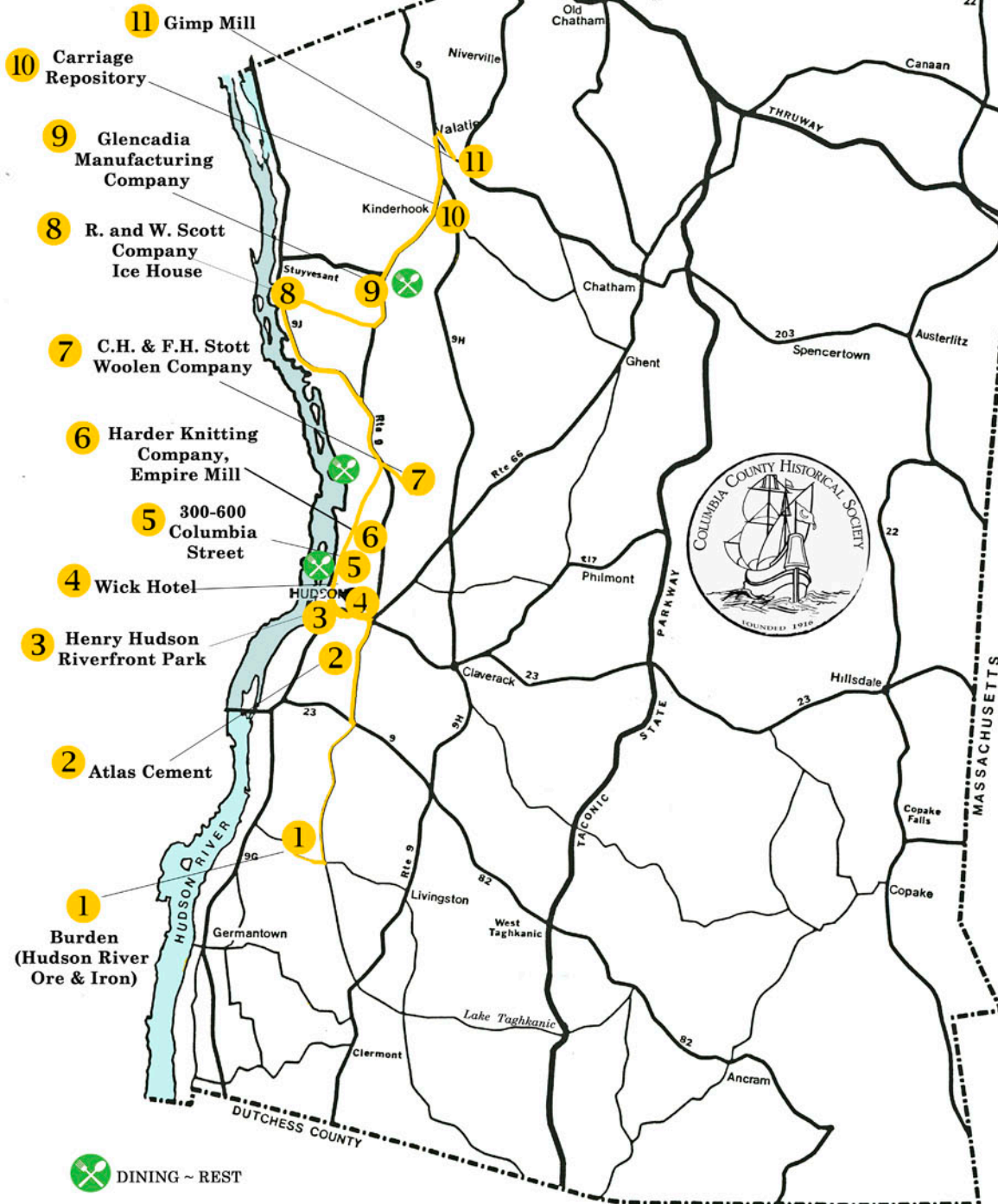


Drive Through History

Artifacts of INDUSTRY

Columbia County



Artifacts of Industry

Columbia County's growth and character has been shaped over time by its industrial evolution. As mills began popping up on our fast-moving streams in the late 1600s, an influx of newcomers gave rise to vibrant, diverse communities. Those communities have weathered the boom and bust of shifting industry over 300 years to become the places we call home today.

