



# Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark Museum, 1863 School House

Town of Deerpark Historian, P. O. Box 621, Huguenot, New York 12746

Website—1863schoolhouse.org Phone: 845-856-2702

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## Then and Now Motorcycles

**C & D Technologies**  
(aka C & D Batteries)

**Thomas' English Muffins**

## Motorcycles

Ever since the time of early bicycles engineers have searched the way to make transport on public roads automated and faster. Since the mid-19th century inventors have tried to make their version of the motorcycle. In 1867, the first motorcycle was steam-powered. It wasn't until 1885 that the German inventors, Daimler and Maybach, produced a motorcycle with a diesel-based engine.

In 1895, the first motorcycle came to the USA via a French circus group. That same year American inventor, E. J. Pennington, demonstrated his version of a motorcycle with a top speed of 58mph. In 1900 the Werner Brothers submitted the first motorcycle patent. From that time many different models were manufactured.

In 1903 motorcyclists formed the New York Motorcycle Club fostering motorcycle activities and interests. Eventually other organizations expanded these

interests until the American Motorcycle Association was founded in 1924. Its mission is to promote the motorcycle life style and protect the future of motorcycling. The name was changed in 1976 to the American Motorcyclist Association. Members organize racing and travel events.

## Racing

Photos in the Town of Deerpark Museum Archives record some of the racing and riding history dating back nearly one hundred years.



*Huguenot Hill Climb--1930s*

It wasn't long before motorcycle races were organized, which increased the demand for faster and more powerful engines and designs. During the 1930s and 1940s the Town of Deerpark had two motorcycle race tracks. There was a hill climb race on Route 209. It is the hill located behind the lot where the former bowling alley was located. A flat

motorcycle racetrack was located at the Huguenot Airport. Their events brought many spectators to our area.



*Time for a lemonade break*

This photo was taken either 1948-49 during the American Motorcycle Association (AMA) three day sanctioned races and hill climb held in Huguenot. Roger Goodspeed, approximately 4 years of age was selling lemonade to members of the AMA. Roger is the son of State Trooper Goodspeed who worked out of his home located across from today's Police Station.



*Huguenot Airport Race Track*

The Huguenot Airport was started in the late 1930s. When no planes were flying, it was an ideal flat field for motorcycle racing.

Racing was suspended until after World War II. The Civil Air Patrol was stationed at the field. An aerial view of the field shows the motorcycle racetrack as a figure eight.

## Riding as a Life Style

Local residents and visitors enjoy riding in our area because of the beautiful scenery. Even before the Hawk's Nest Road was paved motorcyclists traveled the dirt road in the early 20th century. Others climbed Skyline Drive to Point Peter to view the Tri-State Valley.



*The Flying Merkel*

Joe Merkel designed a motorcycle in 1902 and was in business until 1911 when his company was taken over by Miami Cycle and Manufacturing Company. They changed the trademark to "Flying Merkel" and a bright and shiny orange paint was used. Production ceased in 1915. At that time the price was \$85.00.

At a 2011 auction a 1911 Flying Merkel went for \$201,250.00. In 2015, a 1911 Flying Merkel Board Track Racer went for \$423,500.00. Greg Merkel, the great-great-grandnephew of Joe Merkel, has taken ownership of the trademark "Flying Merkel" and has started a revival of the brand called "Flying Merkel Inc."



*Harley —Hawk's Nest 1920s*

Even when the Hawk's Nest Road was not much more than a dirt path, motorcyclists traveled the winding, twisty road to enjoy the stunning views provided by the Delaware River Valley. The road underwent significant renovations between 1931 and 1933 when it was paved. In 1939, it was officially dedicated as a significant roadway. These improvements brought many more motorcyclists.



