

Tributaries of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers in Rotterdam

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Place names as of April 2025

Most streams in Rotterdam flow into the Mohawk River from the Rotterdam Hills on the south side of the Mohawk Valley. The Normanskill flows towards the Hudson River, rises in Princetown and only flows through a short section of Rotterdam on the south side of the Town.

Key Coordinates: Latitude (N) & Longitude (W) are written as numbers & letters “Degrees-Minutes-Seconds – N & W, with the elevation in feet above Mean Sea Level, written as @ “msl.”

Normanskill a significant stream that rises in Princetown and drains waters on the south side of the Rotterdam Hills including a small tributary, Bonny Brook. The Normanskill forms significant wetlands, large ponds and a steep ravine at it flows thru Guilderland into Albany and the deep gorge leading to the Port of Albany where it enters the Hudson River. It flows for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile through southeastern Rotterdam. [**Entry near NYS Route 7/Feuz Road 42-46-31-N///73-1-19-W @ 330’ msl :: Exit near Sharon Court 42-46-12-N///74-0-44-W @ 290’ msl**]

The tributaries entering the Mohawk are listed here starting at the sandy bluff above the Great Flats Aquifer westward to the hamlet of Pattersonville at end of Town of Rotterdam and the start of the Town of Florida.

Poentickill is a stream sometimes identified on maps as Poentieskill. It is locally recognized at that stream next to BJs parking lot and the ditch along West Campbell Rd. by the Via Port Mall (Rotterdam Square Mall). The Poentickill is the second longest of Rotterdam’s streams. It rises as a spring east of Mariaville Road across from the Plotterkill Preserve trailhead. The Poentickill parallels Mariaville Road for 3-4 miles on the

southeast side of Rotterdam. It contributes to extensive wetlands east of the Mall where it meanders in a circuitous route before it eventually empties into the Mohawk. It is clearly featured on the 1866 Map of Rotterdam.

[Coordinates: Near the Mohawk 42-48-47-N///73-58-15-W @ 225' msl:: The Source: East of NYS 159: 42-49-N///74-2-W @ 910' msl]

The **Teller Kill** is a stream that originates in a spring near Silvia Ln above Gordon Road that flows eastward under Gordon & Schermerhorn Roads. At the S curve on Schermerhorn Rd, the Teller Kill carves a short, deep ravine. It empties onto the Flats at the "Wilson Pond/Duck Blind" waters at the terminus of the Great Flats Nature Trail. It feeds the wetlands south of the historic Simon Schermerhorn house. The "Greater Teller Kill" is that body of water below the Schermerhorn "Carriage House" and the Teller Family Cemetery. It is the area below Schonowe School and the Putnam Woods housing development. The Teller Kill wetlands are also below the 2-3 houses west of the "S" curve on Schermerhorn Road. On the flats, the Teller Kill "stream" continues across W. Campbell above Dunkin Donuts, and seeps into the Poentickill wetlands at the eastern end of the Via Port (Aquarium) parking lot. No recognizable "Teller Kill" stream is evident crossing the Flats. Instead, the water feeds a pond at the base of the ravine and forms a broad wetland on the southeastern expanse of the Great Flats. Before I-890 was constructed, the Teller Kill may well have seeped/drained into the Old Erie Canal as it turned toward the main plant of the GE Company. Hydrogeologists say there is an underground "bulb" of land underneath the Tellerkill that separates the Poentickill from the Aquifer proper. Of interest is the presence of the Teller Kill as a tributary of the Poentic Kill on the 1866 Map of Rotterdam – is shown as a continuous stream unlike its present configuration as described.

