

# The Albany-Hudson Rail Line



*Welcome to the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail, built on the route of a thirty-seven-mile-long electrified rail line that connected its namesake cities and the communities between them from 1900 to 1929.*

## Transportation Improvement

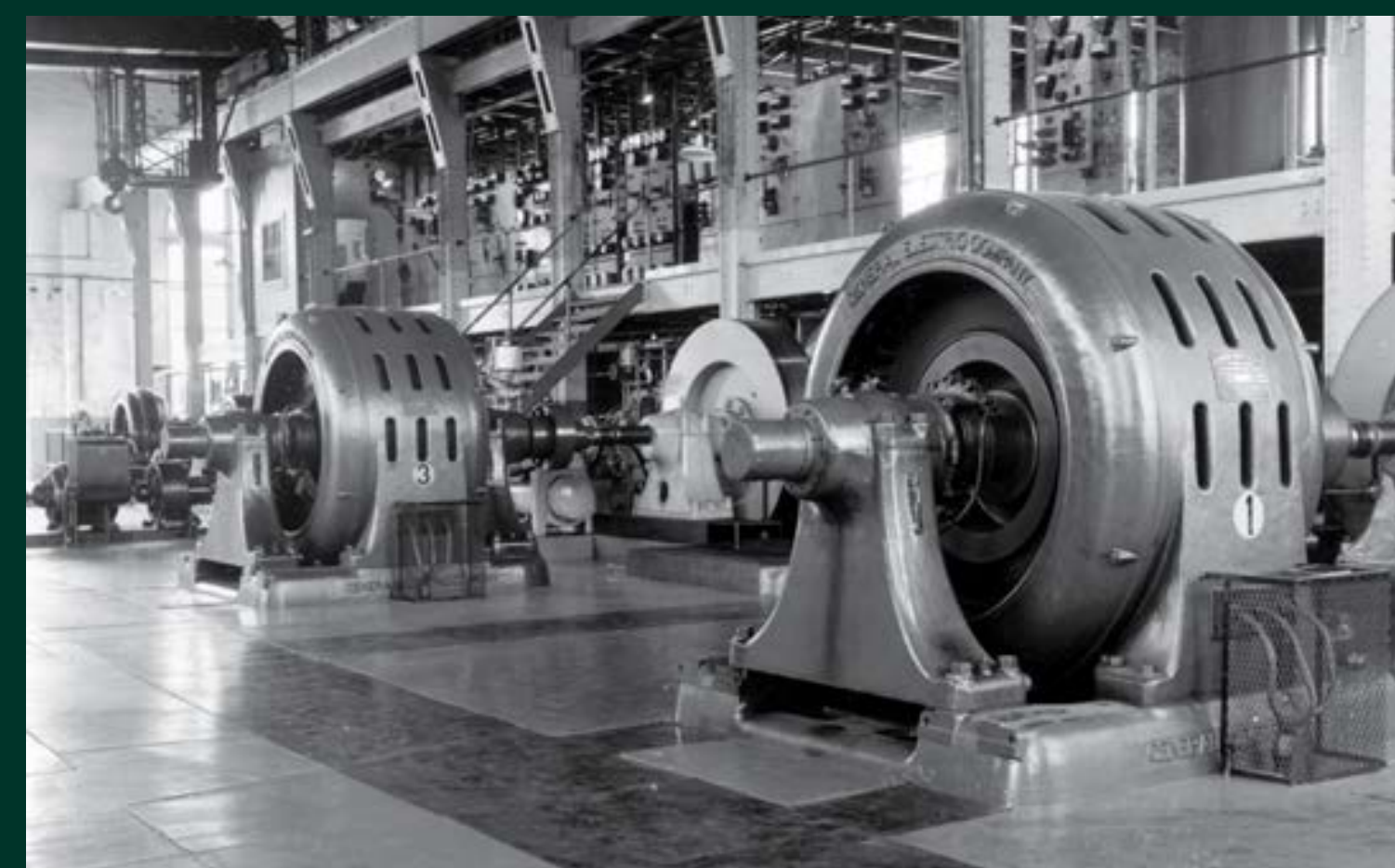
Before 1900, inland transportation between Columbia and Rensselaer Counties was horse drawn on unpaved roads. In 1900, the Albany & Hudson Railway & Power Company completed this interurban rail line, using electricity to power high-speed travel between cities and villages separated by rural areas. Ownership changed several times. The longest ownership was the Albany Southern Railroad between 1909 and 1924.

## Passengers and Freight

Albany-Hudson trolley cars made hourly trips, moving at speeds up to 60 mph, stopping at fourteen stations on runs taking about one hour and forty minutes between Albany and Hudson. At its peak, 1.4 million passengers rode the line annually. It also served local industries, hauling freight including milk, farm products, cotton and wool for textile mills, and finished goods.

### INTERURBAN RAIL ►

*This scene of Albany-Hudson line passengers ready to board a car at Merchant's Crossing in Nassau captures the spirit of interurban railroading, which provided fast intercity service through largely rural territory. Source: Nassau Village Historian.*



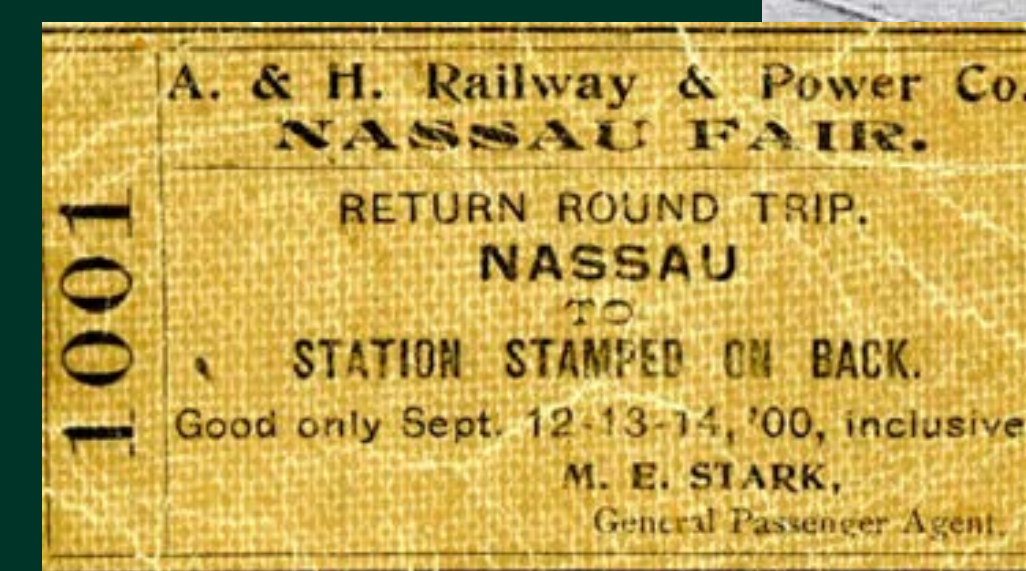
### ▲ ELECTRICAL POWER

*Generators at the rail line's hydroelectric plant at Stuyvesant Falls produced electricity to power the trolleys and to service communities along the route. Source: Albany Engineering Corporation.*



### ▲ DOWN AT THE DEPOT

*Albany-Hudson line depots like Kinderhook's were busy centers of community life along the route. Depot agents handled ticket sales, freight, mail, and railway safety communications. Source: Village of Kinderhook.*

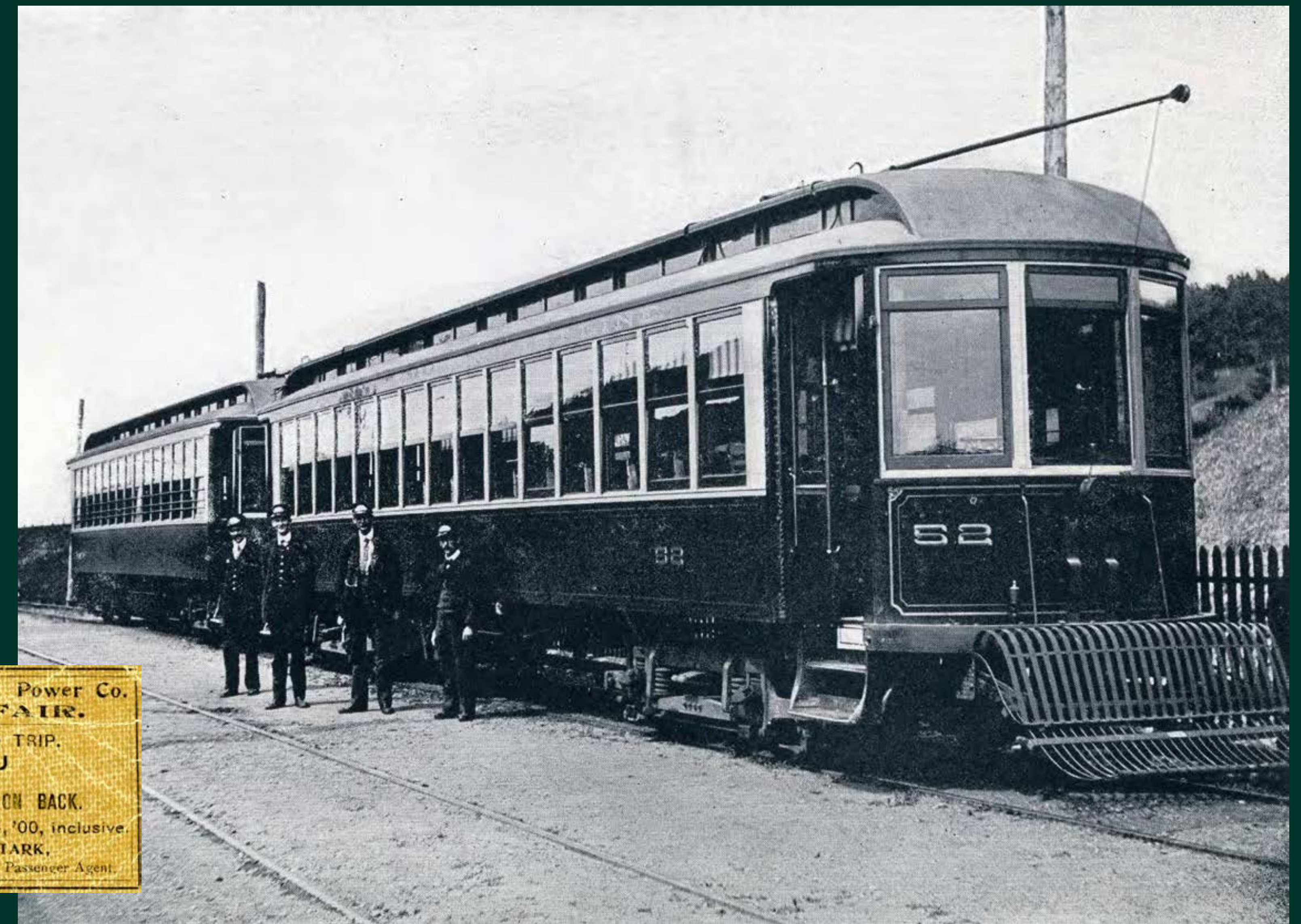


## Industry and Recreation

The Albany-Hudson line was the first US interurban line to power cars via an electrified third rail. The company generated electricity at its Stuyvesant Falls hydroelectric plant and provided the first electric service to communities along the line. To increase ridership, the rail company developed "Electric Park," an amusement park at Kinderhook Lake that was a popular getaway until it closed in 1923.

## Impact and Decline

The Albany-Hudson line shaped development of the rural communities it served, spurring economic growth and opening them to recreational and residential development. The line was successful until after World War I when automobiles and bus lines eroded ridership. The last trolley car ran on December 22, 1929, two months after the stock market crash. This marked the end of almost thirty years of fast intercity public rail transport in Columbia and Rensselaer Counties.



### ▲ CARS AND CREWS

*Proud Albany-Hudson line motormen and conductors pose in front of their gleaming trolley cars, sometimes coupled in pairs to handle busy summertime traffic to the company's "Electric Park" amusement destination. Source: Chatham Public Library.*



### ▲ ELECTRIC PARK

*To boost weekend revenue, the Albany-Hudson line created "Electric Park," a popular amusement destination on Kinderhook Lake featuring entertainment, food, and rides. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*







**KINDERHOOK DEPOT**

Built in 1900, this classic passenger depot design was also used at Nassau. Depots were gateways to the outside world for communities along the line. Source: Nassau Village Historian.



**VALATIE DEPOT**

This 1905 depot was built to replace a dilapidated earlier freight rail building. This design, using imitation stone blocks, was copied for the Stottville depot. Source: Lee Sharp.



**NASSAU INTERIOR**

Nassau depot agents handled ticket sales, freight, mail, and railway safety communications. Source: Nassau Village Historian.

# Passenger and Freight Depots

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail follows the route of a thirty-seven-mile-long electrified rail line that connected its namesake cities from 1900 to 1929. This interurban line, which used electricity to power high-speed travel between cities and villages separated by rural areas, incorporated a variety of buildings serving passenger and freight traffic.

## History and Impact

The Albany-Hudson line spurred economic growth in the communities it served. The rail company generated electricity at Stuyvesant Falls and ran its own amusement park, “Electric Park,” at Kinderhook Lake. The line was successful through World War I. After the war, automobiles and bus lines eventually eroded profits, and the last train ran on December 22, 1929.

## Stations and Service

Albany-Hudson line trolley cars stopped hourly at East Greenbush, East Schodack, Nassau, North Chatham, Electric Park, Niverville, Valatie, Kinderhook, Stuyvesant Falls, Rossman Crossing, Stockport Centre, Empire, and Stottville. Over almost thirty years, millions of commuters, shoppers, and excursionists passed through these depots, which were busy centers of community life where people got mail, packages, and news from the outside world.

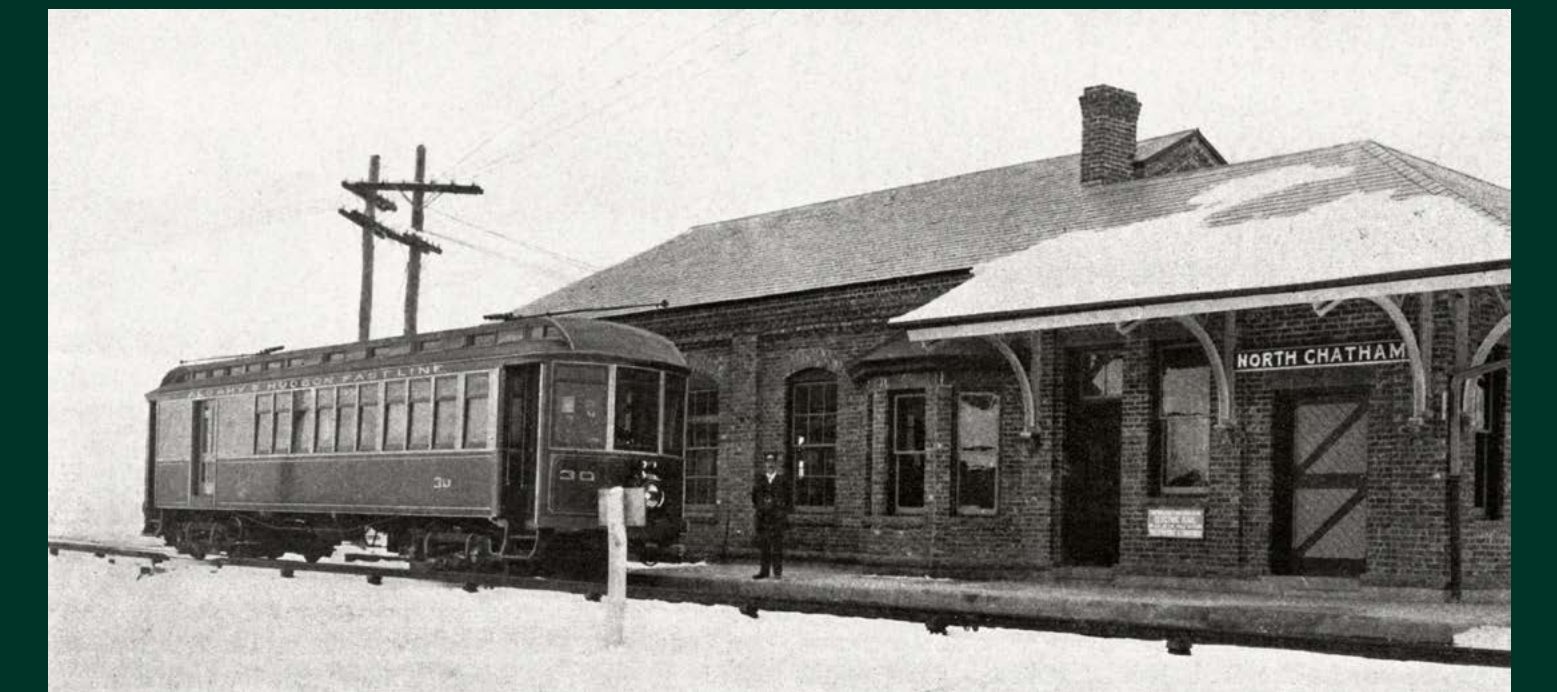
## Style and Survivors

Passenger depots were distinctive buildings. Overhanging roofs sheltered passengers from the elements, and platform doors opened onto passenger waiting rooms and freight storage. A bay window gave depot agents a clear view of the tracks. Today, trail users pass by surviving depots at East Greenbush, North Chatham, Valatie, Kinderhook, and a flag-stop shelter at North Chatham, all now private property.



**SCHODACK CENTRE FLAG STOP**

The Albany-Hudson line had over thirty small, unmanned “flag stop” shelters like this one, where passengers could stop a trolley car by waving an arm, flag, or lantern. Source: Schodack Town Historian.



**NORTH CHATHAM DEPOT / SUBSTATION**

Of the three brick electrical substations providing power for the rail line, this is the only survivor and the only one that doubled as a passenger depot. Source: Nassau Village Historian.



**ELECTRIC PARK DEPOT**

This long, narrow depot housed six ticket windows to handle sudden throngs of eager arrivals at Electric Park, the Albany-Hudson line’s own amusement park on Kinderhook Lake at Niverville. Source: Nassau Village Historian.



**EAST GREENBUSH DEPOT**

This unusual two-story passenger depot was the only one of its kind on the Albany-Hudson trolley line. Source: East Greenbush Historian.