Peter Stott's 2007 book, *Looking For Work: Industrial Archaeology in Columbia County, New York*, explores more than 130 surviving sites and structures from the industrial era. They range from the crumbling ruins of ice houses to abandoned cement factories and former mills that have been given new life in the modern renaissance of places like Hudson and Chatham. This road trip tells the stories of how western Columbia County—the first area to develop and for many years the county's industrial epicenter—came into its own thanks to the Hudson River and the hard work of many.

1 Burden (Hudson River Ore & Iron Company)

Route 10 at Meiner Road, Linlithgo

Formed in 1883, the Hudson River Ore & Iron Company was the largest industry ever to operate in Livingston. At its peak, it employed 500 men (mostly Scottish and Eastern European immigrants), mined 1,200 tons of ore daily, and spanned a village of 60 houses which went by the name of "Burden." However, the grade of ore proved too expensive to mine profitably, and the company folded in 1901. Virtually all that remains is this striking brick machine shop.



Certainly one of the most elegant 19th-century industrial buildings to survive in the county, the machine shop features enormous double-hung windows, stone sills, and decorative brickwork. This building was equipped with all the tools and machinery required to maintain the mine locomotives that once hummed along this picturesque countryside.

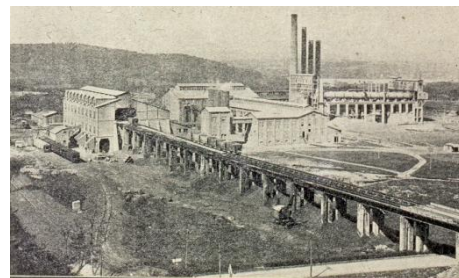
Directions to Next Stop: Head east on Route 10, then turn left onto Route 31 (Blue Hill Road). Continue for approximately 6 miles (Route 31 will become U.S. 9 N.). The next stop will be on your left, 1.8 miles from the intersection of NY-23.

2 Universal Atlas Cement Co. Factory Ruins

Route 9 (map coordinates: 42.232, -73.784), Greenport

Driving north on Route 9, you'll see the Becraft Hills rise before you. This geological wonder is an isolated outcrop of the Catskills that is rich in Becraft limestone, a key component of portland cement.

Limestone was likely quarried here as early as the 17th century. The Columbia Turnpike West Gate Tollhouse (NY-23B at Spook Rock Road) was built of Becraft limestone around 1800. In 1910, two cement companies built enormous plants on Becraft Mountain to capitalize on this natural resource; the largest was the New York and New England Portland Cement and Lime Company (organized by Atlas Portland Cement Company of Pennsylvania). At that time, Atlas was the largest portland cement manufacturer in the world, and supplied cement for the building of the Panama Canal. In Greenport, "Atlas Plant No. 7" could produce 7,500 barrels per day and employed 800 hands, making it the county's single largest employer for much of the 20th century.



The plant later passed into the hands of various corporations—U.S. Steel and St. Lawrence Cement among them—but shuttered for good in 1989. Most of the hulking factory ruins you see now date to the mid-1900s. Plans were introduced in the early 2000s to build a brand new plant on the site, but were scrapped after a prolonged community dispute.

Directions to Next Stop: Continue north on U.S. 9 N. into Hudson. Turn left onto Warren Street and follow it until it ends, at Henry Hudson Riverfront Park. From here, you can either drive to the next location (41 Cross Street) or explore the next few stops on foot.


3 Henry Hudson Riverfront Park

1 Water Street, Hudson

Hudson has been a workhorse of a town since its first days of European settlement, when it was known as Claverack Landing. The Hudson River was the main driver of that success, and early on merchants sent furs, fish, and grains to be sold in New York City.



In 1783, Hudson was settled by a group of seafarers from Nantucket who quickly went about turning the young city into a bustling port. What attracted the New Englanders was this high bluff flanked by two natural harbors that made a fine location for the wharves, warehouses, and shipyards that would make up Hudson's new whaling and maritime industries. After a period of explosive growth, the last whaling ship sailed from Hudson in 1819. In 1850, a new railroad from New York to Albany cut off the two harbors. It was around that time that manufacturing supplanted maritime interests as Hudson's dominant industry.

