



# Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct

*Newsletter*

No. 18, Summer 2004

## Friends Publish Map of Aqueduct in New York City

The Croton Aqueduct began its 41-mile journey to bring pure water to New York City in Westchester County. The Westchester part of its route—now Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park—is shown on the color map and guide published by Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct in 1998. This June the Friends published a companion map, *The Old Croton Aqueduct in New York City*, in the same foldout format. The new map shows the route of the Aqueduct's final 15 miles, from today's Yonkers- Bronx boundary, through the Bronx to the Harlem River, where it crossed to Manhattan on the High Bridge, to its terminal reservoir at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street.

Winthrop Aldrich, former State Parks Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation, commented on the map: "It is a truism that sequels never rise to the level of acclaim accorded the original. Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct has produced the exception that disproves the rule. I am entranced by the New York City map—the richness of the meticulous, voluminous detail in text and map no



less than the alluring and easily comprehended graphics. This is a notable contribution to the literature and deserves a wide distribution."

**Different emphasis.** The new map differs in emphasis from the first map, reflecting the fact that the city was the destination of the Aqueduct and that the city has changed dramatically since 1842, when the Aqueduct opened. All of what is now the Bronx was then part of Westchester County. Central Park did not exist. For most of its length the Aqueduct traversed farms, countryside, and hamlets like Fordham and Carmansville. The population of New York City, then about 312,000, was concentrated between the Battery and, roughly, 23rd Street. As the Aqueduct approached this delivery area, one encountered the gatehouses and reservoirs needed for storing and directing the water to meet constantly changing needs. The New York City map features these waterworks.

The map also reflects the Aqueduct's evolution as engineers



*Searching for Aqueduct clues in Manhattan. Robert Romagnoli, map designer, peers at a building. Behind him, from left: Doug Emilio, John Bartelstone, and Nestor Danyluk. Just visible behind them: Ellen Macnow and Colleen Alderson of the Parks Dept. (Photo by B. Goodman)*

tried to keep up with the city's explosive growth (partly engendered by the Aqueduct's success) and burgeoning demand for water. It shows new reservoirs built; gatehouses moved; High Bridge Tower added to serve new buildings on the heights of north Manhattan; rerouting of the Aqueduct; and its frequent replacement by pipes as Manhattan developed.

Also shown are aspects of the three-times-larger New Croton Aqueduct, opened in 1890. Structures at which the two aqueducts came together, shown on the map, allowed the system's operators to mingle and distribute the two water flows through increasingly complex networks, and eased delivery of water to the west Bronx and upper Manhattan. Completion of Jerome Park Reservoir and the New Croton Dam in the first decade of the twentieth century marked the culmination of the Croton system.

**Creating the map.** The New York City map project started where the map starts, in Van Cortlandt Park, where highways prevent walkers from following the Aqueduct through the length of the park. A walk in December 2001 with Van Cortlandt Park Friends and staff helped determine the best alternate routes for mapping. Soon after, on two bright winter days early in 2002, walks with Nestor Danyluk and John Bartelstone along the Aqueduct route between Coogan's Bluff and Central Park identified tantalizing clues, like cut-off building corners and diagonally aligned gardens, to the pre-development passage of the Aqueduct through Manhattan.

It took the next 27 months to create the graphics and text, including very helpful review by a number of individuals (see page 5). Design and cartography were again the work of Robert Romagnoli, who was an avid Aqueduct walker before he started mapping its path. Robert Kornfeld, Jr., provided historical expertise on the Croton system. Charlotte Fahn directed the project, and she and Bob Kornfeld co-authored the text. John Bartelstone, who has long tracked the Aqueduct in the city, generously provided information on its various reroutings in Manhattan.

Bob Kornfeld notes, "The Aqueduct is evident as a continuous structure topped by a railway for much of its route in Bronx and Westchester counties. Unfortunately, the Croton system on Manhattan Island has been perceived as widely spaced, vaguely related structures. Our hope is that this map, by illustrating the history, evolution, and physical presence of the system, will foster an understanding that it is really a cohesive work of historic engineering."



*W. 153rd St. and St. Nicholas Ave. in Manhattan: the "cut off" facade of a building wall abuts the Aqueduct's right-of-way where it angled toward Amsterdam Avenue. (Photo by C. Fahn)*



*The rock outcrop on which Central Park's Belvedere Castle was later built was at the southwest corner of the Aqueduct's receiving reservoir, now under the Great Lawn. (Photo by B. Goodman)*



*The pleasures of late summer on the trail. This photo, by Dr. Arthur Langmuir, is dated September 2, 1928, and captioned "Hikers on the old Croton Aqueduct, 1837-1842, going North just beyond Pinecrest Drive." From the archives of the Hastings Historical Society, with permission.*



## Sleepy Hollow - Tarrytown Updates

**Breezeway at Sleepy Hollow High School.** There is good news on ending the longstanding detour at the high school. The School District has agreed to change the doors of the breezeway that blocks the trail so that trail users can pass through the structure and stay on the Aqueduct. However, Dr. Howard Smith, Superintendent of Schools, has informed us that it won't happen this summer as originally planned because of site complications. The Friends will continue to work with the School District to see this trail improvement realized at the earliest possible time.

