The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Presents:

Patriots, Plowshares & Post Roads:

Chapters from Our Local Journey to Independence

The 2026 Exhibition Catalog



Roeliff Jansen
Historical Society
Founded 1974

The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Presents...

Patriots, Plowshares & Post Roads:

Chapters from Our Local Journey to Independence

It is always difficult in history to mark the beginning and end of a period. Events keep rushing on and do not pause to be divided into chapters; or, in other words, in the history which really takes place, a new chapter is always beginning long before the old one is ended. The divisions we make when we try to describe it are merely marks that we make for our own convenience.

John Fiske's *War of Independence*

Against the backdrop of the Revolutionary War, *Patriots, Plowshares & Post Roads* highlights the individuals, industries, communication networks, and infrastructure that sustained daily life and helped lay the foundations for a new Republic - or what we are calling chapters from our local journey to Independence.

The American Revolution was not a single event, but the result of countless local actions, decisions, and grassroots efforts that gradually merged into a coordinated rebellion against British rule lasting more than eight years.

As Captain Franklin Ellis wrote in his 1878 History of Columbia County, "Although no major battles occurred here, the landscape and people of Columbia County were deeply connected to the war effort."

This exhibition is a collaboration among historians, historic sites, museums, and traditional businesses across the Roe Jan region — and our member towns of Ancram, Copake, Gallatin, Hillsdale and Taghkanic — exploring the late eighteenth century, when post roads, taverns, and local self-sufficiency shaped daily life amid resistance to British taxes and imported goods.

The exhibit was open to the public weekends from early July through October 2026. *Patriots, Plowshares &* Post Roads also offered a series of pre-registered workshops, presentations, and site visits. These programs actively connected visitors with aspects of the revolutionary period in our corner of what was then the province of New York



Chapter 1 - Columbia County and The Revolution



In his 1878 book, The History of Columbia County, Captain Franklin Ellis described how "residents in the county first heard the mutterings of discontent which arose from the Stamp Act of 1764 and the more ominous growling of incipient rebellion, occasioned by the Boston Massacre and forced importation of tea; a growling which deepened into the unmistakable roar of revolution as it rolled across the country." "Soon," Ellis wrote, "the patriotic flame burst forth and spread through all the colonies, burning as brightly upon the shores of the Hudson and along the slopes of the Taconic Mountains as it did upon the plain of Bennington and the banks of the Brandy Wine."

"Though here are no historic battlefields, and the soil has never been pressed by the foot of the invader," committees of safety were formed in this and other parts of what was then Albany County as early as 1774, and consolidated in 1775. Among other things, the committee of safety established and maintained a night-watch in the county for the purpose of guarding and defending the persons and property of patriots against the machinations and evil designs of Torries..."

(Ellis, The History of Columbia County, pages 28 & 29).

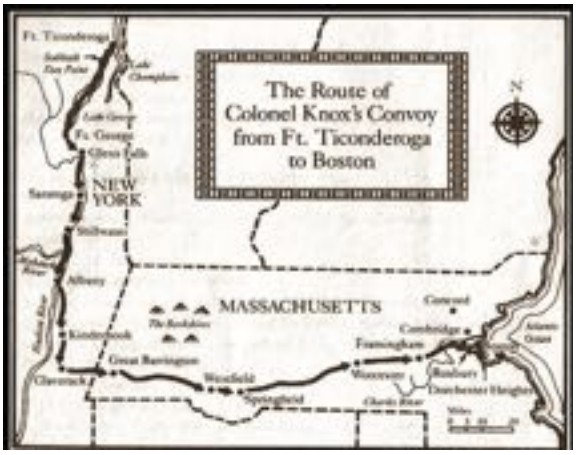


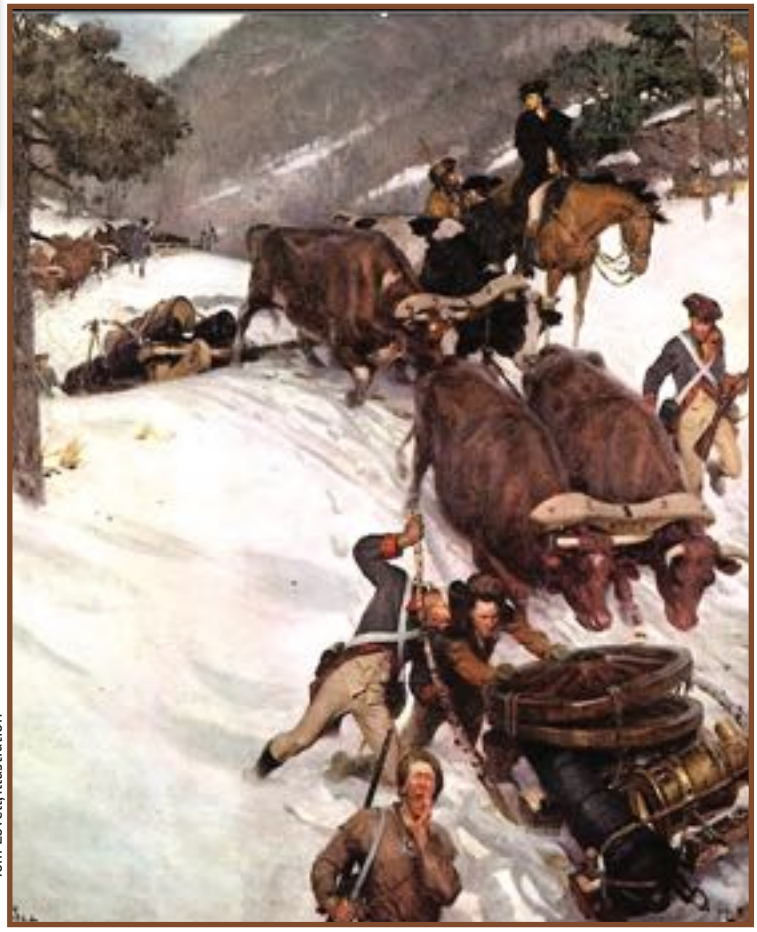
Chapter 2 -The Knox Trek



Although no major battles occurred here, the landscape and people of Columbia County were deeply connected to the war effort. One of the most remarkable episodes was the 1775-76 winter trek of Colonel Henry Knox and his noble train of artillery.

Acting under orders from General George Washington, Knox and his team transported 59 cannon, artillery weighing more than 60 tons, from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston through snow, swamps, rivers, and mountain terrain. Part of that route passed through present-day Kinderhook, Ghent, and Hillsdale's NobleTown Road, then into Massachusetts.





Tom Lovell, Illustration

The transported artillery was essential in forcing the British evacuation of Boston in March of 1776. 56 Historical markers all along the route allow present-day enthusiasts to trace what Knox himself called a noble and glorious enterprise.



