

CORNER TO CORNER

The Greeting

Welcome to **Corner To Corner**. With this publication, RDM Surveying is bringing our clients, friends, & fellow professionals thought-provoking topics of interest and concern. This issue is the first issue of 2009. In this issue, we will look back at 2008, along with how a boxing match changed the New York and Massachusetts State Line. We hope you will find reading **Corner To Corner** helpful and informative and we always welcome your comments. Please pass this publication onto a colleague, and if you would like additional copies of an issue just call us. As always, feel free to contact us if you have any comments or questions.

“Providing Solutions to Unique Problems”

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Looking Back At 2008

As 2008 came to a close so did one of RDM Surveying Consultants biggest jobs, the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. As a facility, the new 220,000 square-foot center is like no other. It contains a 1200-seat concert hall designed to the highest acoustical standards; an intimate 400-seat theater; and two highly flexible studio spaces. This project presented many challenges for RDM Surveying from setting the initial control to checking the height of the projector to see that there were no obstructions.

The project began in 2005 with setting the initial control to be used for the building layout. The challenge of this project was the elevation change of over 100 feet on this small site. As construction continued, we had to verify the location of walls, anchor bolts, pilings, and caissons.

As the building came out of the ground we verified the locations



of 100's of imbed plates and knockouts on the concrete forms, many of which we were unable to reach due to their location, before the concrete was poured to prevent errors. This meant that we needed to provide solutions to unique problems and to purchase the latest in surveying technology to do this job.

As the building progressed, we needed to provide control on the eight different levels in the building for the different building trades. This control was used for

aligning the elevators, laying out interior walls, laying out the seating in the concert hall and theater and setting all the glass on the outside of the building along with a number of other layouts and measurements that are not typical to building construction due to the unique design of the building.

If you have not seen this signature work of architecture in Troy, you should pay a visit to this new facility, see it for yourself, and think about the challenges that this building presented to us.



Looking Back At 2008



RDM Surveying continued to work on the new East Campus Athletic Village, which, eventually, will include a new stadium, a natatorium, a new arena, a field house for indoor track and field, and new and upgraded outdoor fields. We are providing control and verification as this site is developed.

We also worked on many school district

projects providing the initial survey work needed for project design. The sites range from Malone, Ticonderoga, Mohonasen, Guilderland, Watervliet to Jefferson. We worked on projects for the Albany Housing Authority and Omni Development on public housing projects.

RDM completed a 680± acre survey on the Brunswick and Grafton Town Line that contained

large elevation changes that made it a difficult survey to traverse. We also prepared surveys for adverse possession cases along with the usual surveys and flood elevation certificates that we normally perform.

We are looking forward to new challenges in 2009. If you have a project coming up in the future, contact us to see what we can do for you.

How A Boxing Match Changed The State Line

By Chris Michael

On Wednesday, October 12, 1853, a boxing match held in the small town of Boston Corners, Massachusetts forever changed the state boundary line between New York and Massachusetts. A 22-year-old fighter, John Morrissey, who would later become a U.S. Congress man, faced Yankee Sullivan, a 40-year-old boxer, in a prizefight with a purse of \$2000 at stake. During this time boxing was illegal. Prizefights were held in places that were out of the reach of the law. Therefore, Boston Corners was an ideal site for such a match.

Boston Corners is

a hamlet of the town of Ancram in Columbia County, New York. It was formerly part of the town of Mount Washington, Massachusetts and was annexed to New York State on April 13, 1857. It is a small town of approximately 1,000 acres and consists mainly of farmland. It is located at the southeast corner of Columbia County and looks like a sore thumb on a map. Today there is nothing exciting about Boston Corners, it is a quiet community tucked in the Taconic Hills. It consists of farms, a few roads and was once a stop for various rail lines. Because of its location west of the highest peaks of the Taconic Hills and the Connecticut state line

to the south, it was virtually inaccessible to Massachusetts law enforcement officials and therefore the perfect location for an illegal prizefight.

An entrepreneur from New York City, by the name of Samuel Black, came to Boston Corners and saw all kinds of possibilities there. He opened a tavern and visitors from the wrong side of the tracks found their way to Mr. Black's establishment. Guests came and went, duels and gambling were common and lawlessness bred in the small town. It became a sort of "city of refuge" for criminals and outlaws of all classes, who fled to it to escape from the reach of the officers of the law.

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How A Boxing Match Changed The State Line

It made perfect sense to hold an event that would change the history of Boston Corners forever.

The fight took place on October 12, 1853 in a field, and was supposedly viewed by some 3,000 to 5,000 spectators. They came from New York City, Albany, Troy, and all places in between. The population of Boston Corners was less than 150 people and had only one inn. People came by train, by stage, by horse and on foot to see what was hoped to be the fight of the century. When the fight began, many of the fans were drunk from alcohol they brought or bought from Black's tavern.

