

Welcome to “The Loggie”

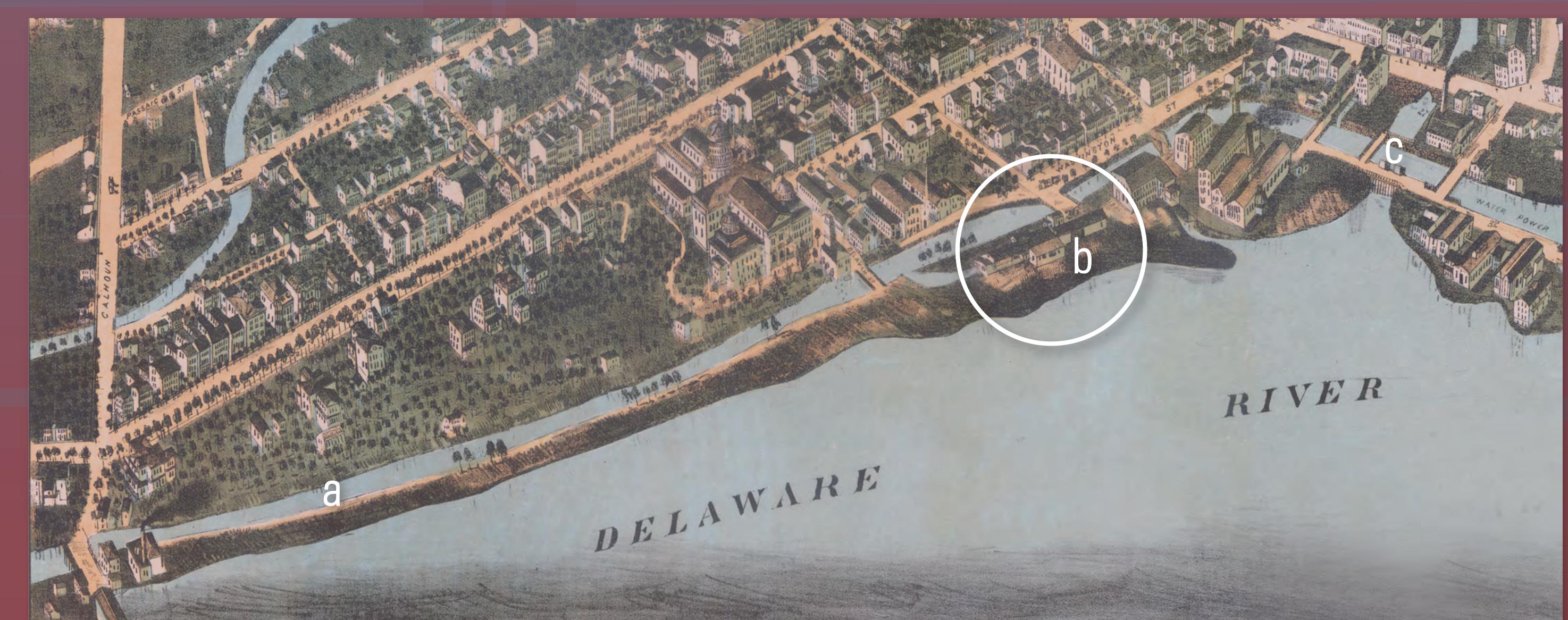
Block out the sound of the passing traffic and imagine the highway as a gently flowing canal feeding the pond before you. Known locally as the “Loggie” – for the log basin that was used for storing logs for Trenton’s sawmills for almost half a century – the still waters of this silent pond went on to support an ice-making business before serving as a swimming pool and skating rink in Stacy Park.