**STUYVESANT FALLS MILK HOUSE**

Albany-Hudson line daily freight trains collected locally produced milk in cans stored in ice-cooled buildings like this one along the rail line. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.





# The Valatie Kill

The Hudson River Valley was colonized by Dutch settlers in the first half of the 1600s. The stream in front of you—the Valatie Kill—draws its name, pronounced “vah-lay-sha,” from the Dutch words “vaal” (falls), “je” (little), and “kill” (stream or creek), roughly translating to “little falls stream.” Valatie Kill waters rise from the Rensselaer Plateau north of Nassau Lake, flow south through Kinderhook Lake to the Village of Valatie to meet Kinderhook Creek, and then join Stockport Creek, a tributary of the Hudson River. The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail follows the Valatie Kill’s course for ten miles, from Nassau Lake to Valatie.

## Agricultural Growth and Decline

In the early 1800s, European settlers cleared most Hudson Valley forests for farms, from which they could efficiently ship agricultural products to New York City via the Hudson River. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the rapid spread of railroads opened up rich midwestern farmlands to supply eastern US markets. The resulting widespread abandonment of Columbia and Rensselaer County farmlands led to reforestation of over half the region.

## Changing Forests

Today’s woodlands are very different from the precolonial old-growth forest. American chestnuts, revered by Native Americans as sources of both food and timber, were decimated by a blight introduced in the early 1900s. Ash trees are now falling victim to the invasive emerald ash borer beetle. Climate change is favoring species such as red oak and red maple, while species such as yellow birch, sugar maple, and red spruce, better adapted to colder climates, are in decline.

### EASTERN BOX TURTLE (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) ▶

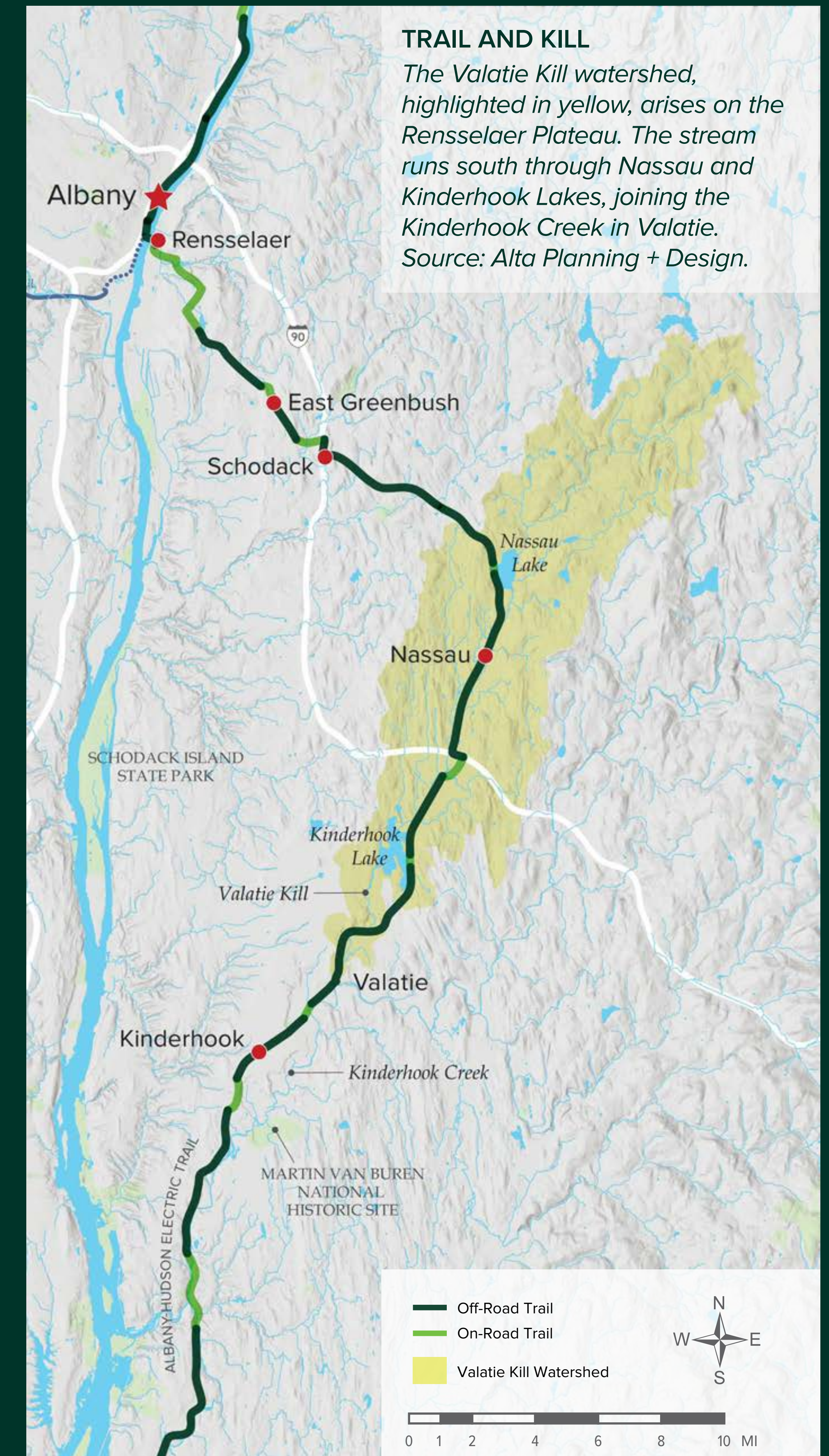
This land-based turtle found in the greater Kinderhook Creek watershed is omnivorous and inhabits forests and fields near water. Although it typically lives thirty to forty years or more, it is slow moving, slow to mature, has few offspring, and is imperiled by automobiles, agricultural machinery, and land development. It is in decline in New York, where it is considered a “species of special concern.” Source: Hudsonia.



▲ **BROOK SNAKETAIL DRAGONFLY** (*Ophiogomphus aspersus*)  
The Kinderhook Creek watershed hosts this rare dragonfly named for the males’ snakelike mating claspers. Among the most colorful US dragonflies, it is also among the most environmentally sensitive, and its presence indicates high water quality. It also needs undisturbed fields and woodlands for feeding and breeding. Source: Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Ecology Program.



▲ **WILD’S POND**  
The Valatie Kill fed Wild’s Pond in Valatie, dammed for textile mills in the 1820s. Although man-made, the pond was considered scenic and was featured among postcards sold by Valatie news agent Frank L. Fowler. Source: Village of Valatie / Guy Gamello Collection.



### ▲ ELECTRIC TROLLEY

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail follows a former trolley line, shown here north of Valatie, which ran from 1900 to 1929. The trail crosses the Valatie Kill five times on new bridges installed where original ones were long ago removed. Source: Schodack Town Historian.





# Mohican Homelands

*The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail crosses the ancestral lands of the Muhheconneok, “People of the Waters that are Never Still,” Native Americans whose name refers to the tidal Hudson River. Called Mahicans by early Dutch settlers and Mohicans by the English, they inhabited the upper Hudson Valley and parts of western Massachusetts and Connecticut until the American Revolution.*

Mohicans lived in settlements along streams, with families sharing bark-covered wigwams. They grew crops of corn, squash, and beans in fertile river lowlands and hunted deer and small game and gathered plants in forests and meadows. Mohicans also relied on fish from the valley’s many waterways.

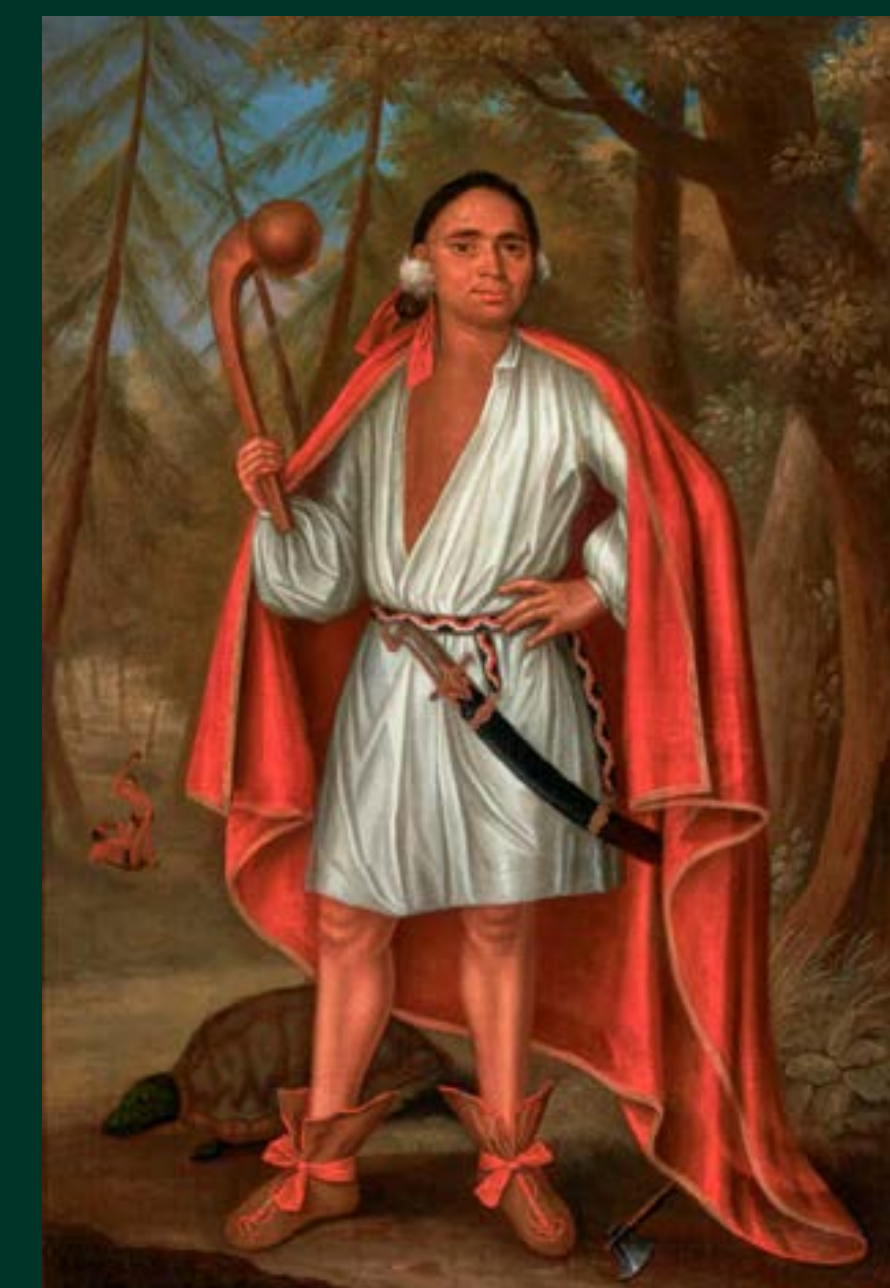
European arrival in the Hudson Valley in the early 1600s presented opportunities—and great challenges—for the Mohicans. Dutch traders offered valuable goods such as metal tools and kettles, blankets, and firearms in exchange for beaver pelts and the furs of other animals. They also brought with them deadly diseases that killed

more than half the Mohicans and other Native Americans in the region. By the mid-1700s, conflict with other Native Americans and colonists, the loss of land, and missionary activity saw many Mohicans move to Stockbridge, a “praying town” in Massachusetts.

After the Revolutionary War, the Mohicans resettled in central New York in the hopes of reestablishing their communities, but by the 1820s and 1830s they had made their way to Wisconsin under the federal Indian removal policy. There they joined with Munsees, people originally from the lower Hudson Valley. Today, the federally recognized Stockbridge-Munsee Community continues to assert their cultural ties to New York’s Hudson Valley.



▲ **“THE GRANDFATHER”**  
Contemporary artist Len Tantillo painted this early 1600s scene of a tribal elder retelling a story to a captivated audience at a Mohican village on the Hudson River near present-day Castleton, New York. Source: Len Tantillo.



◀ **ETOWAUKAUM**  
Mohican leader Etowaukaum visited England in 1710 to meet with Queen Anne to warn her of rising tensions with the French and their Indian allies. During the visit, Dutch artist Jan Verelst painted this portrait of Etowaukaum. Source: Library and Archives Canada.

▶ **ARTIFACT REPATRIATION**  
An archaeologist and members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community examine artifacts recovered from a Mohican site in the Hudson River Valley. Source: Stockbridge-Munsee Community.



ONE INCH  
Artifacts shown larger than life-size

Artifacts, left to right:

**PROJECTILE POINT**

Archaeologists call this a Madison projectile point, an arrowhead used by regional Native Americans from about 1350 until Europeans arrived in the early 1600s. This example is made of chert, a flint-like stone prized for making tools and weapons.

**TRADE BEAD**

Early Europeans traded colorful beads such as this example from the late 1600s recovered from a Mohican site in the upper Hudson Valley. Beads made from shell, called wampum, were used by natives and Europeans as a medium of exchange in the trade for furs.

**POTTERY SHARDS**

The Mohicans made clay pottery, recovered fragments of which are shown here, to store and cook their staple foods, which included meat, corn, squash, and beans.

Source (all artifacts): Hartgen Archaeological Associates Inc.





# Hampton Manor

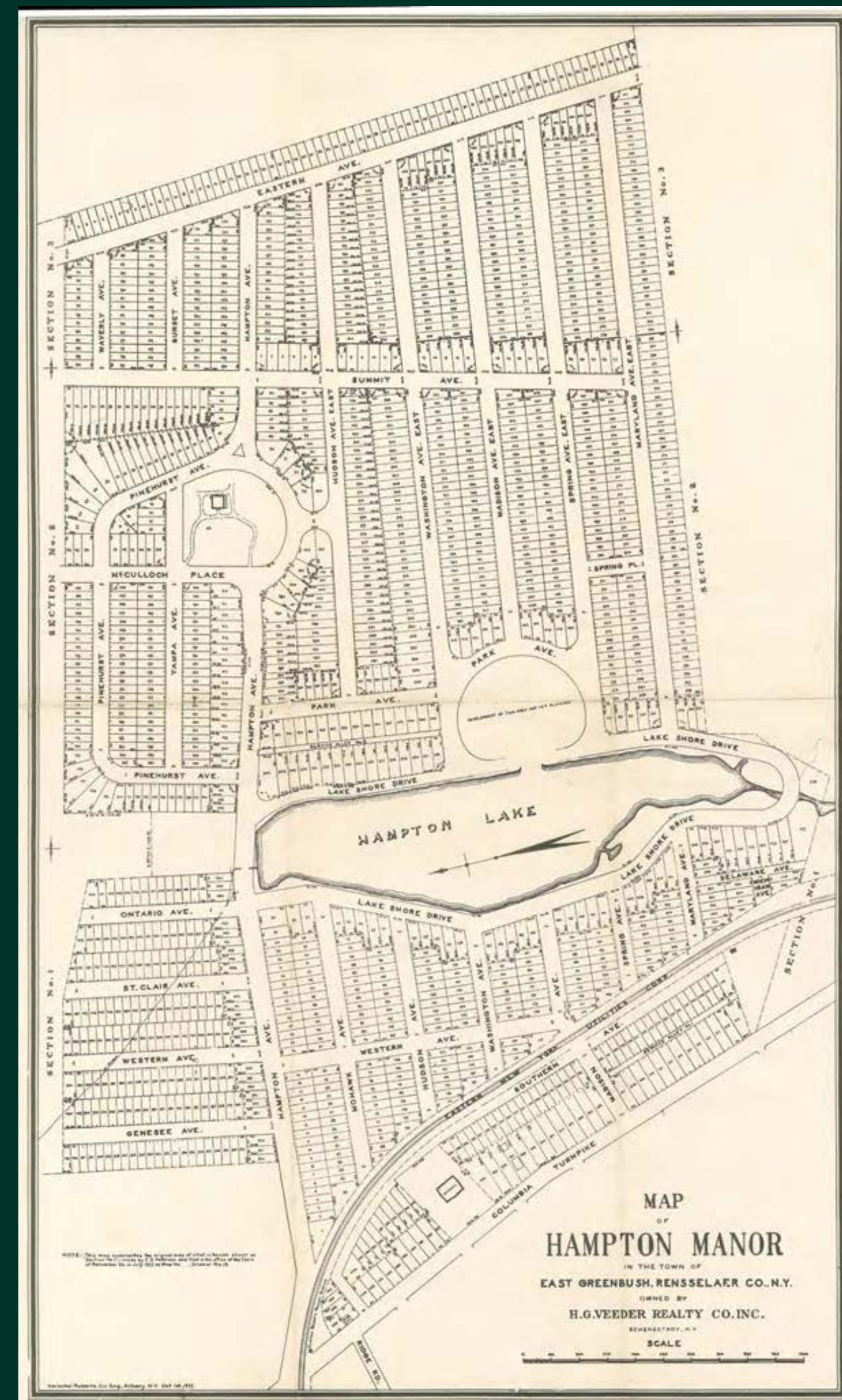
The Hampton Manor neighborhood surrounding this part of the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail is an example of the automobile-era subdivision of farmland for residential development that was part of Albany's suburbanization in the 1920s. Hampton Manor occupies part of an area that once included the Greenbush Cantonment, military barracks built to ready US troops for the War of 1812. Hathorn McCulloch purchased these lands from the US government in 1831 and established his "Cantonment Farm," living in a former officers' quarters. He gave a southern portion of his land to his son William, who built a mansion called Hathornden. Both historic homes still stand nearby today.

## Suburban Subdivision

In 1925, the Veeder Realty Company bought the former Hathornden lands to develop its 187-acre "Hampton Manor" subdivision. Albany real estate promoter Harold Veeder hoped to attract city dwellers to relocate to the suburbs, an exodus supported by the increasing availability of the automobile. Veeder's advertisements touted Hampton Manor's ten-minute commute to Albany, pure springwater, beautiful artificial lake, good neighbors, and fine environment for children.

### SUBDIVISION PLAN ►

A Veeder Realty Company map of Hampton Manor house lots. The first houses were built in "Hampton Manor South" in the Maryland Avenue area, near the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail parking lot. Source: East Greenbush Historian.



### ▲ TROLLEY STOP

An Albany-bound trolley stops at Clinton Heights crossing by the Hathornden estate gates, about 1912. The trolley line shut down in 1929, replaced by a parallel Albany-Nassau bus line. Source: Schodack Town Historian.

