleling construction of the parkway—with the commission. Whether it was loyalty to FDR or the personal commitment of

commissioners and staff that empowered the TSPC, the commission pursued its goal faithfully until forced to relinquish control to state agency and highway planners in the early 1960s.

In the context of New York's efforts to provide recreation for its citizens, one of the most compelling aspects of the Taconic regional program is the way that its focus on automobile tourism expanded the concept of a public park. The heart of the program, the opportunity to take a delightful drive, enjoy beautiful scenery, and view the agricultural landscape, offered an experience that extended far beyond the bounds of state parkland. It is interesting to consider this in reference to Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s concerns that the acquisition of large tracts of scenic land by wealthy citizens—for personal retreats or for conservation-threatened to limit the average

citizen's ability to experience the benefits of recreation.¹² Rather than distancing citizens from nature, the Taconic State Parkway essentially redefined the private landscape as a public park, making larger segments of the Hudson Valley's scenic and cultural landscape available for the enjoyment of the people. In building its program around the view from the road, the TSPC helped to ensure that those who could benefit from the state's restorative environments would be welcome in them.

For more information, see New York Taconic State Parkway, Historic American Engineering Recordation Project No. NY-316, available on line at www.cr.nps.gov/habshaer.

12 Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., final report of the Yosemite Commission, 1865; quoted in Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1972), 557.



DONTGIVEUP THE FLAG



Don't Give Up the Ship flag prior to treatment at the Peebles Island Resource Center. March 2004.

“Don't Give Up the Ship” is not only the motto of the U.S. Navy, but it is also the name of the battle flag that was flown by Commodore Oliver Perry at the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. “Don't Give Up the Ship” were the dying words of Captain James Lawrence, who was mortally wounded in action on June 1, 1813, in a naval battle between the *USS Chesapeake* and *HMS Shannon*. Perry had this flag made, and he named his flagship on Lake Erie the *USS Lawrence* in Lawrence's memory. The flag was hoisted as a signal for the American fleet to go into action against the British squadron on the morning of September 10, 1813.

For more than 150 years, the 98" x 120" wool flag, with cotton letters appliquéd to each side, had



Textile conservators at the Peebles Island Resource Center carefully roll back the linen lining that was part of the flag's 1912 restoration. The conservators estimate that they had to clip over 16,000 stitches in order to uncover the original fabric. January 2005.

been on almost continual exhibit at the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) in Annapolis, Maryland. However, its most recent display in the academy's Memorial Hall subjected the flag to the harmful

effects of light and extremes of temperature. Mounted high up against a wall in what had originally been a window opening, the top and bottom of the flag had been folded to fit the space. In addition, earlier flag restoration efforts had obscured all of the original materials except the letters spelling out the famous battle cry.

Textile conservators at the Peebles Island Resource Center in Waterford are conserving this nationally significant American flag. In 2004, conservators removed the older restoration efforts, including a linen lining with extensive, tight stitching applied in 1912 by famous flag restorer Amelia Fowler, and an earlier wool overlay fabric that covered all but the letters on the opposite side. Removal

of these earlier treatments was painstaking and time-consuming but also exciting and informative. For the first time in about 130 years, the original flag fabric was exposed. To everyone's surprise, the 1813 flag was dark brown, not the blue of the later overlay fabric.

The original flag was very fragile but more intact than had been expected. However, the fabric was extremely soiled and had a dangerously low pH (acidity) level. If left untreated, the flag's textile fibers would eventually disintegrate. To reduce soiling and improve the pH level, the conservators designed a special support system so the flag could be safely cleaned in mild detergent and filtered water.

The conservators have recommended that the restored flag not be returned to Memorial Hall. Instead, the USNA agreed to have a replica of the flag made for display in the building. The original flag will ultimately be exhibited in a new addition to the USNA Museum, which is planned to open in 2007. This new wing will provide an environment conducive to the flag's long-term preservation, helping to safeguard this prominent symbol of American naval history.



U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen view the replica of the Don't Give Up the Ship flag, which went on display in Memorial Hall at Annapolis in 2004. Photograph courtesy of the USNA Photo Lab, May 2004.

Paintings ON EXHIBITION



Twilight, a sketch painted by Frederic Church in 1858, was shown in the annual exhibition at the National Academy of Design in New York City in 1859.

The views from Olana inspired Frederic Church to paint landscapes of the Hudson Valley. Although Church's home will be closed in 2006 for the installation of the new systems, the grounds will be open and visitors will still be able to enjoy the spectacular vistas of the river and mountains. Photograph courtesy of Andy Wainwright, © 2003.



