

Touring the North Chuctanunda Creek

The North Chuctanunda Creek Tour Guide is an educational and recreational project of the Montgomery County Water Quality Committee (MCWQC)

This guide provides information about the stream to encourage people to visit the Chuctanunda and to share our concern about the quality of the creek and the environment.

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Introduction

Welcome to an approximately four-mile walk (one-way) that includes twenty bridges and eleven waterfalls or dams. The walk starts at the Mohawk River and follows the North Chuctanunda Creek (the Creek) to Shuttleworth Park. If the Creek could talk, it would chronicle the history of Native Americans, European settlers, and the Industrial Revolution.

The North Chuctanunda Creek was chosen as an educational and recreational project. Some places along the Creek are still peaceful and serene and other places have changed so much that they hardly resemble a natural creek. This guide provides information about the stream to encourage people to visit the Chuctanunda and to share our concern about the quality of the Creek and the environment.



A map is included to help you find your way and friendly residents will often help with directions. You may take the entire tour or walk a small section. We start our tour at the Mohawk River and walk uphill, but you may also begin at Shuttleworth Park and walk downhill. During flood stage, please respect the power of the Creek and do not get too close. Some of the streets mentioned in the tour have no sidewalks and will require extra care. Please respect private property. Do not trespass or litter in the City.

1. Bridge No. 1 over the Mohawk River [Why is March 27th Bridge Day in Amsterdam?]



We start our walk above the middle of the Mohawk River on the sidewalk of the Route 30 Bridge. Enjoy the view! This is the beautiful Mohawk Valley. Here we are at about 42 degrees 56 minutes of North Latitude and 74 degrees 12 minutes of West Longitude. There

are about 3,460 square miles of land in central New York that collect the water that drains into the Mohawk River. This collection basin is called the Mohawk's watershed or drainage basin. All the land you can see from the bridge is part of the watershed. The Mohawk River flows about 143 miles, from the headwaters north of Rome in Oneida County to the mouth at the Hudson River near Albany. The Mohawk River is the largest tributary of the Hudson River and contributes an average 5,670 cubic feet of water each second. This river water is precious. Only 2.8% of our earth's water is fresh, and most of that is unusable since it is stored in glaciers (2.2% glaciers, 0.6% subsurface, 0.01% lakes and streams). Our bodies are made up of about 70% water and we must have fresh water to survive.

How clean is the Mohawk River water? It's improving.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is responsible for monitoring the waters of the State. The 1965 Pure Waters Act and the 1972 Environmental Quality Bond Act helped pay for sewage treatment plants that have made it much cleaner. The local plant, out of sight downstream at the extreme eastern end of the city, was added in 1973. The Federal Clean Water Act of 1977 also helped to pay for the River cleanup. Our leaders had set a goal of making the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers swimmable. A swimmers rope swing hangs in a secluded spot just upstream from here.

Geologists hypothesize that the Mohawk River raged much larger and mightier 12,000 years ago. The melting continental glacier,

that covered the northern USA and Canada, provided colossal amounts of water. Here in Amsterdam the glacier was a mile thick and it was thicker farther north. The front of the glacier melted in the north, and water from this glacier and the “Early Great Lakes” came flooding down the Mohawk Valley. The Mohawk Valley was formed and now separates the Adirondacks and the Appalachian Plateau. This valley provides an important travel route that has affected our history and economy. The New York State Thruway, the railroad, the bikeway and the canal use this lowland route to travel to the West.

Native Americans and early European pioneers did not see the same Mohawk River that we see today. Man has changed the River. When Theodore Roosevelt was elected Governor in 1898, he helped initiate the successor to the old Erie Canal. Voters approved the improvements in 1903, and the new Barge Canal opened on May 15, 1918. The Mohawk River was incorporated into the Erie Canal and dams were made to form “lakes” between the dams. A twelve to fourteen foot channel was dredged and reservoirs at Delta and Hinckley were built upstream to insure adequate water in the dry summers. If you look upstream, you will see Amsterdam’s Lock 11, with a moveable dam. The lock is 300 feet long and 44.5 feet wide. All fifty-seven locks of the Barge Canal are the same size. Lock 11 is located 41 miles from Albany. This lock lifts vessels from 255 feet above sea level to 267 feet above sea level. [Lake Erie is 565 feet above sea level and Albany is almost sea level.] Eighty percent of upstate New York’s population lives within twenty-five miles of the Canal. In 1992, the legislature changed the name of the Barge Canal to the “New York State Canal System”. Responsibility for the Barge Canal was transferred from the NYS Department of Transportation to the NYS Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the NYS Thruway Authority. Today the Mohawk River is part of the new Erie Canal. In 2001, Congress established The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The National Park Service, part of the U.S Department of the Interior, oversees the Corridor. Although barges are rare today, the canal is popular with pleasure boaters.

In the early 1800's, a ferry was used here to cross the Mohawk River. The first bridge was constructed in 1821. A covered bridge was built in 1842. The third bridge was completed in 1864, and the toll charges were removed. The fourth bridge was constructed in 1876, and it washed away on March 27, 1913. Exactly one year later on March 27, 1914 its temporary replacement was also washed away! Many of Amsterdam's residents still remember crossing the fifth bridge. The fifth bridge was completed in 1916 and the abutments can still be seen on the banks as you look upstream. You are standing on the sixth bridge that was completed in 1972.

When the Erie Canal opened in 1825, the south side of the Mohawk River became a prosperous canal port called Port Jackson. It was annexed to the city of Amsterdam on April 13, 1888.

The Riverlink Park that is visible on the north bank was built on the site of a former coal gas manufacturing plant that operated from the 1860s to the 1930s. Coal was heated to produce the gas used for lighting and cooking. In the process of producing the gas, pollutants, such as coal tar containing benzene, toluene, and phenol, were also produced. These pollutants were released into the soil, the ground water and the river. We have paid a high price for the pollution and it was very expensive to construct a safe park over these pollutants. Our people and the beautiful Mohawk River Valley have been harmed by these pollutants.



Now, look for the stone arch on the north bank of the Mohawk river. This is the mouth of the North Chuctanunda Creek. This tour guide is mainly about the Creek. The Creek is why waterwheels turned; factory whistles blew, and Amsterdam became a mill

town. The Creek has a unique, steep course that wise European settlers saw as ideal for water wheel mills.

It is believed that, although local Native Americans of the Mohawk tribe did not have a village here, they did visit the area. According to New York State Museum ethno historian, George Hamell, the meaning of “Chuctanunda” is “stony resting area when traveling.” In 1810, Dewitt Clinton, the Governor of New York and of Erie Canal fame (The Canal was sometimes called Clinton’s Ditch), was on the Mohawk River at Amsterdam. He wrote in his journal about a Native American pictograph he saw on a rock ledge showing travelers and canoes. In 1888 historical artist, Rufus Grider [1817-1900], made a watercolor and pencil painting entitled “Painted Rocks” showing the pictograph with twelve braves walking and two canoes sitting along the shore. This painted rock ledge along the Mohawk cannot be located today. The painting belongs to the Van Alstyne Homestead Society in Canajoharie and is sometimes on loan to the Arkell Museum in Canajoharie. The Arkell Museum is a treasure of the Mohawk Valley. If you Google Rufus Grider, you will find the New York State Museum website and Grider’s works.

Amsterdam author, Adam Golab, wrote in 1999 of his love for the North Chuctanunda Creek in a book called, The Mighty and Awesome Chuctanunda Creek Roars through Limestone City. He affectionately called the North Chuctanunda Creek, “Chuck.” We may use the friendly name “Chuck” for the Creek. The headwaters of “Chuck” are near Galway Lake, which is about 15 miles north of Amsterdam in Saratoga County. Several industrialists dammed the lake in 1855 to insure a constant flow of water for their mills. The lake was enlarged several times with bigger dams to form the current Galway Lake.

If you look upstream you will see the “Chuck’s” sister stream, the South Chuctanunda Creek, entering the Mohawk River on the south bank between the old Chalmers Mill and the boat launch. If you look downstream you will see Davey and Giording Islands. If you look upstream you will see Bronson Island. In the summer, you will see various kinds of pleasure craft in the canal. Now it’s time to

walk down the bridge sidewalk and turn left on Main Street to start our walk along the Creek.