[Coordinates: Near the Mohawk @ Long Path Estates 42-48-4-N///73-58-W @225' msl :: The Source: On Sylvia Ln 42-48-36-N///73-59-55-W @ 400' msl]

Schermerhorn Spring is located at the base of the 350' msl ridge near the intersection of Viewland and Schermerhorn Roads. It is not

recognized as a "kill" because the water from hillside springs have not yet amassed sufficient volume to erode the slope. And unlike all the other streams it does not continue flowing through a ravine into the Mohawk River. Schermerhorn Spring and sister springs form wetlands, vernal ponds and feed the Great Flats Aquifer. The main spring has furnished fresh potable water for centuries and was likely a year-round source of water for game animals hunted by Indigenous People. Many arrowheads, blades, scrapers, pottery, firestones and grinding tools have been found nearby. A village site, known as "The Schermerhorn Site" was excavated in the 1930s by the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club and has been identified as part of the Eastern Coastal archeological tradition. Sister springs uphill and west of the Schermerhorn Spring drain into a ditch along the Schaefer/Morris property line onto the Flats crossing through the foundation of the former Teller-Schermerhorn Dutch Barn. Johannes Teller, son of a founding member of Schenectady built (1701) his small house adjacent to the barn near the spring. **[Sole location: 42-49-N///73-59-W @ 270' msl]**

Partridge Kill is located several hundred yards west of the Schermerhorn Spring location next to Schermerhorn Road. It flows under the National Grid access road. The Partridge Kill rises in a series of springs east of the CSX Railroad in the Old Maid's Woods. The springs are located at the end of Newell Rd before it begins to flow through a deep ravine onto the Flats. The ravine that cuts through the shale is a classic geological characteristic of these tributaries south of the Mohawk River. Once on the Flats the Partridge Kill waters disappear into "sinks" possibly feeding the aquifer before emerging near the Old Erie Canal and the Mohawk. The Partridge Kill is shown on the 1866 Map of Rotterdam as a line that does not connect to the river. **[Coordinates: Near the Mohawk 42-49-15-N///73-59-27-W @ 230' msl:: The Source: 42-49-22-N///73-59-19-W @ 350' msl]**

Hermit Thrush Kill rises on the top of the ridge where the CSX Railroad line runs. The spring that feeds the Hermit Thrush Kill is on the south side of the tracks and rushes through the Old Maid's Woods to a small ravine

dropping steeply over a series of waterfalls onto the Flats, under I-890 and into the Mohawk River. It likely fed directly into the Old Erie Canal in the past. A campsite of the Indigenous People can be found on banks of the stream. Of note, a handful of arrowheads and stone implements found in the 1950s were perfect specimens -- not fractured. The Hermit Thrush Kill is shown accurately on the 1866 Map of Rotterdam.

[Near the Mohawk: 42-49-33-N///73-59-23-W @ 227' msl :: The Source: <1/2mile due south to a spring south of the CSX railroad tracks]

Unnamed stream 1 There are two recently emerging streams with a short but deep ravine (<1960) formed west of the Hermit Thrush Kill. The easternmost of these has a spring that rises 250 yards west of the Hermit Thrush Kill. The spring begins alongside of the CSX Railroad tracks. Its water flows immediately downhill, under I-890, the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Path before emptying into the Mohawk River just above Lock 8. **[Coordinates: Near the Mohawk: 42-49-33-N///73-59-25-W @ 237'msl :: The Source: <1/8th mile south, near the CSX railroad tracks]**

Unnamed stream 2 Is a recent (<1970) phenomenon. The spring is 150 yards west of Unnamed stream 1. It has already begun a small ravine, rushing over shale in small waterfalls. Its course into the Mohawk is undetermined. **[at I-890: 42-50-8-N///73-59-55-W @ 280' msl]**

Unnamed Stream 2



The **Plotterkill** is a historic spring-fed stream celebrated as one of Schenectady County's largest Nature Preserves. It is prominent on many early maps including the 1866 Map of Rotterdam. The Preserve is named in honor of environmentalist Almy Coggeshall. The Plotterkill been plotted by cartographers (Plata Kill), as a tributary of the Mohawk River west of Schenectady since the 17th Century. It was an important stream from the early days of the Erie Canal where one of four aqueducts in the county was built. The Plotterkill rises in Princetown and crosses into Rotterdam at Rynex Corners.

