



WELCOME TO COPAKE FALLS AND THE HARLEM VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

This hamlet, originally called Copake Iron Works, established a post office in 1853. In 1909, it was briefly known as Berkshire Pass and finally became Copake Falls in 1910.

The Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness, adjacent to the Taconic State Park entrance, was built in 1852 by owners of the iron works. Irish workers built St. Bridget's Catholic Church in 1867. It was demolished and replaced by a new building on Route 22 in 1959.

Bash Bish Brook, which passes under the bridge just south of here, flows from Bash Bish Falls in nearby Massachusetts to Copake where it joins the Roeliff Jansen Kill.

Taconic State Park was formed in 1925 by a five-man commission, which included Franklin D. Roosevelt. The first parcels acquired included the iron works and the Bash Bish Inn property, formerly the Douglas estate, located along Bash Bish Brook. An ironworks museum is currently located at the blast furnace site. The park now includes 5,000 acres stretching 15 miles from Catamount Ski Area south to Rudd Pond. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail is a recent addition to the park.

COPAKE FALLS



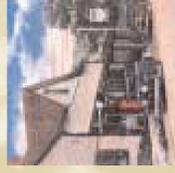
WOOD FROG
(*Rana sylvestris*)
A champion leaper, this woodland frog has a dark "raccoon mask" and skin color which may vary from lawn-brown to bronze-green. Wood frogs lay their eggs in vernal pools - basins that collect water in late winter after snowmelt and early spring rains. Listen for the duck-like "quacking" of breeding frogs in mid-March.



BLACK WALNUT
(*Juglans nigra*)
This beautiful native tree is commonly 100 feet tall and three feet in diameter. Because of their value for making furniture, large black walnut trees were over-harvested in this region. Look close at the branches for the round, light-green fruits that contain the nut.



NEW YORK AND HARLEM RAILROAD STATION
The New York and Harlem Railroad first came through Copake Iron Works (as Copake Falls was then called) in 1852. The railroad was key to the prosperity of the iron industry and mining operations in eastern Dutchess and Columbia Counties. The milk industry also depended on the railroad to expedite milk shipments to New York City.



KEATING'S STORE AND POST OFFICE
Nearby, at Keating's New York Store, patrons shopped for general merchandise and picked up mail that was brought from the railroad station. The store was destroyed by fire in the early 1940s.



GENERAL STORE AND METHODIST CHURCH
At the center of the hamlet was E.B. Weaver Colonial Stores, the town general store, which now serves as the post office. Next to it was the Methodist Church, now the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society museum of local history.



COPAKE FALLS
Most residents of the village worked at the iron works or on dairy farms that prospered in the rich valley's bottomlands. The community also prospered from tourists and seasonal homeowners who were attracted to the picturesque mountain scenery and rural countryside dotted with farms.



ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE
Village children, in this circa 1850 photograph, attended classes through eighth grade in this schoolhouse on Route 22. One teacher taught all grades. By 1933, the schoolhouse had closed and a new central school opened. Restoration of the schoolhouse began in 2003.



RED FOX
(*Vulpes vulpes*)
The red fox can be distinguished from the gray fox (*Urocyon cinereargatus*) by its distinctive white-tipped tail and striking red coloring. Foxes prey on small vertebrates and insects, but eat fruit and other vegetation in the summer months. The young are raised in dens that are abandoned by late August when families disperse.



TIMBER RATTLESNAKE
(*Crotalus horridus*)
Timber rattlesnakes spend the winter in communal dens in the nearby rocky uplands. In late spring, they migrate to lower elevations to obtain food and water. Though rattlesnakes are venomous, if left alone they pose no serious threat to humans. Both golden-yellow and black color phases are found in our region.

