

Heritage Lecture Series Continues this Friday

Summer of 1788 put Poughkeepsie on world stage as New York debated ratification of the US Constitution

Poughkeepsie, NY... The second presentation of the Dutchess Heritage Speaker Series will focus on the critical role Poughkeepsie played in the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Professor Andrew Shankman of Rutgers University-Camden will discuss New York's Ratification Debates on the US Constitution, which took place at the site of the Dutchess County Courthouse on Market Street in Poughkeepsie and peaked on July 26, 1788. The heritage lecture will take place on Friday, July 26th at 7:30pm at the Cunneen-Hackett Theatre located at 12 Vassar Street in Poughkeepsie.

Shankman's lecture, *The Gentleman and the Democrat: New York's Battle over the US Constitution in Poughkeepsie* will discuss the confrontation behind Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, champion of the Federalist cause, and Dutchess County native Melancton Smith, who led the Anti-Federalists in their fight against the Constitution. The debates that raged for weeks during the summer of 1788 would decide the fate of the American Republic and placed Poughkeepsie on the world stage.

"Had New York refused to ratify the Constitution, the new nation would have been cut in half and might well have foundered over the following years," said Dutchess County Historian William P. Tatum III. "The compromise measure that swung the vote in favor of ratification led to the Bill of Rights, giving Poughkeepsie, and Dutchess County, a good claim as the birthplace of this essential expression of our liberties."

Shankman will take the audience through the debates, highlighting the most decisive points, while shedding light on what the Federalist and Anti-Federalist positions meant for common people at the time and today. A reception will follow the lecture, hosted by Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center with refreshments graciously provided by the Poughkeepsie Ice House.

Tickets are on sale through Dutchess County Tourism, [845-463-4000](tel:845-463-4000), \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Donors wishing to support the lecture series may purchase the Heritage Patron Package, which includes two tickets, dinner with the speaker, and a limited-edition print of the 1804 Dutchess Turnpike map for \$150. This program is part of the Dutchess Heritage Days celebration of 300 years of Democracy in the county, sponsored by the Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union, Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation, and the Dutchess County Historical Society.

Additional ratification anniversary events occurring in Poughkeepsie on July 26th include a visit to the location where the Ratifying Convention was held. The Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society invites the public to meet outside the Dutchess County Courthouse, located at 10 Market Street in Poughkeepsie, at 4 pm to see the historical plaques and listen to a discussion on the events that led up to the convention. From there, a brief walk down to the Post Office (55 Mansion Street) to see the mural depicting the Ratifying Convention will be accompanied by an informal talk on the “Backgrounds of the Convention Leaders.”

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