

The Rust Plaets [Dutch for Resting Place] Kill

"The native came to it for rest and pleasure and the white settler made an honorable purchase of the soil."

Helen W. Reynolds - 1924

"If the Rust Plaets Kil [sic] be followed on foot throughout its course it will be found that Henry Livingston, Jr., laid it down accurately on his map of the corporation of the village of Poughkeepsie in 1799. Described in terms of landmarks familiar at the present time the creek "slanting over to Juffrouw's Hook" rises on land owned by Mr. John Van Benschoten, which lies on the east side of the New York and Albany Post Road. It traverses Mr. Van Benschoten's field at a down grade and northwesterly direction to the property of Mrs. John Kinkead; crosses Mrs. Kinkead's land, northerly; turns west across the Post Road; falls over a steep and high ledge of rock to the low land of the **Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery**; and pursues a westerly and gently descending course to the Hudson, into which it flows almost within the shadow of the north side of Mine Point."

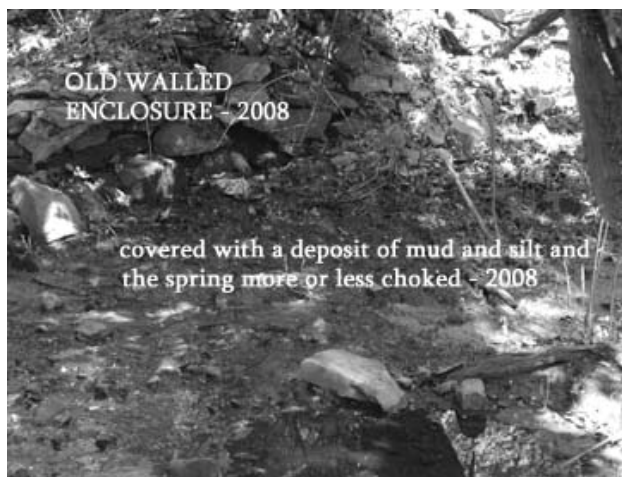
Poughkeepsie, The Origin and Meaning of the Word

Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, 1924

Collections of the Dutchess County Historical Society

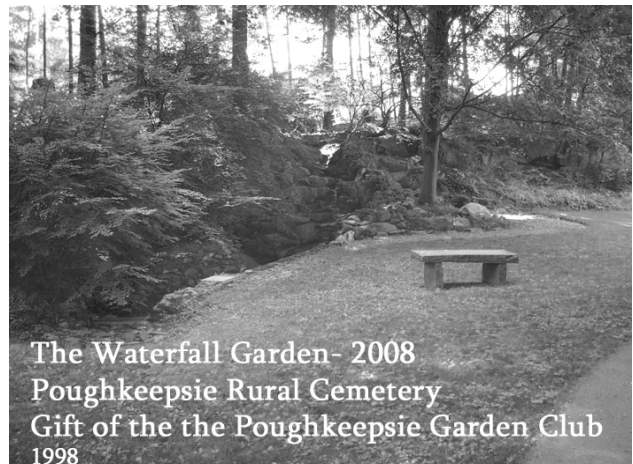
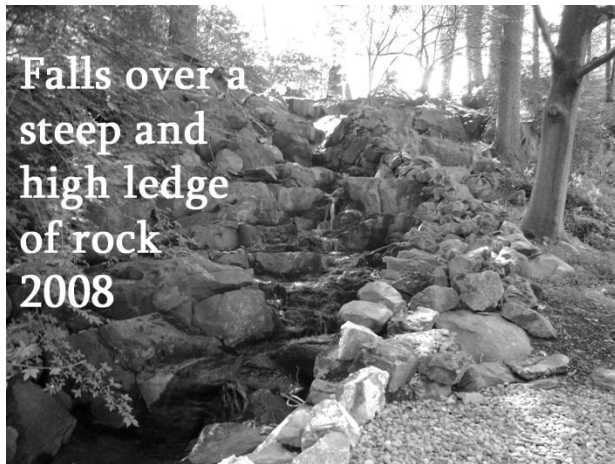
With all the development which has occurred in Poughkeepsie since Helen Wilkinson Reynolds wrote the above description in 1924, it appears most uncanny that much of what she wrote eighty-five years ago can be found today if one takes the time to cover the course she so aptly described and Henry Livingston laid down in 1799. It seems befitting in this Quadracentennial year to bring to view once again the course of the Rust Plaets Kill as it makes it way from its source, through Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery and to Henry Hudson's River in 2009.