## Kit Homes and Improvements



New Hampton Manor homeowners purchased house lots from Veeder and contracted to have their choice of two- or three-bedroom "kit" houses built in one of several styles within a price range of \$7,400 to \$8,900. The Hampton Manor Improvement Association made sure the streets and sidewalks were paved and lighted, and banned commercial development. Hampton Manor filled out with over six hundred houses by the early 1950s. Hampton Manor and surrounding residential subdivisions made East Greenbush one of the growing Capital District's first major suburban areas.

### ▲ SUBURB BEAUTIFUL

Veeder Realty Company advertisements for Hampton Manor claimed that "people who make their homes outside the city are quite apt to be healthier, wealthier and wiser." Source: East Greenbush Historian.



### ▲ LAKE RECREATION

Veeder Realty dammed a small creek to form the 14.5-acre Hampton Lake, East Greenbush's largest body of water. Hampton Manor residents enjoyed boating, fishing, swimming, ice skating, and miniature sailboat regattas. Source: East Greenbush Historian.

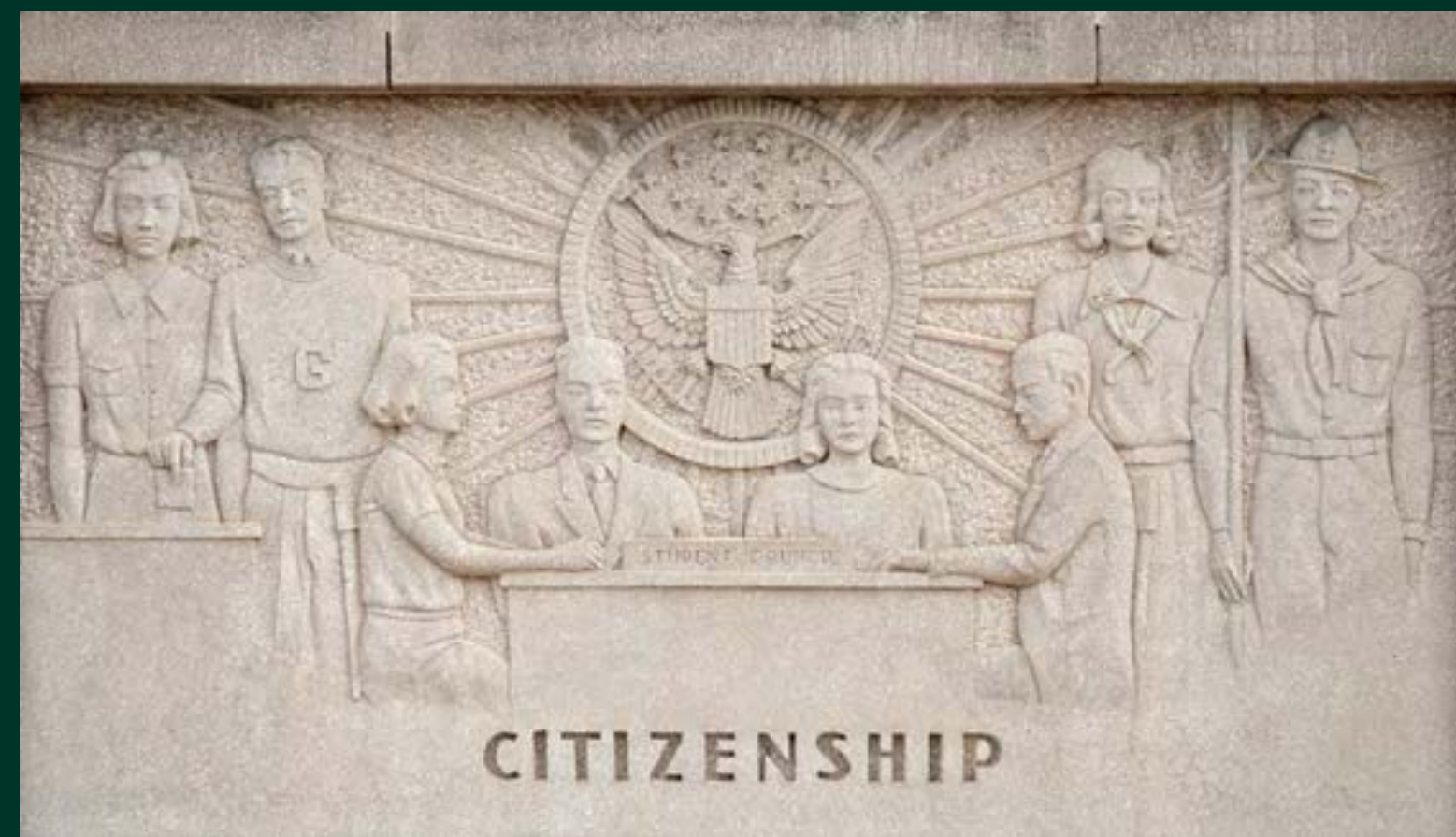


### ▲ KIT HOUSES

Hampton Manor's houses included prefabricated Sears, Roebuck & Co. "kit" houses like this example. Kits were delivered to a house site by truck within four weeks of being ordered. Source: John Carl D'Annibale / Albany Times Union.



# East Greenbush Central School



*East Greenbush Central School opened in September 1940, consolidating students from surrounding communities to learn in one modern complex for the first time. The class of 1941 included students who had previously attended twelve different schools. Nicknamed the “Million Dollar School,” the Central School accommodated seventy-two teachers and nine hundred students. It was shaped like a giant letter E to provide sunlight to every classroom, with elementary, junior high, and senior high students in separate parallel wings. The school had its own fleet of buses to transport students from five towns on fourteen routes. In 1973, the Central School was repurposed and renamed Citizen Edmond Genet Elementary School.*

## New Deal School

Construction was funded by the Public Works Administration, or PWA, a Great Depression-era “New Deal” federal agency created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933 to address the national economic plight after the stock market crash of 1929. New Deal programs revived the economy, creating jobs for millions of Americans, improving and building transportation infrastructure, parks, and public buildings—including schools. These programs lifted the nation out of economic depression and left a legacy of beautiful utilitarian buildings like the East Greenbush Central School.

### ▲ RELIEF SCULPTURES

*The school building’s façade includes ten relief plaques depicting aspects of school life, including Academic Studies, Athletics, Citizenship (shown here), Graduation, Kindergarten, Manhood, Manual Arts, Parent Interest, Social Life, and Womanhood. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



### ◀ LAYING THE CORNERSTONE

*Rensselaer County Central School District No. 1 Board of Education president Arthur Monthie trowels mortar at the school’s cornerstone-laying ceremony on Saturday, October 7, 1939. Architect J. Russell White, second from right in light coat and hat, looks on. Source: East Greenbush Historian.*

## Architecture and Architect

The Central School’s architectural style is called “Stripped Classical Modernism,” a distinctly American version of the Art Deco style combining streamlining, classical forms, and applied decoration that was common in PWA-era buildings. The school’s architect was J. Russell White, best known for his Washington Park Lakehouse in Albany and a designer of many other regional PWA-funded schools. East Greenbush Central School was the largest of his Rensselaer County schools, which included those in Nassau and North Greenbush.



### ▲ GRAND ENTRANCE

*The front entrance tower originally had tall glass-block bands, a polished metal-trimmed awning, and multipane glass entry doors and windows. In 1961, the Columbia High School Key Club raised money for new “Columbia High School” letters for the awning. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



### ▲ ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING

*This 1939 illustration of the East Greenbush Central School, prepared by architect W. Parker Dodge, chief draftsman and designer for J. Russell White’s architectural firm, is a beautiful example of the art of architectural rendering. Source: Mosaic Associates Architects.*



### ◀ ORIGINAL AUDITORIUM

*This photo of the East Greenbush Central School auditorium is one of a set taken by school architect J. Russell White’s firm to document the completed project. The auditorium, which seats 1,350 students, remains in much the same original condition today. Source: Mosaic Associates Architects.*





# Elsie the Cow



Schodack has a connection to the Borden Dairy Company's mascot "Elsie the Cow," who once lived in a barn near the Albany-Hudson trolley line, now the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail. The company was founded in New York by Gail Borden, whose 1865 condensed milk patent spurred

regional dairy farming. Borden became a national dairy brand, and in the late 1930s the company created a cartoon cow, "Elsie," to help advertise its pure milk.

## World's Fair

The "Borden's Dairy World of Tomorrow" 1939 New York World's Fair exhibit featured dairy machinery, but most visitors wanted to know which live Jersey cow on display was Elsie. Borden chose a cow named "You'll Do Lobelia" to be the first real live "Elsie," and fourteen million people saw her at the fair. When Elsie gave birth to baby Beulah, Borden gave Elsie a husband, Elmer. After the fair, Elsie toured the US by train to promote Borden products.

### ▲ BORDEN'S IMAGE

A collage of vintage Borden advertising images including "Elsie the Cow." In 2000, Ad Age named Elsie one of the "Top 10 Advertising Icons" of the twentieth century. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.

## Schodack's Elsie

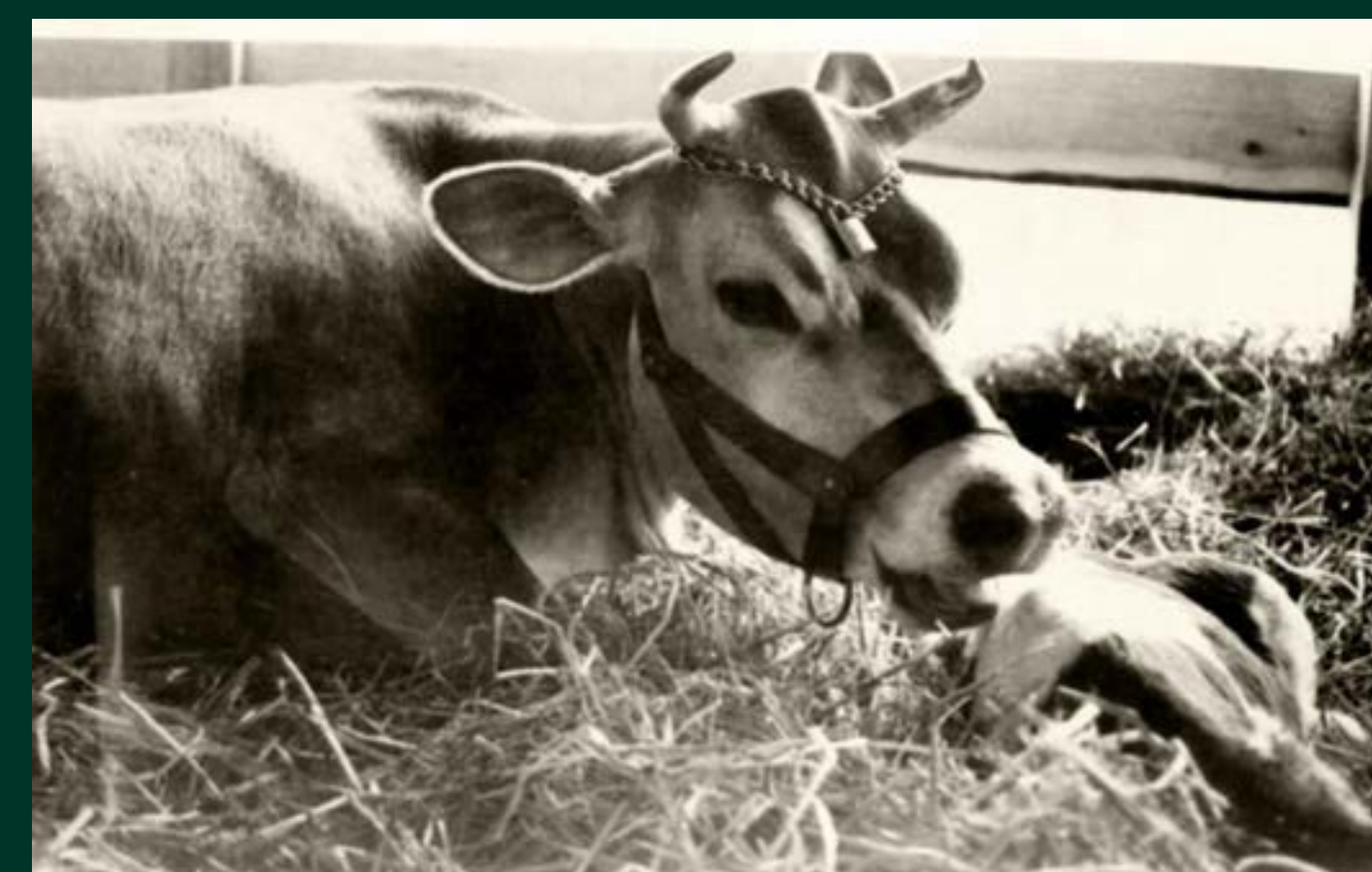
Tragedy struck in 1941 when the first Elsie lost her life in a New Jersey truck accident. Borden quickly adopted a new Elsie, a Jersey cow named "Noble Aim Standard." When this Elsie was not traveling to advertise Borden products, she lived nearby at Schodack's Moordenier Hills Farm, on Payne Road just south of the trolley line. In 1947, Elsie gave birth to a calf, Beauregard, named in a contest that drew over a million entries. Elsie and Beauregard toured the US together through the 1950s in a tractor-trailer carrying her "Barn Colonial" boudoir display. This Elsie eventually retired, but her successor's appearances remained popular at events like the Indianapolis 500, the Kentucky Derby, and state fairs into the 1970s.



Elsie, Elmer and Beauregard are Traveling Representatives of Borden's Family of Fine Foods.

### ▲ BARN BOUDOIR

This 1950s Borden postcard shows Schodack's Elsie with Elmer and Beauregard in the "Barn Colonial" boudoir display, which included playful farm-related furniture and knickknacks. Source: Schodack Town Historian.



### ▲ SCHODACK HOME

Elsie nuzzles her newborn calf in a hay-filled stall in 1948 at Moordenier Hills Farm, which was located about a thousand feet south of the trail. Source: Schodack Town Historian.



### ▲ ELSIE IS A GOOD GIRL

Elsie enjoyed all the comforts of home in her "Barn Colonial" boudoir, including portraits of fictional family members Uncle Bosworth and Great Aunt Bess. Source: Schodack Town Historian.



### ◀ MILK RIDES THE RAILS

The Albany-Hudson trolley line carried freight, including local farm products. Milk cans were placed on platforms like this one at Schodack Centre for easy loading onto refrigerated boxcars. Source: Schodack Town Historian.





# The Nassau Fair

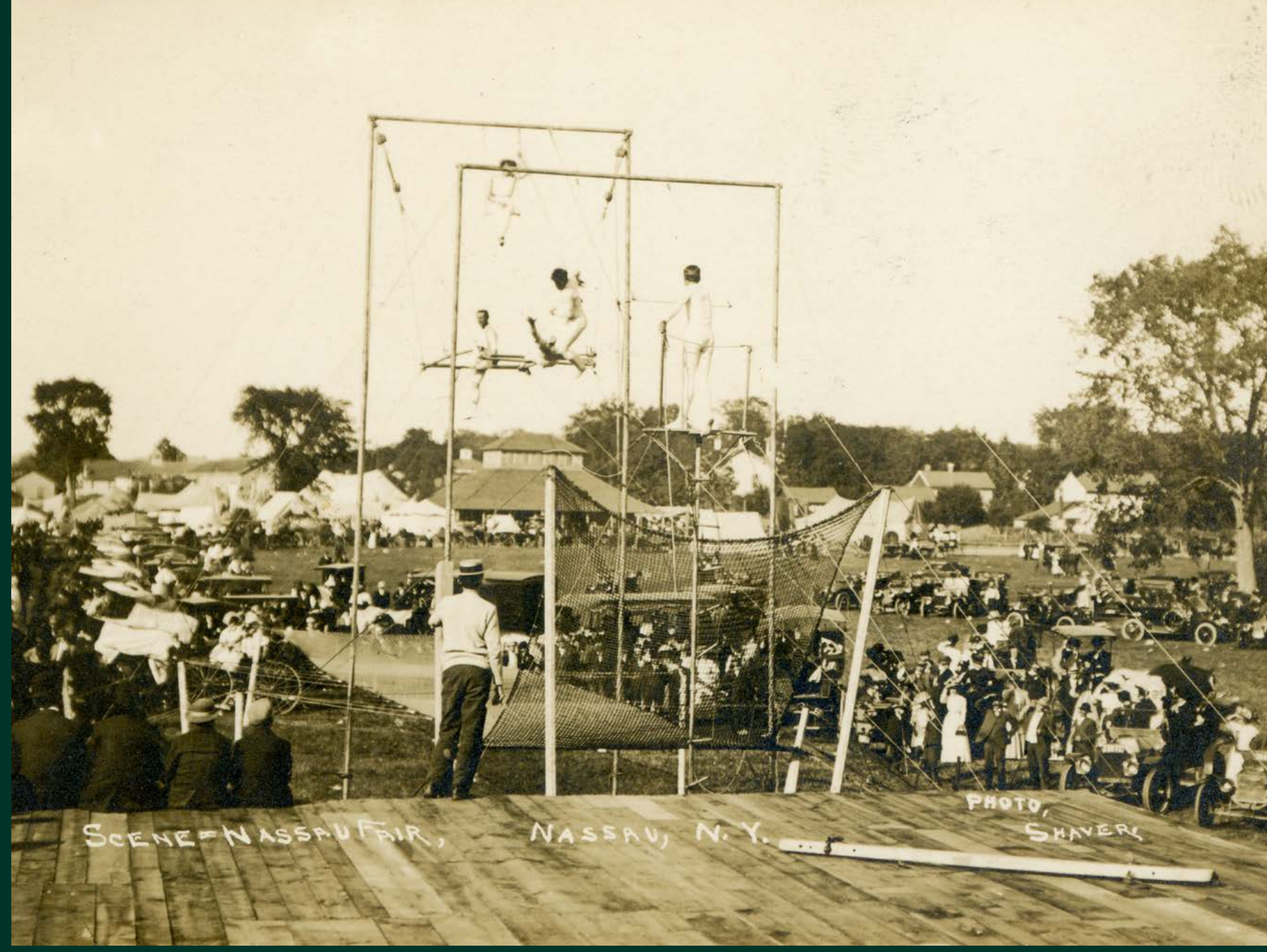
The land east of the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail in this part of the Village of Nassau was once the site of the Nassau Fair, held annually from the mid-1890s to 1944. The Village, once a junction on the Albany-Boston stagecoach route, was the site of mills on the Valatie Kill in the late 1700s. By the 1850s it was a busy commercial center including hotels, stores, and fine homes, now part of a National Register Historic District. In the early 1890s, the Rensselaer County Agricultural and Liberal Arts Society, a group of prominent area businessmen and farmers, purchased land for a fairground here and established a southern Rensselaer County agricultural fair as an alternative to older, established county fairs held to the north.



