

## THE RIDE OF SYBIL LUDINGTON:

### A Student Perspective

By *Catherine Davie*

*IHARE* was pleased once again to participate in the New York State Ramble, a September weekend program involving historical, ecological, and art organizations along the Hudson River from New York to Albany. A high school student provided the following report.

Everybody knows the story of Paul Revere. Almost every child knows the rhyme of the 40 year old man who rode 16 miles to alert the Americans that the British were coming. But few people know of another American hero who was much more daring in her ride than Paul Revere. Sybil Ludington was a 16 year old girl when she rode over forty miles on a late April night to alert her father's militia that the British were attacking Danbury. I was fortunate enough to attend an event led by Vince Dacquino (part of The Hudson River Ramble) that covered not only the events that took place April 26, 1777, but also the rest of Sybil's life and the great deal of research that went in to her story.

It's hard to believe, but just a few years ago almost nothing was known about Sybil. All that was known was that she was a 16 year old girl who rounded up her father's men in the middle of the night on April 26, 1777. The rest of her life was largely unknown, or the information was inaccurate. Vince Dacquino thought that



Catherine Davie – Pearl River High School



Author Vin Dacquino, kneeling, led a tour of the Putnam County Sites of Sybil Ludington



## SYBIL *continued from page 1*

this was no proper way to honor a hero, and spent a good three years researching Sybil's life. In school, I had learned the importance of Document Based Questioning (DBQ.) This involved studying a document from history and being able to understand what it meant. Vince Dacquino stressed the importance of using a DBQ approach to chronicling Sybil's life. I was amazed that he was able to put together so much information from so few documents. Sybil's life turned out to be far more interesting than just a girl who went on a ride. She was congratulated by George Washington himself for her heroism, was the one of the first women tavern-owner in New York State and played a large part in her community.

I was surprised to find out that such a unique heroine had gone undiscovered for such a long time. She traveled more than twice



Sybil's admirers pay their respects



Artifacts from the Luddington Mill

as far as Paul Revere, was less than half his age, and rode until dawn in a cold, rainy night. I am hopeful that with Vince Dacquino's new book, more people will appreciate Sybil Ludington for what she did for her country and be amazed at her famed journey.

## Benedict Arnold: American Traitor?

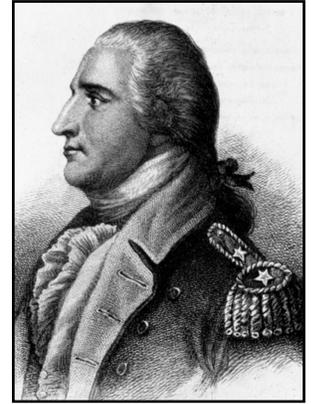
The words “Benedict Arnold” and “traitor” are synonymous in American history but does that one description provide the true significance of Arnold to America. Ray Raymond, USMA and SUNY, says, “No.” In a forthcoming PBS documentary, producer Raymond, a former British diplomat and current Gilder Lehrman fellow writing a biography on fellow diplomat and Huguenot descendant John Jay, takes the position that Arnold has received a raw deal in the historical record. Raymond touts Arnold’s superior military experience displayed on the field such as at Saratoga, the key battle of the American Revolution and perhaps the 18th century.



View from Fort Putnam  
Thomas Cole

He took this position with the teachers at a program last spring at Saratoga. In a subsequent program on the American Revolution at Fort Montgomery he showed clips from the upcoming documentary. At the annual conference of the Westchester/Lower Hudson Council for the Social Studies this December, he was able to show a 30-minute clip that more closely matched what the public will see once the documentary is shown on PBS. Benedict Arnold (and Major Andre) will highlight the 2009 American Revolution Teachehostel/Historyhostel both in the talks and the sites visited along the Hudson River.

As it turns out, Arnold also played a significant role in the emergence of Hudson River Art. When English immigrant Thomas Cole was just beginning his career as a painter in 1825 he traveled from New York to Fort Putnam on the grounds of the West Point which Arnold had sought to turn



Benedict Arnold

over to the British. Cole was the first of many artists to paint Fort Putnam during the Jacksonian and antebellum periods. Indeed the site was a tourist destination located close to New York especially with the advent of the steamship. But generally one thinks of Hudson River Art as further upriver near the cities of Catskill where Cole settled and Hudson across the river where Frederic Church settled. So why all the fuss about Fort Putnam, a site scarcely remembered today? It is precisely because of Arnold. His attempt to deliver America’s mid-Hudson bastion to the British assumed cosmic proportions in American mythology. It represented where Arnold, the force of darkness, sought to “vanquish the forces of light, his commanding officer George Washington and the American Revolution. Thus for Americans back then, Fort Putnam assumed the same significance as the O.K. corral and high noon in later American history: the place where good and evil confront each other in a cosmic showdown.

