

# Polopel Island (Bannerman's Island)

## Text from William Wade

Pollopel Island is situated at the northern entrance to the Highlands, six miles above West Point. It consists of a mass of rock, and rises near the centre of the river, between Breakneck Hill on the east and Butter Hill on the west.

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Pollopel Island is most commonly spelled Pollopel Island on old maps. It also appears as "Potlepel Eylant" which is Dutch for Potladle Island. Dutch sailors who got too drunk were often left on this island to sober up and the name Potladle may have come from a Dutch expression for being drunk. (The potladle hangs from his side). The island is 6 3/4 acres and lies about 1,010 feet from the eastern shore of the Hudson. The name was changed to Bannerman's Island in this century after the man who purchased it in 1900 and built a castle on the island.. Francis Bannerman was originally from Dundee, Scotland and a descendant of the MacDonalds clan. He took over his father's business of buying and reselling second-hand military equipment. He built a Scottish castle on the island as a summer retreat and as a storage place for his arms business. The castle was built in the old style with crenellations, turrets, and battlements but was not yet completed at the time of Francis' death in 1918. While the family continued to use the castle predominantly as a storage place for their arms,ammunition and explosives, the main place of business was on Broadway in New York City. In 1967 the Bannermans sold the island to the State of New York and removed all the military merchandise. Some articles were donated to the Smithsonian. On August 8, 1969, a fire destroyed all the buildings on the island leaving it in its present ruined state. The island is now part of the Hudson Highlands State Park.

Pollopel Island has been surrounded by many legends throughout the years. Washington Irving wrote that mischievous creatures or goblins lived in the river between Dunderberg Mountain and Pollopel Island and that sailors had to take precautions against their mischief. A horse's shoe nailed to the mast was said to save ships from the goblins. It was also the custom to dunk first time sailors in the water by Pollopel's Island in order to make them immune to the goblins.

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