

The Town of Saugerties

Kingston and Catskill were made into townships in 1788. Catskill was made up of all the land in Albany County from the township of Coxackie south to Kingston. Throughout the 1790's the Corporation of Kingston litigated as the Trustees tried to define the northern boundary of Ulster County and the Kingston/Catskill border.

On April 5, 1798 the legislature placed Catskill in Ulster County. At this time a boundary between the two towns was agreed upon: the lands between the Hudson and the Sawyerkill became part of Kingston and the lands north of a line run northwest from Wonton Island toward the Pine Orchard (North Lake) were in Catskill. In 1800 the legislature created the County of Greene, taking Catskill from Ulster County to be part of the new county. The agreement line between the towns then became the border between the counties.

With the northern bounds of the Town of Kingston made official the ancient dispute over the exact division between the original Ulster and Albany Counties that determined the northern extent of the Corporation of Kingston was finally moot. In 1803 a survey of all overlapping claims in this northern area was filed with the legislature and the rights of the Corporation to its designated Northwest, Fifth and Sixth Classes were recognized. By 1804 all of the Classes of the Corporation of Kingston had been mapped into parceled lots and a method of numbering their many locations was formalized. This is known as the Division of the Kingston Commons.

The Trustees then began the politically charged task of transferring into private ownership lands that had been commonly used for generations. Lands in the Saugerties region had been mainly used for grazing and were transferred

with the stipulation that fences be laid to keep animals from straying. The earliest lots were enclosed with the most available material: stone. These stone walls formed in the land the grid of the division map with their straight lines perpendicular to and parallel to the wall of the Catskill escarpment; south sixth-six degrees west and south twenty-four degrees east.

Every lot came with a right to access. Wording was standardized on the deeds to recognize the customs that had been followed in the commons. Most of those purchasing private ownership had always worked

These routes attracted the interest of speculators. By 1804 the Ulster and Delaware Turnpike had already climbed over the Catskill Mountains and the legislature had approved the establishment of a corporation to build an extension from its end on the Susquehanna 160 additional miles into the interior of the state. The traffic this would add to the tidewater destinations on the Hudson River promised substantial growth in business for the Town of Kingston.

Within the next few years three routes were created to feed off the Ulster and Delaware

It was the first business of the new Town of Saugerties to re-survey the Woodstock road from the river to "where the aforesaid road intersects the Ulster and Delaware first branch turnpike-road". That concern would define the growth of Saugerties' political boundaries, its influence as a major industrial and mercantile center and its identity as a separate community from Kingston.

under this understanding. "Trespass" was not limited to owners of lots but followed the custom of allowing any freeholder the right of passage.

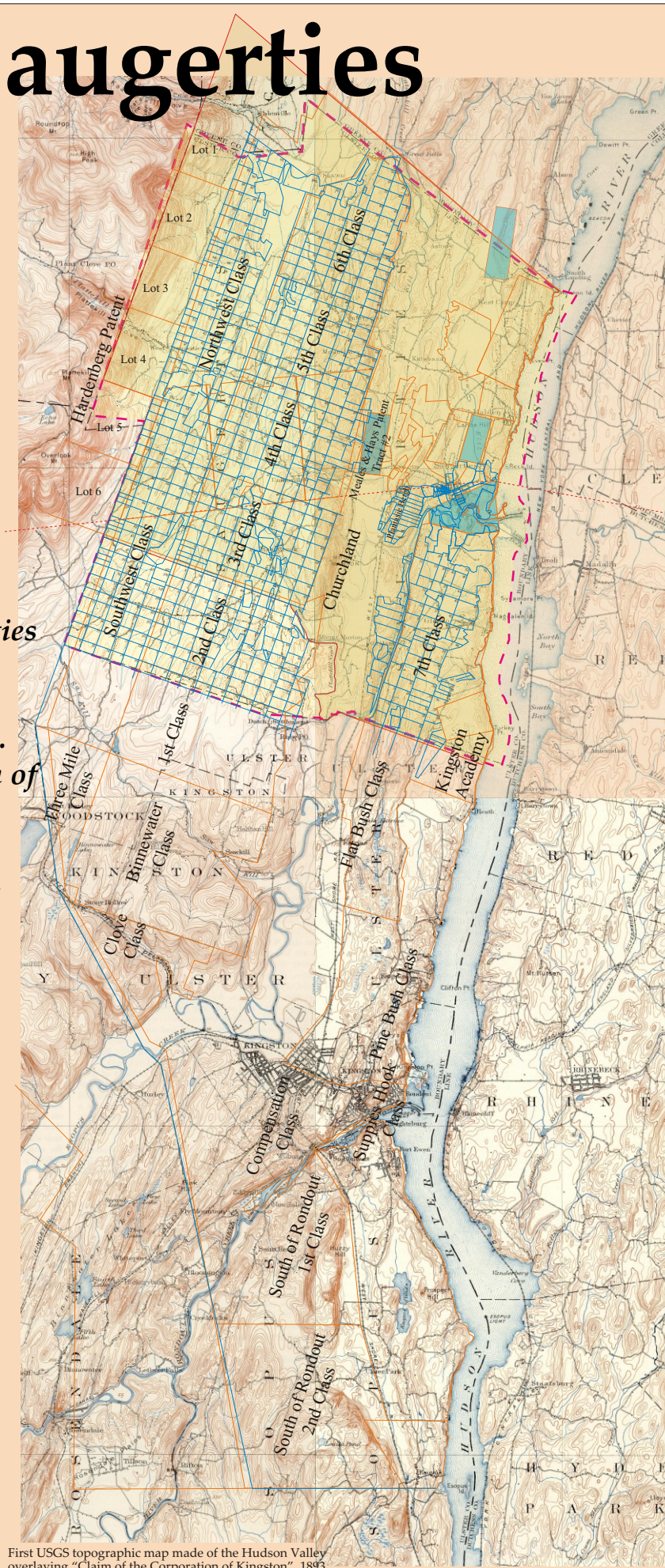
Roads had early formed along the ridge lines of the bluestone ledges. The ledges paralleled the Catskill wall. Their high ground location made them passable in wet weather but also reserved the best watered lower grassland for the herds. These north-south roads were only narrow herding paths so they did not impose much on the lots they crossed. The east-west roads and those that followed diagonal courses were wider. Most of the lots they crossed were left unnumbered on the division map because they fell within earlier deeded or leased lots and benefitted them as commercial routes to the other lots and beyond into the mountains.

