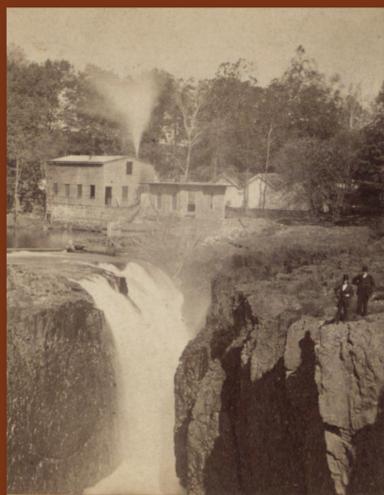




The Passaic Water Company

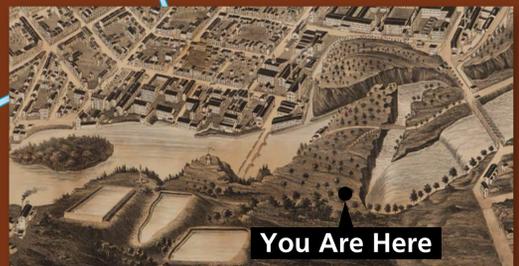
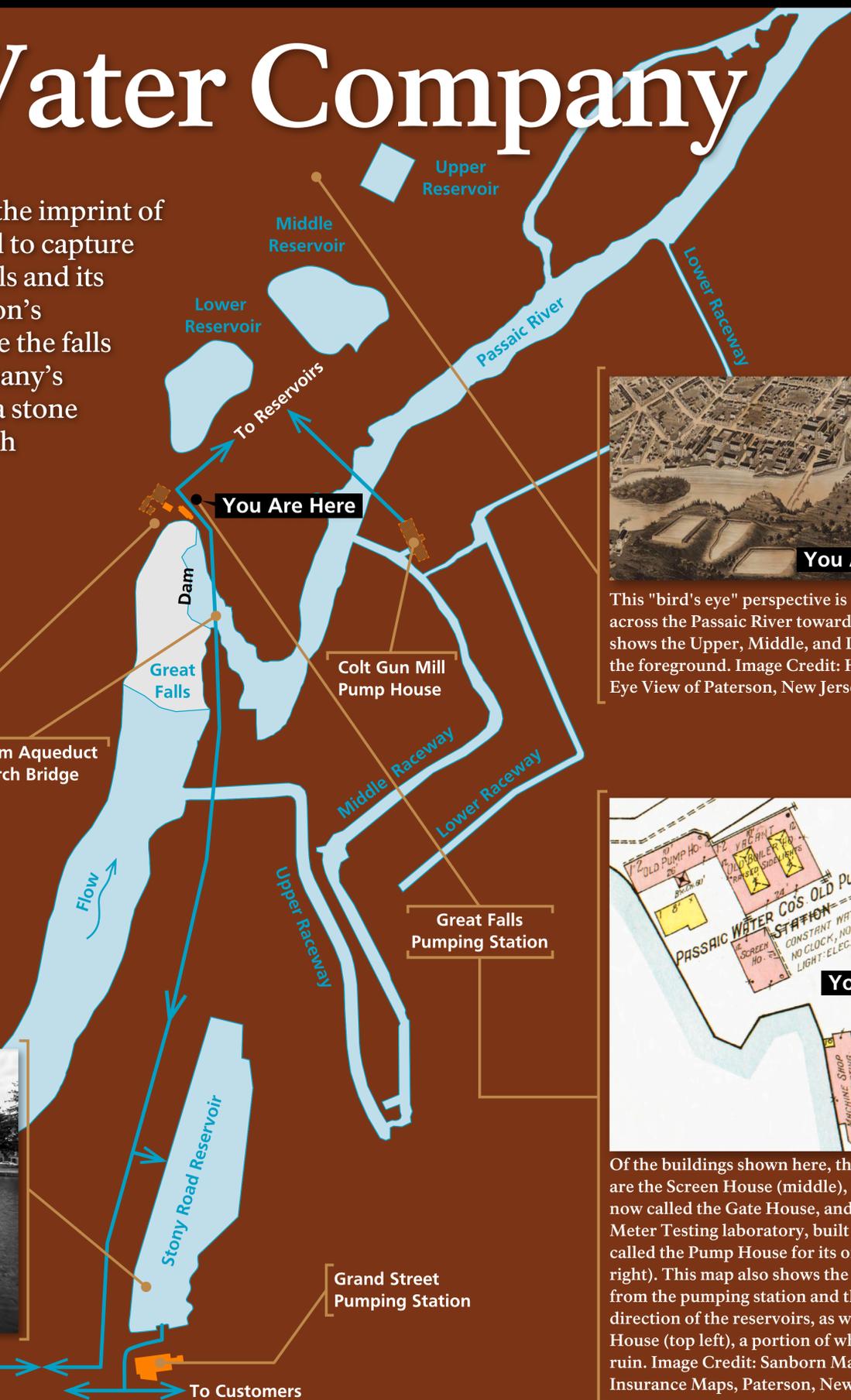
The Great Falls dominates the landscape around you, yet the imprint of urbanization, industrialization, and technologies designed to capture and redirect the flow of water have greatly changed the falls and its surroundings. From the 1860s to the 1920s, most of Paterson's drinking water was syphoned from the Passaic River above the falls to fill nearby reservoirs. Look for the Passaic Water Company's brick pumping station at the edge of the falls, the ruins of a stone dam along the top of the falls, and the chasm aqueduct arch bridge as you explore the park.