**New building approved.** After years of review, the Tarrytown Planning Board in April approved a six-unit building ("Aqueduct Courtyard") west of the Aqueduct, between Prospect Ave. and the back of the Tarrytown medical office building. The new building will be about 64 feet wide and 35 feet high and will largely block the deep, green view now enjoyed from the trail.

The original proposal was for two four-unit buildings. The protracted review resulted in part from efforts by the Planning Board, the Friends, and neighbors—particularly Berndt and Helen Ringeisen of the Mozartina Academy, directly across the Aqueduct from the building site—to reduce the size and impacts of the project and its effect on the trail-using public.

A major concern is the fate of a spectacular cluster of mature eastern redcedar trees at the site. The Friends secured a consultation by a state urban forester, who attested to the unusual health, size, and



*Several of the cedars seen from the Aqueduct just north of Prospect Avenue.*

beauty of the trees. With the reduced footprint of the project, none of the large cedars will be cut down. Still, with construction equipment moving across the site, the trees will be exceptionally vulnerable to root damage.

The Friends proposed to the Planning Board that the developer be required to hire a village-approved arborist to be present during all construction and whenever equipment is moving on the site. The board ultimately imposed this requirement. (Annual inspection of the trees' condition for 10 years is also required.) Much will depend on enforcement by the village. The Friends also urged the best possible design, since trail users will be viewing the rear wall of the new building.



### Medallion Inaugurates Display Collection

One element of the Friends' plans for the Overseer's (Keeper's) House visitor center is to exhibit historic material that will bring life to the stories of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Board member Robert Kornfeld, Jr., has given the collection a memorable inaugural gift by donating to the Friends, for eventual display, one of the original Aqueduct medallions. Aqueduct images and statistics adorn both sides of the 2"-diameter piece, with a cross-section of the brick-lined tunnel and its stone mantle on the front side, and the Murray Hill distributing reservoir—with the city's skyline beyond—on the reverse.

Such medallions were a common way of commemorating important events in the nineteenth century. The 1842 opening of the Croton Aqueduct was a turning point in the life of New York City. To mark the giant Croton water celebration held on October 14 of that year, the city's Common Council commissioned the Aqueduct medallion, designed by sculptor Robert Lovett.

The Friends are most grateful for this contribution, and hope others with Aqueduct memorabilia will consider making a similar gift.



## Sixth-Graders' Aqueduct Project Ranks Nationally

An exhibit entitled "Flowing Into the Future: The Croton Aqueduct Provides Life to New York City," created by three sixth-graders, was one of the projects chosen from among thousands to represent New York State in the prestigious National History Day Competition, held on June 14-17 in Maryland. The students, John Gearity, Carl Barreto, and Patrick Coleman attend Genesis at Xaverian, a middle school in Brooklyn for academically gifted students.

At the national competition, the project won an impressive twelfth place out of more than 90 projects in the Junior Group Exhibit category. Earlier this spring, the boys had won the Brooklyn Award for the best project in Brooklyn, First Place at the New York City Historical Fair on March 7, and then topped it all with First Place at the New York State History Fair in Cooperstown on April 30.

The exhibit consists of an eight-foot by six-foot display board, highlighted by a replica of the High Bridge. Using sources at the Fire Museum, Business and Science Library (New York Public Library), and other archives, Patrick, John, and Carl researched the

fires and epidemics and the rapid growth experienced by New Yorkers in the 1700s and 1800s that led to construction of the Aqueduct. Their exhibit reports on how the city raised funds, hired workers, acquired Westchester land, and built the Croton Dam, Aqueduct, and bridges.

The idea for the project came from a family drive that took one of the boys under the arches of the High Bridge. After their triumph at the state

competition, Michael Boyle, Aqueduct trail manager, led the three down into the Aqueduct in Ossining for a look at the real thing, bats and all. The Friends salute this award-winning trio!



*L-R: Middle-schoolers John Gearity, Carl Barreto, and Patrick Coleman with their winning Aqueduct display.*

Thank you on behalf of the Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct to those whose efforts contributed in numerous ways to creation of the map of the Aqueduct in New York City.