Chapter 2 - Display of Knox Trail Items from 1976







(Above) **Knox Trail Photographs** (1976) Photographer Frank Case (aka Duke) documented the reenacted Knox trek. *Collection of RJHS*

The Winter Trek of Colonel Henry Knox

From December 10, 1975 to January 10, 1976 (the same dates as the original Knox Trail expedition), a group of living history interpreters and volunteers re-enacted the trek of General Henry Knox from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston in 1776. To reconstruct the route, organizers used clues in the Knox diary written during the original expedition, as well as the 56 Knox Trail monuments erected along the route by New York and Massachusetts in 1927. On December 10th, opening ceremonies were held at Fort Ticonderoga, and the New York group arrived at the Massachusetts state line on January 10th. There, the New England contingent took over and headed on to Cambridge, arriving 17 days later.



(Above) **Horseshoes** (misc. dates) From the Copake Falls area *Found by Blair Benken*



(above) **Commemorative "*First Day Issue" Envelope*** of reenactment with cancelled stamp dated January 10, 1976 *(the end of the historic trek 200 years before), Collection of RJHS*



(Above) **Knox Trail Pamphlets** *(1976) Many promotional items were created in preparation for the 1976 Bicentennial – many of which highlighted the story of the Knox Trail expedition – including a "passport" for participants (this one in the name of local preservationist Lloyd Williams).*



(Above) **Replica of Knox Trek Cannon** *created by Hillsdale Historians* Chris Atkins & Lauren Letellier



(above) **Commemorative Knox Trek Bicentennial Coins (1976)** *Collection of RJHS*

Chapter 3 - The Livingston Furnace in Ancram





NYS Education Dept. Marker, 1935



The revolutionary effort was also supported by the industrial power of the Livingston family and the Ancram ironworks established in 1743, the first in New York colony.

As we learned in a talk by local historian Jim Mackin, during the war, the iron works produced iron used to make cannon shot (balls) and links for a massive Hudson River chain that stretched between Fort Montgomery and Anthony's Nose, a barrier designed to prevent British ships from advancing upriver. In 1778, the more successful *Great Chain* was installed across the Hudson near West Point.



Illustration of the Great Chain from "Iron Age Magazine"

Though the original furnace is gone, the paper mill established on the same site in 1854 remains the longest continuously operating business in Columbia County.



1789 French map of West Point and 'Anthony's Nose'



The Ancram Paper Mill, sometime after 1854



Jim Mackin speaking at the RJHS

Chapter 4 -Agriculture & Industry



At the same time, the great Hudson Valley Manors functioned as agricultural engines for the revolution.

The vast estates of Livingston Manor and Rensselaerswyck, the patroonship of the Rensselaer family, supplied wheat, livestock, and preserved foods that helped sustain Washington's Continental Army.

Yet, this productivity existed within a rigid tenant farming system based in British and Dutch traditions where farmers leased land under long-term agreements that often restricted their independence and kept them in debt. Even so, local farms became essential contributors to the revolutionary cause, producing grain and livestock used to make long-lasting hard tack and salt pork for the troops in the field. The manor system also supported other industries, including an expanding network of mills.

Robert Livingston authorized the construction of grist mills, sawmills, textile mills, paper mills, and even gunpowder mills all along local streams and waterways. One important example was Mill Success, a grist mill established around 1720 along the Taconic creek. After threshing wheat at home, neighboring farmers hauled their grain to the mill to be ground to flour.

The miller and the manor owner received a portion as payment while the remainder returned to the farmer. Though converted into a sawmill in 1790, remnants of Mill Success still survive today at Pumpkin Hollow Retreat in Taghkanic, one of several locations visitors were able to explore during an exhibition site visit.





Chapter 4 - Agriculture & Industry - Items on Display at the RJHS



(Above) Showcase featuring items related to the iron industry and agriculture of the Revolutionary War Era.

Iron Bar ***(circa mid-1800s)***
Iron is made by heating natural iron ore with carbon and limestone in a massive blast furnace (such as at Copake Iron Works). The intense heat strips the oxygen from the ore, while the limestone removes impurities, leaving behind the liquid molten iron that is refined into steel. Molten iron is then poured into molds to form bricks or bars, often called "pigs," "blooms," or "ingots". These solid blocks can be easily stacked, transported, and melted down again. Collection of Friends of Taconic State Park

Slag ***(circa mid-1800s)***
Slag is a glass-like, stony, non-metallic byproduct of the iron-making process.
Collection of Friends of Taconic State Park

Charcoal ***(circa mid-1800s)***
In the 18th century, charcoal functioned as both the fuel and the essential reducing agent in extracting iron from iron ore. It generated the extreme heat needed to melt iron ore and its carbon reacted with the oxygen in the ore to free the metallic iron.
Gift of Friends of Taconic State Park

Iron Chain ***(circa mid-1800s)***
Heavy iron chains were used as a tool to help ease the grip of tree roots when removing stumps. Because chains were flexible, durable, and could withstand immense tension without breaking, they allowed settlers to leverage horsepower rather than removing deep stumps entirely by exhausting manual labor.
Gift of Catherine Mikic from Sweet-Sherman Homestead (Copake, NY)

Wooden Pestles* ***(left and right, circa late 1800s)***
Pestles were grinding tools that were hand-turned from dense hardwoods like yew, boxwood, and lignum vitae to prevent splintering. They were highly valued in kitchens and apothecary shops for crushing herbs, salt, and spices. Collection of Rowena Doyel

** Pestles are an example of "treen," – the generic term for small, handmade wooden household utensils and objects – deriving from the Old English word for "tree".*

Firkin ***(circa 1800s)***
Firkins are traditional small wooden casks or barrels. Originally, the term referred to a unit of volume equivalent to one-quarter of a standard barrel (derived from the Dutch word vierde, meaning "fourth"). Collection of Lewis Cleale

Hardtack
Hardtack is a simple dry cracker made of flour, water, and sometimes salt.
Because it is baked multiple times to remove all moisture, it can last for years without spoiling. It was historically used as a staple ration by sailors, soldiers, and pioneers.
Baked by Madeline Foote

Hand-carved Wooden Bowl ***(circa late 18th century)***
Hand-carved wooden bowls—often called "dough bowls"—were crafted from a single hardwood log. Artisans split the green log with wedges and used traditional hand tools like adzes and gouges to hollow out the interior, followed by drawknives and spokeshaves to shape and smooth the exterior. Collection of Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski

Cast Iron Muffin Pan ***(circa late 1800s)***
Muffin pans were used primarily for baking small, individual quick breads like cornbread, drop biscuits, and whole-wheat "gems". Cast iron was highly valued for its ability to conduct intense heat evenly and to withstand open hearths, wood stoves, and coal fires without warping or burning
Collection of Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski

Toleware Tin Salt Shaker ***(late 1800s)***
"Toleware" (produced in the 18th and 19th centuries is the term for decorative tinware covered with lacquered paint or varnish, historically used to prevent rusting. Deriving from the French tôle peinte (painted sheet metal). this folk art tradition originated in France and features intricate hand-painting, stenciling, or gilding on utilitarian items like trays, tea caddies, and candlesticks. It was originally popularized in the 18th century as an affordable alternative to expensive lacquerware. Collection of Lesley Doyel

Sickle ***(circa mid–late 1800s)***
Sickles were essential hand tools with a sharp, open-crescent metal blade and a short wooden handle. They were primarily used for harvesting cereal crops like wheat, often alongside a scythe for cutting underbrush. Gift of Jennifer Berne and Nick Nicholson

Mason Cash Ceramic Bowl ***(contemporary)*** *Collection of Lesley Doyel*

Site Visit to the remains of an 18th century grist mill: 'Mill Success' at Pumpkin Hollow, in Craryville, NY



Chapter 5 - The Homespun Movement







Starting in the 1760s, British trade laws sharply restricted textile manufacturing in the colonies, forcing Americans to rely heavily on imported cloth.