The development potential of these east-west roads as turnpikes became one of the earliest concerns of the Trustees.

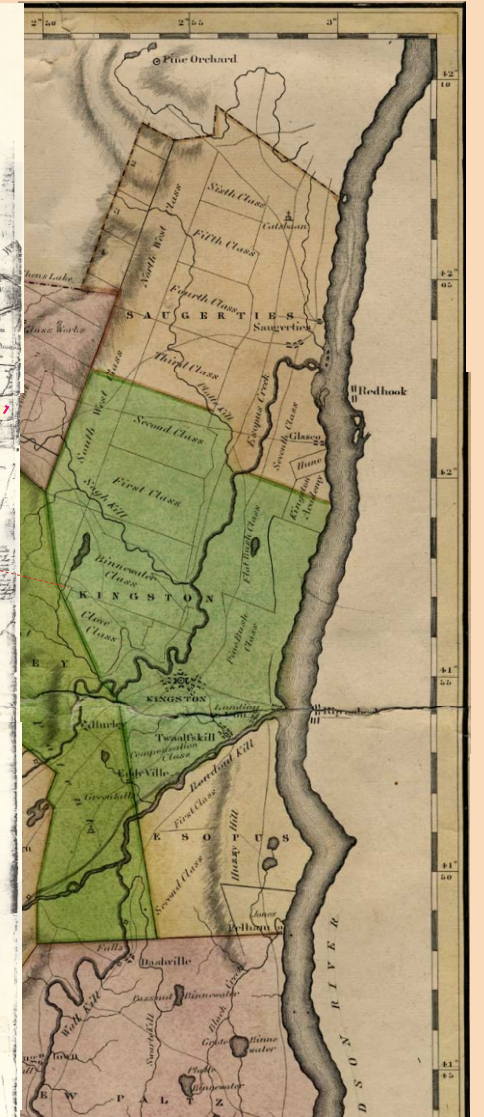
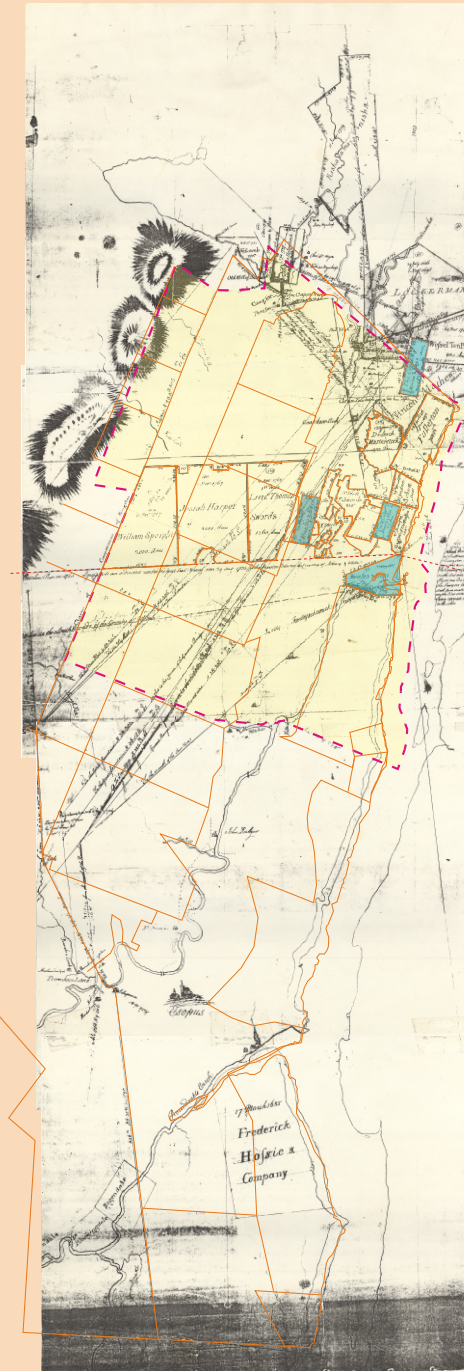
Turnpike to ports on the Hudson in Saugerties. Over the same period the business interests of the Saugerties region worked to influence the legislature to have a separate town made of this region. On April 5, 1811 the Town of Saugerties was incorporated.

