



Historic Beacon (Images of America)

Robert J. Murphy, Denise Doring VanBuren

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Residents of Beacon, New York, are justifiably proud of a community that is rich in history and promise. In this exquisite collection of images, local historians Robert J. Murphy and Denise Doring VanBuren uncover the fascinating past of Beacon and the people who have called it home. The community's earliest permanent European settler was Madam Catheryna Rombout Brett, whose c. 1709 home is preserved within the city as the the oldest building in Dutchess County. Within the vicinity of the Madam Brett Homestead, two distinct villages grew: Matteawan, a manufacturing community at the foot of the mountain, and Fishkill Landing, a Hudson River port. Both villages prospered and eventually merged in 1913. Through the decades, the community was hailed as a model of a successful manufacturing center and became the location for several significant Hudson River estates. It played host to one of the longestrunning ferries in American history and introduced one of the first electric streetcar systems in the Hudson River Valley. Perhaps its most well-known feature was the Mount Beacon Incline Railway, a feat of engineering documented as the world's steepest incline railroad.

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