



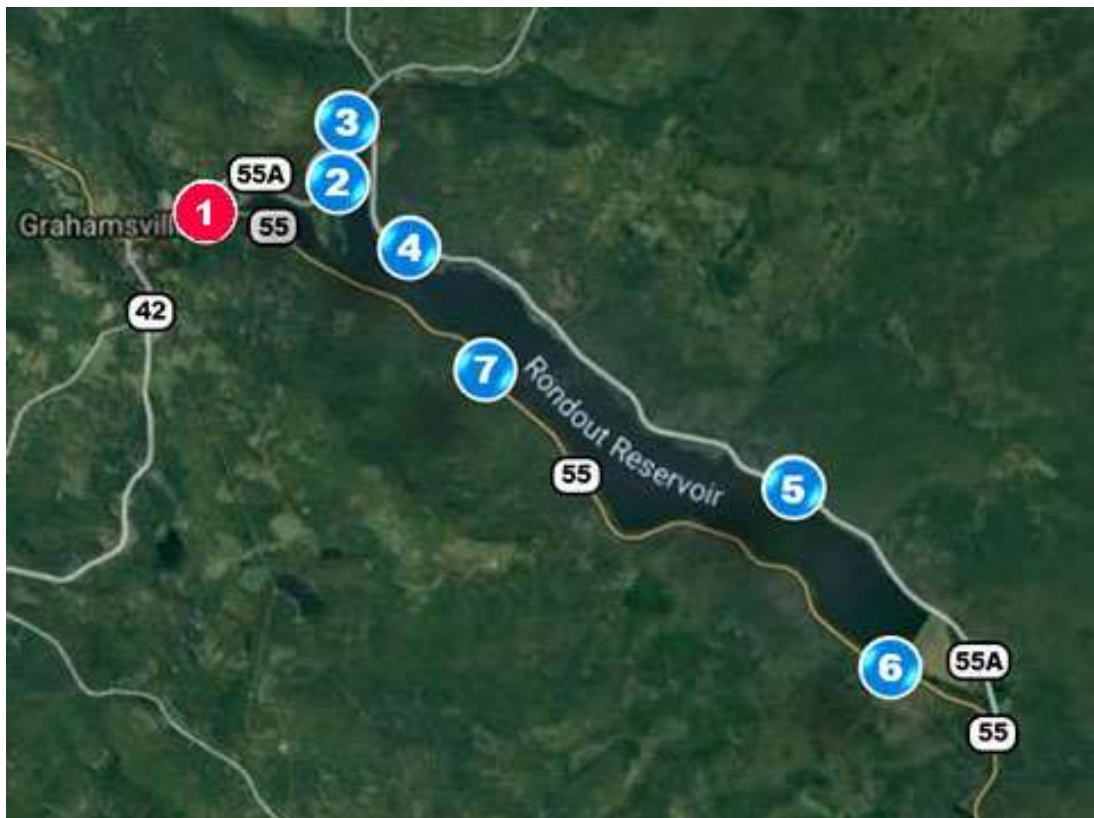
Introduction

On this tour you will learn about the Rondout Reservoir, the natural features surrounding it, how it was built, and who lived here before.

You will see ghostly images of a way of life long past, which was very much alive in the 1930s where today there is only water.



Three villages: **Eureka**, **Montela** and **Lackawack** were eliminated and all residents forced to move to build this reservoir. For most residents, with close ties to family, neighbors, church and business, the move was a very traumatic one.



If you do not have a DEP fishing permit, please remain in your vehicle when parked. You may leave your car at the Eagle Watch stop and at the County Line stop, as they are open to the public. If you leave your car at the other stops, you are subject to ticketing by the DEP Police who patrol regularly.

This tour goes around the whole reservoir.
Please obey all rules of the road and drive safely.

New York City's Water System

Why DOES New York City Need Upstate Water?

As early as the 1700s there were water problems. Salt from surrounding rivers infiltrated the drinking water, and increased population polluted the largest source of clean water, the Collect Pond. Over time, the **population increased** rapidly and there was not enough water.



By the early 1800s, New York City began seeking water off of Manhattan Island and designing ways to bring the water quickly and safely into the city.



