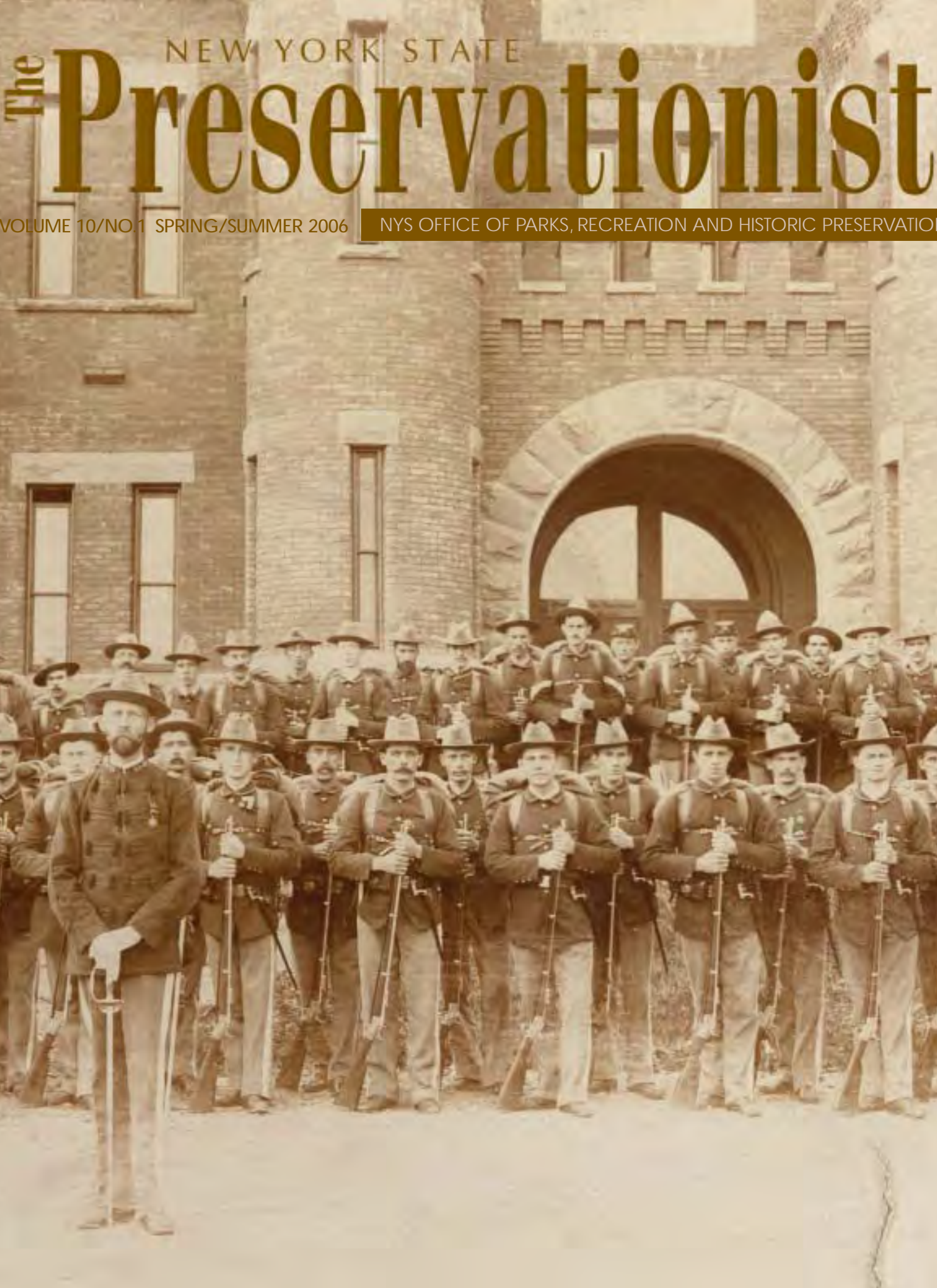


NEW YORK STATE

# The Preservationist

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NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Watertown Armory (1879), courtesy  
Library of Congress

# Power Pride Patriotism

## New York State Armories

Built to house local units of the state volunteer militia, New York's armories are perhaps some of the most prominent, tangible reminders of the role of the citizen soldier in American military history. While structures to store munitions were in use since colonial times, the armory emerged as a specific building type during the last half of the nineteenth century. Armories served not only as military headquarters, but also as clubhouses for volunteers and civic monuments designed to convey power, pride, and patriotism. The structures usually consisted of administrative offices and meeting spaces in front with an attached drill hall in the rear. Despite their formidable appearance, most armories were designed to be community centers as well as military facilities.

Armory construction in New York can be divided into three periods. From c1880 to c1900, armories were constructed when the militia defended middle and upper income residents from what were perceived as unruly throngs of striking laborers and immigrants. Many armories during this period were designed in lavish interpretations of Medieval Gothic architecture. Between c1900 and c1920, armories were designed in restrained Gothic styles and served as active military centers at a time when the United States was becoming a global power. From c1930 to c1940, armories were designed in various popular styles and were also used for community events. New York's armories remain prominent landmarks, recalling the state's military heritage and the growth of numerous communities around the state.



Officers of the Eighteenth Separate Company,  
Glens Falls, c1890s, courtesy DMNA.

# Governor's Message

As a youngster growing up in Peekskill, I thought that the armory on Washington Street was one of the most impressive landmarks in town. Built in 1932 and designed by State Architect William Haugeard, the fortress-like structure, with massive brick walls, tall windows, and an enormous drill hall, always conveyed an air of authority and permanence. Like other armories, it was not only an active center for military affairs, but also the site of large public events and social gatherings. Today, the Peekskill Armory remains a prominent local landmark, recalling the city's history and development.

New York has one of the oldest, largest, and most distinguished collections of historic armories in the country. Begun in the late eighteenth century, the state's extensive armory-building program played a key role in the expansion of our armed services and spurred economic growth in communities across the state. When these major construction projects were initiated, they involved hundreds of workers, massive amounts of building materials, and some of the state's most experienced architects and engineers. Unlike any other buildings in their communities, the armories were large, distinctive structures, skillfully combining similar plans with a variety of stylish architectural designs and details, such as imposing towers and battlements.

Today, due to changing needs and technological advancements, many of our historic armories no longer support military operations. Some of them have been sold for private redevelopment, creating distinctive venues for sports and entertainment. Others remain underused, vacant or neglected, and in need of rehabilitation. While some may view these aging monuments as lost causes, many of us consider the armories to be renewable resources full of exciting and creative possibilities.

Over the past several years, through the cooperation and hard work of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA), the armories have been inventoried, researched, and many have

been listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. I wholeheartedly support these important activities, which have heightened our appreciation of the significance of these properties and increased our awareness of the value of preserving and rejuvenating them.

I am pleased to announce that an illustrated history of New York State's historic armories is being published and will be



Utica Armory (1893-94), courtesy DMNA.

available later this year. This successful educational endeavor is another beneficial product of the OPRHP/DMNA partnership. I am confident that this book, which chronicles the architecture and history of New York's armories, will help to further our efforts to recognize and safeguard these valuable assets. By preserving our historic and cultural treasures, we have the opportunity to improve the quality and character of our communities and this great state.

George E. Pataki, Governor  
State of New York

**For more information and to order the armory book, visit [www.sunypress.edu](http://www.sunypress.edu)**



This artist's rendering of the newly opened Peekskill Armory appeared in the May 1933 issue of the *New York National Guardsman*.

## Short Takes



The c1820 Vanderpoel House and its furnishings reflect an elegant lifestyle in prosperous, early nineteenth-century Kinderhook.



Erie Canal, Rochester, NY, c1890, courtesy Erie Canal Museum.

### James D. Vanderpoel House

Located in the Kinderhook Village Historic District, which is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, the James D. Vanderpoel House is one of the finest examples of Federal style residential architecture in the area. Originally the home of prominent lawyer and politician James Vanderpoel and his family, the house, which is owned by the Columbia County Historical Society, remains largely intact and is open to the public. Thanks to the support of the Regional and Community Historic Preservation Benefit Plan,\* the house's original wood windows have been restored. The benefit plan is also helping to fund the restoration of the Luykas Van Alen House, a rare surviving Dutch farmhouse also owned by the historical society.

*\*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.*

### Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Governor Pataki recently approved the Preservation and Management Plan for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, a federal initiative created to recognize and promote New York's historic canal system. The plan, which was also sent to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior for approval, presents strategies for advancing preservation, recreation, tourism, and redevelopment activities along the waterway. Thanks to the commitment and cooperation of the Erie Canalway Corridor Commission, staff, and numerous public and private partners, the plan skillfully assimilates the enormous amount of information collected during an extensive public outreach process involving more than 230 communities. For information, visit [www.eriecanalway.org](http://www.eriecanalway.org).

### Quadricentennial Commission Launches Website

In 2009, New York State will celebrate landmark passages in American history: the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's famous voyage of exploration aboard the Dutch ship, *Half Moon*; Samuel de Champlain's historic expedition to Lake Champlain also 400 years ago; and Robert Fulton's maiden steamship journey up the Hudson in 1807, launching a new era of travel and commerce on the river. These remarkable voyages established New York State's identity as America's gateway and its first frontier.

The Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commission was established in 2002 by Governor Pataki to plan, promote, and organize a commemoration of these historic events. The commission's new website, [ExploreNY400.com](http://ExploreNY400.com), provides a comprehensive look back at previous celebrations

and reveals the commission's vision and goals for 2009 and beyond. Among the website's highlights are the commission's Draft Strategic Plan and a link to the complete, digitized 1909 Hudson-Fulton Celebration publication. As the website continues

to evolve over the next three years, communities, organizations, and historic sites will be able to link to the website and post information about their own commemorative events, exhibits, and festivities. For more information call 1-888-HFC-2009 or e-mail: [info@exploreNY400.com](mailto:info@exploreNY400.com).



[ExploreNY400.com](http://ExploreNY400.com)

# From the Commissioner

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), the most important preservation legislation in America. The act declared preservation to be public policy of the United States and established various federal preservation programs. It created a partnership between the federal government, specifically the National Park Service, and state governments, through a network of state historic preservation offices.

The NHPA authorized the creation of the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of properties significant in our history and culture. It also created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and directed federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic and cultural resources. In 1980, the act was amended to include the Certified Local Government program, which extended the preservation partnership to localities. Also in 1980, the New York State Historic Preservation Act (NYSHPA) was created. This law established preservation as state policy, created the State Register of Historic Places, and expanded preservation environmental review to include state agencies.

The NHPA is central to all the programs and services provided by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and New York has become a national leader in advancing preservation efforts. These programs have recognized and preserved thousands of historic properties, helping to incorporate them into local improvement activities. There are more than 4,600 listings on the State and National Registers in New York, including over 86,000 properties. There has been a noticeable increase in the diversity of themes represented in the listed properties, ranging from transportation, social reform, and modern architecture to entertainment, immigration, and medicine. In addition to recognition, listing on the



**Last November, Commissioner Castro received the Governor's 2005 Parks and Preservation Award for her outstanding commitment to safeguarding and improving New York's scenic, historic, and recreational resources. The award was presented by John Cahill, Secretary to the Governor, during a gala party in New York City.**

registers provides access to preservation incentives, such as grants and tax credits.

There are more than fifty Certified Local Government (CLG) communities in New York. This program of financial and technical assistance offers communities the opportunity to preserve local historic and cultural properties. A local government can participate in this program when the SHPO certifies that the municipality has established its own historic preservation program that meets federal standards.

Specially earmarked grants encourage CLG communities to sustain preservation efforts through training and education.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of environmental review in the preservation of New York's historic and archaeological resources. Under Section 106 of the NHPA and Section 14.09 of the NYSHPA, the SHPO's role is to ensure that the effects or impacts on properties listed on or eligible for registers listing are considered and avoided or mitigated during state and federal project planning. The SHPO reviews thousands of projects each year. Initiated in 1977, the federal Investment Tax Credit program has played a significant role in furthering the goals of the NHPA, especially in New York. Each year, the tax credit program generates millions of dollars worth of private investment in rehabilitation projects.

The NHPA has made important contributions to recognizing and preserving the various resources that together represent our heritage. New York has been the beneficiary of all that the legislation has to offer, and we join our friends and colleagues in celebrating the anniversary of this remarkable landmark law.

Bernadette Castro  
Commissioner  
State Historic Preservation Officer

## ***SHPO Website Award***

*This year, the Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts presented its Technology Award to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for its website, which offers a variety of preservation information and online resources, such as electronic copies of New York's State and National Registers nominations. With Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the SHPO is also expanding its archaeological resources data and improving its assessment of visual impacts of proposed projects on historic resources through three-dimensional, digital elevation models. [www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/](http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/)*

# Letchworth State Park Celebrates 100 Years

On May 26, 2006, William Pryor Letchworth's birthday, Letchworth State Park launched the celebration of its first 100 years as a state park. To recognize this special anniversary and commemorate Letchworth's 1,000-acre gift to New York State in 1906, staff from the Genesee State Parks Region and Peebles Island Resource Center (PIRC) have undertaken a number of projects to enhance visitors' appreciation of the park's history and natural beauty.

Thanks to the assistance of Congressman Thomas Reynolds and the support of Governor Pataki and Commissioner Castro, a \$99,000 Save America's Treasures (SAT) grant was awarded in 2003 to restore two historic log structures on the park's Council Grounds, a plateau on Letchworth's estate that he set aside to commemorate Seneca history. After decades of exposure to extreme weather conditions, the pre-Revolutionary War-era Council House and the c1800 Nancy Jemison Cabin, both associated with the region's Native American heritage, had begun to deteriorate. SAT funding was used to re-roof the buildings and to purchase new logs, which were carefully hewn to replace the rotted ones using eighteenth-century tools and techniques. The grant also funded the relocation of these structures to their original nineteenth-century positions on the bluff and the replanting of a maple grove, a historic landscape feature.

Visitors to the William Pryor Letchworth Museum, rededicated this season, will see exciting new gallery installations. One gallery tells the fascinating story of William Pryor Letchworth and his contributions to industry, his community, and the people of New York State. A second gallery traces the geology and history of the Genesee Valley region and includes Native American objects

**The museum's new installation features woven containers from Letchworth's collection.**



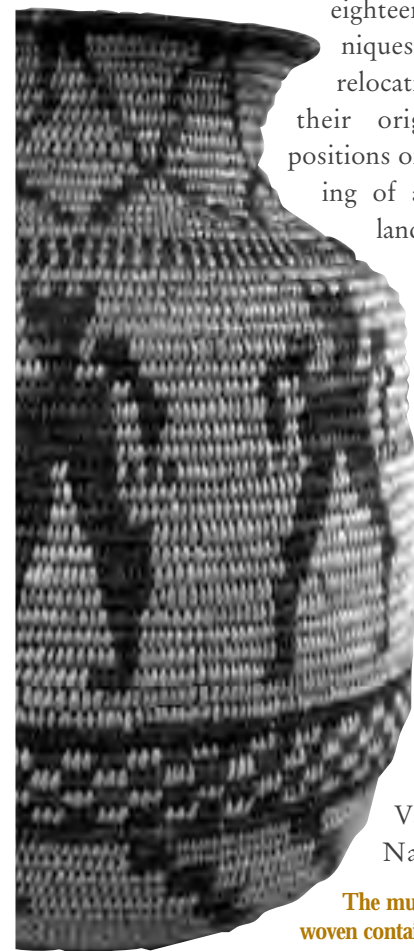
**The original installation at William Pryor Letchworth Museum, 1913.**

collected by Letchworth. Although the galleries have been updated and many artifacts are being shown for the first time, the exhibit team has been careful to preserve the historic flavor of the museum's interiors. Many of the original display cases have been reused, and the early twentieth-century lighting fixtures have been reinstalled. PIRC conservators have treated the collections; even the mastodon skull, on display since the museum first opened in 1913, has had a "face lift." A new twenty-minute video presentation highlights the park's history and recreational opportunities. To ensure that the building remains a safe and secure environment for the collections, the museum also received a new roof, drainage system, and mechanical systems.

In preparation for the 2006 visitor season, interpretive signs and orientation kiosks have been installed throughout the park, several key vistas have been restored along the main park road, and the Clan Trail, which connects the museum to the Council Grounds, has been rehabilitated. The 1910 bronze statue of Mary Jemison, designed by Henry K. Bush-Brown and located on the Council Grounds, was cleaned and covered with a protective coating. This summer, a book featuring spectacular scenic photographs of the park by Ray Minnick will be published to commemorate the park's centennial.

In his deed of gift to the State of New York in 1906, William Pryor Letchworth specified that the land "shall be forever dedicated to the purpose of a public park or reservation." Thanks to his vision and generosity, more than 750,000 annual visitors continue to enjoy the park's dramatic views and participate in a variety of educational and recreational activities.

**To learn more about the park's special centennial events and educational programming, visit [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com) or call 585-493-3600.**



# Centennial Parks

Festivities are planned this summer to commemorate the centennials of two of New York's most celebrated parks. Letchworth (see facing page) and Watkins Glen State Parks (see page 14) are among only a handful of state parks that were acquired more than a century ago. The histories of these parks provide information about New York's early conservation activities, and their acquisitions set important precedents for the state's efforts to protect scenic land and establish public recreational opportunities.

New York State's involvement with state parks stems from post-Civil War changes in demographics and land use. Earlier clear cutting of farmland combined with a lack of prudent agricultural practices to restore it, the rapid growth and decline of industries that depleted natural resources, the transition to an industrial society, and the movement of the rural population to the cities left New York with a surplus of idle and unproductive farmland, denuded forests, and an overcrowded and needy urban population.

New York State's first large-scale conservation activity, the establishment of the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves in 1885, was undertaken to protect dwindling timber resources. Although some early interest was motivated by economic rather than social needs, the state's acquisition of endangered land for protection and the acknowledgement that it should also be accessible for public recreation laid the foundation for New York's parks and conservation policies in the twentieth century.

