



In 1762, Dr. Thomas Young named Amenia for the Latin word *Amoena*, which means "pleasing to the eye." The town includes the hamlets of Leedsville, Amenia Union, South Amenia, Smithfield, and Wassaic. The original Amenia Center, settled in 1742 by Captain S. Hopkins, was located a mile north of the Amenia traffic light. When the Dutchess Turnpike (Route 44) was built in 1805 to connect Hartford and Poughkeepsie, the town shifted to its present location. After the Revolutionary War, abolitionists were active in the area. They were led by Ezra Reed, who freed his slaves in 1788. In 1794,

Jacob Bockee introduced a bill to the New York legislature for the abolition of slavery. The bill was passed on July 4, 1827. Noted Amenia residents included Decost Smith, author, and Ammi Phillips, the noted colonial "borderline painter" of primitive portraits in New York and Connecticut. Bockee, Ephraim Paine, and Elisha Barlow were early politicians from Amenia. Lewis Mumford, 20th-century architectural historian and city planner, was a resident of Leedsville.

AMENIA STATION



SKUNK CABBAGE
(*Symplocarpus foetidus*)
Named for its odor, this extremely common plant can be found in the wooded swamp habitat along much of the rail trail. Its huge, bright-green leaves can be seen expanding in May and June.



BOUNCING BET
(*Spergularia officinalis*)
Also known as seawort, the bruised leaves of this plant were used by early settlers to make a cleansing lather. The pale pink, phlox-like flowers can be found in many places along the rail trail.



TROUTBECK
In 1794, Caleb Benton purchased farmland in Amenia. His grandson, Myron Benton, named the property "Troutbeck," after his family's ancestral village in England. A writer and a farmer, Benton created a literary retreat for Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Burroughs, Henry David Thoreau, and others. Around 1900, a Columbia University professor purchased the farm and the tradition of intellectual meetings at the farm continued. From a 1916 conference held here of black and white leaders, the NAACP was established. Today, Troutbeck is a noted inn and conference center.



NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD STATION
This is a view looking north at the Amenia Railroad Station in 1915. The station had a ticket office, waiting room for passengers, telegraph office, freight platform, and a Railway Express Agency office. The locomotive in the picture is a class E-2, "Tan Wheeler" type (4-6-0 wheel arrangement) built by the Alco Locomotive Works in Schenectady in 1905.



THE AMENIA SEMINARY
The Amenia Seminary was a private secondary school just north of the center of Amenia. In the days before public high schools, students attended private academies in order to be educated past the eight grades of the local "common schools." The Amenia Seminary had an outstanding reputation as an educational institution, attracting students from all parts of the east. It closed in 1888 with the opening of public high schools. For a brief time, it was a hotel and boarding house. About 1928, it was demolished when the brick school (now a primary school) was built on the site.



LAKE AMENIA
Once an old millpond, Lake Amenia was a vacation spot for many years. Starting in the early 1900s, a predominantly Jewish resort community was located on the lake. Visitors would come from New York City by train. In 1955, however, the torrential rains of Hurricane Diane flooded Lake Amenia, breaking the old dam and sending floodwaters through Wassaic. The dam was never replaced and the lake met its end.



THE AMENIA INN
The Amenia Inn was located across from the New York and Harlem Railroad Station (the present site of the Hartem Valley Rail Trail parking lot). The inn housed businesses that serviced vacation travelers and businessmen. Over the years, the hotel changed hands several times and was also known as The Barton House and Colony House. By the 1980s, the building had fallen into a state of disrepair and was demolished.



OLIVE HAIRSTREAK BUTTERFLY
(*Mitoura cyrenus*)
The caterpillars of this butterfly feed on red cedar (common juniper) trees. The larvae's mottled-green color blends in perfectly with the cedar foliage.



SHRUBBY CINQUEFOIL
(*Potentilla fruticosa*)
This yellow-flowered shrub stands two to three feet tall. It usually grows in fens, an unusual type of shallow, calcium-rich wetland found along the Rail Trail.



DEDICATED IN LOVING MEMORY BY THE FAMILY OF PAUL B. THOMPSON. A lifetime local resident, Paul B. Thompson was a member of the Amenia Fire Department and the Amenia Fire Truck Company. He served as the Amenia Fire Company's captain for the next 45 years. Paul was a lifetime member of the Amenia Fire Rescue Squad and served as its president for the next 20 years. He served as Amenia's town supervisor for four years and served the next 20 years as a town justice. Paul was always supported by his loving wife of 35 years - Dorothy A. (Franklin) Thompson.

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