The exhibition catalog, Treasures from Olana—Landscapes by Frederic Edwin Church, was published by Cornell University Press and can be purchased for \$24.95 at the Olana gift shop.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) recently awarded the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) a \$650,000 grant towards a \$1.6 million project to upgrade heating and cooling equipment and install a fire suppression system at Olana State Historic Site in Hudson, New York. The NEH grant served as the impetus for an exciting new venture for the home and studio of Hudson River School painter Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900). While Church's Persian style villa (but not the site) is closed for the 2006 visitor season to accommodate the upgrades, eighteen of Church's oil paintings and sketches will travel to six prominent museums as a national loan exhibition, "Treasures From Olana: The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church." According to Princeton University art history professor John

Wilmerding, who wrote an introduction to the show's accompanying catalog, "Treasures from Olana" will give "a wider public a chance to see first-hand a group of pictures intensely beautiful in their own right" from an artist "now seen as America's greatest artist before Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins." When the exhibit opens at the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, New York, on June 12, 2005, visitors will have the opportunity to view many works of art that have never been displayed outside of Olana. Kevin Avery, associate curator in the Department of Paintings and Sculpture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, selected the paintings and wrote the catalog essay. The paintings selected represent an intimate portrait of the painter through his own work—of a changing panorama of majestic landscapes and of his evolution as an artist. According to Avery, these

paintings are "the house's truest treasures."

After Cooperstown (June 12–September 18, 2005), the exhibition will travel to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas, (October 9, 2005–January 8, 2006), the National Academy Museum in New York City, (February 9–April 30, 2006), the Portland Museum of Art in Portland, Maine, (May 20–September 10, 2006), the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, (October 14, 2006–January 3, 2007), and the Princeton University Art Gallery in Princeton, New Jersey, (January 27–June 10, 2007). OPRHP and its non-profit partner, The Olana Partnership, organized the exhibition, which was made possible through grant assistance from The Henry Luce Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, and additional support from other foundations, corporations, and individual donors.

The eyes of all have for a long time turned to Sackets Harbor as a place of preparation for mighty deeds.

Lt. Col. Franklin Wharton, Commandant of the Marines, July 27, 1814

A North Country Treasure

Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site

No fences mark the boundary between the village of Sackets Harbor and the Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site on Lake Ontario in Jefferson County. Together they form the geographical center of this serene and picturesque waterfront community. The site, with its expansive landscape, sweeping views of the lake, and historic features, encompasses one-third of the village and is significant for its critical role during the War of 1812 and subsequent use as a United States naval station. The property's rich military and maritime history are the focus of the site's interpretive programs.

Following the outbreak of war between the United States and Great Britain in June 1812, Sackets Harbor, with its deep, natural harbor, became the headquarters for American naval and military activity for the upper St. Lawrence Valley and Lake Ontario. A large fleet was constructed at the harbor's extensive shipyards, and barracks were built to house the



History comes alive during the site's annual War of 1812 living history weekend. Members of the Boston-based *USS Constitution* 1812 Marine Guard engage visitors of all ages.

thousands of military personnel and workers who provided support for the invasion and conquest of Canada.

In an attempt to destroy the shipyard, a British-Canadian force launched an attack on May 29, 1813. At the time, many of the American troops were across Lake Ontario attacking Fort George. Although the enemy was driven off, the Americans burned their military stores, a necessity that marred the victory. In December 1814, the Treaty of Ghent officially ended the war, and the Lake Ontario fleet was placed in storage.

After the war, the earthen fortifications of Forts Tompkins and Kentucky were leveled, and the battlefield became

farmland. An unfinished ship, the *New Orleans*, which was designed to carry 106 cannons, remained at the yard and a large wooden storage building was constructed to protect it for future use. In 1817, the Rush-Bagot Agreement between the United States and Great Britain limited all naval forces on the Great Lakes.

During the 1840s and 1850s, old shipyard buildings were removed and new quarters were constructed for the naval commandant and lieutenant. By the 1880s, the Navy decided to scrap the *New Orleans*. Improved Canadian-American relations ended the need for a naval base at Sackets Harbor, but the Navy maintained the facility until 1955, using it for training naval militia.

By the 1860s and 1870s, part of the battlefield was being used as a public park. The land was called the Old Battlefield Ground and became a popular place for patriotic meetings, political rallies, church picnics, and community events. In 1913, a portion of the park was officially set aside to honor all military personnel who had fought and died in the War of 1812. That year, on the centennial of the Battle of Sackets Harbor, a large crowd gathered to attend the dedication of a commemorative granite monument and memorial grove of 100 trees. The park was donated to the state in 1933, and the property was later enlarged to include the naval station.

