

HOPKINS VINEYARD



The Director,
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Wine and Beer Branch
P.O. Box 385
The Department of the Treasury
Washington, D.C. 20044

Dear Sir:

This is to petition the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to establish the grape growing region of the Western Connecticut Highlands as a viticultural area.

Name

The name "Western Connecticut Highlands" is descriptive of the land in the Western part of Connecticut which is distinctly different from the coastal land adjoining Long Island Sound and the central lowlands adjoining the Connecticut River Valley.

The name "Western Connecticut Highlands" has been used by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, and the U. S. Soil Conservation Service in the publication Soils of Connecticut, Bulletin # 787, Dec. 1980 authors Hill, Sauter and Gonick, to describe the area. The name has also been used by the popular press to describe the portion of Connecticut, the example enclosed from the magazine Northwest Hills.

Geographic Criteria

Physiography

Connecticut's area is small, but its 5,000 square miles contain more variety of terrain than many larger states. The State can be divided into four physiographic zones; the Coastal Lowlands, the Central Lowlands, the Western Highlands and the Eastern Highlands. These zones or regions differ considerably in topographic features.

Connecticut's southern boundary is formed by 253 miles of irregular shoreline on Long Island Sound. Along this shore stretches a narrow strip of fairly level land designated as the Coastal Lowlands. The coastline is characterized by alternating limited sections of sandy beach, rocky bluffs and salt water marshes, indented with numerous small coves and inlets.

A north-south strip of lowland bisected by the Connecticut River comprises the Central Lowlands, which extends northerly from Long Island Sound into Massachusetts. Although broken with occasional traprock ridges, most of the land is gently sloping with productive agricultural soils. With few exceptions, most urbanization in Connecticut has occurred within the Coastal and Central Lowlands.

The remaining areas of the State are largely hilly uplands which slope gradually toward the south and east. The Western Highlands are an extension of the Green Mountain Range to the north, with the general elevation in this region ranging from 200 feet in the south to over 2,000 feet in northwestern Connecticut. This area is generally more rugged than the corresponding Eastern Highlands, although in its southern part the hills are gentle.

Climate

Connecticut's coastal location has a moderating effect on the State's climate. Winters are moderate and summers warm. The mean annual temperature for coastal Connecticut is 50 degrees and 49 degrees Fahrenheit for the Central Lowlands. On the other hand, the Eastern and Western Highlands have mean annual temperature of 47 degrees and 46 degrees, respectively. In January, the coldest month, the average statewide maximum temperature is 36 degrees and the average minimum is 18 degrees. In the warmest month, July, the average maximum is 83 degrees and the average minimum is 60 degrees.

The winters in Connecticut are not as long, nor as severe, as they are in the northern New England states. In the fall, freezing temperatures usually begin about the middle of November, and end by the last week in March along the coast and early in April in the highlands. Sub-zero temperatures occur in practically every part of the State, but readings of -10 degrees or lower are unusual. Extreme heat in summer is usually rare. The average number of days per year with maximum temperatures of 90 degrees or above is eight in Hartford and four in New Haven. Summer temperatures on the southern coast of the State are modified by cooling sea breezes.

Precipitation is generous. The average statewide total is 45 inches with a range of 42 to 52 inches. Precipitation is distributed evenly throughout the year, ranging from three to four inches per month. Therefore, droughts are infrequent and usually short in duration. Flooding occurs in both spring and fall, and is a frequent problem in the State's river valleys.

Snowfall varies throughout the State, lighter along the coast and heavier in the northwest. Near the Sound the average snowfall is less than 35 inches while the north-western portion of the State receives about 100 inches. Long-term records indicate that there is considerable variation in seasonal amounts of snowfall; in one location more than 130 inches fell in one year where only 37 inches had fallen several years previously. Generally, though, the northwest region receives enough snow to encourage winter sports with the ground being covered an average of 90 days a season.

General Information

Within the Western Connecticut Highlands viticultural area there are four wineries, with others being established. Overall the area covers approximately 1570 square miles or 1,004,550 acres.

Boundaries

The Western Connecticut Highlands viticultural area is located in the State of Connecticut. The boundary is as follows:

- (1) The beginning point is where Connecticut Route # 15 (Merritt Parkway) crosses the Connecticut - New York State line.
- (2) The boundary proceeds northerly along the Connecticut - New York State line to the northwest corner of Connecticut.
- (3) The boundary proceeds easterly along the Connecticut -Massachusetts State line to the easterly border of the Town of Hartland, Connecticut.
- (4) The boundary proceeds southerly along the eastern boundary of the Town of Hartland to the northeast corner of Barkhamstead.
- (5) The boundary then proceeds southerly along the Litchfield-Hartford County line to the southeast corner of the Town of Plymouth.
- (6) The boundary then proceeds westerly along the Litchfield-New Haven County line to Connecticut Route # 8.
- (7) The boundary proceeds southerly along the western side of Connecticut Route # 8 to the intersection of Connecticut Route #15 (Merritt Parkway).
- (8) The boundary proceeds westerly along the northern side of Connecticut Route # 15 (Merritt Parkway) to the beginning point.

