

The Maybrook Line

Welcome to the Empire State Trail's Maybrook Trailway, which follows the Brewster-to-Hopewell Junction portion of the former New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad

“Maybrook Line,” once an important New England freight rail gateway.



POUGHKEEPSIE BRIDGE

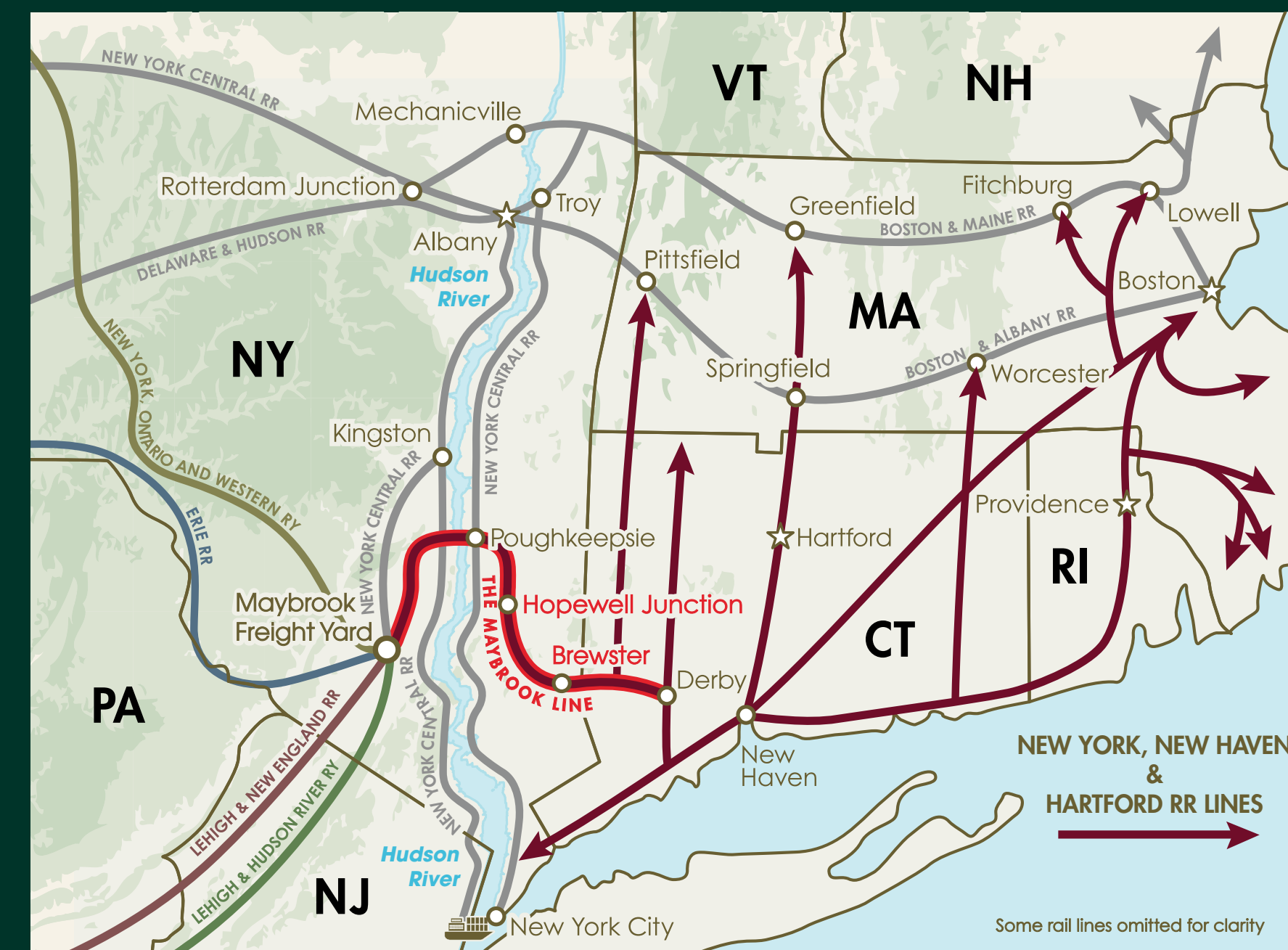
Completed in 1889, this 6,768-foot-long cantilever truss bridge carried Maybrook Line trains 212 feet above the Hudson River. It burned in 1974, impacting regional freight rail routes. It is now the Walkway Over the Hudson State Park. Source: Kent Cochrane.

The Maybrook

East-west rail traffic south of Albany crossed the Hudson River on freight car ferries between Beacon and Newburgh until 1889, when the railroad bridge across the river was completed at Poughkeepsie. The “New Haven,” then southern New England’s dominant railroad, consolidated several existing end-to-end rail lines by 1904 to create the 125-mile-long Maybrook Line. The Maybrook moved freight gathered from five railroads converging at a large freight yard west of the Hudson in Maybrook, Orange County. From there, the freight was carried east across the river at Poughkeepsie, over the mountains of Dutchess and Putnam Counties, and ultimately to the Cedar Hill freight yard outside New Haven, Connecticut.

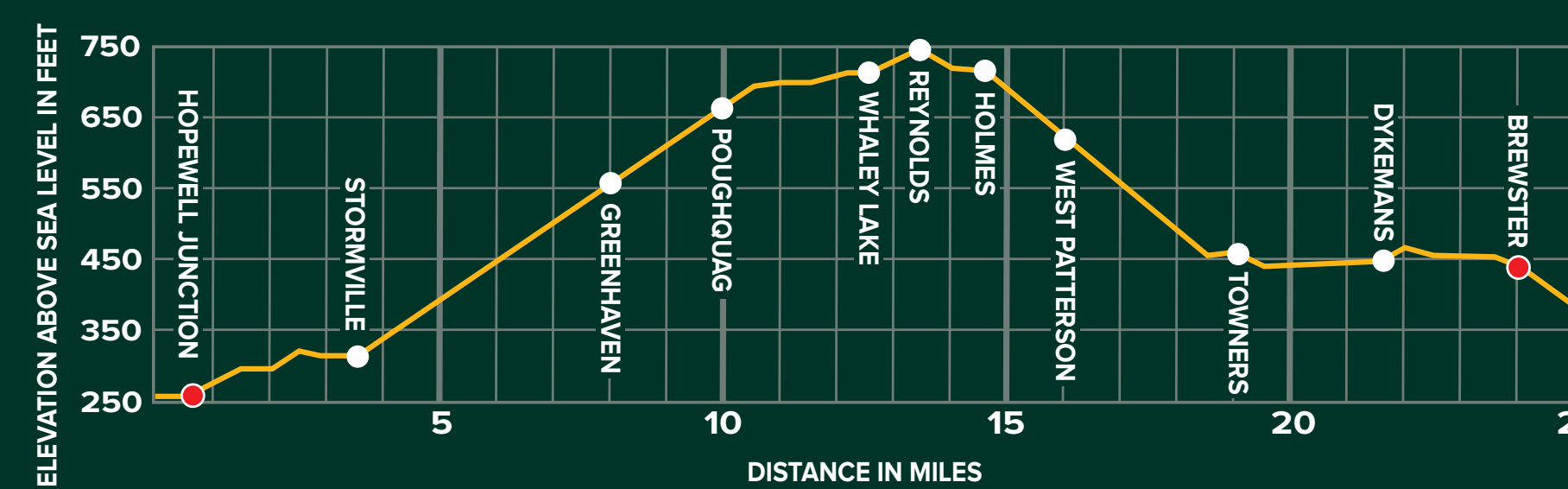
Rise and Fall

Like its hilly route, the Maybrook had its ups and downs. It was busy during World War I but lost traffic during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Maybrook’s finest hour was during World War II, when powerful New Haven steam locomotives moved record freight tonnage over the line. After the war, traffic declined again, and diesel locomotives replaced steam in 1947. Parallel competition from Penn Central rail lines after 1968 and Interstate 84 after 1971 further eroded service. A 1974 fire resulted in the permanent closure of the Poughkeepsie bridge, ending Maybrook Line long-distance freight trains and altering regional freight rail patterns. The last freight train ran on the Brewster-to-Hopewell Junction portion of the line in 1992.



MAYBROOK LINE

The Maybrook Line was a key rail freight connection across the Hudson River. The Maybrook Trailway follows the section between Brewster and Hopewell Junction. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.



STEEP GRADES

The Maybrook Line crossed the Appalachian Mountains in Dutchess and Putnam Counties, climbing grades as steep as 1.22 percent eastbound and over 1.3 percent westbound. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.

“MAYBROOK BOUND”

This painting of New Haven Railroad diesel-locomotive-powered freight trains passing at Poughquag, New York, captures the spirit of mountain railroading on the Maybrook Line. Source: William G. Dulmaine Jr.

Rail to Trail

Today, the Empire State Trail follows the route of the former Maybrook Line for forty-four miles from Brewster to Highland, New York, along the Maybrook Trailway, the William R. Steinhaus Dutchess Rail Trail, the Walkway Over the Hudson, and the Hudson Valley Rail Trail.



MOUNTAIN RAILROADING

The New Haven Railroad’s powerful steam locomotives pulled—and pushed—heavy Maybrook Line trains like this eastbound freight on Depot Hill at Poughquag in 1950. Source: Kent Cochrane / Thomas J. MacNamara Collection.