During the Revolution, however, the homespun movement became both an economic necessity and a patriotic act. Large estates expanded their sheep flocks while local mills processed wool into fabric for civilian use and for the Continental Army.

Although these early mills have disappeared, the region's textile tradition continues today through Noble-town Fiber Works, which draws inspiration from the area's long history of spinning, carding, weaving, and wool production. *(see next page)*





Chapter 5 - The Homespun Movement - objects on display at the RJHS





Lewis Cleale in front of
Nobletown Fiber Works
Hillsdale, NY

Three Distaffs *(circa 1800s)*
A "distaff" is a traditional spinning tool used to hold unspun fibers untangled and ready to be spun into yarn.
Collections of Lewis Cleale and Maryanne Fallon

Weasel* (circa 1800s)
A spinner's weasel (also called a "weasel" or "clock reel") is a mechanical tool used to measure and wind spun yarn into uniform lengths called skeins. It features a spoked wheel and internal gears that make a loud, "pop" sound after a specific number of revolutions.
**The nursery rhyme "Pop Goes the Weasel" derives its famous lyric and rhythm from this exact device. Collection of Lewis Cleale*

The Yarn-making Process
Unwashed raw wool (covered with lanolin and debris from the shearing floor); washed fleece (still covered with some debris); picked fleece (clean from debris); cloud fleece (a jumbled clump – or batt – of wool in which fibers are still mis-aligned); carded roving (a continuous strand of combed – or carded – wool with fibers running parallel); and a skein of yarn (the finished product) Collection of Lewis Cleale

Niddy-Noddy (circa 1800s)
The "Niddy-noddy" (sometimes called a "Knitty-Knoddy"), is an essential handheld tool used by spinners and knitters to wind freshly-spun yarn off a bobbin and into an organized loop, or "skein". Collection of Lewis Cleale

Shuttle (circa 1800s)
A shuttle is a handheld tool used in weaving to hold and carry the "weft" (cross-wise) threads back and forth through the "warp" (lengthwise) threads. As it passes through the open gap in the warp, it unwinds its stored yarn to create the woven fabric.
Collection of Lewis Cleale

Hackle *(circa 1800s)*
A hackle is a specialized combing tool consisting of a block of wood fitted with long, sharp metal pins (tines). It acts as an essential pre-spinning tool used to straighten, align, and blend fibers, as well as remove impurities and short, broken strands.
Collection of Lewis Cleale

Gansey (or Guernsey) *Sweater & Bottle Sweater*
Knitted from tightly-spun oiled wool (called seaman's iron) to resist wind and water, the Gansey sweater was originally made in the Channel Islands, England. This unique structure, which historically featured underarm gussets for mobility and reversible front/back panels, continues to inspire modern heritage knitwear.

Sweater made by Mary McGregor. Collection of Lewis Cleale

(Below) Site visit to Lewis Cleale's *Nobletown Fiber Works* in Hillsdale, NY







Chapter 6 - The Postal System



NY State marker, State Education Dept.,1935



Early mail bag, Smithsonian National Postal Museum



Eugène Delacroix: "A Horse Hitched to a Post" circa 1820

National Gallery of Art

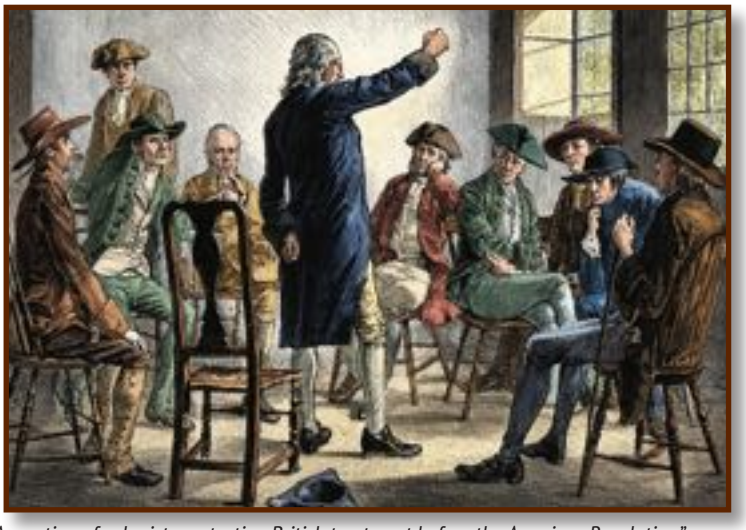
Transportation and communication were equally vital to the growth of the new nation. The colonial Albany Post Road, also known as the King's Highway, was a local example that served as the principal mail and stage route between New York City and Albany. Today, much of the old post road route survives as nearby US Route 9 and 9H.



The term "post" derived from the Latin "postium' meaning placed or fixed, originally referred to a station where fresh relay horses were hitched and kept ready for post riders carrying letters and dispatches.

The word mail comes from the old French mal, meaning a bag, wallet or bundle. It originally referred to the pouch used to carry correspondence and other important items.

In 1775, frustrated by the Royal Mail's expense, unreliability, and threat to a free press, many colonists boycotted the British postal system. That same year, the Second Continental Congress established a postal service operated by the colonists themselves, with Benjamin Franklin as the first Postmaster General.



North Wind Picture Archives

"A meeting of colonists protesting British treatment before the American Revolution."



Commorative Stamp "B. Free Franklin, Postmaster" issued 2006

Chapter 7 - Correspondence and Wax Seals







During the Revolutionary period, there were no commercial envelopes; instead the letter itself was folded onto a neat packet and sealed with wax. At this time, wax seals played an essential role. As we saw in workshops presented by Mitch Mandello, wax seals not only secured correspondence, but also served as a form of authentication, verifying the sender and the integrity of the document.



In addition to being an important means of authenticating correspondence, sometimes the imagery on the seals conveyed coded messages that could be recognized and understood only by the recipient.

Because America rejected British titles of nobility, early American organizations (like the Society of the Cincinnati, an exclusive organization founded by Revolutionary War officers) reinterpreted and used classical military helmets to denote gentleman-soldier status — meaning a citizen who took up arms for liberty but was not part of a permanent mercenary or royal class.

When you read the split shield together as a single story, the coat of arms on the wax seal to the left, it translates to: "A citizen soldier (Helmet) who fought aggressively for colonial independence along-side the secret patriot network (9 Pine Trees), but has now laid down their weapons because victory and liberty have been secured (Crossed Swords Facing Down)."

Red wax, for wax seals, became historically popular because it was easily made with affordable, fade-resistant vermillion pigment mixed into beeswax and resin, eventually becoming the default color for official and everyday correspondence. Over time, red wax became associated with power, authority and high status, and was often used to signify particular importance. Official documents tied with ribbon and sealed with red wax eventually gave rise to the expression red tape.