The thirty-two-acre state historic site contains ten structures and preserves the nationally significant battleground



Visitors to the Commandant's House can tour its 1860s interior and learn about nineteenth-century military life in northern New York.

memorial park and the historic navy yard. The navy yard complex features a commandant's house restored and furnished to the 1860s, an orientation center and gift shop in the lieutenant's house, an interactive War of 1812 exhibit in the former stable, and an ice house and well house. The site is open to the public from early May to Columbus Day and at other times for special events. The grounds are open year-round and have become a popular spot for bird watching, dog walking, bike riding, jogging, and enjoying spectacular sunsets.

The site is interpreted to the public through exhibits, tours, an interpretive trail, education initiatives, special events, and demonstrations of War of 1812 army camp life. A living history weekend has been reestablished at the site in cooperation with the Boston-based *USS Constitution* 1812 Marine Guard. Visitors have the opportunity to interact with re-enactors and learn about weaponry, cooking methods, and the traditions of early nineteenth-century American military life.

Sharing the site's history with younger audiences has become a high priority. Last winter and this spring, the site provided in-school programs for 1,100 students, a substantial increase over last year's efforts. The site is also home to an extensive archive, including a large War of 1812 database, which was donated by a member of the not-for-profit Sackets Harbor Battlefield Alliance. The archive is accessible to the public by appointment, and periodic publications enhance education and research opportunities.

Throughout the year, the site hosts a series of community events, including a Memorial Day observance, involving 10th Mountain Division soldiers from nearby Fort Drum, summer concerts on the lawn, Fourth of July celebrations and fireworks, and holiday festivities in December. In 2003, the site collaborated with other local attractions on a motor coach tour package, "The Sackets Harbor Experience," which helped to promote regional tourism.

Community outreach has become a key component of the site's long-term preservation and operation. The site's not-for-profit friends group, the Sackets Harbor Battlefield Alliance, was established in 2003 to support the site's interpretation and improvement. Through its dedicated members and volunteers, the alliance has already expanded several of the site's core initiatives, including visitor orientation and interpretation.

Some of the alliance's most popular events include the "Commandant's Lawn Party" and the mid-winter "Savor Sackets Harbor: A Moveable Feast." In just a short period of time, the organization has raised \$6,000 through donations and membership fees. These important fund-raising activities have assisted various education and promotion efforts, such as the

purchase of 1860s reproduction clothing for the site's interpreters, the installation of an attractive new entrance sign, and new publications.

As a prelude to the War of 1812 bicentennial in 2012, the alliance will begin planning a pilot educational project this year and hopes to involve American and Canadian scholars in a military history symposium. Over the next several years, as it looks forward to the bicentennial commemoration, the alliance will seek other partners and opportunities to highlight the site's importance.

The Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site is one of the region's most valuable scenic and historic assets. The site tells the fascinating story of America's courageous defense of its northern frontier during the War of 1812, its long use as a naval station, and later dedication as a War of 1812 memorial park. Throughout its history, the site has played an important role in the village's development and growth. Today, thanks to community interest and support, the state historic site contin-



This mid-twentieth-century aerial photograph shows the Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site in the foreground with Navy Point forming the harbor.



The Navy Yard, c1860, shows from left to right, the Commandant's House, the Lieutenant's House, and the ship house, which protected the unfinished ship the *New Orleans*. This ship and protective ship house were demolished in 1883.

ues to make an important contribution to interpreting the past while improving the quality and character of the village and the surrounding area.

For information, contact the site at P.O. Box 27, 504 W. Main Street, Sackets Harbor, New York 13685, (315) 646-3634, or visit www.nysparks.com.

Dressed with Skill

Eight years ago, Commissioner Castro proposed that the Peebles Island Resource Center (PIRC) develop a program to outfit historic site guides in authentic reproduction period dress in order to enhance visitors' experiences at New York's state historic sites.

Since then, a dedicated group of seamstresses, under the guidance of PIRC curators, has spent one day each week constructing high-quality garments for interpretive staff. Together, these five talented women have almost 250 years of sewing expertise. Whether they volunteer their time or work under contract, they all share a love of historic garments.

The seamstresses carefully research each garment they design to ensure that it accurately reflects a particular period or the lifestyle of a specific historic person. Not only must the garments look good from a distance, but they must also be accurate in their fabric, construction techniques, and fit.

Starting from the skin out, the seamstresses provide interpretive staff with every article of clothing they need to create an appropriate historic appearance.

Undergarments, including corsets, hoops, and bustles, help create the proper silhouette and posture.

Historically accurate construction techniques ensure that fabrics move and fall the way they did originally. The manner in which a ruffle is attached to a skirt, for example, can make all the difference; the contemporary method of attaching a ruffle can flatten it, while the nineteenth-century technique creates bounce. Frequently, the seamstresses examine original historic garments in storage at the PIRC to determine exactly how they were assembled and to create patterns for reproduction garments.