John Bartelstone  
Peter Capek  
William Cassella  
Daniel Chazin  
Cornelia Cotton  
Holly Daly  
Nestor Danyluk  
Stanley Fahn  
Brian Goodman  
Brian Hatch  
William Fox Logan  
Dale Ramsey  
John Reutershan  
Richard Romagnoli  
James Renner  
Karen Sherman  
Pamela Sullivan  
Ildiko Viczian

Bronx Borough President's Office:  
Daniel Donovan

### Bronx Historical Society:

Lloyd Utan

### East River C.R.E.W.:

Victoria Gilbert Mary Nell Hawk

### Friends of Highbridge Park:

Millie Seubert

### Friends of Van Cortlandt Park:

Paul Sawyer Dart Westphal

### Jerome Park Conservancy:

Anne Marie Garti Sandra Sider

### New York City Dept. of Environmental Protection:

Kim Estes-Fradis Raphael Hurwitz

Douglas Greeley Charles Sturcken

Joseph Hadden

### New York City Parks & Recreation:

Colleen Alderson Ellen Macnow

John Mattera

### West Harlem Arts Fund:

Savona Bailey McClain

### LZA Technology

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## Happenings



**State Assemblyman Michael Spano** not only organized an Aqueduct cleanup in Yonkers but rolled up his sleeves and joined in. Participants included students from Yonkers and Gorton high schools, Mavis Cain and Joe Kozlowski from Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Aqueduct State Park Manager Michael Boyle, and five contestants for Queen of the Yonkers Puerto Rican Day Parade. "As a National Historic Landmark, the Aqueduct is part of New York State's history," said Spano. "We are fortunate that part of the trail runs through Yonkers, and have a responsibility to keep it looking clean so it can be enjoyed by our community." Photo on left shows the distaff side of the work crew, with Mavis Cain on the far left.



**Tom Sawyer** had nothing on volunteers from Hastings' Temple Beth Shalom. On June 13, some 20 adults and children led by Louis Schwartz gathered at the Overseer's House in Dobbs Ferry for their second annual community service project on the Aqueduct. This year they gave the fence around the historic keeper's house a sparkling coat of white paint. Talk about making a nearly instant difference . . . (Photos by Doug Emilio, left, and C. Fahn)

**Work on the Yonkers North Hudson Promenade** has started and is scheduled for completion in the fall. This Yonkers Planning Dept. project will transform a section of Warburton Avenue overlooking the Hudson into a scenic promenade, connecting in three places with the Aqueduct trail to create a nearly two-mile-long walking loop. Untermyer Park's stone gateposts and carriage paths will be refurbished, making it easier for trail walkers to visit the former estate's grounds and gardens. The view shown is on Warburton near Harriman Avenue. (Photo by C. Fahn)





## Calendar Notes

**Sat., Sept. 18, 9:30 am.** Bike trip, 8-10 miles from Ossining to the dam and back, led by Henry Atterbury, Supt. of Ossining Parks & Recreation, with a visit into the Aqueduct on the way back. Free. Pre-register at 914-941-3189, ext. 302. Part of Hudson River Valley Ramble (800-453-6665). For details, go to [www.hudsonvalleyramble.com](http://www.hudsonvalleyramble.com), click on Events List> Westchester County; see Event no. 117.

**Sat., Sept. 18, morning.** Ossining: Aqueduct tunnel visit led by local historian. Free. Part of Hudson River Valley Ramble (see Sept. 18), Event no. 118.

**Sun., Sept. 19, morning.** Aqueduct tunnel visit led by local historian, part of day-long "Celebrate Ossining: Then & Now." Information: 914-923-0140 or [EmbracingOss@aol.com](mailto:EmbracingOss@aol.com). Free. Also part of Hudson River Valley Ramble (see Sept. 18), Event no. 120.

**Sun., Sept. 26, noon.** Walk on the Aqueduct between Metro-North's Greystone Station (Yonkers) and Hastings, with visits to Untermyer Park, Lenoir Preserve, and Draper Park, all adjoining the Aqueduct with views of the Hudson and Palisades; 7 miles. Led by Hal Kaplan. Free. Part of Hudson River Valley Ramble (see Sept. 18), Event no. 127. Rain cancels.

**Sat., Oct. 9, and Sun., Oct. 10.** Walking tours of the Aqueduct route in Manhattan and the Bronx, led by Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Part of Open House New York. See [www.ohny.org](http://www.ohny.org) for details.

**Sat., Oct. 16 (rain date, Oct. 17), 10 am.** Explore Ossining/Croton section of the Aqueduct including a visit into the tunnel. Register with Westchester Community College (fee), course WJ-D533. Information: 914-785-6830 (option 5 on voicemail message) or [www.sunywcc.edu](http://www.sunywcc.edu), click on Continuing Ed.> Explore Westchester.

