

HRES Fall Field Trip

On Saturday September 12th, HRES sponsored a trip to Constitution Marsh and the West Point Foundry, both in Cold Spring.

We started at Constitution Marsh, where Eric Lind explained the Audubon Preserve and its role in studying and preserving the marsh. [Figure 1](#). We then paddled the Preserve's canoes out into the marsh, [Figures 2, 3, 4](#) where Eric showed us the wild rice [Figure 5](#) and other plants of the swamp [Figure 6](#) and told us about the history of the swamp and the cadmium pollution by the Marathon Battery Factory in Cold Spring [Figure 7](#). Although we had paddlers of every experience and ability, we all had a wonderful time on a beautiful fall morning [Figure 8](#).

We then drove over to the West Point Foundry, where Reed Sperling gave us the background of the Foundry during lunch and then showed us around the Scenic Hudson Preserve [Figure 9](#). I had not been to the Foundry since it was under excavation [Figure 10](#), and was very impressed by the job Scenic Hudson has done with the trails [Figure 11](#), the interpretive signage [Figure 12](#), the stabilization of the standing remains [Figure 13](#), and the creation of an elegant model [Figure 14](#) of one of the overshot waterwheels that provided energy to run the Foundry machines.

Everyone had a wonderful time and we look forward to future field trips. If there are places in our valley that you would particularly like to visit with expert guides, let us know, and we will see if we can add them to our roster of HRES trips.

Submitted by
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President of the Board

Figure 1 credit Lucy Johnson



Figure 2 credit Tracy Johnson



Figure 3 credit Helena Andreyko



Figure 4 credit Lucy Johnson



Figure 5 credit Helena Andreyko



Figure 6 credit Tracy Johnson



Figure 7 credit Lucy Johnson



Figure 8 credit Helena Andreyko



Figure 9 credit Lucy Johnson



Figure 10 credit Lucy Johnson



Figure 11 credit Lucy Johnson



Figure 12 credit Lucy Johnson



BORING MILL OVERLOOK

Looking at the ruins of the boring mill, one of West Point's vital centers and among the earliest buildings in the garrison complex. A large, two-story structure, the boring mill served several functions. The first floor was used for the storage of various products, while the second floor housed a workshop, where forms and molds for the molten iron were stored.

For its activity, the boring mill was filled with geared cranes, lathes and other heavy machinery driven by a massive water wheel and leather belting system. The water that powered the mill came from an intricate series of headraces fed by Foundry Run. Steam engines, steam boilers, church bells and industrial machinery for cotton and sugar plantations in the U.S. and other parts of the world were produced here in great numbers – setting the stage for America's emergence as a major industrial power.

WATER WHEEL

The boring mill's operations were powered by the powerful, 36-foot water wheel housed in the main structure. The illustration you see today depicts the water wheel at its original location, exactly where it stood during the foundry's heyday.

Scale for this diagram is 1:100. The illustration is based on a photograph of the water wheel at the Foundry, taken in 1862. The illustration is based on a photograph of the water wheel at the Foundry, taken in 1862.

This illustration, all images and text are a collection of the Pulnam Museum.



- 1 Pattern storage area
- 2 Water wheel
- 3 Flume from battery pond
- 4 Parrott guns on lathe
- 5 Wheel lathe
- 6 Underground tailrace

This illustration depicts how the boring mill complex appeared during the Civil War, when the foundry was manufacturing Parrott guns. One of the challenges of industrial archaeology is that, in many cases,

structures such as these are fluid in their layout over time, with additional rooms added and others falling into disuse, reflecting new technologies and advances in raw materials and – above all else – changing fortunes in manufacturing. Understanding how these early industrial sites functioned in their time is a complex process.

combining careful excavations with research into documentary evidence – surveys, maps, village records, and other primary source material. Period photographs also are valuable tools that help archaeologists make sense of the ruins that remain at West Point Foundry Preserve today.

A POWERFUL FORCE

Water has profoundly impacted the Foundry site. Whether flooding or freezing, it has played a role in destroying and obscuring remains here by cracking and decomposing artifacts. As the foundry's gates and dams decayed in its operations ceased, water haphazardly over much of the conditions that made this region for a water-powered enterprise. In elevation, powerful brook, in proximity to the river – much to protect. In an effort to allow Hudson has reinforced sections of Brook's banks and maintain forest, critical for soaking up



Figure 13 credit Lucy Johnson



Figure 14 credit Lucy Johnson