It was the first business of the new Town of Saugerties to re-survey the Woodstock road from the river to "where the aforesaid road intersects the Ulster and Delaware first branch turnpike-road". That concern would define the growth of Saugerties' political boundaries, its influence as a major industrial and mercantile center and its identity as a separate community from Kingston.

The Woodstock valley presented the most direct route between the turnpike over Pine Hill and the Hudson River



First USGS topographic map made of the Hudson Valley overlaying "Claim of the Corporation of Kingston", 1893



Upper right section of the earliest surviving map of Ulster County and the Town of Saugerties, 1829

1687 bounds of the Kingston Patent with exclusions and "Claim of the Corporation of Kingston", 1803

Overview: Mapping Saugerties

In the 19th century 90% of the topographic features recognizable in the Saugerties of today took form. In 1804 the northern border of the Kingston Commons became the southern boundary of the newly created Greene County. In 1811 the Town of Saugerties was separated from Kingston. In 1832 the Village of Saugerties was incorporated as "Ulster" to be changed to "Saugerties-on-Hudson" in 1851.

With the sale of the Kingston Commons as a grid of 30 and 45 acre lots the land became divided with stone walls running perpendicular to and parallel to the great face of the Catskill Mountains. The map of this division hints at the location of the large post-revolution farms as exclusions from the grid in places that will be called Pine Grove, Saxton, Fish Creek, Flatbush and Plattekill.

The earliest description of Saugerties uses a combination of commons lot boundaries and watercourses as borders. Its political bounds changed in 1832 adding from the Southwest Class and the Second and First classes of commons. A

later change cut away the northwest corner.

By the time the U. S. Geological Survey was revising its early 1893 topographic maps, turnpikes built in the 1820's that crossed Saugerties bringing materials from its heart to the Hudson River were already being planned as automobile roads to mountain recreation destinations.

Much of the land that was once rugged hills and rushing streams had also changed. The early industrial revolution factories of Saugerties raised the Esopus behind a great dam in 1826 and by 1869 dredging for their industrial traffic spread the mouth of the Esopus a mile into the river channel to the Saugerties lighthouse.

The greatest change resulted from the quarrying of bluestone. Between 1832 when this industry was founded in Saugerties and the early 20th century entire hillsides were chipped away in two-inch-thick slabs for the sidewalks of the major

cities of the era. Between the lowering of the hills where the bluestone was quarried and the spreading of the shoreline of the Hudson River with waste from the finishing docks the quarrymen of Saugerties had distributed its mass in a way that the great glaciers had failed to achieve.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century Saugerties shared in the industrial growth of the Hudson River corridor. It sent its products directly west by the Erie Canal and east to the world from its tide water access to the Atlantic. As the 20th century approached the arrival of the railroad signaled change. Pulp paper bypassed its papermaking industry with trains from factories closer to the forests. Steel bypassed its iron works with trains from factories closer to the ore. Saugerties began returning to its past. By 1920 the landscape would be dominated by the large Winston farm, Washburn farm and Cantine farm, each a re-consolidation of the lands that had been the cornerstone of Saugerties' agrarian base over a century before.

