



Redeveloping a Former Lake Resort

The small town of Hopatcong recently marked a milestone in its quest to rejuvenate the River Styx section with a groundbreaking ceremony.

Five years in planning, the project illustrates what can happen when state, county and municipal agencies, along with private enterprises, work together to realize a vision. Town officials hope the redeveloped area will restore some of the popularity the community enjoyed before the 1960s; when the completion of Interstate 80 and other roads put an end to the borough's popularity as a summer destination.

The borough includes the western shore of Lake Hopatcong in Sussex County. The history of Hopatcong parallels the history of the lake. Our town has gone from a resort town, to a summer community similar to the Jersey Shore, to its current form, as a quiet, pleasant year-round community of 15,000.

Hopatcong's Heyday

Following World War II, Lake Hopatcong flourished as a popular summer spot. It evolved into a middle-class bungalow and second-home community. The center of social life at "The Lake" was The River Styx Business District.

On any given summer weekend during the late 1940s or 1950s, the area was a blaze of activity. Perhaps the best remembered place was the Mad House Bar and Grill, located at the River Styx Bridge. The Mad House opened in the 1920s during Prohibition.