2. Welcome to Main Street formerly Veddersburg (1783- 1804) (.25 miles from Mohawk River) (Bridges No. 2 & 3)

Stop at number 31 Main Street in front of the seven-story Amsterdam “Bank Building” or “Amsterdam Skyscraper”. You can’t see it, but the Creek can be found flowing directly under Main Street. Walk behind the “Bank Building” and look under the building. Yes, the building is built over the North Chuctanunda Creek. Turn around and look toward the river to see the Creek pass under NYS Route 5 on its way to the Mohawk River. In 1903, an abandoned textile mill stood over the Creek just as the “Bank Building” does today. In 1903, Harvey Chalmers and his son Arthur purchased the abandoned textile mill. The Chalmers’ Hampshire Pearl Button Co. grew and employment peaked at 1,000. Amsterdam has many examples of entrepreneurial successes replacing failed businesses. An earlier enterprise preceded the abandoned textile mill. The capitalist system was working well for many in Amsterdam.



Look down into the streambed and locate the oval potholes. Pebbles, sand, cobbles and boulders caught in whirlpools of the stream eroded out these oval and circular basins. You will see other potholes, some much larger than these, at other places in the bed of the Creek.

Looking further downstream you will see the field over the tunnel to the Mohawk River and the Route 5 East roadway. Together they are considered Bridge No. 2 of our trip. The area behind the “Bank Building” is Bridge No. 3. The “Bank Building” and Main Street are considered part of Bridge No. 4.

The North Chuctanunda Creek [the Creek] is the reason why Amsterdam developed in this locale. In the 1780's Albert (or Aaron) Vedder became the first European settler in the area later known as Amsterdam. After the Revolutionary War, Vedder built a water powered grist mill, saw mill, and blacksmith shop along the Creek. He must have been a very clever, ingenious and industrious man! It was a small settlement of Dutch, Scotch and German immigrants. Veddersburg soon had a church and by 1802 there were five mills. In 1813 there were five grain and four saw mills, two wool carding machines to clean, separate and straighten wool, two wool fulling machines to clean and thicken wool, two oil mills, a trip hammer (a powerful hammer) and the S. & A. Waters' Iron Manufacturing Company which made 6,000 grass scythes annually. All these operations used the power of water wheels. These entrepreneurial pioneers depended on the power of the Creek.

Now, walk to the front of the "Bank Building" and you will be on Main Street. Before the American Revolution, it was a rough road known as the King's Highway. After 1800, Main Street became part of the Mohawk Turnpike. This toll road carried not only horses and stagecoaches, but larger "freighters" pulled by teams of six or eight horses. (You may see similar teams at the Fonda Fair around Labor Day.) A bridge was built at this location to enable people to cross the Creek. Today we cross the Creek by walking across Main Street. In 1873, mass transportation began with teams of two horses that pulled cars that ran on tracks. The first electric lights were installed on Main Street in 1887. In 1890, electric trolleys using the same tracks, replaced the horse drawn cars. In 1891 bricks were used to pave Main Street. Buses appeared in 1927 and by 1936, the city's electric trolleys were gone.

In 1804 the name of the hamlet along the North Chuctanunda Creek was changed from Veddersburg to Amsterdam. In 1813, Amsterdam had a post office, Presbyterian Church, school, stores and a population of 150. In 1834 the Village of Amsterdam was incorporated with 3,354 citizens. On April 16, 1885 Amsterdam became a city. By 1890 Amsterdam had 20,929 residents. The industries of this

young city lined (and in many places covered) the Creek. Amsterdam reached 34,817 residents in 1930. Today Amsterdam’s population is just over 18,000.

3. Chuctanunda Street Waterfalls (.37 mile from the Mohawk River) (Bridge No. 4) (Waterfall No. 1)

Yes, the Creek has a street named after it. This was the second street paved in Amsterdam. The brick paving was done in 1892. If you walk up Chuctanunda Street behind the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame and cross over the small bridge, you will obtain a better view of the Creek passing under the Hall of Fame building. That’s right, the Hall of Fame building is also built over the Creek. The building and the small bridge behind it are considered connected with Main Street and the “Bank Building” to form Bridge No. 4.

As you look across Chuctanunda Street to the building on the east corner of Main and Chuctanunda Streets, you will see the site of the former Globe Hotel that welcomed stagecoach passengers in the early 1800’s. In 1839, the hotel became the fashionable Amsterdam Academy and Female Seminary. In 1867 the First National Bank was constructed on the site. It’s time to continue up Chuctanunda Street past the Texas BBQ restaurant. Older Amsterdam residents will remember this as the site of the Maxwell House and Tullio’s Diner. A firehouse built along the Creek in 1839 later became the police headquarters and jail.



The “baby” waterfall (Waterfall No. 1) in is the bed of the Creek as you proceed along Chuctanunda Street. This is the first and probably the smallest of the eleven waterfalls on the tour. If you are here in the spring, you will enjoy the flowers of the European Linden trees that line the sidewalk. The fragrant flowers are said to be used by the French for tea. As you reach the end of Chuctanunda

Street, rest on one of the benches and take in the view and the

sound of the Creek. In the spring, enjoy the flowering pear trees planted around the Library.

In the 1880's the Morris Knitting Mills lined both sides of Chuctanunda Street. Other mills continued on up the hill along the Creek. The Morris Mills were demolished in 1936 to provide space for the new Post Office. Federal Street, just south of the Post Office was constructed at that time. It is worth going into the Post Office to view the murals of the Mohawk Indians, Sir William Johnson, and the Erie Canal painted by New York City artist Henry Ernest Schnakenburg (1892-1970) and restored by Lucy Suhr. The murals were painted in the 1930's as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal Policy. It was called the Treasury Department Art Project. One percent of the cost of construction for federal buildings was set aside for art projects within the buildings. What a great idea!

It was said that Amsterdam had the highest number of millionaires per capita in the country at the beginning of the twentieth century. Amsterdam was a flourishing place where many people came to find work. Although most people progressed, they certainly were not millionaires. The Irish immigrant Leonora Marie (Kearney) Barry (a.k.a. Mrs. Obediah R. Lake and Mother Lake) (1849-1930) was one of the first female labor organizers in American history. Her husband had died in 1880 leaving her with three children. She went to work in Amsterdam in 1882 and earned sixty-five cents her first week. In 1884, she joined the Knights of Labor and after attending the national convention in 1886 in Richmond, Virginia, she became an important national labor leader and speaker in the organized labor movement. She married Obediah R. Lake in 1890 and moved to St. Louis, Missouri. Leonora was known as "Mother Lake" on the speaking circuit. A historic marker on the east end of the mall commemorates her life.

4. Kirk Douglas Park Waterfalls (.67 mile from the Mohawk River) (Bridge Nos. 5 and 6 over the North Chuctanunda Creek) (Waterfall Nos. 2 and 3)

Walk along the sidewalk at the end of Chuctanunda Street to the twelve steps that take you up to Route 5 West. At the top of the stairs turn west (left) and walk to Bridge No. 5. Look up and downstream for the “baby” waterfalls. Bigger falls are coming! The walls along the stream prevent flooding, but this only pushes the flood waters further downstream.

You can see storm water pipes along the walls that empty into the Creek. The storm pipes bring rain runoff from the streets into the Creek along with any oil, trash, sediment, pet waste, or other materials on the streets. From the Creek, these pollutants flow into the Mohawk River. To reduce the pollution, we should fix car oil leaks, pick up our pet’s waste, and limit use of fertilizers and pesticides. These pollutants, which come from many different places on the land, are known as nonpoint source pollutants.

It’s time to turn around and return to Church Street and cross north at the Library light to the Public Safety Building. Walk up Church Street to the sidewalk on the north side of the Public Safety Building. When you look up and across Church Street you will see the Italianate Victorian home built by linseed oil maker John Kellogg in 1858. Now turn west and again walk toward bridge No. 6 over the Creek. The granite monument you pass on the left is for a decorated police dog. This is the only igneous rock you will see on this trip. Igneous rock is made from molten rock that has cooled into solid rock. All the other rocks we will see are sedimentary rocks. Continue on to the Guy Park Avenue Extension Bridge (Bridge No 6).

Carefully cross to the Kirk Douglas Park, named for actor, Kirk Douglas who was Amsterdam’s most famous son. Douglas tells of his rise from humble beginnings in his biography, The Ragman’s Son.

