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A STORY
OF SAND LAKE

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SAND LAKE, one of 17 towns of Rensselaer County, was formed in the early 1800's. Although there were scattered settlements as early as 1767 as designated on the map of John R. Bleecker, only the last names were given. A family by the name of Adams lived in the southwest part of town, and the Brett farm was located north of the Adams' farm.

It was not until June 9, 1812 that the Legislature created the town of Sand Lake which is bounded on the north by Poestenkill, on the south by Schodack and Nassau, on the east by Berlin and on the west by North and East Greenbush.

The eastern part of the town is mountainous, a large section having an elevation of about 900 feet, covered with hard wood and evergreens.

West Sand Lake, first called Ulineville, was named after Barnhardt Uline who owned the first hotel in town.

Rensselaer County is noted for its beautiful lakes, and Sand Lake Township has its share -- which include Glass, Crooked, Burden (formerly Martin's), and Crystal (originally called Sand Lake); Big Bowman and Little Bowman lie in Taborton, and Reichard Lake is near West Sand Lake Village.

The lakes have become popular summer resorts and at present there are swimming beaches on all of the lakes, with a heated pool on Crooked Lake for year-round use.

The streams are the Wynantskill, which has provided water power all along its banks to the Hudson River and has been a good fishing stream before pollution; the Tsatsawassa flows south.

Glass Lake derived its name from the early glass works situated there. At first, it was called Rensselaer Village. About 1788 Leonard de Neufville, Jan Heerfke and Ferdinand Walfahert who had a

glass factory west of Albany appealed to the people of New York State to become interested in the manufacture of glass. They maintained that the State was being drained of a great deal of money buying English glass, and that their glass was of a better quality.

Elkauah Watson visited this plant and became interested, with others, in establishing a glass factory in Rensselaer County. They provided for 100 shares at \$1,000. a share. The company, seeking experienced workmen, sent William Richmond to England, where, dressed as a wandering bag-pipe player, he visited many glass manufacturing districts and engaged expert workers and sent them back to New York State.

A General Thomas Frothingham was superintendent of this factory and the glass was of good quality -- thus, this was the beginning of glass manufacturing at Glass Lake. From then on, the factory passed into different companies, suffered fires, was rebuilt; but in the year of 1853 a fire again brought to a close glass making here. There are some pieces of this glass in existence, and small pieces are occasionally found on the bottom of the lake when the water is low.

In 1849 the Legislature passed an act to construct a plank road from Albany to Sand Lake, and on into Massachusetts. A company was formed of area citizens and the upkeep was made possible by charging tolls. Today, nearly all roads are paved and a farm to market road is nearly completed.

Frost Myers was the first Postmaster when the first Post Office was established in West Sand Lake in 1840. Burton A. Thomas was the surveyor who laid out many public parks in this and other states, and was one of the prominent men in town. Mr. Thomas surveyed the Albany Rural Cemetery and his son was superintendent of the cemetery for a number of years.

When we hear the autos go whizzing by, it may come to our minds, "How did people travel before the autos?" Yes, there were horses, but not everyone had a horse; then we remember the trolley -- yes, there were trolleys drawn by horses. In Sand Lake James K. Averill, a prominent citizen, organized a syndicate of business men to build a trolley line from Troy to Averill Park, which they called the Troy-New England Railway. The car over this new road made the first trip in September 1895 and continued to serve the public until April 1925. Then a group of citizens started a bus service known as the K.L.W.M. Company. Bus service has continued ever since. Today it is run by the United Traction Company.

The Hastings Brothers started the Hydro-Electric Company in January 1912, thus giving the town the first electricity. In 1927 the franchise rights were sold to the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation, which serves this area today.

In April 1803 Thomas Thompson interested the town's people in organizing a circulating library.

CHURCHES

When our pioneers settled an area in this New World, they first built a church, then next, a school. The first church in Sand Lake was built of logs, and a traveling minister preached here - as he did in several churches in nearby towns, and when no minister was present, a lay preacher gave the sermon.

Here, in Sand Lake, we had our log churches and chapels. The first church was the Lutheran, called Zion, and was built of logs and situated on the now Raymond Cipperley farm, with a cemetery nearby. During the period between 1776 and 1786, it was an offshoot of the Gilead Church in Brunswick, New York.

The cemetery long ago disappeared and the church was transferred to the Village in 1816, the land being given by ~~Ulathias~~ *Hendrick* Youngmans ~~and~~ *au* Barnhardt Uline and Stephen VanRensselaer gave \$500. toward the building of the church. The church was small at first, then an addition was built on; later the interior was remodeled. The church was a beautiful old-style church and unfortunately was struck by lightning and destroyed -- a modern church replaced it.

