Elsie the Cow

Schodack has a connection to the Borden Dairy Company’s mascot “Elsie the Cow,” who once lived in a barn near the Albany-Hudson trolley line, now the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail. The company was founded in New York by Gail Borden, whose 1865 condensed milk patent spurred regional dairy farming. Borden became a national dairy brand, and in the late 1930s the company created a cartoon cow, “Elsie,” to help advertise its pure milk.

World’s Fair
The “Borden’s Dairy World of Tomorrow” 1939 New York World’s Fair exhibit featured dairy machinery, but most visitors wanted to know which live Jersey cow on display was Elsie. Borden chose a cow named “You’ll Do Lobelia” to be the first real live “Elsie,” and fourteen million people saw her at the fair. When Elsie gave birth to baby Beulah, Borden gave Elsie a husband, Elmer. After the fair, Elsie toured the US by train to promote Borden products.

Schodack’s Elsie
Tragedy struck in 1941 when the first Elsie lost her life in a New Jersey truck accident. Borden quickly adopted a new Elsie, a Jersey cow named “Noble Aim Standard.” When this Elsie was not traveling to advertise Borden products, she lived nearby at Schodack’s Mooresdale Hills Farm, on Payne Road just south of the trolley line. In 1947, Elsie gave birth to a calf, Beauregard, named in a contest that drew over a million entries. Elsie and Beauregard toured the US together through the 1950s in a tractor-trailer carrying her “Barn Colonial” boudoir display. This Elsie eventually retired, but her successor’s appearances remained popular at events like the Indianapolis 500, the Kentucky Derby, and state fairs into the 1970s.