When interpreters from the historic sites first come to the workshop to be measured,

Fort Montgomery State Historic Site Manager Donald Fraser dressed as a c1770s farmer who served as an American militiaman at the Battle of Fort Montgomery, October 6, 1777.



Former Lorenzo State Historic Site Manager Russell Grills attired as John Lincklaen, who built Lorenzo in 1807.

they are often apprehensive, concerned that the many layers of fabric, especially in women's clothing, will make them appear heavy. Invariably, they are thrilled to discover that what they perceive to be twenty-first-century figure flaws actually become quite alluring when clothed in reproduction period garments. For those slender interpreters who look great in contemporary styles but rather sickly in nineteenth-century gowns, there is always a bag or two of poly-fill nearby for that extra padding!



Seamstress Peggy Madson works on a contractual basis for the Reproduction Period Dress Program at the Peebles Island Resource Center. She also sews costumes for the New York State Theater Institute.

Whitehall

State Heritage Area

Situated at the head of Lake Champlain, in a narrow valley sheltered by forested mountains, Whitehall is the northeastern portal to the New York State Heritage Area system. From earliest times, the principal route linking the St. Lawrence Valley and the mid-Atlantic region followed a line of major waterways, including Canada's Richelieu River, Lake Champlain, Lake George, and the Hudson River.

British Captain Philip Skene, recognizing the abundant natural resources of the Lake Champlain region and the strategic value of controlling the portage, established Skenesborough, the first English-speaking settlement on the lake, in 1759. Eventually, Skene owned over 56,000 acres at the south end of Lake Champlain, with mines, forests, and farms that supported an iron foundry, mills, a shipyard, and a shipping business.

In 1775, rebellious colonists confiscated the burgeoning trading center, putting its sawmills and shipyards to work for the American cause. Skene's trading schooner, commandeered and renamed *Liberty*, and a newly built fleet engaged the British Navy at Valcour Island in 1776, earning Skenesborough/Whitehall the title, "Birthplace of the U.S. Navy."

Rebuilt and renamed after the war, Whitehall thrived as a warehousing and ship-building center. When the War of 1812 broke out, Whitehall was again garrisoned, and its ships and shipyards pressed into service. Remains of the victorious American fleet and British booty, brought to Whitehall after the Battle of Plattsburgh, lie underwater just north of the village.

To facilitate transport between the Champlain and Hudson Valleys, a canal was cut between Whitehall and Albany. In use after 1819, the Champlain Canal brought prosperity to shippers of produce, iron ore, and specialty products such as eels and ice. The railroad was built in 1848 and the harbor flourished because

passengers and freight traveling by both canal and rail had to transship at Whitehall to continue their journey on Lake Champlain.

When the railroad was extended northward in 1878, maritime traffic declined, but railroading continued as Whitehall's principal industry well into the twentieth century.

Beginning in 1905, the canal was redeveloped as the Champlain Branch of the New York State Barge Canal. Carpet and silk manufacturers, attracted by the easy access to New York City markets, established factories in Whitehall.

Although Whitehall had lost much of its manufacturing and industrial base by the 1970s, it retained its scenic setting, an intact nineteenth-century Main Street, and a dedication to preserving and celebrating the community's history. Identified as a pilot community in New York State's Urban Cultural Park program (now the State Heritage Area system), Whitehall enthusiastically developed a plan to revitalize the Main Street/Canal District, interpret the community's role in defense and transportation, and participate in North Country recreation and tourism markets.

Since its first project—reconstruction of an 1892 bandstand—the Whitehall Heritage Area has focused on improving community infrastructure and enhancing public spaces. Today, the village features renovated sidewalks, lighting, and parking, a refurbished harbor, and such new amenities as waterfront trails, picnic areas, fishing sites, and an amphitheatre.

The Heritage Area Visitor Center/Skenesborough Museum, housed in a 1917

canal terminal building, interprets local history and welcomes visitors to the community. Walking tours introduce the historic district



Whitehall's Main Street Historic District, shown here in 1973, remains largely intact and is the focus of the village's continuing community and heritage development activities.

and its fine architecture. Summer concerts, an autumn quilt show, and a winter festival are augmented by cultural and recreational offerings at the Bridge Theatre. To build the tourism market, the community works with tour bus and cruise ship companies and planners on events such as the Americade motorcycle rally.

Renewed interest in the canal, including the HUD Canal Corridor Initiative, New York's Canal Recreationway Plan, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, has brought millions of federal and state dollars to the harbor and historic district. Public investment has spurred business development, including new restaurants, marinas, and services for boaters. Community development programs continue to focus on Main Street revitalization, encouraging commercial activity and filling upper stories with housing.