The Great Falls Pumping Station, 1870. The Passaic Water Company replaced the pictured station after 1877. The S.U.M. and the water company were in direct competition for water from the falls. Image Credit: J. Jefferson Reid.

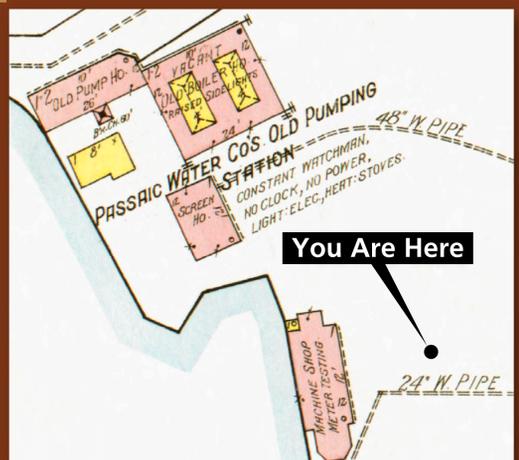


Stony Road Reservoir (Levine Reservoir) with the Grand Street Pumping Station in the background. Image Credit: Historic American Engineer Record No. NJ-155, 2019.

From Little Falls



This "bird's eye" perspective is looking south across the Passaic River toward downtown. It shows the Upper, Middle, and Lower Reservoirs in the foreground. Image Credit: H.H. Bailey, Bird's Eye View of Paterson, New Jersey, 1875.



Of the buildings shown here, the two still standing are the Screen House (middle), built in 1906-07 and now called the Gate House, and Machine Shop and Meter Testing laboratory, built about 1895 and now called the Pump House for its original use (lower right). This map also shows the water pipes leading from the pumping station and the river in the direction of the reservoirs, as well as the Old Pump House (top left), a portion of which survives as a ruin. Image Credit: Sanborn Map Company, Insurance Maps, Paterson, New Jersey, 1915.

Pumping Station

In the 1850s, the Passaic Water Company opened its first pump house at the Colt Gun Mill below the falls. This arrangement had the disadvantage of pumping water across the river and up a cliff, so the company built a dam and pumping station at the top of the Great Falls about 1862.

The station grew over the next half century with the construction of three pump houses, two boiler houses to supply steam engines, a coal house to store fuel, and a machine shop for repairs, all within the confines of what is today known as Mary Ellen Kramer Park.

Reservoirs

From the 1850s to the 1880s, the Passaic Water Company successively built four reservoirs to expand its storage capacity and meet the needs of Paterson's growing and thirsty population. The three reservoirs known as the Lower, Middle, and Upper Reservoirs, completed in 1853, 1868, and 1872, were stone-lined basins located northeast of the Great Falls, directly behind you. The final reservoir, completed in 1886, was the Stony Road Reservoir, known today as the Levine Reservoir, built on high ground about one-half mile south and to the other side of the Passaic River. Only the Levine Reservoir remains in use today, receiving its water from the filtration plant at Little Falls, which opened in 1902.

The Lower, Middle, and Upper Reservoirs ceased to be needed after the opening of Little Falls. Hinchliffe Stadium was built on the site of the Lower Reservoir in 1932. A massive stone retaining wall of the Middle Reservoir still exists, as do the footings of the Upper Reservoir.