Metro-North Railroad

Tonetta Lake

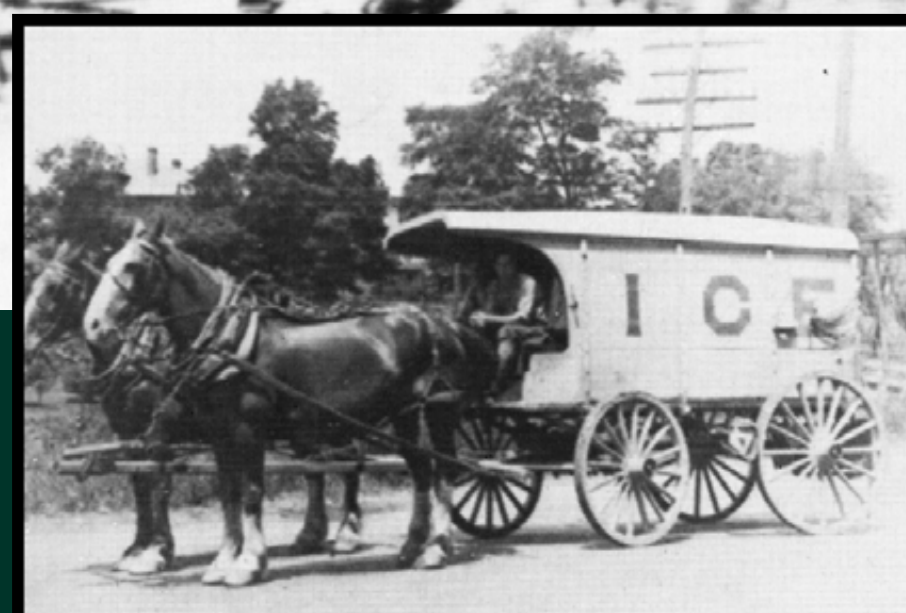
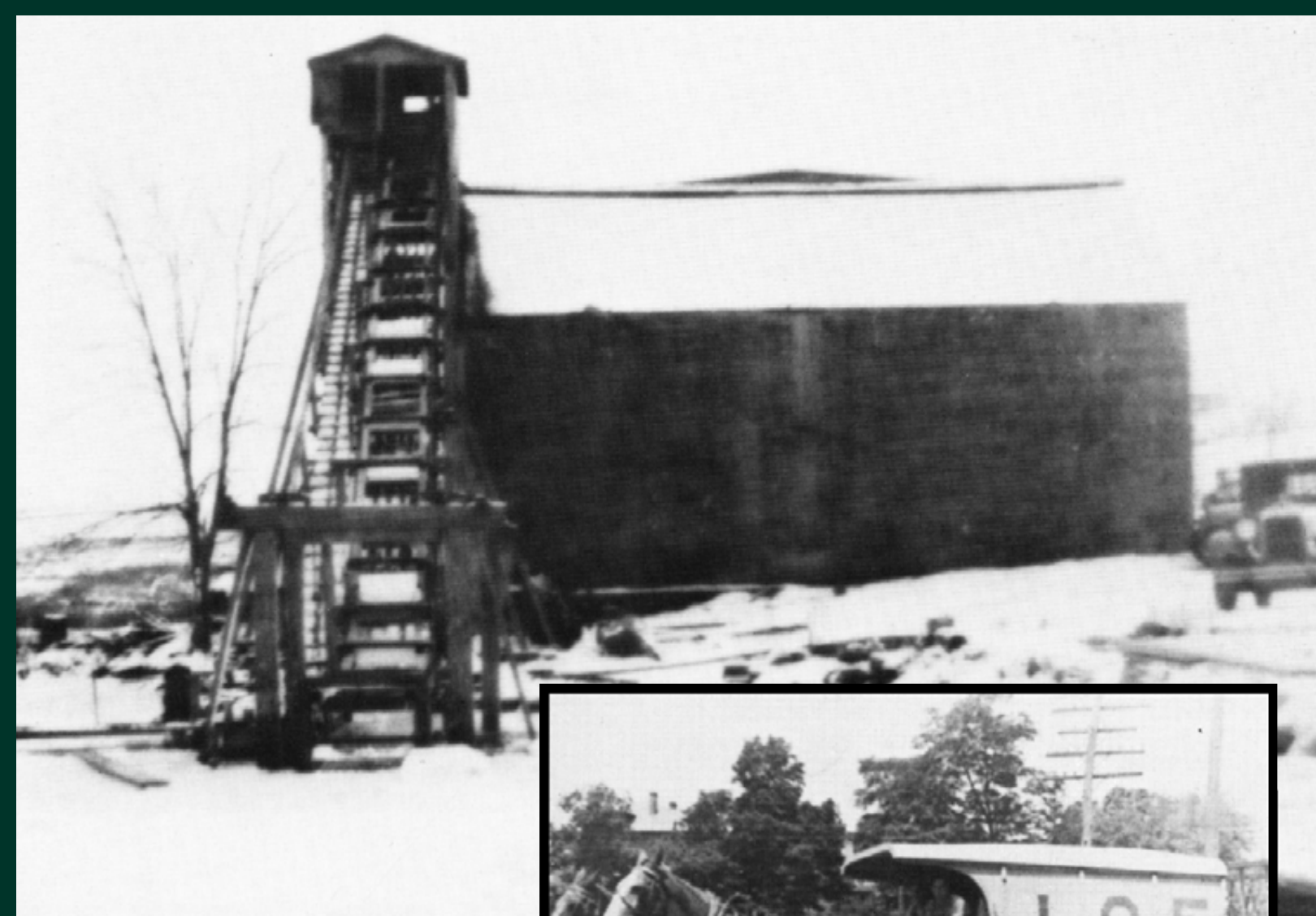
The Maybrook Trailway passes three-quarter-mile-long Tonetta Lake in the town of Southeast. According to local tradition, the lake was named for Tone, an African American slave freed after fighting in the Revolutionary War, and his African-Native American wife Etta, also a freed slave. Tonetta Lake history is tied to George Hine (1834–1914) whose five-hundred-acre farm included the lake. He was one of the first area farmers to import Holstein dairy cows, and sold milk from his hundred-head herd to the local Borden Company milk plant. Hine dammed Tonetta Lake and harvested winter ice to cool his milk in the warm months of the year.

Residential Development

Starting around World War I, real estate speculators purchased Putnam County farmland and developed it for summer homes easily reached from New York City by train and increasingly by automobile. In 1925, the Tonetta Lake Corporation purchased 110 acres of Hine family farmland southwest of the lake and developed Tonetta Lake Park, the first residential subdivision in the Brewster Village area. The new neighborhood included a beach for boating, swimming, and water sports, and a recreation pavilion featuring public dances, boxing matches, and clambakes.



▲ **HINE HOUSE**
This house on Tonetta Lake Road was built in 1862 and was home to farmer and former owner of Tonetta Lake, George Hine. The house was a wedding present from his family. Source: Town of Southeast Bicentennial Commission.



▲ **TONETTA LAKE PARK**
This 1933 aerial view of Tonetta Lake shows summer cottages on quarter-acre lots on the oval road at the south end of the lake. Source: Office of the Putnam County Historian.

◀ **TONETTA LAKE ICE**
The Palmer family built an icehouse on the lake in 1924 and was known for giving ice chips from their carriage to children on hot days. Source: Town of Southeast Bicentennial Commission

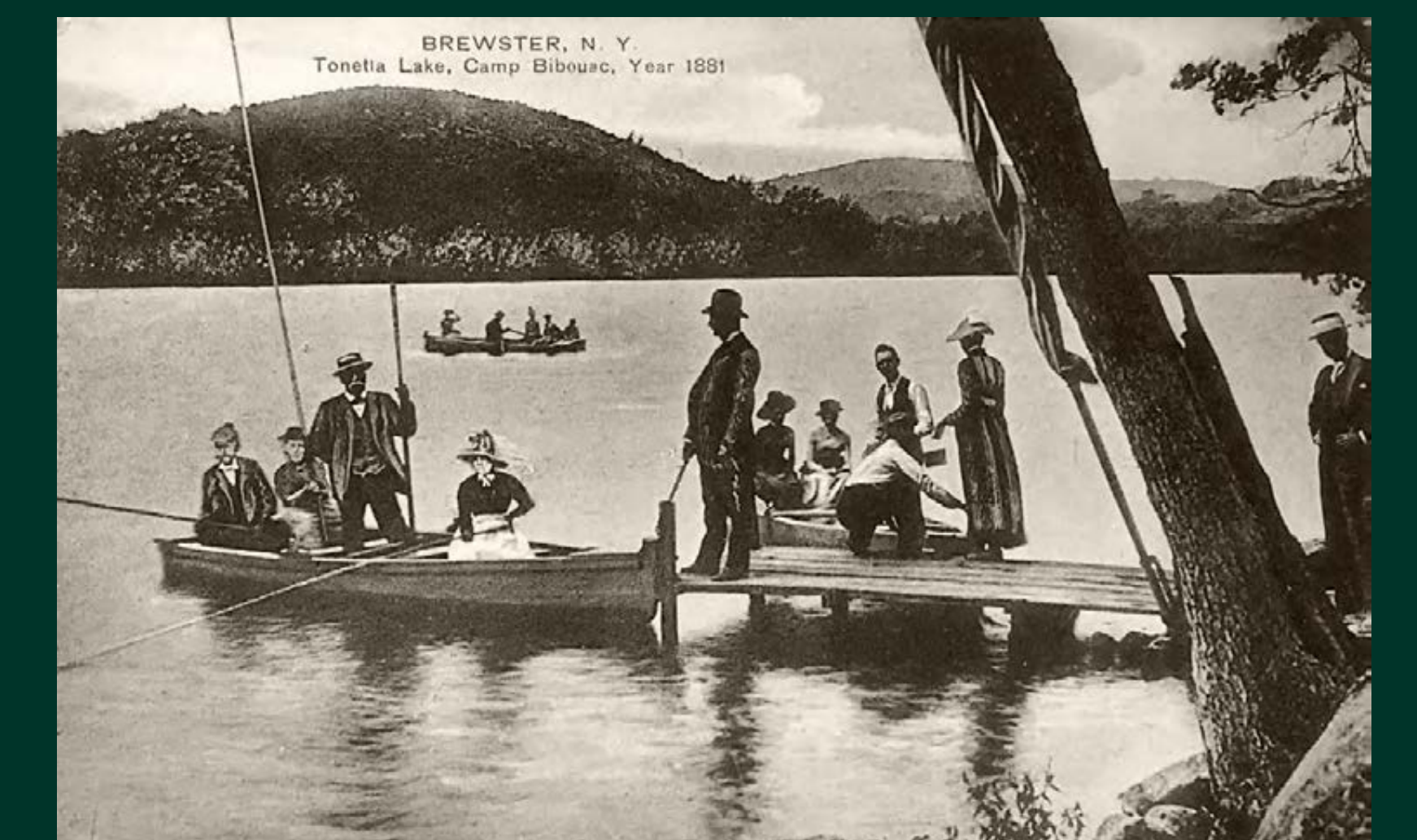
▶ **EARLY RECREATION**
Tonetta Lake was a late nineteenth-century destination for summer boating and winter ice skating. Source: Southeast Museum.



▲ **TOWN BEACH**
Swimmers and boaters enjoying the beach at Southeast's new public park at Tonetta Lake in 1965. Source: Office of the Putnam County Historian.