Maps

Would you please accept the enclosed USGS map: Connecticut State base 1:125,000 instead of the USGS scale 1:250,000. The two maps would have been NK 18-9 Hartford, and NK18-6 Albany.

Unfortunately the USGS in Arlington is out of stock of the 1:250,000 maps, also the Map Section, Natural Resource Center, Hartford only has file copies, and is waiting also for USGS to reprint.

Sincerely,

Judith W. Hopkins
William L. Hopkins

Mr. & Mrs. William Hopkins
Hopkins Vineyard
Hopkins Road
New Preston, Conn. 06777

Telephone: (203) 868-7954

HOPKINS VINEYARD



*Received 1/12/87
SRP*

January 9, 1987

Mr. Richard A. Mascolo, Chief
FAA, Wine and Beer Branch
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P.O. Box 385
The Department of the Treasury
Washington, D.C. 20044

Dear Mr. Mascolo:

Enclosed is a petition to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to establish a viticultural area known as the Western Connecticut Highlands. The petition includes elements of our previous submission plus the supplemental material you requested including USGS maps.

I hope this information is now complete such that a notice of proposed rule making can begin.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. William Hopkins
Hopkins Vineyard
Hopkins Road
New Preston, Ct. 06777
(203) 868-7954

HOPKINS VINEYARD



Petition for Western Connecticut Highlands Viticultural Area

Mr. and Mrs. William Hopkins of Hopkins Vineyard, Hopkins Road, New Preston, CT petition on behalf of the wineries located in the region for a viticultural area located in the highlands of Western Connecticut.

Name. The name "Western Connecticut Highlands" is descriptive of the land adjoining the Connecticut coastal plain, the central valley of Connecticut, the Hudson Valley of New York State, and the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts. The area is referred to as Western Highlands and Western Connecticut Highlands in numerous sources (examples enclosed). The specific name Western Connecticut Highland is used by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service in the publication on Soils of Connecticut.

Geographic Criteria. Climate and elevation distinguishes the Western Connecticut Highlands viticultural area from adjacent areas in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Although Connecticut's area is small, its 5,000 square miles contain more variety of terrain than many larger states. The State is divided into four physiographic zones; the Coastal Lowlands or Coastal Plain, the Central Lowlands or Central Valley, the Western Highlands and the Eastern Highlands. The Western and Eastern Highlands are most similar in climate and other features but are geographically separated by the Central Valley. The Western Highlands are an extension of the Green Mountain Range to the North with the general elevation in the region ranging from 200 feet in the South to about 2000 feet in the larger hills in the Northwest sector of the region. The Eastern Highlands range in elevation from 200 feet to 1,100 feet. The Western Highlands are generally more rugged than the corresponding Eastern Highlands but otherwise are very similar in physiography. The Coastal Plain and Central Valley have elevations from 0 to less than 500 feet and a warmer temperature. The Western Highlands has a mean annual temperature of 48° F while the Eastern Highlands has a mean temperature of 47° F. The mean annual temperature for the Coastal Plain is 50° F and the Central Valley is 49° F. The area to the West is characterized by the Hudson River Region, a complex geological region characterized by the Hudson River Valley and surrounding hills. To the North is the Berkshire Region of Massachusetts, similar in broad physiography. Both the Berkshire Region and the Western Connecticut Highlands are a continuation of the Green Mountain Range, however, the elevation is higher resulting in a more rugged terrain and due to higher elevations and more northerly setting that region experiences colder average temperatures and a shorter growing season.

The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map includes most of the proposed region in USDA Zone 6 and 5b. The enclosed maps (figure 1) allow the average dates of the first 32° F in the fall and the average of the last 32° F in the Spring. This data indicates a distinct climatic difference from the Coastal Plain and Central Valley.

General comments on Connecticut's climate include for January, the coldest month, an average maximum of 36° F and an average minimum of 18° F. In July, the warmest month, the average maximum is 83° and the average minimum is 60° F. Sub-zero temperatures occur but readings of -10° F or lower are unusual. Extreme heat in summer is rare. The average statewide total or precipitation is 45 inches with a range of 42-45 inches. Precipitation is distributed evenly throughout the year. Snowfall varies and is heavier

Hopkins Road in Warren
New Preston, CT 06777

in the Western Highlands and ranges from 35 to 100 inches. Long-term records indicate that there is considerable variation in seasonal amounts of snowfall; in one location more than 130 inches fell in one year where only 37 inches had fallen several years previously. Generally the Western Highlands receives enough snow for ground coverage to average 90 days per year.

