

Kids love it: A *castle*, scaled to kid size and set in the middle of nowhere, off in the woods. We led a family hike past it in mid-August. From State Line Look-out we took the group south along the Long Path, then down the Forest View ravine and over the new bridge. As we started up the other side of the ravine, we let the kids go ahead, so they would get to the castle first.

"What *is* this place?" It was the grownups who asked; the kids had already scrambled up the little flight of stairs to the miniature battlement, whooping—"Whoa!" "Check it out!"—out over the Hudson, a mile wide and more than fifty stories below.

We told them how the "castle" was a monument built in 1929 to honor the role the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs played in preserving the Palisades. Its design was meant to evoke the ancient watchtowers along the River Rhine in Europe: poets had called the Hudson "the Rhine of the New World" or "America's Rhine" because of its scenic beauty. (Its beauty was so revered that a group of prominent American landscape artists in the nineteenth century went by the name "Hudson River School," even though their paintings were sometimes of scenes far beyond the Hudson Valley.)

By the 1890s, several big quarries had begun blasting the Hudson's famous Palisades Cliffs for gravel for roadbeds and for broken stone for concrete. Many people who lived across the river in New York or who traveled on the river by steamship, or along its banks by train, felt outrage at the destruction these quarries were causing. Newspapers labeled the quarrymen "vandals." A group calling itself the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society studied the problem, to see if they could find a way to stop the quarries; some lawmakers suggested turning the Palisades into a military reservation, just to preserve them from the quarries—but the army wasn't interested.

The blasting went on.

In Englewood, members of the Englewood Women's Club decided that they would champion the cause of the Palisades. These women, mostly wealthy, knew the Palisades well; their families picnicked and hiked around the tall cliffs. Women's Clubs had been formed all across the country as part of the movement for women's suffrage; the Englewood women

worked to get the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs, with sister clubs all across the state, interested in the Palisades cause. In 1897, the Englewood women convinced the Federation to hold its annual convention in the northern part of the state. During that convention, some of the leaders of the Federation ventured out in a yacht to view the quarry devastation first-hand. Their minds were made up: the Palisades must be saved.

The Palisades quarries were big business. They employed hundreds of men. At Carpenter Brothers' Quarry in Fort Lee alone, it was claimed, 12,000 cubic yards of rock were blown down *daily*. They shipped the stone as far as New Orleans, for a dollar a ton. For the men who owned the quarries, the fact that the prehistoric stone columns of the Palisades could be blasted down and broken and loaded onto barges—with no need for costly overland transportation—spelled big profits. No way would they close down their operations without a political fight.

It was the women of New Jersey, a generation before suffrage, who gave them that fight.

In 1900, Governor Foster Vorhees of New Jersey joined with Governor Theodore Roosevelt of New York to sign legislation passed in each state to form an Interstate Commission empowered to acquire and manage the Palisades lands. Money and support from powerful figures, including J. P. Morgan, enabled the Commission to buy out the quarries.

And so a unique Interstate Park had been created. Early on, the Commission acquired a piece of land on top of the cliffs at Alpine that they named "Federation Park," where they planned to place a monument for the Women's Clubs, with soaring views across the famous Hudson so far below...

And it was time to move on, to continue our hike. (It so happened that the very *next* day was the ninetieth anniversary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution: *The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.* The little "castle" on the Palisades, now part of New Jersey's Women's Heritage Trail, marks one stop along the long journey that led to that day in 1920—when the right to vote was extended to more Americans than on any other day in our nation's history.)

This fall at Mrs. Kearney's tavern... *

"Punch & Pie"

Wednesday evenings,

October 13 - 20 - 27

7:30-10 PM

\$18 per guest per evening

includes light food & drink, music & tall tales, Etc.