Albert Vedder, who started Amsterdam, built his original grist mill on this spot. Other mills replaced the grist mills and later mills, in turn, replaced those mills. According to Katherine M. Strobeck by “...the 1880’s Amsterdam was a city of millionaires, blooded hors-

es, and very high society and not a few scandals.” “Ninety-eight manufacturing establishments sent goods all over the world. Trade unions were only a distant dream and no one had ever heard of the Internal Revenue Service.” Since early manufacturing depended on the power of the Creek, the mills had to be located along the Creek. In an 1894 newspaper article “A Walk Up North Side Chuctanunda Valley“, Hollander (Max Reid) says, “The hum of the spindle and the click-clack of the shuttle remind one that the buildings are teeming with life...” The old limestone walls along the Creek were probably part of these mills. When the water is low, you should scan the bed (bottom) of the Creek for scars of old dams and mills.

A “mama-sized” waterfall can be seen upstream from the Guy Park Avenue extension bridge. You will see an interesting boulder with a plaque and a picture of Kirk Douglas. This boulder and all the rocks you see on the sides and bed of the stream are sedimentary rocks called limestone and dolostone. This hard rock has been quarried in and near Amsterdam and been used to make many local buildings, walls and streets. Sedimentary rocks are either made from pieces or chemicals from previous rocks or are made from organic material such as shells. Organisms that lived in a tropical ocean over four hundred million years ago formed these limestone and dolostone rocks. The fossilized remains of these organisms are visible in some of the rocks. Amsterdam and this tropical sea were located at 30 degrees South Latitude. Amsterdam’s part of the earth has moved about 5,000 miles to its present location. Amsterdam was in the Tropics millions of years ago. Similar fossils found on the separated continents, the actual shape of the continents, and the volcanic and earthquake patterns, all provide evidence to support this theory of Plate Tectonics.



Climb up the twelve steps and follow the walkway to the right. At the end of the fence look at the rock wall about five feet up and you will see the fossils of brachiopods and corals. Brachiopods look like

clams but internally are much different. Since these organisms live only in tropical seas, what inferences can we make? Geologists infer that 450 million years ago this rock and these fossils were in a tropical sea. Look for more fossils, then take the six giant steps up and enter the falls viewing area. Wow!! Here is the papa waterfall! Enjoy the view and the music of the falls. The sound is part of the energy being released by the falling water. Amsterdam's early mills used this water power for grinding wheels and machinery. Mills once lined and spanned the creek along here. Just upstream was the site of the first saw mill of Albert Vedder and then the site of John Sanford's and William K. Greene's pioneer carpet mill. Just downstream was the Vedder Grist Mill which ground grain into flour. The site later became John K. Stewart and Sons, the largest textile manufacturers in Amsterdam. In 1910 they employed 1,000 workers. All these mills required the Creek's water power.

You will see that the rocks of the falls are formed into layers. These layers or strata were the sediment layers on the bottom of an ancient tropical sea. Most sedimentary rocks are made in these horizontal layers or strata. This is the geologic principle of original horizontality.

It's up twelve more giant steps and then follow the path up to a bench. In 1905, a foundry, machine shop, broom factory, carriage spring factory, and of course, knitting mills lined both sides of the Creek. The restored house you see across Market Street on the corner of Greene Street and Market Street was the 1880 home of Mr. Henry K. Greene, son of carpet pioneer William K. Greene Jr. The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and now serves as an adult residence. William, Henry's father, brought the first carpet looms to the Amsterdam area in 1836. The Greenes left the carpet business, but owned one of the largest knitting mills on the Chuctanunda. Henry died prematurely in 1881. His wife, an active philanthropist, lived in the elegant Victorian mansion for 44 years.

5. Amsterdam City Hall (.85 mile from the Mohawk River) (Bridge No. 7 over the North Chuctanunda Creek)

Continue walking north on Route 67 to the Bridge No. 7 over the Creek. Study the rocks in the streambed. The slight tilt (dip) of the rock layers may have been caused by the uplift of the Adirondacks just to the north of Amsterdam. Remember that sedimentary rocks were originally horizontal.

The North Chuctanunda provided one of the primary methods for sewage disposal in the early community. A sewer board was named in 1886 and was given the dual tasks of preventing the spread of disease and eliminating unpleasant odors. Originally, eight-inch sewer mains were installed. Unfortunately, the Board underestimated the sizes needed and by 1910 an additional, 35 miles of sewer mains between eight and twenty-four inches in diameter had to be installed. Seven miles of storm sewers that measured up to 63 inches in diameter were also added. All these sewer mains led to the Mohawk River. In 1886, the outlets for sewage into the Mohawk River were at Pine, Wall, Railroad, Morris, Caroline, and Bridge Streets and on the Southside. Nine others were added soon after. I (author) remember from my childhood playing near an outlet on Kline Street. The raw sewage could be seen flowing into the Mohawk River. As mentioned earlier, in 1973 a Sewage Disposal Plant was finally built for fourteen million dollars. Concerns about the sewer system remain. How can the system be maintained? Do storm and sanitary sewers mingle? What happens to the sludge? Is tertiary treatment of water returned to the Mohawk River needed?

Now, continue under the 441-foot long automobile bridge that crosses the Chuctanunda and Schuler Streets and carries Route 30 north. This bridge was constructed as part of the 1955-1978 urban renewal arterial projects. This project was a source of many complaints from local citizens. Many of the old, but historic, buildings of Amsterdam were torn down and roads were rerouted into a confusing pattern for downtown. Pedestrians still find it difficult to move about in the area.



Soon you will see Amsterdam City Hall across the highway. In 1932, the building was given to the City as a memorial to Stephen Sanford (1826-1913). When Stephen was married in 1849, he and his wife lived at Main and Church Streets. Later they

moved to Market Street opposite Division Street, and in 1870, the Sanford's moved to their newly built home on Church Street. The current City Hall was built by Stephen in order to have a home near the mills. When Stephen died in 1913, his son John and John's wife transformed the house into a show place that included beautiful gardens. A grand party was held in 1917 to mark the renovations. If you would like to get a feel of what it was like to attend the party, view the Sanfords' portraits on the first floor of the City Hall and visit the gardens behind the building. Walk the paths of the garden to the twelve steps up to the back porch. It must have been some party! If you see Jim, tell him thanks for the great job he does trying to maintain this historic home.

6. Sanford Carpet Mills (Noteworthy Indian Museum) (1.1 miles from the Mohawk River) (Bridge Nos. 8 and 9 over the North Chuctanunda Creek) (Waterfall No. 5)

John Sanford began his carpet operations in the 1840s in the limestone block building on the corner of Prospect and Church Streets. Stephen was an astute businessman and the company soon added many mills along the creek on Prospect, Church, Shuler, Willow, and Park Streets. All the mills you see along the creek and in the distance were part of the Sanford Mills. In 1929 Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company formed from the merger of S. Sanford and Sons and Bigelow-Hartford Company of Thompsonville, Connecticut. The peak number of employees

was 3,000 during the First World War years (1916-1918). In 1955 Sanford Mills ended carpet production. My (author) father lost his job as a weaver, as did many others.

Some industries have used and continue to use the old Sanford Mills. Most notable today are Fiber Glass Industries [FGI] and the Noteworthy Company. In 1968 Coleco, a company noted for its toys, games and above ground swimming pools, provided jobs to many people in the area. Coleco boomed in 1983, with the production of Cabbage Patch dolls,



but only five years later the company went bankrupt when the Adam Computer failed.

The limestone block building now houses the Noteworthy Indian Museum.

It is well worth a visit. Look on the outside wall, just to the right of the entrance door. About five feet up you will see a locally derived block of limestone with brachiopods fossils.

Walk a few feet west on Prospect Street to Bridge No. 8 on our tour. The Bunn Creek, a tributary of the North Chuctanunda Creek, enters far downstream, just below the wall of the large, old Bigelow-Sanford mill now housing FGI (Fiber Glass Industries). Just downstream from where Bunn Creek enters, is another small waterfall in the North Chuctanunda Creek. (Waterfall No. 5) In 1820 water from the Bunn Creek was piped downtown through wooden pipes to be used as drinking water by some Amsterdam residents. Springs and wells were also sources of drinking water. Guy Park Avenue was formerly known as Spring Street because of these groundwater outlets.

To help insure pure water for the City, a water board was formed in 1880. In 1882, the City Reservoir on Brookside Avenue was constructed. The reservoir covered 18 acres and held 81 million gallons of water. The Bunn Creek flows from this area, along Brookside

Avenue, and under Sikorski's Gas Station until it reaches the North Chuctanunda Creek. In 1885 the watershed in the Town of Providence in Saratoga County was purchased. Water is still piped from the Glen Wild in Saratoga to Amsterdam. In 1889, a dam across Hans Creek and 12 miles of pipeline, diverted waters heading to the Sacandaga River into Amsterdam's reservoirs. In 1899 a storage area was created north of the city along Route 30 at Kellogg's Reservoir and in 1909, a second 12-mile pipeline was added.