The establishment of New York's first state park, Niagara Reservation, also in 1885, resulted from efforts of prominent architects, landscape architects, painters, politicians, and the public over many years. Although the falls were long celebrated for their spectacular beauty, conservation interests vied with those of industry, which was eager to harness the power of the falls. Efforts to protect Niagara for public enjoyment were led by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., whose influential 1879 report made an elegant and convincing case for a public park.

Valuable assistance in the preservation of both Watkins Glen and Letchworth was provided by the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society (ASHPS), founded in 1895 to protect sites of scenic and historic value. The ASHPS became a valuable caretaker of endangered properties, acquiring them, undertaking improvements, and opening them to the public in the days before state acquisition of parkland was common.

The earliest state park in eastern New York dates to 1902, when Governor Charles E. Hughes authorized recreational use of a 120-acre parcel, originally purchased as a quarantine station, on the western end of Fire Island. Even though Fire

Island State Park (now Robert Moses State Park) was for years the only substantial parcel of oceanfront land on the south shore of Long Island in the public domain, the park, originally accessible only by ferry, saw little use until a causeway was built in the 1960s.

The establishment of the St. Lawrence Reservation by the New York State Legislature in 1896 reflected an awareness that private ownership of the

"thousand islands" region of the St. Lawrence River Valley denied the public access to one of the state's most scenic locations. The hundred-mile-long reservation was planned as an international park in cooperation with the Canadian government. In 1897, a state commission received \$30,000 to purchase parkland. After careful study, the commission acquired its first parks, constructing steamboat docks on most of them immediately. These parks (now Mary's Island, Canoe-Picnic Point, Burnham's Point, Cedar Point, Cedar Island, DeWolf Point, Waterson Point, and Kring Island State Parks) were incorporated into the Thousand Islands State Parks Region when it was established in 1932. The commission's acquisition criteria considered the needs of both local residents and tourists, and its awareness of the importance of coordinating regional parks and transportation systems found its mature expression in the development of the comprehensive New York State Park and Parkway Plan in the 1920s.



**In April, the new gazebo at Canoe-Picnic Point State Park was dedicated to Sissy Danforth, who helped progress park improvements and organize fundraising efforts.**

## Behind the Scenes

Protecting the several hundred thousand artifacts that furnish New York's thirty-five state historic sites is one of this agency's top priorities. The conservators at the Peebles Island Resource Center (PIRC) in Waterford treat a large and diverse array of objects and collaborate with other PIRC preservation staff, site managers, and state parks regional



**Olana's Dining Room being prepared for systems installation.**

staff on creating safe and secure environments to ensure the long-term protection of these priceless treasures. New fire alarm and suppression systems are being installed in two of New York's most prominent state historic sites, Lorenzo, in Cazenovia, and Olana, near Hudson.

The systems at Lorenzo, the distinguished 1807 Neoclassical home of the Lincklaen/Ledyard family overlooking Cazenovia Lake, were installed earlier this year and will protect the property's extensive collection of furniture, art, decorative objects, textiles, and family books and manuscripts. The installation was carefully planned to meet applicable fire codes for historic properties, while at the same time upholding the highest preservation standards. The regional state parks staff worked closely with the installation company to minimize damage to the house's historic fabric and finishes, and the system's visible elements have been custom-painted to appear as unobtrusive as possible.

Lorenzo, which had been closed to the public for this project since last November, reopened on June 15. Over the past several months, site and PIRC staff have had the opportunity to inventory, accession, clean, and assess the condition of the mansion's collection, which includes more than 6,400 objects. The nonprofit Friends of Lorenzo hosted a gala reopening celebration on June 14.

Olana State Historic Site, the nineteenth-century Persian style villa created by Hudson River School artist Frederic Church, also closed late last year for the installation of state-of-the-art fire suppression and climate management systems, which were identified as among the highest priorities in the site's 2002 comprehensive plan. The climate management system will carefully regulate temperature and relative humidity inside the house to maintain a controlled environment suitable for museums. The installation will be completed in 2007 and is being funded by the state with major grant assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A team comprising staff from the site, The Olana Partnership, and PIRC have cleared collections from the house's attic and storage spaces to provide access for the contractors who will install the new systems. The collections are being protected on and off site, and the project has been carefully planned to minimize damage to the house's lavishly decorated interior. While the house is closed, the team will develop an expanded historic furnishing plan, which will include, for the first time, opening the first-floor kitchen and second-floor bedrooms to the public. Throughout the project period, Olana's scenic grounds will remain accessible, visitors



**PIRC conservation staff re-install paintings at Lorenzo.**

can view a new exhibit in the carriage barn, and the site will continue to offer special programs and events that feature the landscape and the site's extraordinary views of the Hudson River and Catskills.

The Lorenzo and Olana projects combine the latest building protection technologies with an exacting attention to historic preservation. These important installations demonstrate this agency's continuing commitment to safeguarding New York's state historic sites and collections for the benefit and enjoyment of millions of visitors.

# Tale of Two Villages



The Kingston Heritage Area celebrates four centuries of history through active preservation and education programs. Visitor centers, located in the Stockade and Rondout Historic Districts, offer exhibits and tours highlighting the city's past, especially its early European settlement.

Shortly after Henry Hudson's 1609 exploration of the river that bears his name, a Dutch trading post was established at the mouth of the Rondout Creek, and by the 1650s there was a settlement occupying the lowlands of the nearby Esopus Creek. Relations with the Esopus Indians were difficult, however, and in 1658 Governor Stuyvesant ordered that the village be fortified. A stockade was erected on a bluff above the floodplain, and all the houses were rebuilt within its walls. Named Wiltwyck (Dutch for "wild woods"), the village was renamed Kingston after the Anglo-Dutch wars of 1664-1674. A 1664 treaty with the Esopus Indians began a century of peace and prosperity, and Kingston became a thriving agricultural market town, shipping produce via warehouses at Rondout landing.

By the Revolutionary War, Kingston was a stable community boasting a courthouse, jail, church, and 326 houses, many constructed of local limestone. Its citizens were sympathetic to the American cause, and in 1777 the city served as capital to the state's first non-colonial government, hosting a Constitutional Convention, meetings of the Senate and Assembly, and the swearing in of Governor George Clinton. On October 16, 1777, British troops burned the village in reprisal for its hospitality to the revolutionaries. One stone house and the shells of many others survived the fire, however, and with support from Whigs statewide, the community was quickly

rebuilt. Today's Stockade Historic District retains its colonial-era street pattern and several early stone houses.

Following the war, Kingston thrived as a governmental and market center, while a bustling shipping trade developed on the Hudson riverfront. With the



**Historic image of Kingston City Hall from *Picturesque Ulster*, published 1896.**

opening in 1828 of the Delaware and Hudson Canal, built to connect the Pennsylvania coal fields to the Hudson, the community burgeoned. Ferry service, railroads, and turnpikes added to the traffic, and warehouses, shipyards, and dry docks flourished, attracting immigrants from Germany, Ireland, Canada, and the South. In 1849, the port incorporated as the village

**Above: The former machine shop for the Cornell Steamboat Company is being revived as a center for historic vessel repair and education.**

of Rondout, with a population of over 5,000. In 1876, the villages of Kingston and Rondout merged to form the city of Kingston, which built a High Victorian Gothic style city hall on Broadway, halfway between the two villages.

As rails and roads improved, the canal closed, river traffic declined, and companies like the Cornell Steamboat Company, one of the most important tugboat operators in the Northeast, disappeared. Although urban renewal eliminated much of Kingston's early fabric, significant historic districts were preserved. The city embraced the Urban Cultural Park (now Heritage Area) program as a means to revitalize the community, especially waterfront areas at Rondout and Kingston Point. The Rondout Visitor Center became the anchor of a redevelopment effort that attracted millions of dollars of public and private investment. Today, tourists are attracted to the area's museums, parks, restaurants, and shops. A second visitor center, open seasonally in the Stockade area, introduces visitors to the community's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture. Signage, parks, and infrastructure improvements and preservation of such landmarks as the Kingston City Hall, Ulster County Courthouse, Rondout Lighthouse, Broadway Theater, and the Old Dutch Church have made Kingston one of the region's top heritage destinations.

## ***Living History Education Foundation***

*This summer, the Living History Education Foundation is sponsoring a series of learning experiences at Fort Ticonderoga, which played an important role in the Revolutionary and French and Indian Wars. Participants will study eighteenth-century life in North America and the social, military, economic, and cultural factors that helped to shape the history of New York, the United States, and Canada. For information, visit [www.livinghistoryed.org](http://www.livinghistoryed.org).*

# The Carneys of Cornell's Farm

More than 150 years ago, Christopher and Catharine Carney left poverty-stricken Ireland in search of a better life in America. The Great Famine had a devastating effect on Ireland during the mid-nineteenth century. Hundreds of thousands of people died of hunger and millions more emigrated to Great Britain, Australia, and North America to escape the catastrophe. The Carneys settled in the thriving central New York village of Ithaca, where they proceeded to raise a family. In Ithaca, Christopher found occasional employment on the farm of Ezra Cornell, one of the founders of Cornell University.

Over time, Christopher became a salaried farmhand entrusted with extra responsibilities. While history has recorded much about the lives of Cornell University's founders, the record has been silent about the people who worked on Cornell's estate—until an archaeological project made them visible once again.

