

WPF Trailblazer of Industrial America Curated Tour

Instructions: Use these questions and prompts to guide your viewing of the exhibition

Panel 1 – *West Point Foundry: Trailblazer of Industrial America*

1. Look at the painting in the middle of the panel. What do the men on the left seem to be doing? How would you describe the scene as a whole?
2. Notice the group to the right of the painting. Who might they be?

Panel 2 – *Beginnings*

1. Notice the Foundry's use of multiple natural resources for production.
2. Consider why it was important for the Foundry to be located near a major river like the Hudson.

Panel 3 – *A New Kind of Workplace*

1. What role did machinery play in the iron-casting process? How might this have differed from earlier blacksmith shops?

Panel 4 – *Vertical Integration*

1. Consider how the Foundry's use of raw materials impacted Cold Spring's natural environment.
2. Why do you think vertical integration became such a popular practice for industrial companies in the nineteenth century?

Panel 5 – Paternalism

1. Look at the photo in the upper-right hand corner of men seated on the steps. What type of clothing are the men wearing? How would this help identify managers and laborers?
2. Can you think of any global events or new inventions that would have led Europeans to immigrate to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century?

Panel 6 – Growing the Cold Spring Community

Read the following quote from Thomas Wylie, an Irish immigrant who worked at the West Point Foundry:

“I have got nothing of news for to write here. I gave you all the particulars of this barren wilderness before. I am always working in the same place, nothing for to do but work, eat & sleep. There is no places [sic] of amusement, no enjoyment like what I have been used to, nothing to gladden the heart for to make us forget our labour [sic] and our toil (Wylie 1851).

1. Why do you think Gouverneur Kemble built houses and a church for his workers?

Panel 7 – Success!

1. What made the Parrott gun better than other weapons during this time period?
2. Take a close look at the photo of the Administrative Building, why do you think it was considered a symbol of the Foundry’s success?

Panel 8 – Legacy

1. How did new technology lead to the decline of the Foundry?
2. Think about factories you’ve seen in person, on TV shows, or in videos. What similarities do you notice between these present-day factories and the West Point Foundry?