General Information. Within the Western Connecticut Highlands viticultural area there are four wineries with others being established. In addition, there are at least six additional growers of grapes for wine or fresh market. Details of these vineyards are presented in Table 1.

Boundaries

- (a) Maps for determining boundaries of the Western Connecticut Highlands viticultural area are two U.S.G.S. maps as follows:
- 1) Hartford (NK 18-9) scale of 1:250,000 series; 2) Albany (NK 18-6) scale of 1:250,000 series.
- (b) The Western Connecticut Highlands Viticultural area is located in the State of Connecticut. The boundary is as follows:
- 1) The beginning point is the point where the Connecticut Route Number 15 (Merritt Parkway) crosses the Connecticut-New York state line.
 - 2) The boundary proceeds northerly along the Connecticut-New York stateline to the Northwest corner of Connecticut.
 - 3) The boundary proceeds easterly along the Connecticut-Massachusetts state line to the easterly border of the town of Hartland, Connecticut.
 - 4) The boundary proceeds southerly along the eastern boundary of the town of Hartland to the Northeast corner of the town of Barkhamstead.
 - 5) The boundary then proceeds southerly along the Litchfield-Hartford County line to the Southeast corner of the town of Plymouth.
 - 6) The boundary then proceeds westerly along the Litchfield-New Haven County line to Connecticut route Number 8.
 - 7) The boundary proceeds southerly along the western side of Connecticut route 8 to the intersection of Connecticut route 15 (Merritt Parkway).
 - 8) The boundary proceeds westerly along the northern side of Connecticut route 15 (Merritt Parkway) to the beginning point.

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1/9/87



THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Cooperative Extension Service

AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS, 4-H, COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

FAIRFIELD COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICES

67 Stony Hill Road
Bethel, CT 06801, Tel. 797-4176

February 17, 1987

Mr. Ed Reisman
FAA, Wine and Beer Branch
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P.O. Box 385
Department of the Treasury
Washington, D.C. 20044

Dear Mr. Reisman:

Enclosed is further supportive material, documenting the name
"Western Connecticut Highlands".

Sincerely,

Howard A. Kemmerer
Cooperative Extension
Agricultural Agent

HAK/mq

Received
7/24/87
EAR

WILLIAM BIXBY



Connecticut:
A New
Guide

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING IN PUBLICATION DATA

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TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Small though it is, Connecticut has a diverse topography, with several strikingly dramatic features. There are hills and small mountains in the west and northwest section of the state, a broad low river plain through which the Connecticut River meanders in the central portion before it surprisingly turns east into a rising, undulating eastern plateau. The main divisions of the state, in fact, are known as the Western Highland, Central Lowland, and Eastern Highland.

The Western Highland

A visitor driving from Danbury, north along U.S. Rte. 7, soon begins to feel that he is in the mountains. The road that runs along a valley floor is flanked in Kent and farther north by steeply rising mountainous slopes. These are the southern ends of the larger and higher ranges of mountains in Massachusetts and Vermont. Those on the western side of the Housatonic can be thought of as the foothills of the Taconic Mountains, which rise farther west in New York State. They are not high, as mountains go, but in the towns of northwestern Connecticut there are peaks that give the industrious hiker a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside. Bear Mountain, in Salisbury, is the highest in the state at 2,322 feet. Others in the northwest are: Gridley, Bald (Ball) Mountain, Mt. Riga, Mt. Tom, Canaan Mountain, and Ivy Mountain.

The eastern part of this highland section is not so mountainous as it is around Coshen and Cornwall. There are, however, many high rugged hills and ridges (running north-south) that interrupt the undulating fields and meadows of the countryside. Talcott Mountain, for example, running through Simsbury, Avon, and Farmington, marks the eastern edge of the highland in that portion of the state.

Two major rivers, the Housatonic and the Naugatuck, drain the region whose highest point is in the northwest corner of the state. The land slopes gradually, about twenty feet per mile, to the shores of Long Island Sound.

Except for nineteenth-century industrial development in the Naugatuck River valley, the Western Highland has largely resisted man's excessive exploitation. One result is the preservation of some of the best scenery in the state and many square miles of virtual wilderness among the hills and mountains.