In 2001, the Public Archaeology Facility (PAF) at Binghamton University (SUNY) was hired by Trowbridge and Wolf Landscape Architects and



Cornell University to survey a parcel of land included on a site slated for construction of residence halls and parking. Archaeological testing identified artifacts associated with a structure marked on an 1866 map as "E.C." Documentary research found that the land was owned by Ezra Cornell but occupied by the Carney family. Further excavation produced thousands of artifacts associated with the Carneys' everyday lives on the Cornell estate. The site was declared eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and PAF conducted extensive excavation,

research, and analysis to mitigate future adverse impacts to the significant site. The results of this study provided a rare glimpse of a working-class, immigrant family that contributed to the well-being of its more prestigious neighbors. The study revealed aspects of the Carney family's daily lives, aspirations, and achievements.



The Carneys' relationship to the Cornell family was documented only in the private ledgers and diaries of Ezra Cornell and his son, Franklin. These records detailed the salaries earned by various farmhands, including Christopher, and later, his son, Michael. The Cornells also kept rent records but the

Carney house was not included. Instead, Franklin's fleeting mention of the "Chris Carney Farm" in a diary suggests that the Carneys were living on the Cornell farm in a state of semi-independence. Such an arrangement may be interpreted as an example of Ezra Cornell's well-deserved reputation for philanthropy towards "those in humble stations." Alternatively, free housing may have been a benefit offered to Christopher Carney because he was a trusted employee.

While the Carneys' ethnic affiliation was documented in census records, aspects of their cultural heritage were revealed in the archaeological record. A clay pipe stamped with an Irish insignia may indicate that Christopher was proud of his roots, while a flask decorated with an American eagle possibly demonstrated the family's pride in its new homeland. A more direct expression of the family's heritage was found in the spatial composition of the site. Careful analysis of artifact distribution, soil composition, and botanical remains revealed that the Carneys were raising pigs in a byre situated adjacent to their house. This practice was typical of nineteenth-century Irish tenant farmers, whose definition of "home" included space for their valued livestock. This assessment was supported by the discovery of a

**Images on this page include: an 1882 Bird's Eye View of Ithaca (with the Cornell/Carney farmhouse at the bottom), and clothing accessories and a transfer-printed mug found on the site.**



Redware cuspidor found on site.

pig-butcherer station elsewhere on the house lot. Archaeological evidence indicated that the Carneys also kept chickens, and Franklin Cornell's diary mentioned a garden.

The artifact assemblage suggested that the Carneys enjoyed a higher standard of living than many laboring families, and a lifestyle far better than that of their impoverished brethren in Ireland. Christopher had an engraved brass snuffbox and a redware cuspidor. The latter was part of a craft kit designed to allow Victorian ladies the opportunity to display their artistic talents and was probably painted by Catharine or one of her daughters. The broken remains of fancy ceramic and glass dishes indicated that Catharine was able to set a decorative table, though many of the pieces did not match or were out of date. She also wore decorative clothing accessories, such as embellished garter supports. In her spare time she embroidered—another genteel feminine pastime. Only the eldest Carney child, Michael, worked for the Cornell family, in contrast to the many Irish immigrant children of other families who were obliged to work for wages. Instead, the Carney children enjoyed marbles, dolls, and toy teawares. The recovery of slate pencils and ink wells suggests that they also attended school.

The Cornell household may have been the source of some of the delicacies enjoyed by the Carney family. For example, examination of butchered animal bones showed that the Carneys consumed cuts of beef that would have been prohibitively expensive to the average laboring family. However, Christopher's

salary was occasionally paid in goods, including fuel and food. On one payday he received more than ninety pounds of beef, which the archaeological record suggests included choice cuts such as sirloin. Some of the items recovered from the site may have been hand-me-downs from the Cornell household. This would explain the “out-of-date” transfer-printed dishes or the fancy brass snuffbox. Interestingly, the site yielded a transfer-printed mug that may have been a souvenir. The mug is decorated with the legend “Octagon Building” and appears to represent the gate of an agricultural or zoological exposition. Ezra Cornell was a gentleman farmer and avid agriculturalist, so he may have purchased the souvenir and given to a member of the Carney family.

The greatest luxury of all was not apparent in the archaeological record. Home ownership was something denied to generations of Irish farmers in their own country, and it continued to be unattainable for the impoverished victims of anti-immigrant prejudice in the United States. After twenty years of hard work and Cornell generosity, the Carneys were able to purchase their own home. The last evidence of the family's

upward mobility can be seen in the local Irish-Catholic cemetery, where the Carney family's plot is marked by two




Carney family gravestone.

large gravestones. The life story of Ezra Cornell will never be forgotten, but the artifacts and documents of the E. Cornell Site remind us that “those in humble stations” also have stories to contribute to our regional heritage.

## BATTERY PARK DISCOVERY

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a series of defense works were built at the southern tip of Manhattan in the vicinity of present-day Battery Park. The remains of stone walls believed to be associated with these early fortifications were recently discovered in the park during the construction of the new South Ferry subway station. Through environmental review, the State Historic Preservation Office has been providing technical assistance to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the City of New York in an effort to document the site, which is being carefully investigated before work on the station continues. For more information, visit: [www.mta.info/capconstr/sft/archaeology.htm](http://www.mta.info/capconstr/sft/archaeology.htm).





Artist's rendering of Fort Niagara's new visitor center.

# Visitors Welcome

## Old Fort Niagara Visitor Center

With annual attendance averaging 85,000 visitors, Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site in Youngstown, administered by the non-profit Old Fort Niagara Site Association on behalf of New York State, has long recognized the need for a visitor center. Fortunately, a building ideally sited and suited for adaptive use as a visitor center stands adjacent to the entrance and visitor parking area. Building #102, a 10,000-square-foot structure built in the 1930s to serve as an U.S. Army commissary warehouse, has been transformed into a new facility that showcases the site's extensive collections. The \$7 million project combined public and private funding, including grants from the Baird, Griggs-Lewis, Oishei, and Margaret Wendt Foundations.

Scheduled to open in June, the center will feature permanent and changing exhibits; a theater/auditorium; year-round family, group tour, and school programs; and a community meeting space. The centerpiece of the facility's new installation will be the fort's original War of 1812 flag, measuring 24 feet by 28 feet.

While project architect Foit-Albert Associates and exhibit design and fabrication firm Hadley Design Inc. have worked closely with the Old Fort Niagara Association and State Parks staff to ensure the success of this undertaking,

special recognition must go to the association's leadership for its fund-raising efforts, without which this new center would not have been possible.

## Hoffman Visitor Center and Long Island State Parks Archive Center

After a multi-year renovation, Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park's "Hay Barn," the principal farm building at the former Oyster Bay estate of William R. Coe, will open later this year as the park's new visitor center. Designed by New York City architects Walker & Gillette and constructed in 1916, the H-shaped structure originally housed livestock, grain storage, wagons, a carpenter's shop, and living quarters for

library and herbarium (collection of dried plant specimens) and provided a space for interns, special meetings, and events.

The structure's current renovations include restoration of the exterior masonry, wood trim, and fenestration; removal of SUNY-era interior alterations; replacement of mechanical systems; construction of spaces for an archive, library, and herbarium storage as well as research and administrative offices; and installation of areas for visitor reception, restrooms, café, gift shop, and orientation exhibits.

The \$8 million center, to be known as the Hoffman Visitor Center, was made possible in part by a \$1 million grant from the M.O. & M.E. Hoffman Foundation and \$2 million from the nonprofit Planting Fields Foundation and other private sources. The balance of the renovation was funded by New York State. Wondercabinet Interpretive Design, Inc. designed the center's exhibits. Renovations were planned by Ward Associates, P.C. in collaboration with facility, regional, and Peebles Island Resource Center (PIRC) staff.

The adaptive use of the Hay Barn is noteworthy not only because it creates a centralized location for visitor services, but also because the building's north wing has become the permanent home for the Long Island State Park Region's archives. The archive facility,



Rendering of the Hay Barn exhibits at Planting Fields.

farm laborers. The State University of New York (SUNY), which owned the property during the 1950s, extensively remodeled the space into a dormitory and cafeteria. The Hay Barn has most recently served as the arboretum's horticultural

conceived by Commissioner Castro to ensure the long-term preservation of the region's record of development during the Robert Moses era, will house an estimated 114,500 photographic items and 100,000 architectural and engineering drawings. The collection dates from 1926 to 1980 and documents the evolution of the Long Island's state parks and parkways. It also includes the papers of the Planting Fields Foundation and arboretum.

### Fort Montgomery Visitor Center

Fort Montgomery is situated on the west bank of the Hudson River just north of the Bear Mountain Bridge. In 1777, the fort played a critical role in the colonies' fight for independence. This October, thanks in large measure to Governor Pataki's keen interest in American history, Fort Montgomery will celebrate the grand opening of its 5,000-square-foot visitor center, designed by Palisades Interstate Parks Commission architect Sal Cuciti.