Lakefront Recreation

Early Tonetta Lake recreation included George Hine's 1880s Lake Tonetta Outing Club, which was limited to thirty members and offered boating and ice skating. In 1963, the town of Southeast purchased 167 acres of Tonetta Lake Park's recreation land for a public town park. Today, this park is a popular destination for Southeast residents, offering picnic areas, a playground, a hiking trail, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and the town's only public beach.



**Metro-North
Railroad**

The Great Swamp

This part of the Maybrook Trailway at Ice Pond follows Muddy Brook, a tributary of the Great Swamp, a 6,000-acre wetland that gathers waters from a 62,000-acre watershed in a twenty-mile-long valley stretching from Dover to Southeast.



◀ **ATLANTIC COAST LEOPARD FROG** (*Lithobates kauffeldi*)
This newly recognized species, identified here in 2012, was previously mistaken for the common southern leopard frog. It is a "cryptic species," hard to distinguish by eye, but with a unique mating call. Source: Brian Zarate.

RAILROAD IMPACTS ▶

This 1905 photo shows the New Haven Railroad burying the 1881 New York & New England trestle with fill, forming an embankment across the swamp. Muddy Brook was placed in a culvert, altering swamp drainage. Source: Patterson Historical Society.



▲ ICE POND OVERLOOK

This view from the trail on the 400-foot-high rock knob above Ice Pond shows the New York & New England Railroad embankment, now the Maybrook Trailway, crossing the mouth of a Muddy Brook tributary, dividing marsh and open water. Source: Judy Kelley-Moberg.



▲ WOOD DUCKS (*Aix sponsa*)

The Great Swamp is a major spring and fall migratory flyway for mallards, green-winged teal, and wood ducks, one of North America's most colorful waterfowl. Source: Gary Kramer

Conservation Efforts

Although the Great Swamp has been recognized for its environmental and recreational value, it still needs protection. The preserves surrounding Ice Pond resulted from grants from the US Wildlife Service, obtained by Friends of the Great Swamp, donations to the Putnam County Land Trust, and parcels acquired by the Westchester County Land Trust, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Putnam County, and the Town of Patterson.

Watershed Geography

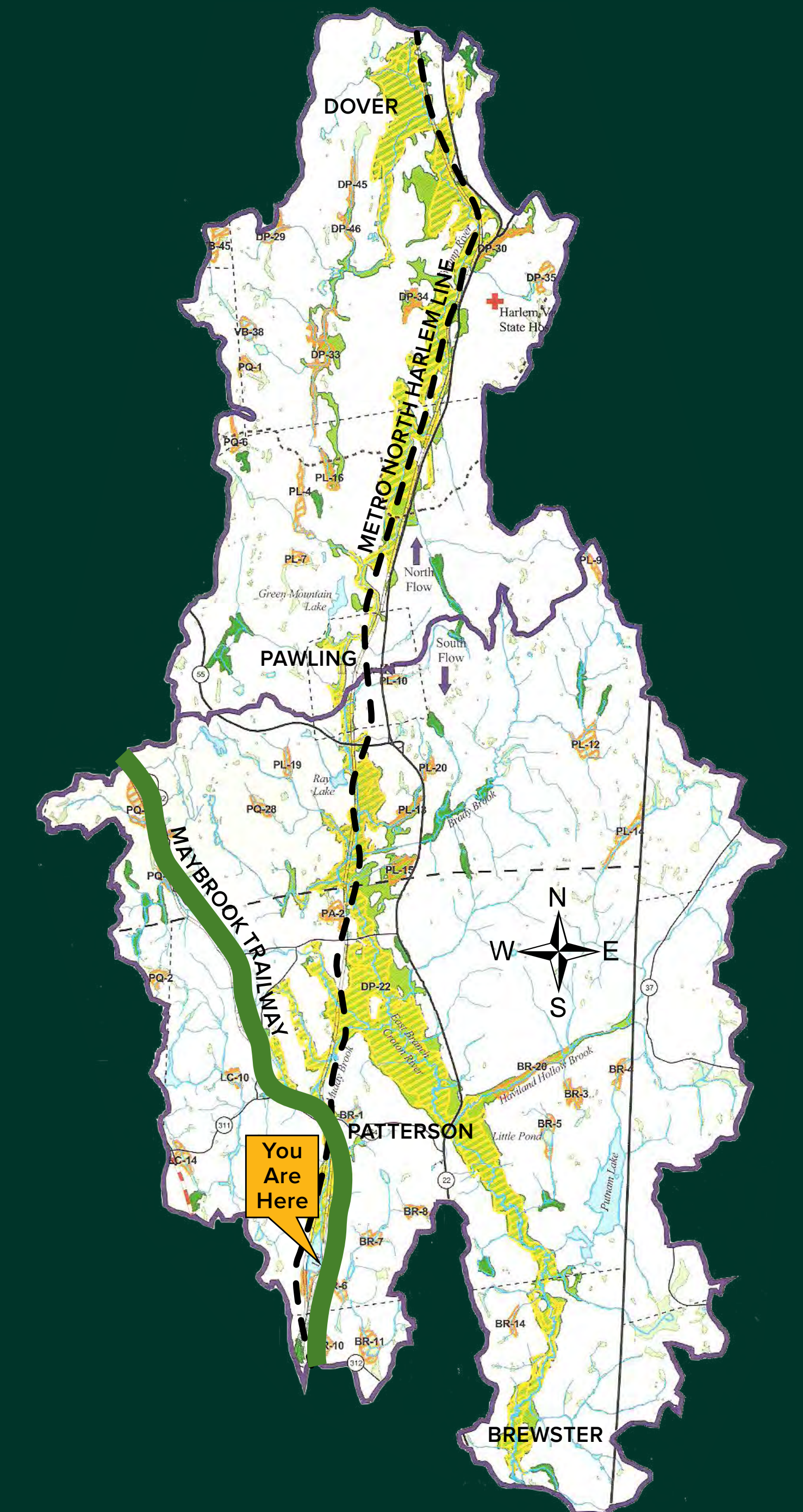
About 20,000 years ago, this valley was carved by glaciers from soft marble bedrock. At the end of the last ice age, the valley depression flooded with meltwater to form a massive lake. Great Swamp waters flow north to the Housatonic River and then into Long Island Sound, and south into the Hudson River via the Croton River, part of New York City's water supply.

Natural Habitats

Ice Pond's wetlands are a refuge for migrating waterfowl, and its waters are home to bass, bluegill, and perch. The swamp hosts mink, muskrat, and otter. Beaver, trapped for pelts in colonial times, have returned, damming streams and drowning floodplain forests.

Human Impacts

Natural processes that formed the Great Swamp created resources useful to humans. At Ice Pond, peat was cut and dried for horticulture and agriculture industries, and the Croton Brick Company dug clay from the pond's banks. Ice was cut for local use, and after railroads arrived in the mid-1800s, a large commercial icehouse served New York City. Railroad construction affected Ice Pond drainage after the New York & Harlem Railroad built across the west side of Muddy Brook in the 1840s and the New York & New England Railroad, now the Maybrook Trailway, built across the east side in 1881.



▲ THE GREAT SWAMP WATERSHED

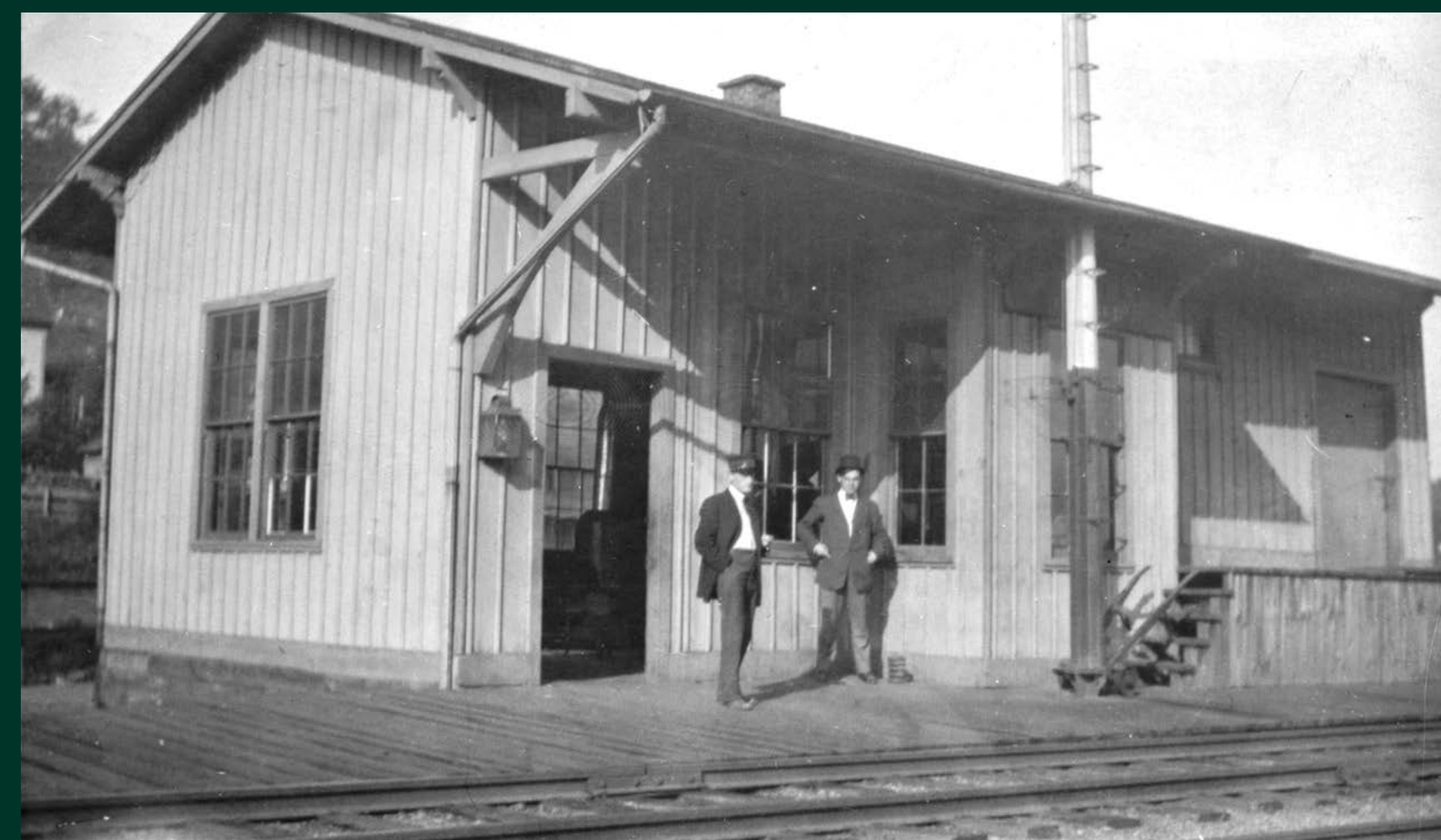
This map shows the 20-mile-long, 62,000-acre Great Swamp watershed and wetlands, Metro-North Harlem Line commuter rail tracks, and New York & New England / New Haven Railroad line, now the Maybrook Trailway. Ice Pond, located in Patterson, is near the bottom of the map. Source: Beth Herr.



