

Sunday, April 25, 2010

## Hike to Croton Dam, Croton-on-Hudson, NY, 8 Miles

We walked from Ossining Metro North Station to the Old Croton Dam and Sing-Sing museum, then along the Old Croton Aqueduct to the Croton Dam, and back to Metro North Railroad at the closest station, Croton-Harmon Station. This hike has an optional extension from the Dam to [Teatown Lake Reservation](#). This beautiful lake walk through one of the largest bird and wildlife preserve in NY leads to an information/nature center and shop. The more miles, the better to build bone density and help with our constant struggle for weight control. This is a [great map locating the area south of the Croton Dam and detailed trail maps](#) with a printable version.



Our walk started at the Ossining Metro North Station up and away from the tracks and the coiled barbed wire of Sing Sing Prison, eastward through town to *95 Broadway*, the [Caputo Community Center](#) and museum. We loved the informative displays about Sing Sing Prison and the Old and New Croton Dam and Aqueduct.



When Frederick Philipse purchased the land around

In the showcases, plaques and prints explained the history of the area. The *Sint Sinck* Indians (origin of the name Sing Sing), sold the land now included in the village of Ossining to Frederick Philipse in 1685. Sometime within the next two centuries, large prisons were built to replace the old penal system of [stocks and pillaries](#). Ossining became home to [Sing Sing Correctional Facility](#), just "up the river" from NYC.



You can look, but do not sit!!

In 1888, New York State abolished hanging and substituted electrocution. Electric chairs were installed in Auburn, Sing Sing, and Clinton Prisons. 614 prisoners were electrocuted at Sing Sing between 1890 and 1965, the year New York State abolished the death penalty.



walk by this cell block.

Watch out for dangerous types lurking behind the bars when you



picked up the [trail of the OCA](#) ([click for exact walking directions.](#)) and the hike continued.

**The Old Croton Aqueduct:** Just outside the visitors' center, we



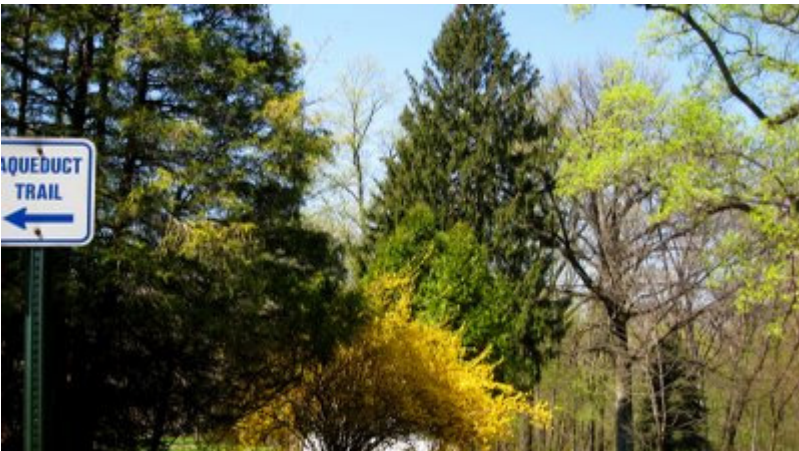
Our leader knew each leg of the surprising walk along the aqueduct. Some of us expected to see water or pipe-works, but all is hidden below a series of dirt paths, populated streets, wooded lanes, and paved roads. BTW, many hike leaders are in their 80s and are still going strong. Hiking may be a way to live a longer life, no?

Nature sprouted spring surprises at every turn.



this stone mansion.

