

West Point Foundry Preserve and Foundry Cove Park

Most tourists to Cold Spring only know the shops and eateries of Main Street. Its true treasures are at the historic and scenic Hudson River waterfront.

It is but a few steps past the end of Main Street and under the railroad walkway to the gazebo and stunning views up and down the Hudson River. To the north: the icon Storm King Mountain, the death-defying Breakneck Ridge, and imposing Mount Taurus. To the south: the magnificent edifices of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, jutting Constitution Island, and World's End which swallows southbound ships. The shoreline can also be toured by kayak, canoe and paddleboards offered by Hudson River Expeditions (HudsonRiverExpeditions.com) located near the Cold Spring riverfront.



**West Point Foundry
office building**

Strolling along the river southward past Hudson River Expeditions to the MetroNorth Railroad station is Foundry Dock Park – maintained by Scenic Hudson (ScenicHudson.org). This quiet, little park is the perfect place for repast and repose while watching paddlers put in at sheltered Foundry Dock Cove. A plaque here commemorates the composer of the Civil War era poem and hymn “Jesus Loves Me” – and evident in this spiritual spot, not only does the Bible tell us so, but also all of creation. As if to sanctify this already sacred place, adjoining the park is the Chapel of Our Lady – built in 1833 – more akin to a Greek temple than country chapel.

Following the curvature of the shoreline leads to West Point Foundry Preserve (FoundryTour.org) which encompasses the wildlife sanctuary of Constitution Marsh, the historic structures of West Point Foundry, and two miles of easy walking trails. Ecological battle lines are drawn in the marsh as the invasive, banner-waving phragmites attempt to overrun the entrenched, food-providing cattails. Ornithological delights of this day included the chimpanzee calls of a *pileated woodpecker*, an obscure *bald eagle* atop a distant snapped conifer, and a not-so-common mated pair of *common mergansers*. The topmost trail leads to the Putnam History Museum (PutnamHistoryMuseum.org) which offers facts and artifacts of West Point Foundry. As an ironworks factory of the 1800's, the West Point Foundry produced everything from war munitions to locomotives to water pipes. On Saturday, May 2, from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., Scenic Hudson will conduct a free history and nature tour of the West Point Foundry Preserve (<http://www.scenichudson.org/event/free-guided-history-tours-2015-05-02-150000-2015-05-02-163000>).

Reading the war production statistics of the foundry was astounding: among the items 1,700 cannons, some so long and large I have nothing to compare it to other than perhaps the girth of a sycamore or tulip tree. Over 600,000 soldiers died in the Civil War – so ironic the moniker – millions were maimed. Were our societal history as peaceful as our individual daily lives, and

some film producer came along and made a true-to-life horror movie of the Civil War, we would dismiss that fiction as too far-fetched to ever really happen.

Also worthwhile to visit is the 1834 Church of Our Lady of Loretto. The gilded sanctuary, slat wood ceiling, stained glass images, and icons of Irish and Italian saints evidence the faith of this foundry town. Pausing for prayer among the worn pews, I wondered how confounded the Civil War era parishioners much have felt as no one wanted war, but inexorably each step of honor, righteousness and glory was taken until Fort Sumter was fired upon in April 1861 and arms laid down at Appomattox in April 1865.

For dining, Main Street in Cold Spring offers an endless cuisine and every venue from pizza parlor to ice cream parlor, from restaurant to tavern, from deli to dessert. Touring these historic parks, and the smorgasbord of dining, all make for an ideal day of exploring, learning and enjoyment, and perhaps even reflection and resolution.



Foundry Brook waterfall



Map of West Point Foundry Preserve



Constitution Marsh



Foundry Cove Park