Chapter 7 - Correspondence and Wax Seals on Display

(Below, clockwise from upper left) 1. Array of Varioous Wax Seals and tools, 2. More seals tools and wax tools, 3.Letter folding, 4. Portable set of seals with wax 5. Inkwells and pen, 6. Mitch Mondello in front of Roosevelt Document, 7. 8.9. three pictures of Mitch teaching workshops at the RJHS 10.



















Mitch Mondello teaches the art of Wax Sealing and Envelope-packet folding to Judy Whitbeck and others in special workshops at the RJHS



(above) The Post & Wax Seal display case at the RJHS

Chapter 8 - Transportation & Commerce







After the Revolutionary War, New York City's population surged, creating a steady market for farmers in what is now Columbia County. However, getting goods down to the city meant hauling them west over rough roads to the Hudson River and the port city of Hudson, a city that had been chartered in 1785.

In 1799, the New York State Legislature authorized the creation of the Columbia Turnpike Corporation for the purpose of improving the road from the city of Hudson to the line of Massachusetts on the route to Hartford. When the Columbia Turnpike was constructed, it was the first turnpike in Columbia County and the fifth in New York State.

The legislature also gave rights to the corporation to use existing roads and approved the construction of three tollhouses spaced about 10 miles apart. The revenues from the tolls paid by travelers covered the cost of construction and ongoing maintenance of the turnpike.

The word turnpike came from the use of heavy wooden pikes swung aside by tollkeepers after payment was made. As part of our exhibition programming, historian Peter Cipcowski gave an illustrated talk about the Columbia Turnpike and the two surviving toll houses, West Gate in present-day Greenport and East Gate in Hillsdale, currently under restoration. In another presentation, Hillsdale historian Chris Atkins described his extensive research to determine the location of the long-lost third toll house known as Middle Gate, which disappeared sometime after 1907 when the Turnpike closed. The former Columbia Turnpike is essentially today's routes 23 and 23B.


MIDDLE GATE.

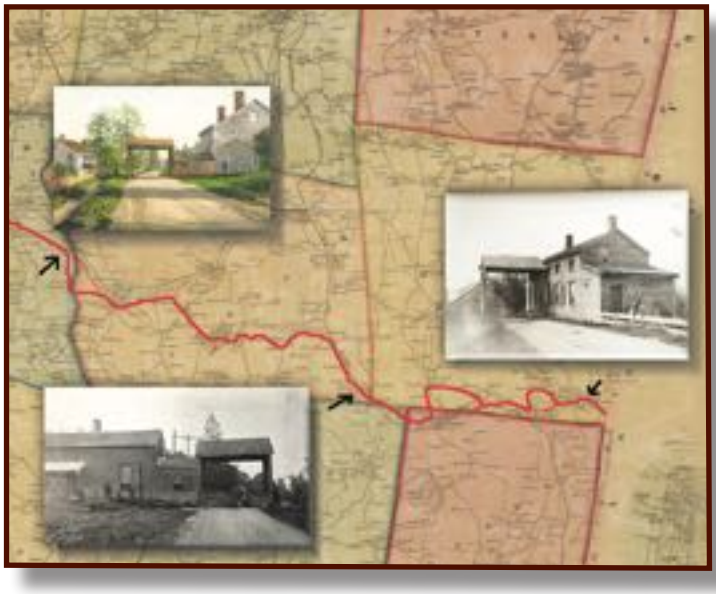
Mr Jacob Conklin (paid by Allen Conklin)

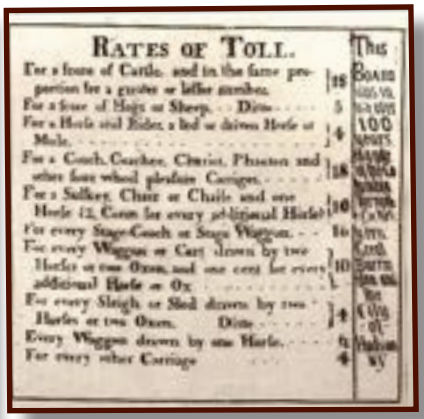
To COLUMBIA TURNPIKE, Dr.

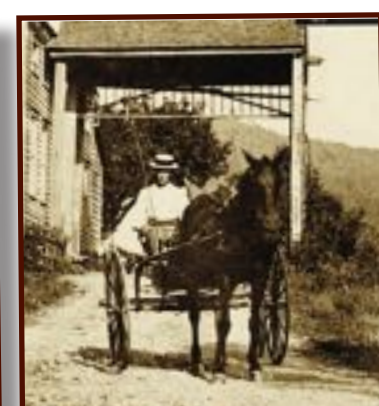
To commutation for travel on road of said Company from Jan 1st 1889 to Jan 1st 1890 2.00

Received payment for the Company.

Byaly Bashford Toll Gatherer.







(above, center of page) Commutation Ticket
(left) Map with overlay of all three toll gates (courtesy Peter Cipkowski)
(above center) Rates of toll sign
(above right) Traveler at East Gate

Chapter 9 - Inns, Taverns & Mail



(above) "The Tun Tavern" by Frank Taylor, Late 18th century, Philadelphia





(above) The Village Tavern 1808, John Lews Kimmel, Toledo Musseum of Art

Before organized stagecoach lines and local post offices emerged, taverns and inns served as essential stopping places for travelers and for post riders as drop-off points for mail. Hillsdale, near the Massachusetts border, became an important way point during the difficult route between Massachusetts and the Hudson River.

As part of our exhibition programming, there were site visits to two Revolutionary-era buildings in the Hillsdale Hamlet Historic District. Both buildings were built along the former Columbia Turnpike, the present-day County route 23, and are the Parla Foster House and the Hillsdale House.

Parla Foster House: At the intersection of routes 22 and 23 stands an imposing Georgian-style building dating from 1790 and built by Parla Foster, a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Local decorative arts expert and amateur architectural historian David Gallagher considers the building to be a classic example of the Georgian style, noting "the Palladian windows are typical Georgian features, seen in many Columbia County homes such as the Ludlow house in Claverack, 1786, and other homes including frame examples." This imposing brick structure served as a home, a tavern, and a stagecoach stop. A tour of this building was organized by Hillsdale historian Chris Atkins, Marilyn Herrington and proprietor Carrie Harrington. *(Hillsdale Historians, May 25, 2020).*

Hillsdale House: In their article about the Latting family, the Hillsdale historians Lauren Letellier and Chris Atkins write, "*...The Latting Tavern is still standing and known today as the Hillsdale House. The tavern became a stagecoach stop on the Columbia Turnpike. This historic tavern has been in almost continuous operation since 1814 and is now owned by Cory and Carmen Barbato. If you look at the eastern gable end of the building, you can clearly see the contours of the original tavern, which was enlarged over the years".*







(above) ***The Parla Foster House*** *and* ***The Hillsdale House****, photos by the HIllsdale Historians,* ***Chris Atkins*** *and* ***Lauren Letellier***

Chapter 9 - Inns, Taverns & Mail - Items on Display



Contents of Inns & Tavern Wall and Display Case

Stagecoach Warmer *(circa 1700s–1800s)*
Because stagecoaches lacked heating systems, they used portable heating devices to keep passengers warm during freezing winter travel. These metal or wooden boxes held hot coals, heated bricks, or hot water bottles, and were placed on the floor to warm passengers' feet, alongside heavy furs and shared body heat. Stagecoaches stopped at roadside inns or relay stations every 15–20 miles to swap out cooled implements for freshly heated ones.

