

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

TOWN HISTORIAN

Main Topics

- Historic Skiing Sign on Crawford Road
- Rotterdam Tributaries to the Mohawk & Hudson Rivers
- Early Historic Map of Schenectady County -- 1856
- Local conversations
- Rotterdam file review and plan for material storage

Historic Sign on Crawford Road

A spinoff from the celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the Snow Trains from Schenectady to North Creek last year was the implementation of a plan to get a historic sign to recognize the start of Alpine Skiing in New York on the slopes of Yantaputchaberg above Rotterdam Junction.

The New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation did not encourage an application from our effort to have state recognize skiing in the early 1930s on Yantaputchaberg as the start of alpine skiing in New York. Their reasoning was that there were too few remnants of the original ski trails present on the mountain to warrant an application for preservation. They also were under the false impression that North Creek and Gore Mountain would be a better nominee. In this notion they failed to understand the historic fact that activities at North Creek largely evolved from the initiatives of the Schenectady Wintersports Club. It was the SWC that got the Snow Trains to North Creek! And the Schenectady Force helped

locals build ski trails on Gore and Pete Gay Mountains in anticipation of the trains, a rope tow, a ski patrol and the 'Ride Up Slide Down' 1930's mantra -- all generated from initiatives begun in the Rotterdam Hills.

In lieu of state recognition of the historic the Schenectady Wintersports Club agreed to raise funds needed to pay for the casting of a sign to celebrate the development of alpine skiing . It was the Club's efforts in 1933 that began the State's multi-million dollar ski industry. A sign to signify the facts was created, and Catskill Casting was contracted to create the historic sign. Michael Karl was contacted about placing the sign on his property after clearing the concept with the Highway Department of the County and Town of Rotterdam. As it turned out the location for placing the sign on Karl's Crawford Road property was the original site where skiers parked their cars when traversing the Schumacher access to the Yantaputchaberg ski trails. The sign was unveiled, followed by a reception with talks by the Mabee family descendants who owned Yantaputchaberg, followed by Jim Schaefer regarding skiing history starting with his father Vincent J Schaefer and friends in the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club, the 1932 Olympics, Schenectady Wintersports Club, petitions, trains and the North Creek activities. Storyboards were made showing ski trails on Yantaputchaberg, the lease of the land for cutting trails, start of the first aid committee, and events in North Creek with photos and captions of activities. A separate storyboard was made of Freddie Anderson's founding of the Schenectady Ski School at Maple Ski Ridge and the thousands of skiers and snowboard riders that learned their craft under her

tutelage. The Anderson storyboards were used at the Fall Festival at Maple Ridge Ski area.

The Historic Sign



As Installed on Crawford Road October 2025



Documentation of Rotterdam Tributaries to the Mohawk & Hudson Rivers

As part of Hudsonia, Ltd.'s contract for a Natural Resources Inventory for the Town of Rotterdam, a field study and historic maps search was completed to trace the streams and related waterbodies relevant to the Town-wide inventory. Geographic coordinates of the sources and riverside deltas were found for every stream in Rotterdam. Some streams begin in Rotterdam and enter rivers elsewhere. Other streams disappear underground in sinks or tunnels. Numerous photos were taken. A paper describing the tributaries was posted on the Town's Historian's Page.

An Early Historic Map of Schenectady County-- 1856

An original copy of the legendary Fagan Map of Schenectady County was donated to the Town by the Family of David Bills of Rotterdam Junction, NY. The map had been used in one of Rotterdam's schools. The copy has small tears and needs to be professionally mounted if framing is expected.

Library of Congress categories:

Title

- Map of Schenectady County, New York

Names

- Fagan, L.
- Ramsay, Henry, surveyor.
- Dumcke & Keil.

Created / Published

- [Philadelphia?] : Published by L. Fagan, 1856.
- N.Y. [New York] : Engraved & printed by Dumcke & Keil.

Headings

- - Schenectady County (N.Y.)--Maps
- - Landowners--New York (State)--Schenectady County--Maps
- - Villages--New York (State)--Schenectady County--Maps
- - Schenectady (N.Y.)--Maps
- - Landowners--New York (State)--Schenectady--Maps
- - Real property--New York (State)--Schenectady--Maps
- - United States--New York (State)--Schenectady County
- - United States--New York (State)--Schenectady

Notes

- - General-content county map showing towns (townships), rural buildings, and householders' names.

- - Hand colored to emphasize town boundaries/territories and mounted on cloth backing.
- - Relief shown by hachures.
- - "Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1856 by L. Fagan in the ... Eastern District of Pennsylvania."
- - Originally printed on 4 sheets (later conjoined).
- - LC copy imperfect: Shellacked, darkened, mounted on cloth backing, sectioned to 6 sheets, cloth-hemmed, north-central sheet imprinted on cloth backing with the figure of Neptune cum trident and with the words "Atlantic Fine Shirting", hand lettered "Schenectady, N.Y." in gray wash on cloth backing.
- - LC Land ownership maps, 558
- - Includes text, distance table, 6 village street insets, illustrations of prominent buildings, and large inset of "Schenectady City, surveyed by Henry Ramsay".

Local Conversations

Cold Brook House plans

Van Skyke farm & cemetery

Rotterdam Junction places

Strang Farm gardens & trails

Mohawkville Farm life 1870s

Poentic Kill wetlands (old BJs)

Rotterdam File Review and Plan for Material Storage

Files stored in the Senior Center will be reviewed in 2026. Related historic file storage space will be discussed. Should the review require assistance, volunteers will be recruited.