During the week of June 14 - 21, 1936, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated the 160th year of the founding of the first church in Sand Lake with appropriate ceremony.

About 1837 a division occurred in the Hartwick Synod and the Franckean Synod was formed in which the Zion Church became involved, and finally a second Lutheran church was organized in 1890, called the Second Lutheran Church.

The Methodist churches in Sand Lake were founded about the same time. About the year 1820 a camp meeting was held somewhere in this area and a few interested, and perhaps curious, folks attended and became much interested, especially Sabastian Weatherwax, whose descendants are now members and workers in the church. These folks investigated to find out about Methodism -- its beliefs and ideas of God.

*Voorheesville ?
Albany County*

They held prayer meetings in the house of Zacharia Fellows on the Albany Road, and discussed with others about repentance, forgiveness of sins, and salvation. Members increased, and they finally built a small church on the Fellows farm, which stood across the road from where Harold Weatherwax now lives. In time, a minister was sent to preach their sermons. Finally, the Sand Lake Circuit was established in 1833, which included West Sand Lake, Glass Lake, Oak Hill, Hedding Chapel, Clark's Chapel and the Iron Works. These ministers traveled on horseback, as did the first Circuit Riders -- Asbury, Wesley and Coke in the late 1700's from Baltimore to New England.

On the 4th of December ^{1836?} 1826 a meeting was held for the purpose of incorporating the congregation, and trustees were appointed for the Methodist Episcopal Hedding Chapel. Those elected were William Mott, William N. Martin, Benjamin Sibley, Jr., and Henry Moul.

About 1845 the membership had increased so that a larger church was needed. Then a church was erected in the village of West Sand Lake and a second certificate of incorporation was secured about 1850. The minister in charge served West Sand Lake, Glass House and Oak Hill in 1865, but at the Fourth Quarterly Conference held on February 18, 1869, it was voted that West Sand Lake Church be a separate charge.

In 1894, under the leadership of the Rev. George H. VanDusen, a new church was built which was attached to the previous church, and on September 18, 1894, the church was dedicated. Sylvester Craver was Superintendent of the Sunday School, and Mrs. Clifford Moul was the first President of the newly formed Loyal Berean Class in 1930. In 1941 the name of the church was changed to West Sand Lake Methodist Church.

A pipe organ was built by Robert S. Rowland and dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Melvina Kidder, an active church worker, on November 15, 1927. Mrs. Clarence Wicks was the first organist.

At the death of Mrs. Beryl H. A. Moul in the Fall of 1958, the family presented a memorial in the form of a chapel and library. The original designs were the work of the Pastor, the Reverend Roy B. Severance, representing symbolism of the Church. Many memorial gifts were given by persons other than the family.

The cornerstone for the Church Hall was laid and dedicated August 23, 1953, by the Reverend Robert A. Hammond. The building was completed by 1954, and serves the Sunday School and as a center for recreational and social activities.

The Clark's Chapel was organized in 1799 on a farm belonging to a man named Clark, hence the name. It has long ago been abandoned and is now used as a farm storage place, belonging to a man named Tolcser.

The Presbyterian Church was organized on December 21, 1808, and was located in the present Baptist Church. Then the Baptist Church was organized and both denominations used the one church, calling it the Union Church.

Finally, the Presbyterian congregation decided to erect a church at Sliter's Corners, now Sand Lake, where it is now, and was incorporated in 1835. The Baptist group remained in the Union Church.

The Salem Evangelical Association, which was a German group, met in the parsonage, and organized a church in 1845. Later, in 1849 the group met in the old school-house and dedicated it as a house of worship. As the congregation grew, the present frame church was erected, and in 1865 was dedicated by Bishop J. J. Esher. Trustees were elected the following February in 1867. The services were conducted in German for many years.

There was a church on the mountain, east of West Sand Lake, known as the Mountain Church where the minister preached in the afternoon, but this one has long since been abandoned.

In that part of Sand Lake now known as the Village of Averill Park (named for the Averill family), a group of serious thinking citizens met to discuss the forming of another Methodist Church, since the population had increased in that vicinity. This group had as their leader, A. Douglass McConike. Their plans ended in having revival meetings for a month. Sometimes the attendance was as high as 400 persons.

On March 22, 1874, land was purchased on Burden Lake Road and the construction of a church was begun, using volunteer labor. The church was dedicated on December 31, 1874. Mr. McConike chose the name "Olive Methodist Episcopal Chapel" because "the olive branch is the ancient Biblical symbol of peace." In March of 1870 the church was incorporated under New York State law. In the early days they acquired a Meneeley bell weighing 830 pounds and they have it yet, in their possession.