The Central Lowland

Stretching from the Massachusetts border to Long Island Sound at New Haven is the central lowland of the state. North-south vehicular traffic through Connecticut from New York to Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire follows Interstate 91 up through the lowland from New Haven to Springfield, Massachusetts. The prospect gives the unwary passing visitor the impression that all of Connecticut is a lowland.

It is in this central valley that the best farmland in the state exists and here were its first settlements: Windsor, Wethersfield, and Hartford. To the Indians who formerly lived here, it was a beneficent river plain, and white settlers found it equally so. Tobacco is a major crop in this valley and like river-valley and flood plains the world over it is where human settlements first sprang up.

A peculiar intrusion in the Central Lowland gives the otherwise ordinary river plain a dramatic quality from near the shores of Long Island extending north to the Massachusetts border. These are trap ridges projecting above the almost flat plain and they are hard basaltic rock, resistant to erosion, that project above the

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flood plain of the Central Lowland area. This clifflike, upthrusting, reddish or green rock forms the East Rock and West Rock protrusions near New Haven, the Hanging Hills of Meriden, with a series of others extending north into Massachusetts.

The long broad valley of Connecticut's Central Lowland actually begins far to the north in the narrow valley separating Vermont and New Hampshire through which runs the Connecticut River on its course to Long Island Sound. The valley broadens in Massachusetts and when it reaches Connecticut, it is twenty miles wide; it narrows on the shore to a width of about five miles. The Connecticut River does not follow the lowland to the Sound. Surprisingly it veers east into a valley of the Eastern Highland just south of Middletown.

The Eastern Highland

This region, in the northern part of the state, lies to the east of the Connecticut River. In the southern part, it crosses the river and accounts for the hilly, ledgy character of such towns as Killingworth and Durham. With few exceptions, the Eastern Highland does not resemble the Western Highland. Traveling east from Portland, for example, on state Rte. 66, one is in the Eastern Highland immediately and, as you drive through East Hampton, Marlborough, Hebron, and Columbia, you get the impression that you are in a small boat crossing a sea of long undulating waves. The wide almost symmetrical ridges run north and south and you drive from one crest to a trough and on to the next crest. In many parts of this section north-south roads are laid out along the crests and from these roads you get the feeling of being on top of the entire region.

It is an area of big sky, for nothing obstructs the view. A westering sun hangs for seemingly endless time on the western edge of this world, sending long, slanting rays to illuminate everything. Exceptions to this rhythmic pattern of ridges are found along the easternmost section of the state in the Quinebaug River valley and in the southern part including the towns of Stonington and North Stonington. Here isolated hills intermingle with the rolling meadows and valleys, breaking the obvious pattern of