This caused two problems:

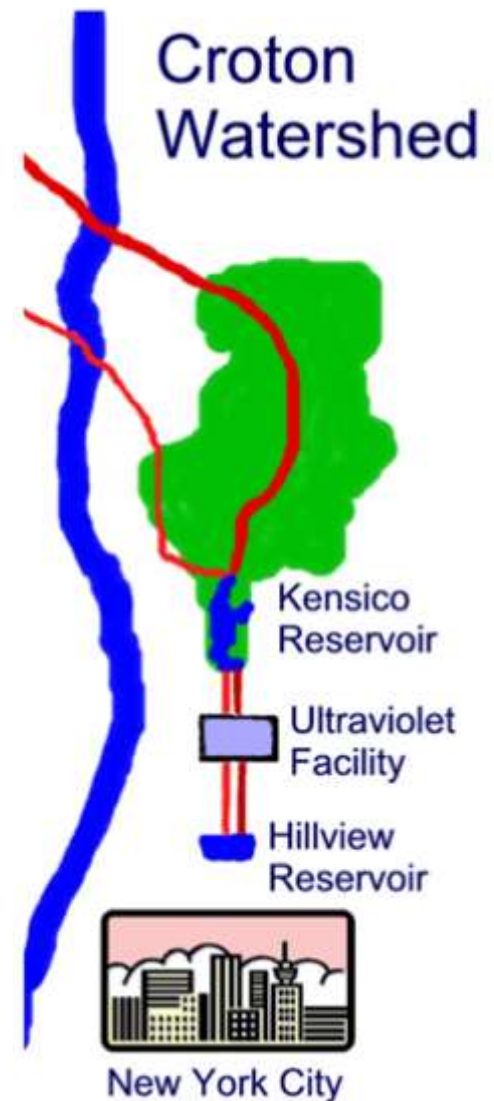
1. **Outbreaks of sickness** such as small pox, cholera and yellow fever which killed thousands of residents.
2. **There wasn't enough water to put out fires**, when most of New York City was built of wood! Over $\frac{1}{4}$ of the entire city was destroyed by fire in 1776, and in the "Great Fire" of 1835, over 17 city blocks and 700 buildings were destroyed.



Damming natural water sources to create reservoirs and building tunnels to transport that water by gravity was the easiest way to bring water into the city.

The first water system, known now as the **Old Croton System**, came on line in 1842, and boy was there a celebration when it did! Finally abundant clean water for everyone! But, demand quickly overcame the supply and the **New Croton System**, an expansion of the old Croton, was built.

The **Catskill System** with the Schoharie and Ashokan Reservoirs came on line in the early 1900s, at about the same time as waves of immigrants descended on New York City, and again, there was not enough water!

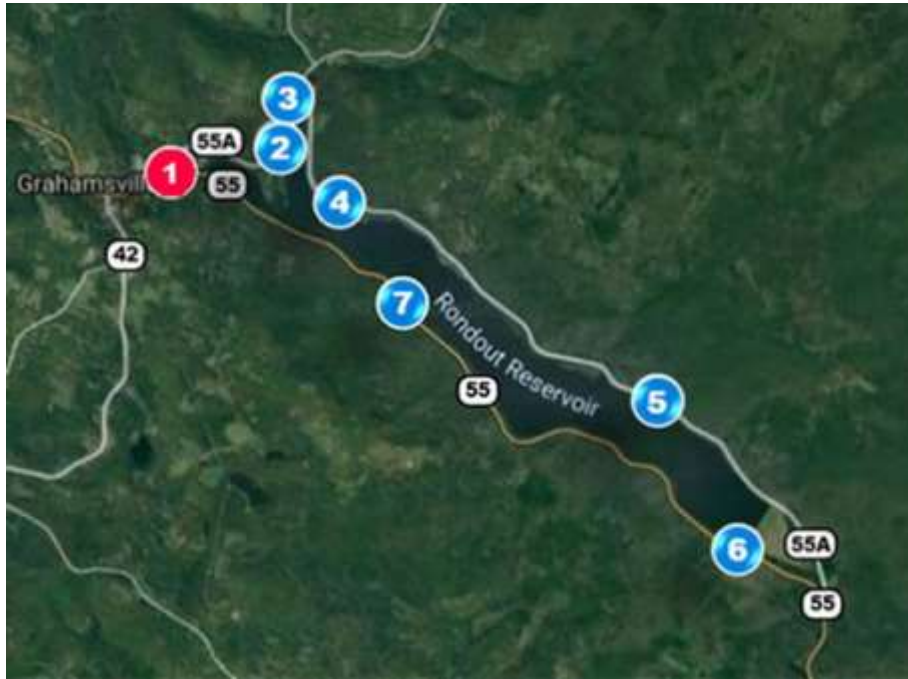


Built during the 1930s and 40s, the first phase of the **Delaware Water Supply System**, where you are now, includes the Neversink and Rondout reservoirs. The second phase, with the Cannonsville and Pepacton reservoirs, came on line in the 1950s and 60s.