1811 - 1825 - Saugerties is Born as a Transportation Center

through the broad Zena flats and traditional pathways to Dutch Settlement. The original 1811 border between Saugerties and Kingston was the northern Second Class division line of the Commons extended to the division line between the lots sixteen and seventeen of the Southwest Class. This left the Glasco Turnpike in Kingston but the port of Glasco in Saugerties.

The Glasco branch of the Ulster and Delaware Turnpike Company was owned by Kingston and New York City investors. Its wharves were in direct competition with those of the north. The hamlet of Glasco's main street to the river wharves is named Delaware Street in recognition of this relationship to the company. The sign on a wharf at the end of Delaware Street for a glass company in Woodstock is the origin of the name of the hamlet and turnpike.

Just as the political map of 18th century Saugerties was guided by the actions of the Corporation of Kingston, the physical map of 19th century Saugerties would be profoundly influenced by the actions of four individuals: Asa Bigelow; Jeremiah Russell; Robert L. Livingston; Henry Barclay.

Asa Bigelow arrived in Saugerties in 1807 and initially tried to do business on the river at Glasco but finding this too restrictive purchased land for a store in the village area of Saugerties and ran his shipping business from the dock below the falls. The next year he purchased the deWolven patent lands and in 1812 incorporated the Village of Bristol on the northern end of this tract on the Hudson shore. He began construction of a road to the Kaaterskill clove from there and moved his business and residence from the village of Saugerties to Bristol in 1814 after purchasing the land bordering to

the north. He was the second supervisor of the new Town of Saugerties and its first Postmaster.

Jeremiah Russell was born at West Camp and was running a business in Trumpbours Corners by 1804. In 1814 he moved his operations to the store vacated by Asa Bigelow in the village of Saugerties.

Robert L. Livingston was the son-in-law of Robert R. Livingston and his secretary during the Louisiana Purchase. When Robert R. died in 1813 he became heir and owner of all the Livingston lands in the village area of Saugerties and the

the river frontage of its extended Esopus and Hudson shorelines. By 1800 all of the wharfs were Livingston businesses. Their main function was to trans-ship the continuous flow of products that came down the roads of Saugerties from Livingston lands in the Hardenburg patent.

The Chancellor had placed all future hopes for profiting from Livingston land holdings on transportation and centered these hopes on Saugerties. Following the success of his Steamboat enterprise with Robert Fulton and the freighting monopoly this created, Robert R. Livingston applied his influence

with those at the forefront of the same ideas. Had he lived to continue what he started with his innovative steamboat enterprises and related businesses the "landlord" image the Livingston family is most recognized for would have been changed and the early course of the state of New York would also have been changed. Saugerties would struggle from his loss for the next three decades as it tried to put into action the vision his presence made part of its founding purpose.

Robert L. Livingston had inherited all of his father-in-law's property in Saugerties by 1814.

He had been the Chancellor's personal secretary and was fully involved in all of his political plans and business relations. By 1825 "Robert L." was continuing development of what the Chancellor had planned for the properties he had accumulated throughout the Town of Saugerties, particularly the improvement of the road to Woodstock into the Woodstock and Saugerties Turnpike and, in a partnership with a cousin-in-law, Henry Barclay, establishing the iron and paper industries in Saugerties.

By the mid 1820's the 20 year steamboat monopoly had come to an end and the Chancellor's vision of the supremacy of the Saugerties ports had been overshadowed by the Erie Canal that centered shipping to the north at Albany. Additionally, the Delaware and Hudson Canal was already bringing a speculative boom to Roundout in the south. The only thing left of the Chancellor's broad vision for his holdings in Saugerties was water power and Industry.

The Chancellor's initial involvement had served to attract speculative businesses along Saugerties' inland roads and the leader of these, Jeremiah Russell's mercantile business in the village area, was positioned to organize

Just as the political map of 18th century Saugerties was guided by the actions of the Corporation of Kingston, the physical map of 19th century Saugerties would be profoundly influenced by the actions of four individuals: Asa Bigelow; Jeremiah Russell; Robert L. Livingston; Henry Barclay.

Hardenburg patent at Woodstock.

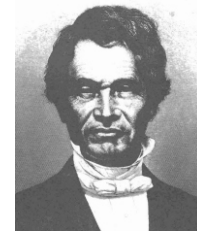
Henry Barclay, in 1825 at the age of 47 sold his half of a mercantile business in New York City and bought all the land in Saugerties near the river at the Esopus falls to build a dam and develop the water power as the basis for a "model" industrial community.