**HORSE RACES**  
 Harness racing was a major Nassau Fair attraction, and regional trainers ran horses in races with thousands of dollars wagered. Racehorses competing at Saratoga and other tracks were quartered year-round at Nassau. Source: Nassau Village Historian.



**GRANDSTAND EVENTS**  
 Fairgoers could pay an extra ten cents to sit in the twenty-five-hundred-seat grandstand for the best view of entertainment, including band concerts, equestrian exhibitions, and oxen pulls. Source: Nassau Village Historian.



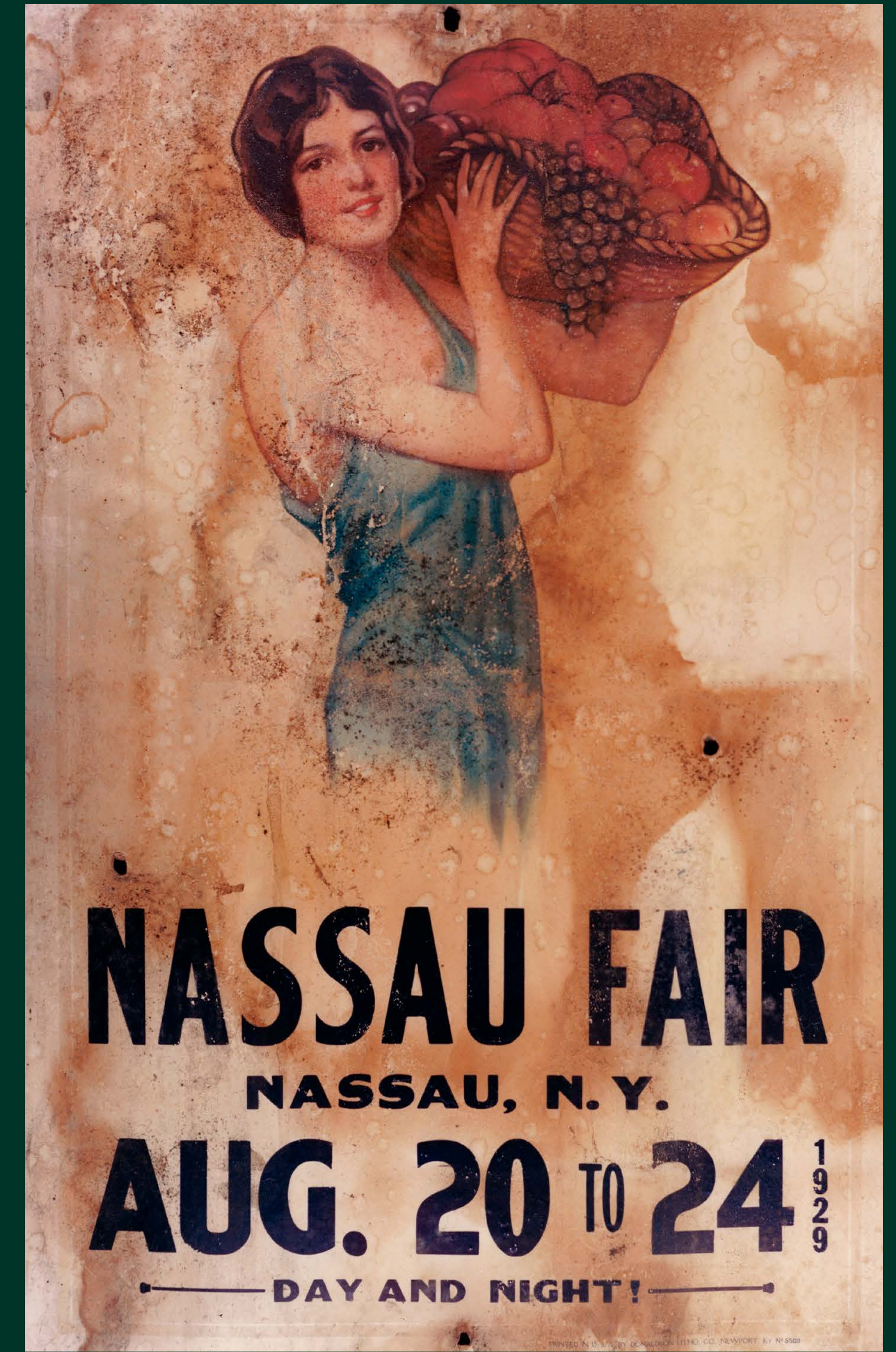
**FAIR AMUSEMENTS**  
 Fair entertainment included acrobats, "Wild West" shows, and rides including a Ferris wheel. Technology brought change, including nighttime electric lighting in 1925, and travel to the fair by automobile. Source: Nassau Village Historian.

## Fun at the Fair

The Nassau Fair ran every summer. A single-admission ticket to the forty-acre fairground cost twenty-five cents, and children under ten were admitted for free. The fair included a carnival midway, commercial displays, agricultural exhibits, horse races, and live entertainment. The Albany-Hudson trolley line, which opened in 1900, ran past the fairgrounds and made it easy to travel to the fair.

## Popularity and Demise

The Nassau Fair was the biggest annual event in southern Rensselaer County for many years. In 1922, thirty thousand people attended over three days. However, the event's popularity waned during World War II, and the last fair ran in 1944. The Nassau Fair merged with the county fair in Schaghticoke, New York. Some Nassau fairground land became house lots, and racehorse training continued for a time. The grandstand and barns burned in the 1960s, and one original Nassau Fair building, now used as a church, survives today near the Nassau Post Office.



**FAIR POSTER**  
 Posters like this surviving 1929 example advertised the Nassau Fair, held for the "encouragement and promotion of Agricultural, Horticultural, Domestic Economy and Kindred Arts." Source: Nassau Free Library.



**THE MIDWAY**  
 Fairgoers walking on the midway, surrounded by commercial-goods exhibits and sheds where farmers displayed their produce, chickens, cows, pigs, and sheep. The large building is the Women's Arts & Crafts Building. Source: Nassau Village Historian.

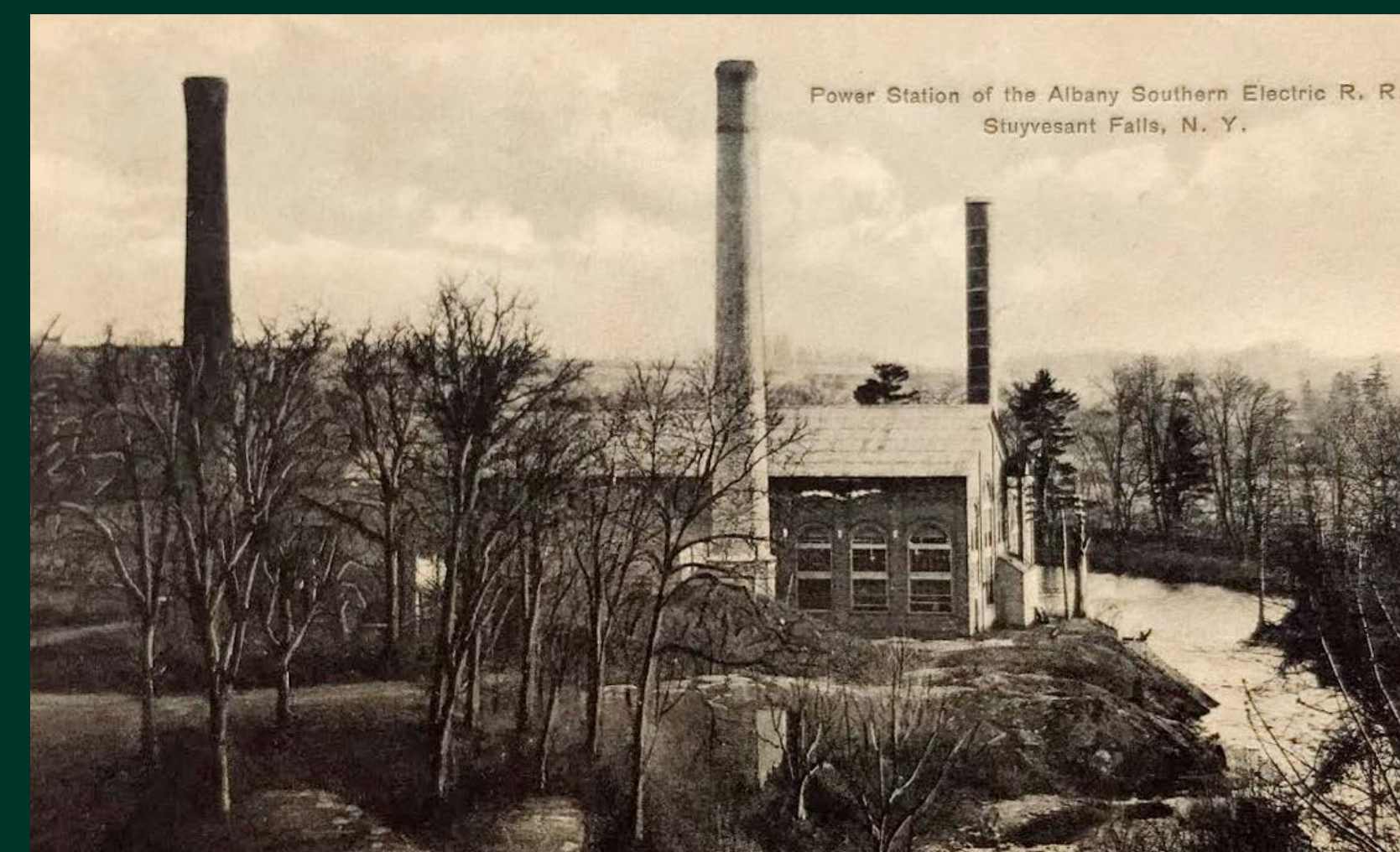


# North Chatham Depot

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## Passenger Depot

Built in 1900, North Chatham depot incorporates characteristic architectural features including overhanging roofs for sheltering passengers, a large waiting room and freight office doors, and a bay window providing a clear view of the tracks. This depot was a busy center of community life where people got mail, packages, and news from the outside world. Converted to a fire station in 1940, the depot was restored in 2013 and is now the home of the North Chatham Historical Society. It is part of the North Chatham National Register Historic District.



### ▲ POWER PLANT

*The Albany & Hudson Railway & Power Company built this electrical generating plant at Stuyvesant Falls in 1900 to power its thirty-seven-mile Albany-Hudson rail line and to light streets in towns along the way. Source: Stuyvesant Town Historian.*



### ▲ THIRD RAIL

*The Albany-Hudson line's electrified third rail, visible at right, was the first to power a US interurban rail line. Despite fences and warning signs, there were occasional accidents involving people, farm animals, and pets. Source: Schodack Town Historian.*

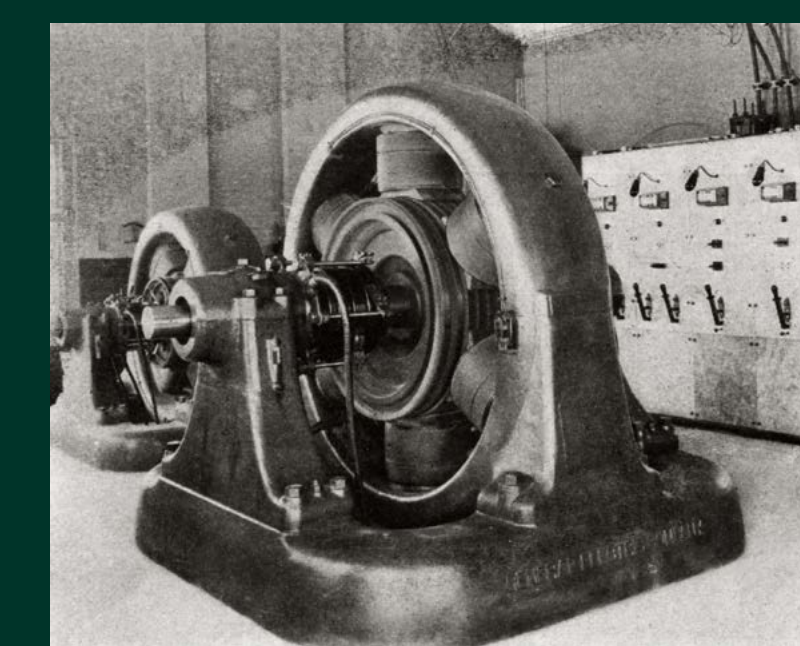


### ▲ NORTH CHATHAM DEPOT / SUBSTATION

*The North Chatham depot has been restored to its original appearance from the early 1900s. Passenger depots were community gateways to the outside world. Source: Hagley Museum and Library.*

## Electrical Substation

The Albany-Hudson line was the first US interurban railroad powered by an electrified third rail. The company generated its own electricity at its Stuyvesant Falls hydroelectric plant and provided the first electric service to communities along the line. High-tension wires carried 12,000-volt, 25-cycle AC power to brick substations at Hudson, East Greenbush, and North Chatham. There it was stepped down in air-cooled transformers, converted to DC power in rotary converters, and delivered at 600 volts to the third rail. North Chatham is the only surviving substation and the only one that doubled as a passenger depot.



### ◀ SUBSTATION EQUIPMENT

*North Chatham's 200- and 400-kilowatt rotary converters changed AC current to DC to power the trolley cars. Station staff kept equipment immaculate and controlled current for local streetlights. Source: Hagley Museum and Library.*

## Freight Service

The Albany-Hudson rail line also hauled freight including milk, farm products, cotton and wool for textile mills, and finished goods. Dairy and lumber buildings still stand on private land adjacent to the North Chatham depot, evidence of once-busy freight operations here.



### ▲ FREIGHT SERVICE

*This Albany-Hudson line freight locomotive pulled daily trains, sometimes forty cars long. The overhead wire pickup poles were used in urban areas and highway crossings instead of the third-rail contacts visible at the outer wheels. Source: Schodack Town Historian.*

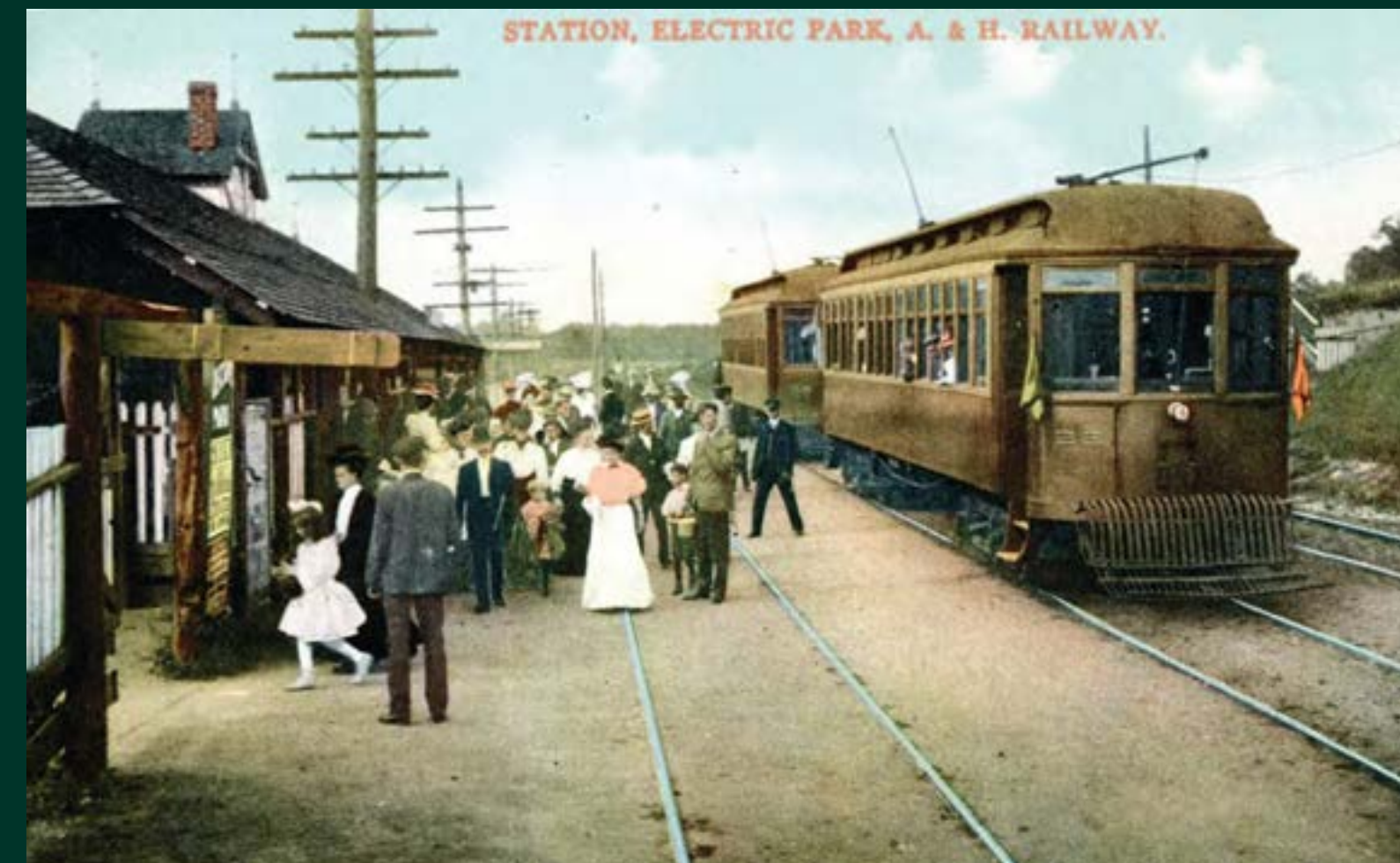




# Electric Park



*In 1900, electricity was a novel source of power and light. This was also the dawn of the golden age of amusement parks. Electrified passenger rail line operators, some of whom generated their own electricity, created “electric parks” as destinations on their lines to boost ticket revenues through increased weekend ridership.*



### ▲ TROLLEYS TO THE PARK

*A rail line conductor ushers an excited crowd across the tracks after a forty-minute trip from Albany. The rail line was powered by a third rail except in areas of heavy foot traffic like Electric Park. Source: Nassau Free Library.*