Today this system provides NYC with over 50% of its water!

Stop 1: Rt. 55 and 55A

St. Rt 55 and 55A, the two roads now going around the reservoir were not here in the 1930s.



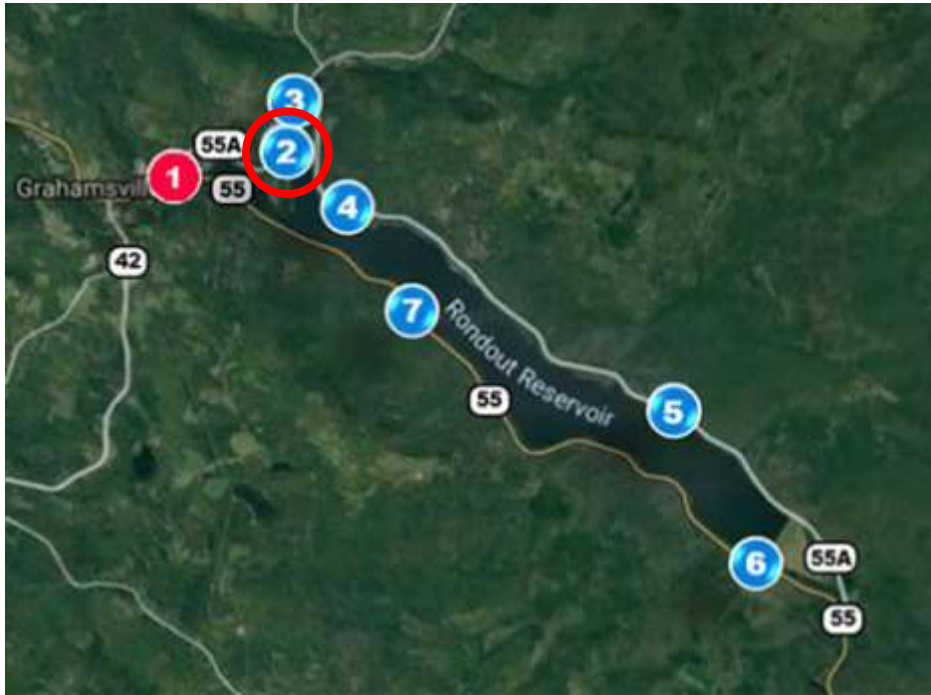
This road, known as the **Montela Highway**, went from Grahamsville to Eureka, Montela and to Lackawack, straight through what is the middle of the reservoir today.

Standing here in the 1930s, you would see the home of Nial Everett and the Cities Gas Station, and a little further away, the Morris Brundage Grist Mill.



Located on the left side of the road traveling between Grahamsville and Eureka, the Cities gas station repaired cars and sold gas. **Can you guess how much a gallon of gas cost in the 1930s? 10 cents!**