[Coordinates: Near the Mohawk: 42-51-N///74-1-W @ 230' msl:: The Rotterdam Town Line/Rynex Cor. Intersection: 42-49-19-N///74-4-14-W @ 1030' msl]

Mocassinkill AKA Rhegel Brugese Kill is another spring fed stream that rises near the top of the Rotterdam Hills southwest above Crawford Road. It forms a deep ravine through the shale with sides that through most of the drainage are at the angle of repose (too steep to safely climb or descend). The Mocassinkill has a 30' high falls at the base of the ravine. The stream flows gently afterwards with minor falls until it goes under the NY State Thruway, CSX Railroad and 5S into the Mohawk River. A mile up Crawford Road is the Mocassinkill Sanctuary at 980' msl with a circuitous hiking trail. At the pool below the high falls in 1929 the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club was formed promoting outdoor activities, conservation and environmental education during the Great Depression. The Mocassinkill is shown on the 1866 Map of Rotterdam. **[Coordinates: Near the Mohawk: 42-51-11-N///74-1-26-W @ 250' msl :: The Source: 42-51-0-N///74-3-23-W @ 1030' msl]**

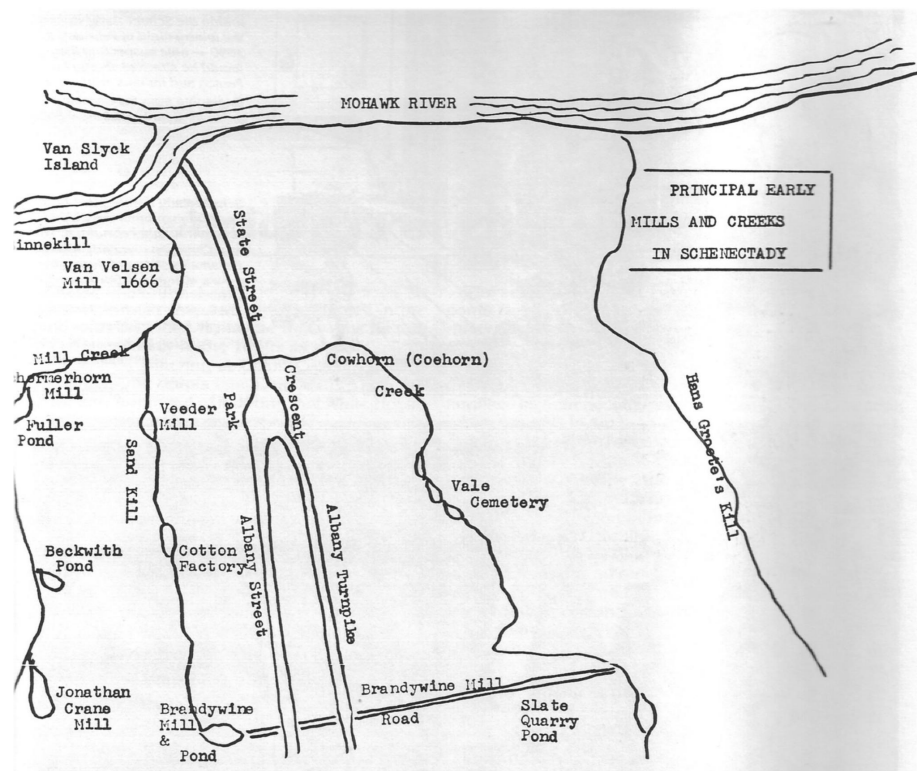
Water St. is a generic term used here for several streams draining the northern face of Yantaputchaberg, the highest mountain (~1,300' msl) on the southern edge of the Mohawk Valley. The streams flow intermittently through small ravines visible on maps of the NE slopes of the mountain. Yantaputchaberg (Dutch for "Jan Mabie's (Yanta) Woodlot (putcha) on