*Mother's Day Motorcycle Ride*

The Hawk's Nest is known as one the best motorcycle rides in New York. It has also been listed in the top ten rides in the northeast. Motorcyclists come from all over the United States to admire

the picturesque scenery as they drive along the road, with several scenic overlooks and pull-outs. These vantage points offer the opportunity to marvel at the beauty of the river, the lush surrounding forests and the natural splendor of the Delaware River Valley. It is such a popular route that riders are urged to travel at 25 mph in order to enjoy the views and consider a weekday ride to avoid the crowds. The images captured from Hawk's Nest have become iconic.

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## C & D Technologies Site (aka C & D Batteries)

### Then

The history of the land upon which C & D Technologies operated dates back to the time of early colonial settlement. This was the Swartwout homestead. In the mid 1950s C. Howard Swartwout sold nine acres to Larry Taylor for \$900.00. Taylor thought this was a good place to have some industry and create jobs for Deerpark residents.

That never materialized and the land was subsequently acquired by the Port Jervis Development Corporation and sold to the Empire Tube Company in 1959. There was some connection to Channel Master which manufactured TV antennas in Ellenville.

The Empire Tube Company manufactured black and white television picture tubes. In the manufacturing process, hydrofluoric acid was used to clean the picture tubes. Wastewater containing hydrofluoric acid was dis-





*Cathode Television Tube*

posed of in an on-site lagoon having a diameter of approximately 150 feet. In 1966, the NYSDOH filed a complaint against Empire Tube Corporation for the disposal of untreated sewage, industrial wastes and other wastes into the water of NYS. Violations of these standards were reported to occur until 1968.

C & D Technologies purchased the property in 1970. The company manufactured lead acid batteries which are rechargeable batteries for use in motor vehicles. Some lead compounds are extremely toxic causing environmental concerns. Long term exposure to even small amounts of these compounds can cause brain and kidney damage, hearing impairment and learning problems in children. Between 1982 and 1992 several investigations of the

site were completed. Fluoride was detected in groundwater. In 1992 C & D Technologies, Inc. entered into an Order of Consent with NYSDEC to conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study at the site. The lagoon soils, on-site groundwater, off-site residential potable well and off-site stream sediments were tested. On the basis of detected fluorides, NYSDEC determined that the site presented a “significant threat to the environment” and classified the site as a Class 2 Inactive Hazardous Waste site.

C & D Technologies closed its manufacture in 2006.

### Now

*Source: NYSDEC website*

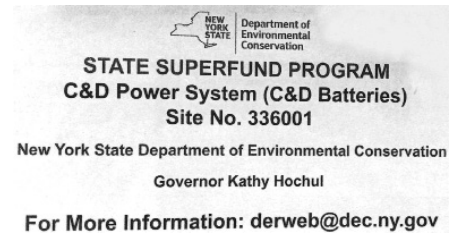
*August 14, 2024*

### “DEC Announces \$7 Million Settlement to Support Cleanup of C & D Power Systems State Superfund Site in Orange County”

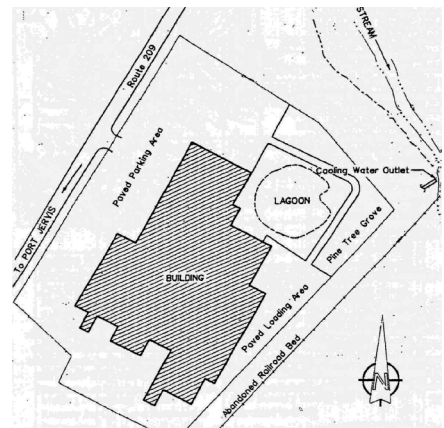
“NYSDEC Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar today announced a \$7 million settlement with Avnet, Inc., for costs associated with the remediation of the C & D Power Systems (C & D Batteries) State Superfund Site in the Town of Deerpark, Orange County. As part of a recent Order of Consent and Administrative Settlement negotiated by

DEC in partnership with the Office of the NYS Attorney General, the former owner and operator of the site will pay \$6.3 million towards the cost of remediation activities already un-

derway and \$700,000 for Natural Resource Damages.