Stop 2: Eagle Watch and Eureka

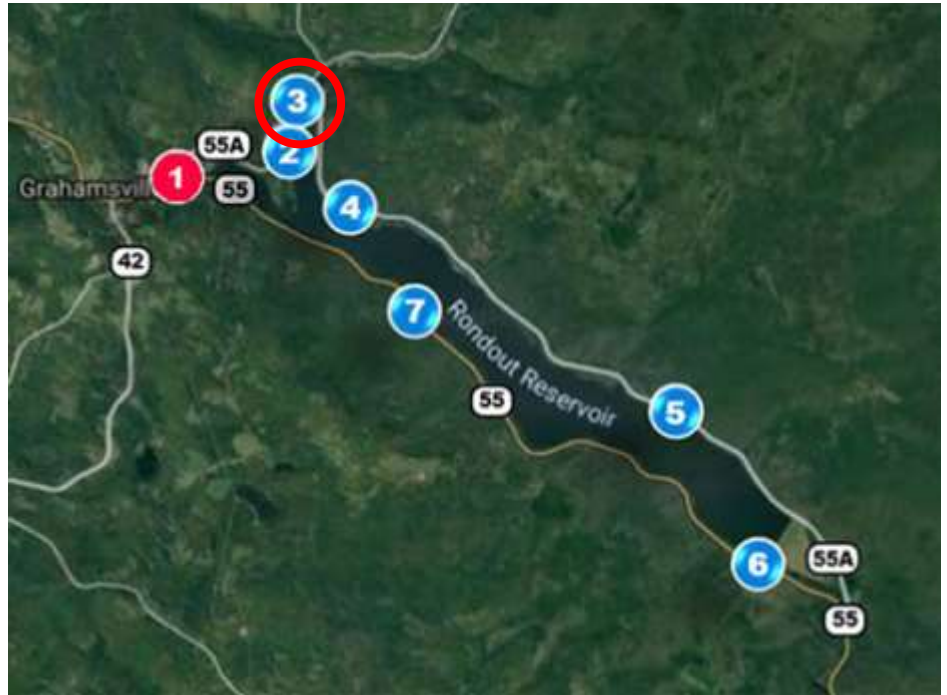


There are more than two dozen active bald eagle nests and over 116 wintering bald eagles throughout the New York City reservoirs. Why? The high undisturbed trees and open waters of the reservoirs are perfect for the eagles to hunt and forage. The long established nest located at this eagle watch is to your left, high in the tree along the shore of the reservoir. Can you see it?



Look to your right past Cooney's Point where in the 1930s stood **Eureka**, settled by Tobias Hornbeck in 1743 and one of the three communities removed to build the reservoir. A small farming community, it had two stores, the most famous being **Smith's General Store**.