### ◀ FUN ON LAKE AND LAND

*Electric Park offered milder forms of entertainment including boating, fishing, picnicking, swimming, and promenading in flower gardens, on landscaped walks, and on the park midway. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



### ▲ ROLLER COASTER

*In 1907, Electric Park added a roller coaster to the park's amusement rides, which included Ferris wheels, a carousel with a calliope, and rides on ponies, donkeys, and goats. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



### ▲ SHOOT THE CHUTES

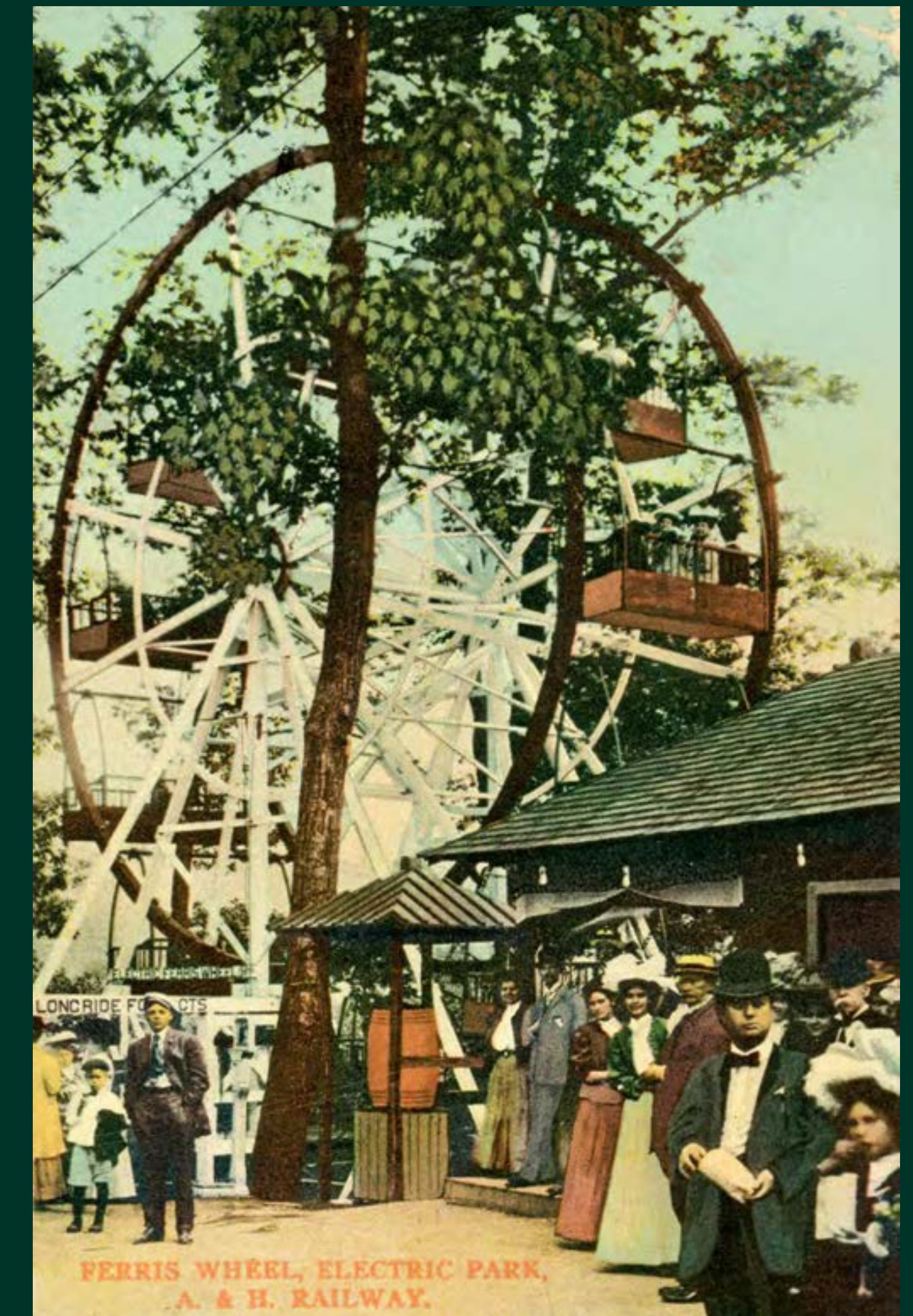
*One of Electric Park's main attractions was this early form of waterslide or flume. Riders took a sixty-foot plunge into Kinderhook Lake on flat-bottomed boats riding on rollers. The chutes doubled as a toboggan run in winter. Source: Gobrecht family.*

### FERRIS WHEELS ▶

*Electric Park had two Ferris wheels, a large, steam-powered one outside the gate that cost five cents to ride, and an electrically powered one on an island in a lagoon inside the park. Source: Gobrecht family.*

## Popularity and Decline

Electric Park was a popular recreation destination for upper Hudson River Valley residents for fifteen years. Summertime weekend daily attendance of ten thousand visitors was common. The rail line ran park-bound trips every half hour and added a second parallel track in 1909 to handle traffic between the park and Albany. Park popularity began to wane during World War I, when competition from new forms of entertainment like silent films and the freedom of movement offered by the automobile drew people away from amusement parks. Electric Park closed its gates after Labor Day weekend in 1923, and the land was sold for house lots.



## Electric Park at Kinderhook Lake

In 1901, the Albany & Hudson Railway & Power Company Railroad opened “Electric Park” where the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail now runs past the east shore of mile-long Kinderhook Lake. The forty-acre park, illuminated at night by hundreds of colored electric lights, was billed as the largest amusement park between New York City and Montreal. Admission for trolley riders was free with a forty-cent round-trip ticket. Visitors enjoyed rides on Ferris wheels, a roller coaster, carousel, waterslide, and farm animals. Entertainment included orchestras and tasteful vaudeville shows, and activities included bowling, dancing, and wintertime skating.

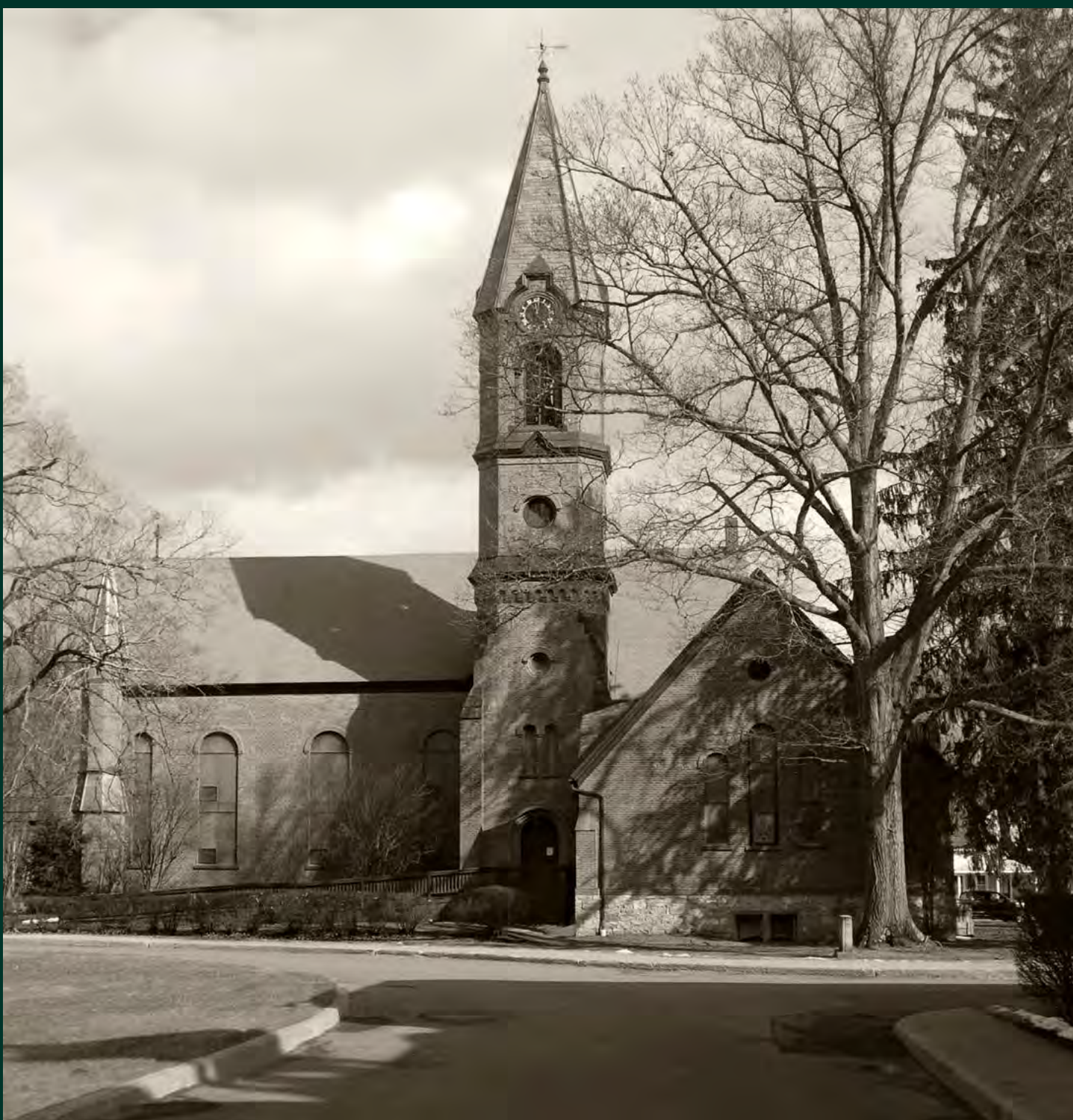




**DAVID VAN SCHAACK HOUSE**, 24 Broad Street (1774)  
*This important example of colonial-era architecture is one of a few Georgian-style mansions built north of New York City before the Revolutionary War. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



**KINDERHOOK ACADEMY**, 29 Albany Avenue (1836)  
*The Academy, established in the 1790s, hired Albany builder Henry Harrington to erect this Federal-style building, which later housed a knitting mill, grange hall, and Elks Club. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



**DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH**, 21 Broad Street (1869)  
*This Romanesque Revival-style church was built for Kinderhook's Dutch Reformed Church congregation, originally organized in 1712. Martin Van Buren is buried in the church cemetery. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



# The Village of Kinderhook

*Welcome to Kinderhook, a Hudson River Valley village rich in history. The name “Kinderhook,” which appeared on area maps as early as 1614, means “children’s corner” in Dutch. This area was settled in the 1660s by Dutch colonists who purchased land along Kinderhook Creek from Mohican Native Americans. Dutch and later English settlers tilled fertile farmlands here through the colonial era. After the American Revolution, the village grew and became a stop on the Albany-New York City stagecoach line.*

Kinderhook Village, incorporated in 1838, became a busy nineteenth-century commercial center. Village streets were lined with shops, banks, taverns, and churches, and small factories made carriages and hats. Kinderhook became the most populous town in Columbia County and attracted prominent doctors and lawyers to practice and live there. Kinderhook was home of the eighth US president, Martin Van Buren (1782–1862), whose estate, Lindenwald, now a National Historic Site, is located two miles south of the village.



**PETER VAN SCHAACK HOUSE**, 20 Broad Street (ca. 1787)  
*Originally built in the Georgian style like David Van Schaack’s nearby mansion, this house was altered in the Second Empire style by then-owner James Mix between 1865 and 1888. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



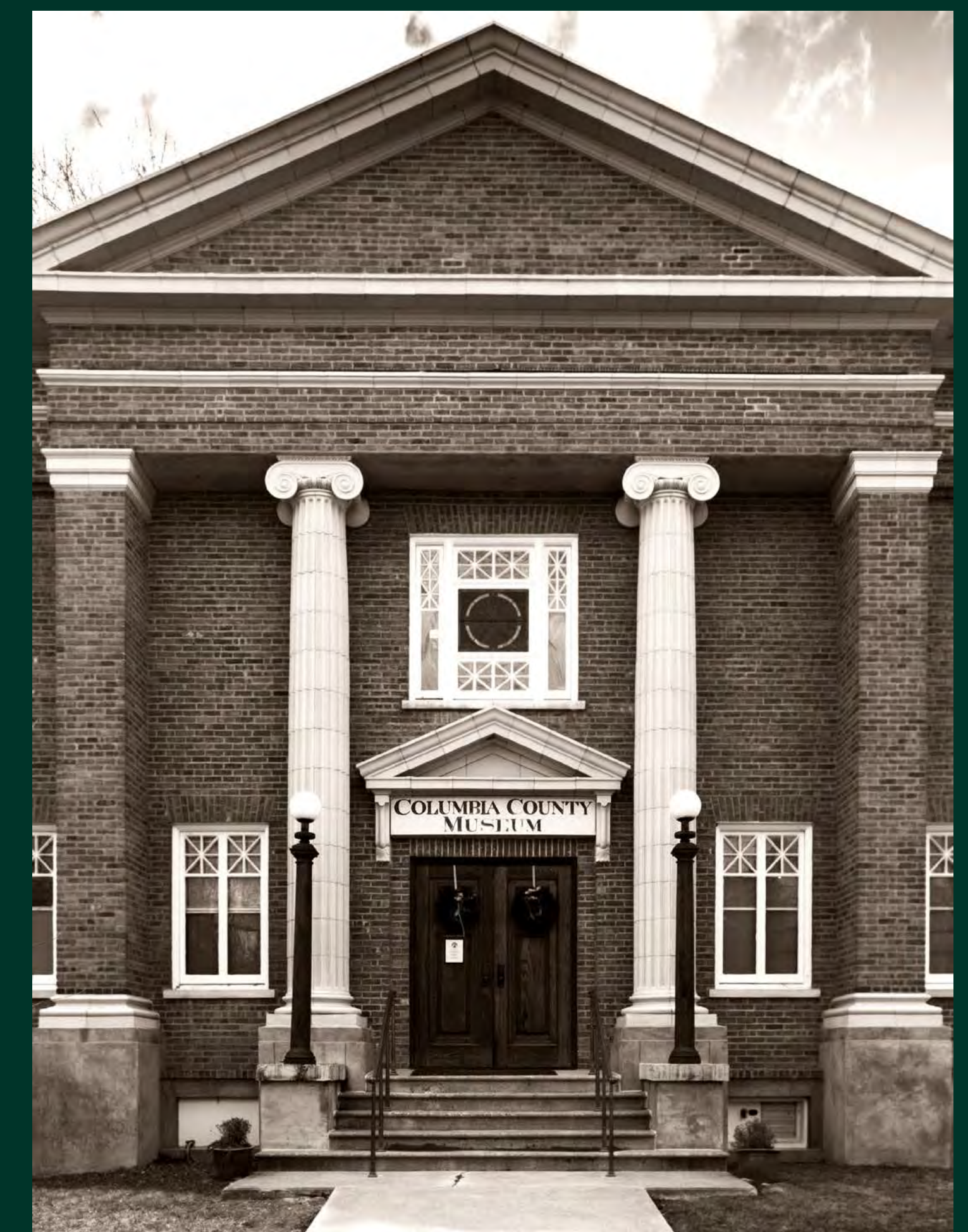
**TROLLEY DEPOT**, Albany Avenue at Mills Park (ca. 1900)  
*The Albany-Hudson electric trolley line built this passenger depot when the line opened for service. Once a busy center of village life, it is now a private residence adjacent to Mills Park. Source: Village of Kinderhook.*



**VILLAGE GREEN**, Broad and Hudson Streets (1820–1880)  
*Villagers moved a graveyard to create this town center, which included a hay wagon scale. After an 1880 fire destroyed shops, the green was enlarged to accommodate firefighting cisterns. Source: Village of Kinderhook.*



**MARTIN VAN BUREN SCHOOL**, 25 Broad Street (1930)  
*This Colonial Revival-style school was dedicated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Built for kindergarten to Grade 12 students, it is now a contemporary art gallery. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



**COLUMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**, 5 Albany Avenue (1916)  
*This Classical Revival-style building, once a Royal Arch Masons hall, is now home to the County Historical Society’s offices, a library, and public history exhibits. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.*



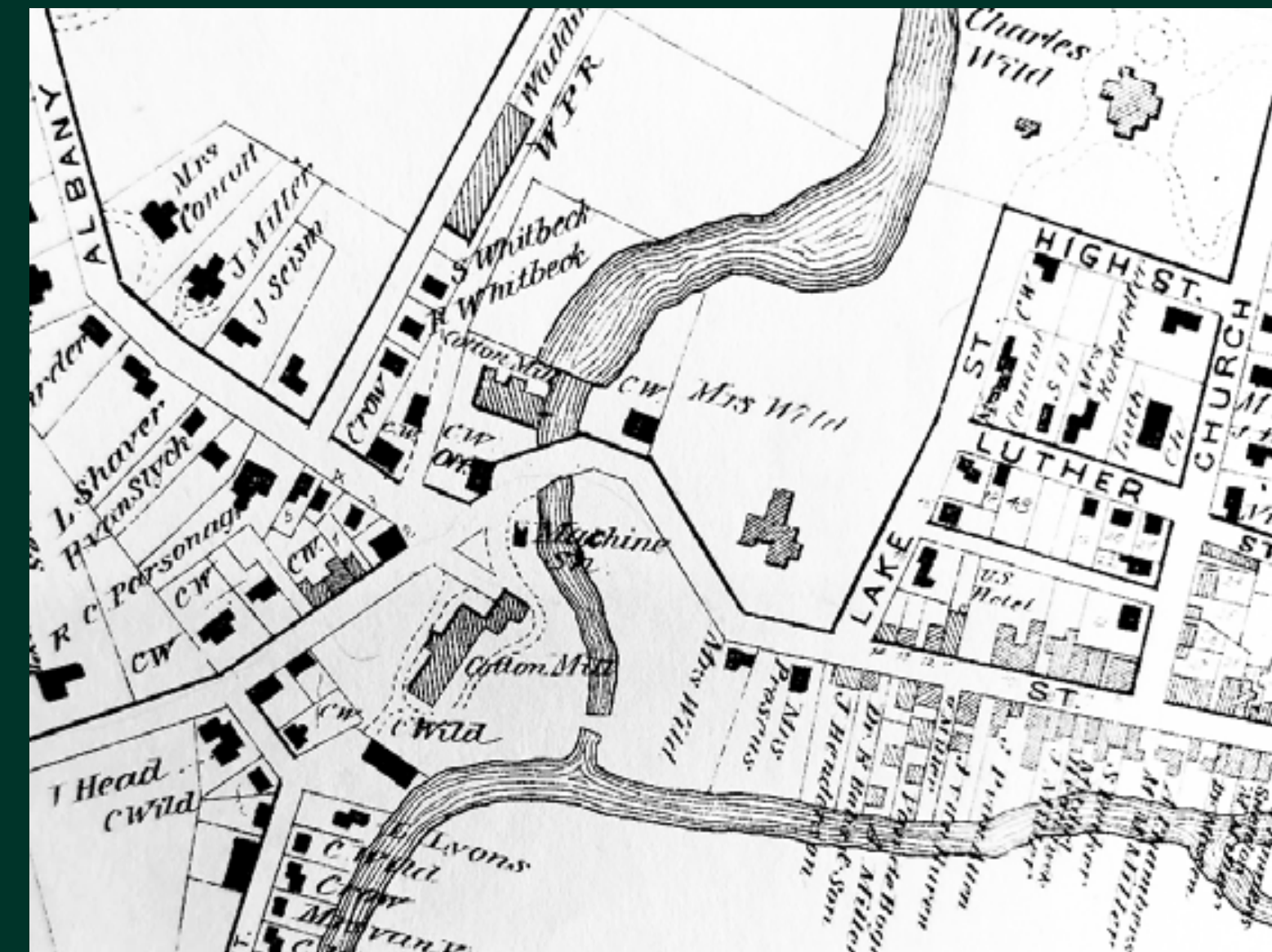
# Wild's Mills at Valatie

*The history and landscape of the village of Valatie, Dutch for “little falls,” were shaped by the waters of Kinderhook Creek and the Valatie Kill, which provided power for textile mills for over a century.*