We look forward to seeing you at our return visit next summer and to other key locations from Tappan to Fort Ticonderoga.

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## WINTER/SPRING EVENTS 2009

\* **JANUARY 26**

*Shawn Zelig Aster, Yeshiva University,  
Elisha and the Politics of Damascus:  
Are Biblical Narratives Historical?*

\* **FEBRUARY 8**

*Fran Dunwell, Hudson's River  
Garrison*

\* **FEBRUARY 10**

*Adolfo Roitman, Shrine of the Book  
at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Magic,  
Demons and Satan in Early Judaism*

\* **FEBRUARY 11**

*Adolfo Roitman, Shrine of the Book at  
the Israel Museum in Jerusalem: From Serpent to Satan.  
The Original Sin in Literature and Art*

**MARCH 7**

*Teaching Ancient Egypt, Institute of Fine Arts,  
New York University and the Metropolitan Museum*

**MARCH 8**

*Beyond Babylon, Institute of Fine Arts,  
New York University and the Metropolitan Museum*

\* **MARCH 16**

*Andrea Berlin, University of Minnesota:  
Maintaining Ethnic Identity in the Hellenistic East:  
The Case of Judea*

**APRIL 18-19**

*Teaching Ancient Egypt,  
Peabody Museum, Yale University, New Haven*

\* **APRIL 20**

*Jeff Zorn, Cornell University,  
"Benjaminite Mizpah: Revealing Judean History"*

**MAY 2-3**

*Hudson River Art, Olana, Thomas Cole House,  
Catskill Mountain House*

**MAY 16-17**

*The Ride of Sybil Ludington, Danbury,  
Ridgefield, and Westport, Connecticut*

**MAY 30-31**

*The Oswego Teacherhoste/Historyhostel*

**JUNE 6-7**

*The Battle of Saratoga Teacherhostel/Historyhostel*

\* Held at the JCC, 334 Amsterdam Avenue, New York

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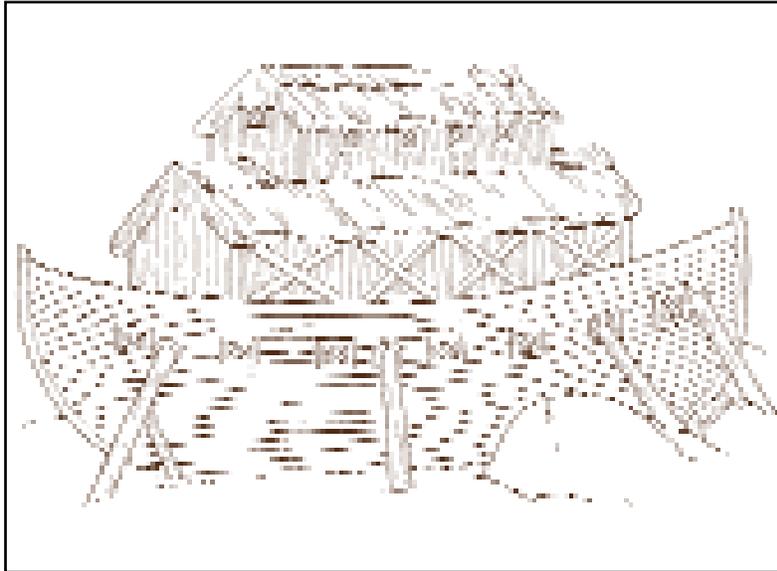
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## PSEUDO-ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

**Have you ever noticed how often the ark has been found?** Both the Ark of the Covenant and Noah's. It is difficult to go through a check out line at the supermarket without seeing that once again a remarkable discovery involving the Bible has occurred. It is bad enough when such claims appear on the web where there is no peer review as in an academic publication or even editorial review as



in a newspaper, but sometimes such claims even appear on cable TV shows that appear respectable. What can one do?

This issue was the subject of a conference arranged by IHARE in conjunction with the American Schools of Oriental Research (Peter Feinman is a member of the ASOR Education Outreach Committee) held at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University on November 23. An audience of teachers and the general public heard the following three speakers address the issue.

