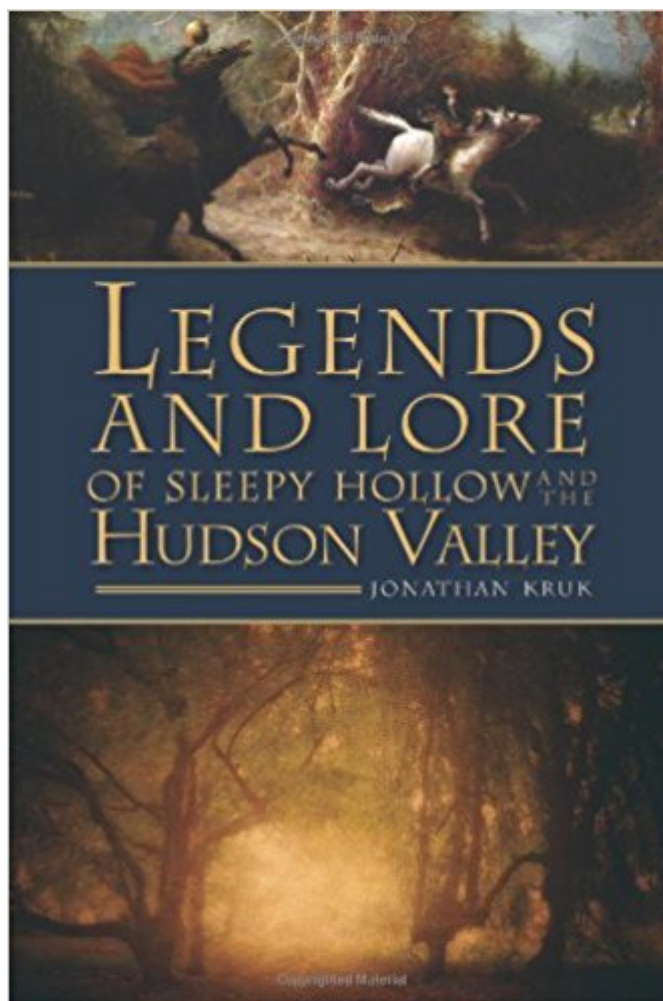


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# Legends And Lore Of Sleepy Hollow And The Hudson Valley



## Synopsis

Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is one of the best-known works of American literature. But what other myths lie hidden behind the landscape of New York's Hudson Valley? Imps cause mischief on the Hudson River, a white lady haunts Raven Rock, Major Andre's ghost seeks redemption and real headless Hessians search for their severed skulls. Local storyteller Jonathan Kruk tells these and other tales of the lore of the Hudson Valley—the stories that have created an atmosphere of mystery that helped inspire Irving's legend.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Kruk has been enchanting audiences with his dramatic, enticing storytelling ability for 20 years."

--Suzanne Rothberg, Tarrytown-Sleepy Hollow Patch

Performing Washington Irving's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* hundreds of times every October since 1996, revealed more of the iconic headless horseman to me. People find the galloping Hessian compelling after 190 years. This keen interest and my own fascination with the lore of the Hudson River inspired me to write the book. I discovered where and how the Hessian lost his head. I found direct borrowing Irving made from German literature and a diabolical idea taken from the Bard of Scotland Robert Burns. The real story lies in unique Dutch-American custom. The story of the first spell cast over Sleepy Hollow begins with ancient Native lore, has a link to Henry Hudson, and grows with help from prejudice against witchcraft. Further, other ghosts of note

inhabit the region. Major Andre, (Benedict Arnold's co-conspirator) though hanged in Old Tappan NJ, haunts Sleepy Hollow. The White Lady wailing before storms actually is a layer of several spirits reaching back to pagan Europe. There's much more than accounts of local lore in this book. It's history, scholarship, folktales and a tracing of the most plausible route of the famed chase of Ichabod Crane by the headless horseman. It's full of informed tales only a real storyteller from the area would know.