Collection of Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski

Pewter
In the 18th century, silversmiths began using pewter as a cheaper alternative to silver. An alloy made of tin mixed with other metals like bismuth, copper and lead, pewter was referred to as "Poor Man's Silver".

Large Bowl, Baby Cup, Plate, Spoon, and Platter *(circa late 1700s–early 1800s)*
Collection of Lesley Doyel

Fork *(circa late 1700s–early 1800s)*
Collection of Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski

Colonial Tankard *(replica, circa 1976)*
Collection of Sharon Flitterman-King

Cracker Tin *(circa early 1800s)*
In the 1700s, before the invention of tin biscuit boxes, crackers and dry goods were stored in dovetailed wooden boxes ("caddies"), lidded pewter canisters, and tin-glazed earthenware pots.
Collection of Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski

Small Bowl *(circa 1970s)*
Gift of Richard Barton

Traditional woven placemat *(contemporary)*
Collection of Sharon Flitterman-King

Stoneware Beer Bottles *(circa early 1700s)*
Stoneware, such as crocks, jugs, and mugs, was often used for utilitarian storage. Fired at high temperatures, this pottery was very durable and often salt-glazed, resulting in a dimpled, "orange peel" texture. *Collection of Lesley Doyel*

Laird's Apple Brandy Jug *(circa late 1700s)*
This two-handled jug contained apple brandy that was distilled by Laird and Company, founded in 1780. Jugs like this were popular in taverns, and could be used for travel.
Collection of Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski

Coffee Bean Grinder *(circa late 1800s)*
18th-century coffee bean grinders featured hand-carved wood or wrought-iron bodies, iron hand cranks, "burr" mechanisms (in which the coffee beans were ground between two revolving abrasive surfaces), and a small pull-out drawer to collect the grounds. *Collection of Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski*

Tin Candlestick Holder (*replica*) *Collection of Sharon Flitterman-King*

Colonial Clay Pipe *(circa early 1800s)*
Cheap and disposable Colonial tobacco pipes were primarily made from kaolin, a fine, heat-resistant white clay imported from England and Holland.
Collection of Lesley Doyel

Fireplace Bellows *(circa late 1700s)*
Collection of Lesley Doyel

Folk Art Painting *(circa 1970s)*
It was common for people to commemorate significant family events with a painting. This one commemorates a couple's first wedding anniversary, which is known as the paper anniversary.
Collection of Sharon Flitterman-King

Wooden Wall Sconce with Tin Candleholder *(replica)*
Wall sconces holding candles adorned the walls of homes and taverns.
Collection of Sharon Flitterman-King

Glass Bottles and Drinking Glasses* *(circa late 1700s–early 1800s)
A variety of glassware types that were common in 18th-century America.
Collection of Lesley Doyel



Chapter 10 - Commerce & Currency

By Mitch Mondello, In memory of Bill McKivor (1940-2021)



(Above) T. Hardy , convicted taitor, 1794 Conder Coin



James Conder, (1761 - 1823), artist unkown



18th century coin purse

The first thing to cover in this section is the actual name of this token series. In Britain, they are known as 18th Century Provincial tokens. Collectors in the United States have adopted the name of one of the first catalogers of the series, one James Conder of Ipswich, England. James Conder put out his catalog in the late 18th century. His arrangement became the standard reference.

Early Colonial Coins: A few colonies attempted to mint their own change to ease shortages. The most famous are the silver coins minted by Massachusetts Bay Colony between 1652 and 1682, which featured stamps of a Willow, an Oak, or a Pine Tree. Before the U.S. adopted a unified decimal currency, colonists heavily relied on bartering with staple goods like tobacco, beaver pelts, and indigenous wampum (beads) when coins were unavailable.

Conder Tokens did circulate in early America, but primarily after the Revolutionary War during the early Federal period, rather than the core colonial era. Also known as 18th-Century Provincial Tokens, these private copper pieces were minted in Great Britain starting in 1787 to combat a massive shortage of small-denomination copper coins. Because the young United States faced an equally severe coin shortage before the Philadelphia Mint achieved high-volume production, millions of these British tokens crossed the Atlantic and were used during the later part of the 18th century and the early part of the 19th.

The Franklin Press Token: Struck in England in 1794, this token featured a classic printing press. While initially produced as a local British merchant token, many were shipped to America to serve as much-needed copper change. Because they were roughly the same size and weight as British halfpennies and pennies, the public accepted them seamlessly alongside whatever other miscellaneous copper coins were available at the time.
Today, these are highly sought after by collectors of Early American Coppers.



(Above, left) the Philadelphia Mint



(center) The Franklin Press Token (1794)



(right) James Conder coin, Ipswich (England)

Chapter 10 - Commerce, Currency & Coins

From the collection of Mitch Mondello



PEACE AND PLENTY



GUIELMUS TERTIUS REX



EARL HOWE & THE FIRST OF JUNE



GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES



TRIED FOR HIGH TREASON T. HARDY



J. LACKINGTON



GUILFORD WOOLEN MANUFACTORY



LEEDS



ANGLESEA MINING DRUID



WILLIAM STINTON FINE TEAS & COCOA



PAYABLE AT I. FOWLER WHALE FISHERY



MACCLESFIELD



WAINFLEET



MACCLESFIELD



PRO BONO PUBLICO

Chapter 11 - American Revolutionary War Veterans - Hillsdale:







The Revolution's human presence remains visible in local cemeteries and church-yards.

Recent research by Hillsdale resident Jeanne Kiefer has identified 72 Revolutionary War veterans buried in Hillsdale alone. As Jeanne reports, "For the 250th, I began digging into their service records and, as much as possible, their lives." Jeanne gave a talk on this fascinating subject in early October at the RJHS.

From Jeanne Kiefer's book about the American Revolutionary War Veterans of Hillsdale, (published 2025)

In 2016 I researched 15 of Hillsdale's old cemeteries for a town report, and eight years later began work on biographies of the American Revolutionary War veterans who were buried within. I owe a great deal to the two little books published 50 years ago by the Henry Hudson chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Some very determined women sorted through reams of obscure documentation to come up with brief facts about every Revolutionary War veteran they could find buried in Columbia County. Without the internet, Wikipedia or Ancestry to help them! Thank you, ladies.

These books handed me the names of 55 Hillsdale veterans, and further research has added 16 more to the list - a total of 71 soldiers, at the time of this publlication. I've been able to fill in some life details for all of them, but a number left very faint paper trails. These men lived 250 years ago, so this was not unexpected.
What was a surprise was the confusing/conflicting information out there on long-dead ancestors. In two cases, the dates chiseled into their granite tombstones were wrong! All this is to say, I cannot vouch for the strict accuracy of every detail within this report.