Within the first quarter century of Saugerties' existence as a Town, and through the direct enterprise of these four individuals, all of the major physical features of the town took form. Turnpikes were run to the mountains. Dams and mills were built. Quarries were cut into the hillsides. Stone wharfs stretched into the Hudson. A lighthouse was built and the streets of a village were laid out and filled with homes.

What bound its enterprise and industry together was transportation. Over the decades between the revolution and when Saugerties became a town Robert R. Livingston, the Chancellor, had been acquiring

with the legislature to separate his center of operations in Saugerties from the politics of the Corporation of Kingston. A Town of Saugerties between his Town of Woodstock tenancies and his Saugerties wharfs would put the Livingston family in control over all production of the Catskill Mountains that reached market by way of the Hudson. By 1813 when he died Robert R. Livingston had successfully created a steam transportation industry and secured the political positions necessary to retain all the profit benefits he envisioned that this industry would bring.

Robert R. Livingston, the Chancellor, was an extraordinary mind with an astute understanding of the political, scientific and industrial concepts of his time. He wrote extensively on these and communicated



Asa Bigelow



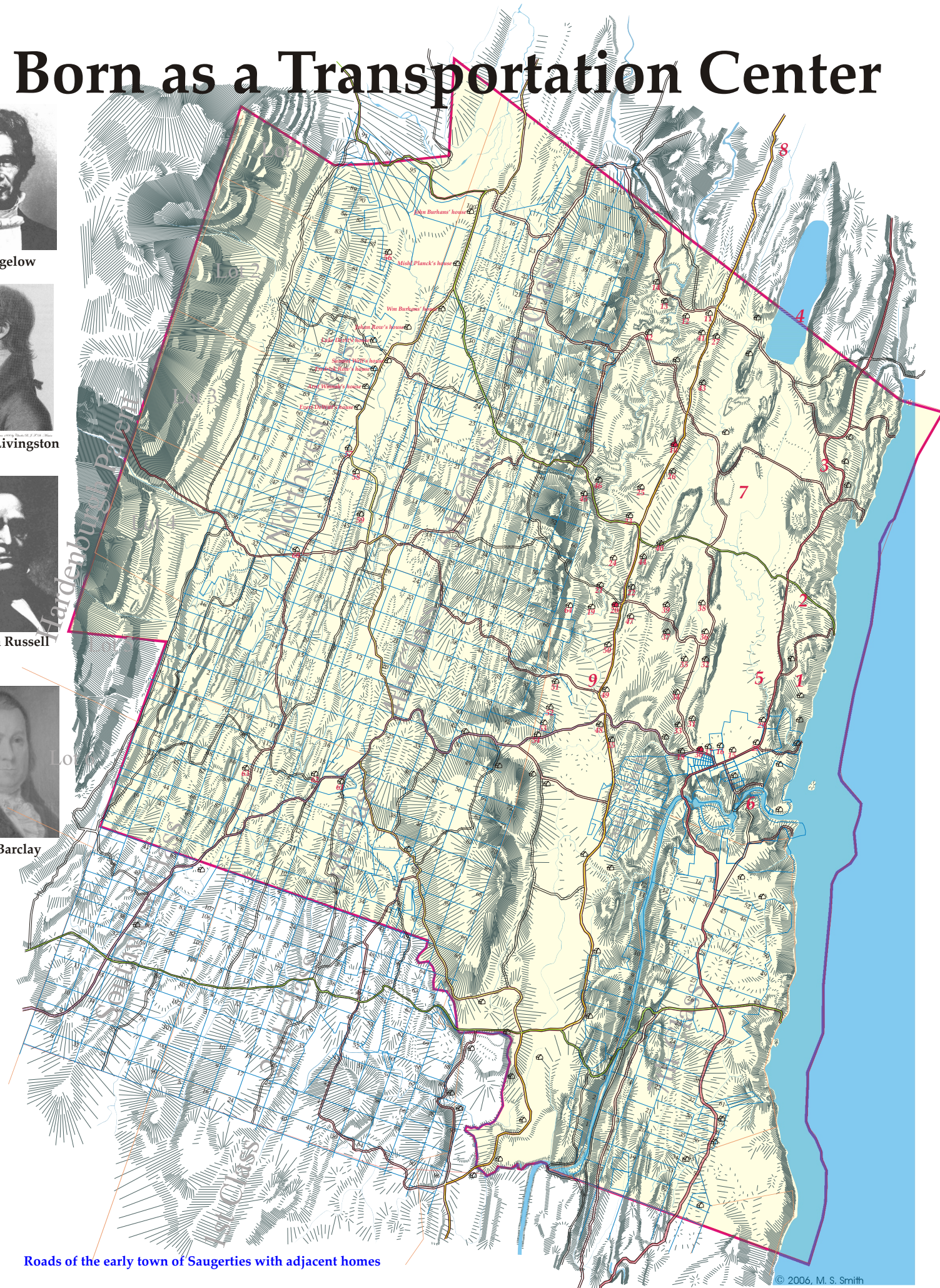
Robert L. Livingston



Jeremiah Russell



Henry Barclay



Roads of the early town of Saugerties with adjacent homes

1825 - 1831 - Industrialized Saugerties

them into one common goal. They became subscribers partnering with Jeremiah Russell as the main financial backer and with Robert L. Livingston to gain a state charter for the planned Woodstock and Saugerties Turnpike. This major road would be the main land support for the mills and the population Henry Barclay was, after 1825, bringing into the growing village area.

Earlier, in 1812 Asa Bigelow had begun to improve a road from his deep water wharves at Bristol and was granted for this a turnpike charter. This was the Malden Turnpike. It was the second chartered turnpike in Saugerties but the first in Saugerties as a town. The principal commercial function of both the Glasco and the Malden turnpikes after 1817 was hide transport for the large commercial tanneries in the Catskill Mountains. They had previously connected the many smaller tanneries to market but after an act of the legislature permitted large corporations to develop tanneries in Greene County they experienced greatly expanded traffic.

The tanbark tree and water resources of the Catskill Mountains made tanning a major industry there. The ports of Saugerties were the closest these mountain industries came to the Hudson River. The relationship of its ports and turnpikes to tanning became a major source of wealth for Bristol and Glasco as their merchants received shipments of raw hides from as far away as South America at their wharves and transported these along their related turnpikes into the mountains and then received the finished hides back for shipping. They quickly became brokers between the tanners and makers of leather goods. With their profits they positioned themselves to be the bankers for the industry, advancing funds back to support the operations of the tanners and the needs of the communities that grew up

around them.

