

# ULSTER & DELAWARE RAILROAD

## FROM RAIL TO TRAIL

Thomas Cornell chartered the Roundout and Oswego Railroad in 1866 with the primary purpose of transporting goods to towns in Central and Western New York. The railroad would connect the canal port of Rondout (along the Hudson River) to Oswego (on Lake Ontario). Construction began in 1868 and had reached the former town of Olive Branch by 1869, extending gradually farther over the course of the 1870s. The railroad was reorganized first as the New York, Kingston, & Syracuse Railroad and then as the Ulster & Delaware

Railroad. The line connected to other developing railroad systems and became an increasingly vital transportation link for both passengers and freight. Local people used the railroad to commute to jobs in Kingston, and local industries, such as mills and quarries, used the railroad to transport goods. Advertised as the only all-rail route to the Catskills, vacationers flocked from New York City to the mountains. The local tourism industry boomed, and artists' colonies multiplied. The railroad carried 676,000 passengers in its peak year of 1913.

West Hurley, ca. 1906



## WEST HURLEY STATION

When Ashokan Reservoir was built between 1907 and 1915, communities in the reservoir footprint were displaced, including the once-bustling hamlet of West Hurley, a former center of the bluestone industry. The railroad was also realigned to accommodate the reservoir. It was shifted from its original route along the Esopus Creek to the northern edge of the reservoir (the current route of the Ashokan Rail Trail).



West Hurley Station, ca. 1902

The original West Hurley Station was one of six local stations that were abandoned when the railroad was realigned in 1913 to make way for the reservoir. A new West Hurley Station (originally called Woodstock) was constructed near this location, first as a wood-frame structure, later rebuilt in brick. The brick station was demolished in 1967. Still visible in this location are a railroad siding and a railroad switch, reminders of the railroad in West Hurley.