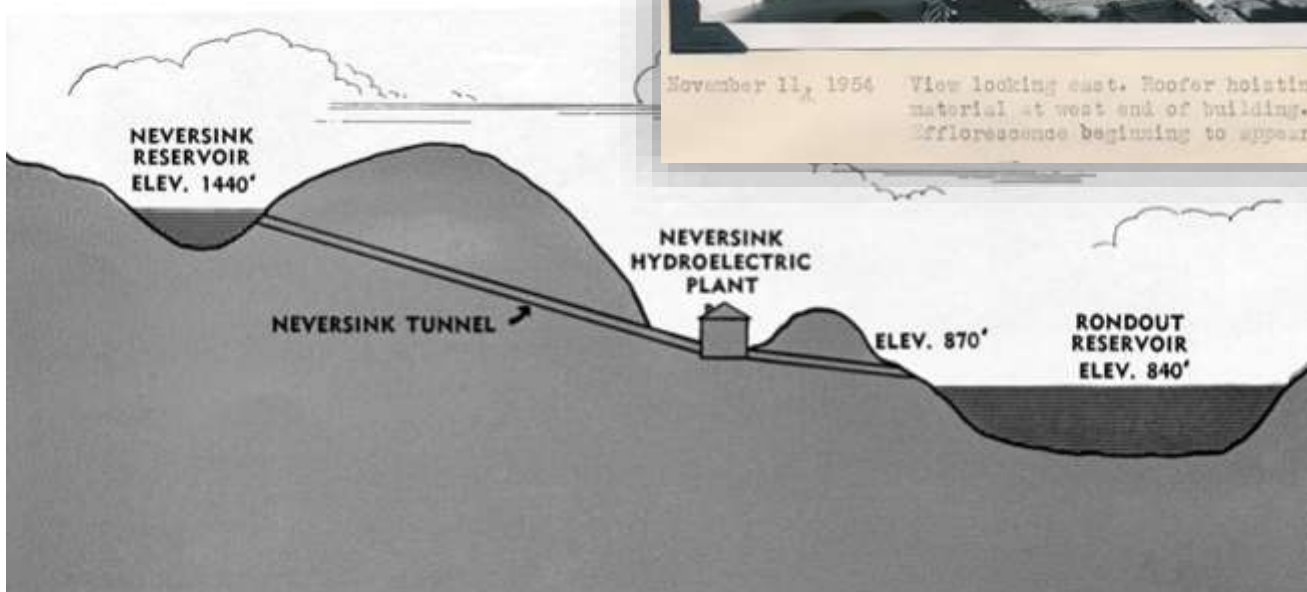
Stop 3: Hydroelectric Power Plant



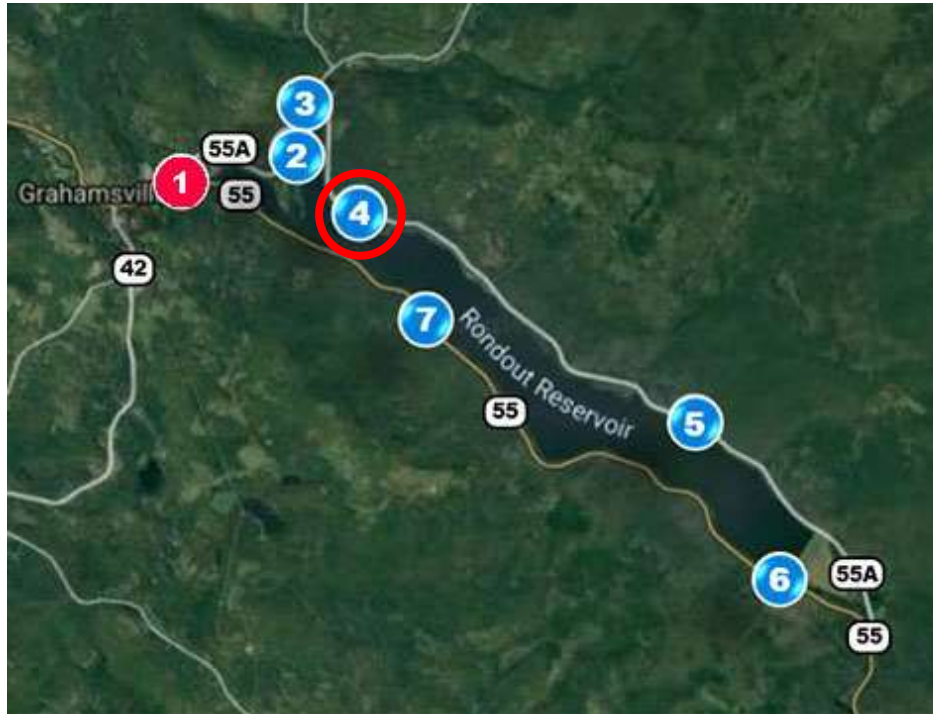
To the left is one of four hydroelectric plants connected to New York City's water supply system. These power plants use New York City water to produce electricity. This one is the **East Delaware Tunnel Outlet**, which generates electricity as water moves from Pepacton Reservoir to Rondout Reservoir.



November 11, 1954 View looking east. Roofer hoisting material at west end of building. Efflorescence beginning to appear.



Stop 4: The Taking and the Building



Were you wondering if there are fish in the reservoir? Yes! Brown Trout, Small Mouth Bass and Lake Trout among others. Also notice all of the trees along the bank of the reservoir. These trees are there because they help keep the water clean! How? By filtering debris, garbage and other objectionable materials from reaching the reservoir and going into the water!

Construction began in 1937 and ended in 1951.

The reservoir holds 50 billion gallons of water and is 175 feet deep.

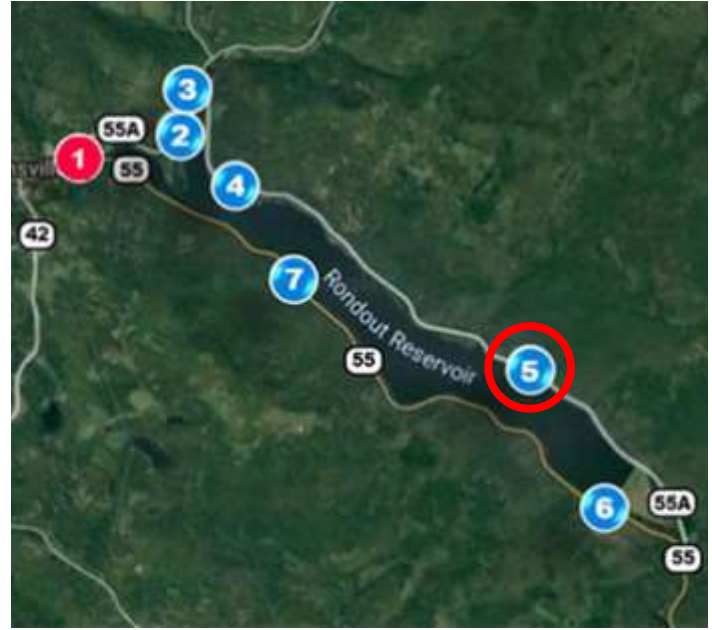
Seven 1/2 miles long, the Rondout Reservoir is the most important of the Delaware system reservoirs, because it is the control reservoir. What does that mean? It means that all of the water from the other three reservoirs are funneled by underground tunnels into this reservoir, and it is from here that the water is released into the Delaware Aqueduct which goes directly down to New York City.



