



# PILOT CLUB LOG

## 1996

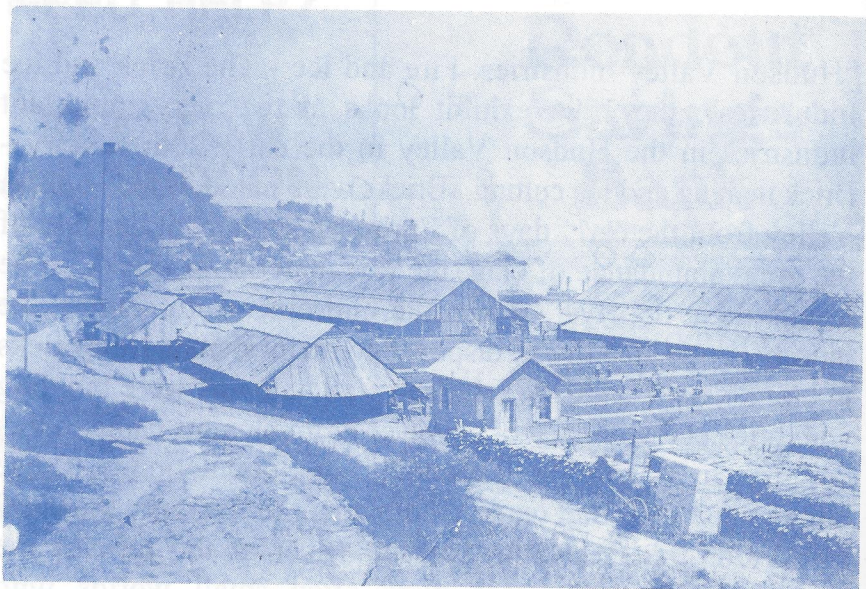


## FIRE AND ICE

"Hudson Valley Industries: Fire and Ice - The Brick and Ice Industries", the 1996 exhibit looks at two very important industries in the Hudson Valley in the early 20th century - Brick making and Ice cutting. Bricks were made in the Hudson Valley from the early days of European settlement because of the great abundance of clay, the raw material of bricks, to be found along the river. From the mid-nineteenth century the industry grew steadily in response to major demand for bricks to build New York City. Hudson Valley towns were building with brick at that time, too, as waves of immigrants came to this country from Europe, expanding the population. Those immigrants could find ready employment in the more than 100 brickyards that lined the Hudson River at the turn of the century. The brickyards were often small worlds unto themselves with worker housing, a company store, social hall, church, and school.

The brick industry was seasonal and did not operate in the winter. However, during cold weather the ice-cutting industry came to life, providing employment for idled brickyard workers as well as other seasonal workers like boatmen. They were employed cutting natural ice from the river and lakes in the Hudson Valley to preserve food and drink in those pre-electric refrigeration days. Since the ice-cutting season was totally reliant on cold weather, the work was undependable for the worker, and the price of ice fluctuated according to availability. There were over 100 ice houses along the Hudson above Poughkeepsie, operated by a number of different ice companies. Most of the ice went to New York City.





Rose Brickyard, north of Newburgh

At the turn of the century, despite some mechanization, both of these industries depended mainly on the labor of many men working with horses and simple tools. The work was physically very demanding, the hours long, and the pay small. However, workers at that time could not have expected that their work, so little changed in method for centuries, would be swept away by changing technology within two or three decades. Nor could they imagine that the endless parade of brickyards, icehouses, and the long strings of brick and ice barges would disappear forever.