Major water, rail, and highway routes still pass through Whitehall. Thanks to heritage development, today's travelers have good reasons to linger and explore its scenic, cultural, and historic attractions.

From the Chairman

Years ago, protecting individual landmark buildings was the primary focus of historic preservation activities in New York State and the nation. While these initial efforts were laudable and helped to form the foundation for today's preservation movement, single-resource approaches have quite rightly evolved into community-wide initiatives that encourage the recognition and rejuvenation of whole neighborhoods, commercial centers, parks, roadways, industrial areas, agricultural districts, archeological and cultural properties, and landscapes of every type and description. The settings, surroundings, and scenery of New York's historic places are integral to their significance. These widely varied environments preserve some of our most valuable outdoor assets, helping to enhance the quality and character of hundreds of localities across the state.

New York's state parks and historic sites system contains some of our most spectacular historic open spaces. With its dramatic setting and Olmsted-designed landscape, Niagara Falls State Park tops the list of scenic wonders that are accessible to the public. Established in 1885, Niagara Reservation was New York's first state park and its designation helped to safeguard the world-famous attraction from industrial development. The same year, the Adirondack Park Preserve was established to protect the state's great northern wilderness from similar threats. These early environmental protection efforts focused on placing New York's most significant landscapes in the public domain. Through the years, the system has grown to include a large and important collection of historic and scenic treasures that have been protected in perpetuity for the benefit and enjoyment of generations of New Yorkers and visitors.

Several prominent park initiatives were launched at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Palisades Interstate Park Commission was established in 1900 to save the escarpment from development and oversee the region's park program. William Letchworth gave 1,000 acres along the Genesee River gorge to the state in 1906 for use as a park, helping to safeguard one of the area's great scenic waterways.

In 1909, the state acquired land containing natural springs near Saratoga Springs and developed a public therapeutic resort, which later became Saratoga Spa State Park.

In the 1920s, a statewide park plan and the subsequent creation of the State Council of Parks signaled the formation of the modern park system. Thousands of acres of land were acquired; hundreds of recreation, transportation, and support facilities were built; and the administrative structure for an expanding network was established. Although the Depression halted this progress, some development continued under federal programs, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The 1960s and 1970s marked another significant phase of growth, with the addition of more parks, the construction of new facilities, and increased administrative oversight through the newly established Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Over the past several years, through the governor's commitment and support and the

commissioner's resourceful oversight, the system, which now contains 170 parks and thirty-five historic sites, has experienced a new era of expansion. Since 1995, the state has acquired hundreds of thousands of acres of land and opened twenty new state parks. Recent acquisitions include the 1,067-acre Robert G. Wehle State Park on Lake Ontario in Jefferson County, Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion State Historic Park in Canandaigua, and the expansion of the 13,300-acre Clarence M. Fahnestock Memorial State Park in Putnam County. These new properties preserve valuable open spaces, increasing and enhancing the system's wide array of scenic, historic, and recreational resources.



The rugged shoreline along Robert G. Wehle State Park on Lake Ontario.

Robert B. Mackay, Ph.D.

Chairman

New York State Board for Historic Preservation

State and National Registers

Recent Listings

ALBANY COUNTY

Albany:

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Stephen and Harriet Myers
House

Coeymans: Cornelius and

Agnietje Van derzee House

BRONX COUNTY

Bronx:

242nd Street–Van Cortlandt
Park Subway Station
Westchester Square Subway
Station
Pelham Parkway Subway Station

BROOME COUNTY

Binghamton: General Edward F.

Jones House

CAYUGA COUNTY

Auburn: Willard Memorial

Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall
(NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARK)

Meridian: William Smith Ingham
House**New Hope vicinity:** New Hope

Mills Complex

Union Springs:

Almeron Durkee House
Charles Howland–William H.
Chase House

Union Springs vicinity: William

Richardson House

CHEMUNG COUNTY

Elmira: Woodlawn Cemetery and

Woodlawn National Cemetery

CLINTON COUNTY

Rouses Point: Rouses Point

Railroad Station

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Hudson vicinity: Henry A. and

Evalina Dubois House

Snyderville: William and Victoria

Pulver House

DELAWARE COUNTY

Downsville: Union Free School**East Branch:** Hotel Delaware

DUTCHESS COUNTY

Amenia Union: St. Thomas'

Episcopal Church

Beacon: Beacon Engine Company

No. 1 Firehouse

ERIE COUNTY

Buffalo: School 13

ESSEX COUNTY

Lewis: First Congregational

Church and Cemetery

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Bellmont: First Union Protestant

