



Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark Museum, 1863 School House

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Introductio

This issue of the Deerpark Diary will continue its articles about background information for the historic markers located in the Town of Deerpark. Through research it has been discovered that some of the information on the markers is incorrect, especially the ones which were erected in the 1930s. Where possible the sources for these articles will be included.



Old Greeting Cards



Holiday Greetings



Santa Visit

Middletown Times Herald
Dec. 31 1927
Santa To Make Belated Call
Summoned by Broker to Visit
Huguenot Children

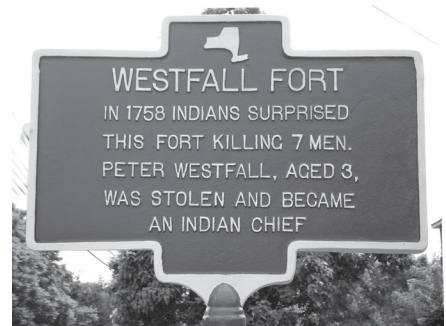
The children of the Neversink valley are looking forward to a delayed visit of Santa claus to the school house in Huguenot tomorrow. George Gilchrist, a broker of New York, who likes to cometo Huguenot, told Saint Nick the boys and girls there have been

very good this year. So a great number of presents will be delivered.

This is a party for the Neversink valley, however, and the practice that has grown during late years of people “horning in” from other communities will not be tolerated.



Westfall Fort



*Blue and Yellow Historic Marker
Route 209, Huguenot
French & Indian War*

Text

In 1758 Indians surprised This fort killing 7 men. Peter Westfall, aged 3, Was stolen & became An Indian Chief.

This marker is located across from Harriet Space Park where Jurian Westfall and his wife lived. In the 1750s this area was claimed by New Jersey. During the French and Indian War (1754-1763) Lenape Indians quarelled over land with the New Jersey colony and attacked the settlers. A number of soldiers were stationed at Westfall Fort to protect this area.



Royal-American Militiaman

In June 1758, Jurian's son, four-year old Peter, was captured by a war party of Indians. Jurian mentions this in his will. He left his son a portion of his estate, "If he lives to come back from his captivity."

Peter came back after 25 years, having heard of his inheritance. His mother recognized him but he did not remember her. He

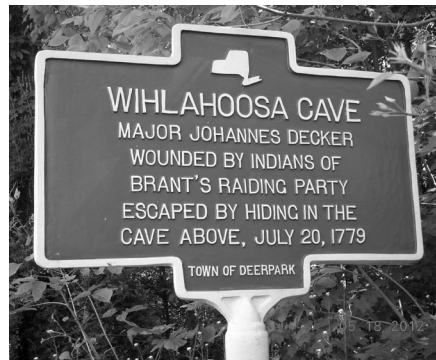
did remember the home and the little pond where he was playing when captured. That pond is still there and brings back a reminder of the trying times.

Peter had forgotten his native Dutch language and could only converse with his people through two Indian interpreters who came with him. He said he had been well treated by the Indians and had become a chief. He would not listen to the entreaties of his family to stay with them and returned to the life of the Children of the Forest.

The information for this article is in the Deerpark Historian's library in a pamphlet entitled "Children of the Forest".

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Wilahoosa Cave



*Blue & Yellow Historic Marker
Neversink Drive
American Revolution*

Text

Major Johannes Decker Wounded by Indians of Brant's Raiding Party Escaped by hiding in the Cave above, July 20, 1779.

Wihlahoosa, the local name of a cave on the side of the Shuwangunk Mountains, east side of Neversink River, probably is from the Indian words "wihl" meaning "head" and Hoos, meaning "pot or kettle". The reference may have been to its shape. In the vicinity of the cave was an Indian burial ground covering six acres.



Joseph Brant JOSEPH BRANT

During Brant's raid on July 21st 1779, Major Decker, who had a bounty on his head from the British, made his escape from capture. He hid in this cave until nightfall. Then he rode over the mountain to Greenville to be reunited with his son.

In the 1840's, the Erie RR was built through the Black Rock cut through the mountains. It is believed that the blasting and digging during track construction caused the Wihlahoosa cave to collapse.

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Slaves



Text
Old Burial Ground for
Slaves owned by families
In this vicinity is
Located on the hill above.

The first slaves were brought to New Amsterdam (New York) in 1626 by the Dutch East India Company. The area which is now known as the Town of Deerpark was settled in the 1690s. Slave cemeteries are located in both the Upper and Lower neighborhoods of the settlement.

The Upper Neighborhood slaves were buried next to the Gumaer Cemetery (Godeffroy) and the Lower Neighborhood slaves were buried on a hill in the vicinity of Decker Fort, Neversink Drive—the exact location is unknown.

The following residents living in the area which became the Town of Deerpark were listed as slave holders in the 1790 census:

Town of Mamakating
(Upper Neighborhood)

Name of owner	# Owned
Elijah Reeves	1
Abraham Westfall	4
Jacobus Swartwout	4
Hermanus Van Inwegen	5
Jacob Gumaer	1
William Cuddeback Jr.	5
Ezikiel Gamaer	1
Cornelius Van Wagan	3
Abraham Cuddeback Jr.	8
Benjamin DePuy Sr,	8
Elias Gamaer	3
Jacob Ruston DeWitt	5
Samuel DePuy	1
Abraham Westbrook	2
Total Number owned	50

Town of Minisink
(Lower Neighborhood)

Name of Owner	# Owned
Benjamin Smith	2
Sylvester Cortright	1
Levi Van Atter	3
Henry Van Atter	5
Nathaniel Van Auken	1
Absalom Van Auken	1
Deborah Decker	1
Averit Hornbeck	2
Cornelius Van Auken	1
Moses Cortright	6
John Decker	5
Total number owned	31

Source for this information: Research by Richard Carey, Town of Deerpark Historian November 1979

In 1799, New York gradually freed slaves who would otherwise have been born into slavery, but left thousands enslaved who were born before 1799. It was not until March 31, 1817 the New York legislature ended centuries of slavery within its borders.

July 4, 1827 is the date of final emancipation making New York the first state to pass a law for total abolition of legal slavery. Children born to enslaved mothers after 1799 were born free but would have to provide free labor to their mother's master (females to age 25—males to age 28).

Source for slavery legislation: The New Historical



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Honey Tree

Port Jervis Gazette
December 15, 1911
90 Pounds of Honey in a
Tree at Huguenot

Thomas Degroat and son, Chester, found a bee tree on Pine Grove Inn property at Huguenot last week. The output of honey was ninety pounds which Mr. Degroat divided with the owner of the property, Mr. Anderson.



