Stottville

The history and landscape of the Stottville hamlet were shaped by the waters of Claverack Creek, which provided power for textile mills for over a century.

The Textile Industry

Before 1800, Columbia County’s small streams powered gristmills and sawmills supplying local needs. Trade restrictions act 1806–1807 and the War of 1812 interrupted British cloth imports. Columbia County entrepreneurs then built textile mills powered by waterfalls on swift creeks flowing to Hudson River shipping ports. This region was a major textile producer until well after the Civil War. By the mid-1900s, most regional mills closed in the face of cheap southern US labor, foreign competition, and synthetic materials.

Jonathan Stott’s Mills

Claverack Creek drops fifty feet at Stottville, making it an ideal location for water-powered industry. Jonathan Stott established a wool flannel mill here in 1828 and built new mills in 1846 and 1859, making Stottville the largest woolen producer in Columbia County. Stott died in 1863, leaving the business to his sons Charles and Frank, who added new mills in 1865 and 1879. Operations peaked in the 1880s when the Stotts employed over seven hundred workers, making them the county’s largest employer. Fortunes changed with the financial Panic of 1893 when the Stott mills closed after sixty-five years of operations.

The Twentieth Century

Stottville’s mills prospered again after 1910 when they were bought by Atlantic Mills of Rhode Island. Atlantic improved Stottville’s infrastructure, including adding new worker housing. Prosperity lasted until the stock market crash of 1929, which was also the year the Albany-Hudson electric trolley that served the town and mills closed. Atlantic stayed open through World War II but shut down for good after a 1953 strike.