Church of Mountain View

Santa Clara: St. Regis Mountain

Fire Observation Station

GENESEE COUNTY

Batavia: First Presbyterian

Church

GREENE COUNTY

Oak Hill: The Parsonage

HAMILTON COUNTY

Long Lake: St. William's Catholic

Church

HERKIMER COUNTY

Dolgeville: Breckwoldt–Ward

House

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Carthage: First Baptist Church

and Cook Memorial Building

KINGS COUNTY

Brooklyn: Pratt Institute Historic

District

LIVINGSTON COUNTY

Avon:

First Methodist Episcopal
Church of Avon

First Presbyterian Church of

Avon

Cuylerville: National Hotel

MONROE COUNTY

Rochester: Saint Mark's and Saint

John's Episcopal Church

Scottsville: Union Presbyterian

Church

Webster: George G. Mason House

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Amsterdam: Green Hill Cemetery**Stone Arabia:** Trinity Lutheran

Church and Cemetery

NASSAU COUNTY

Carle Place: St. Mary's Chapel**Long Beach:** Pauline Felix House**Syosset:** Schenck-Mann House

NEW YORK COUNTY

American Thread Building

Biltmore Theater

Building at 304 Park Avenue South

Ivey Delph Apartments

Lilac, United States Lighthouse

Tender

Look Building

Seville Hotel

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

William Schickel House

R. C. Williams Warehouse

145th Street Subway Station

168th Street Subway Station

181st Street Subway Station (IRT)

181st Street Subway Station

(IND)

190th Street Subway Station

28th Street Subway Station

86th Street Subway Station

Chambers Street Subway Station

West 28th Street Subway Station

West 4th Street Subway Station

NIAGARA COUNTY

Niagara Falls:

Jefferson Apartment Building

Town of Niagara District

School No. 2

ONTARIO COUNTY

East Bloomfield: George and

Addison Wheeler House

Phelps: Philetus Swift House

ORANGE COUNTY

Goshen: Everett–Bradner House**Montgomery:** Montgomery

Water Works Building

Montgomery vicinity: Colden

Family Cemetery

Pine Bush: Taylor–Corwin

House

Pine Bush vicinity: Andrew

Thompson Farmstead

OSWEGO COUNTY

Hastings vicinity: Carley's Mills

Schoolhouse

Oswego: Oswego City Library

(Additional Documentation

Approved)

QUEENS COUNTY

45th Road–Court House Square

Subway Station

Listings cont.

RICHMOND COUNTY

Staten Island: Reformed Church on Staten Island

ROCKLAND COUNTY

New City: H. R. Stevens House

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY

Clare: Clare Town Hall
Heuvelton: Pickens Hall

SARATOGA COUNTY

Schuylerville: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

SENECA COUNTY

Waterloo: United Methodist Church

STEBEN COUNTY

Bath: George W. Hallock House
Campbell vicinity: Wood Road Metal Truss Bridge

SUFFOLK COUNTY

Bridgehampton: Nathaniel Rogers House
Port Jefferson: Port Jefferson Village Historic District
Southold: Henry W. Prince Building
Town Doctors' House Site
Wainscott: Thomas Strong House

SULLIVAN COUNTY

Cochecton vicinity: Cochecton Railroad Station
Ferndale: Ferndale School
Grahamsville: C. Burton Hotel

TOMPKINS COUNTY

Ithaca: Ithaca Downtown Historic District
Slaterville Springs: District No. 2 School
Speedsville: District No. 7 School

ULSTER COUNTY

Kingston: Frank A. Palen House
Marlboro vicinity: Chapel Hill Bible Church

Village of Ellenville: George and John R. Hunt Memorial Building

WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Peekskill: Peekskill Freight Depot
Somers: Elephant Hotel (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK)
South Salem: Osborn-Bouton-Mead House

YATES COUNTY

Dundee: Dundee Methodist Church

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in partnership with the Fulton-Montgomery Community College, Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor, and Mohawk Valley historic sites will cosponsor a two-day symposium at the community college entitled "The Western Frontier: Plantation Society in Colonial New York 1750-1775" on November 19-20, 2005. Staff at Herkimer Home, Johnson Hall, and Schuylerville State Historic Sites are hosting the event with their local non-profit colleagues. The conference will explore how the interactions between Dutch, Anglo-Irish-Scots, Palatine Germans, and Native Americans during the third quarter of the eighteenth century created a distinctive Mohawk Valley culture.

Living in the Past

This summer, the Living History Education Foundation is offering a special "hands on" learning experience that highlights several key periods in New York State history – the Iroquois, the American Revolution, and the Erie Canal. Participants will visit the Oneida Cultural Center and Ganondagan State Historic Site, tour the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and take part in a Revolutionary War encampment at Fort Stanwix, and visit the Erie Canal Village and ride on a historic canal boat.