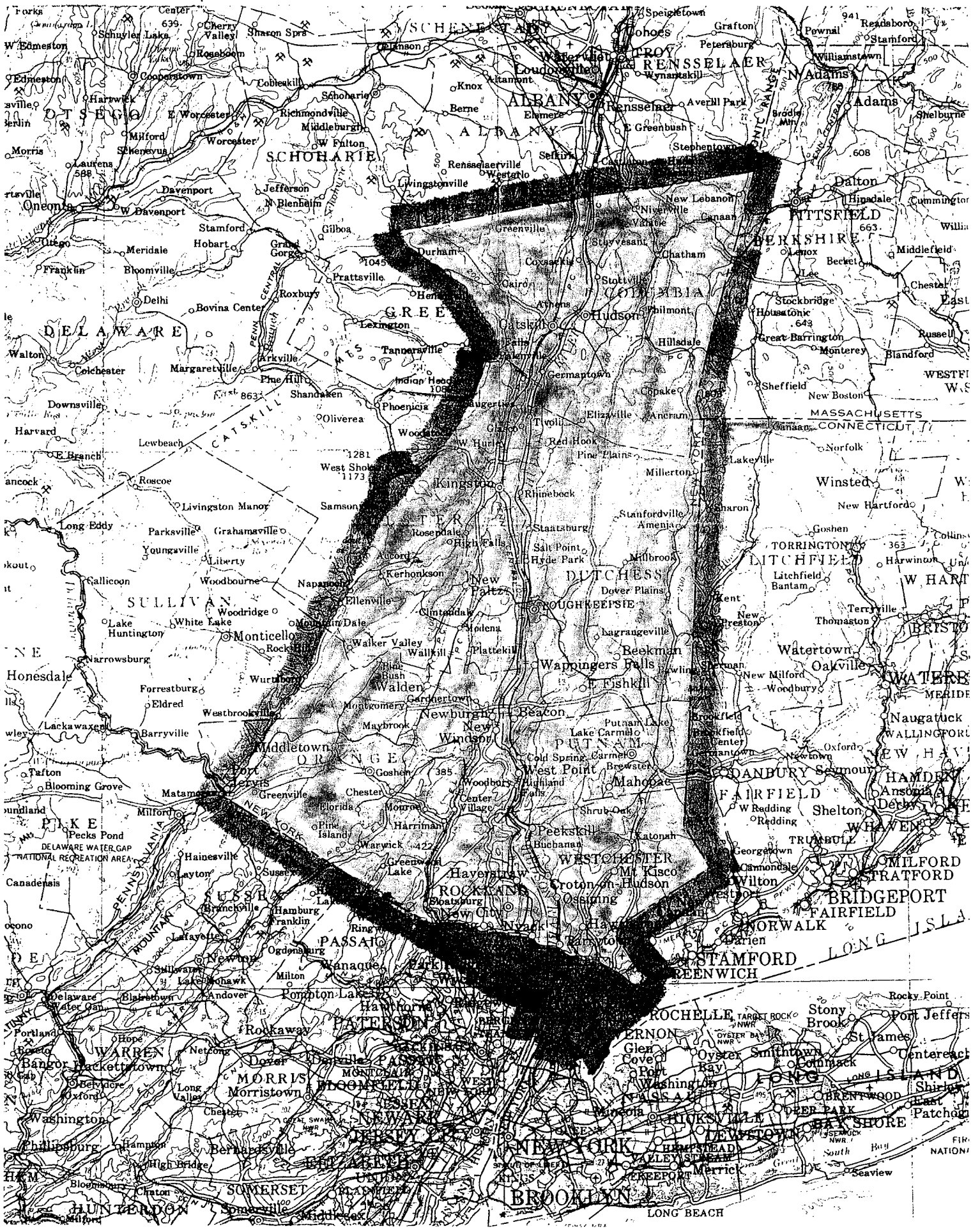
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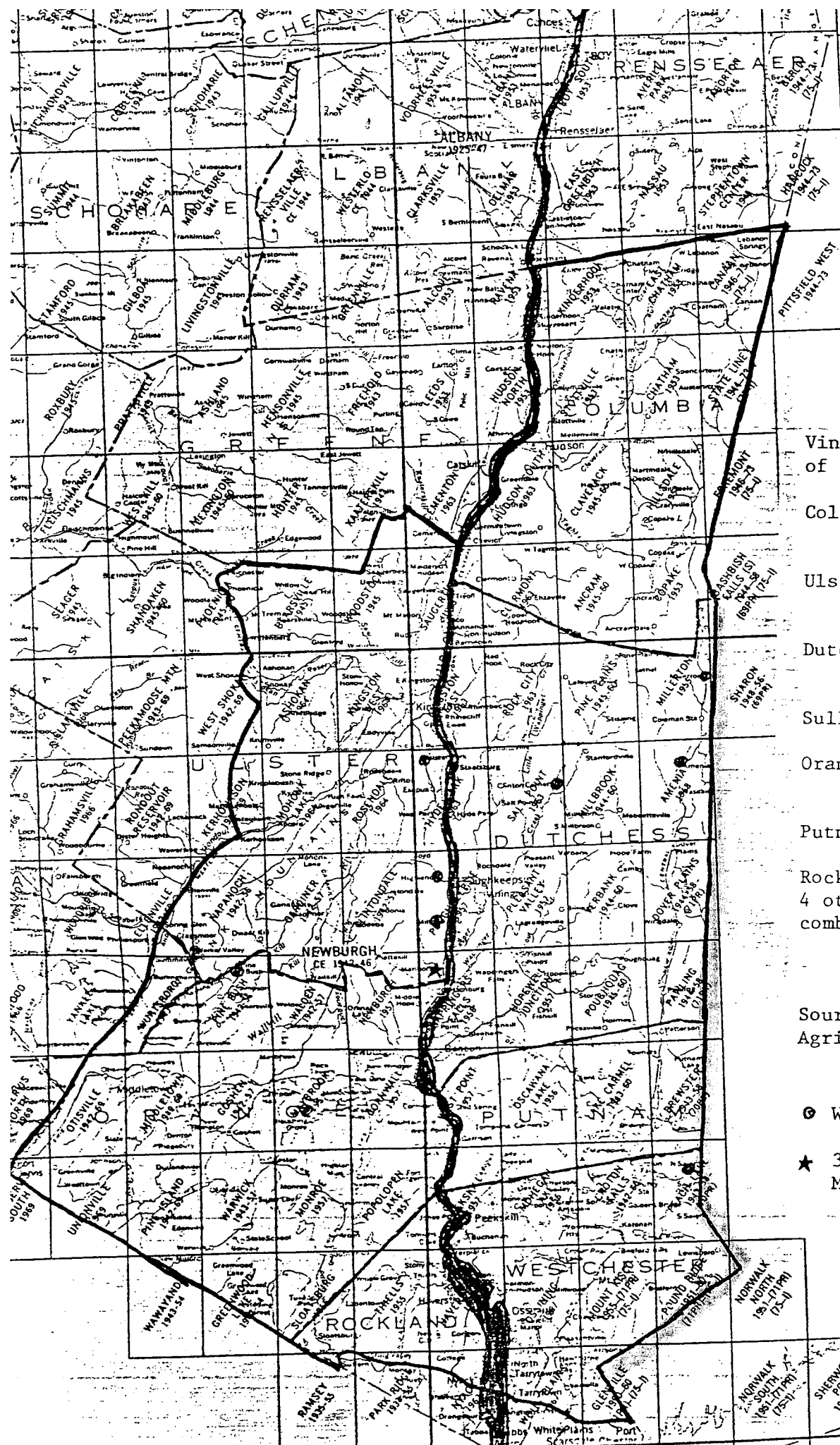
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Hudson River Region





