

ELECTRIC LAKE

ONEONTA'S FORGOTTEN GEM

JIM LOUDON

BOOK PREVIEW



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Oneonta's Forgotten Gem**

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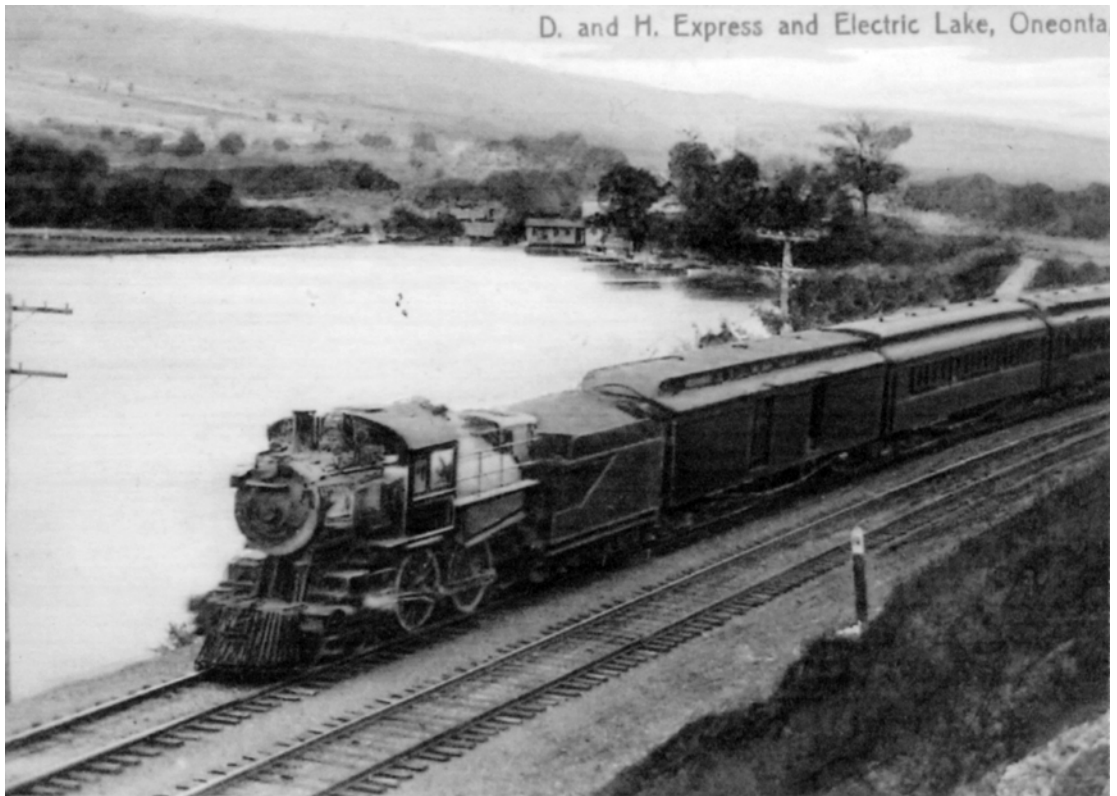
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INTRODUCTION

Driving on I-88 east of Oneonta you might be surprised to learn that sixty years ago your car would have been under water! Indeed, the flat between exits 15 and 16 is the former bed of Electric Lake, a placid 50-acre pond that provided generations of Oneontans with the enjoyment of swimming, boating and fishing.

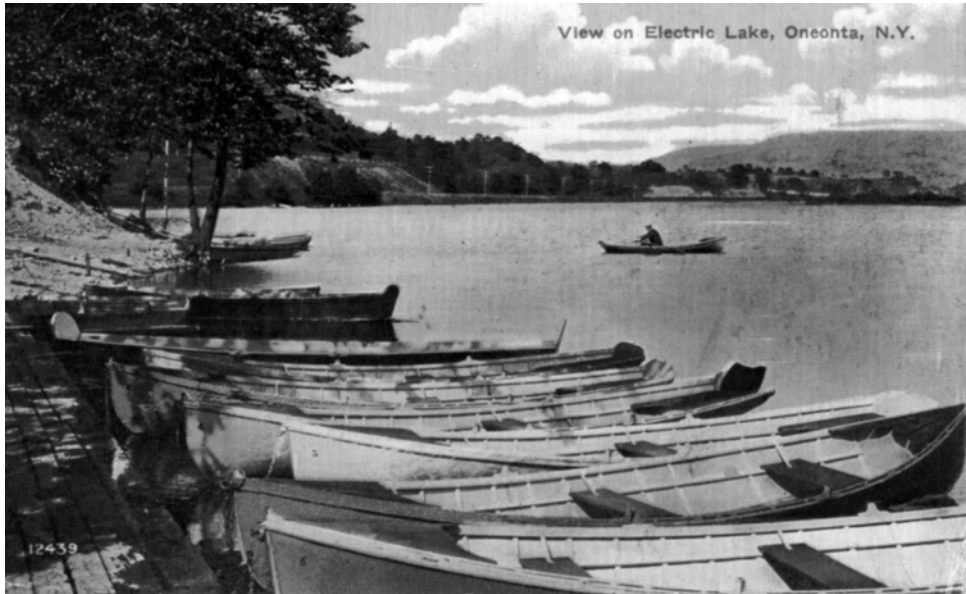
The lake was developed in 1898 to satisfy Oneonta's ever-growing demand for electricity, spurred on by the rapid growth of the Delaware & Hudson railroad shop facilities, in addition to the electrification of the Oneonta trolley line. In addition to its recreational function, Electric Lake provided employment during the winter months to the ice harvesters, and soon after the lake was filled the Oneonta Ice Company was incorporated on Railroad Avenue not far from the power house.