**Metro-North
 Railroad**

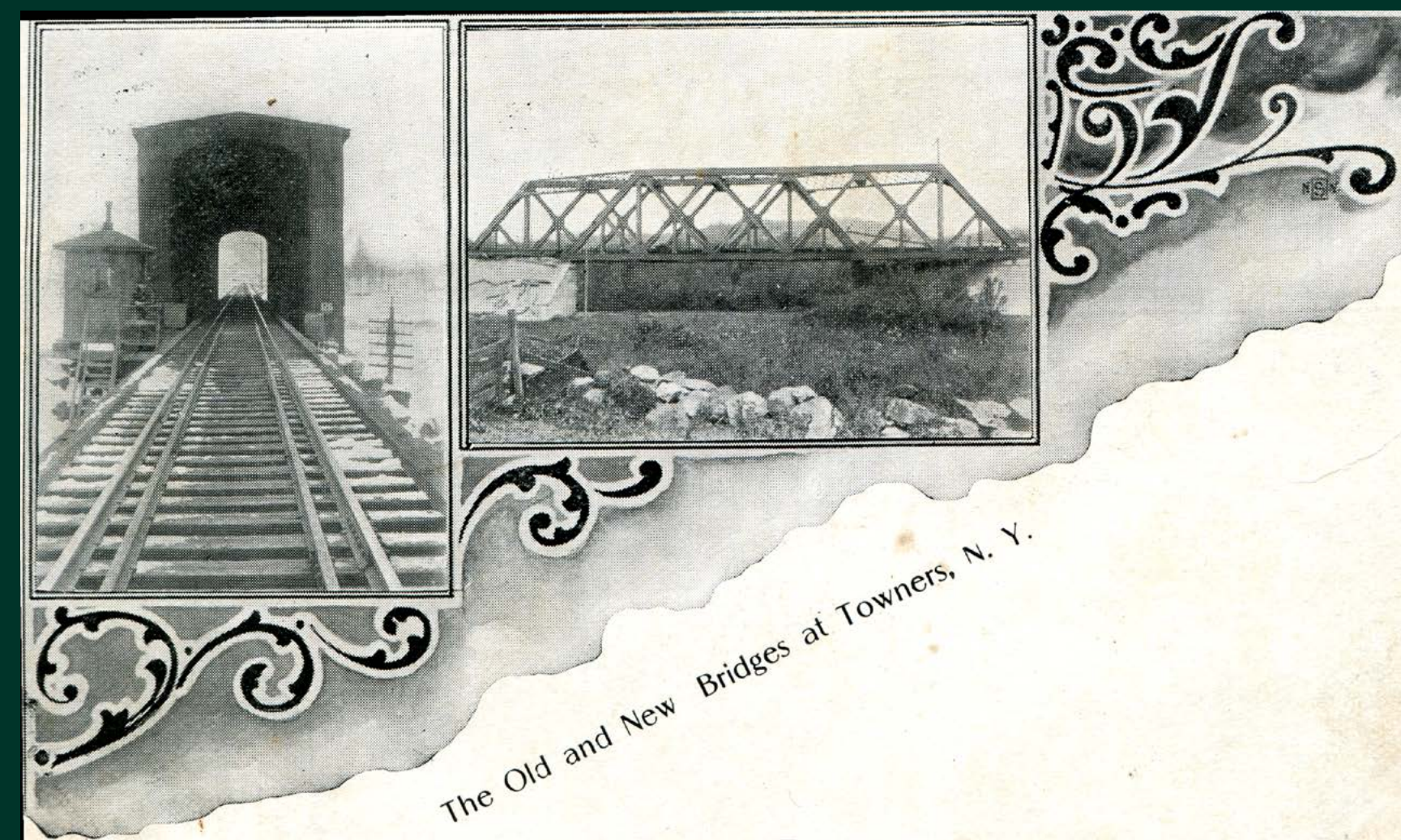
Towners Station

The southwest corner of the town of Patterson, organized in 1795, is known as Towners, named for Samuel Towner Jr., who bought a farm in 1780 and ran a tavern north of here at Towners Four Corners. Before the railroad came to Patterson in 1848, the area around the Maybrook Trailway here at Towners Station was a small crossroads hamlet near a bridge over Muddy Brook.



TOWNERS DEPOT

A station agent and passenger pose on the New Haven Railroad depot platform. Local passenger service was phased out on the Maybrook Line by 1930, but freight traffic remained important. Source: Patterson Historical Society.



OLD AND NEW BRIDGES

The first bridge here was the 1881 New York & New England Railroad's timber covered bridge, replaced with a steel truss by the New Haven Railroad in 1906. Source: Patterson Historical Society.

Two Railroads

Railroads played an important part in Patterson's development and the shaping of the Towners Station hamlet and landscape. The New York & Harlem Railroad was constructed through Patterson in 1848 and linked New York City and Chatham, New York, in 1852. This line was known for its dairy industry traffic and summer resort passenger service, and is now a busy Metro-North Railroad commuter line. In 1881, the New York & New England Railroad was built through Towners Station, crossing over the Harlem Line. This east-west route, known as the Maybrook Line, became an important New Haven Railroad freight route connecting New England with the sprawling freight yard in Maybrook. Buildings clustered around the two railroad stations in Towners included a blacksmith shop, hotels, a post office, and stores selling dry goods, groceries, and hardware.



OVER AND UNDER

New Haven Railroad freight diesels pass over a New York Central Railroad passenger steam train at Towners Station in 1948. Source: New Haven Railroad Historical & Technical Association.

New York City Water

The development of New York City's Putnam County reservoir system impacted the Towners Station area at the turn of the twentieth century. Watershed sanitary concerns forced the relocation of houses and the demolition of barns, cemeteries, and slaughterhouses in the 1890s. Pre-World War I plans for a new Patterson reservoir, requiring railroad relocation and the drowning of Towners Station, were abandoned in favor of reservoir system expansion west of the Hudson River.



GRAIN MILL

Eaton & Kelley Company ran a grain mill and sold flour, animal feed, coal, and farm supplies. The mill burned in 1907, allegedly from a spark from a passing steam locomotive. Source: Patterson Historical Society.



LOCAL BUSINESSES

Workers pose at the Towners Station hardware store in the late 1880s. In 1867, businesses included the Croton Lake Hotel, the Penny dry goods and grocery store, and Monroe & Company hardware. Source: Patterson Historical Society.

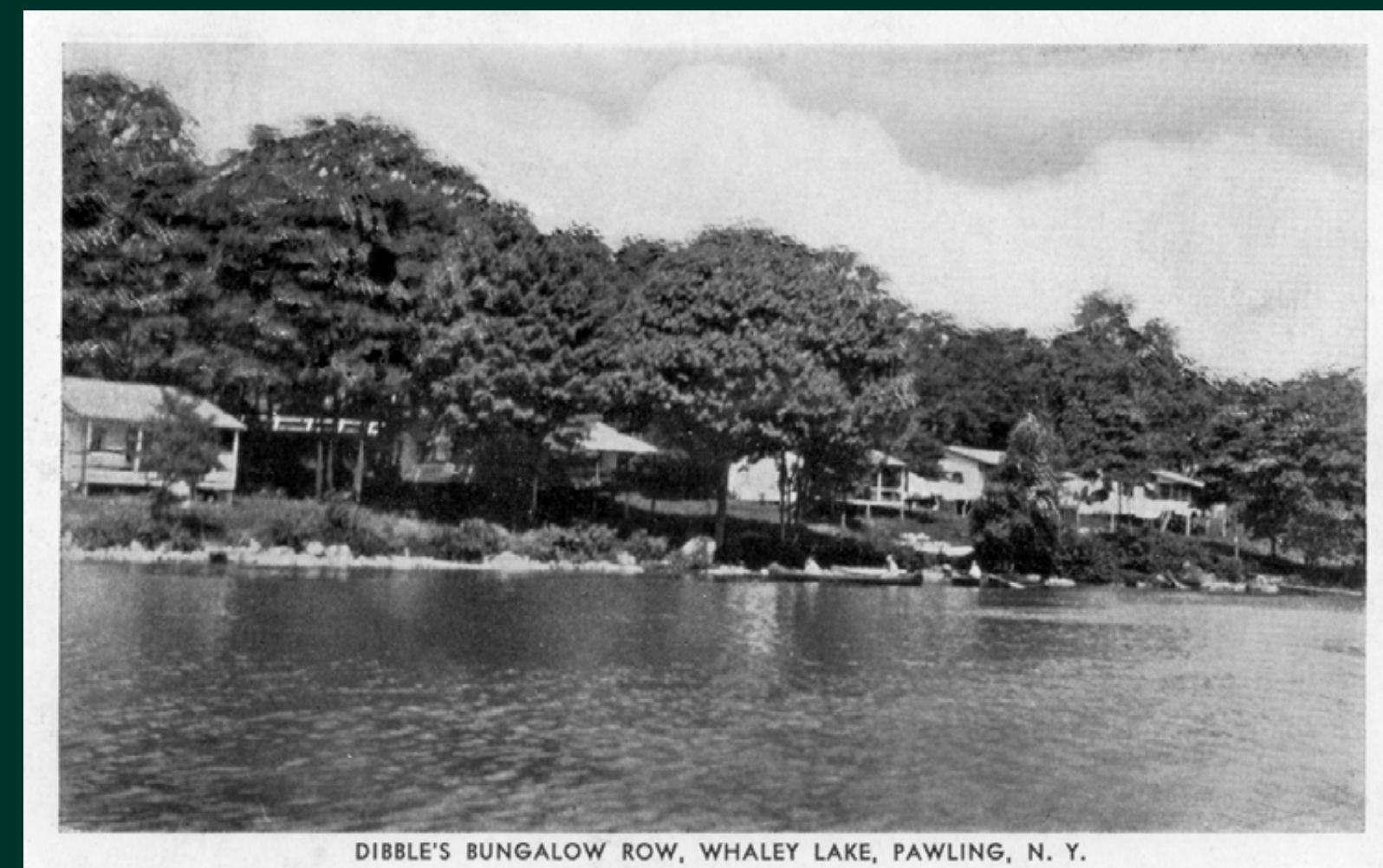


Whaley Lake

The Maybrook Trailway hugs the east shore of 2.5-mile-long Whaley Lake, the largest body of water in Dutchess County. Local tradition says the lake was named after a squatter, Timothy Whaley, or for distant descendants of Lord Wyamarus Whaley (a companion-in-arms to William the Conqueror at the battle of Hastings) who settled here in the 1700s. Whaley Lake was dammed in the early 1800s by the Matteawan Manufacturing Company to control water for textile mills downstream on Fishkill Creek in what is now Beacon, New York.