For information, visit www.livinghistoryed.org or call (914) 739-0136.

The New York State Preservationist

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1
Albany, NY 12238-0001
www.nysparks.state.ny.us

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Newsletter Contributors: Linda Abston, Constance Barone (*Sackets Harbor State Historic Site*), Lucy Breyer, Robin Campbell, Richard Clauss, Robert Harrison, Kathleen LaFrank (*Associate Editor*), John Lovell, Dirk Marcucci (*Landmark Archaeology Inc.*), Lesley Neufeld (*Martin House Restoration Corporation*), Audrey Nieson (*Associate Editor*), Austin O'Brien (*Editor*), Vincent Simeone (*Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park*), Evelyn Trebilcock (*The Olana Partnership*), Deborah Trupin, and Edward Yetto (*Design/Production*).

Listings Highlight

Guggenheim Museum

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is one of Frank Lloyd Wright's most recognizable works, and its enormous spiral-shaped rotunda is an iconic feature in the Fifth Avenue streetscape. Completed a few months after the architect's death, the Guggenheim is also one of Wright's last commissions, his only substantial work in New York City, and one of his few executed urban designs.

The building was commissioned by philanthropist Solomon R. Guggenheim to house his collection of European Non-Objective paintings and designed and constructed between 1943 and 1959. Wright intended to create a building that would be a visible symbol of the unity of art and architecture. He conceived the museum as a complete entity and described it as "so symphonic in character that the least discord at any point echoes throughout the entire structure."

Although the site was selected and the initial construction drawings had been approved by 1945, the design process was far from complete. Over the next fourteen years, the proposed shape, color, materials, and structural system of the building changed, the size of the lot increased, the siting of the building shifted, and the building program was



View of oculus from rotunda floor.
Photography by David Heald
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View of the Guggenheim Museum looking southeast from Central Park.
Photography by David Heald © Soloman R. Guggenheim
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affected by a significant turnover in the museum administration, a change in its philosophy, and the deaths of both client and architect.

As built, the Guggenheim embodies ideas that Wright had been developing for more than sixty years into an exceptionally coherent and unified whole. The reinforced concrete building is characterized by dramatic sculptural forms and interlocking design elements. The primary component of the design, the spiral-shaped rotunda, is a single form - an enormous cantilevered coil enclosing an open well. Serving as the main gallery space, the rotunda expresses both the form and the function of the building. Seamlessly integrating program, form, structure, and materials, the Guggenheim is an outstanding illustration of Wright's principles of organic architecture.

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Life along the Maritje Kill

Just south of Hyde Park, where the Maritje Kill (or stream) winds its way through woodlands and ravines to the Hudson River, a fascinating archaeological site was recently documented on the campus of the Culinary Institute of America. The five-acre site contains an extraordinary collection of artifacts and features providing evidence of more than 3,600 years of human activity. The Maritje Kill Site was discovered when the Culinary Institute consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on a construction project to create a new residential complex on the campus. The SHPO required the archaeological survey as part of its review of the project's federal Army Corps of Engineers permit application. After an initial investigation of the site revealed evidence of significant archaeological remains, a more in-depth examination was undertaken to determine the site's eligibility for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Funded by the Culinary Institute and conducted by Landmark Archaeology, Inc., the comprehensive year-long study included detailed research and excavation of several large areas across the site. The exploration culminated in the assemblage of an extensive archaeological record of human behavior from the Late Archaic prehistoric period (c1700 BC) to the mid-twentieth century.

The Hudson River Valley, one of the country's most important transportation corridors, has offered a rich array of natural resources to the people who lived or traveled through the region since prehistoric times. The river was a reliable and abundant source of water, fish, and edible plants, and the lands along the river and its streams were desirable habitats for many of the area's earliest residents. The adjacent old Albany Post Road, which parallels the river, follows one of the region's oldest historic period north-south routes. The site's location between the river and the post road, with the Maritje Kill

running along its northern and western portions, figured prominently in its prehistoric use, early European settlement, and later historic development. Artifacts from the prehistoric period included projectile points, stone tools, and the evidence of stone tool production. This important collection was found below the historic period ground surface in areas of the site that had been limited to cultivation.

