

ROCKLAND LAKE STATE PARK Ferry Landing/Parking Facility

Congers, New York

The ice industry was critical to the development of eastern Rockland County and a major contributor in the worldwide market of ice processing, food supplies and refrigeration. Prior to the invention of refrigeration, Rockland Lake was one of the most significant resources exploited for the purpose of obtaining ice. The clear, clean water of Rockland Lake drew many entrepreneurs and the lake became known as the "icebox of New York". During the 19th century, in locations throughout the Hudson River Valley, icehouses were constructed on lakes and streams with access to the river. By 1840, the Hudson River had surpassed more northern locales to become the central location for the ice industry in the United States. The ice industry grew during the 1850s through the 1870s and peaked during the last two decades of the 19th century. In 1858 an estimated 500,000 tons of ice was produced in the Valley, of which approximately 80,000 tons came from Rockland Lake.



Today, this ice industry is celebrated in the on-site Park museum. At the same time, mill village structures are still inhabited, a cemetery from the ice industry era can be seen on the hilltop, and remnants of the ice industry machinery are scattered along the river front.

A proposed terminal within the Park for ferry service to Manhattan required a cultural resources evaluation. Historical Perspectives, Inc. (HPI) conducted the research to establish a baseline of the type, extent and significance of any cultural resources which may be present in the Rockland Lake State Park Site, particularly in the waterfront areas designated for parking facilities. To complete this study a variety of primary and secondary resources were consulted, interviews were conducted, and a site inspection and photo documentation was completed. The collected and synthesized data became a critical part of an alternatives analysis for site selection for the terminal.

