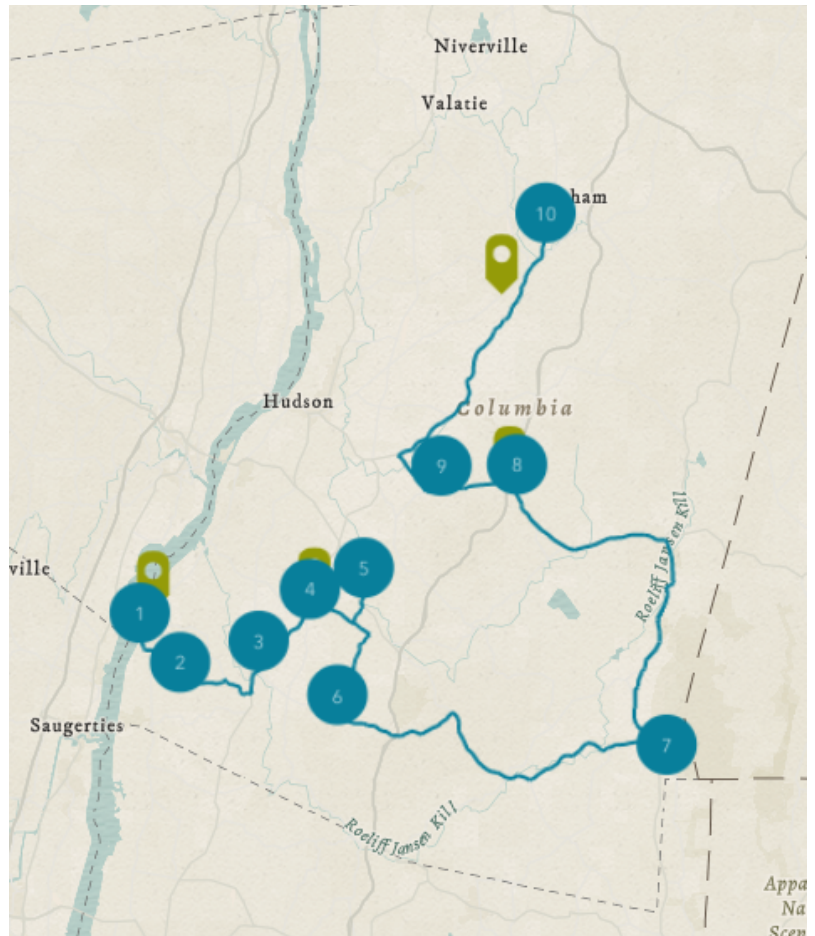


Hidden Hamlets

and Vanishing Villages

Columbia County is made up of one city, four villages and eighteen towns, but tucked among them are lesser-known hamlets with their own fascinating origin stories and civic identities. As the County took shape during the 18th and 19th centuries, settlements sprang up around river landings, rail stops and mill sites on fast-flowing streams. Some survived the test of time, while others faded into history, got swallowed up by larger towns, or were rechristened with new names. From Blue Stores to Buckleyville, from Cheviot to Smokey Hollow, this tour explores some of Columbia County's smaller communities, past and present. If you've ever dreamed of being a history detective, grab your road map and come along for the ride!



Road Trip Stops:

- ① Cheviot
- ② Viewmont
- ③ Blue Stores & Bingham's Mills
- ④ Johnstown (now Livingston)
- ⑤ Sober (now Glenco Mills)
- ⑥ Snyder'sville
- ⑦ Boston Corner
- ⑧ Martindale
- ⑨ Smokey Hollow (now Hollowville)
- ⑩ Buckleyville

1 Cheviot

End of Cheviot Road, Germantown

This little riverside hamlet in southwest Germantown has gone by many names since it was established in the early 18th century, including Hunterstown, Jacobi's Landing, Lasher's Landing and East Camp Landing. Like many southern Columbia County settlements, Cheviot's development was shaped by the powerful Livingston family; the name "Cheviot" is an homage to the Cheviot Hills, which are located near the Livingstons' ancestral home of Ancrum, Scotland.

Chancellor Robert R. Livingston built a mill here before 1762, and by century's end the community had grown into a bustling shipping port. A building boom continued into the 19th century, with the addition of a warehouse, dock, church, post office and railroad station. In 1845, a boating accident claimed the lives of nine prominent citizens of Cheviot, including members of the Rockefeller, Lasher and Saulpaugh families; some of the victims are interred at **Christ Lutheran Church** in Viewmont, the next "hidden hamlet" on this tour.