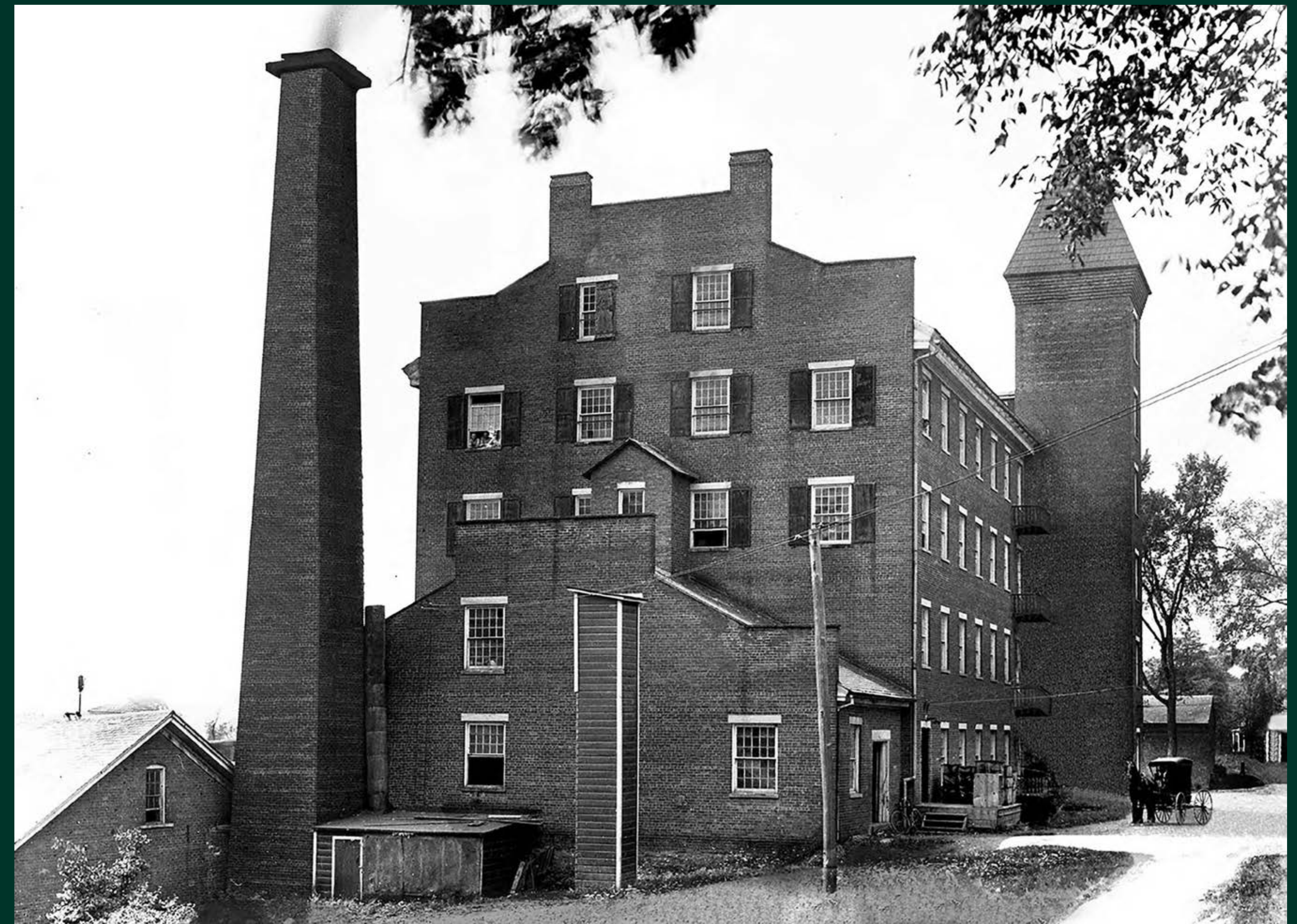
## CHARLES WILD ESTATE

Charles Wild, who ran the Wild cotton mills from 1871 to 1903, owned an estate on scenic Wild's Pond on the Valatie Kill. The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail runs through the foreground today. Source: Franklin Ellis, *History of Columbia County, New York*, 1878.



## WILD'S VALATIE MILLS

This 1873 map shows Wild's cotton mills on the Valatie Kill. Properties marked “C. Wild” and “CW” were owned by Charles Wild, whose estate appears at the upper right. Source: Beers's Atlas of Columbia County, New York, 1873.



## 1846 LOWER MILL

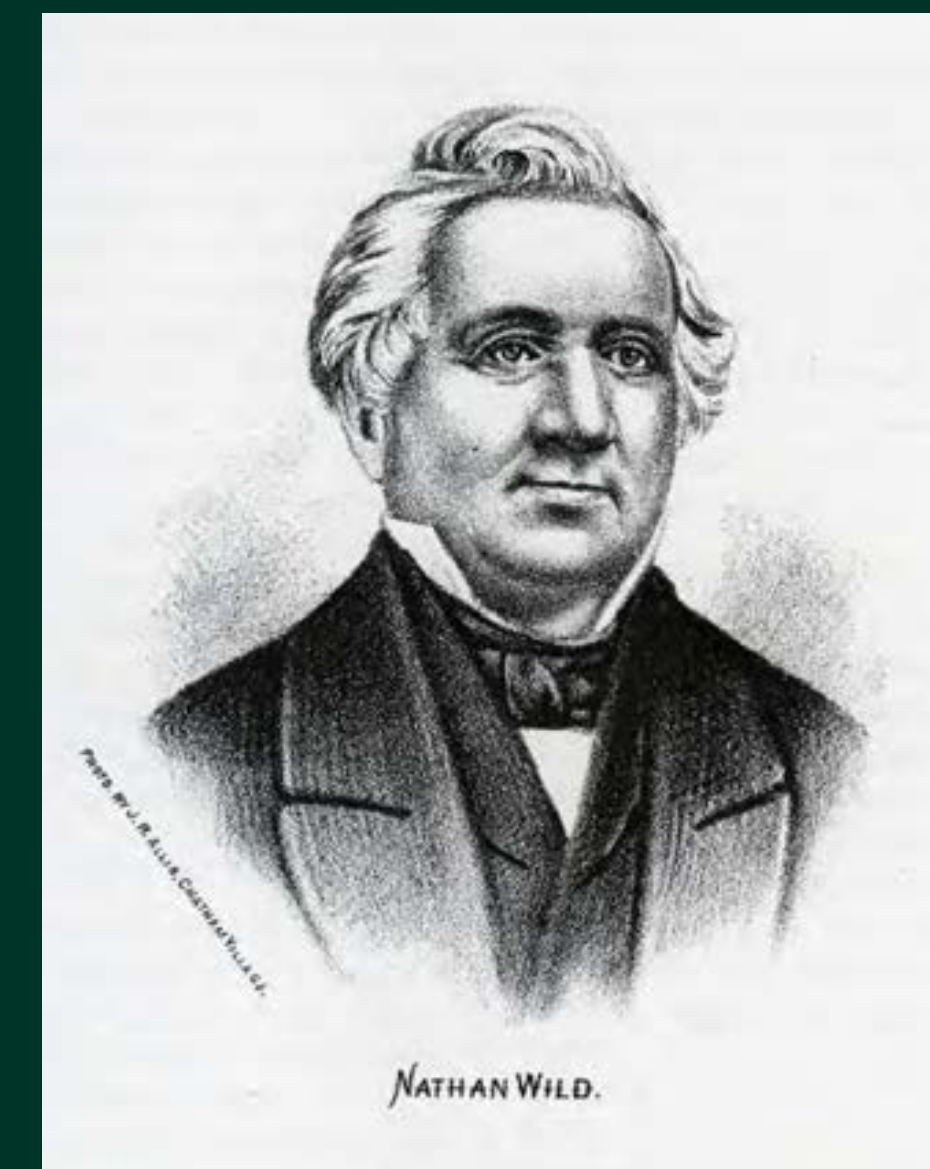
One of Valatie's biggest textile mills, Wild's Lower Mill was powered by water turbines as well as a stationary steam engine in the powerhouse at left. The tower at right contains the staircase. Source: Village of Valatie / Guy Gamello collection.

## The Textile Industry

Before 1800, Columbia County's small streams powered gristmills and sawmills supplying local needs. Trade restriction acts in 1806–1807 and the War of 1812 interrupted British cloth imports. Columbia County entrepreneurs then built textile mills powered by waterfalls on swift creeks flowing to Hudson River shipping ports. This area was a major textile producer until well after the Civil War. By the mid-1900s, most mills closed in the face of cheap southern US labor, foreign competition, and synthetic materials.

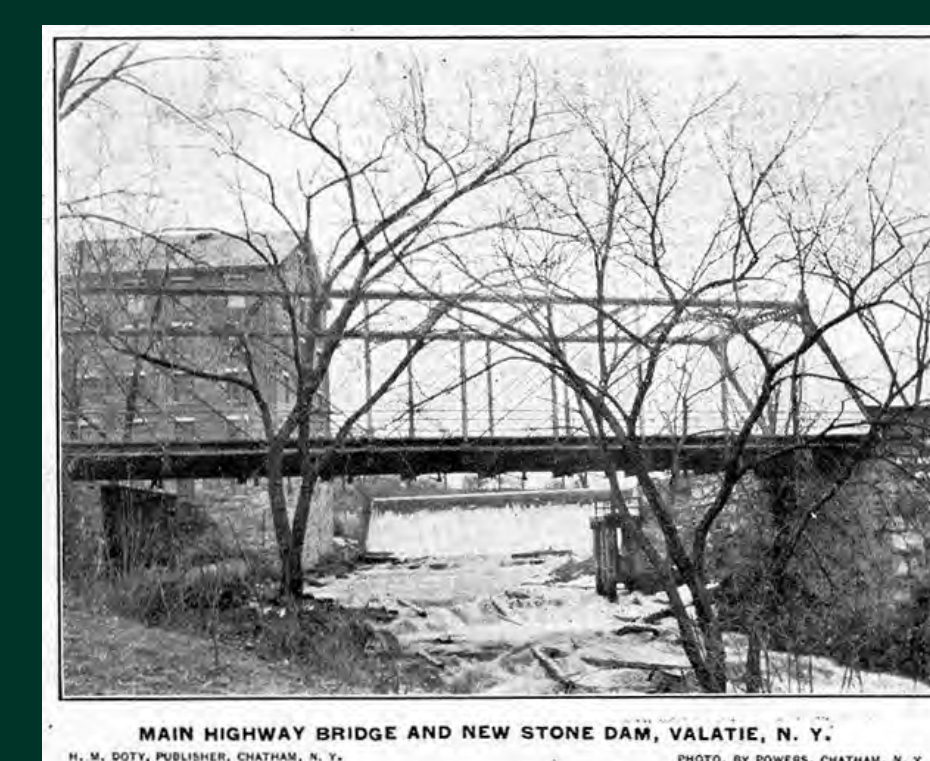
## Wild's Mills

Nathan Wild emigrated from Stockport, England, to Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1807 to work at Samuel Slater's pioneering cotton mill. Wild later came to Valatie, formed the Kinderhook Manufacturing Company, and built a cotton mill here on the Valatie Kill in 1828. He built a second mill in 1846 and by 1850 was making 1.6 million yards of cotton cloth a year. Nathan Wild died in 1867, and his son Charles assumed control. By the 1870s the company employed two hundred workers and was one of several cotton manufacturers in Valatie, then the largest industrial community in northern Columbia County.



## NATHAN WILD (1790–1867)

Wild gained experience at Rhode Island's Slater Mill, birthplace of the American textile industry, before coming to Valatie in 1828 to establish his own cotton mills. Source: Franklin Ellis, *History of Columbia County, New York*, 1878.



## 1828 UPPER MILL

This early twentieth-century postcard view looking upstream on the Valatie Kill, under the previous Main Street bridge north to the Wild's Pond dam, shows a portion of Nathan Wild's 1828 five-story brick cotton mill at left. Source: Lee Sharp.

## Rensselaer and Valatie Mills

Valatie's cotton industry declined after the financial Panic of 1873. Wild's operations survived, but efforts to reorganize after the Panic of 1893 failed. In 1904, textile magnate William Harder acquired the Wild Manufacturing Company to make knit fabric. Renamed the Rensselaer and Valatie Mills, the business closed during the Great Depression, ran twenty-four hours a day during World War II, and closed for good in 1955.





# Stuyvesant Falls

*The history and landscape of the Stuyvesant Falls hamlet were shaped by the waters of Kinderhook Creek, which provided power for textile mills and the Albany-Hudson electric trolley line.*



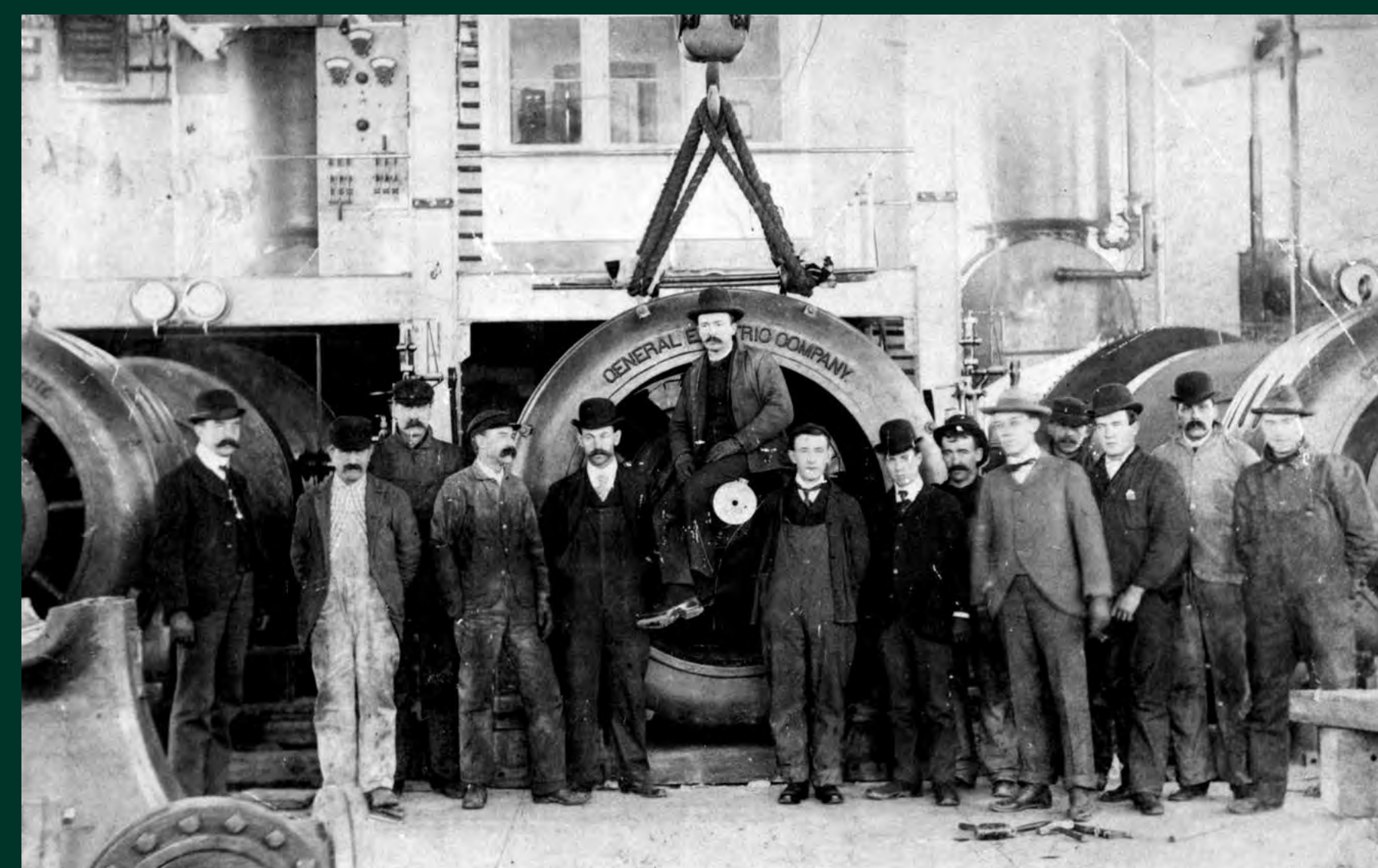
## TRUSS BRIDGE

Built in 1899 by Connecticut's Berlin Iron Bridge Company to replace a timber covered bridge, this 202-foot-long "Pennsylvania"-type span is the longest metal truss bridge and only one of its kind in Columbia County. Steel arches were added to strengthen it in 1993. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.