In 1954 New York State Electric and Gas discontinued operations at the Electric Lake power plant, bringing to a close a very pleasant chapter in Oneonta's history. Today nature has reclaimed much of the lake bed, while I-88 slices across the former tail race of the dam. The ghost of the lake still haunts the grounds however, through a small stream that meanders along the old channel between the sluice gates and the small lagoon adjacent to I-88.

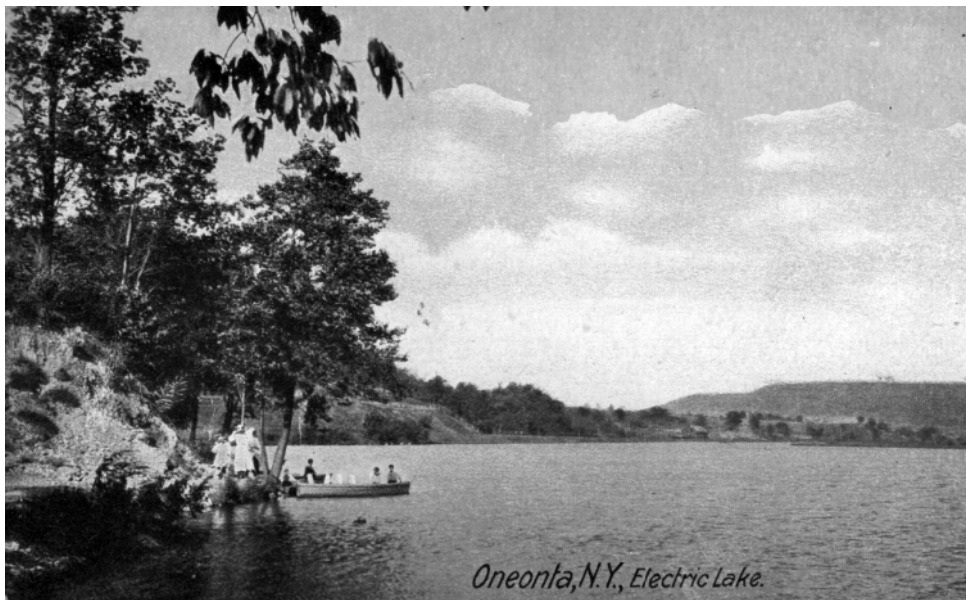


Courtesy of Greater Oneonta Historical Society.

THE BOAT LANDING

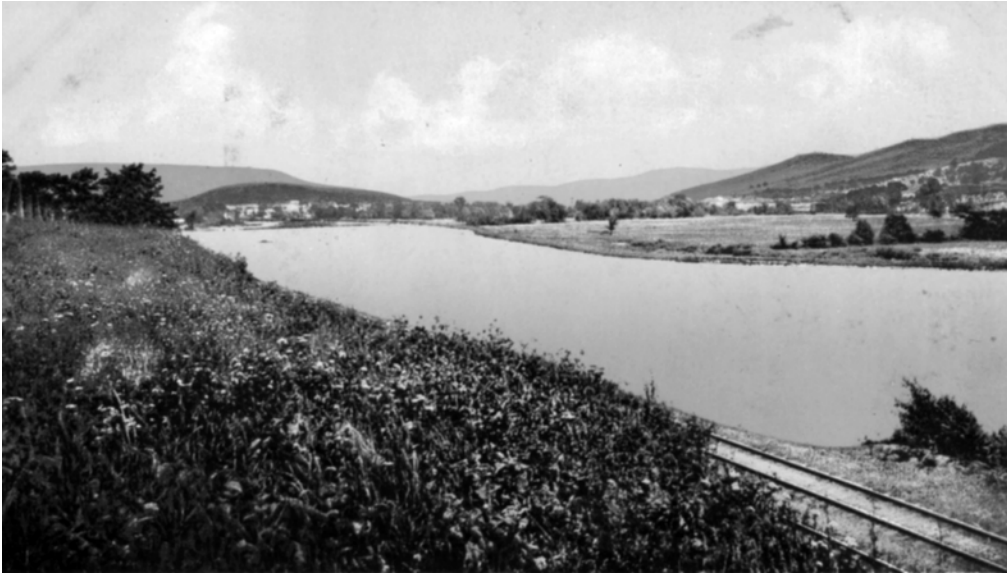


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