 **Wm. Farmer & Sons** (20 S. Front Street), serves fine American cuisine and cocktails. Bonus: It's housed in a beautiful 19th-century building on a grand promenade overlooking Hudson's former harbors.

4 Wick Hotel (formerly South Bay Mill)

41 Cross Street, Hudson

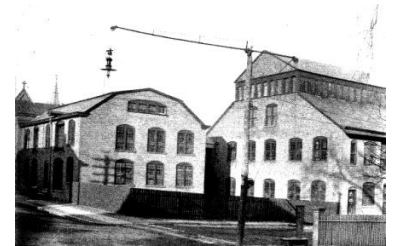
Looking at this crisp white building, it's hard to imagine that its life began as a soap and candle factory in the 1860s. Formerly known as the Gale & Hover South Bay Mill, the plant went on to manufacture everything from textiles to bedsprings to electric vaporizers. Today, the building has been meticulously renovated and is enjoying a new chapter as the Wick Hotel, a name that pays tribute to its original function.



5 W.I. Traver & Son Planing Mill

359-361 Columbia Street and 17-23 N. Fourth Street

As maritime gave way to manufacturing, knitting mills and carriage shops sprung up on arteries like Columbia Street, where you can still see many original buildings in various states of use. Originally built in 1863 (rebuilt 1885 after a fire) for the manufacture of cabinetry and other wood products using lumber imported from the South, the former W.I. Traver and Son Planing Mill has been revitalized in recent years by the retail website Etsy, happily maintaining the building's connection to hand-crafted goods. Other industrial buildings to look for in the area include the **Hudson Carriage Repository** (513-515 Columbia Street) and the **Hudson Electric Light Company** (530-532 Columbia Street), thought to be the first building in Hudson to generate electric light.



6 Harder Knitting Company Empire Knitting Mill

561 Washington Street, Hudson

This brick mill, built in the 1880s, is probably the best representation of Hudson's golden age of knitting mills. At four stories high, it was also one of the largest mills in Hudson. Here (and at other mills like it), spinning took place on the third floor, carding and knitting on the second floor, and drying, washing, seaming, and finishing on the first. The building has remained vacant since the final occupant moved out in 1960.



Directions to Next Stop: Head northwest on Washington Street toward N. 6th Street, then turn right onto Harry Howard Avenue. Turn left onto Joslen Boulevard, and travel for 1.8 miles. Turn left onto Fairview Avenue. Turn right onto Atlantic Avenue. As you enter the Village of Stottville and cross Claverack Creek, the site will be on your left.

7 C.H. & F.H. Stott Woolen Company

County Route 20 at Claverack Creek (north side)

Stockport, which includes the hamlet of Columbiaville and village of Stottville, was the first true manufacturing town in Columbia County. That activity continued well into the 19th and 20th centuries. Several large mills stood on both sides of the Columbiaville Bridge, harnessing the formidable waterpower of the Stockport Creek—formed by the joining of the Kinderhook and Claverack creeks.



That legacy lingers at the former C.H. & F.H. Stott Woolen Company in Stottville (founded 1828), about 1 mile east of Route 9 on the north side of Claverack Creek. Here was the site of four state-of-the-art textile mills, only one of which remains, albeit in a state of decay. Production skyrocketed in the 1860s when the mills began manufacturing Union Army uniforms. At its peak in 1880, the mills employed 400 men, 200 women, 75 boys, and 60 girls, making it the largest employer in Columbia County at the time. The mills closed in 1953 as manufacturing declined throughout the Northeast.



Stockport Flats (end of Station Road at the Hudson River) is a great place for a rest, a picnic, or a paddle. The park, which is part of the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail, is also full of history. Not only is it the presumed point of Henry Hudson's landing in 1609, it is likely the site of Columbia County's first European settlement, a fur-trading station.

Directions to Next Stop: Head north on U.S. 9 until the junction of NY-9J, then turn left to follow 9J for 2.7 miles. Turn left onto Ice House Road. Drive to the end of the road and park at the parking area. A short walk leads to the next site.