Cheviot passenger and freight rail service ran from 1851 to 1868. The former Cheviot station is now a garage, located just a few feet from the tracks. By the turn of the 20th century, the dock was home to a cider mill, wine works and cooperage (seen above right). During that era, a man named Edgar R. DeWitt built a small causeway into the Hudson River shipping channel, completed in 1911; though no longer in use, ruins of the causeway can still be seen at low tide and explored by boat.

Local Attraction: Cheviot Park is a 1/3-acre park that is part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Water Trail, and consists of a boat launch, floating docs, picnic tables, charcoal grills and fishing access. Enjoy a picnic from one of Germantown's restaurants, cast a line into the Hudson, or read more about Cheviot's history at an informational kiosk installed in 2021 by the Germantown History Department.

Head southeast on Cheviot Road for .4 miles. Make a sharp left onto Woods Road, then an immediate right onto Roundtop Road. In 1 mile, turn right onto Church Avenue. In 1.8 miles, your destination will be straight ahead.



Cheviot dock c. 1915, courtesy of the Germantown History Department.



Cheviot railroad crossing, 1976, by Howard "Howie" Gibson. Courtesy of Bruce Bohnsack, photobygibson.com.

2 Viewmont

Church Avenue at Lasher Avenue, Germantown

Described by Capt. Franklin Ellis in his 1878 *History of Columbia County, NY*, as “a pleasant hamlet on the south line of the town,” Viewmont (or Viewmonte, as it is sometimes spelled) came into being with the construction of **Christ Lutheran Church** (599 Church Avenue) in 1867. At the time of Capt. Ellis’ writing, Viewmont consisted of a cabinet shop, a blacksmith shop and a schoolhouse, with the church and parsonage comprising the “chief features” of the hamlet. However, the history of Christ Lutheran Church reaches back much farther. The congregation was formed in 1711 or 1712 by Palatine German immigrants, shortly after they arrived in Germantown. They built the present church at Viewmont to replace a former place of worship which burned in the late 1700s.

Head east on Lasher Avenue for 1.6 miles, then turn left onto Hogtrough Road. Turn right onto County Route 8 and continue for 1.4 miles. Turn left onto U.S. 9 N. and continue until you reach the intersection of Blue Hill Road, about 1 mile.

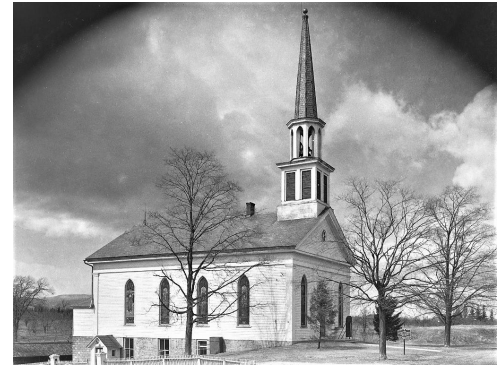
3 Blue Stores & Bingham’s Mills

U.S. 9 N. at Blue Hill Road, Livingston

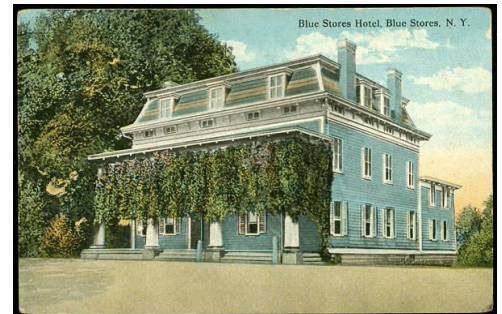
Just across the Germantown border in the town of Livingston, **Blue Stores** was once a lively stop at the junction of the Post Road, which connected Albany to New York City (today’s U.S. 9) and the Highland Turnpike, today’s Blue Hill Road. Its name comes from a former store and tavern at this intersection that was painted a traffic-stopping shade of blue. A post office was established in 1871, and the hamlet once had its own doctor, mechanics shops and hotel. In 2014, a fire severely damaged the 200-year-old hotel, which still stands (albeit abandoned), at the southwest corner of the intersection.