Industry

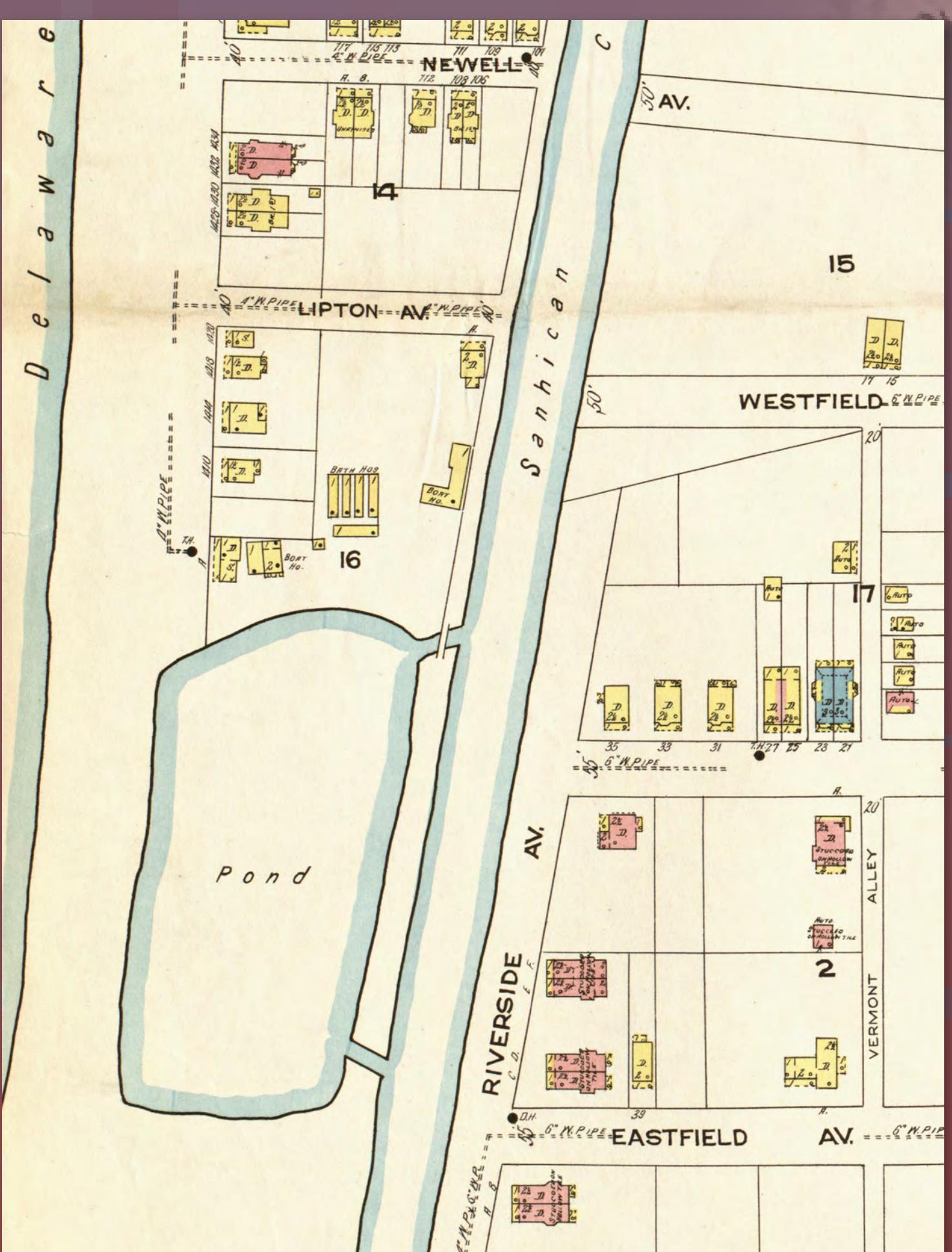
Surprise! Route 29 across the pond is laid atop a canal. Built in 1831-34, at the same time as the nearby Delaware and Raritan Canal, the seven-mile-long Trenton Water Power was designed to drive industrial development in the city’s downtown. All told, the power canal had energy enough for more than 20 watermills – gristmills, sawmills, textile mills and the immense rolling mills and furnaces of the Trenton Iron Company/New Jersey Steel and Iron Company.

By 1840, a cluster of at least three sawmills were in operation on the Water Power about a mile and a half downstream from here, roughly where the War Memorial is today. One of these sawmills was run by Fish, Green & Company, which established the log basin adjacent to the power canal sometime in the late 1830s or early 1840s. The basin was used for storing surplus lumber that was rafted down the Delaware River, broken up and funneled down the canal, and then held here in reserve before being floated on to the lumber yards and sawmills.

