



NEWS RELEASE

June 12, 2021

For more information contact:
Susan Siegel
Bookhunterpress@verizon.net

Yorktown's Industrial History Comes Alive

Yorktown Heights, NY, June 12, 2021: Yorktown's long forgotten industrial history will be revealed again on Saturday, June 12 when the Yorktown Trail Town Committee unveils a series of interpretive and directional signs at the Sylvan Glen Park Preserve. Together the signs are designed to help visitors explore the Mohegan Granite Quarry located in the park.

A large Gateway sign, located at each of the two entrance parking lots, provides an overview of the quarry, its location and a detailed trail map of the entire Park Preserve. Six interpretive panels which explain the multiple operations in the quarrying process and include many historic photos, are located on existing trails among the remains of the abandoned quarry. Combined, these six panels illustrate the entire quarrying sequence, from drilling to finishing, in a way that brings to life these echoes of Yorktown's industrial past.

The Mohegan Granite Quarry operated from 1890 to 1941 and was once a major supplier of granite for buildings and monuments throughout the northeast and as far away as Nevada. Granite from the quarry was used in the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City and several nationally landmarked buildings. The quarry also finished the granite used in the approaches to the George Washington Bridge.

At its height in the 1920s, the quarry had 200 employees, and sometimes more, depending on the number and size of its contracts.

In addition to the interpretive panels that focus on the technical aspects the quarry operation, the Yorktown Trail Town Committee has created a web page, www.yorktowntrailtown.com/quarry, that recounts the quarry's history, including information about how the quarry site was twice considered for a garbage dump, once for an innovative composting operation, and once for a housing development.

Based on old newspaper reports, the web site also shares stories about how the quarry impacted the local economy. One section is devoted to the quarry's role in the construction of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and includes many photos from the Cathedral's archives. Another identifies 31 buildings and monuments, many with photographs, that used Mohegan granite or were carved at the Mohegan quarry.

The online history also explains why the quarry, although located in Yorktown was often referred to as the "Peekskill" quarry, even by the quarry's owner.

"We're absolutely delighted that the Yorktown Trail Town Committee was able to combine its commitment to the town's trails with an important part of the town's history," said Susan Siegel, the Committee's president. "Now,

when hikers wonder what those strange markings are on the rocks or why there are so many twisted metal cables strewn around the park's trails, they'll have answers. They'll understand what they're looking at."

The interpretive sign project at the Mohegan Granite Quarry was funded by grants by the Hudson River Valley Greenway, the Putnam County Savings Bank, the Candreva Environmental Foundation, and generous contributions from many donors.

The project was a collaborative effort on the part of the following outside consultants and volunteers:

- The technical information on the panels was created by industrial archeologist Matthew Kierstead of Milestone Heritage Consulting.
- The panels were designed by Vox, Inc. under the supervisor of Yorktown Trail Town Committee member Jonathan Nettelfield.
- The panels were installed by volunteers under the direction of Committee members Jane and Walt Daniels and with the assistance of the Yorktown Parks Department.
- The quarry's history was compiled by Committee member Susan Siegel and the quarry web site created by volunteers Maria Sanford and Walt Daniels.

The 343 acre Sylvan Glen Park Preserve is open to the public every day from dawn to dusk. Parking is available at both entrances, off Stony Street and Morris Lane, and the quarry can be reached from either in about 20 minutes of moderate hiking. The Yorktown Trail Town Committee recommends that visitors stick to the marked trails, especially in the vicinity of the quarry, since there are steep cliffs and drop-offs in the area. The trails go around the quarry, including up the steep incline, affording views of the quarry from above, but do not enter the quarry which is overgrown, difficult to access and not recommended.

Since its formation in 2014, the volunteer 501c(3) not-for-profit Yorktown Trail Town Committee has completed projects designed to promote and enhance Yorktown's extensive network of hiking and cycling trails for the enjoyment of town residents and visitors. Its projects have included the construction of the Mohansic Trailway that links the North County Trail to FDR State Park, two permanent Welcome to Yorktown signs on the North County Trailway, and a series of wayfinding signs on town roads that direct visitors to many of the town's hard-to-find trails.

For more information about the Yorktown Trail Town Committee, visit yorktowntrailtown.com.

###