This relationship was well known to the merchants that capitalized the Woodstock and Saugerties turnpike. They expected to play a similar role relative to the new industries arriving in Saugerties. With Henry Barclay's investments there, attention was squarely placed on the Esopus falls on the Hudson River where the village was growing rapidly in population. Jeremiah Russell already controlled most of the commerce in this community and the banking relationship that he and his son William would build made them the wealthiest and most influential citizens of Saugerties over the entire nineteenth century.

On September 21st, 1825 Saugerties entered the Industrial Age. On that date Henry Barclay purchased all the land that included the south side of the Esopus Creek from where it flowed east to the Hudson River. In June of the following year he purchased from Robert L. Livingston all the lands of the creek's north shore to the river. Written into the Livingston deed were the words "to be used for manufacturing purposes only and not for the purposes of building dwelling houses or to farm as part of the village that may be laid out or built on the lands north of said creek it being understood that said lands may be used for the establishment of every kind of Mills Manufacturing or workshops necessary or convenient for the said party of the second part and for no other purpose."

Henry Barclay's entrance into Saugerties brought with it business interests that spanned the Atlantic and involved manufacturing processes that would see their first application in America. He was capable of executing a vision that he shared with Robert L. Livingston but that Robert L. could not achieve himself. They were both part of an intellectual movement that

saw industrialization as an opportunity to construct ideal communities of workers. Robert L. and the Chancellor became steeped in this idealism in France and in industrial Belgium and the spark of the idea that ignited Saugerties came with the visit of the marquis de Lafayette to Clermont in September of 1824. It was following the conversations over this dinner with Lafayette that Robert L. and Henry made their tour across the river and began the first discussions toward a plan for an Ideal Village there.

Henry Barclay was from a business and family with the connections needed for acquiring protected technologies restricted from being used outside of Great Britain. His financial business with his brother dealt with the owners of these properties and his father was the government official responsible for arranging their entry into the country. Before the summer of the next year he had made all the preparations necessary to industrialize Saugerties.

By 1826 Henry Barclay had confined the Esopus with a dam that directed its water power through a series of canals feeding multiple mill wheel sites for building factories. The first to be built and become functional employed machinery brought to America for the first time for making continuous roll paper by the Fourdranier process. The next awaited the arrival of John Simmons, an expert in the process of purifying iron, to begin production. This was the first use of the "puddling process" in America.

For the Iron and Paper Mills to go into such immediate production over 200 skilled workmen were brought in from England, Scotland and Ireland. These were attracted with the promises of life in Henry Barclay's ideal community.