Stop 5: The Lost Town of Montela



This stop is across St. Rt. 55A, opposite the reservoir.



During construction, 50 ton dump trucks barreled through this parking lot loaded with dirt and gravel taken from the area behind you, known as the **Borrow Pit**. These materials were used to build the reservoir's dam.

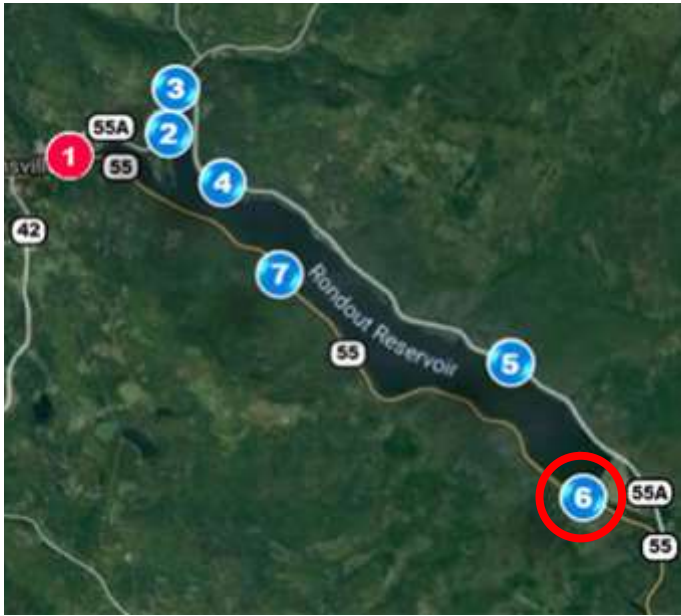


In the 1930s, the community of **Montela** stretched out to your right where the reservoir is now. Originally called Upper Lackawack, the name changed to Montela in 1886 with the opening of their own post office.

On your right stood the **Montela Store and Post Office**. The Halpern Hotel and store and the **Montela Excelsior Mill** were also located here. What is excelsior? – wood fibers used in filling mattresses and stuffing for upholstery.

Stop 6 : The Dam, Delaware Aqueduct and Lost Town of Lackawack

From this vantage point, you can get a good look at the Lackawack/Merriman Dam. The dam is what holds the water in the reservoir. Please don't get out and definitely don't cross the road – it's not safe! Cameras will also alert the DEP police.



Here the Delaware Aqueduct joins with the Rondout Reservoir. **An 85 mile underground tunnel, it transports water down to NYC and is the longest continuous tunnel in the world!**



Aqueduct or Tunnel building is a dangerous process: 1. Standing on the jumbo scaffolding at the end of the tunnel, several men ran drills to punch holes into the rock. 2. After loading hundreds of pounds of dynamite into the holes, the dynamite explodes and breaks up the rock. 3. Men running a "mucking" machine load the blasted rock into train cars. 4. The muck cars roll to the shaft, are hoisted out and dumped. After making sure the remaining rock is stable, the process starts over again, gaining about 8 feet each time.

Where now there is a dam, in the 1930s the Village of Lackawack stood here.



To the left of the dam was Alva Wright and Will Evan's home and garage with the **Shields Hotel** and the **Lackawack Store**.

To the right of the dam stood the **Lackawack School**.



Stop 7 The County Line, is on St. Rt. 55 by the kiosk pull off.

Stop 7: The County Line



At this stop you can get out of your car and view the beautiful reservoir and the informational kiosk to the right.



You are standing on the county line, marking the boundary between Sullivan and Ulster counties. The popular **County Line Barber Shop and Bar** stood directly on top of this line. You could have your hair cut in the left side of the building (located in the dry town of Neversink) and then walk over to the right side of the building in the not-dry Town of Wawarsing and have a drink at the **County Line Bar**!



In the 1930s ,you would see the **County Line Pond** close to the opposite bank of the reservoir which was a popular swimming hole in the summer and place to ice skate in the winter. Former residents fondly remember the summer picnics held behind the Montela Church by the pond.

Do You Want to Know More?

If so, please visit the **Time and the Valleys Museum** by making a right out of the parking lot and taking a short drive up St. Rt. 55. into Grahamsville.



Open Thursday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day and weekends in September, the Museum has interactive and engaging exhibits on Catskill Water and the building of New York City's water system and a 1930 Lost Catskill Farm with a farm house and 5 outbuildings.



Go to www.timeandthevalleymuseum.org to find out more!