

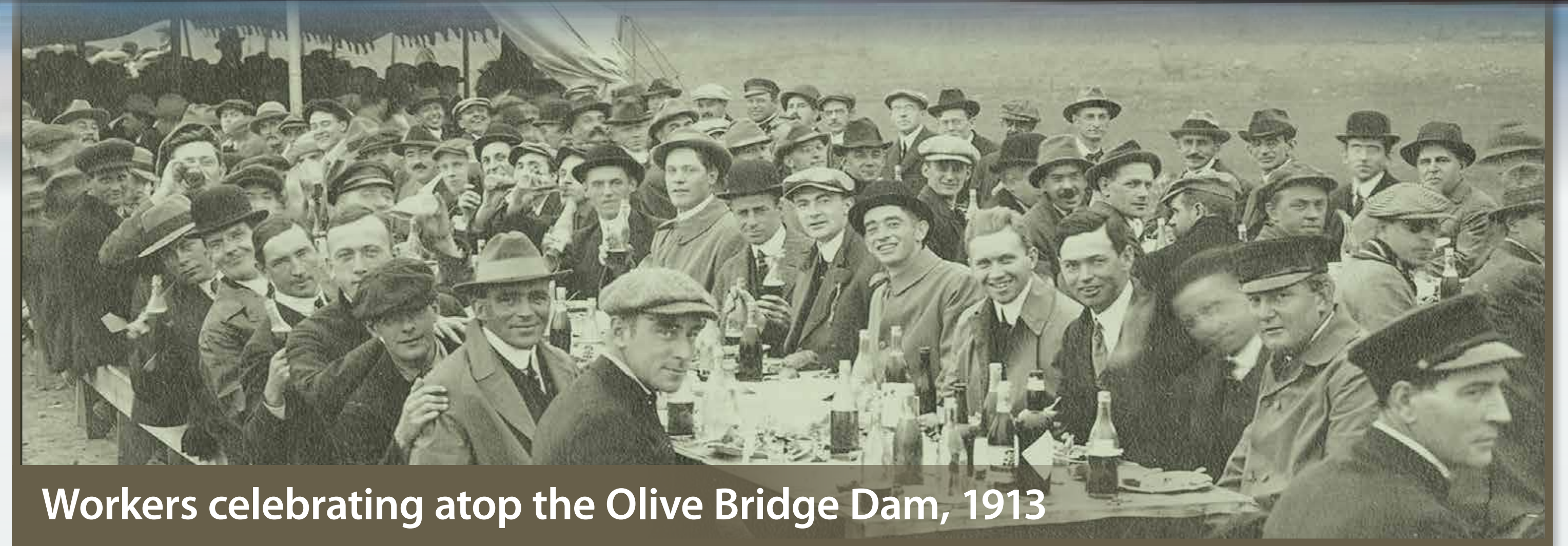
GLENFORD DIKE

DIKES & DAMS

The construction of Ashokan Reservoir (1907–1915) relied on a series of dikes and dams to collect about 130 billion gallons of water in low-lying areas between the hills. Workers excavated an immense amount of soil and stone from local sources to build 10 dams and dikes that would form the reservoir. Measuring 29,000 linear feet, the total length of the massive structures at Ashokan is longer than all the dams at New York City's other 18 water supply reservoirs combined.

You are standing atop Glenford Dike, completed in 1912 as one of three dikes built in the Hurley area. The dike is 2,850 feet long, 36 feet wide, and 60 feet high and extends more than 30 feet underground to the depth of bedrock. It consists of a concrete core covered with clay and gravel and topped with stone from a quarry that was located 500 feet away. The tracks of the Ulster & Delaware Railroad ran along the top of the dike. The rail line originally ran through the valley but was rerouted to accommodate Ashokan Reservoir in the early 1910s.

Glenford Dike, 1916



Workers celebrating atop the Olive Bridge Dam, 1913

THE WORKERS

Much of the work to construct Ashokan Reservoir was done by hand. Up to 3,000 workers were employed on the project at a time, and they were assisted by early construction machinery such as steam shovels, locomotives, and a system of cableways. The workers were a diverse group that included people from local towns, African-Americans from the South, and immigrant laborers from Italy, Eastern Europe, and Scandinavia. Italian masons completed the stonework on Glenford Dike. Nora Stanton Blatch Barney, a noted suffragist and one of the first female civil engineers in the country, was part of

the team that designed the dams and intake structures at Ashokan Reservoir. Workers and their families lived in large camps that included houses, dining halls, stores, and a police force. Work weeks were capped at 40 hours and schools were provided for workers' children; however, segregation was enforced in the camps, with African-Americans and Italian immigrants residing in separate housing. When Ashokan Reservoir was completed, the camps were dismantled. However, some of the workers remained and settled in the Catskills.