John Morrissey from Troy, N.Y. challenged the Yankee Sullivan. Sullivan, age 40, weighed 145 pounds, giving away 30 pounds to the younger Morrissey. Morrissey, who was 22 years old, stood 6 foot 2 inches and weighed 175 pounds. Morrissey was not a skilled boxer but a brawler who was considered a favorite over Sullivan. From the beginning of the fight Sullivan displayed his boxing skill against his young and bigger opponent. By the end of the first round Morrissey's left eye was blackened and blood was coming from his nose. Each of the following rounds were repeats of the first with Sullivan badly punishing Morrissey. For thirty-six grueling rounds Sullivan beat his heavier opponent, but Morrissey refused to stay down. In the 37th round, as Sullivan tried to throw Morrissey to the floor, both fighters' handlers charged into the ring and there was a free-for-all. In an attempt to restore order, the referee called the fighters to the center of the ring to resume the fight. Morrissey responded, but in the confusion Sullivan failed to answer the referee's call. The referee declared the winner with the title of "Champion of America."

What happened next has become known as "The Sack of Millerton" (though it all took place several miles north of that benighted village). A brawl broke out in the crowd after the decision. The riot spilled out of the field into neighboring farms. The rioters started looting on their way back to the train. Farms were ransacked, pantries were looted for food, and hogs were slaughtered and roasted along the road. The Boston Corners community was stripped of every edible thing that could be found.

New York law enforcement authorities moved in and arrested the two boxers. The boxers were held on \$1,500 bail each. Sullivan jumped bail and was last

heard of on the West Coast. Morrissey paid a \$1,200 fine and became the toast of New York. He made friends with the Tammany Hall politicians who controlled New York City politics. He opened a gambling house and then a racetrack in Saratoga Springs, New York, helping to establish the town as a popular resort and horseracing center. Morrissey was elected to two terms in Congress and two in the New York State Senate before his death in 1878.

The citizens of Boston Corners petitioned New York State and the U.S. Congress to bring them into the jurisdiction of New York. After Massachusetts and New York agreed to this in 1853 the House of Representatives passed a bill (H. R. 601) giving the consent of Congress to the cession, by the State of Massachusetts to the State of New York, of the district of Boston corner. It passed in the Senate on December 27, 1854 and it was delivered to the committee to be presented to the President of the United States. On January 3, 1855 an Act of Congress changed the state line and made Boston Corners officially part of New York. Russell Dorr was appointed on the part of New York and John Z. Goodrich by Massachusetts, to establish the boundary.

The present boundary between Massachusetts and New York was thus described from resurveys by a joint commission in 1899:

"then on an azimuth of 90°43'49", twenty-six hundred and twenty-four feet to bound 3, a granite monument set in ledge on the steep westerly slope of a wooded mountain ... at the southwest corner of Massachusetts, also in the eastern line of New York, and marking a corner of the towns of Mount Washington, in Massachusetts, and Ancram and Northeast, in New York; thence on an azimuth ... thirteen thousand six hundred and forty-nine feet to bound 9, a granite monument set in ledge on the westerly wooded slope of Alandar Mountain about a quarter mile west of its summit, ... at the corner of Mount Washington, in Massachusetts, and Copake, in New York; thence on an azimuth ... two hundred forty-nine thousand two hundred and forty-six feet, by the towns of Mount Washington, Egremont, Alford, West Stockbridge, Richmond, Hancock, and Williamstown, in Massachusetts, and Copake, Hillsdale, Austerlitz, Canaan, New Lebanon, Stephentown, Berlin, and Petersburg, in New York, to bound 112, a granite monument set in ledge and earth on an open easterly



Corner To Corner is a publication of RDM Surveying Consultants. It is intended to inform our clients and friends of items of interest in the surveying profession.

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slope about seventy-five feet west of a private roadway... at the northwest corner of Massachusetts, also in the east line of New York and in the south line of Vermont, and marking a corner in the boundaries of the towns of Williamstown, in Massachusetts, Petersburg, in New York and Pownal, in Vermont.

This location of the line was approved by Massachusetts May 8, 1901 and by New York June 9, 1910.

In a world of GPS, cell phones and Google Earth it is hard to imagine a time when an illegal boxing match could escape the law and draw such a large crowd. Had law enforcement officials from Massachusetts been able to reach Boston Corners we may have been robbed of one of the strangest boundary disputes in history. As well as a legendary boxing match.

History of Columbia County, New York, Capt. Franklin Ellis, 1878.

The Battle of Boston Corners, *By Patrick Higgins* www.abouttown.us/dutchess/articles/winter02/battle.shtml

'The Boxing Register' by James B. Roberts and Alexander G. Skutt, copyright © 1999 by McBooks Press. All rights reserved. The 3rd edition of *'The Boxing Register'* will be published in June 2002.

John C. Kofoed, *Biography of Honorable John Morrisey, Champion Heavyweight of America and State Senator*, New York, 1938 Brien Bouyea,

"The Legend of Old Smoke," newspaper article appearing in the Troy Record.

Journal of the Senate of the United States of America, 1789-1873, WEDNESDAY, December 27, 1854.

<http://www.msp.umb.edu/placebiblio.html>

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