West Point Foundry Preserve Visit

Unit: Cold Spring: Learning Where We Live

Destination(s)

West Point Foundry Preserve

(845) 473-4440
68 Kemble Avenue

Cold Spring, NY 10516
www.scenichudson.org

County

Putnam

Grades

6th Grade

Author

Jeff Sniffen, Haldane Elementary, & Susan Hereth, Scenic Hudson

Summary

Visit(s) to West Point Foundry Preserve provide a foundation for other lessons in this unit. Depending on your priorities and the amount of time you have, students can learn about the:

- foundry and how it influenced the community's development
- archaeological uncovering of the site
- molding, blacksmithing, and other industrial processes
- planning needed to create the preserve

Question

- What is the historical, cultural, and environmental significance of this site?
- How does the preserve, and its history, affect us as individuals and our community?

Content Understanding(s)

- History of the preserve -- once the site of a landmark of American industrial technology, the West Point Foundry.
- How the preserve, and the Foundry before it, shaped the community of Cold Spring.
Concept Understanding(s)

- How humans and their environment affect and depend on each other.
- Meaning of/appreciation for community.
- Ramifications of progress and change.
- Role of the individual in all of the above.
- How history, environment, and culture intertwine at one site.

Vocabulary

- Moulding house
- Gun foundry
- Boring mills
- Turning shop
- Boiler shop
- Parrot Gun
- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Ecology
- Interdependency

Suggested Time Frame(s)

Trip activities can be adjusted for one or two half- or full-day visits. We spread the entire unit over an entire year, but recommend spreading it over just 6-8 weeks.

Narrative

POSSIBLE PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Invite speakers to provide background information on the West Point Foundry and the surrounding community. The resource people students will meet during the trip or as part of future lessons are one possibility. (See resource section for contacts.)

Use your social studies text book or other sources to provide background on the industrial revolution, the civil war, and other topics related to the West Point Foundry.

Ask students to reflect on their community and its history in their journals.

- What places in Cold Spring (or your town) are the most important to you and provide you with your basic needs?
- If asked to show a new resident around Cold Spring where would you take him or her? Students may also draw a map showing these places. If you are doing a unit on mapmaking, they can practice drawing to scale and creating keys to highlighted places.

WEST POINT FOUNDRY PRESERVE TRIPS

During a four-hour visit, students can rotate through four stations with 15 to 20 minutes for journal writing or discussion after each. We were able to make two such trips experiencing the eight stations described below. Choose the stations that best meet your goals and the amount of time you have. The destination section includes contact information for station leaders. Some may be able to conduct their activity at your school.
1. Students identify and mark the historic location of the machine shop (Elizabeth Norris, archaeologist). 2. Students assume a role in the foundry process to learn how iron is forged. (Dean Anderson) 3. Students hear a story about a day in the life of a foundry worker and another about Governor Kemble (Jonathan Kruk, storyteller).

4. Students play an ecological contamination game that demonstrates the spreading of pollutants like cadmium through the marsh's ecosystem. (Eric Lind, director, Constitution Marsh) 5. Students identify and measure the actual location of the Foundry's boring mill using information the original archaeologists used.

6. Students conduct an archaeological dig, uncovering and sifting through dirt at a housing site on the grounds of the foundry. They help archaeologists uncover and bag artifacts. Stations five and six were led by students and/or professors from Michigan Technological University who are part of an archaeological team that works seasonally on the site.

7. Students build sand molds for iron forging and participate in the manipulation of iron. (Dean Anderson and Andy Bicking, Scenic Hudson) 8. Using maps and markers, students develop a site-plan for developing the West Point Foundry site into a park for the public. (Susan Hereth and Rita Shaheen, Scenic Hudson)

**POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES**

Encourage students to reflect on the trip by leading a class discussion and/or assigning journal writing or drawing. Possible discussion questions or writing/drawing prompts include:

- What were three of your most memorable experiences?
- Share your thoughts about tools, clothing, or other artifacts.
- How did you work best during the trip, e.g., in a group or as an individual?
- Did you prefer hands-on work, like the archaeological dig, talks by our resource people, or something else?
- Is there any thing about the trip you feel we should do differently in the future?
- What would have helped you learn more from your experiences?

Visit the nearby Foundry School Museum to see and discuss tools, clothing, journals, and other items in the collection. (See destination tips for contact information.)

**Supplies Used**

See attachments & worksheets

**What Should Students Know At The End of This Lesson**

- Industrial activities that took place at the West Point Foundry from 1818-1911
- How the industrial revolution changed the landscape of America
- Industrial changes that have taken place since the early 1900's; how a majority of production activities have migrated to other countries and the reasons why this happened
- Also, see the essential questions and understandings above

**How do you assess student learning?**

- Level of engagement in activites and discussions
- Journal writing
Use of information gained on site in other lessons in this unit

Site Tips

Keep the weather in mind as you plan and schedule your trip. Long pants and sturdy sneakers or hiking boots are a good idea. Consider rain gear and insect repellent depending on the time of year. Talk with Scenic Hudson about where to have lunch; they provided us with tarps and portable tents so ask if this is possible and make other arrangements if not. The Preserve is carry-in, carry-out so bring garbage bags.

Scenic Hudson owns and manages West Point Foundry Preserve. Their address is One Civic Center Plaza, #200, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; www.scenichudson.org. Key contacts are Susan Hereth, community education coordinator, and Rita Shaheen, senior park planner. Reach them at 845-473-4440, info@scenichudson.org

STATION LEADERS AND LOCAL EXPERTS

One of the best things about our trips was the flexibility of the experts and hosts. We told them what students wanted to do and they responded by creating the stations. Take advantage of their enthusiasm to meet your goals and students's needs.

Dean Anderson, metal works artist, Super Square Corp., PO Box 636, Beacon, NY 12508, Supersquare2@aol.com

Mindy Krazmien, executive director, Putnam County Historical Society and Foundry School Museum, 63 Chestnut Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516, mkrazmien@pchs-fsm.org. The Museum is a great source of photos, artifacts, artwork, and census information related to the Foundry.

Jonathan Kruk, storyteller, Cold Spring, NY 10516, jonatales@highlands.com, http://www.jonathankruk.net

Tom Lake, naturalist, Hudson River Estuary Program, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, and instructor, Behavioral Science, Dutchess Community College, TRLake7@aol.com. Tom is, by many accounts, the leading expert on prehistori times in this region and a wonderful source of information.

Eric Lind, director, Constitution Marsh Audubon Center, PO Box 174, Cold Spring, NY 10516, 845-265-2601, elind@audubon.org. Eric gathered a great deal of information about the Marathon Battery plant, the contamination it caused, and the Superfund clean-up as well as photos and information on the marsh and larger ecosystem.

Patrick Martin, director, Graduate Studies in Industrial Archaeology, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, MI 49931. 906-487-1885.

Elizabeth Norris, assistant archeologist, West Point Foundry Preserve, Michigan Technological University, 25 Kemble Ave, Cold Spring, NY 10516 917-648-1201, enorris2000@yahoo.com.

Jan Thacher, photographer and local historian, 62 Chestnut Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Chaperone Information

Chaperones should be prepared for extensive walking in wooded areas.