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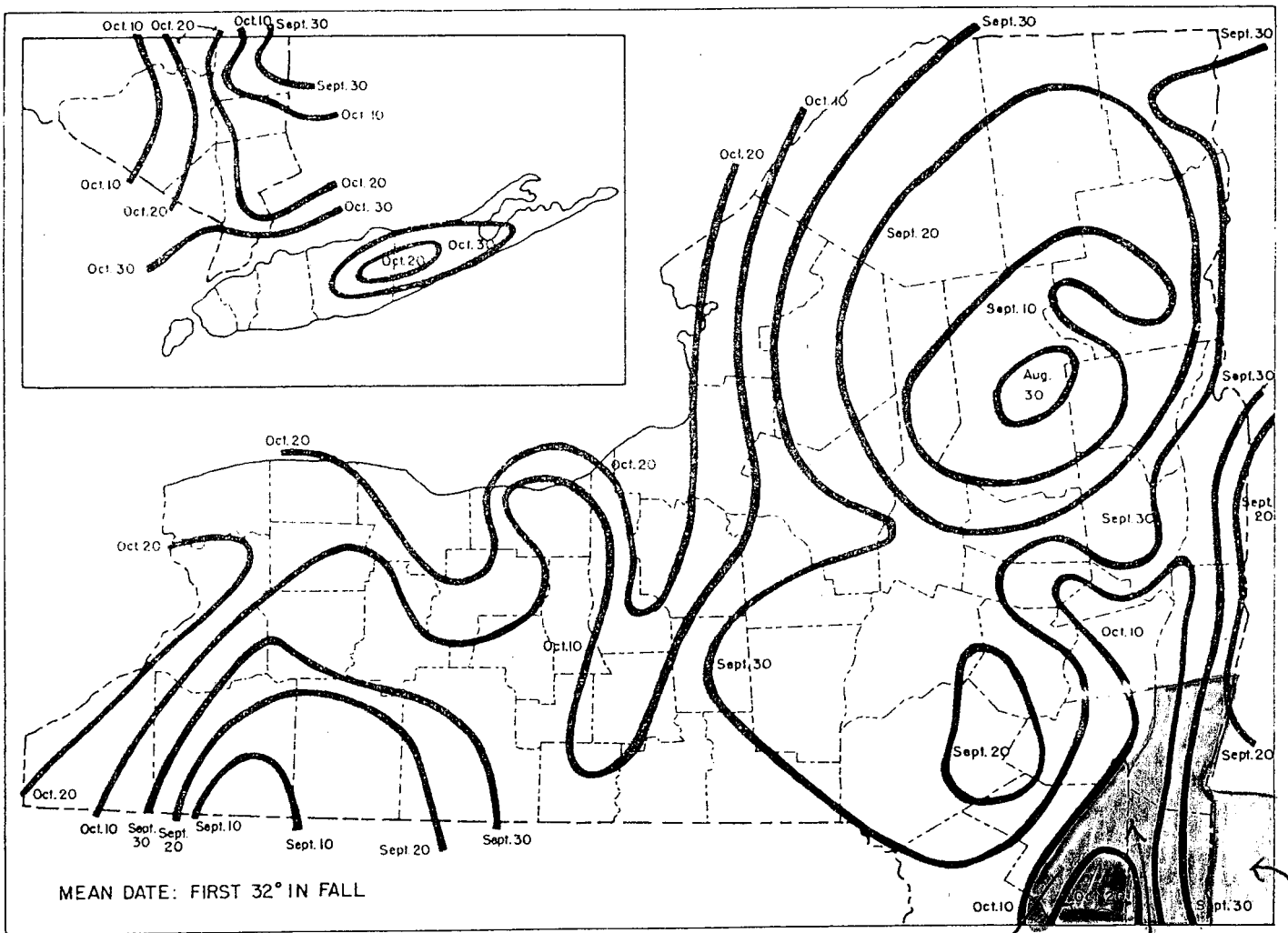
- Vineyards with Sales of \$ 2,500 & Over
- Columbia - 32 Vineyards
372 Acres
 - Ulster - 21 Vineyards
486 Acres
 - Dutchess - 3 Vineyards
44 Acres
 - Sullivan - None
 - Orange - 6 Vineyards
29 Acres
 - Putnam - None
 - Rockland, Westchester and 4 other New York counties combined as all other - 11 Vineyards
47 Acres