Recreation Destination

Railroad access made Whaley Lake an early recreation destination, with the Fisherman's Home and Topeco Lake Hotel established in the 1860s. Early twentieth-century automobile access boosted Whaley Lake resort development. For many years, the lake's shores hosted summer visitors at places like Camp Seneca, Dibble's Bungalow Row, Grant's Cottages, the Mountain House, and Whaley Lake Inn. Land on the west side of the lake, divided into one-eighth-acre summer cottage lots, eventually became a dense neighborhood of year-round homes.



▲ SUMMER DESTINATION

Whaley Lake hosted a variety of bungalows and cottages, hotels and motels, retreats and conference centers, and private religious and nondenominational camps. Source: Pawling Historical Society.



▲ ELEANOR AT SANITA

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited Sanita Hills Camp and spoke to campers in July 1943. Source: Pawling Historical Society.

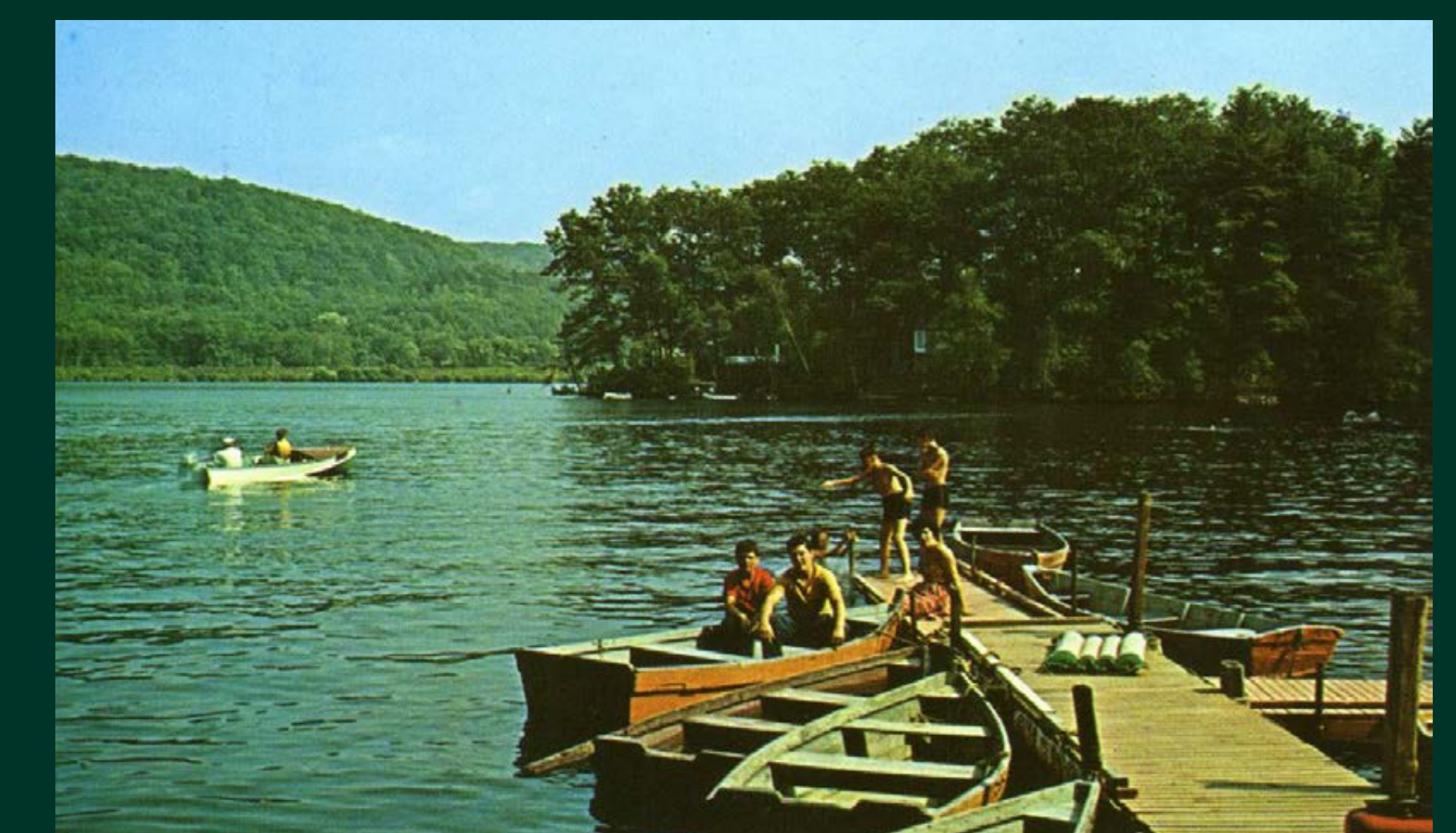


▲ RAILROAD SUBLIME

Scenic Whaley Lake was a destination for railroad enthusiasts documenting the New Haven Railroad's transition from steam to diesel locomotives in the late 1940s. Source: Thomas J. MacNamara.

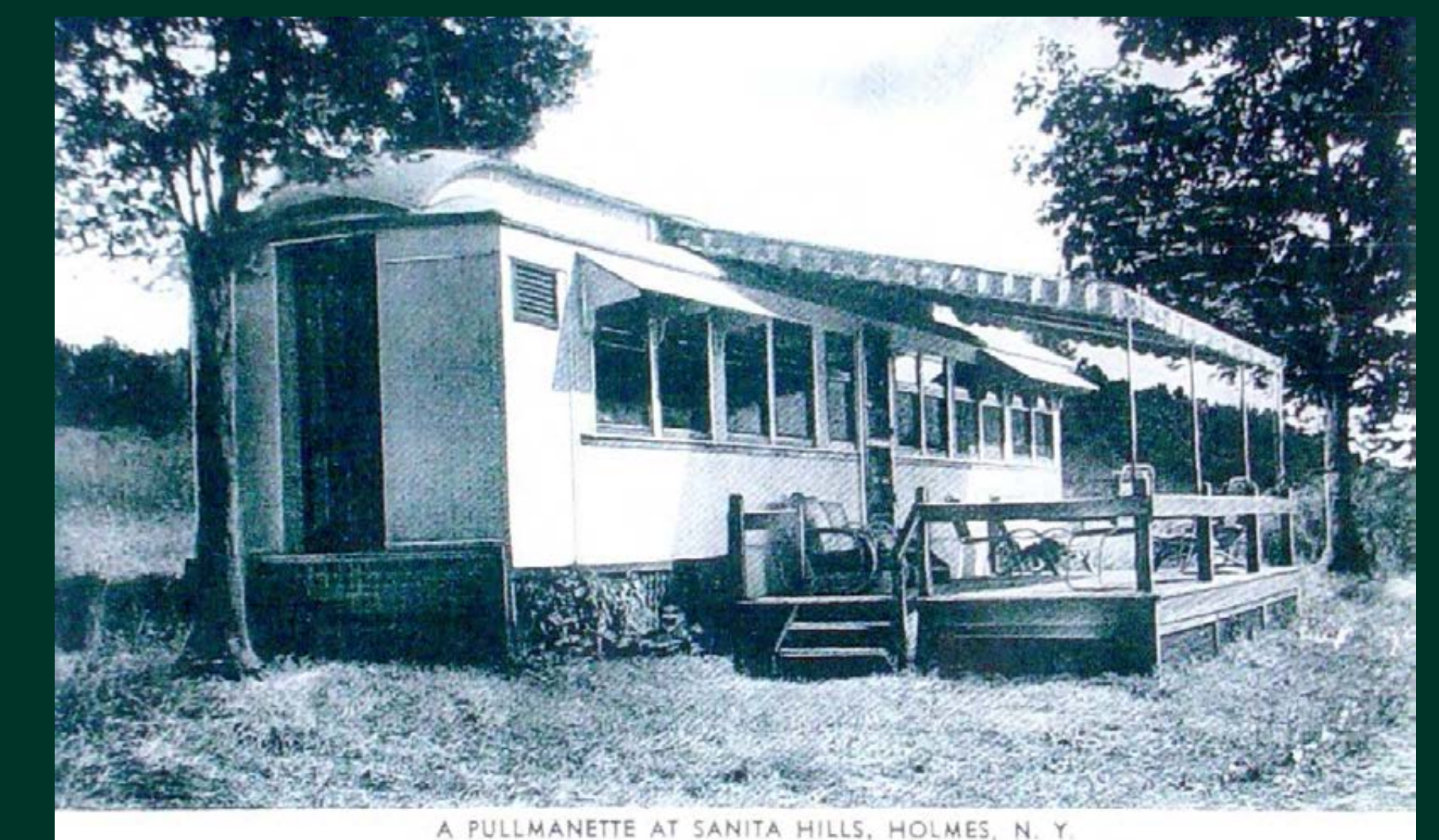
Sanita Hills Camp

Land east of the trail was once Sanita Hills Camp, a summer getaway for New York City Sanitation Department workers. Department commissioner William Carey purchased eleven hundred acres here in 1941 to create a morale-boosting amenity for workers. He constructed recreation facilities with help from sources including Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. Housing included dozens of "Pullmanettes," surplus Ninth Avenue elevated railway cars remodeled as cabins. Scandal erupted over use of city pension funds, and Mayor Fiorello La Guardia ordered the camp closed and donated to the Boy Scouts of America for a sailing camp in 1956. The area is now a wooded neighborhood of private homes.