A totally entertaining look at the local folktales of the country around Tarrytown, New York, mostly focusing on the legends mentioned in, and at the center of, Washington Irving's Legend of Sleepy Hollow. The stories themselves are told in a lively style and the author also includes plenty of cultural and historical context that explains the stories to readers who may not be familiar with the rich legacy of the Hudson River Valley. You'll meet the headless Hessian and his surprisingly numerous kinfolk, the real Ichabod Crane, women in white, river imps, and other denizens of the early American imagination...or are they? This little corner of America is one of our national treasures and so is Mr. Kruk's book.

This is a great companion to Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow". This book gives you insight into the many legends and folklore's of the Hudson Valley that inspired Irving's wonderful Halloween favorite staple of Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman. Jonathan Kruk is an amazing storyteller who colorfully sheds light on these folklore's, bringing to life a world long gone. I would also recommend getting the CD recording of Kruk's animated reading of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." It's perfect for a long car ride with children during the Halloween season. Better yet, go to Sleepy Hollow, NY during October and watch Kruk perform it live at the Old Dutch Church.

As a long-time fan of Irving's legend, I've collected a number of books on the topic, and have visited the real Sleepy Hollow in New York. In my experience so far, I would describe this book as the strongest publication currently available that examines the origin of Sleepy Hollow's many regional legends. Some reviewers have described this book as "scholarly," but I would not use that term - although the book is comprehensive, covering a wide variety of stories in detail, I often found myself disappointed by a lack of direct source citations. There is a bibliography, but it's typically impossible to know exactly which piece of information came from which source. Direct quotations from sources might also have added greater detail in many places throughout the book, but are often dismissed in favor of Mr. Kruk's own recitation of events in his own words. All in all, though, this is an enjoyable

volume that I would strongly recommend to anyone who simply wants an introduction to the legends of the Hudson River Valley. It certainly greatly expanded my own knowledge, and I find myself returning to it again and again, either simply for enjoyment or to refresh my memory about the content.

Every October, my eldest son and I have a tradition of reading aloud and/or watching a video of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle." We had always wondered about those tales told around the fire by the old Dutch settlers, as mentioned in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." I finally did some searching and discovered this book. It's like a treasure trove of old Dutch legends, ghost stories, and mysteries. We're now planning a "pilgrimage" next fall to the Tarrytown/Hudson Valley area, where this author is a storyteller. A great find for fans of Washington Irving's classic works.

Having just recently attended one of Jonathan Kruk's Sleepy Hollow storytelling performances at the Old Dutch Church for the first time, I was definitely looking forward to reading Legends and Lore of Sleepy Hollow and the Hudson Valley. And I was not in any way disappointed. The storytelling finesse, knowledge of the era and obvious love for the genre carried over beautifully in the book. The comfortable storytelling flow of the text is infused with numerous plausible sources for the ideas that have grown into both familiar and lesser known legends. The anecdotes and the possible origins come not only from other literary pieces and legends, but also from true documented incidents in Early American history. The author cleverly correlates fact and fiction to create material that is entertaining and informative while still allowing room for the reader's own interpretation. The writing is supported by a varied collection of meaningful illustrations - both historical and contemporary. I found this book to be enjoyable, educational and perfect for "The Legend" enthusiasts.

If you are a fan of legends and lore, tales and local American history, I completely recommend this book. Quite scholarly and eloquently written, but not in any way dry...thoroughly enjoyable. I received this book on a Friday evening and was entranced till the wee hours of the morning. Historical illustrations are profuse throughout. Jonathan Kruk's delightful storytelling prowess is evident, history encircled with many a tale ...this book is a gem.

Legends and Lore of Sleepy Hollow is a colorfully written, easy to read tour of the history and fables

of the lower Hudson River. It was a pleasure to re-live the Washington Irving tales, and learn the background for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." There's a wealth of geographical tidbits, like the story of Spuyten Duyvil in The Bronx. Kruk's account of Major John Andre's ride, capture and execution, was fascinating. Benedict Arnold's realpolitik actions compare interestingly with those of present day US allies and enemies. Some historical maps were missed.

Very entertaining and informative book! Will be visiting Sleepy Hollow this October and look forward to seeing Mr. Kruk's reenactment of Irving's The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Although book was purchased used, it looked brand new.

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