Before Robert L. had sold the land of the village to Henry he had a map created that subdivided it into streets and lots. The workmen were at first housed in tenement rows near the factories but the intention was for them to lease these lots and build their houses. This difference from the British company housing is what attracted them to America.

Much more than just mill workers was required to make the specialized products of the factories. Before the iron mill went into production Robert L. had his tenants in the Catskill Mountains begin the time consuming task of producing the

By 1826 Henry Barclay had confined the Esopus with a dam that directed its water power through a series of canals feeding multiple mill wheel sites for building factories. The first to be built and become functional employed machinery brought to America for the first time for making continuous roll paper by the Fourdranier process.

vast amounts of charcoal needed for the iron purification process. Enormous amounts of chord wood needed for the furnaces was supplied in a continuous flow from the woodlots of Saugerties and Woodstock. Docks became congested with sloops continually unloading cargos of cotton lint and fibers from the mills of New England and the plantations of the South that was the raw material for making the paper. They competed with the barges carrying the ore arriving to be processed into iron material that would later be called steel. More orderly shipments left the factories from their special docks on a regular basis.

All of this traffic to and from the mountains and in and out of the Esopus' narrow channel into the river soon left little room for ordinary business. In 1828 a charter was given by the state to

make a wide turnpike road between the Main Street in Saugerties and Shandaken through the Woodstock Valley. This increased the traffic through the fledgling village many fold and in 1831 Henry Barclay built a toll bridge to carry traffic between the mills and docks on the south shore and the business center of the growing village on the north side along Main Street.

All of the docks and the facilities to handle the workers were on the south side and this is where products arrived and left. Most of the mill workers were beginning to live on the north side. All the merchants

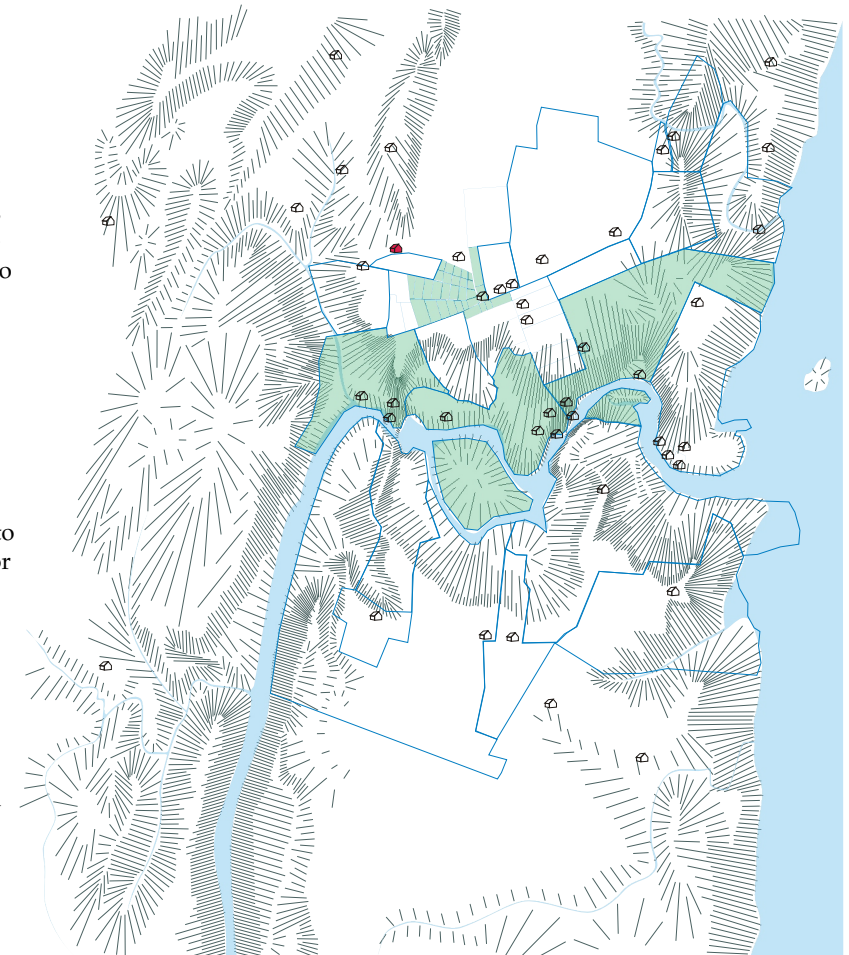
lived on the old farms spreading north from their stores on Main Street. Within six short years the area that was envisioned as a village had grown from less than a dozen houses around Main Street to begin to fill the hundreds of lots that spread left and right off Partition Street down to the new bridge. The demands of a growing population and the needs of the factories had wildly succeeded in making Saugerties a major center of transportation and business.