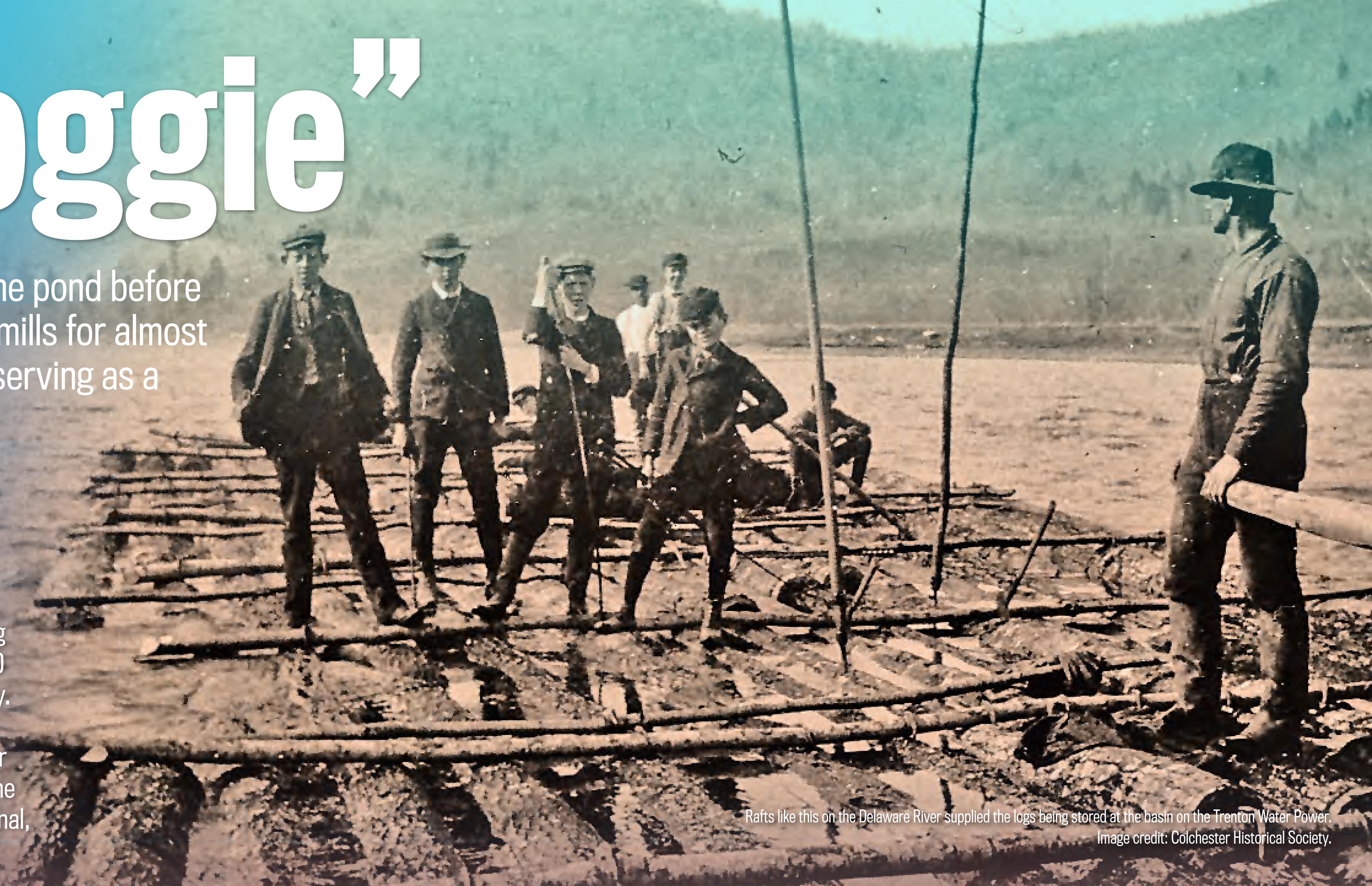
By the 1880s, with the hillsides of the Upper Delaware largely stripped of trees and Trenton’s lumber industry in decline, the log basin was seldom being used for its original purpose. In the 1890s and early 1900s, local residents fished in the pond, then owned by the Sutphin Ice and Coal Company which harvested its winter ice. When the ice business foundered, rendered obsolete by the new technology of refrigeration, squatters took up residence in the abandoned buildings between the basin and the river.