In 1930 the Ireland Vlaie expansion took place. According to Hugh Donlon, inadequate clearing of this flood land and careless planning caused discoloration of the water from decaying vegetation. In 1934, voters voted 10:1 not to pay for water a filtration system. Finally, in 1972 a filtration plant was built near the Brookside Avenue Reservoir. This water supply is key to local development. Problems still exist with Amsterdam's water. During the annual Montgomery County Water Quality Committee's municipal water taste test, Amsterdam's water consistently finishes near the bottom of the list. What can be done to improve the looks and flavor of the Amsterdam water? That question remains to be answered.

Carefully cross over the Prospect Street Bridge. The old Bigelow-Sanford mills form walls on each side of the Creek. You can even see a mill that is over the Creek (Bridge No. 9). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many of the banks of the North Chuctanunda Creek were built up in this fashion. Now, return to Church Street and continue walking north (turn left onto Church Street).

7. Noteworthy Company and Green Hill Cemetery and the former "Sanford Pond" (1.2 miles from the Mohawk River) (The remains of Dam No. 5)

The Noteworthy Company has restored some of the Bigelow-Sanford mills. Noteworthy was started by Thomas B. Constantino in 1954. The Noteworthy web page states, "From the very beginning, Tom wanted to build not just a good company, but a company



that did good things.” Noteworthy’s first product was the “Travel Tissue Pak”. Over the years, litterbags, coloring books, note pads, book jackets, merchandising bags, and photo finishing envelopes were added to the product line. In 1970, the company

acquired the necessary printing and converting equipment to manufacture its products from start to finish. Mr. Constantino also published a magazine about the local area called “Mohawk Valley USA”. If you can find a copy, it is a joy to read. The Montgomery County Archives has preserved copies of “Mohawk Valley USA”. Tom passed away in 1989 and his wife, Carol, took over as president and still runs the company today. In 1989 Noteworthy acquired Filmkote; in 1999 Crystal Awards USA; and most recently the Avanti firm. Today Noteworthy has 300 employees, and sells through a network of 15,000 distributors. Noteworthy Company has continued the entrepreneurship spirit of those companies that have been located along the Creek.

The Greenhill Cemetery on the east side of Church Street contains a civil war memorial called the “Soldiers and Sailors Monument”. The inscription reads “In memory of her brave sons who gave their lives in suppressing the rebellion of 1861, Amsterdam erects this monument.” The monument was erected in 1872. The cemetery was constructed in 1858 after two earlier burial grounds had to be moved because of construction. Fourteen acres were originally purchased for the community cemetery with another twenty-six acres added in 1865. Stephen Sanford was involved in the project and provided the ornamental gate for the cemetery. The cemetery now contains more than 15,000 graves.

In the Creek bed, at the back of the Noteworthy Company Parking Lot you can see the remains of the Sanford Pond Dam (Dam No. 5). A pond and wetland known as “Sanford’s Pond” occupied this area at one time. Residents have both sad and happy memories of this place. Carl Sinicroppi remembers when two youngsters from the 1950s drowned in this area of the creek after falling from a train trestle just upstream. Bob Forbes, a former city fireman, remembers searching for the boys and never finding one of the bodies. Dick Sleeper remembers hearing stories of men fishing in the pond from the mill windows. Don Lasher remembers that the paving bricks under the pond were cleaned as a regular maintenance job. He also remembers watching schools of bullhead swimming across the pond. This wetland was filled in over the years to form more land. Over half of our country’s wetlands have been filled or drained. People did not realize that wetlands are a valuable part of our ecosystems. The wetlands recharge and purify the ground water, hold water to prevent floods and provide habitat for wildlife. We now have laws that protect our wetlands.

8. Willow Street Bridge (1.4 miles from the Mohawk River) (Bridge No. 13 over the North Chuctanunda Creek) (Dam No. 6)

Continue North on Church Street and turn left on to Willow Street. On the right, before crossing the Creek is the back of the former Kelloggs and Miller Linseed Oil Mill. This plant once was a leading producer of linseed oil, which was used in paint and varnish. The small black seeds of the flax (linseed) plant were cleaned, crushed, heated, and pressed for oil. The oil was then aged in large tanks, before it was shipped all over the country. In 1824, Supplina Kellogg originated the mill in West Galway further upstream on the Creek. His sons, John and Lauren Kellogg relocated the business to Amsterdam in 1850. The building they purchased from the estate of

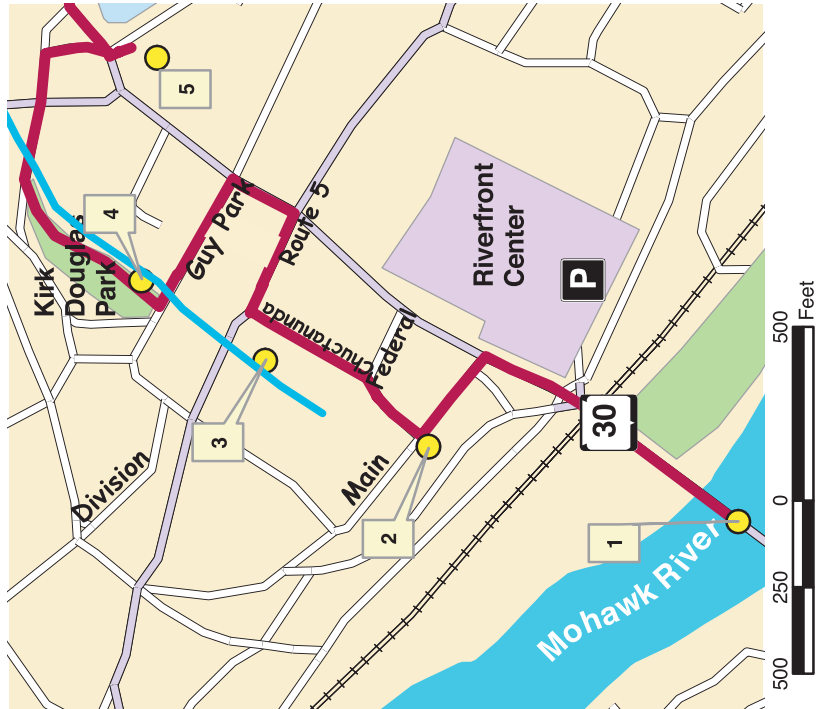


Benedict Arnold was a distillery. (This Benedict Arnold was a prominent Amsterdam citizen and not the infamous traitor of the American Revolution). The old mill dam was repaired soon after 1850 and a rail link was created in 1879. James A. Miller was admitted to partnership when Lauren Kellogg died in 1853. In 1872 two sons, George and Spencer Kellogg were admitted to the family business and the name became Kelloggs and Miller. The company added the branch railroad spur in 1879. In the first year, George Kellogg fell from a freight train and lost his left arm.

Adam Golab says the current Kellogg concrete dam was built in 1878 to provide power and water for the linseed oil business. A gate controlling the water was opened and closed from a mechanism near the top of the Kellogg's dam. Adam remembers a man with a large wrench opening the valve each morning. A 20-foot deep pond formed behind the dam and extended to Forest Avenue and Church Street. Much of this pond was later filled in and stores and parking lots were built over the pond. The flax seed, *Linum usitatissimum*, used in the mill, came from local farmers and additional seed was imported through Boston from India and the Near East. At one time Kellogg and Miller had 500 workers. One year they produced 2.4 million gallons of oil and 19 thousand tons of cake and meal for animal food. John Kellogg built the ornate home on Church Street below the City Hall in 1858. The company was sold to Bisby Linseed Oil Company in the 1930's. The mills closed in 1948.

Continue over the Creek on Bridge No. 10, but stop to read the plaque. Continue on Willow Street and proceed straight up the small hill and across the old train tracks. Turn right to observe the linseed oil mill across the Creek and see Kellogg's Dam and the train trestle. The dam provided power to turn four sets of grindstones. On the return, look up the cavernous Willow Street and see the former Sanford Mills. NTI Global is among the businesses using the old Sanford Mills today. Return across the bridge to Church Street, turn left (north) and continue up the hill. Notice the remaining large brick oil storage tank.