the Mountain (berg)”) was the site of the *first alpine skiing in New York*. Started by the Schenectady Wintersports Club in the 1930s. The Quarry trail was one of the steepest racing trails in the northeast at the time. It was popular among high school and collegiate teams. The “Bridge Trail” crossed the streams at the midpoint of the mountain. The Old Erie Canal crosses at the base of Yantaputchaberg from east to west, which is where much of the water of Water St flows. Some of the stream water appear flows east into the Schenectady Aquifer at Lower Rotterdam Junction where mining activity in the early 20th Century left a small lake currently being developed into a Town Park. Other streams from Yantaputchaberg flow west into the Mohawk. West of Rotterdam Junction parallel to the Old Erie Canal, The New York Thruway, CSX Railroad and the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Path is a large pond 600 x 75 yards between Turnbull Ln. [42-52-28-N///74-3-7-W @ 245’ msl] and Leggerio St. [42-52-39-N///74-3-32-W @ 245’ msl]. The stream crosses 5S, ¼ mile south of the Mohawk River [42-52-41-N///74-3-41-W @ 230’msl].

Sanseakill AKA Zandsekill is a long tributary of the Mohawk River that rises in Rotterdam and empties into the Mohawk. The main part of the stream is almost entirely in the Town of Princetown. Its short-lived start is in Rotterdam where it appears as a trickle the brush line where it crosses the Rynex Corners-Pattersonville Road. The Sanseakill flows through a deep ravine just before it reaches Pattersonville at NYS 5S. It enters the Mohawk River several hundred yards south of the 5S bridge. It is also shown on the 1866 Map of Rotterdam as it enters the Mohawk at Pattersonville. [Coordinates: Near the Mohawk: 42-53-20-N///74-4-40-W @ 240’ msl :: The Source: 42-50-32-N/// 74-4-50-W @ 1180’ msl

Eastern Streams of “Old Rotterdam” There have been discussions of streams (kills) that were in Mohawkville or “Old Rotterdam” that were plotted on a cartographer’s 1866 map of the town. Several of the “old streams” flowed through Niskayuna, east of Schenectady on the SE side of the Mohawk River. According to a 1942 Schenectady Gazette article

“Buried Water Courses of Old Schenectady” by Edwin G Conde there



were 4-5 streams that were sent underground as Schenectady developed.

- Hans Groote’s Kill (Balltown Road, Niskayuna/Rexford)
- Cowhorn (Coehorn) Creek (Union College area, Niskayuna)
- Sand Kill, Mill Creek & Schuylerbergkill (Rotterdam in 1866)
- Binnekill at Van Slyke Island (Rotterdam; then and now)

Eastern Rotterdam tributaries of the Mohawk include: **Schuylerbergkill, Mill Creek and Sand Kill.**

Rotterdam Map of 1866



Schuylerbergkill rises near the center of “Mohawkville” in 2025 the area centered at Altamont/Curry Roads of Rotterdam. That area is shown on the 1866 map of Rotterdam, Schenectady. Schenectady historian of the time, Edwin Conde, shows that most of the streams were dammed to create the waterpower for numerous mills that ground the grain crops of local farmers into flour.

[Coordinates: Near the Mohawk (Binnekill): 42-49-1 N/// 73-57-19-W :: Near the Source of the Schuylerberg in “Mohawkville” @

Deforest St/Patton Dr: 42-46-45-N///73-58-29-W @ 340’ msl]

The Schuylerbergkill 4/1/2025 (flowing behind Hannaford Plaza @ 1440 Altamont Ave.)



The mysterious **Binnekill** on the easternmost reaches of Rotterdam is described as emptying into the Mohawk River in the vicinity of the Schenectady County Community College parking lot. The Binnekill was

probably created out of the confluence of the Schuylerbergkill, Mill Creek, Sand Kill and Cowhorn Kill streams were buried underground following construction of and highways around the GE Co., downtown Schenectady and the Old Erie Canal. Conde's 1942 sketch (above) suggests they flowed under Union St., State St., Broadway, Weaver St., Erie Blvd. and I-890.