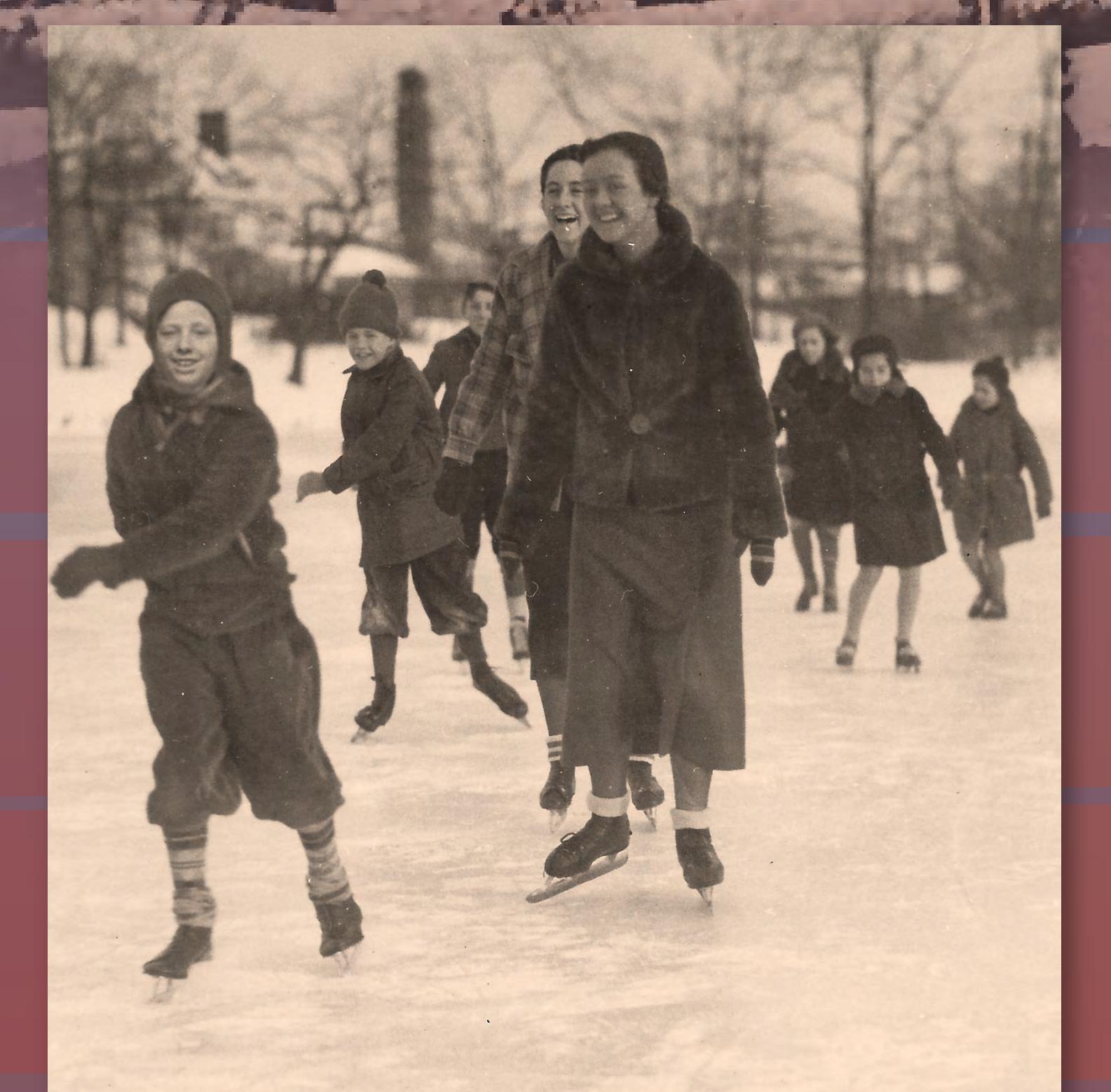
In this detail from an 1874 bird's eye view of downtown Trenton, logs stored at the Loggie would have been floated down the Water Power [a], entering the view at the bottom left corner, passing below the State House, and then fed into the Fish, Green & Company's saw and planing mill [b] for processing. The finished product – boards and beams – was stored and offered for sale at the company's nearby lumber yard. The Water Power continued on beyond the saw and planing mill to provide energy to some 20 other mills along the riverbank, crossing the mouth of Assunpink Creek on a massive stone aqueduct [c]. Image credit: Fowler & Bailey, Trenton, N.J., 1874.



This map from 1918 shows the Loggie fed by Sanhican Creek (the former power canal) when it was in its heyday as a swimming pool and skating rink. Image credit: Sanborn Map Company, Insurance Maps of Trenton, Volume 1, Sheet 90, Princeton University Library.



Rafts like this on the Delaware River supplied the logs being stored at the basin on the Trenton Water Power. Image credit: Colchester Historical Society.



The neighborhood flocks to skate at the Loggie, Circa 1960. Image credit: Trentoniana Collection, Trenton Public Library.

Recreation

In the 1910s, the City of Trenton made a concerted effort to improve the riverfront. Out of this was born Riverside Drive and Mahlon Stacy Park, which stretched along the riverbank from behind the State House upstream to “The Island.” The power canal became Sanhican Creek and the log basin was reconfigured as a swimming pool, boating pond and skating rink, complete with bath and boat houses, a store and restrooms. On July 4, 1916, with great fanfare, the Loggie hosted its first “Aqua Carnival,” a City-organized festival with swimming and diving competitions and other attractions.

For a decade, the Loggie thrived as a summer water sports venue and winter skating rink, until in 1926, pollution forced a ban on the City’s public swimming facilities. This spelled the end of swimming at the basin, but over the following decades skating continued as a favored pastime, along with canoeing and fishing. This activity has tapered off in intensity in recent years to leave us with the placid pond of today, which the City of Trenton intends retaining as a pleasant passive recreational feature of the park for many years to come.