Special consideration was given to the building's setting and design. Sited to provide views downriver, the visitor center will serve as the trailhead for a network of interpretive trails that highlight the site's archaeological features and points of military engagement. The new center continues the region's long tradition of architectural design that is sympathetic to its natural surroundings, placing an emphasis on native stone and wood building materials.

The building will provide space for exhibits, school and adult group activities, restrooms, gift sales, and administrative offices. Permanent exhibits, featuring the site's extensive archaeological collection, are being researched, designed, and executed by site and PIRC staff. A forty-eight-square-foot model of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, rendered in exquisite detail by Albany artist Jeff Brower, will be a focal point of the installation. Two smaller models, created in a larger scale, will depict the Grand Battery and North Redoubt, archaeological features still visible at the fort today. Boston Productions, Inc. is creating an engaging, ten-minute video presentation about the 1777 battle, focusing on the climactic events that culminated in the destruction of the forts. Together, these exhibit elements tell the story of the fort's strategic role during the American Revolution, within the context of the Hudson Valley.



Fort Montgomery's new visitor center.

### National Purple Heart Hall of Honor

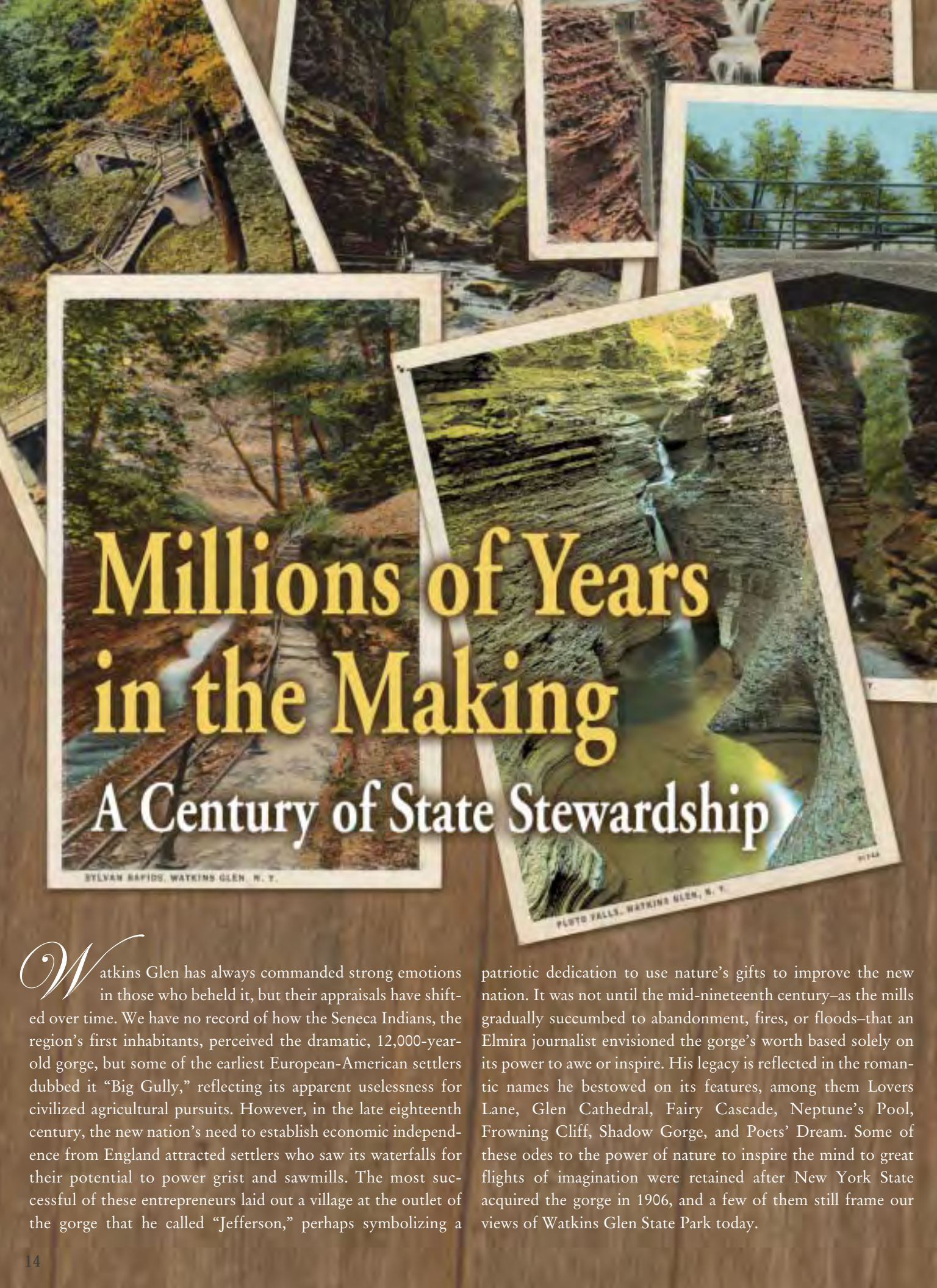
Established at New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site and endorsed by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the United States Congress, the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor will commemorate the extraordinary sacrifices of American men and women killed or wounded in service to our nation. Sited in the Hudson Valley, where General Washington was headquartered and first awarded the Badge of Military Merit, the predecessor to the Purple Heart, the Hall of Honor will present some of the tens of thousands of veterans' stories from our country's various military campaigns.

With generous support from Congress, New York State, the Military Order, and the private sector, the Hall of Honor will be housed in a new 7,500-square-foot facility designed by the Albany firm Einhorn, Yaffee & Prescott, with exhibits developed by Vincent Ciulla Design. Constructed at an estimated cost of \$6.3 million, the Hall of Honor will introduce a timeline of the Purple Heart and our country's military conflicts; video presentations in which Purple Heart recipients share their personal stories; a Roll of Honor database and archive to which individuals can add their own Purple Heart information; and a documentary film, *Freedom Isn't Free-The Story of the Purple Heart*, produced by ABC. The new facility will also include a video recording studio and ceremonial grounds, which will provide a place for contemplation and special events in remembrance of those who have given so much for our country. The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is scheduled to open to the public this fall.

*For more information about the Hall of Honor and dates and plans regarding all of these exciting new visitor facilities visit our website at [www.nysparks@state.ny.us](mailto:www.nysparks@state.ny.us)*



This new facility will be home to the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor.



# Millions of Years in the Making

## A Century of State Stewardship

SYLVAN RAPIDS, WATKINS GLEN, N. Y.

PEUDO FALLS, WATKINS GLEN, N. Y.

Watkins Glen has always commanded strong emotions in those who beheld it, but their appraisals have shifted over time. We have no record of how the Seneca Indians, the region's first inhabitants, perceived the dramatic, 12,000-year-old gorge, but some of the earliest European-American settlers dubbed it "Big Gully," reflecting its apparent uselessness for civilized agricultural pursuits. However, in the late eighteenth century, the new nation's need to establish economic independence from England attracted settlers who saw its waterfalls for their potential to power grist and sawmills. The most successful of these entrepreneurs laid out a village at the outlet of the gorge that he called "Jefferson," perhaps symbolizing a

patriotic dedication to use nature's gifts to improve the new nation. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century—as the mills gradually succumbed to abandonment, fires, or floods—that an Elmira journalist envisioned the gorge's worth based solely on its power to awe or inspire. His legacy is reflected in the romantic names he bestowed on its features, among them Lovers Lane, Glen Cathedral, Fairy Cascade, Neptune's Pool, Frowning Cliff, Shadow Gorge, and Poets' Dream. Some of these odes to the power of nature to inspire the mind to great flights of imagination were retained after New York State acquired the gorge in 1906, and a few of them still frame our views of Watkins Glen State Park today.

Watkins Glen is among the state's most scenic landscapes. Located in the heart of the Finger Lakes region, the glen encompasses the eastern end of a seven-mile-long creek that drains into Seneca Lake. Now called Glen Creek, the stream's erratic course down a steep hillside was altered by the action of melting glaciers over millions of years. While the most obvious product of glacial action is the eleven scoured-out, north-south valleys now filled by the Finger Lakes, the region's characteristic deep gorges and dramatic waterfalls are the result of streams left "hanging" above the water level of the lakes to complete their descent via steep falls. The action of these debris-filled torrents gouged narrow chasms hundreds of feet deep, while slight shifts in direction left old gorges buried and began the corrosive process again in a new location<sup>1</sup>.

Although Watkins Glen can be defined as a deep, narrow ravine, this deceptively simple term fails to acknowledge the riot of movement, sound, and texture that characterizes the environment within the glen, which takes in a series of stepped gorges marked by waterfalls, cascades and swirling pools, deep chasms and towering crags, and variegated layers of textured rock walls graced with ferns, moss, and wildflowers. The state park has two principal sections. East of the New York Central railroad tracks, the stream winds through 1.5 miles of the steepest and most dramatic rock

cuts, while west of the railroad, the creek follows a gentler slope through a wider, forested valley, traversing a section of older gorge that was later reburied. Although the natural history of the glen is a complicated and fascinating subject, it is the intersection of human and natural forces that defines the character of the park as a historic resource and a

*I played in that glen when I was a lad  
And the only redeemin' feature it had,  
Was the water it furnished for runnin' two mills,  
That were driven by cumbersome overshot wheels  
In the valley below; though I understand's how  
They charge half a dollar for seein' it now.*

George W. Slawson, 1896

recreational experience. The recorded history of the park began long after the last glaciers receded. The first known European-American

Finger Lakes region, destroying Iroquois Indian settlements in retribution for their support of the British. The soldiers were impressed with the area's soils and timber, and many returned after the war to claim farms as their reward for military service. The arduous tasks involved in domesticating the wilderness may have predisposed early settlers to dismiss the "Big Gully" as another obstacle to the pastoral landscape that they envisioned.