▲ LAKEFRONT RECREATION

2.5-mile-long Whaley Lake was a busy summertime fun spot for fishing, paddling, sailing, and swimming. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.



**Metro-North
Railroad**

"PULLMANETTE" CABINS ►

Sanita Hills Camp, a 1940s summer getaway for New York City sanitation workers, had cabins remodeled from surplus railway cars. Source: Pawling Historical Society.

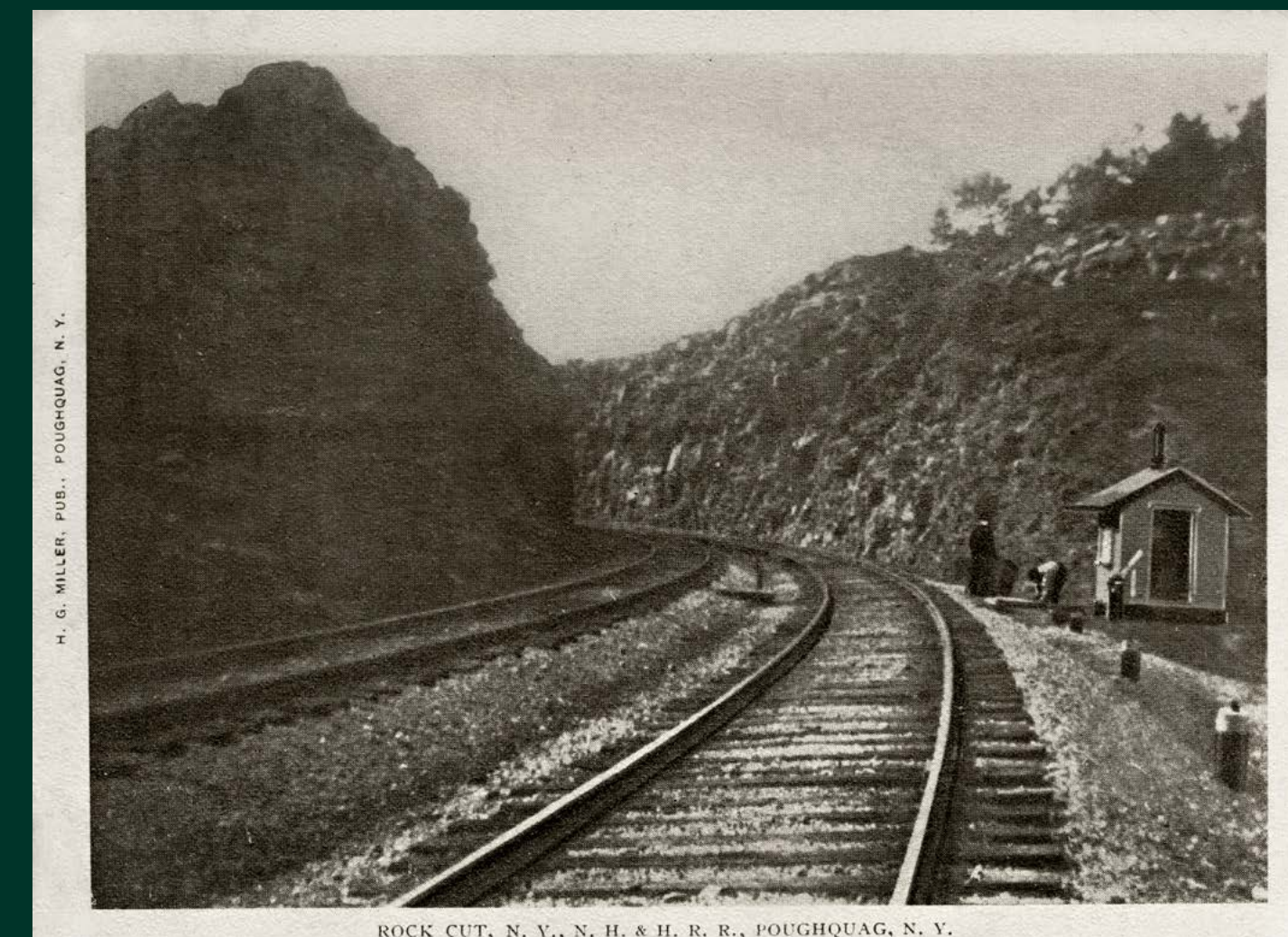
Mountain Railroading

The Maybrook Trailway follows the Brewster-to-Hopewell Junction portion of the former New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad's 125-mile-long "Maybrook Line," once an important New England freight rail gateway. "The Maybrook" required heavy-duty engineering, equipment, and operations to move freight trains over the Appalachian Mountains in Dutchess and Putnam Counties.



▲ POUGHQUAG DEPOT

This 1881 Depot Hill depot was replaced when the line was double-tracked in 1905. That depot was destroyed in a train derailment in 1912 and replaced. Local passenger service ended by 1930. Source: Hopewell Depot Museum.



◀ POUGHQUAG CUT

The New York & New England Railroad blasted the Depot Hill rock cut in 1881, and the New Haven Railroad widened it for a second track in 1905. A watchman was posted in a shanty to warn of rock slides in bad weather. Source: Roger Liller.



▲ FREIGHT PUSHER

The New Haven Railroad's powerful steam locomotives pulled—and pushed—heavy Maybrook Line trains like this eastbound freight on Depot Hill at Poughquag, photographed in September 1947. Source: John P. Ahrens.

◀ STEAM POWER

In 1918, the New Haven Railroad bought fifty new powerful 2-10-2 steam locomotives that it assigned primarily to Maybrook Line service, like this one pulling a heavy eastbound freight through the Poughquag rock cut in May 1947. Source: John P. Ahrens.

Building the Line

In 1881, the New York & New England Railroad completed the line between Connecticut and Hopewell Junction. The route included a thirteen-mile eastbound climb of 490 feet in elevation at grades as steep as 1.22 percent (64.4 feet per mile) to Reynolds summit near Holmes, New York. Westbound trains climbed five miles at grades exceeding 1.3 percent. At Depot Hill in Poughquag, construction required blasting a seventy-five-foot-deep rock cut on a seven-degree curve, the sharpest on the entire line.

Improvements and Locomotives

By 1904, the "New Haven" consolidated this line and its connections, linking large freight yards at Maybrook, New York, and New Haven, Connecticut. The company rebuilt the Maybrook Line, reducing grades and curves, replacing bridges, and installing two parallel tracks in time for heavy World War I traffic. In 1918, the New Haven bought fifty new steam locomotives built by the American Locomotive Company in Schenectady, New York. The powerful 2-10-2 Santa Fe-type locomotives moved increasingly longer, heavier freight trains on the Maybrook. Several were placed in "pusher" service at Hopewell Junction to help eastbound freights climb the grade to Reynolds.

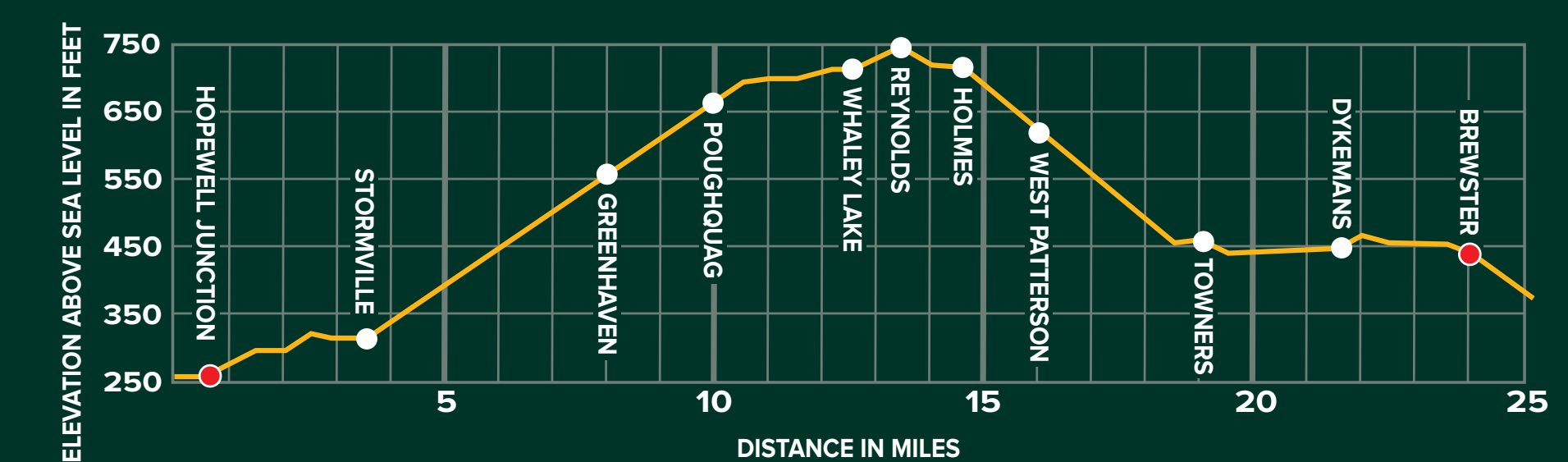
Glory and Decline

The Maybrook Line's finest hour was during World War II, when its steam locomotives moved record freight tonnage over the line. Diesel locomotives replaced steam in 1947. A 1974 fire on the Poughkeepsie bridge ended the Maybrook Line's long-distance freight trains, and the last freight train ran on the Brewster-to-Hopewell Junction portion of the line in 1992.



▲ SUMMIT SIGN

This sign marked the location of the Maybrook Line summit at Holmes, New York, almost 490 feet higher than Hopewell Junction, thirteen miles away. Source: Hopewell Depot Museum.



▲ STEEP GRADES

The Maybrook Line crossed the Appalachian Mountains in Dutchess and Putnam Counties, climbing grades as steep as 1.22 percent eastbound and over 1.3 percent westbound. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.