**Sat. Oct. 23 (rain date, Oct. 24), 10 am.** Guided walk, 7-8 miles from Metro-North's Greystone Station (Yonkers) to Tarrytown. Register with Westchester Community College (fee), course WJ-D575. For info, see Oct. 16 listing. See [www.aqueduct.org](http://www.aqueduct.org) for updates and new listings.

## MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Your tax-deductible contribution helps to protect and preserve the trail.

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Please make check payable to Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Send it with this coupon to the Friends at Overseer's House, 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109.

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Please let us know if you would like to volunteer.

## New Exhibit: "Valley of the Dam"

The Yorktown Museum has opened "Valley of the Dam" to celebrate the coming 100th anniversary of the New Croton Dam. The museum invites the public to "come and see how water for New York City impacted our local community and changed the lives of many of the residents who were living and working here. New villages were created, new roads and bridges were constructed, houses and farms were relocated. Yorktown was fortunate to have had many water sources available . . . Some of these water sources are still in use by the local population today."

Friends board member Cornelia Cotton has seen the show, which includes Old Croton Aqueduct material, and calls it a marvelous, "must-see exhibit for all of us." Check hours before visiting. See [www.yorktownmuseum.org](http://www.yorktownmuseum.org) or call 914-962-2970. The exhibit is scheduled to run until November 7.

**Correction:** Thanks also to Cornelia for correcting an error in the previous issue (no. 17, p. 1), where a wrong location was given for the New Croton Dam (1905-06). The dam is in the Town of Cortlandt. The original (1842) Croton Dam, now submerged, is in the Town of Yorktown Heights.



## Map Orders

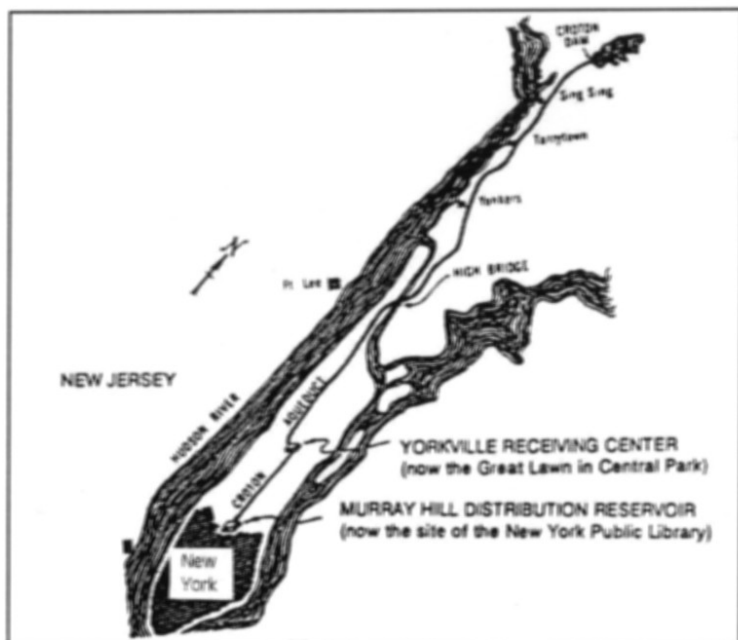
The Friends' full-color map/guides, *Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park* (Westchester County) and *The Old Croton Aqueduct in New York City*, are \$5. each (members, \$4.). Add 75 cents S&H for the first map, 50 cents each additional map. Send a check for the total to the Friends at 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522. For the name of the retailer nearest you, call 914-693-4117 or visit



**Discount Offered.** The retail outlet of [BuyFitnessStuff.com](http://BuyFitnessStuff.com), at 41 Cedar St. (Store 3) in Dobbs Ferry, is offering a 10% discount on pedometers to members of the Friends. Stop by to take a look. Tel. 914-478-2771.

**For inquiries about Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park or to report trail conditions, call Park Manager Michael Boyle at 914-693-5259.**





"Sketch Map of the Old Croton Aqueduct." New York City, the destination of the water supplied by the Aqueduct, occupied only the south tip of Manhattan Island in the 1840s. (From Hastings Historian, Fall 1990.)

**Newsletter:** Charlotte Fahn, *Editor*. News items, reminiscences, and comments welcome: 914-478-3961 or [czfahn@yahoo.com](mailto:czfahn@yahoo.com) or by mail c/o the Friends.

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**Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct** is a private, non-profit, volunteer organization formed to protect and preserve the Old Croton Aqueduct. The Friends work to raise public awareness of the Aqueduct and trail, and to secure the resources that will enable this historic greenway to remain unspoiled in perpetuity. Address: Overseer's House, 15 Walnut St. Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522- 2109; telephone 914-693-4117, [www.aqueduct.org](http://www.aqueduct.org)

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