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture - 1974 Data

- ⊙ Wineries
- ★ 3 Wineries located in Marlboro, NY

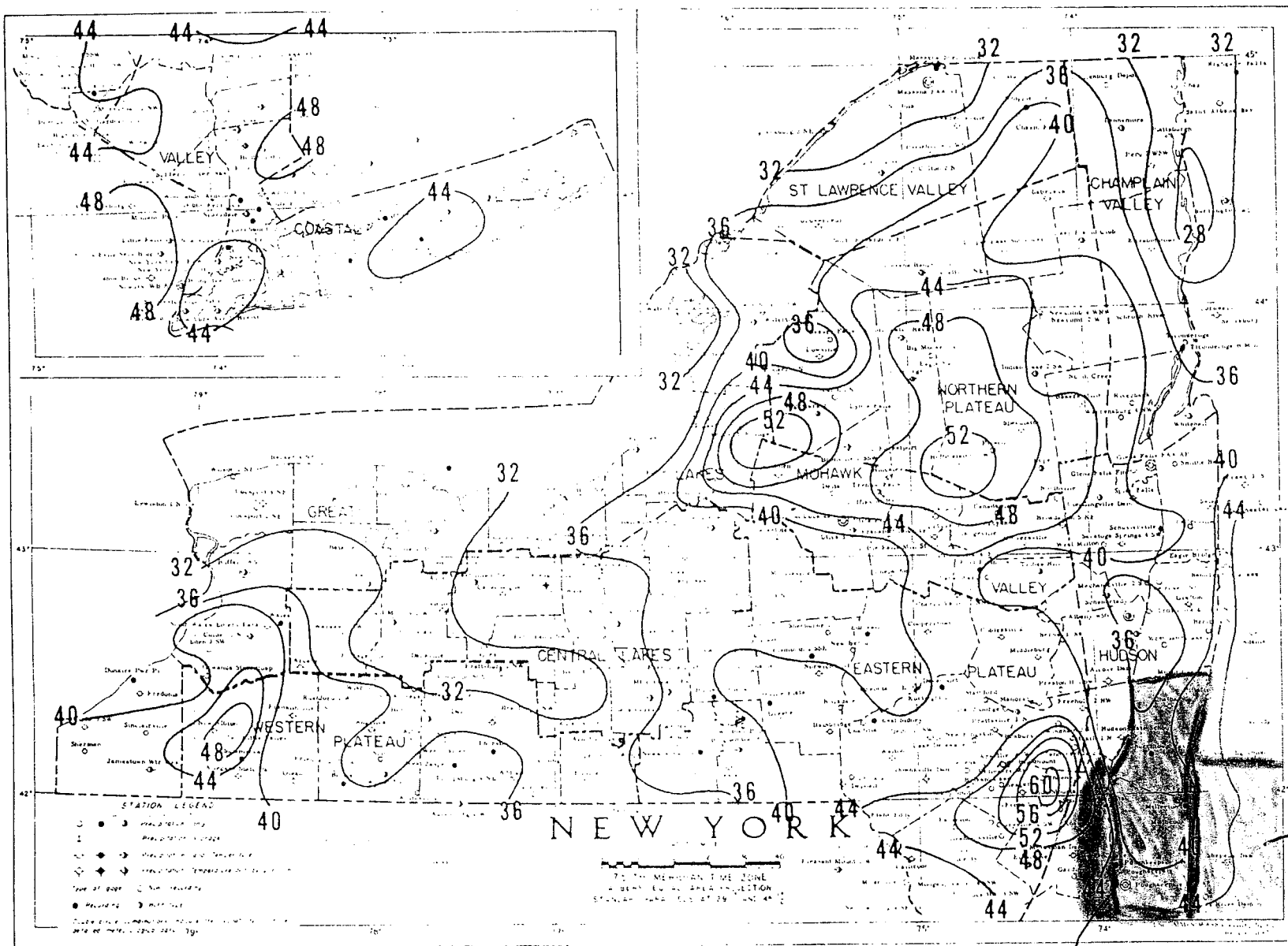
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3 Mean date of first 32° F. or lower temperature in fall.