Detail Map - Downtown Amsterdam



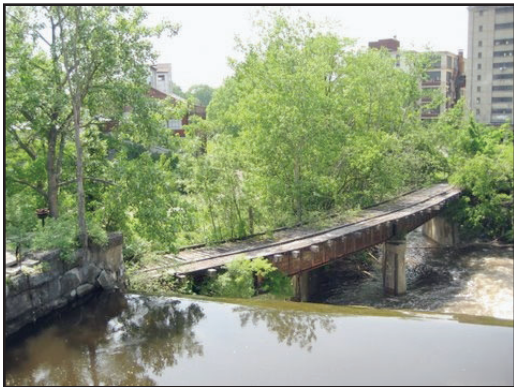
North Chuctanunda Creek Walking Trail



9. Five Corners (1.9 miles from the Mohawk River) and the former Amsterdam, Chuctanunda & Northern Railroad (Bridges No. 11 and 12 over the North Chuctanunda Creek)

Continue up Church Street past the Dunkin Donuts and the Uechi-Ryu Karate School to the infamous Five Corners. It is said the corners are very dangerous and that it is only because drivers are extremely careful that few accidents happen. Locals claim that even a specialist could not figure out how a traffic light would help alleviate the danger. The Amsterdam, Chuctanunda and Northern Railroad [AC&N] crossed Church Street at this location.

The railroad was built in 1879 to bring flax seed to the Kelloggs and Miller Linseed Oil factory and to take away oil and seed cake. The Amsterdam, Chuctanunda and Northern (AC&N) railroad is a short line railroad that branches off the main line in Cranesville which is



about two miles from the Five Corners. The original branch went to the Kelloggs and Miller linseed oil factory and the Pulaski Bridge. The railroad then continued to the Sanford Carpet Mills on Willow Street. A third branch that went to the Mohawk Mills continued from the Five Corners and

across the Creek at the former Smeallie and Voorhees Paper Mill on Forest Avenue. From the parking lot of the old paper mill, you can still see the footings of the old trestle in Creek. The rail spur continued along the Creek behind the City's storage area and then across Second Avenue (behind the Passonno Paint Store). The trains went along the west side of the Creek behind the Veterans Park which is located on Locust Avenue. The rail line split below the powerhouse, with one branch bringing coal up a trestle to the upper level of the Mohawk Mills powerhouse. The other branch crossed the Creek on another large trestle that supplied the Mohawk Mills

upper mills. CSX railroad still runs the AC&N railroad servicing FGI on Edson Street. The section we discussed is no longer in use and we will use it on our walk.

Carefully stop on the corner of Church Street and Fourth Avenue. Upstream you can see stores that are located where the Old Mill Pond once existed. The Pond extended all the way to Church Street and Forest Avenue. Rowboats were once used here. This pond is part of the fifty percent of our country’s wetlands that have been filled in for commercial development.

Joseph Slezak remembers that at one time his gas station was located on the pond’s shore. Several stores are now between the gas station and the Creek. If you cross to the Slezak Brothers Gas Station, and look behind the outside phone, you will see on the ground a metal disk about four inches in diameter that is the U.S. Geological Survey’s bench mark. This accurately marks the elevation of 457 feet above sea level. We have climbed about 200 feet in altitude since the leaving the bridge over the Mohawk River.

Across Church Street is the Old Peddler’s Wagon. This was a coal depot. You can see the old AC&N train tracks on both sides of the building.



Turn around and carefully walk down Fourth Avenue to the Pulaski Memorial Bridge. We are crossing from Reid Hill to Park Hill via the Pulaski Memorial Bridge (Bridge No. 12). Once again, the Kelloggs and Miller Oil Plant and the Bigelow-Sanford’s Mills and the AC&N train trestle are all visible from the bridge.

Read the sign before crossing the Pulaski Memorial Bridge. General Casimir Pulaski was a Polish nobleman who founded the American Cavalry. He gave his life in the Battle of Savannah, Georgia on

October 11, 1779. Just below the bridge is the Kelloggs Dam (1878) that could be seen from Willow Street. Look south and you will see the linseed oil factory and the train trestle that went to the Bigelow-Sanford's Carpet factory.

10. Stewart's Dam and Giant Potholes across from the Elks Club (2.3 miles from the Mohawk River) (Dam No. 7)

You can continue walking on Fourth Avenue past the Elk's Club (formerly the St. John's Club) and go straight ahead toward the city's storage area. (Adam Golab wrote of his disappointment when the old limestone quarry in this storage area was filled in.) In the Creek on your right, you will see the Stewart Dam and falls, which provided water power for the former paper mill on Forest Avenue. The dam is difficult to see with leaves on the trees. If you are adventuresome, you may use the same paths neighborhood children use to reach the stream. Amazing bathtub-sized potholes mark the limestone below the dam! If the water is low you will be able to see the potholes. Please be careful and stay back if the water is high. In 1866, this was the Stewart and Carmichael mill. In 1907 it became the Smeallie and Voorhees paper mill. In his book, Adam Golab tells of his childhood adventures here. It is still a beautiful place.



Does this dam site, and several others along the Creek, still have the potential to provide hydropower as it did in the past? Hydropower does not produce greenhouse gases or radioactive waste. New technologies suggest that small-scale hydropower systems may be profitable at

old mill sites. Russell Dunn in Mohawk Region Waterfall Guide tells of Jim Besha, a hydroelectric engineer with Albany Engineering Corporation. He... “builds hydroelectric plants that

are efficient, environmentally unobtrusive and respectful of the area’s surrounding history.”

11. The Path of the Amsterdam, Chuctanunda, and Northern Railroad to Powerhouse (cul-de-sac) (Bridge No. 13 over the North Chuctanunda Creek)

Here you have a choice. You can continue north on the primitive path along the Creek to the Second Avenue Bridge (Bridge No. 13) or you can bypass this path by walking on Belmont Place to Second Avenue behind St. John’s Church. Turn right at Second Avenue and walk to the bridge over the Creek. The gradient of the Chuctanunda is much lower here. It looks like a nice trout riffle. Here you also have another choice you can cross the Second Avenue Bridge and turn left on Forest Avenue and proceed north along this Avenue and bypass the cul-de-sac walk (that follows). Proceed to the Mohawk Dairy Store as mentioned at the end of this section.



If you decide to take the cul-de-sac walk, follow the path along the Chuctanunda behind the Passonno Paint store. This is the old railroad bed of the AC&N line to the Mohasco Mills [formerly Mohawk Mills]. If you are walking when the leaves are off the trees, you have a

great view of the Creek below. The Creek is a peaceful and picturesque stream at this location. The gradient is lower, but still looks like a well-aerated trout stream. The Veterans Field Park will appear above the slope on the left. You will also see debris from the houses above the Creek. The trail may be muddy in spots and you may have to duck under some blown down branches.

As you approach the Mohasco Powerhouse, follow the fork to the left. The branch to the right leads to a steep drop to the bed of the Creek. The foundations of a tall train trestle that once carried trains

over the Creek can be seen in the streambed. Paula Dean and Bob Stangle both told me of their childhood adventures crossing the Creek on the high trestle. Bob remembers the industrial dump below the trestle. Paula says her grandfather was “Power House John Pisarczyk”. He ran the powerhouse and at times had to climb the smokestack. Keep to the left, walking along the bank and you will soon reach the powerhouse. **Be careful and observe the powerhouse from a distance.** A trestle behind the powerhouse carries the track to the upper level of the powerhouse. Large chunks of coal lie below the trestle. The train delivered the coal to the powerhouse where it was converted into electric power. According to Herb Shuttleworth, Mohasco produced its own power but purchased some as well. Turn around and return to Second Avenue the way you came on the trail. Return to the Passonno Paint Store then turn left on Second Avenue and walk to Forest Avenue. Turn left again and walk north along Forest Avenue to the Mohawk Dairy Store. Here you have another choice. You may walk to the Mohasco site on Forest Avenue or take the path on the north side of the store that leads along the Creek to the Mohasco Powerhouse and Mohasco upper mills. If you follow the Creek, either way you walk, you will find the large brownfield area where Mohawk Mills once stood along the banks of the Creek. If you reach Lyon Street you have walked too far. Look to the Creek to help guide you to the old mill site.

12. Upper Mohawk Carpet Mills (3.4 miles from the Mohawk River) (Bridge Nos. 14, 15, 16 over the North Chuctanunda Creek) (Waterfall or Dam Nos. 8 and 9)



Imagine 5,500 workers moving about this site. Herb Shuttleworth, the former CEO, said employment peaked in the late 1930’s. The mills lined both sides of the Creek and also covered parts of the Creek. Amsterdam was called the

“Carpet City” and it was said that half the population was directly or indirectly connected to the Mohawk Mills. The raw wool was washed, dyed, and spun here before it was woven into beautiful Mohawk carpets. The Creek was said to change colors whenever the wool dyes were discharged into its waters.