Stormville

Stormville, a hamlet of East Fishkill, is named for the Storm family, descended from Dirck Sturm, who came to New York from Holland in 1662. Beginning in 1739, Dirck's grandson Thomas bought several hundred acres of land here, which he left to his oldest sons when he died. The Storms lived and farmed here across three centuries, closely linking the area to their name. Early Storm farmers were slave owners, and the Storms established an African-American cemetery nearby. Slavery was completely abolished in New York by 1827.

The Revolutionary War

During the Revolution, colonial militia were stationed here, and Isaac Storm let Colonel Jacob Griffen's men train in his fields. In 1777, Loyalist soldiers raided outspoken patriot Garret Storm's house and hanged him in his attic. His slave Epye Schouten rescued him alive after the soldiers left, and Garret's will stipulated that she was supported for life.

RAILROAD HAMLET ▶

This diorama at the east Fishkill Historical Society shows Stormville hamlet about 1925 when it included the Stormville Chapel and the Shady Maple Academy one-room schoolhouse. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.



TROOPS IN ACTION (Camp Whitman Series)

▲ CAMP WHITMAN

In 1916, New York State built an 825-acre camp in Stormville and Green Haven to train National Guard soldiers to guard the US border during the Mexican Revolution and to fight in Europe during World War I. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.



**Metro-North
Railroad**



▲ HORTON'S STORE

Stormville residents pose on the steps of C. W. Horton's Store. Horton established a hotel here in 1871 that remained open until the 1960s. Source: East Fishkill Historical Society.

The Stormville Hamlet

For much of the 1800s Stormville, surrounded by rolling fields below Stormville Mountain, was a quiet agricultural area of large dairy farms owned by the Berry, Hallstead, Storm, and other families. State Road became a stagecoach and mail route, and a post office was established here in 1826. By the mid-1800s, Stormville was a hamlet of twenty houses with a blacksmith shop, church, hotel, school, and shoe shop. When the New York & New England Railroad built through Stormville in 1881, the focus of the hamlet shifted to the railroad. W. J. & W. B. Storm built a feed, flour, coal, and lumber business by the tracks, and the post office moved there as well.

STORMVILLE DEPOT ▶

Passengers wait for a train at the Stormville depot. Local passenger service was phased out on this line by 1930, but freight traffic remained important. Source: Roger Liller.



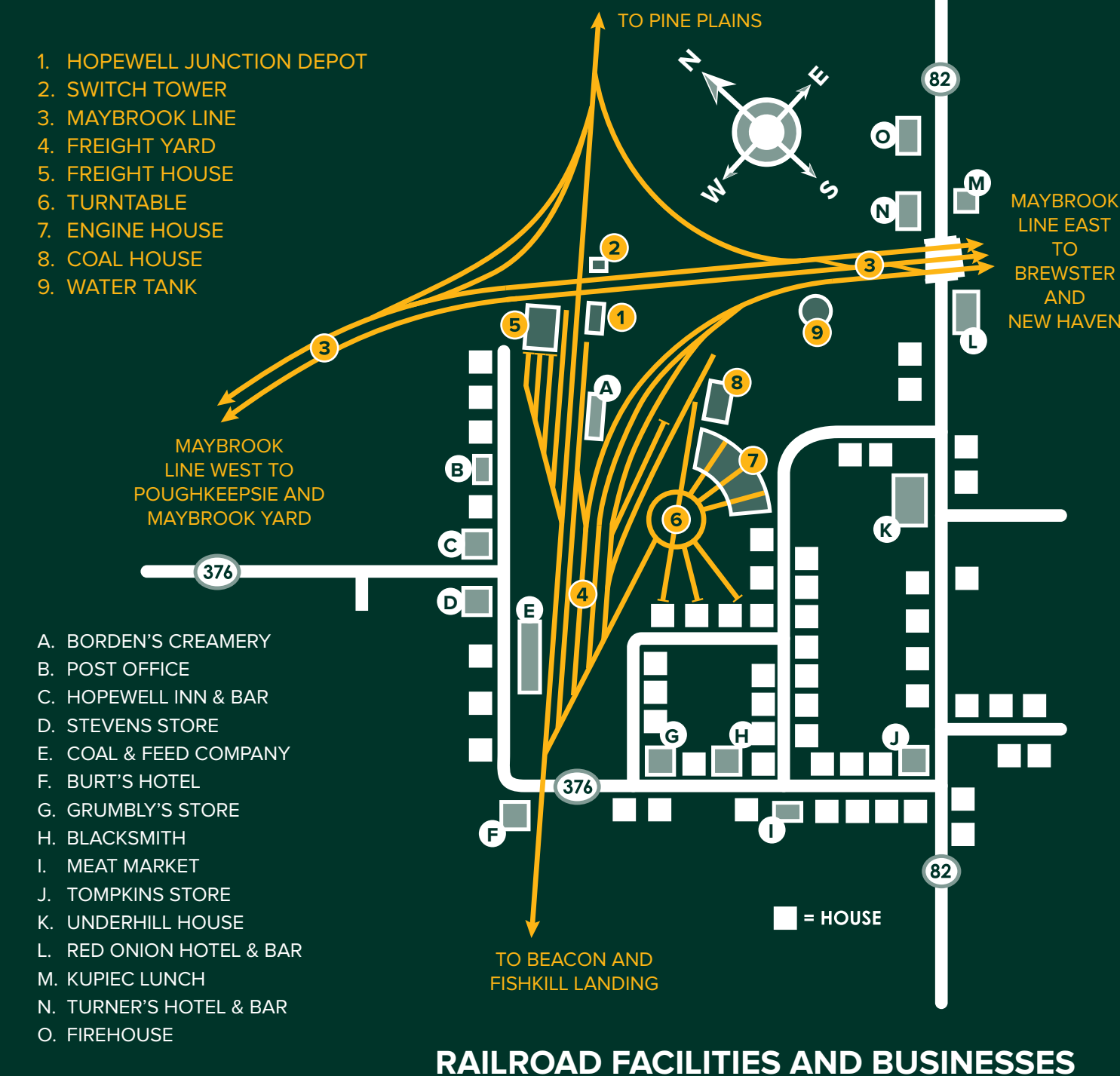
▲ GARRET STORM HOUSE

Garret Storm built this brick Georgian-style house on Phillips Road in 1770 and was attacked there by Loyalist troops in 1777. Source: East Fishkill Historical Society.



Hopewell Junction

HOPEWELL JUNCTION



Hopewell Junction was an important Dutchess County rail center for almost a century and an important part of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad's "Maybrook Line," once a major New England freight rail gateway. The hamlet that grew around the railroads here served and relied on them for its livelihood.

▲ This map shows the junction in the World War I era. The Maybrook Line, map number 3, is now the route of the Maybrook Trailway east to Brewster and the Dutchess County Rail Trail west to Poughkeepsie. Source: Milestone Heritage Consulting.

Junction Lines

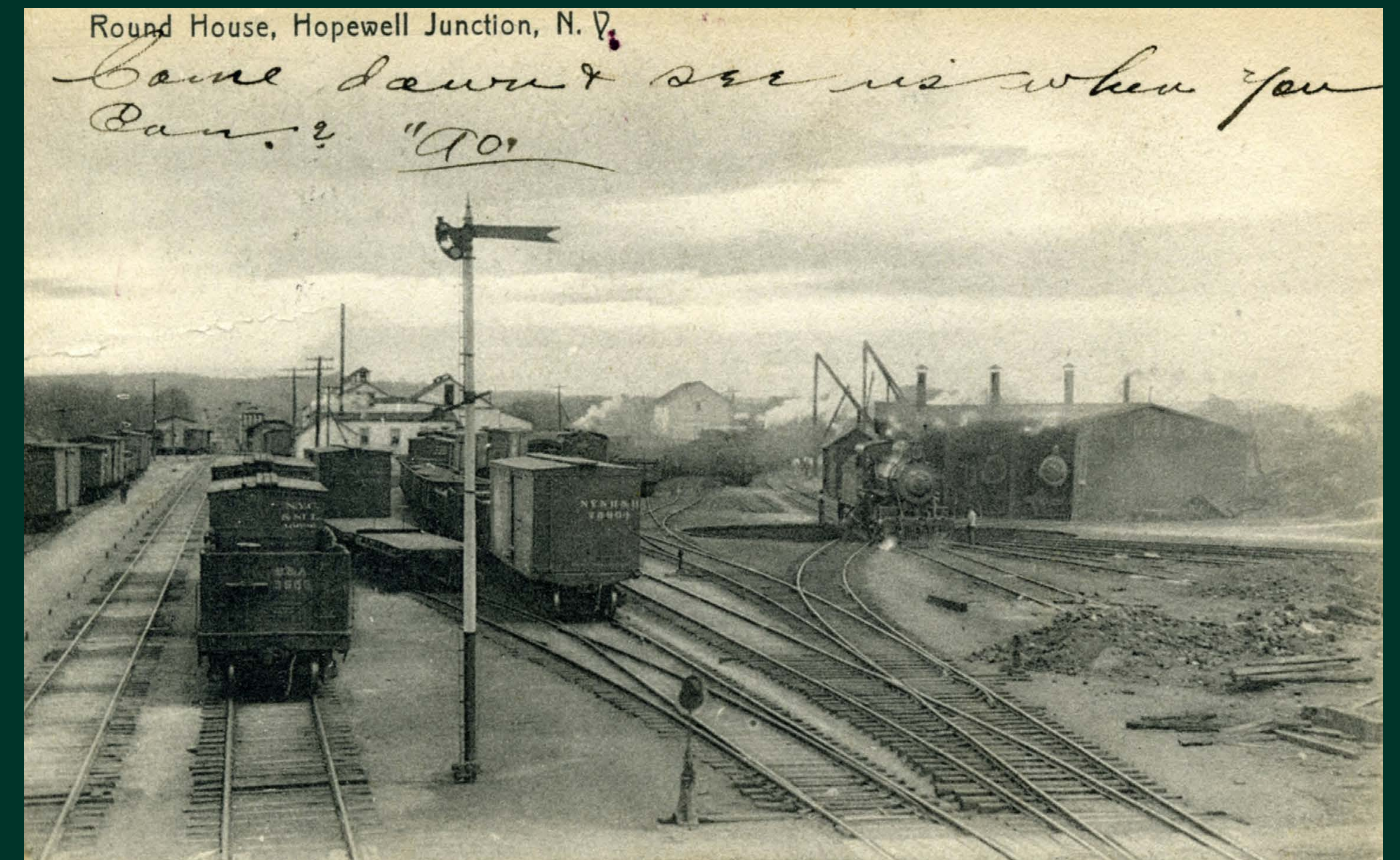
The Dutchess & Columbia Railroad arrived in 1869, linking Hudson River docks at Beacon, New York, with northwestern Connecticut. A junction was established in 1881 when the New York & New England Railroad came west from Connecticut. In 1892 the Dutchess County Railroad linked Hopewell with the 1889 Hudson River rail bridge at Poughkeepsie. By 1904, the New Haven Railroad consolidated these lines, forming the 125-mile-long Maybrook Line, linking large freight yards at New Haven, Connecticut, and Maybrook, New York.