Reservations required:

201 768-1360 ext. 108

kearney@njpalisades.org



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RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED:
201 768-1360 EXT. 108
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*The historic Kearney House, at Alpine Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 2)



For more information: 201 768-1360

Saturday, September 11

“WILDFLOWER WALK: FOREST VIEW TO STATE LINE” Nature hike with Nancy Slowik. Meet 10 AM at the Forest View trailhead in Alpine (at the pedestrian bridge over the PIP near Boy Scout Camp Alpine). About 4 mi., 2 hrs., moderate. Free.

Saturday, September 18

“CLOSTER LANDING + GREENBROOK FALLS” Guided hike with Christina Fehre. Meet 10 AM at the entrance to Alpine Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 2). About 6 mi., 3.5 hrs., moderate. Free.

Sunday, September 19

Trail Run—“THE WOMEN’S MONUMENT” Guided trail run with Dave Rosen & Lindsey Foschini. Meet 10 AM at Park Headquarters in Alpine (PIP Exit 2). About 5 mi., easy trails, moderate pace. Free.

Sunday, September 26

“KIDS’ NATURE WALK TO THE CASTLE” Nature hike for children with Christina Fehre. Meet 2 PM at State Line Lookout in Alpine (northbound PIP opposite Exit 3). About 1.5 mi., 1.5 hrs., easy. *Children must be accompanied by an adult.* Free.

Saturday, October 2

“PEANUT LEAP CASCADE” History hike with Eric Nelsen. Meet 10 AM at State Line Lookout in Alpine (northbound PIP opposite Exit 3). About 4 mi., 2 hrs., moderate with some challenging slopes. Free.

Sunday, October 3

Trail Run—“GREENBROOK FALLS” Guided trail run with Dave Rosen & Lindsey Foschini. Meet 10 AM at the entrance to Alpine Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 2). About 4 mi., moderate trails & pace. Free.

Saturday, October 16

“THE GIANT STAIRS” Guided hike with Christina Fehre. Meet 10 AM at State Line Lookout. About 4 mi., 3 hrs., *difficult rock scramble with challenging slopes. Advanced registration required: 201 768-1360 ext. 107.* Free.

Sunday, October 17

“RIVER SEINING” Nature program with Christopher Letts & Tom Lake for Palisades Nature Association. 10–11:30 AM at Bloomer’s Beach at the north end of Englewood Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 1). For all ages. Free.

“CLOSTER LANDING LOOP” (includes “Millionaires’ Row”) History hike with Eric Nelsen. Meet 10 AM at the Kearney House at Alpine Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 2). About 5 mi., 3 hrs., moderate. Free.

Saturday, October 23

“BOMBAY HOOK” History hike with Eric Nelsen. Meet 10 AM at the Kearney House at Alpine Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 2). About 7 mi., 5 hrs., moderate with some challenging slopes. Free.

Sunday, October 24

“VISITOR’S DAY” at Greenbrook Sanctuary Open-house event with Palisades Nature Association. 1–4 PM at the Sanctuary (entrance is off U.S. Route 9W in Tenafly). Information about the Sanctuary’s programs, short guided hikes, & more. Free.

“OUTDOOR SURVIVAL FOR KIDS” Nature program for children with Christina Fehre. 2–4 PM meeting at the Kearney House at Alpine Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 2). Free.

Sunday, October 31

“Hallowe’en Hike” Guided hike with Eric Nelsen. Meet 4:30 PM at the Kearney House at Alpine Boat Basin & Picnic Area (PIP Exit 2). About 3.5 mi., 2 hrs., moderate. *Bring flashlights.* Free.

...MORE ON THE OTHER SIDE...

Find a complete listing of events at... njpalisades.org



Palisades Interstate Park—NJ Section
P.O. Box 155
Alpine, NJ 07620-0155

CLIFF NOTES

Featured story

*A Stop
along the
Lang Path*



Dedication of the Women’s Federation Memorial, 30 April 1929. The “castle” is now a stop on New Jersey’s Women’s Heritage Trail. Find more photographs with the online version of this story at njpalisades.org.



Cliff Notes, the visitors’ letter for the NJ Section of the Palisades Interstate Park, is edited by the staff of the Kearney House.