For these first half dozen years Henry Barclay managed the growth of his Ideal Village nearly singlehandedly, arranging for municipal services out of mill profits and even donating land for and supporting the building of just about every denomination

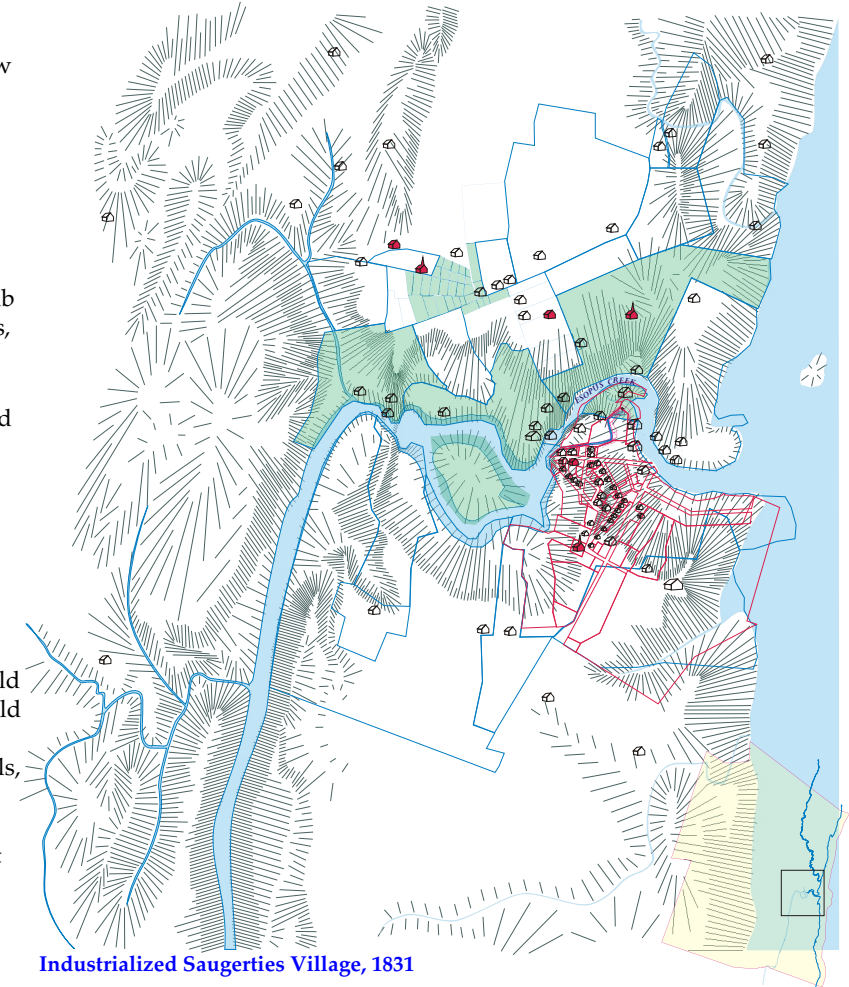
of church that his workers needed. He even conducted his own temperance meetings. The community of Saugerties was so organized, the businesses so cooperative and the society so civil that Robert L. had a large and comfortable house built there for his daughter and her husband, William Bayard Clarkson. A gated cobblestone carriage drive overlooking Barclay's pond and bridge led to this house where enthusiasts for this model industrialization venture were entertained with this view of the future.

However, in this same year, 1831, a pivotal event was beginning to shake the focus of this Model Village. A Connecticut stone mason and sculptor by the name of Silas Brainard, employed to structure the supports of the Barclay bridge, discovered a material for this purpose on the route of the Woodstock and Saugerties Turnpike at the farm of William VanValkenberg at what is now Veteran. The quarrying he started there for this project developed into an industry that was to dwarf the manufacturing that Henry Barclay had based his plans upon. Within a decade Bluestone quarrying would grab the attention of all of Saugerties, particularly Jeremiah Russell and Asa Bigelow.

A new value was being placed on the old Kingston Commons lots that could never have been imagined by the Dutch herders and planters that reluctantly took ownership of them just twenty years before. And an influx of workers not skilled in the new sciences of industrial manufacturing but in the age-old art of hard rock quarrying would place its own demands on the new Town and Village, its ideals, the society it had begun to personify and the already threatened culture of those that had called Saugerties home for generations.



Pre-Industrialized Saugerties Village, before 1825



Industrialized Saugerties Village, 1831