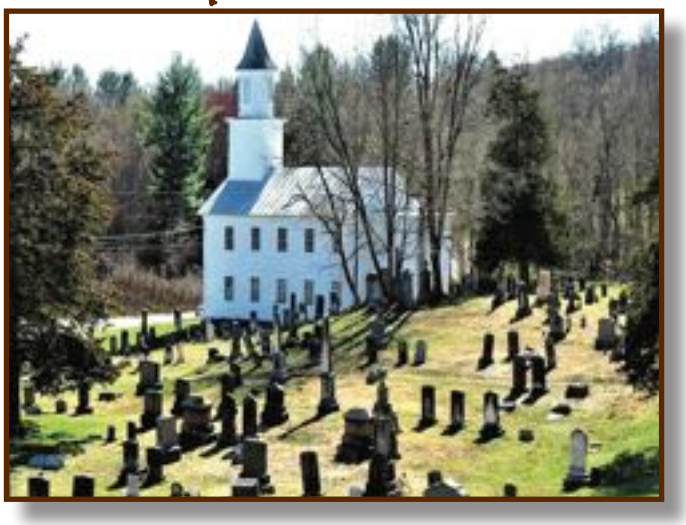
There are several reasons for this caveat.

So all I can claim is that I did the best I could with the available resources. It was often a judgement call deciding which of the conflicting facts to include in this report, and eventually I had to just stop researching and start putting this book together. I predict future local historians will find additional Hillsdale veterans and provide corrections and updates on some of the details here within.

Now, 250 years later, we are able to officially honor each and every one of them for his patriotic service.

What I can say for sure is that Hillsdale can be very proud of its dozens of brave residents who put their lives on the line for our independence and freedom. For the most part, these were rural farmers who laid down their plows and took up their rifles for an inspired idea - creating a new nation, with liberty and justice for all.

Chapter 12 - Gallatin and the Revolutionary War Period







(Left) The Gallatin Church and churchyard; Two Revolutionary War veteran graves; Gallatin Town Historian, Louisa Ruby points out a detail on a veteran's headstone.

Gallatin, NY is deeply connected to the early history of the American Republic. The congregation of the Gallatin Dutch Reform Church was first established in the mid-18th century, and the current church was built in 1824. The sprawling churchyard dates to 1770, and is well-known for hosting a high concentration of Revolutionary War veteran graves.

Gallatin was originally part of the vast Livingston Manor. The Livingston family played a massive role in financing and leading the American Revolution, and many individuals who settled or leased land in the area following the war were veterans who established roots in the town. During an October site visit, participants had the opportunity to explore the historic Gallatin Reform Church and its adjacent churchyard cemetery with Gallatin Town historian Louisa Ruby, and with devoted preservationists, Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogashowski. Visitors were also treated to a brief recital of period music by Steve Gubler on the historic organ, which is a centerpiece of the interior.

The Gallatin Church (bottom left) was founded in 1748 as the Greenbush Dutch Reformed Church, which was destroyed by fire. The new building was dedicated in 1824 and is an outstanding example of early American meetinghouse design. From the early 19th century to the Civil War, the church was led by the Reverend Herman Vedder, and fostered many other local churches including those in Ancram, Copake, Milan, and Pine Plains. The churchyard dates to 1770 and contains tombstones of local residents and of Revolutionary War veterans. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2021.









Left to right - The Gallatin Church, *The National Register of Historic Places* plaque; The Rev. Herman Vedder plaque, erected by his children and grandchildren, the historic church organ first installed in 1872, and later rebuilt by Robert S. Rowland in 1968.

Chapter 12 - Gallatin and the Revolutionary Era - Items & Visits



Above: Articles of Incorporation (1803)
Also on display are the original 1803
Articles of Incorporation signed by Reverend Vedder.
Collection of the Gallatin Church, Gallatin, NY



Above: Indenture Document of 1804 (photo by Gallatin Town Historian Louisa Ruby)
This is a copy of the indenture of 1804, which deeded farmland from John Livingston of Livingston Manor to the Reverend Herman Vedder, in exchange for Vedder's service to the Dutch Reformed Church. It is signed by Vedder and John Wigram, a prominent 18th-century land surveyor. Wigram is most well-known for his 1798 Map of the towns of Livingston, Germantown, and Clermont (shown earlier in this exhibit) – all of the land encompassed by Livingston Manor. The original document is currently in the collection of Clermont Historic Site in Germantown, located on the former estate of the Livingston family.
Collection of Gallatin Church



(above) A site visit to the many graves of Revolutionary War Veteran's graves at the Gallatin Churchyard



(above) Organist Steve Gubler performs at the Gallatin Church during a site visit



Related sacred objects on display at the RJHS including:
Dutch Bible (1741) *Brought over to Colonies in 1759. Publisher: Jacob and Heidrick of Holland Gift of Van Deusen Family*

A Concealment shoe - top center (circa late 1700s to mid-1800s)*Shoes were sometimes placed inside walls of houses as an attempt to ward off evil spirits. This shoe was found inside the walls of a circa-1850 farmhouse in the Craryville area, during a renovation.*
Collection of Marybeth and Gerry Ketz

Toleware Deed Boxes (circa early 1800s) *Collection of Lesley Doyel*

The Book of Common Prayer, (1725). Inscribed: "*This copy came by ship from London to the colonies in 1730.*" *Collection of Lesley Doyel*

18th century Cressey Lamp *on loan from Mellissa Curtis & Bob Rogoshewski*

Chapter 13 - Colonial Gravestones and Modern Rubbings



Grave rubbings have long been a popular way to preserve Colonial American folk art, but the practice is now largely banned or requires strict permits and methodology to prevent damage to fragile stone.

Early New England carvers created a rich visual language on slate and schist, featuring motifs like winged skulls, weeping willow trees, cherubs, and hour-glasses.

In the 1960s and 1970s, as the nation's bicentennial approached, artists and historians such as Irene Mahannah Lahr, whose work is shown here, traveled across Massachusetts and New York to document these fast-deteriorating carvings. Using rice paper and wax or ink pads, they captured early American beliefs about death and memory. Today, many preservationists, including the Association for Gravestone Studies, recommend non-contact methods to preserve inscriptions instead of rubbings.

The display at right, represents the work of Irene Mahannah Lahr. Lahr was a skilled potter who, in addition to capturing gravestone imagery with chalk and paper, also translated her captured images in plaster, ceramics and copper, including the work of the John Steven Shop of Yarmouth Port, MA, as well as the work of other notable New England carvers Nathanial Fuller and Solomon Brewer of the Connecticut River Valley.