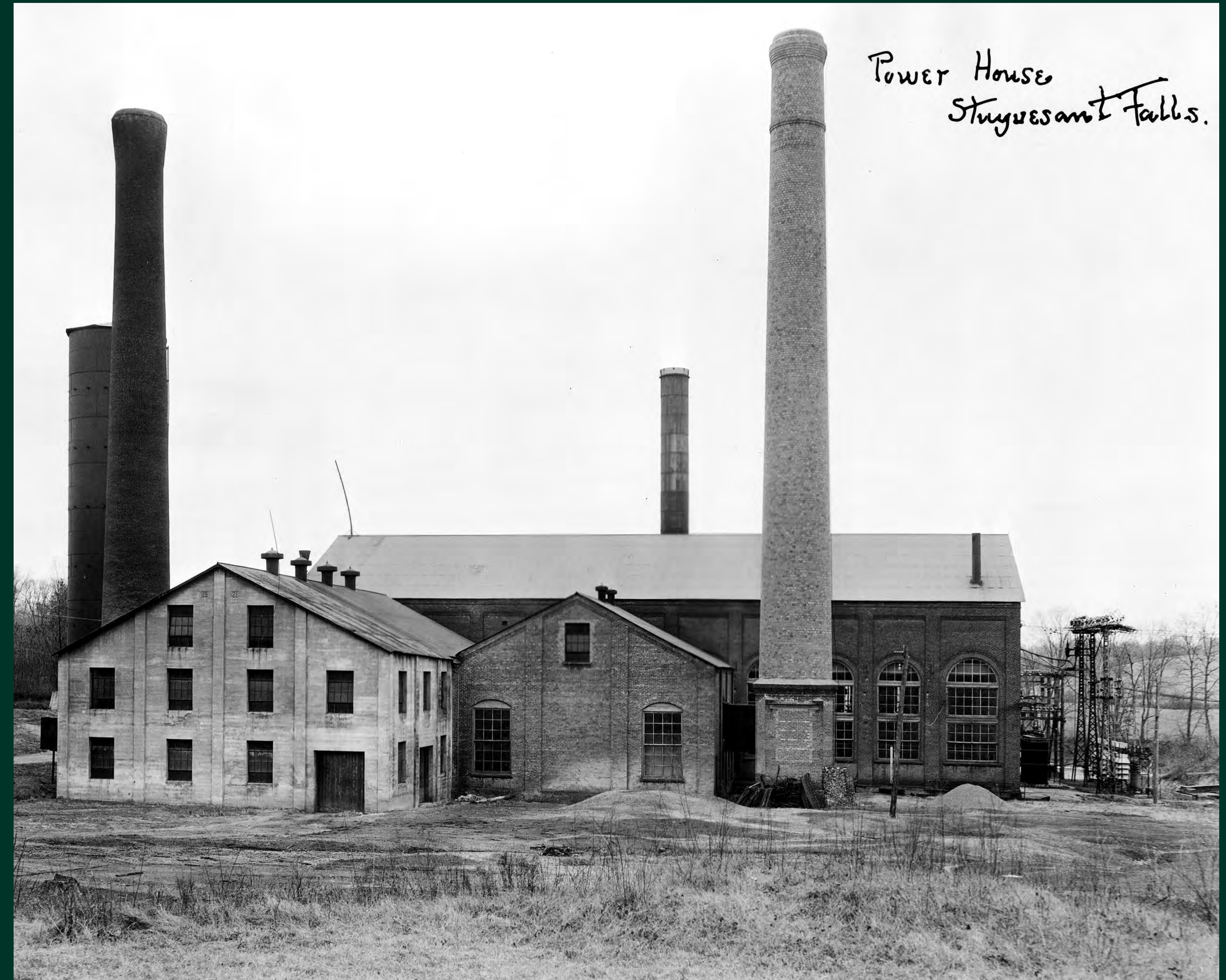
## VAN ALEN MILLS

Built in 1827 and 1845, the Van Alen mills complex, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is among the most picturesque pre-Civil War industrial sites in New York. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.



## GENERATOR INSTALLATION

Electrical contractors are shown installing General Electric Company generators in the Albany & Hudson Railway & Power Company hydroelectric power plant in 1900. Source: Albany Engineering Corporation.



Power House  
Stuyvesant Falls.

## ELECTRICAL POWER

The Albany & Hudson Railway & Power Company built this electrical generating plant here in 1900 to power its thirty-seven-mile Albany-Hudson rail line and illuminate streets in towns along the way. Source: Albany Engineering Corporation.

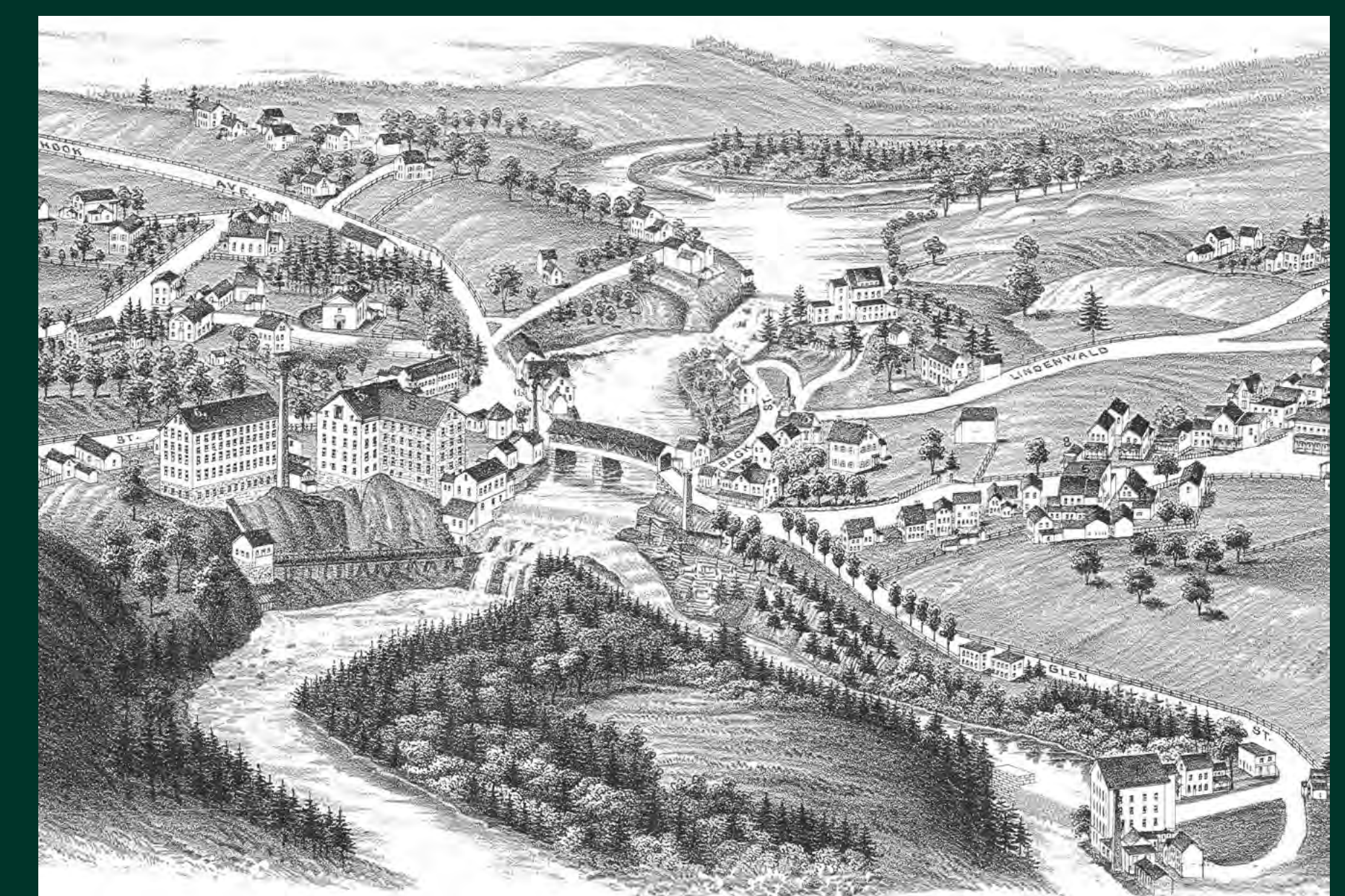
## Textile Mills

Kinderhook Creek drops seventy feet at Stuyvesant Falls, the site of an early woolen mill established in 1800 by William Van Hoesen. James Wardle built a stone cotton mill here in 1827, and in 1841 Van Alen & Company bought that mill and built the brick mill next to it in 1845. By 1878 the Van Alen mill employed over two hundred workers and made one hundred thousand yards of cotton cloth a week. Successor owner Frisbee Manufacturing Company sold cloth to the US government during World War I. Textile production ended after the stock market crash of 1929.

## Electrical Power

In 1900, the Albany & Hudson Railway & Power Company built a thirty-seven-mile-long rail line powered by an electrified third rail. Albany & Hudson built a hydroelectric generating plant at the Van Hoesen mill site, diverting water from the upper falls through 4,200-foot-long penstock tubes to spin turbines connected to generators. Steam power was used at times of low water. The plant generated three kinds of electrical current: 12,000-volt, 25-cycle AC for the rail line delivered by high-tension lines to substations at

Hudson, East Greenbush, and North Chatham and stepped down to 600 volts and converted to DC; 600-volt DC power for the rail line near the plant; and 2,200-volt, 60-cycle AC for streetlights at Hudson, Rensselaer, and communities along the line. After rail service stopped in 1929, Niagara Mohawk Company generated electricity at the plant until 1993. Restored by a private generating company in 2012, it now produces fifteen million kilowatt-hours a year.



## STUYVESANT FALLS

This 1878 engraving shows the Van Alen cotton mills at left, and at lower right the Van Hoesen cotton mills, where the Albany & Hudson Railway & Power Company built its hydroelectric plant in 1900. Source: Franklin Ellis, *History of Columbia County, New York*, 1878.



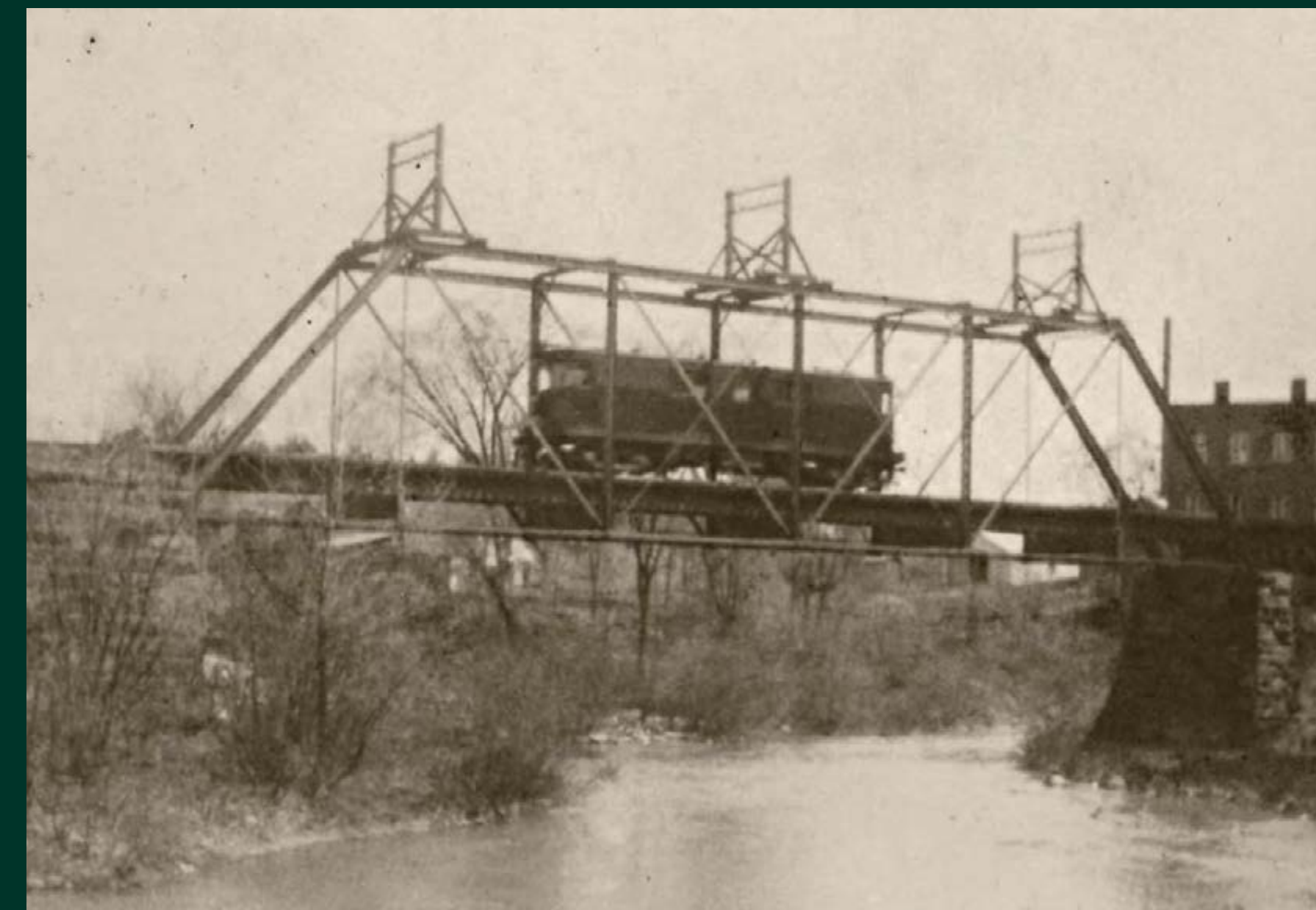


# Stockport Hamlet

*The history and landscape of the Stockport hamlet were shaped by the waters of Stockport and Claverack Creeks, which provided power for textile mills for over a century.*

## The Textile Industry

Before 1800, Columbia County's small streams powered gristmills and sawmills supplying local needs. Trade restriction acts in 1806–1807 and the War of 1812 interrupted British cloth imports. Columbia County entrepreneurs then built textile mills powered by waterfalls on swift creeks flowing to Hudson River shipping ports. This area was a major textile producer until well after the Civil War. By the mid-1900s, most mills closed in the face of cheap southern US labor, foreign competition, and synthetic materials.



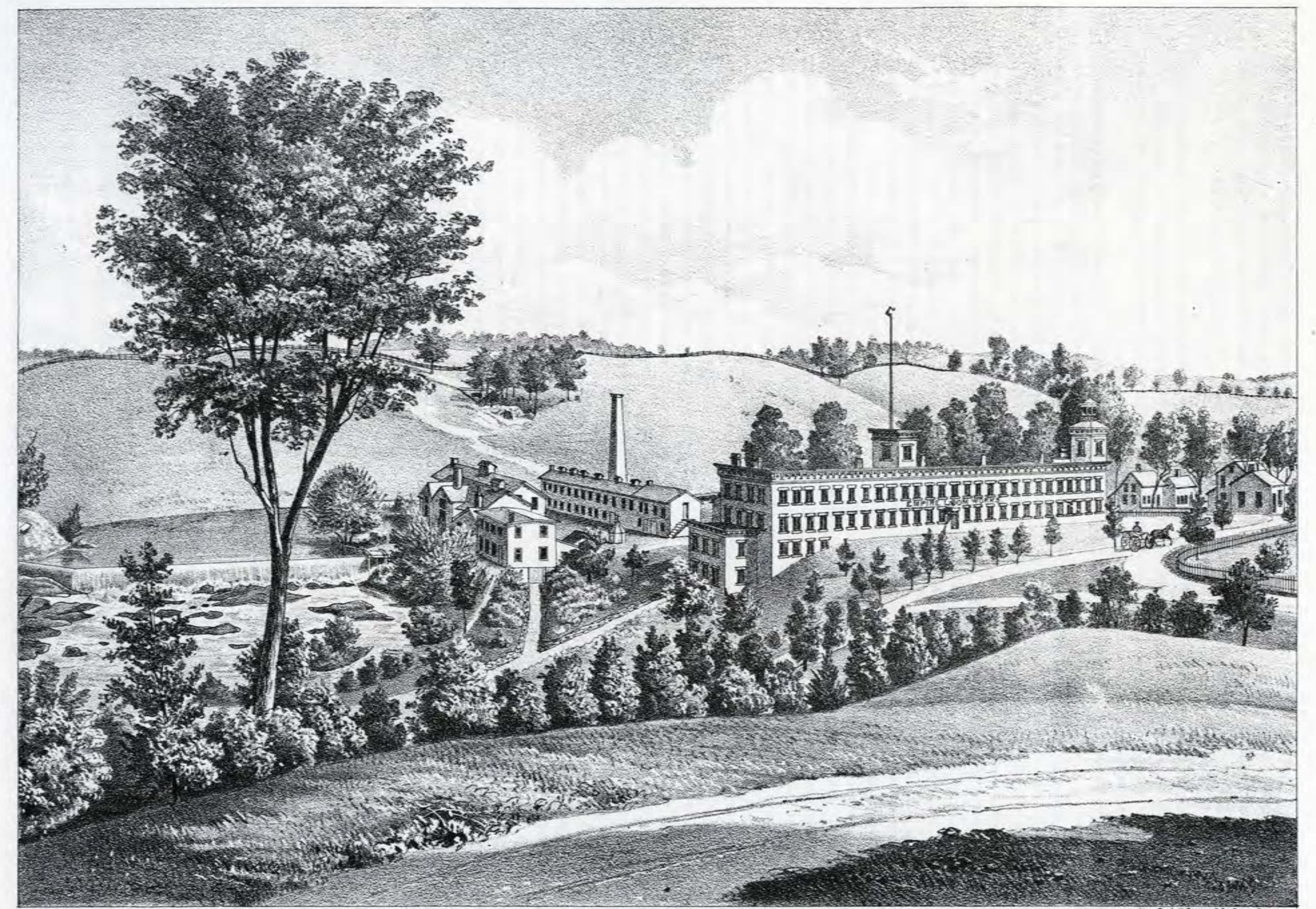
### TROLLEY CROSSING

An Albany-Hudson electric trolley car crosses the truss bridge over Claverack Creek, with the Empire Loom Works visible at right. The trolley line was built on the route of an earlier freight railroad serving the mills. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.



### STOCKPORT HAMLET

Homes and businesses grew between the textile and paper mills on Claverack Creek, once known as Factory Creek. The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail crosses the creek at this location today. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.