***A Tale of Two Tombs: Looking for Jesus and Herod's Burial Sites*** – Jonathan L. Reed, University of La Verne

Early in 2007 two press conferences were held: one in New York announced that the family tomb of Jesus had been discovered in Jerusalem, and one in Jerusalem announced that the tomb of Herod the Great had been found. Why did all archaeologists instantly dismiss the former as a publicity stunt but cautiously engage the other as serious archaeology? This slide-illustrated lecture contrasted the presentation, peer review, and publication of both discoveries to distinguish *pseudo*-archaeology from *real* archaeology, noting along



Jonathan L. Reed

the way the dubious legacy of over a century of *biblical* archaeology on the quest for relics.

*Dr. Jonathan L. Reed is Professor of Religion at the University of La Verne in Southern California.*

He is a leading authority on the archaeology of early Christianity, and has been involved in excavations at both Capernaum and Sepphoris in Galilee. In addition to numerous articles, reviews, and a major scholarly monograph titled *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus* (Trinity Press International 2000), Reed has co-authored with noted biblical scholar John Dominic Crossan two best-selling books

***Excavating Jesus and In Search of Paul*** (Harper San Francisco 2001 and 2004). His newest book is ***The HarperCollins Visual Guide to the New Testament: What Archaeology Reveals about the First Christians*** (2007) and he recently served as the Senior Historical Consultant to the *National Geographic Channel's* 10-part ***Science of the Bible*** series on Jesus. He holds his doctorate from the Claremont Graduate University.

***There Were Giants in the Earth in Those Days (Gen 6:4): The Sad Tale of the Cardiff Giant*** Ken Feder, Central Connecticut State University

In October 1869, Stub Newell, a farmer in upstate New York, uncovered the remains of what appeared to be a giant, recumbent man whose body had turned to stone. Geologists and archaeologists immediately declared it to be fraudulent, but such pronouncements meant little to the hordes who descended on the Newell farm to see the giant for themselves. Circus impresario P.T. Barnum was so impressed by the archaeological fake that he tried to purchase it for his sideshow. The perpetrator confessed just a few months after the giant's discovery but the giant himself continues as a tourist attraction at the Farmers Museum in Cooperstown, New York. Though not nearly as well known as the Piltdown Man hoax, the Cardiff Giant fraud is one of the most instructive in the history of archaeology. And it's much funnier.

***Ken Feder*** has taught in the Department of Anthropology at Central Connecticut State University since 1977. He is the founder and director of the Farmington River

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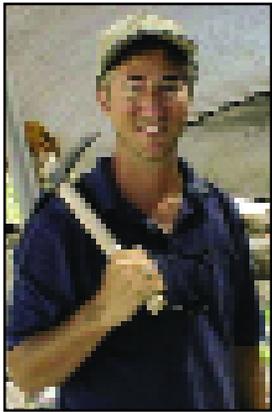
Archaeological Project, a long-term investigation of the prehistory of the Farmington River Valley. He is the author of several books including: *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology*; *A Village of Outcasts: Historical Archaeology and Documentary Research at the Lighthouse Site*; *The Past In Perspective: An Introduction to Human Prehistory*; and *Linking to the Past: A Brief Introduction to Archaeology*.

*Raiders of the Faux Ark: From Noah's Ark to the Ark of the Covenant and Beyond* Eric Cline, George Washington University



Ken Feder

The amount of pseudo-scientific nonsense that has been published on so-called “mysteries” of the Bible is overwhelming. The vast majority of this work has not been produced by professional scholars but by amateur enthusiasts. Indeed, the work of such enthusiasts frequently meets the criteria of “junk science,” especially when it “advocates a cause, pays little attention to the investigative process, ignores contrary evidence, and advertises a high moral purpose.” In this lecture, using material from his book *From Eden to Exile: Unraveling Mysteries of the Bible* (National Geographic Books, 2007), Cline presented, and debunked, examples of such junk science—especially as it pertained to topics such as the possible locations of Noah’s Ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Ten Lost Tribes— while at the same time took a brief look at what we really do and do not know about these biblical mysteries.



Dr. Eric H. Cline

**Dr. Eric H. Cline** is Associate Professor of Classics and of Anthropology (Ancient History and Archaeology) and Chair of the Department of Classical and Semitic Languages and Literatures at The George Washington University, where he has won both national and local teaching awards. A former Fulbright scholar and award-winning teacher and author with degrees from Dartmouth, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania, he is Associate Director (USA) of the ongoing excavations at Megiddo (biblical Armageddon) in Israel as

well as Co-Director of the ongoing excavations at Tel Kabri, also located in Israel. An award-winning author, he is perhaps best known for his books *The Battles of Armageddon: Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley from the Bronze Age to the Nuclear Age* (2000) and *Jerusalem Besieged: From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel* (2004). He has just published a new book entitled *From Eden to Exile: Unraveling Mysteries of the Bible* (National Geographic Society, June 2007).

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