Settlement of the area began in the 1790s, and in 1794 New York State sold 350,000 acres near the head of the lake to John Watkins and Royal Flint, investors from New York City. John Watkins developed wharves for a shipping business, and his brother Charles built a mill and blacksmith shop in the gorge; however, it was another brother, Dr. Samuel Watkins, whose contributions are



**The mill at Watkins Glen, c1868, courtesy Finger Lakes State Parks Region.**

impressions of the region were those of Revolutionary War soldiers under generals Clinton and Sullivan who ravaged the

recalled today in the name of the park and the village. Samuel Watkins (1771-1851), who inherited 25,000 acres from his brothers, arrived in the area in 1828. The younger Watkins was the area's first important developer, laying out the

1. Much of the information about the park's geology and history was derived from Anthony Draper Ingraham, "A Walk through Watkins Glen, Water's Sculpture in Stone: An Interpretative Guide to the Natural and Cultural History of Watkins Glen State Park, New York," Thesis, State University of New York, Empire State College, December 2004.

village, starting a bank, building a hotel, dwellings, and stores, and renaming the village (then Salubria) Jefferson in 1842. Watkins also built the largest and most important mill—in the area of the park now called the amphitheater—near the entrance to the gorge. There were other mills in the middle and upper reaches of the gorge as well as two dams. This network of industrial developments precipitated construction of the first informal system of walkways and wooden bridges through the gorge to accommodate mill workers. Decades later, the first tourists entered the glen following these same narrow and irregular paths.

after Watkins died in 1851. His widow, Cynthia A. Cass, married Judge George C. Freer, who inherited the gorge property after Cass's death. Freer was instrumental both in preserving the memory of Watkins's public service and in

industrial landscape of the mill creek as a romantic adventure and transforming the village into a tourist destination. Morvalden Ells was a Connecticut native and Elmira journalist. He relocated to Watkins Glen in the 1850s, writing for the local newspaper and working (with Freer) to designate the village as county seat. Ells was enchanted by the glen and spent long hours exploring its secrets. He was the first to argue that the gorge could compete with Niagara Falls, and he persuaded Greer to

*I have often reflected upon the insignificance of man, but never so fully realized what a mere atom I was in this incomprehensible universe, as when standing in this vast cathedral and looking up at its towering walls.*

Morvalden Ells, 1886

continuing it. He helped to obtain a new village charter and to secure the village's designation as county seat; he organized a bank, donated land for civic buildings,

open it to the public. Ells worked to improve the physical experience of the glen, stabilizing existing walks and paths and extending the old mill paths further into the glen; but he devoted perhaps more energy to improving its image, bestowing fanciful and impressionistic names on every twist and turn, and writing voluminous descriptive guides that were widely published in newspapers and magazines. Where geologists observed the outcome of natural processes, Ells saw the dreams of poets and artists, cathedrals and baptismal fonts, and pillars of beauty and frowning cliffs. His imaginative descriptions enthralled both tourists and railroad and steamboat companies, who began to promote recreational travel to the village.

On July 4, 1863, "Freer's Glen" opened to the public. Ells's plans to "[unseal] the mysterious 'book of nature'" succeeded to spectacular effect, drawing 8,000-10,000 visitors the first season.<sup>2</sup> Ells managed the glen for seven years, preparing additional



Historic view of Watkins Glen showing paths, stairs, and bridge from the *Sixteenth Annual Report, 1911, American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society*.

Between the 1850s and the early twentieth century, there was still an active community in the western part of the gorge (White's Hollow), and fragments of industrial resources survived in the east. However, the glen began its transformation into a public reservation

and campaigned successfully to rename the village "Watkins" to honor his predecessor.

Although it was Freer who opened the glen to tourists, it was a newcomer to the area who was responsible for redefining the hazardous trip through the

2. Morvalden Ells, quoted by A.J. Michener, ed., in Morvalden Ells, *Descriptive Guide Book of the Watkins Glenn: Near Village of Watkins-Head of Seneca Lake, Schuyler County, N.Y.* 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Press of American Printing House, c1886, 6.

guides, building more infrastructure, and constructing a small rest house. As the local economy evolved to serve visitors, numerous hotels were built in and around the village.

After the Ells era, Watkins Glen was leased or sold as a concession. In the 1870s the Glen Mountain House was constructed in the glen. The complex eventually included a large hotel, annex, amusement hall, dining hall, excursionists' pavilion, photography gallery, barn, and ice house. A metal suspension bridge spanned the gorge, providing access to a small Swiss chalet on the other side, where hotel guests dined. Only the 1872 bridge and a small lily pond near the hotel site survive to recall this once popular resort.

The first attempts to place the glen under public ownership began about 1899, when a local newspaper reported that the mayor of Watkins had requested that New York State place the glen under state management as a reservation. The article contended that the glen was a national attraction equal to Niagara Falls and should also be freely accessible to the public.

In 1906, this hope was realized when New York State purchased 103 acres for \$46,000. The legislation "forever reserved [the glen] as a state park for the purpose of preserving it in its natural condition..."<sup>3</sup> The American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society (ASHPS), which facilitated the sale, administered the new state park, the first in the Finger Lakes region. The ASHPS commenced substantial "improvements" in the eastern half of the park, prioritizing those that enhanced safety and visual harmony. Its first goal was to dismantle the gorge's dangerous and haphazard circulation system. Working primarily with a New York City architect (John V. Van Pelt), paths were widened and graded; cast-iron safety railings modeled after those used at Niagara Falls were installed; retaining walls were built; reinforced concrete and/or iron stairs and bridges replaced wooden ones; and tunnels were excavated through solid rock, and enclosed stairs were built within them to provide transport between levels. New construction was tied into the gorge with steel rods for extra strength. Many of these dangerous construction projects involved boring and blasting rock and were undertaken in places where there was no firm footing. Workers and materials were lowered from the top in slings. The ASHPS prided its work on harmonizing with the "natural" character of the gorge. Concrete was made by mixing aggregate with broken stone from the bottom of glen. Molds were removed before the concrete had set and the outside was scraped off with a stiff brush to leave a rough surface similar in color to the glen rock. Some reinforced concrete was faced in stone and/or covered with gravel to suggest a more natural appearance.

3. Chapter 676, Laws of 1906.



Photograph taken by A. Ingraham at the Watkins Glen Public Library.

## ➔ Captain James Hope ↵

While Morvalden Ells dazzled prospective visitors with verbal images of Watkins Glen, Captain James Hope captured the romance of the site in paintings. Hope (1818-1892), a native of Scotland and a Civil War veteran, won fame for his large and meticulous depictions of the war, particularly a series of scenes from the Battle of Antietam. In 1871, Hope, by then a renowned New York City artist, received a \$10,000 commission to paint the glen's Rainbow Falls. His 6' by 8' study, *Rainbow Falls*, 1871 (shown above), is one of his most famous works. So taken was the artist by Watkins Glen that he moved there, established a studio and a gallery on the north side of glen, and spent the remainder of his life painting it. Hope, who became a friend of Ells, may have also helped to develop the glen's picturesque nomenclature. Some of Hope's paintings were exhibited in the New York State Building at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. After Hope's death in 1892, his gallery was moved to a location near the main entrance. When the gallery was lost in the 1935 flood, much of his work was damaged or destroyed. Hope's son, James Douglas Hope (1846-1929), was a successful photographer who sold stereo photographs of the glen.

The ASHPS also removed built features that it judged to be unsightly or that obscured natural views and vistas, and by 1910 almost all the evidence of the gorge's industrial and resort history was gone. The society undertook conservation work, such as reforestation to prevent erosion, and scaled off loose rocks from the surface of the gorge to enhance public safety (a practice that continues today). The ASHPS constructed only one substantial building, a concrete pavilion with a decorative tile frieze and roof, near the entrance.

In 1911, ASHPS lost control of the glen to the governor-appointed Watkins Glen State Park Commission after a dispute with state legislators over hiring practices. Politics appeared to play a role, as both the ASHPS and the legislators accused each other of partisanship. The society's report summarizing the history of its involvement with the glen reflected its bitterness at having been dismissed just after completing substantive work to make the glen accessible to the public.

By the time the New York State comprehensive state park plan was approved by voters in 1924, the Finger Lakes region boasted two state parks: Watkins Glen and Enfield Falls, near Ithaca, a 1920 gift from Robert H. Treman. The new plan created the Finger Lakes State Park Commission (FLSPC) to administer these and other proposed parks, including Buttermilk Falls, Taughannock Falls, and Fillmore Glen.