[This is a brief history of carpet manufacturing in Amsterdam. It is the story of three players: the Sanfords; the Shuttleworth Brothers; and the McCleary, Wallin and Crouse Company.]

In 1836, William K. Greene from Poughkeepsie was the earliest carpet manufacturer in the area. He brought six hand looms, his son, and two experienced weavers to a rented building in Hagaman and began his trade. In the 1840's, he partnered with John Sanford (1803-1857). Hugh Donlon said ‘Sanford...set an example of highly successful pushiness after being dropped off a stagecoach coming from Connecticut in 1821. He taught school here and there, in Fort Johnson, Mayfield and Glen, before trying the grocery business at the Main and Market corner in the 1830's. He lived on Market Street in a house north from the store and with an attractive garden along Chuctanunda Creek. There were five children, including Stephen who was born in 1826.’ John Sanford provided land along the Creek on Market Street across from Greene Street to the partnership. This property, which was used for the fledging carpet mill, was the site of the original Albert Vedder saw mill. Today it is the site of Kirk Douglas Park.

In 1844, John recalled his son Stephen Sanford (1826-1913) from West Point to learn the operation of the prosperous mill. The partnership between Greene and Sanford ended when a fire burned the Market Street mill. William K. Greene went into knit goods manufacturing just upstream on the Creek. John Sanford formed the Sanford Carpet Mills.

In 1849, John Sanford, along with his son Stephen, moved the carpet manufacturing operation to the old stone mill (site of the current Noteworthy Indian Museum). He began with 100 hand looms, 12 three-ply Ingrain looms, and 28 tufted rug looms. Another fire in

1853 or 1855 destroyed the new business, but Stephen Sanford rebuilt the business. Stephen added a mill for yarn spinning and began tapestry production. In the 1870's Stephen's two sons, John Sanford (1851-1939) and William C. Sanford joined the company to form Stephen Sanford & Sons. Between 1916 and 1918, the Stephen Sanford and Sons carpet mills employed about 3,000 workers. According to Hugh Donlon, "The most influential Amsterdamian was, beyond doubt, Stephen Sanford... Like William Johnson, he had a lot of things going for him... When he reached his 80th birthday anniversary in 1907, the tough old man had mellowed somewhat and those attending a recognition dinner sponsored by the Board of Trade heard him describe some early happenings. Included was recollection of difficulties in expansion of the carpet mills during a troublesome period when his notes were low-rated by New York bankers."

Stephen Sanford (1826-1913) and both John Sanford (1803-1857) John Sanford (1851-1939) (Father and son of Stephen) were elected to the United States Congress. The father, John, was a Democrat— Stephen and his son John were Republicans.

In 1929, a merger between Stephen Sanford & Sons and Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Co. formed Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Co. In early 1955, the company had factories in Thompsonville, Conn.; Summerville, Ga. and Amsterdam. By the end of 1955, Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company had stopped production in Amsterdam. Bigelow-Sanford left Thompsonville, Connecticut in 1971.

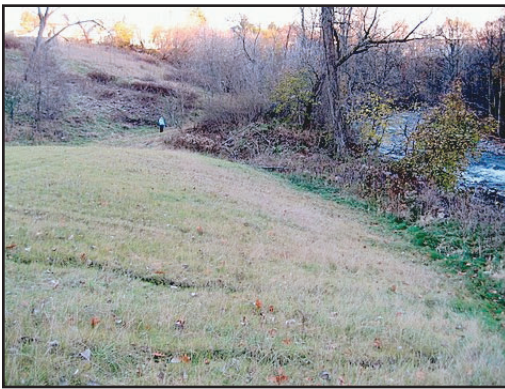
The Sanford story is only one-third of the carpet story in Amsterdam. In 1872, the first competition the Sanfords' had was provided by James Wade. He was a carpet making expert from England who was brought to Amsterdam by Sanford. James Wade, Stephen Kline, and William Arnold opened a Brussels carpet manufacturing business. The business was on the south side of the New York Central Railroad at the foot of Eagle Street. The Brussels carpet manufacturing did not do well here and production was soon ended.

The building, however, would soon be used by the Shuttleworth brothers. In 1875, William Shuttleworth arrived from Glenham, England to run a carpet mill for a wealthy New York merchant. When William died in 1878, his four sons opened a carpet mill in the same building used by James Wade, Stephen Kline and William Arnold. Fourteen used Wilton looms were shipped from Great Britain. John was the dyer; James was the office manager; Walter was the superintendent; and Herbert, the youngest, was messenger and “gofer.” In 1902, the Shuttleworth Brothers Company was incorporated with Herbert as president. By 1910 several expansions had taken place with a new Wilton mill, and a carding and picking mill. The mill was expanded to the north side of the tracks in the east end of the city.

Now the final third of the carpet story in Amsterdam. Four former employees of the Sanford Mills : John Howgate, a finishing room worker; William McCleary, a drum room worker; Samuel Wallin, a designer; and David Crouse, a dyer, opened their own business on the south side of the city. In 1885, they used three looms to manufacture small size Smyrna rugs. After the mill burned, a second attempt to manufacture rugs was made at the Mohasco upper mill site. The Maxwell Dam was used for power. When John Howgate died in 1903, McCleary, Wallin and Crouse formed their own company and added two former knitting mills, an Axminster mill, dye house, power plant, tapestry mill, and warehouse

In 1920, Shuttleworth Brothers Company of the “lower mills site” and Cleary, Walling and Crouse of the “upper mill site” combined to form Mohawk Carpet Mills Inc. Carpets were produced at the upper and lower mills. Raw wool was washed and changed to thread and then woven into carpets. Herbert Shuttleworth II became executive vice-president in 1948, president in 1952 and in 1955, he became president of Mohasco Industries. Hugh Donlon calls Herbert Shuttleworth, Amsterdam’s No.1 citizen “because of his concern and leadership in community affairs.” Mohasco was formed from Alexander Smith Inc. and Mohawk Carpet Mills Inc. For a while, the company kept the corporate offices in Amsterdam on the banks of the Creek. However, by 1968 all the manufactur-

ing jobs were sent to the South. In 1980 when David Kolb became CEO of Mohasco, he moved the company's corporate headquarters from Amsterdam to Atlanta, Georgia to be near the "carpet capital of the world" Dalton Georgia. In 1988, Kolb took the carpet division private with a \$120 million leveraged buyout. In 1992 a public stock offering raised \$38 million. Mohasco became Mohawk Industries, Inc. Many (over 16) acquisitions followed. Today, the former Mohasco and Bigelow-Sanford as well as Karastan, Lee, Hartford, and other carpet companies are all part of Mohawk Industries, Inc. in Calhoun Georgia. Thousands of jobs were lost in the Amsterdam area. Change happens, but life continues.}



The Mohasco site is a just a shadow of the former bustling mills. The buildings were burned and demolished. The demolition of the 206 ft. power plant smokestack with thirteen pounds of explosive was a local media event. Today the area is a brownfield. Brownfields are properties that are so polluted

that development is hindered by the condition of the soil. Some people hope to reindustrialize the area. It would make a great park to remember those who spent their lives working in the various industries along the Creek. It would be nice to enjoy the pastoral area near the Creek.

During the two hundred years of industrial growth in Amsterdam polluting was the norm. We are now paying for that unfortunate legacy. A layer of soil has been used to cover the Mohasco site. According to a New York State engineer, the City has agreed to keep the area mowed to prevent tree growth. If a tree were to fall, the soil covering the brownfield area might be dislocated, thereby exposing the underlying contaminated soil.

DANGER - STAY AWAY FROM THE POWERHOUSE AND OBSERVE CAREFULLY

As you walk below the powerhouse, look for the trestle footings in the creek bed. Adam Golab tells of climbing the trestle as a child and going home covered with tar, much to his mother's displeasure. Imagine huge timbers that could hold the trains high in the air. Many stories of walking across the trestle have been told. You can see both a large pile of slag from the powerhouse just north of the trestle and several small caves in the far wall of the stream. Large boulders of limestone can also be seen in the streambed.

Walk upstream toward the old powerhouse. The grass you see was planted on the soil that was used to cover the Brownfield contamination. A small bridge can be seen at the powerhouse. This is



Bridge No. 14. If you look through the window of the powerhouse, you will see what appear to be gauges on the walls and perhaps a generator on the floor. The building is very interesting to view from a distance, but please do not get too close. As you continue to walk north along the Creek, you will see a bend in the stream.