Later, during the area's early Euro-American settlement, the river offered easy access to rapidly expanding

markets associated with the

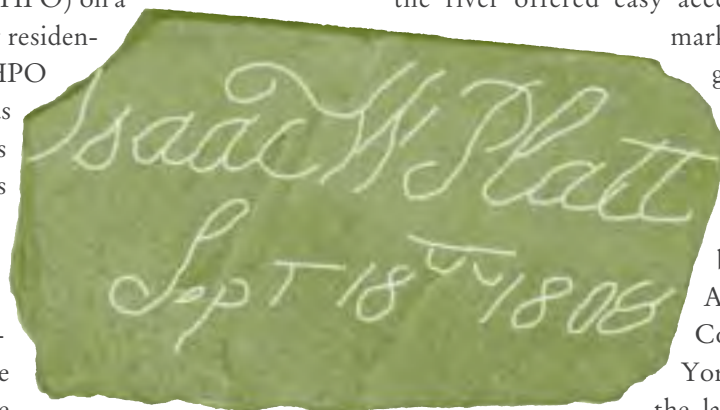
growth of New York City.

The Albany Post Road provided an additional conduit for transportation, commerce, and trade between Manhattan and Albany. After Dutchess County became one of New York's first counties in 1683, the land along the Maritje Kill

was part of Water Lot 3 of the original Nine Partners Patent, awarded in 1697.

Archaeological investigation dated the

site's earliest historic use to the 1750s. The stream's steep drop near the river made this area an ideal location for early industrial use, and research indicated that a sawmill was present on the Maritje Kill by 1774 and a gristmill by 1789. The latter was owned by Jeremiah Rogers, who was a militia officer on Long Island during the Revolutionary War. The Rogers' family cemetery, which includes the graves of Jeremiah, his son, daughter, and grandson, is located on the west side of the stream, across from the site. A large area of excavation east of the stream uncovered hundreds of artifacts from the last half of the eighteenth century, including ceramics, tobacco pipes, military objects, coins, buttons, buckles, thimbles, and the remains of various domestic animals. A piece of slate inscribed "Isaac W. Platt, Sept. 18th, 1808," was one of the most unusual items found. Platt was the middle name of Jeremiah Rogers'



This small piece of slate inscribed with Isaac W. Platt, Sept. 18th, 1808 was found in a large excavated area east of the Maritje Kill.

Photograph at top: Webendorfer Family, Hyde Park, New York, c1890s. The house, about three miles south of Hyde Park on the west side of the Albany Post Road, was demolished about 1940. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, New York.



Some of the thousands of artifacts found on the site, ranging from prehistoric projectile points to eighteenth-century house wares. Courtesy of Landmark Archaeology, Inc.

grandson, who died in 1811.

During the nineteenth century, the site changed hands several times. In the 1820s, the land was part of the estate of James Roosevelt. By the 1860s, Moses Beach had built a “comfortable Hudson River farmhouse” and constructed a series of stone terraces along the stream. During the 1890s, the Webendorfer family (who came to the area from Long Island) acquired the property and transformed the farmstead into a comfortable country estate that included a refurbished main house, barns, outbuildings, and at least one tenant house. Foundation remains of buildings believed to date to Beach’s ownership or earlier and incorporated into the Webendorfer estate were uncovered, as well as cobblestone and rock paving, a stone-lined well, and a clay-lined cistern. A hillside terrace retaining wall was also excavated near the stream, and the remains of a farm outbuilding were uncovered near the wall. Beginning in 1919 and for much of the twentieth century, the Novitiate of St. Andrews owned the estate and used the former Webendorfer house as a rest home. In 1970, the Culinary Institute purchased the property.

The Maritje Kill Site is rare in that it preserves evidence from successive historic eras; more commonly, evidence of previous eras is lost when new groups develop a site. Fortunately, as a result of the archaeological investigations and the significance of the findings, the Culinary Institute revised its project plans to preserve a larger portion of the archaeological



site. Following the excavations, the artifacts were catalogued and organized, and the data is being analyzed and assembled into a final report. This documentation, along with the physical evidence and objects associated with the site, provides a rare opportunity to study and learn about the region’s early history and later development. This important information expands our understanding of prehistoric life-ways in the Hudson River Valley and the history of rural domestic life in the region during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, helping us to envision the various people who may have lived and worked along the Maritje Kill over a long period of time.



A portion of the excavated Maritje Kill site, showing extensive mid-eighteenth-century deposits, including a stone-lined well. Courtesy of Landmark Archaeology, Inc.

Archaeology Season 2005

For more than a decade, archaeologists from across the state have worked together to raise the public’s awareness of New York’s archaeological heritage through a variety of community outreach and education efforts. This annual initiative began several years ago with the introduction of Archaeology Week, which later expanded into Archaeology Month and has been extended for the first time this year into Archaeology Season, running from May through October 2005. This year, in cooperation with the New York Archeological Council, the New York State Archaeological Association, the New York State Museum, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and other private and public partners, Archaeology Season is offering a variety of activities to increase appreciation and stewardship of New York’s archaeological resources. **For more information, please visit <http://nyarchaeology.org>.**



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