The state park plan balanced conservation and recreation, calling for acquisition of the state's most scenic areas for preservation and the development of efficient transportation connections between parks and

## White's Hollow Camp

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide employment and training to young men during the Depression. More than three million participated, many working on state and federal park projects throughout the country. In New York, state and federal emergency relief programs enabled continued development of the 1920s park plan. The two hundred men who reported to Watkins Glen to form White's Hollow Camp in 1935 probably expected to build roads and infrastructure as CCC workers were doing in other New York state parks; however, the devastating flood of July 7th immediately re-cast them as rescue workers. They subsequently engaged in an extensive cleanup before commencing the larger task of rebuilding the entire infrastructure of the park, including roads, paths, bridges, buildings, structures, and stone walls. Crews also undertook clearing, fire prevention, reforestation, planting, grading, seeding, and construction of two new reinforced concrete dams to create White's Hollow and Punch Bowl Lakes. The CCC

program was phased out with the onset of World War II, which drained both workers and funding, and the camp closed in 1941.

White's Hollow Camp, built by enrollees, included a dining hall/kitchen, infirmary, recreation hall, education building, barracks, officer's quarters, showers, and storage. Simple wood-frame buildings had gable roofs and board and batten siding. Buildings were laid out around a circular drive and connected by an oval path.

In 1945, local 4-H leaders requested use of the buildings for a youth camp. The Schuyler County Cooperative Extension Service assumed maintenance responsibilities, and Hidden Valley 4-H Camp opened in 1946; it remains in operation. The dining hall, infirmary, portions of two barracks, and the path and flagpole survive from the CCC era. Although the CCC's legacy in New York's state parks is extensive, its encampments were intended to be temporary and most were dismantled after the program ended. The Watkins Glen complex is the only intact CCC camp in the Finger Lakes region.<sup>4</sup>



CCC workers excavating stone at a quarry in Montour Falls for Watkins Glen State Park, courtesy Schuyler County Historical Society.

4. Information on White's Hollow Camp from Elise Johnson-Schmidt (architect), report to Jeff McDonald (FLSPC), June 24, 2002.

urban areas. Unlike other regions, however, which planned extensive parkways, the FLSPC's plan incorporated existing improved state highways into its regional transportation system by designating them as park highways. One formal parkway was proposed to connect Taughannock Falls and Ithaca; however, it was never completed.

The new commission began park development in the region almost immediately, favoring new construction in Enfield Falls (later Robert H. Treman State Park) over Watkins Glen, which already had extensive facilities constructed by the ASHPS. Nevertheless, the commission installed picnic tables, fireplaces, and comfort stations in Watkins Glen State Park (WGSP), extended trails, and constructed a reinforced concrete dam. The FLSPC also planned to enlarge the park, by then approximately 300 acres in size. A new entrance was built on the north rim, near the railroad trestle, along with a picnic shelter, snack bar, and parking area. In 1927, another new entrance, marked by a stone pavilion, was developed on the south side of the park. As in other regions, state funds for park development disappeared with the onset of the Depression; however, the FLSPC secured funding from the state Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA) followed by federal assistance through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In 1934, four CCC camps, one located in WGSP, were established in the region.

The future of Watkins Glen changed dramatically on July 7, 1935, when a powerful storm unleashed catastrophic floods throughout the region. Once more rushing water redefined the landscape of the gorge, washing out virtually all of the stone, concrete, and iron improvements made by the ASHPS and causing extensive damage to the natural environment. The flood uprooted trees, caused extensive erosion, changed the course of streams, collapsed the railroad trestle, and took out roads and highways. The damage was so great that the park was closed for the rest of the season.

Over the next few years, the park was substantially restored, primarily by CCC workers, later assisted by workers funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). TERA funds were available for emergency cleanup and repairs, and in 1936 the state legislature appropriated \$100,000 for the three regional parks that suffered the most damage (WGSP, Enfield Glen, and Taughannock Falls). WGSP later received two supplemental legislative grants.

Although Watkins Glen reopened in 1936, reconstruction was not completed until 1939. By then, some considered the flood a

blessing in disguise. To park designers of the 1930s, the ASHPS's well-meaning attempt to design park features that were both harmonious and sturdy was a disappointment on both counts. The concrete stairs and metal railings looked conspicuous in the gorge, and they had proven powerless against the forces of nature. Park planners in this era favored a more naturalistic style. Structures might be built of reinforced concrete, but they were usually faced with fieldstones gathered on site. Buildings were often constructed with chestnut log frames and slab siding. Even before the flood, the FLSPC had begun to replace concrete with stone, and the commission had adopted design principles that favored natural materials. As regional landscape architect Herbert Blanche said in 1933, "the best executed project is one that is least apparent in the landscape."<sup>5</sup> After the flood, steps and walls for the reconstructed gorge trail were built of native stone. With their striated look, these features almost suggest an extension of the gorge walls. The FLSPC also reported rebuilding the stone entrance walks in a "new and more attractive style than the old construction."<sup>6</sup>

By 1942, with the nation focused on the war effort, even routine maintenance in New York state parks was deferred. As in other parks, post-war planning began in 1945 and the first park rehabilitation projects were completed in the late 1940s. During the 1950s and 60s, Watkins Glen mirrored other state parks with the development of expanded facilities for active recreation. Features such as an Olympic-size swimming pool, extensive campsites, and expanded picnic and parking areas were added in the southern part of the park in the 1960s, and the park has since expanded to 776 acres.

This year marks the centennial of New York State's stewardship of Watkins Glen. Even after a century, the visitor's experience is still largely determined by nature. WGSP has proportionately fewer buildings and active recreational facilities than some parks, and the most popular activity remains the same journey through the gorge that moved Ells to poetry and Hope to painting. Only fragments from each period document the long succession of substantial development programs in the glen. Likewise, nature itself is continually revising the structure of the park. The ongoing erosion that created the glen continues to refine and reshape it. The prevalence of rushing water in the park requires continual rebuilding of infrastructure. Even one of Watkins Glen's most exciting annual events—the reenactment of the historic Grand Prix Auto Races that once passed regularly through the park—is by nature transient: Once a year, vintage race cars roar through the park following the original route of the race; then, quiet returns to the small village and tranquility to the glen.

*Enjoy all that New York's state parks have to offer. Purchase your **Empire Passport** for only \$59 and gain unlimited day use vehicle entry to most state parks, state forest preserves, boat launches, beaches, arboretum, and more. Visit [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com) or call (518) 486-1868.*

5. Ingraham, 146.

6. NYS Conservation Department, *Annual Report*, 1936.

# From the Chairman

## Preservation Loses Three Leaders



A school group visits the houses on Hunterfly Road.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Joan Maynard (1928-2006) was an extraordinary woman who was deeply committed to improving her community. She played an important role in protecting historic Weeksville, an early settlement of free blacks in Brooklyn. Her father, John Cooper, was a ventriloquist, and her mother, Juliana St. Bernard Cooper, was born in the West Indies. Joan graduated from Empire State College and was a commercial artist for many years.

The preservation of Weeksville began in 1968, when four derelict houses were discovered in an alley once called Hunterfly Road. The buildings became the focus of efforts to recognize the area's African American heritage. That year, Joan helped to establish the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford-Stuyvesant History. She became the society's president in 1972 and executive director in 1974.

From the beginning, Joan was determined to transform the houses into a community history center. With local and private support, the society purchased the buildings, and they were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Joan was particularly proud that the Weeksville project sparked the interest of children, who helped to organize some of the earliest fund-raising efforts. Today, the buildings have been restored and the property attracts hundreds of visitors, including many school groups.

Joan was also associated with other preservation organizations,

such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation; she was trustee emeritus and recipient of the organization's Louise du Pont Crowninshield Award in 1992. Joan was a founding member of the African American Museums Association and served on the Mayor's Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee on the African Burial Ground (in lower Manhattan), which is now a National Monument. She was also a well-respected member of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation and received a New York State Historic Preservation Award in 1999.

Joan was at the forefront of identifying and protecting properties associated with African American history, and she inspired, educated, and effectively advocated for the preservation of our heritage. Her remarkable legacy will remain a source of inspiration for many years to come.