Just a few hundred feet south of Blue Stores is the former manufacturing village of **Bingham’s Mills**, which once contained a gristmill, two paper mills and assorted stores. A church was built in 1857, and provided both Lutheran and Reformed services to the local community. In 1878, the village had 125 inhabitants. A steel truss bridge crossing the Roeliff Jansen Kill, erected in 1941, is now closed to traffic, and a former power plant dam and associated buildings remain in the form of ruins. Today, the hamlet consists of a handful of homes.

Return to U.S. 9 and turn left. In 3 miles, turn right onto County Route 10. Turn left at the first cross street onto Old Post Road, then turn right onto Church Road.



Christ Lutheran Church, Viewmont, 1951, by Howard “Howie” Gibson. Courtesy of Bruce Bohnsack, photobygibson.com.



Vintage postcard, CCHS Collection.



Bingham’s Mills historical marker.
Photo: CCHS.

④ Johnstown (now Livingston)

Old Post Road at Church Road, Livingston

In 1878, Capt. Franklin Ellis described Johnstown as the “largest village in Livingston.” Though no longer a village by definition, the hamlet remains the heart of the Town of Livingston. Johnstown was named for John Livingston, “who was active in promoting the settlement of the place,” according to Ellis. Its location was at the center of two major thoroughfares of its day: the Post Road and the Catskill Turnpike (roughly today’s Church Road and NY-82), which continued on the west side of the Hudson River into New York’s northwestern frontiers. In the late 19th century, the village consisted of the **Linlithgo Reformed Church** (which still stands on Church Road), a schoolhouse, mechanics shops and around 200 residents. Here was also a “famous hostelry” (an inn or tavern) which dated to the Revolutionary War.

Local Attraction: You can learn more about Johnstown’s history at the **Livingston History Barn**, which is located behind **Livingston Town Hall** (please call ahead for current hours).

Continue east on Church Road for 1.6 miles. Turn left onto Willowbrook Road, and in .8 miles, turn left onto NY-82. In .2 miles, turn right onto Water Street Road. Your destination will be at the intersection of Water Street Road and Old NY-82.

⑤ Sober (now Glenco Mills)

Water Street Road at Old NY-82, Livingston

This blink-and-you’ll-miss-it hamlet on the Taghkanic Creek was first called Sober, but renamed Glenco Mills around 1830. In 1878, the hamlet consisted of “a good flouring-mill, a saw-mill, several large shops, a neat chapel of the Methodist church, and about eighty inhabitants,” as told by Capt. Franklin Ellis. According to a 1972 article in the *Chatham Courier* titled “The Forgotten Village,” Glenco Mills has long been a destination for weekenders: “During the summer months, city residents came up the Hudson River line of the New York Central and then drove out in horse and buggy to vacation at Glenco Mills. A hotel was erected in the hamlet by Stephen H. Ham in 1850. On pleasant, warm July evenings, the visitors would gather on the hotel lawn and, with the moon glistening on the Taghkanic Creek they would enjoy the music of the Glenco Cornet Band, a gayly uniformed musical aggregation...” The same article noted that on October afternoons, “the fragrance of fresh apple cider drifted downstream from a cider mill and evaporator owned by the Weaver family.” A New York State historical marker outside



Johnstown historical marker. Photo: CCHS.



Livingston History Barn, located behind Livingston Town Hall. The museum features an ore car from Burden, a former mining settlement in the Town of Livingston. Photo: CCHS.



Old Glenco Mills bridge, c. 1902. Archival photo.

the aforementioned **Glenco Mills United Methodist Church** (405 Water Street Road) tells a curious story: “1869 church funded by native with the money he made working in New York City.” That native was named Isaac Shaurman. In 2019, the New York State Board for Historic Preservation nominated Shaurman’s church for designation on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Return to NY-82, then turn left. In .2 miles, turn right onto Willowbrook Road. In .8 miles, turn left onto Church Road/Livingston Road. In .6 miles, turn right onto Taghkanic Road. Follow Taghkanic Road for 3.7 miles, then turn right onto County Route 8.

