Nearby Places to Visit
These foundry-related sites, along with West Point Foundry Preserve, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Foundry Dock Park
This Scenic Hudson park, located next to the Cold Spring train station, once was the site of West Point Foundry’s busy loading dock. Finished goods were transported via rail to a pier stretching 600 feet into the river and shipped worldwide. The park contains a simulation of the rail line and is an excellent place to admire views of the Hudson Highlands and launch a kayaks.

The Chapel Restoration
West Point Foundry owner Gouverneur Kemble donated land and funds for a Catholic chapel to serve employees and their families. Constructed around 1830, enlarged in the 1860s and renovated in 2006, the building originally was the foundry school for teenage apprentices and workers’ children. Located at 63 Chestnut St., it’s now a museum that houses art, artifacts and documents related to the West Point Foundry and surrounding area. Temporary exhibitions are on view as well as a permanent installation on the foundry’s history, its role in the Civil War and the foundry’s role in New York City’s water system.

Putnam History Museum
Located at 63 Chestnut St., it’s now a museum that houses art, artifacts and documents related to the West Point Foundry and surrounding area. Temporary exhibitions are on view as well as a permanent installation on the foundry’s history, its role in the Civil War and the foundry’s role in New York City’s water system.

Main Street
Myriad foundry-era buildings remain in Cold Spring. These include “worker houses” along Kemble Avenue, constructed for the foundry’s considerable labor force, and well-preserved shops along a still-bustling Main Street that originally served this “company town.”

Rules
- Vehicles permitted only in designated parking area
- Commuter parking is prohibited
- Stay on marked trails and within posted property boundaries
- Be considerate of park visitors and adjoining property owners
- Pets must be leashed. Clean up after them
- All natural, cultural and archaeological resources are protected and may not be removed or disturbed
- Relic hunting is prohibited; possession and use of a metal detector is prohibited
- Geocaching and Letterboxing are prohibited
- Commercial transactions are prohibited
- No smoking
- No possession or consumption of alcohol
- No fires or barbecues
- No swimming
- No boat launching, docking or beaching
- No bicycling on trails

West Point Foundry Preserve was funded by the generous support of:

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WEST POINT FOUNDRY
Leading the Nation

Products manufactured at West Point Foundry facilitated America’s emergence as an industrial superpower. They also played an important role in reuniting the United States.

Foundry Superintendent Robert Parrott developed the Parrott gun in 1860. The weapon of choice for the Union Army and Navy during the Civil War, the cannons’ long range and accuracy gave the North a decisive advantage. On the preserve’s trails, which pass remains of the foundry’s many buildings, visitors can follow the step-by-step process of creating this gun credited with winning the war.

The Hudson Valley offered an abundance of materials critical for producing iron, especially iron ore and trees, to make charcoal for heating a blast furnace. Under temperatures around 1,500°F, the iron liquefied, separating from the rocks’ other components, and was channeled into molds, called pigs. The blast furnace at West Point Foundry shut down in 1844. Iron to make Parrott guns came from furnaces in Orange County.

Skilled laborers in the foundry’s pattern shop crafted exacting wooden replicas (or patterns) of the Parrott guns, which ranged in size from 10 to 300 pounds (according to the weight of projectile they shot). In the nearby casting shop, these patterns were pressed into wet sand and carefully removed. Molten iron from reheated pigs was poured into the resulting impression.

Once the metal cooled, the cannons were separated from the sand mold and delivered to the boring mill. Here the 36-foot-diameter water wheel powered drills for boring the guns’ interior. Parrott guns featured a rifled bore—spiral grooves that caused projectiles to spin when fired, enhancing their accuracy.

At the blacksmith shop workers attached the Parrott guns’ second distinctive feature—a band of wrought iron slipped over the breech (the point furthest from the muzzle) that tightened as it cooled. This reinforced the cannons, preventing them from breaking apart when fired, and allowed for larger powder charges that increased the guns’ range. A 30-pound Parrott gun could shoot a projectile nearly four miles.

Finished Parrott guns were taken to the gun platform and test-fired at targets painted on Crow’s Nest Mountain, across the Hudson River. President Abraham Lincoln visited the foundry in 1862 to witness a demonstration. By the Civil War’s end, West Point Foundry had manufactured more than 2,500 cannons and 3 million projectiles.

Experience the sights and sounds of a 19th-century ironworks: Take a unique audiovisual tour of West Point Foundry Preserve by visiting www.scenichudson.org/foundrytour using any web-enabled mobile device. For optimal enjoyment, headphones are recommended.

200-lb. Parrott gun, Morris Island, S.C., 1865