Robert B. MacKay  
Chair

New York State Board for Historic Preservation

### Ann Webster Smith (1925-2006)

*Ann Smith, who was State Parks' second deputy commissioner for historic preservation, is warmly remembered by staff for her exceptional vision, dedication, and support. In various capacities, from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to the United Nations' Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Ann helped to advance cultural and historic preservation efforts around the country and the world. She had a long and important association with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), effectively expanding its programs through communication, cooperation, and teamwork. In 2005, she won the organization's prestigious Piero Gazzola prize for her extraordinary commitment to safeguarding our heritage.*

### Reverend Thomas W. Phelan (1925-2006)

*The Reverend Thomas W. Phelan will long be remembered for his dedication to recognizing and safeguarding the Capital District's heritage. In 1972, he helped to establish the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway, an organization committed to preserving the area's historic industrial resources. From 1974 to 1994, Father*

*Phelan served as the dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy. He also helped to advance the missions of other organizations, such as the Preservation League of New York State. In 2002, Father Phelan received the New York State Historic Preservation Lifetime Achievement Award.*

# State and National Registers

## Recent Listings

### ALBANY COUNTY

**Preston Hollow:** Sidney White House

**Slingerlands:** LaGrange Farmstead

**Watervliet:** Ohio Street Methodist Episcopal Church Complex

### ALLEGANY COUNTY

**Belmont:** Belmont Grange #1243

### BRONX COUNTY

**Bronx:**  
New York City Subway System:  
Concourse Yard Entry Buildings  
Concourse Yard Substation

### BROOME COUNTY

**Harpursville:**  
Harpursville United Methodist Church

**Johnson City:** Your Home Library

### CAYUGA COUNTY

**Auburn:** Belt-Gaskin House

**Ledyard:** North Street Friends Meetinghouse

**Montezuma:** Seneca River Crossing Canals Historic District (also crosses into Seneca County, Tyre vicinity)

**Sennett:** Sennett Federated Church and Parsonage

### CHENANGO COUNTY

**Guilford Center:** Guilford Center Cemetery

**Rockdale:** Rockdale Community Church

**Sherburne vicinity:** West Hill Cemetery

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

**Livingston:** Linlithgo Reformed Church of Livingston

### COLUMBIA, DUTCHESS, PUTNAM, AND WESTCHESTER COUNTIES

Taconic State Parkway (from the Kensico Dam to the I-90 Interchange)

### DELAWARE COUNTY

**Delhi:** First Presbyterian Church

### ERIE COUNTY

**Amherst:**  
Entranceway at Main Street at Roycroft Boulevard  
Entranceway at Main Street at Lamarck Drive and Smallwood Drive

### GREENE COUNTY

**Oak Hill:** A. T. House

### KINGS COUNTY

**Brooklyn:**  
New York City Subway System:  
Coney Island Yard Electric Motor Repair Shop  
Coney Island Yard Gatehouse

### LEWIS COUNTY

**Osceola:** Osceola Town Hall

### LIVINGSTON COUNTY

**Conesus vicinity:** Kellerman Log Cabin

**Leicester:** Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Station

### MADISON COUNTY

**DeRuyter:** Seventh Day Baptist Church

**Georgetown:** Spirit House

**Morrisville:** Morrisville Public Library

**Oneida Lake vicinity:** Oneida Lake Congregational Church

### MONROE COUNTY

**Belcoda:** Wheatland Baptist Cemetery

**Mendon:** Mendon Presbyterian Church

**Penfield:** Penfield Road Historic District

**Scottsville:** David McVean House

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**Amsterdam:** Gray-Jewett House  
**Canajoharie:** Bragdon-Lipe House

### NASSAU COUNTY

**Locust Valley:** Cock-Cornelius House

**Long Beach:** Samuel Vaisberg House

### NEW YORK COUNTY

**New York City:**  
Greenwich Savings Bank  
Park Row Building  
Seagram Building  
Sheffield Farms Stable  
Wall and Hanover Building  
New York City Subway System:  
207th Street Yard-Signal Service Building and Tower B  
Central IND Substation  
Joralemon Street Tunnel

Substation 7  
Substation 13  
Substation 17  
Substation 42  
Substation 219  
Substation 235  
Substation 409

### NIAGARA COUNTY

**Hartland:** Harrington Cobblestone Farmhouse and Barn Complex

**Lockport:** *Day Peckinpaugh* (Canal Motorship)

**Niagara Falls:** United Office Building

### ORANGE COUNTY

**Middletown:** First Congregational Church of Middletown

**Walden:** Gilbert Millsbaugh House

**Walden vicinity:** Brown Farmstead

### OSWEGO COUNTY

**Parish:** Pleasant Lawn Cemetery

### OTSEGO COUNTY

**Morris vicinity:** Morris-Lull Farm

### PUTNAM COUNTY

**Garrison:** Maniotoga (Russell Wright Home and Studio) (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK)

### RICHMOND COUNTY

**Richmond, Staten Island:** Staten Island Light

### ROCKLAND COUNTY

**Piermont:** Rockland Road Bridge



Manitoga is nationally significant for its association with the life and work of Russel Wright (1904-1970), one of the most prominent American industrial designers of the mid-twentieth century. His Garrison estate is an outstanding example of American organic design in the period c1941-c1960.

**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY**

**Canton vicinity:** Brick Chapel Church and Cemetery

**Lisbon:** United Presbyterian Church

**Rensselaer Falls:**

Congregational Church

**SCHOHARIE COUNTY**

**Middleburgh:** Bellinger-Dutton House

**SUFFOLK COUNTY**

**Babylon:** Babylon Town Hall  
**Lloyd Harbor:** Charles Homer Davis House

**Mattituck:** Jesse and Ira Tuthill House

**Middle Island:** Middle Island Presbyterian Church

**Port Jefferson:** First National Bank of Port Jefferson

**Shelter Island Heights:** Camp Quinipet

**West Sayville:** *Priscilla* (Long Island Oyster Sloop) (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK)

**SULLIVAN COUNTY**

**Burlingham:** Hart House

**TIOGA COUNTY**

**Spencer:** First Presbyterian Church

**TOMPKINS COUNTY**

**Ithaca:** Hayt's Chapel and Schoolhouse

**ULSTER COUNTY**

**Kingston vicinity:** Benjamin Ten Broeck House

**Woodstock vicinity:** Church of the Holy Transfiguration of Christ-on-the-Mount

**WASHINGTON COUNTY**

**Middle Falls vicinity:** Easton Friends North Meetinghouse

**WYOMING COUNTY**

**Genesee Falls, Castile, Mt. Morris, Leicester, Portage:** Letchworth State Park



**New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**

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# Rolling Whirling Coasting



New York will soon add a new and unique park to the statewide system. Midway State Park boasts a 1950s amusement park, including such familiar rides as a Tilt-A-Whirl and a Kiddie Coaster. The forty-three-acre park is on the east side of Lake Chautauqua, opposite Chautauqua Institution, a famed venue for educational and cultural events since 1874. However, Midway, which traces its name to the location of a new steamboat dock “midway” between docks at Point Whiteside and Maple Springs in 1894, boasts a century of cultural history all its own.

In the late nineteenth century, local railroad lines were built to connect the Erie, Pennsylvania, and New York Central Railroads with Lake Chautauqua resorts. In 1888, the Chautauqua Lake Railway became the first to travel the entire eastern side of the lake from Mayville to Jamestown. In 1898, this railroad, then known as the Jamestown and Lake Erie Railway Company, leased seventeen acres near Midway, including woods, lakefront, and a sandy beach, for a picnic grounds. The company constructed a dance pavilion and dining hall, and Midway Park’s opening on July 12, 1898 was celebrated with dancing, baseball, tennis, croquet, bathing, and boating. Although the railroad was geared to carry tourists to hotels, travelers to Midway were more likely to be residents of Mayville or Jamestown, who paid 25 cents fare to the park. Patrons also came by steamboat, and the construction of a 450-foot pier at Midway in 1907 ensured its survival in the face of competition from other local picnic groves.

The railway company reorganized several times until 1913, when it was acquired by the Jamestown, Westfield

and Northwestern Railroad (JW), which electrified the line. In 1914, the JW started carrying passengers to Midway, and an additional twenty-seven acres of parkland were acquired. Midway Park itself changed hands in 1915, when it was sold to the Chautauqua Lake Navigation Company, which erected a large, new two-story lakeside pavilion. The wood-frame structure, which survives today,



Midway’s small-scale train is one of the park’s most popular rides.

includes a bathhouse and restaurant on the first floor and a roller skating rink/dance floor on the second.

In 1924, Midway acquired a large wooden roller coaster. Although this feature does not survive, its acquisition heralded the park’s later development as an amusement park. The idea of the amusement park, complete with its carnival atmosphere, was popularized by the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The property’s famed mile-long midway, a strip of concessions and rides that included the world’s first Ferris

wheel, developed specifically for the fair, offered an exotic alternative to the classical order of the exposition. Its popularity sparked construction of amusement parks in numerous large cities, but the movement peaked with the development of Coney Island, which featured three large individual parks opened between 1897 and 1904. Although many amusement parks closed during the Depression and World War II, their popularity was revived in the early 1950s, bolstered by the introduction of “kiddie parks,” which featured child-size rides.

While early visitors to Midway arrived by train, steamboat, or trolley, after the mid-twentieth century, almost everyone arrived in the family car. In 1951, the Walsh family acquired the park and began to develop the amusement park component, adding more than twenty rides, including Tubs of Fun (1951), Kiddie Boats (1951), Roto Whip (1951), Mini Train (1955), and Kiddie Coaster (1956). Many of these rides were manufactured by the top companies of the day, including Allen Herschell (North Tonawanda) and W.F. Mangles (Coney Island). Most of these rides survive today.

In the 1980s, Michael and Janis Walsh took over Midway; the Walshes continue to operate the property while details of its acquisition and management are finalized. New York State’s venture into this aspect of public recreation is rare but not unprecedented. Rye Playland, developed in 1928 by the Westchester County Park Commission and a National Historic Landmark, is the only other known amusement park in the country operated by a government agency.

Charity fair at Geneva Armory, 1893  
courtesy Geneva Historical Society



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