In 1926 the church was renamed "The Averill Park Methodist Church." The church had the misfortune of having two fires, less than a year apart. After the first fire the congregation decided to

build a new and larger church, dedicating it in December 1936. The second fire was more severe, but the members again rebuilt the church, dedicating it on April 3, 1938.

By 1940 there was greater need for more space for Church School; also the membership had increased, so a new parsonage was built and the old one used for Sunday School purposes and social events.

The old saying "everything goes in threes" was proven true - for fire struck again. This one was traced to a child playing with matches.

The congregation, realizing the growing need of more space both for a Church and for parking area for cars, selected the present location. Here they built a modern, round church - and following Biblical background made it very beautiful and interesting. Membership is increasing and the church has become one of the religious social centers of the village.

Taborton Lutheran Church - A group of German Lutherans living in the eastern part of Sand Lake organized a church, holding the first service in July 1865 - and this is now an active church in the hamlet of Taborton.

The Roman Catholic Church -- St. Henry's -- originated about 1868, and in June 1869 the organization was incorporated under the name of St. Henry's and the church was dedicated October 16, 1870, by the Very Reverend V. B. Wadhams. Like other churches, the Catholics had a church on the mountain, which was called St. Mary's in the Woods, where services were held, and the church and cemetery have been well preserved.

St. Henry's has grown - and an elementary school was built September 1953. The new St. Henry's School is a memorial to William H. Mahoney.

FAIR

I wonder how many people in West Sand Lake remember or know of the old fair grounds -- and yet it was not too long ago when Rensselaer County Fair was held here.

The ground now occupied by the West Sand Lake School was the Fair Grounds in 1907, with a 1/2 mile track -- around which the sulky races whizzed with the high stepping horses. There were no night programs. There was the Judges' stand, and a stand in front

where the entertainment programs were put on. The Fair was held in Lansingburgh and finally transferred to Schaghticoke, where it has developed into a very successful Fair.

There were many saw and grist mills throughout Sand Lake, but one which many now recall, was the Brookner Grist and Cider Mill, which was abandoned in 1956 and made way for the three modern model houses in West Sand Lake Village. Across the Wynantskill from Brookner's was a woolen mill known as the Donaldson Mill which occupied land now the home of James J. Bonesteel, Sr.

FIRE COMPANIES AND AMBULANCE SQUAD

We have in Averill Park and Sand Lake, also in West Sand Lake, Fire Companies with modern, up-to-date fire engines, with volunteer members.

In April 1874 the Village of West Sand Lake purchased a hand-drawn engine, which was also hand-pumped, for \$650., which is kept for exhibition as an antique.

Then, in December 1925, the first motor-driven outfit was purchased. Replacement of engines has taken place when necessary.

Our latest volunteer civic organization is our Sand Lake Ambulance Squad. It is equipped with the latest first aid equipment needed in emergencies. There are about thirty active members who have had advanced Red Cross instructions; both men and women ride the ambulance. The instructions are given by eight different doctors in this vicinity. At present there is a class in training.

The two ambulances are kept in readiness at all times. Members who ride the ambulance are on 24-hour call when they are on duty. Last year (1964) the ambulance answered nearly 400 calls. This service is maintained by voluntary donations.

SCHOOLS

These days when we have had so much agitation concerning our school problems, we do think back and wonder how schools were maintained in the long ago.

The little red school houses surely filled their place in history, and then we hear about academies and institutes of knowledge and the need they filled.

In Sand Lake there were many one-room school houses in the past. Then, too, there were the private schools, one of which was opened about 1825 known as 'Gregory's' and located in Averill Park. In 1854 W. H. Scram built a boarding school for boys called "Sand Lake Collegiate Institute." More than 50 pupils from many states - also some from Cuba - attended. The school was situated where the present Post Office is in Averill Park. Brookside Seminary was conducted by Harvey Boone; and Mrs. Nellie Clark had a private school.

One of the first teachers, we have heard a great deal about, arrived in town carrying his belongings tied in a cotton handkerchief. This man was William L. Marcy, who taught school up in the mountain district. He chopped wood night and morning to pay for his board. We hear of him later, when he became Surrogate of Rensselaer County; then Justice of the Supreme Court; Governor of New York State for three terms; next, New York State Senator; then Secretary of War; and finally, Secretary of State of the United States. He was a graduate of Brown University, and served in the War of 1812.