"There is now to be seen the oval, walled enclosure, rather thickly grown with cat-tails, the rocks near the spring being covered with a deposit of mud and silt and the spring more or less choked. Despite the growth and the deposit, the trickle of running water can clearly be heard " [HWR-1924]

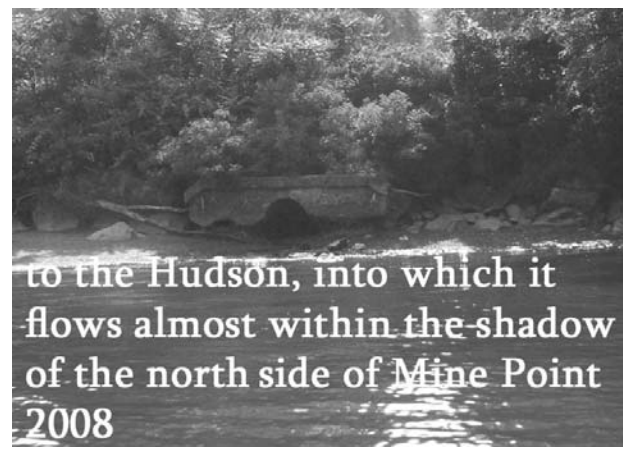
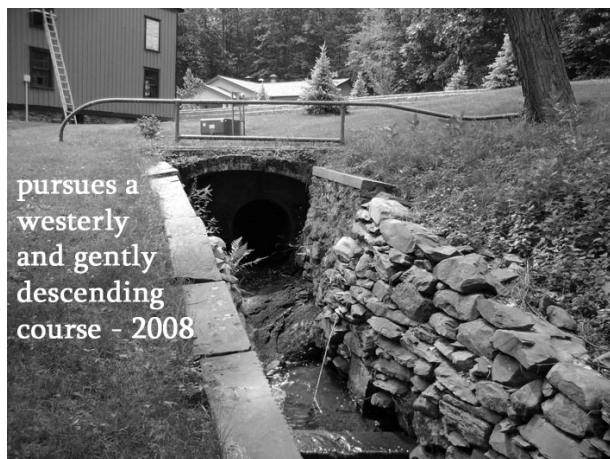


Today the source of the Rust Plaets Kill, the Spring from which Poughkeepsie takes its name, is located on property just north of Spring Manor Apartments on Route 9. In 2008 the Town of Poughkeepsie designated the Spring as a local historical landmark. The Spring once served as a camping place for Native Americans who referred to this resting spot as "uppuqui ipis ing" (translated "reed covered lodge by the little watering place"). Later settlers pronounced the indian name in a variety of ways until finally the word "Poughkeepsie" evolved.

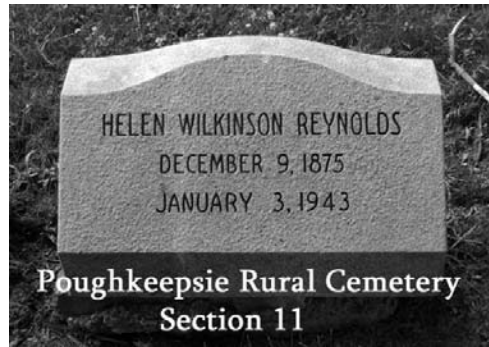
From this point the Rust Plaets Kill flows westerly alongside Teahan and Constantino Law Offices property on Route 9; then under Route 9 until it surfaces again in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery at a point above the Waterfall Garden or as Helen W. Reynolds put it in 1924, "falls over a steep and high ledge of rock to the low land of the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery".



The Rust Plaets Kill disappears at this point as it flows under ground through sections of Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery until it surfaces again just south of the Caretakers House on the cemetery grounds. Once it resurfaces, the kill flows through a walled enclosure, until it flows under the railroad tracks and empties into the Hudson River "within the shadow of the north side of Mine Point" [HWR-1924], home of the Whittier Mausoleum.



Helen Wilkinson Reynolds rests in final peace and solitude in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery a stones throw away from the “Resting Place” of which she so aptly wrote in 1924. In the closing words of the her work, Helen Wilkinson Reynolds not only describes the meaning of the word Poughkeepsie but what you can still find today and where she found her final rest amongst nature’s beauties and peace. “Thus the mystery-word, “Poughkeepsie” carries a reminder of nature’s beauties and suggests a community given to the pursuits of peace”



This fall as you celebrate the Quadracentennial, please take the opportunity to stop by Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery and enjoy a few moments amongst nature’s beauties and the peace of Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. Rest for a moment on the bench at the Waterfall Garden, close your eyes and capture what it may have been like for the Native Americans way back when Henry Hudson sailed the Hudson.

Prepared for
The Friends of Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery
by Virginia A. Buechele, April 18, 2009