Above the bend are a dam and falls. This is most likely the Maxwell Dam used by McCleary, Wallin and Crouse to manufacture carpets. A wood-decked bridge (Bridge No. 15) that was once part of the Mohasco Mills complex can be seen above the falls. Perhaps this would be a perfect site to use the new technologies for hydropower generation.

Continue to walk up Forest Avenue and over Bridge No. 16. The nearby sign explains that Bridge No. 16 was constructed by the Work Projects Administration in 1940. As you look upstream you will see small potholes and the remains of Dam No. 9.

**13. Rock City - Rockton (3.6 miles from the Mohawk River)
(Bridge Nos. 17, 18 and 19 over the North Chuctanunda Creek)
(Dam No. 10)**

This area along Lyon Street is called Rockton. It was once a village located just north of Amsterdam and was sometimes known as Rock City. It was annexed into the City of Amsterdam in 1901. The annexed village became the city's eighth ward. In 1857, Amity Mills was owned by partners Adam W. Kline and John Maxwell. John Maxwell must have been an amazing man. He designed and built much of the machinery used in the knit goods factory. The Creek provided water power to turn the water wheels that powered the mills. A couple of decades later, steam power replaced water power, and mills could be located away from the Creek. L.L. Dean opened the Park Knitting Mills on Lyon St. in 1886.

In 1910, Clarence Collette started to produce "Mendets" in an abandoned Clizbe Avenue School just over the Creek. "Mendets" were used to repair holes in pots and pans. Collette Mfg. Co. obtained a patent on a new paper clip in 1921. Collette manufactured a variety of balls including baseballs and basketballs. The Collette building has been converted to use as an office building. Paul Damiano restored another factory building on the corner of Hewitt Street and Clizbe Avenue as well. The former Collette Company can be seen on Clizbe Avenue. The Kristy Pollak Memorial Christmas Park is located along the Creek across from the Crystal Ristorante. The Eighth Ward Monument is next on Lyon Street.

When you reach Clizbe Avenue, cross Bridge No. 17 very carefully—there is no sidewalk. Look closely and you will see trolley tracks in the Clizbe Avenue pavement. We are following the path of the old trolley. Remains of the old trolley bridge can be seen along the Creek. Continue to the restored mill that is now Damiano's Florist. Across from Damiano's Florist is a small building that Paul Damiano said was called the powerhouse. Jacqueline Murphy thought the building was used for wool reprocessing. Look at the stonework in the arch over the creek and the stone work along the

creek. If you look down over the railing you will see another bench mark. This small, round, bronze metal disk (about 4 inches across) indicates the you are now 615 feet above sea level. (360 feet above the Mohawk River.) On the limestone walls of Damiano’s building, look for more brachiopod and coral fossils. Turn left and walk up Hewitt Street.



Continue north on Hewitt Street and cross the Creek again on Bridge No. 18. Look down stream and see the pond behind the remains of an old dam hidden behind the houses on the left. Adam Golab calls this the Old Grist Mill Dam. The Old Grist Mill Dam can also be seen from Clizbe Avenue Hill. The

dam must have provided water power for the early mills. Fran Sikorski said that below this dam was a very large pool called “Penny Pool”. He remembers catching a large trout in the pool when he was a small child. When Hewitt Street ends turn right on Crescent Street and cross the Creek at Bridge No. 19. Be sure to enjoy the view. Turn left on Crescent Avenue and, if the water is low enough, walk down one of the short paths to a peaceful sitting rock located just off the road. When you are ready, proceed up Crescent Avenue to Shuttleworth Park.

14. Shuttleworth Park (4.0 miles from the Mohawk River) (Dam No. 11)



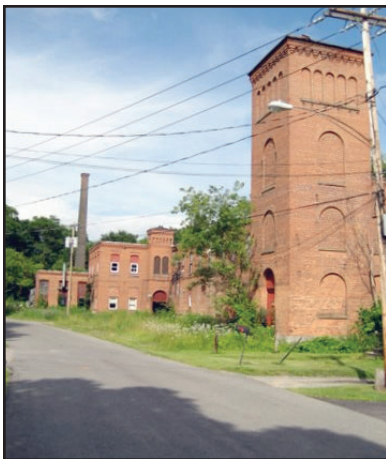
Shuttleworth Park has had many names. It was called Chuctanunda Park in 1902, Crescent Park in 1914, Jollyland in 1923 by Fred J. Collins, and later the Mohawk Mills Park. It is now Shuttleworth Park. Tom Sorbero said this land was given to the City by the Town of Amsterdam.

The Creek is calm here and looks like a series of trout riffles. However, this park was not always so peaceful. The remains of an old clay tennis court can be seen as you look to the south of the bridge toward Pioneer Street. Jack Steenburgh remembers crossing a walking bridge to get from Pioneer Street to the current picnic area when he was a child. The Yankee farm team, the “Rugmakers”, once played where the newly refurbished ballpark is located.

Walk behind the outfield fence of the ball field and you will see the remains of an old warming hut used by skaters and another dam. The Creek was dammed here for swimming and skating. Adam Golab tells of a giant waterslide that thrilled swimmers in the summer of 1923. He said it was 40 feet high and ended 5 feet above the water. Swimmers rode a 2 x 4 foot board down a series of rollers. In the winter, the swimmers traded their bathing suits and the water slide for ice skates and a warming hut. After 1902, electric trolleys, brought crowds of people to the area. Bands played, dancing was popular and so was the carousel. Bob Forbes said that Louis Armstrong and many other famous performers appeared at the park.

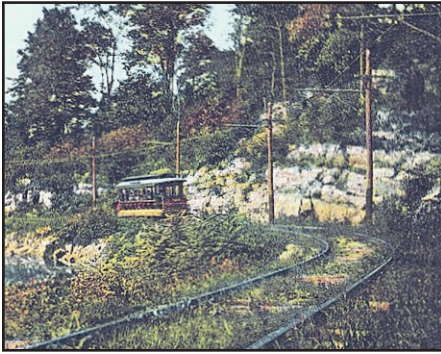
15. Harrower’s (4.6 miles from the Mohawk River) (Bridge No. 20 over the North Chuctanunda Creek)

About a mile can be added to the trip by continuing on to Harrower’s and then returning to the park. Follow Crescent Avenue to Bridge



No. 20 that leads out of the park to Pioneer Street. Turn right and follow Pioneer Street to its end. This area is called Harrower’s. The old mill on the right at the end of the road is in disrepair. Lewis E. Harrower operated the Rural Hosiery Mill here in 1881. Lewis also purchased the Pawling knitting mills in Hagaman further upstream. A dam once stood 20 feet high and 60 feet across the Harrower Pond. Some thought the pond large enough to be a lake.

Today, overgrowth and the old mill obscure the view of the dam. Don Lasher said he took part in dismantling the dam. It was believed to be necessary to counteract the threat of downstream flooding.



The mills in this area were put to various uses. Jack Steenburgh thought Mohawk Mills among others may have used the old mill. The trolleys continued to Hagaman though Harrower's on this side of the Creek. Jack remembers walking on the track to Hagaman and crossing an old

trestle. Jackie Murphy has a picture of the trolley enroute to Hagaman. Joseph Hagaman built a sawmill in Hagaman in 1777. In 1836 William K. Greene brought carpet manufacturing to the Hagaman area. He rented an old satinet mill and dwelling for \$100 per year. Recently the Town of Amsterdam has received a grant to begin testing for the possible construction of a park at Harrower's. A park would be a great addition to the area. Your journey ends here.

Conclusion

The water cycle purifies and recycles the finite amount of water on earth. We use our water molecules over and over again. The water we drink today may have been part of a Roman soldier, a fierce dinosaur, a glacier or a coral lagoon. It has been recycled many times. While watching the waters of the North Chuctanunda cascade down through Amsterdam, we have seen part of this natural purifying cycle. Precipitation in Amsterdam is about 40 inches of rain per year. Fifty percent of that evaporates or transpires back into the atmosphere. Twenty percent seeps into the ground. Thirty percent flows into our streams.

We have seen some of the local Amsterdam landscapes. Our legs have felt the steep gradient; we have seen and heard the North Chuctanunda Creek pulled by gravity down toward the Mohawk River. We have seen sights on the North Chuctanunda that help us better understand why the land has its present form. The factors that affect all landscapes include the activities of man; the forces that uplift and level; the bedrock; and the climate. We have inferred that the landscape is always changing. A tropical sea, a continental glacier, and a peaceful river valley can all be traced back in time.