In 1929 several districts consolidated and formed a Central School which was built between Sand Lake and Averill Park, providing a four-year high school. The capacity was 400 to 500 pupils in all grades and high school. The first principal was Elmer E. Stahlman.

Today the District includes Poestenkill, West Sand Lake, the Miller Hill and Middle (the first building) Schools -- all elementary, and the Junior and Senior High School, with 2565 pupils in attendance this last year (1965), with 129 graduates. A new Junior High School is to be built in the coming years; also to be built are additions to West Sand Lake and Poestenkill Elementary Schools and the new High School.

HOTELS

Ulineville, as West Sand Lake was first called, had two hotels -- one where Wolfe's store and Werger's gas station are today; the other was where the old Miller's Store used to be, now the parking lot. The first tavern keepers were Barnhardt Uline, Nicholas Fellows, and Washington Snyder. At the old Sliter's Corners, now Sand Lake, at about 1800, a hotel was built by Clement Sliter. It was run by several different owners before it was purchased by Crist Crape, but it was better known as Crist Crape's Hotel. It was noted for the fine foods served there, also the quantity. On many a Sunday, as many as 100 people would come for dinner. Mr. Crape had his own farm, raising much of the food he served. When the

roads were changed at Miller Hill, the hotel was torn down -- after more than 150 years of serving the public.

There were many hotels throughout the town -- some were closed, others torn down -- but today there are the Park Hotel at Averill Park; and at Crooked Lake there is the remodeled hotel built long ago by James M. Mosher, now known as the Crooked Lake Hotel and Motels (owned now by A. W. Coon). The hotel at Glass Lake was built by Joseph H. Gabler about 1860, and was later known as the Keeler Hotel. In 1933, J. H. Niebuhr bought and remodeled it. The Glass Lake House is now owned by Edward Evans and caters to all occasions.

SECRET SOCIETIES

In speaking of secret societies, we have heard about the early 'Tin Horns and Calicos' which was indeed a secret society, fighting against the rent demanded by the patroon for farm land. This group was active, and led by a man called 'Big Thunder' who was later revealed to be a very modest and retiring doctor - Dr. Smith A. Boughton - whose home still stands in Alps.

When horses were both valuable and necessary for travel and work, the men in this area founded the 'Sand Lake Association for the Protection Against Horse Thieves,' which is still in existence with a membership of nearly 100.

In the early days, when horses were stolen, a band of out-riders would search for the animal. If not found, the owner was paid two-thirds of the value of the horse.

This association is the oldest east of the Mississippi River. Meetings are held yearly on the second Tuesday in January and election of officers takes place. Cigars are passed around and the afternoon is spent recalling old times and events. If a member fails to attend, he is fined 20 cents -- which, no doubt, goes toward paying for the cigars.

There are many active societies -- some secret, others civic, in the town.

The Grange is one of the oldest secret societies. The first order, No. 233, was organized on January 5, 1875, but was suspended. Then in 1902, Grange No. 949 was organized with Henry J. Best as Master. In 1932 the Grange purchased the old boarding house known as Cedarhurst, converting it into a very attractive Grange Hall. When Ernest Locke was Master in 1953, the Grange celebrated fifty

years of active growth. About 300 Grangers from nearby counties and towns attended. Henry D. Sherwood, Past National Master - and the present State Master - was the speaker. The Grange is active yet.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows was organized in August 1892, and the sister organization was formed in December 1926. Both groups are still very active. The Odd Fellows own their hall.

The Knights of Pythias was organized in March 1896, was very active, and had a large membership. They built a Pythian Temple costing \$12,000. in 1927, decorating the hall with hand painted scenes by Grant Davidson. Pythian Sisters were organized in July 1924. Both organizations gave up meetings and sold the Temple. Some members attend meetings in the city. The building is now occupied by the Bonesteel Furniture Store.

In 1949 James F. Hargrave interested the enterprising men of the town into organizing the Kiwanis Club, which is a community service organization. They meet weekly for dinner, with a speaker for education and entertainment. The membership varies, but generally there are between 35 and 40 members present.

Sand Lake has several well-kept cemeteries. In the Sand Lake Union Cemetery stands a monument erected to the memory of 'Big Thunder' of the anti-rent days, who in private life was Dr. Smith A. Boughton.

The Park situated on Crystal Lake furnishes a wonderful place for outings, both private and for organizations. There is a very fine swimming beach which is open to the public.

I am sure many recall George Fredenburgh, owner and developer of Brookside Park, and the clam bakes he used to serve. The Park is still carrying on, but as clam steams.

Once there was a singing school conducted by Mathias Taylor; also, there was a brass band many years ago.