Hudson River
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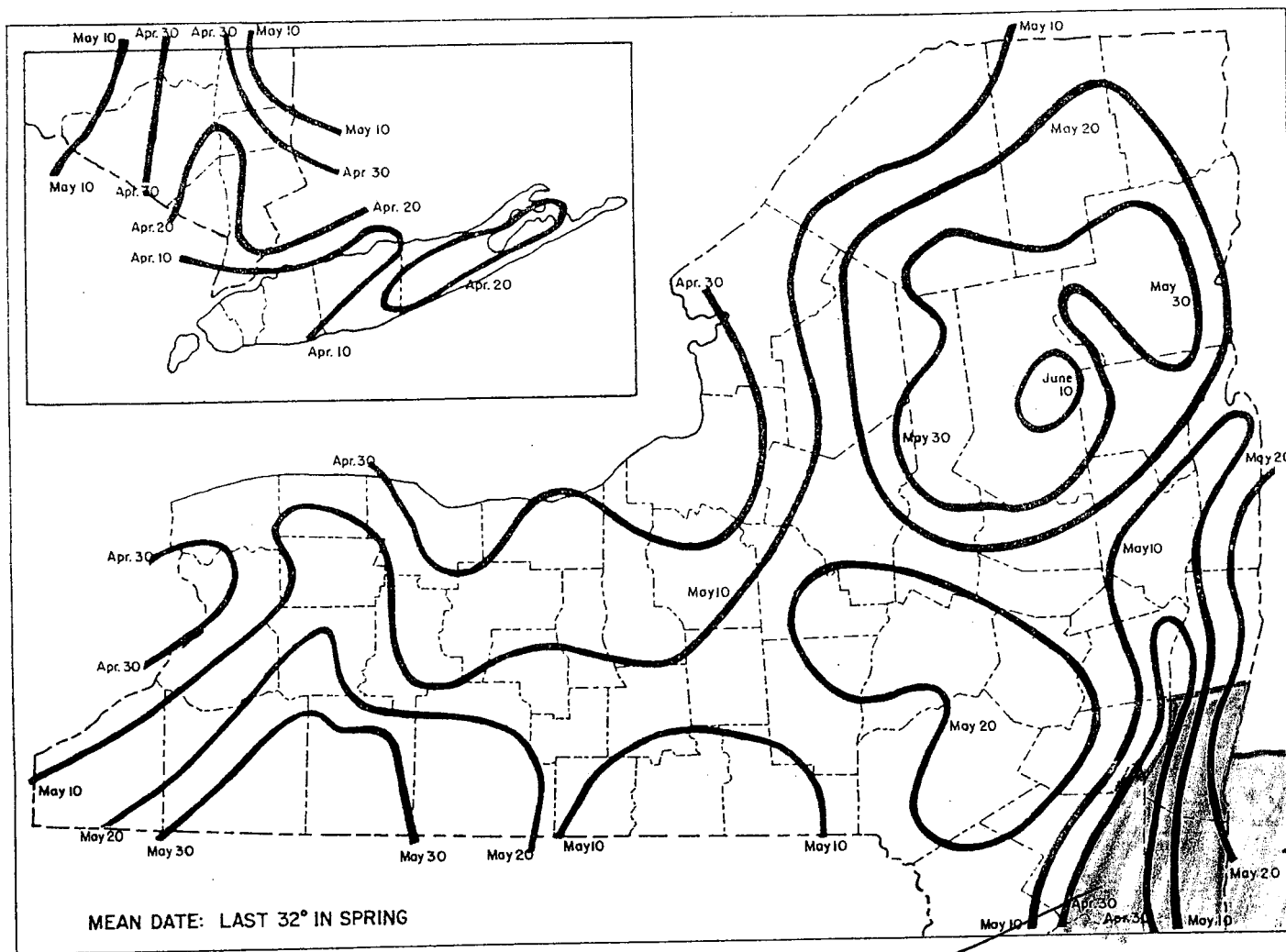


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Data are based on the period 1931-55. Isohyets are drawn through points of approximately equal value. Caution should be used in interpolating on these maps, particularly in mountainous areas.

*Hudson
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2 Mean date of last 32°F. or lower temperature in spring.



HUDSON RIVER REGION

MAY 10 - MAY 20
THRU APR 30

W. CT. HIGHLANDS