Someone guessed J. Gould, one of the area financiers might own





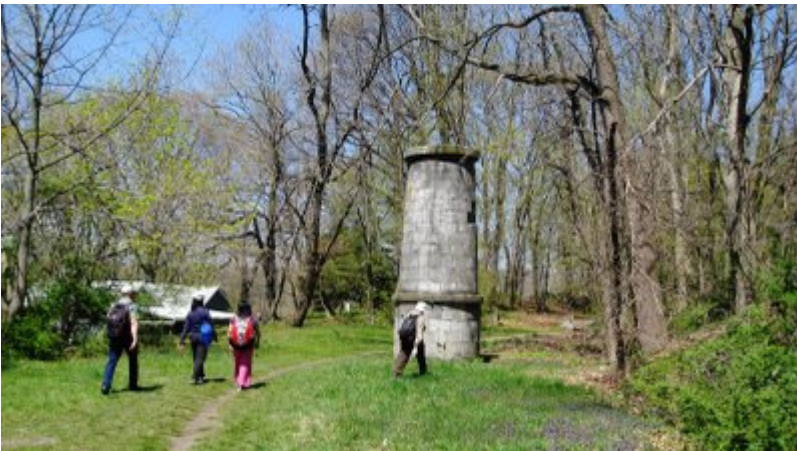
This was the first of three air ventilators, spaced 1 mile apart, we were supposed to pass on our way to the dam. The aqueduct system draws air down from these vents to keep the water flowing toward its destination, while allowing excess air pressure to escape before problems develop. This engineering technique is borrowed from the old Roman aqueducts.



We were an easy-going group, so when someone said he was hungry, we found some rocks and sat for lunch. It was a welcome break in a long walk. We allow ourselves the high calories of a peanut butter sandwich for energy.



Then, it was back on the trail. In the unusual heat of the 90 degree April day, we would have traded some of the beautiful new buds for the darker green of mature shade-providing leaves.



We marked the second ventilator.



Off to the left, we could hear and sometimes see the roar of the river below in the gorge. These high-perched homes on our right must offer beautiful views.



One of our group spotted this geode, right there in situ!



Ah, the 3rd ventilator we've passed on the OCA. The Croton Dam can't be far.



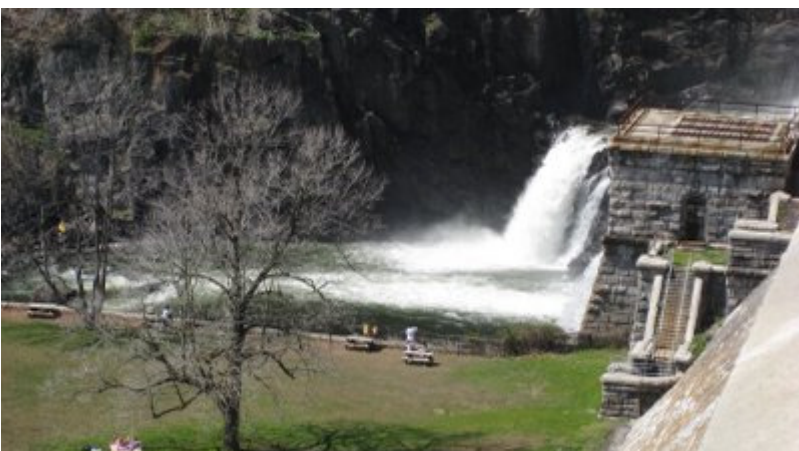
This bridge is the end of the trail. Wait 'til you see paydirt:



We looked north at the huge reservoir.



And at the engineering feat that created it.



Then we looked south from the bridge and understood how the

water is led to its destination.



Excited by these impressive views, we began the walk back and over toward the Croton-Harmon Metro North Station. (On another hike here, we took the extension to Teatown [see link under first photo at top] right from this spot.)





felled tree.

There was one steep incline and a trunk straddle to get passed a



Hudson. We still had hopes of catching the 3:30 express train back to GCS.

Then it was back to civilization through the streets of Croton-on-

But it left without us...



Happy to find a bench, we waited for the 4:00 local. Good to have time to reflect and recover, all with the satisfaction that, according to our [pedometers](#), we had surpassed by far our daily goal of 10,000 steps. Hope the next bone density test reflects this.

Posted by Bernice and Dan at 7:52 PM  

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