Collection of Marybeth and Gerry Ketz





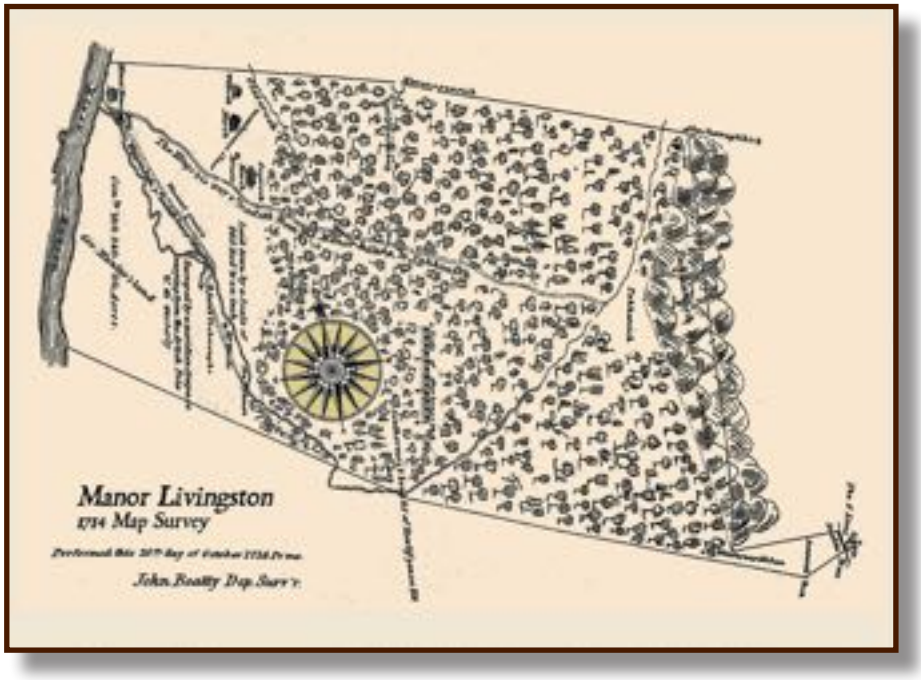
Below:
A number of classic books about funerary imagery during the Colonial period, and the history and practice of making gravestone rubbings, as well as a pivotal article from 1975 providing a survey of ever-changing styles, materials and imagery of gravestones over time. These bolonged to and were used by Irene Mahannah Lahr in her research.



Collection of Marybeth and Gerry Ketz

Chapter 14 - Maps & Boundaries - Livingston & Rensselear

A series of maps displayed in the exhibit illustrated how before, during, and after, the Revolution, the territory that is now Columbia County did not exist as a separate county, but was formed from the southeastern portion of the original Albany County. Columbia County itself was established in 1786.



Replica of Livingston Manor Map (1714)

Livingston Manor was a 160,000-acre tract of land in the Province of New York granted to Robert Livingston the Elder during the reign of George I of Great Britain. Bounded by the Hudson River to the west and the Massachusetts border to the east, it was approximately 20 miles wide and 12 miles long north to south. The Manor encompassed the area that would later become the towns of Livingston, Germantown, Clermont, Taghkanic, Gallatin, Copake, and Ancram, located in Columbia County, New York.

Courtesy Louisa Ruby

Rensselaerswyck Map (1767)

Rensselaerswyck was a Dutch Colonial patroonship (an arrangement that offered massive estates to investors, or "patroons", who agreed to settle at least 50 colonists on the land within four years at their own expense. The estate was originally deeded by the Dutch West India Company in 1630 to Kiliaen van Rensselaer, a Dutch merchant, and was the only successful patroonship in the colony of New Netherland. Rensselaerswyck extended for miles on each side of the Hudson River and included most of the land that would later become the New York counties of Albany and Rensselaer, as well as parts of Columbia and Greene counties.

Courtesy Louisa Ruby



Chapter 14 - Maps & Boundaries - the Formation of Columbia County



Illustration of Hudson Valley Map (2010)
A map of the Hudson Valley in the Revolutionary era shows the area that was to become present-day Columbia County. *(established on April 4, 1786)*

(Map drawn by Jim DeGrand for *Columbia Rising: Civil Life on the Upper Hudson from the Revolution to the Age of Jackson by John L. Brooke)*