6 Snyderville

County Route 8 just west of Green Acres Road, Gallatin

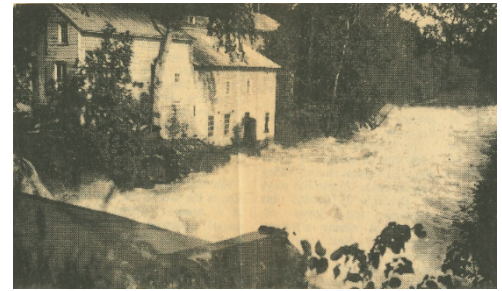
One of the early settlements in the town of Gallatin was Snyderville, alternately called Mink Hollow and Weaver Hollow at various times. Early mill proprietors, including Henry P. and Philip H. Mink, were drawn here by the water power of Doove Creek, the outlet of Lake Taghkanic. At its peak, Snyderville consisted of a store, hotel, gristmill, plaster mill, distillery, blacksmith shop and about six houses. The only substantial remaining evidence of the settlement is the Snyderville one-room schoolhouse, which served the small community from 1861 until 1950.

Continue southeast on County Route 8. In 4.9 miles, slight left onto County Road 11 / County Route 11. In .3 miles, turn right onto NY-82. In 4.3 miles, turn left onto Wiltsie Bridge Road. In 3.7 miles, turn left onto County Road 3. In 1.5 miles, turn right onto NY-22 S. In .8 miles, turn left onto Boston Corner Road.

7 Boston Corner

Boston Corner Road, Ancram

Welcome to the wickedest and most contentious corner of Columbia County—at least, that was the case in the 19th century, when this remote area was known as “the badlands.” Once part of Massachusetts, Boston Corner was virtually unreachable by law enforcement thanks to the Taconic Mountains. At the same time, the arrival of the railroad in the mid 1800s turned Boston Corner into a bustling transport hub. As a result, the hamlet became a hotspot for fugitives, horse thieves and other misfits and misdeeds fit for a pulp novel. The most famous of these was the 1853 prize fight between John Morrissey and “Yankee” Sullivan, a riotous event you can learn more about on our **Legends & Folklore** tour.



Former Weaver Mills on the Taghkanic Creek. Archival photo.



Snyderville schoolhouse. Photo: CCHS.



“Famous Prize Fight” historical marker, Boston Corner. Photo: CCHS.

The same year as the boxing match, Massachusetts officially washed its hands of Boston Corner, ceding the hamlet to New York. Capt. Franklin Ellis described Boston Corner like this: “Boston Corner(s) is a small hamlet situated at the junction of the three railroads running through the town. It contains one hotel, one store, one blacksmith-shop, a fine depot, and about a dozen dwellings...”

Train service was gradually reduced during the 20th century until the station finally closed in 1952. In the 1970s, freight and passenger service ended on the Harlem Line. Virtually no traces remain of Boston Corner’s brief heyday as a whistle stop and den of iniquity, and the hamlet is now one of the most bucolic spots in the County. The former Harlem railroad is currently being converted into the **Harlem Valley Rail Trail**, with several sections now open to pedestrians and cyclists. Stretch your legs on the Boston Corner section before moving on to another former stop on the Harlem Line: Martindale.

Return to NY-22 and turn right. Travel for 2.2 miles, then turn left onto County Road 7A; continue straight onto County Road 7. In .3 miles, turn right onto Center Hill Road. In 4.1 miles, slight right onto County Road 7. In 1.5 miles, turn left onto NY-23 W. In 3.7 miles, you will arrive at your destination.

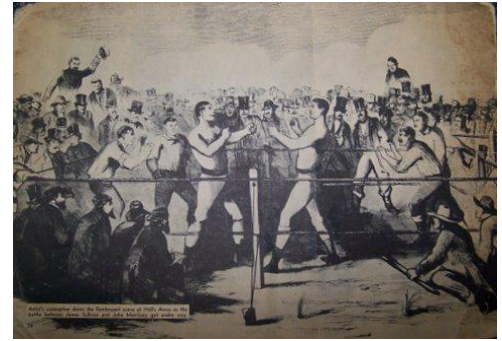
⑧ Martindale

NY-23 at County Road 11, Claverack

If you know Columbia County, there’s a good chance you also know the Martindale Chief Diner, with its iconic retro sign beckoning travelers on the Taconic State Parkway. Lesser known is the hamlet it occupies. Martindale’s origins are tied to one of Columbia County’s earliest roadways, the Columbia Turnpike (today’s NY-23), which was the primary east-west route for transporting farm goods to the Hudson for shipment to Manhattan. Several tollhouses stood on the turnpike, including the east tollgate (Hillsdale) and west tollgate (Hudson); Martindale was the location for a middle gate, now gone.