8 R. and W. Scott Ice Company Powerhouse & Ice House Site

Ice House Road, Nutten Hook (Stuyvesant)

Stuyvesant was one of the earliest towns in Columbia County to be settled, and fur-trading stations may have been established here soon after the settlement of Albany in 1624. The two industries that would come to dominate the town would be just as dependent on its Hudson River access: ice harvesting and brick making.

This small park is home to the ruins of the largest ice house on the Hudson. Built 1885, the R. and W. Scott ice house featured four elevators which hauled ice from the Hudson's edge. By the 1930s mechanical refrigeration had turned the ice harvesting industry obsolete. The walls remain intact, with a brick stack that rises into the trees; inside, machine bases are still visible, as is the decorative brickwork around the chimney.



Speaking of brick, if you stumble across any as you're exploring this area, consider it an artifact. When ice season ended, multiple brickyards along the Hudson would come alive in a swirl of red dust and backbreaking work. Built 1902-1903, **Cary Brickyards** was one of the most technologically advanced brickyards on the river. Less than 5 miles south, **Charles Flood Wildlife Management Area at the Empire Brickyard** preserves the site of the former Empire Brickyard Company, which operated from 1902 into the 1950s.

Directions to Next Stop: Head east on Ice House Road, then turn right onto NY-9J. Turn left onto Stuyvesant Falls Road (NY-46), and continue until you reach U.S. 9 N. Turn left, then make a right onto New Street. The site will be on your right.

9 Glencadia Manufacturing Company

New Street at Kinderhook Creek, Stuyvesant Falls

Located three miles above the Kinderhook Creek’s confluence with the Hudson River, Stuyvesant Falls’ 70-foot drop became “the power base for a complex of mills built during the 19th century,” according to *A Visible Heritage* by Ruth Piwonka and Roderic H. Blackburn. The five-story mill you see today was built in 1827 as a textile mill originally known as Glencadia Manufacturing Company. In its heyday, the mill produced 325,000 yards of cotton cloth per year. In 1841 it was acquired by Abraham A. Van Alen, and later passed into the hands of various owners including the Frisbee Manufacturing Company and Thomas A. Edison, Incorporated. Today, the mill is part of the **Stuyvesant Falls Mill District**, a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places that includes six contributing buildings.



Cross the bridge and turn left onto Lindenwald Avenue to visit **Stuyvesant Falls Park**. This scenic spot is the perfect place to witness the thundering rush of the falls that once powered so many mills.

10 Carriage Repository

17-19 Broad Street, Kinderhook

Without the water power needed for mills, the Village of Kinderhook became the site of multiple manufacturing interests in the 18th and 19th centuries—including hatmaking, leather tanning, and even a hoop skirt factory, formerly located at 19 Broad Street. In 1881, Samuel N. Brown bought 19 Broad and converted it to the manufacture of carriages, sleighs, and wagons. He also purchased the building you see at 17 Broad Street (formerly a printing office for the village’s first newspaper, the *Kinderhook Herald*) and turned it into a repository, or showroom, for his carriages. Displaying both Federal and Victorian trademarks, the building is a rare example of a wood-framed commercial building.



About two blocks away, **Saisonnier** (11 Chatham Street) is a great place to grab a beer and small plates to wind down from your day trip.

Directions to Next Stop: Continue north on U.S. 9 for 1.6 miles until you reach River Street, in the Village of Valatie. Turn right, and the site will be on your right in about 100 feet.

11 Gimp Mill

River Street, Valatie

Valatie was once one of the leading cotton manufacturers in Columbia County, though little evidence remains. This mill, which began in 1896 as Hall and Clark Manufacturing Company, produced gimp—a type of textile trim used in upholstery. The “Gimp Mill” was the last built and is the last remaining of all the Valatie mills, but the many waterfalls along Main Street still echo the village’s industrial past. In the first half of the 19th century, mills stood on both the Valatie Kill and the Kinderhook Creek—the largest and most famous of which were built by Nathan Wild, an Englishman who brought with him all the latest innovations from Manchester. These included the Beaver Mills (which stood on Kinderhook Creek at today’s NY-203) and a four-and-a-half-story mill just downriver, where the creeks meet. All but the Gimp Mill have been torn down or lost to fire.



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