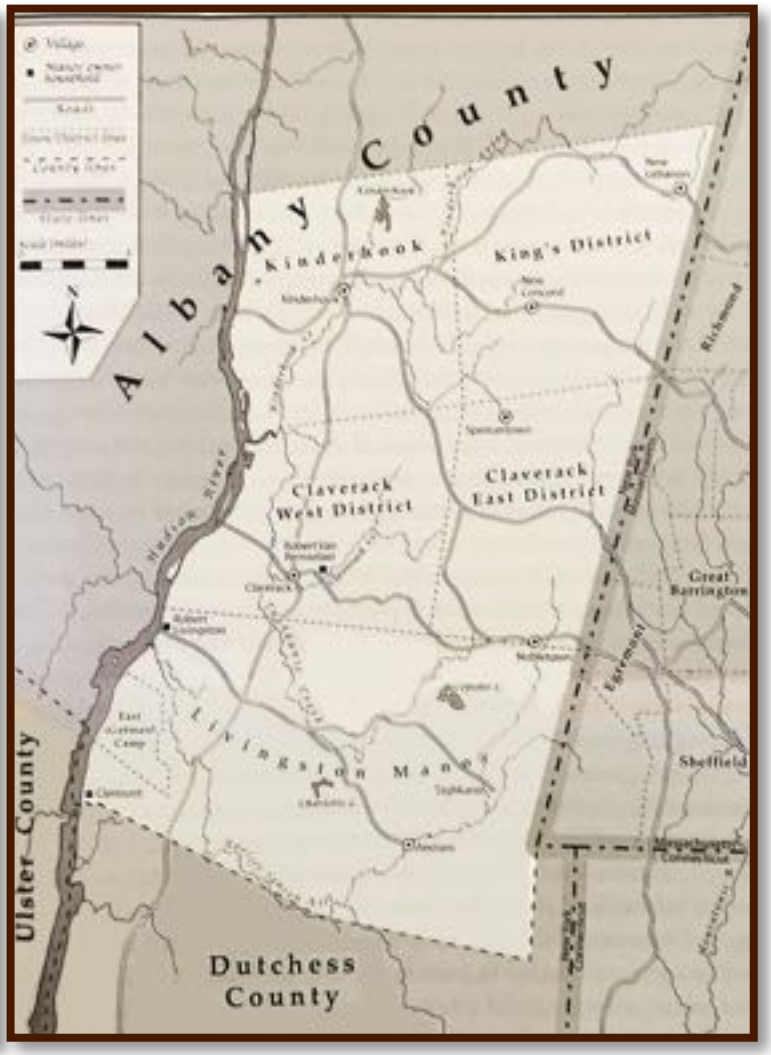


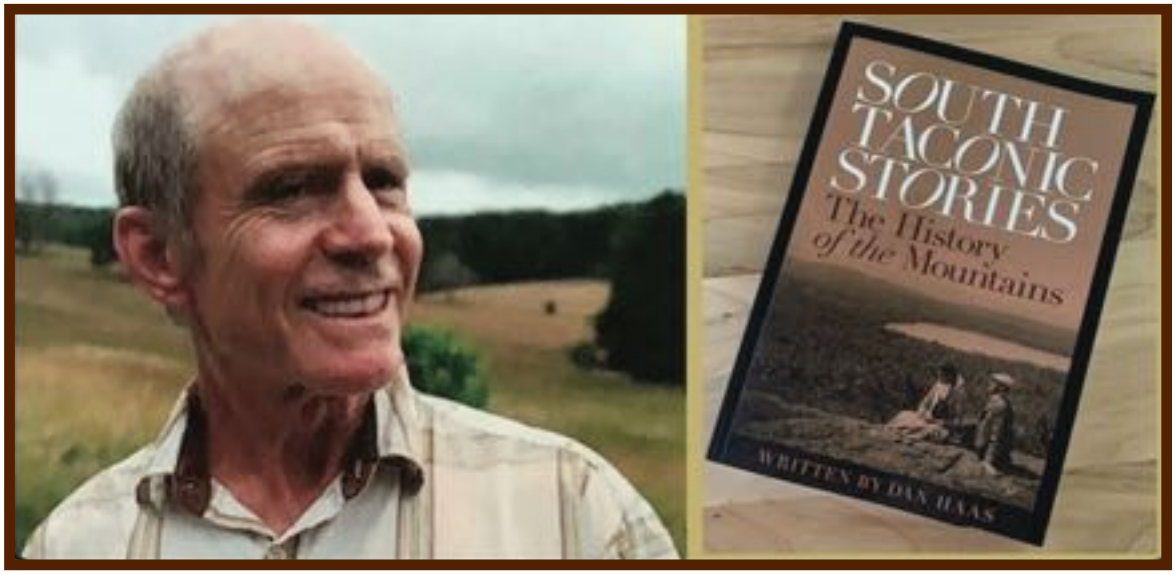
Illustration of Southeast Albany County Map (2010)
The Southeast portion of Albany County was a volatile, strategic crossroads during the American Revolution. Bounded by the Hudson River to the west, the Livingston Manor to the south and the King's District to the north, the region was heavily divided between Patriots and Loyalists (Tories) and many localized skirmishes were fought as civil wars over land disputes and loyalty to the Crown.

(Map drawn by Jim DeGrand for *Columbia Rising: Civil Life on the Upper Hudson from the Revolution to the Age of Jackson* by *John L. Brooke)*



Chapter 15 - South Taconic Stories by Dan Haas

In a special talk at the RJHS, historian Dan Haas spoke about his recently published book, *South Taconic Stories*, and explored the many boundary disputes between the province of New York and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, as well as conflicts over land tenure involving the Dutch Patroonships and the Livingston Manor. These disputes often revolved around the issue of tenant farming...



Excerpt from Introduction to South Taconic Stories:



(above) Dan Haas talks about his book at the RJHS

"My subject, I should make clear, is the South Taconics. The entire Taconic range begins in northwest Connecticut and extends 150 miles up into Vermont. But the section I have studied, hiked, discussed, and learned to particularly love runs only 21 miles north to south, maybe 6 east to west. It consists of two parallel north-south ridges with an interior valley, the New York-Connecticut-Massachusetts intersection near its south end, Catamount ski area on its north end, the towns of Copake and Ancram to the west, Sheffield and Salisbury to the east. On the map, the precise boundaries are Route 23 to the north, 44 to the south, 22 on the west, and 41 on the east. So understand that throughout this text, every reference to the "Taconics" is short for "South Taconics."

These South Taconics are some of the oldest-and smallest mountains on the planet. Their high point is 26,436 feet below Mount Everest. No sherpas or oxygen needed to climb Mount Everett! But they have long been recognized as a distinct area; the Nature Conservancy labelled them one of the "Last Great Places," and several maps and on-line guides detail their topography and features.

I've lived beside them, in Copake, New York, since 1988. Over the years I've hiked every marked trail (many over and over) bushwhacked to a score of remote locations, hunted and camped, introduced them to my kids, showed them off to friends, searched for charcoal circles, Indian graves, 18th century survey marks, forgotten cemeteries, and forgotten trails, and decided the Taconics are the most beautiful place on Earth."*

*copyright ©2026 Dan Haas

Chapter 16 - The 1731 Tri-State Marker



The original Tri-State marker (left) and the current descriptive plaque



(above) Map showing the original southwest corner of Massachusetts, New York, & Connecticut

Visitors also had the opportunity to register for a site visit to the 1731 Tri-State Marker, which established the original southwest corner of Massachusetts, marking the boundary junction of Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. Now located on private property, the site visit will be led by the property owners Carol Falcetti and Norman Osofsky. They were joined by RJHS board member Jane Peck, who was part of the group that rediscovered the long-forgotten marker hidden for generations amidst thick underbrush.

The 1731 New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts tri-state region stems from the historic Treaty of Dover and survey, which set Connecticut's western border and created "The Oblong"—a narrow 60-mile strip of land.
Found near Boston Corners Road and today's Harlem Valley Rail Trail intersection area, the original 1731 Tri-state Survey Marker serves as a tangible remnant of early colonial cartography and border adjustments. The marker also originally designated the historic southwest corner of Massachusetts before that pocket of land was officially ceded to New York State in 1855. Now on private property, the Sunday site visit was a rare opportunity to see the marker, which, until recent years, was lost in surrounding underbrush and found by local historians on farmland owned by Boston Corner residents, Carol Falcetti and Norman Osofsky.

Historical background: When a long-running boundary dispute between New York and Connecticut was settled in 1731, New York received a two-mile-wide, 60-mile-long strip of previously unclaimed land along its eastern border known as the Oblong. Surveyor Nathan Birdsall, himself a Quaker, alerted Friends on Long Island and in Rhode Island and Massachusetts that the newly available land was for sale. Settlers soon arrived, purchasing large tracts, clearing farms, building roads and homes, and establishing what became known as Quaker Hill.

photo: Richard Peck



(left)
Jane Peck leads attendees to the tristate marker for a site visit

(right)
Bruce Darling and Jane Peck at the time of discovery of the original Tri-State Marker



Sundry Goods - Items on Display

Various other typical, period-household items displayed in *"Patriots, Plowshares and Post Roads"*











(Top Left) **"Painted Portrait of a Sheep"** *Alistar B. Martin*
On loan from Mike and Maryanne Fallon

(Top Right) **Spinning Great/Walking Wheel** *(replica)*
Collection RJHS, gift of Olive Langdon

(middle row right) **Two Pocket purses**
(left) Crewel Work replica by Sharon Fitterman-King

Pieced pocket *made by Sarah K. Havener*
Both examples are the precursors of the "pocketbook."

(middle row center) **Butter Churns, Standing and Rocking and round bent-wood Cheese Box**
From the collections of Lewis Cleale and Melissa Curtis and Bob Rogoshewski

Toleware Spice Case
Toleware is painted tin Collection of Lesley Doyel

(right) **Charleville Flintlock Rifle *(replica),*** *with bayonet (not shown)*
Modeled after the French 1763 musket, the Charleville Flintlock rifle was used extensively throughout the American Revolution.

Long Barrel Rifle
American frontiersmen, hunters, and specialized militia—primarily on the colonial side—carried long-barrel rifles.
Collection of Lesley Doyel

Long Barrel Rifle
Collection of Mike Fallon

Colonial Tricorne Hat *(replica)*
Known as a "cocked hat" in the 18th century, the tricorne varied greatly in style and size. Collection of Jeanne Kiefer



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Mitch Mondello
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