Martindale was named for John Martin, a major landowner and prominent citizen of the community. According to tradition, Martin himself persuaded the New York and Harlem Railroad to route through Martindale. The subsequent growth and decline of the local population was largely linked to the trains.

Martindale Station, built on Martin’s own land, opened in 1854, and offered both freight and passenger service. Like in Boston Corner, many commercial interests soon sprang up. In 1946,



Archival illustration depicting the prize fight at Boston Corner, which reportedly drew between 3,000 and 10,000 spectators.



Martindale Chief Diner. Photo: CCHS.

Martindale was demoted to a flag stop. The defunct station was purchased by a railroad employee who reportedly dismantled the structure and used the wood to build a house in Philmont. The remaining track bed will soon become part of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. Just around the corner from the **Martindale Community Gospel Church** (1078 NY-23), on County Road 11, is where Martindale Station formerly stood.

Local Attraction: Why not stick around for classic diner grub at the **Martindale Chief Diner** (1000 NY-23)? Currently offering dine-in and take-out.

Continue west on NY-23. In 2.2 miles, turn left onto County Road 16. In 1.1 miles, you will arrive at your destination.

9 Smokey Hollow (now Hollowville)

County Road 16, Claverack

While Smokey Hollow no longer exists in name, the hamlet remains as Hollowville, a former manufacturing community 3 miles west of Martindale. There were several good reasons to settle the area of Smokey Hollow at the turn of the 19th century. First was its location on the farm-to-market thoroughfare, the Columbia Turnpike. Second was Hollowville Creek, an arm of Claverack Creek which ran right through the center of Smokey Hollow and provided sufficient water power for multiple mills and factories. These included gristmills, woolen, flannel and hosiery mills, a sawmill and a cradle factory, among others. In addition to the mills, a tavern, public house and other interests also shuttered long ago. Smokey Hollow's commercial importance faded with the advent of the railroad.

In 1844, Smokey Hollow was the backdrop for the Rifenburgh Tragedy—a flashpoint in the Anti-Rent Wars which unfolded in Columbia County and surrounding counties in rebellion against the region's manorial control. Here, a boy was killed by friendly fire during a demonstration of Anti-Renters including "Big Thunder," a major figure in the rebellion. Big Thunder was arrested, tried and acquitted for his involvement in the killing. In 1867, Smokey Hollow was renamed Hollowville.

Head west on County Road 16 for .7 miles. Turn left onto NY-23 W. and travel for 1.2 miles. Turn right onto NY-217 and travel for 3.4 miles. Turn left onto Mellenville Road and travel for 2.4 miles; continue onto Ghent Mellenville Road for another 3.2 miles. Turn right onto NY-66 N. In 1.7 miles, your destination will be on the right.



Vintage postcard showing the now-vanished Middle Gate Tollhouse, which was formerly located on the Columbia Turnpike just outside of Martindale. CCHS Collection.



Hollowville hamlet sign, County Road 16, Claverack. Photo: CCHS.

10 Buckleyville

2562 NY-66, Ghent

Located in the town of Ghent, Buckleyville is a hamlet named for self-made businessman Thomas Schofield Buckley. Its promise as an industrial center was heralded in a 1911 edition of *The Columbia Republican* as follows: “Buckleyville between Ghent and Chatham is spreading out toward both places and forming a nucleus of a new city in Columbia County.”

That “new city” never materialized, but by 1916 the hamlet was home to Thomas Buckley’s bustling lumber and cider mills, Borden’s milk plants and a coal yard. These interests were bolstered by the addition of railroad siding—a short stretch of track used for storing stock or allowing trains on the same line to pass—in 1906. Despite this buildup of industry, none of these businesses survived. The hamlet, however, still exists, with a handful of houses and a historical marker installed in 2020 by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation.

Local Attraction: Double back on Route 66 to end your drive with a glass of wine at **Hudson-Chatham Winery** (1900 State Route 66)—a business that would surely make Thomas Buckley proud.



Buckleyville historical marker, NY-66 in Ghent (across from Sei Bella Salon).

Photo: CCHS.

Explore more **Drive Through History** road trips, and consider supporting the Columbia County Historical Society, at www.cchsnny.org

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