Railroad Hamlet

After 1881, a busy hamlet grew up around the rail yards, locomotive house, and new industries. Rail workers moved into new neighborhoods, and hotels, stores, and restaurants opened to serve them. The depot, built in 1873, was a center of local social life and the source of news, mail, and packages for six decades until passenger service ended here in 1933.



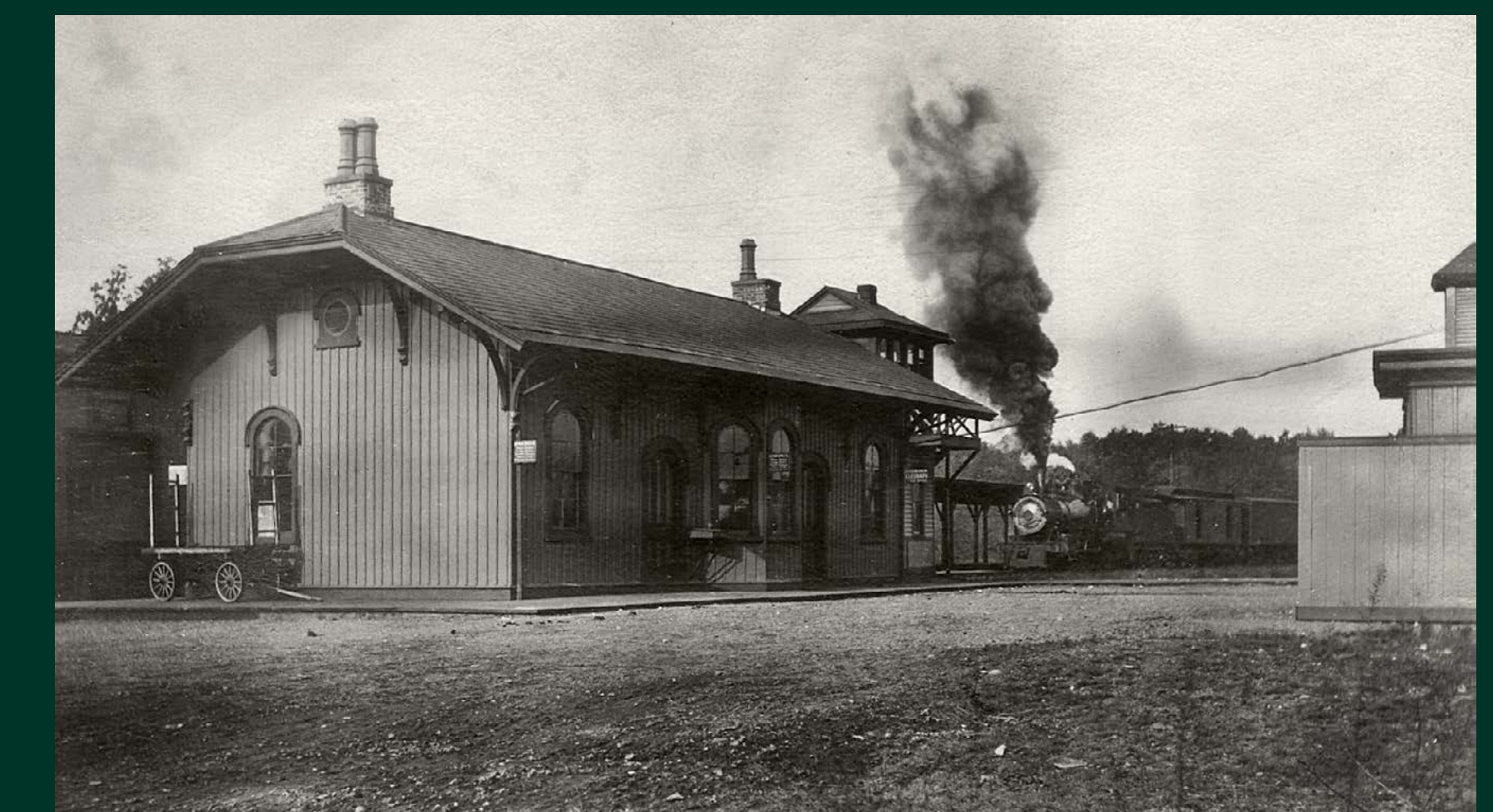
▲ DEPOT RESTORATION
Fire damaged the Hopewell Junction depot in 1986. Hopewell Depot Restoration Corporation volunteers restored it between 1995 and 2012, when it reopened as the Hopewell Depot Museum. Source: Hopewell Depot Museum.



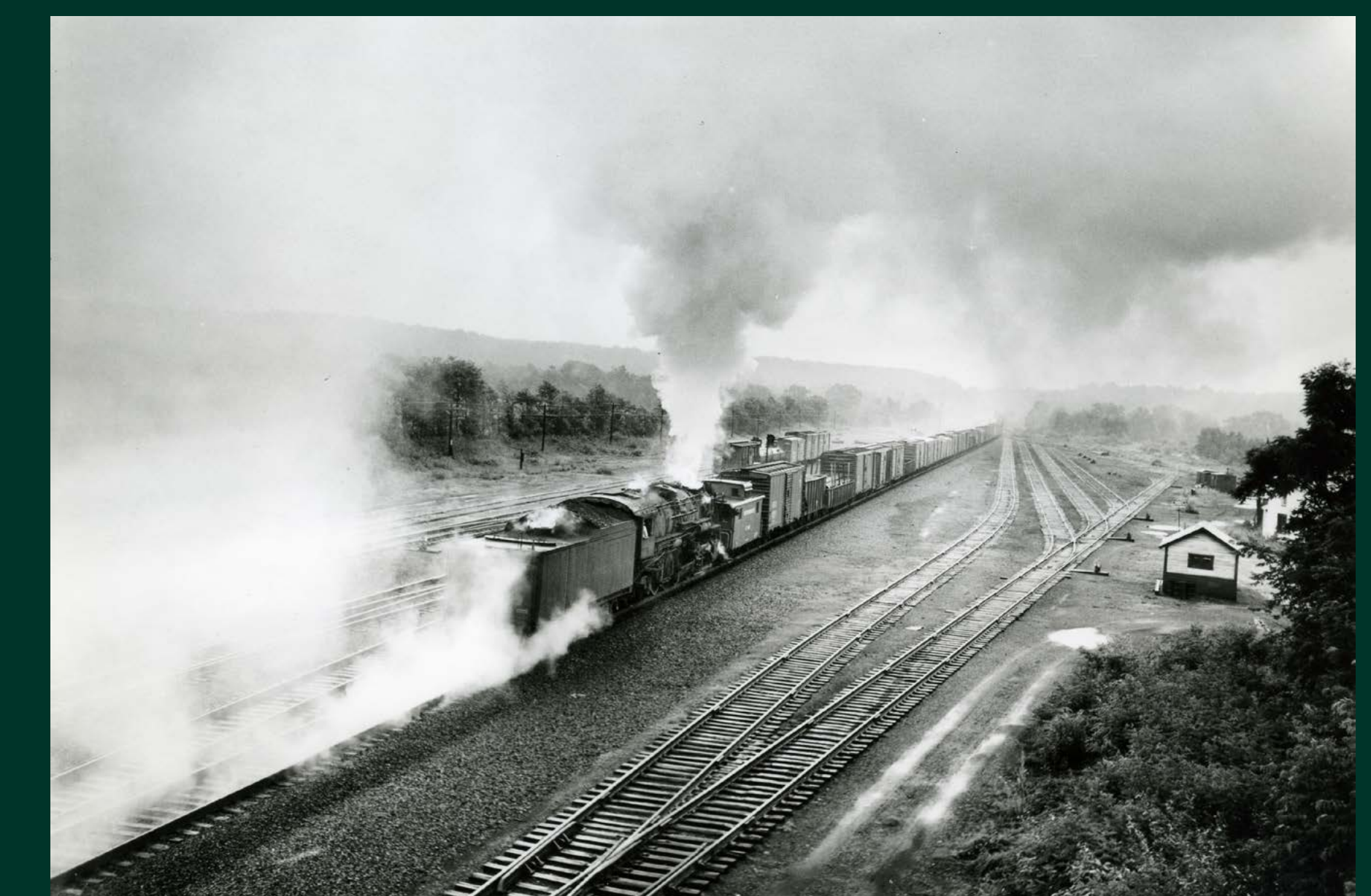
▲ RAIL YARD
This 1910 postcard view looking over the smoky Hopewell Junction freight yard shows the 1901 Borden Milk plant in the distance at left and the steam locomotive roundhouse and turntable at right. Source: Hopewell Depot Museum.

Boom and Bust

In 1918, the New Haven Railroad stationed steam locomotives here to push eastbound freight trains up steep grades in Beekman and Pawling. Railroad workers serviced the steam locomotives and replenished their coal and water until diesel locomotives replaced them in 1947. Freight traffic declined after World War II. Highway competition eroded long-distance rail traffic, which ended here when the Poughkeepsie bridge burned in 1974. The last freight train on the Hopewell Junction-to-Brewster, New York portion of the Maybrook Line passed through in 1992, marking the end of railroading at Hopewell Junction.



▲ HOPEWELL JUNCTION DEPOT
Built in 1873 by the Dutchess & Columbia Railroad, the depot served passengers on two intersecting lines after 1881. The depot was a center of community life and had the first telephone in the hamlet. Source: Hopewell Depot Museum.



STEAM LOCOMOTIVES ►
Powerful New Haven Railroad steam locomotives pulled—and pushed—heavy Maybrook Line trains like this eastbound freight leaving Hopewell Junction yard in July 1950. Source: Kent Cochrane / Thomas J. MacNamara Collection.



**Metro-North
Railroad**