“The primary contaminants concerning the site are PCBs and metals (lead and cadmium). Contaminants are present in site-wide shallow soils, lagoon soils and shallow tributary sediments. The remedial investigation included analysis of groundwater and off-property private wells. Groundwater on-and off-site contains fluoride. Private well fluoride concentrations were below NYS ambient water quality standard.”



*C & D Site*

Cleanup Activities include:

- Excavate lagoon soil containing PCBs for transport and disposal off-site.
- Excavate, stabilize, and contain on-site soils exceeding a commercial use standard.
- Excavate floodplain and tributary sediments exceeding unrestricted use standard for beneficial re-use on site.
- Restore tributary and adjacent



*C & D Batteries —1984*

wetland areas to unrestricted use.  
-Install an engineered cover system to support commercial use of the site.

-Develop a Site Management Plan.

-Place an Environmental Easement on the property.

*Note: Additional information is available at the Town Clerk's Office and the Port Jervis Library.*

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### Thomas' English Muffins

Samuel Bath Thomas, was the man recognized for his popularizing the English muffin. Born in Plymouth, England on March 21, 1855, he came to the United States in 1874. After arriving in Manhattan, he worked in a local bakery until 1880 at which time he opened his own bakery featuring his special muffins.



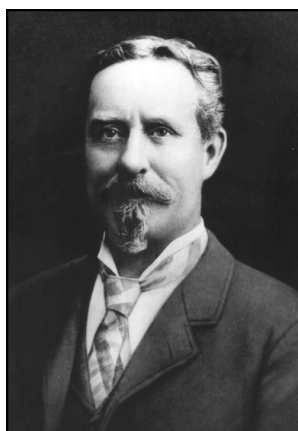
*Thomas' Bakery Delivery Wagon*

His bakery was different from most. In addition to common breads he offered English muffins, a round, single-serve, yeast raised dough baked on a griddle with a distinctly coarse-grained texture. These muffins were unlike any other muffins on the market. They were not to be sliced, but split and toasted before serving. They are close to the English crumpet

and technically not a muffin. Although the "muffins" are called Thomas' English muffins, they are an American invention.

Word about these wonderful tasting muffins spread throughout the city causing Mr. Thomas to expand his deliveries into Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens. Having an entrepreneurial spirit his English muffins spread far and wide. His dream was about quality, being different and freshness which led to a nation-wide success story. The Thomas recipe is closely guarded even to this day.

After his death, his daughters and nephew incorporated the business and expanded the company until 1970, at which time it was acquired by the George Weston Bakeries.



Port Jervis Union  
Obituary  
Samuel Bath Thomas  
(1855-1919)

"Samuel Bath Thomas died at this home, 326 West 22nd Street, New York City, at four o'clock on Monday morning. He was 71 years of age. (Editor's note—actual age 64 years)

"Deceased was a native of Devonshire, England. He came to the United States in early life. For many years he spent the summer

at the home of his niece Mrs. Elizabeth Eider, in Cahoonzie.

"Mr. Thomas was well known at Cahoonzie, Sparrowbush and Port Jervis. His wife (Janet Paton Thomas) died in November, 1908. The surviving relatives are four daughters, Misses Kathleen, Roberta, and Mary Thomas, Mrs. G. Siffert, all of New York City.

"The funeral services will be held at the home in New York at eight o'clock tonight and the body will be brought to Sparrowbush for further services in the Sparrowbush M. E. Church at two o'clock Friday afternoon. Interment will be in the Sparrowbush cemetery. "



*Samuel Bath Thomas  
Gravesite—Sparrowbush*

Today Thomas' English Muffins is a nationally recognized brand. The company still produces the muffins using Samuel Thomas' original process. The same ingredients and griddle baking create the product that has achieved unique stature in American culture.



Visit the new Town of Deerpark Museum Face Book page.

**"The Town of Deerpark 1863  
Schoolhouse Museum"**