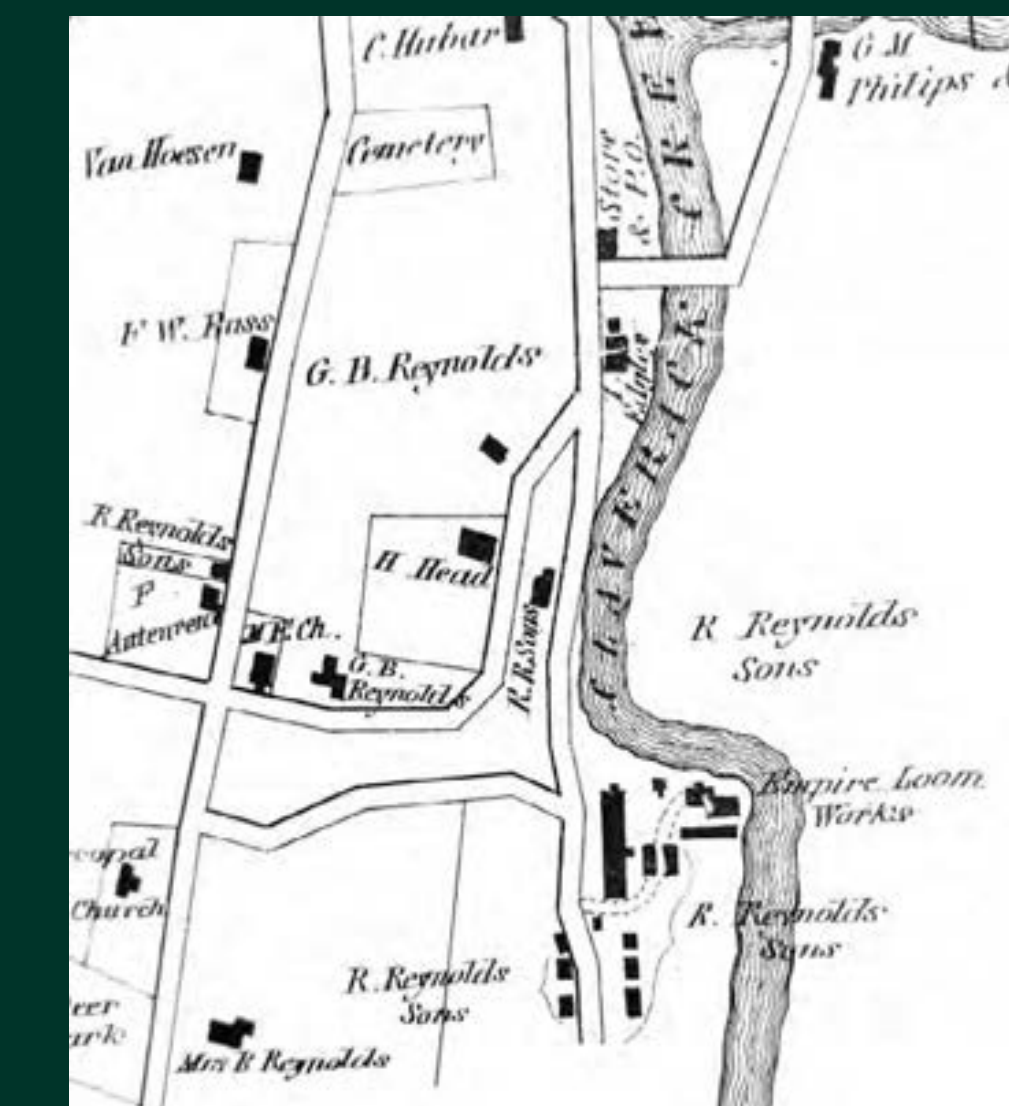
EMPIRE LOOM WORKS, R. REYNOLDS' SONS, PROPRIETORS, STOCKPORT, COLUMBIA CO., N.Y.

### EMPIRE LOOM WORKS

This 1878 engraving of the Empire Loom Works shows the dam at left and workers' houses at right. The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail crosses where the horse and buggy are shown at right. Source: Franklin Ellis, *History of Columbia County, New York*, 1878.

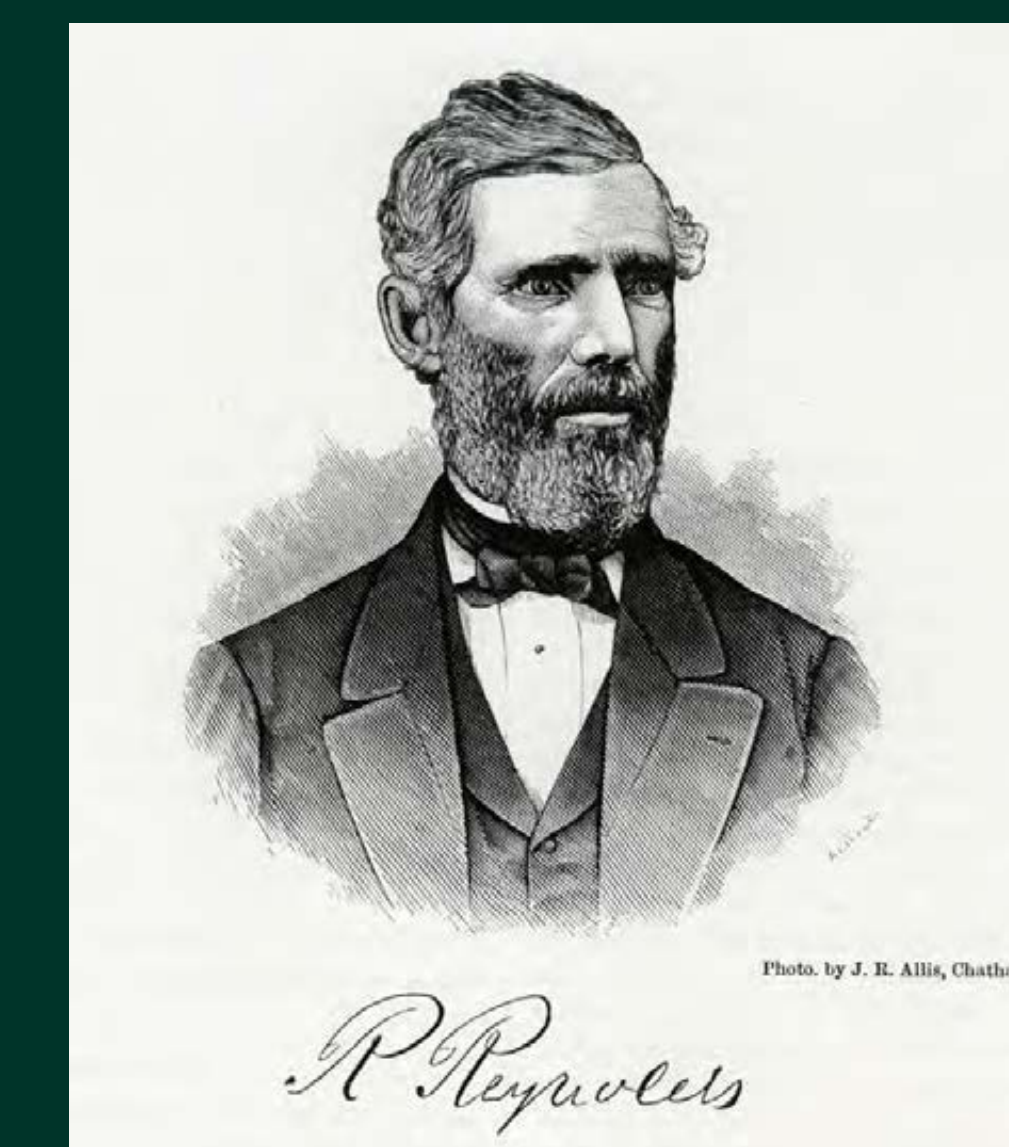
## Empire Loom Works

In 1852, Rensselaer Reynolds established his Empire Loom Works here. Reynolds was born in 1807 in Valatie, New York, where he was apprenticed to mill owner Nathan Wild. Reynolds was a mechanical genius who patented a high-speed cloth-weaving loom that dramatically increased productivity. His works built 150 looms a month, mostly for export to other countries, including Austria, England, and Mexico. Reynolds died in 1872, and his four sons carried on the business, which dwindled until 1900, when the mill was sold and converted to yarn production before eventually being demolished.



### REYNOLDS HOLDINGS

This 1873 map shows Reynolds family homes as well as the Empire Loom Works and adjacent worker houses, all owned by R. Reynolds Sons. Source: Beers's *Atlas of Columbia County, New York*, 1873.



### RENSELAER REYNOLDS (1807–1872)

Reynolds established the Empire Loom Works here at Claverack Creek's upper falls in 1852 to make his patented high-speed weaving loom. Source: Franklin Ellis, *History of Columbia County, New York*, 1878.





# Stottville

*The history and landscape of the Stottville hamlet were shaped by the waters of Claverack Creek, which provided power for textile mills for over a century.*

## The Textile Industry

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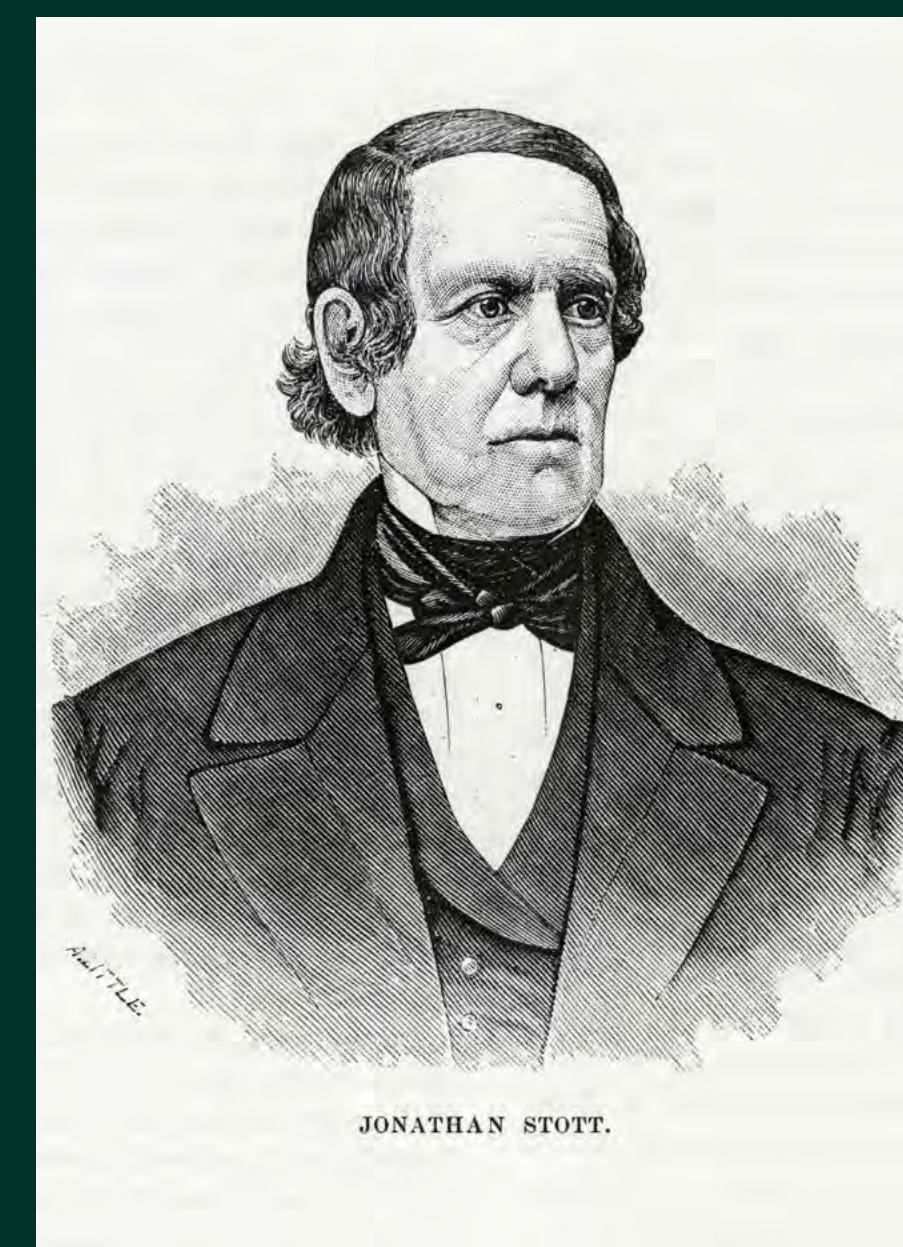


### ▲ STOTT MANSIONS

Mill owners expressed their social standing through homes like Frank H. Stott's Italianate-style mansion, "Brightside," still standing on Atlantic Avenue just east of the trail. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.

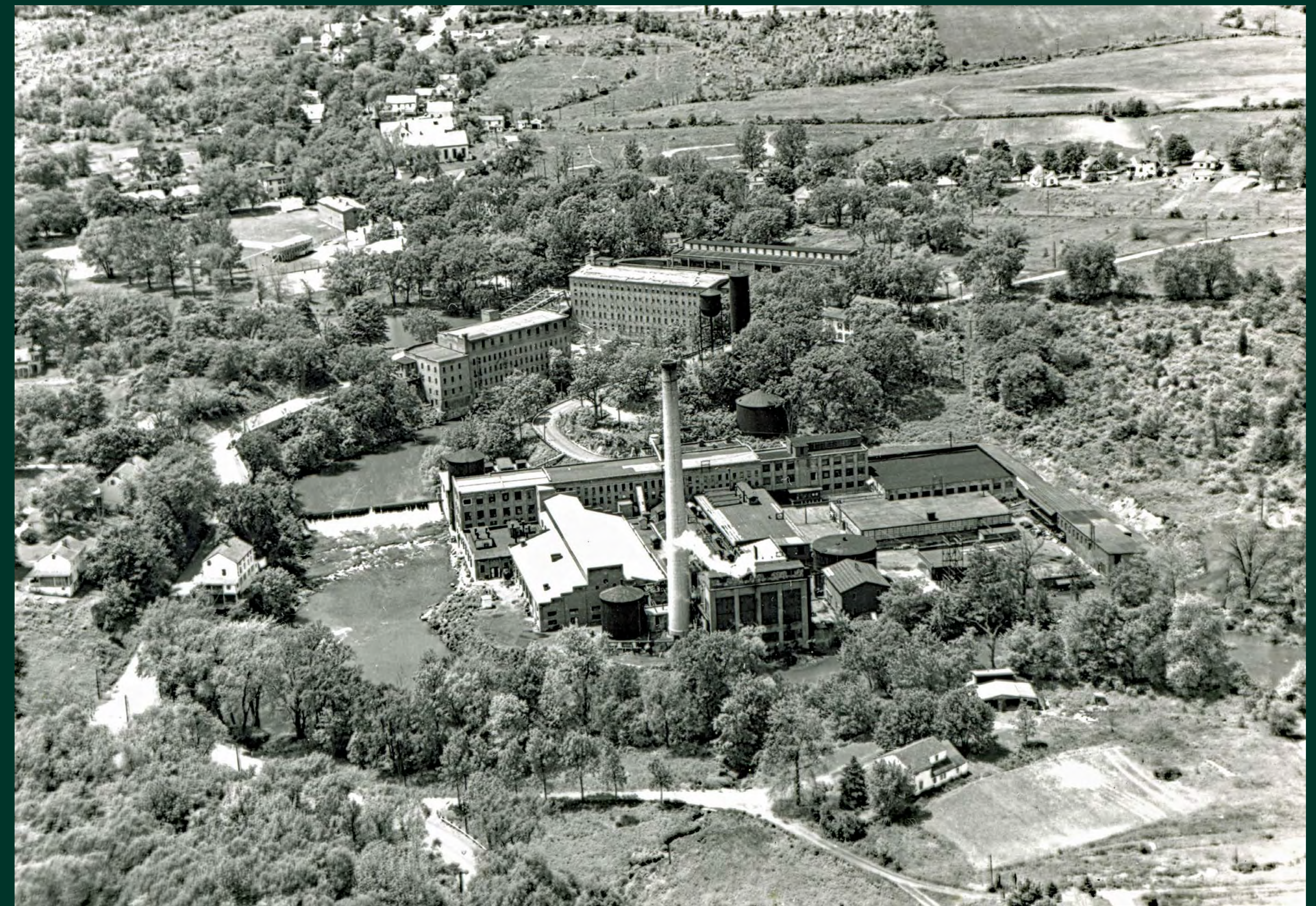
## Jonathan Stott's Mills

Claverack Creek drops fifty feet at Stottville, making it an ideal location for water-powered industry. Jonathan Stott established a wool flannel mill here in 1828 and built new mills in 1846 and 1859, making Stottville the largest woolen producer in Columbia County. Stott died in 1863, leaving the business to his sons Charles and Frank, who added new mills in 1865 and 1879. Operations peaked in the 1880s when the Stotts employed over seven hundred workers, making them the county's largest employer. Fortunes changed with the financial Panic of 1893 when the Stott mills closed after sixty-five years of operations.



### ▲ JONATHAN STOTT (1793–1863)

Son of a Manchester, England, silk manufacturer, Stott started woolen milling here in 1828 and helped turn it into one of Columbia County's biggest industries. Source: Franklin Ellis, *History of Columbia County, New York*, 1878.



### ▲ STOTTVILLE AERIAL

This 1950s Stottville view shows Mills 1, 2 and 3; Mill 4 is out of sight at right. The abandoned trolley line, now the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail, is visible as a thin dark line across the top of the photo. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.

## The Twentieth Century

Stottville's mills prospered again after 1910 when they were bought by Atlantic Mills of Rhode Island. Atlantic improved Stottville's infrastructure, including adding new worker housing. Prosperity lasted until the stock market crash of 1929, which was also the year the Albany-Hudson electric trolley that served the town and mills closed. Atlantic stayed open through World War II but shut down for good after a 1953 strike.



### ▲ TEXTILE WORKERS

This World War II-era photo shows Atlantic Mill workers breaking a wool bale to feed into a carding machine behind them. Stottville's mills soon closed after a 1953 wage strike. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.

### ◀ WORKER HOUSING

After Atlantic Mills took over the Stottville mills in 1910, it improved worker housing, including new gabled houses and fashionable bungalows lining Chester Street. Source: Town of Stockport / Alice Engel.