European settlers first came to Amsterdam to use the power of the North Chuctanunda Creek over two hundred years ago. First a hamlet (1783), then a village (1831), and finally a city (1885) grew. The industries and mills were bought and sold many times over. Companies formed and dissolved in storms of capitalism. New lives began here; some failed here; but many lives flowered and bore fruit here. Hugh P. Donlon ended the forward of his book about Amsterdam with "... it offers an opportunity to say sincerely and gratefully that it is nice to have lived so long among so many nice people." Without the Creek, none of this would have happened.

Today the North Chuctanunda Creek has the potential to transform and enrich our city. Across our country, an environmental justice movement seeks to insure that all people have a clean and healthy environment regardless of race, color, national origin or income. To this end, the city has proposed a North Chuctanunda pedestrian trail, "...beginning at the former Mohasco Mills Complex, this trail is planned to run along the Chuctanunda Creek and end at the Riverlink Park...". This North Chuctanunda greenway trail would aid in the urban rebirth of the city. (www.eswp.com/pdf/shearer.pdf).

Old mills have been torn and imploded down, brownfields have been covered, and future plans have been made. One part of the plan is the North Chuctanunda Creek pedestrian trail. It is hoped that our leaders will follow through and develop an urban greenway that will increase real estate values, lower crime rates, provide cleaner water and air, and provide space to renew, rest and recreate.

Adam Golab, in his book “The Mighty and Awesome Chuctanunda Creek Roars through the Limestone City”, wrote a story about listening to the Creek. Perhaps we should take time to listen to the Creek. Perhaps it will help us respect our public property and not pollute or vandalize. Perhaps fish and other organisms will again flourish in this urban aquatic ecosystem. Perhaps peaceful places along the Creek will be protected and enlarged. Perhaps modern technology can be used to harness the power of the Creek in an environmentally respectful way. Perhaps we will put our concern for the Creek into action.

John Naple

Where to find information about the North Chuctanunda

Donlon, Hugh P. Annals of a Mill Town. (Mr. Donlon lived on Kimball Street in Amsterdam and worked for over forty years as a newspaper man. He wrote a column called “Main Street”. Much of the information in this tour guide came from his book. The Amsterdam Library may still have some copies. Thank you, Mr. Donlon.

Golab, Adam J. The Mighty and Awesome Chuctanunda Creek Roars through the Limestone City, 1999. His book, the places he photographed, and the drawings he made show his love of the North Chuctanunda. He personally knew the Creek. Diane Smith has told me he was a very interesting man.

Dunn, Russell. Mohawk Region Waterfall Guide, 2007. This book includes the falls at Kirk Douglas Park and 78 other nearby waterfalls.

Armour, David A. Historic Mill Creek is a publication of the Mackinac State Historic Parks (1996) that tells of a reconstructed saw mill like the one Albert Vedder built in Amsterdam.

Smoke is a book about Mohawk Mills contribution during World War II. It has a great picture of the “upper mills”.

Women of Distinction, sponsored by the New York State Senate (March 2007), gives the story of Leonora Marie (Kearney) Barry (Mother Lake).

Van Diver, Bradford B., Roadside Geology of New York, Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula 1985.

Farquhar, Kelly Yacobucci, Images of America Montgomery County

Farquhar, Kelly Yacobucci, Haefner, Scott G., Images of America Amsterdam

Porter, Tom, Kanatsiohareke Traditional Mohawk Indians Return to Their Homeland, the Kanatsiohareke Community, New York, 2006

“Mohawk Valley USA” published by the Noteworthy Company has great articles about Amsterdam including “The Mohawk” by David Vicinanza (March 1981); “The Greene Mansion” by Kitty Somers (December 1980); “Brooms, Buttons, Buggy Springs and Long Red Underwear by Katherine N. Strobeck (Spring 1982)

“A Pictorial Review of Amsterdam” and “Amsterdam 1979 Calendar” were publications of the Noteworthy Company on its 25th anniversary in 1979.

Montgomery County Department of History and Archives has much information about Amsterdam. Earlene Melious and Kelly Yacobucci Farquhar were very helpful. They provided “A Walk up North Side Chuctanunda Valley” by Hollander (Max Reid) 1894; Sanborn Maps; Tony Pacelli articles.

Bob Cudmore’s web site has been most helpful.

www.bobcudmore.com

Walter Elwood Museum was very friendly and helpful. They introduced me to Adam Golab's book. Kathleen Coleman and Ann Thane were very helpful.

Charles ver Straeten (Geologist) and George Hamell (ethno historian) from the New York State Museum have provided information by email.

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Many web sites have helped: www.amsterdamedz.com; www.rootsweb.com; www.lostlandmarks.org with Jerry Snyder's articles; www.townofamsterdam.org; www.paulkeeslerbooks.com ; www.threeriversnms.com; www.eswp.com/pdf/shearer; www.mohawkcarnet.com; Google Earth and others .

Personal stories from several people added to the tour. Fran Sikorski, Dick Sleeper, Carm Sinacropi, Herb Shuttleworth, Jack Steenburgh, Joe Slezak, Tom Sorbero, Bob Forbes, Paul Damiano, Don Lasher and others were among the people kind enough to share stories about the North Chuctanunda Creek.

Thanks to those who took time to read this guide and make many suggestions.

Appendix

Here is a list of the twenty bridges over the North Chuctanunda Creek:

1. Bridge over the Mohawk River (Sixth bridge- built in 1972)
2. Tunnel from the Mohawk River under the field next to Riverlink Park; Route 5 East
3. Parking lot bridge behind the "Bank Building"
4. "Bank Building" on south side of Main Street; Main Street; Wrestling Hall of Fame; Small bridge behind Wrestling Hall of Fame
5. Route 5 West (The road between the Library and Public Safety Building)

6. Guy Park Extension (Connects to Kirk Douglas Park)
7. Route 67 south
8. Prospect Street
9. Old Sanford mill built over the North Chuctanunda
10. Willow Street
11. Abandoned Trestle of the Amsterdam Chuctanunda & Northern Railroad
12. Fourth Avenue (Pulaski Memorial Bridge)
13. Second Avenue
14. Mohasco Powerhouse Bridge and Powerhouse
15. Wood decked bridge at Mohasco Site
16. Forest Avenue built by WPA
17. Clizbe Avenue stone archway bridge
18. Hewitt Street Bridge
19. Crescent Street Bridge
20. Pioneer Street Bridge

List of 11 waterfalls or dams along the North Chuctanunda between the Mohawk River and Shuttleworth Park:

1. Baby falls along Chuctanunda Street
2. Mama falls at Guy Park Avenue Extension Bridge
3. Papa Falls at Kirk Douglas Park
4. Waterfall just below where Bunn Creek enters the North Chuctanunda
5. Remains of Sanford dam behind Noteworthy Parking lot on Church Street
6. Kellogg Dam near Pulaski Memorial Bridge and Fourth Avenue
7. Stewart's Dam below the Elk's Club
8. Maxwell Dam and Falls at the Mohasco Site (just above the old powerhouse)
9. Remains of Rockton Dam just upstream from the Forest Avenue Bridge near Lyon Street
10. Old Grist Mill Dam or Penny Pool Dam below Clizbe Avenue Hill and upstream from Damiano's Florist
11. Remains of swimming and skating dam at Shuttleworth Park

List of Tour Stops

- #1. Mohawk River; page 2
- #2. Main Street (formerly Veddersburg); page 6
- #3. Chuctanunda Street waterfalls; page 8
- #4. Kirk Douglas Park waterfalls; page 9
- #5. Amsterdam City Hall; page 13
- #6. Sanford Carpet Mills (Noteworthy Indian Museum); page 14
- #7. Noteworthy Company Parking Lot formerly “Sanford Pond”; page 16
- #8. Willow Street Bridge; page 18
- #9. Five Corners; page 22
- #10. Stewart’s Dam; page 24
- #11. Cul-de-sac path along AC&N railroad to Mohasco site; page 25
- #12. Mohasco site formerly Upper Mohawk Mills; page 26
- #13. Rockton or Rock City Village; page 32
- #14. Shuttleworth Park; page 33
- #15. Harrower’s; page 34

The mission of the Montgomery County Water Quality Committee [MCWQC] is to provide leadership, coordinate efforts, seek funding and carry out programs which improve the quality of water and other natural resources within the county. The MCWQC strives to educate and inspire every generation to maintain water quality and quantity. It reports to the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.

(Any Additions, corrections or suggestions are welcome.)

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