

WITH SEVERAL LAKES WHICH ATTRACT MANY TO LOCALITY

*Was Formed June 19, 1812, By Act of
Legislature—Its History Has Been One
of Real Progress—William L. Marcy,
Former Governor, Taught School in
Neighborhood.*

BY LENA H. COONS.

In 1609, in the month of the falling leaf, Redskins, wandering along the banks of the "River of the Mountains," saw a great white-winged bird sailing on its bosom. This strange craft proved to be the Halfmoon with Henry Hudson and his crew of Dutch sailors. On his return to Holland he gave such a good report of his journey that the Dutch decided to make settlements in this new country, where furs could be had in abundance.

As a special inducement favorites of the King were given large tracts of land and the title of patroon, providing they would bring to this country 50 settlers and furnish them with homes, tools, a school teacher and a minister, thus establishing the old feudal manor system in the New World.

Next we see the homes of the famous Mohicans destroyed, their fertile cornfields taken and they themselves, with their noted chieftain Uncas, Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans," born of the site of Troy, driven eastward to the valley of the Connecticut to make room for the Dutch for traders.

Here begins the history of Rensselaer County. In 1630 Killian Van Rensselaer, a dealer in diamonds and pearls of Amsterdam, Holland, became patroon of the land lying east and west of the river now so called from its famous explorer. This tract contains about 700,000 acres, to which was given the title of the manor of Rensselaerwyck.

When the first assembly convened under the English regime October 17, 1683, the province of New York was divided into counties. The county of Albany erected by this act included the "colony of Rensselaerwyck, Schoonectade and all villages, neighborhoods and Christian plantations on the east side of Hudson's River." Under an act apportioning the representation in the Legislature, Albany County was divided February 7, 1791, and Rensselaer County came into existence.

Location and Contour.

In 1795 we find that there were eight towns in Rensselaer County. It was not until 1812 that Sand Lake began to have a history as a town, as on June 19 of that year, by an act passed by the Legislature, the towns of Greenbush and Berlin were divided and Sand Lake was formed. Afterward another division set off Postenkill from it. Sand Lake Town now has a little south of the center of the county,

an elevation of nearly 900 feet. The mountainous slopes are covered with hard woods and some evergreen, where the hunter finds a place to indulge in his favorite sport. The town abounds with several fine lakes which attract many visitors to this locality. These attractive bodies of water include Glass, Crooked, Burden or Martin's Lake, and Crystal (Sand Lake). Big Bowman and Little Bowman's Pond lie near together in the eastern part of the town, Reichard's Lake is in the northwestern part.

The principal streams are the Wyanetskill and Tsatsawassa Creek. The former rises in Crooked Lake in the southern part of the town, winding its way northwest until it reaches the Hudson. It furnishes to the towns along its banks one of the finest waterpowers in Eastern New York. The Tsatsawassa drains the southern part of the town.

The soil is a hard sterile clay in the mountainous parts, while in the central and western portions we find a gravelly loam and some sand. Agriculture, grazing and manufacturing have always been carried on, Sand Lake long being famous for its strawberries and small fruits.

To this picturesque setting of mountains, lakes, and rivers, came sturdy Dutch farmers from Holland; and settlements which were to grow and live were made at West Sand Lake (originally called Ulmes in honor of Barnhardt Uhlein), Glass House (Rensselaer Village), Sand Lake, South Sand Lake and Taborton.

Pioneer Settlement.

In 1767 there were but two families, so far as known, residing in the town. One of these was a family named Adams residing in the southern part of the town. The other was a family named Brett (or Bradt) who had a home a little north of the Adamses. A few years later Abram Bristol located on the west side of Burden Lake and Ephraim Quimby on the east, near the farm of Mr. Brett. Andreas Wederwax and Philip Carpenter settled. In 1790 Abram Frere settled on the Ephraim Hastings farm at West Sand Lake. Near him and not much later settled Jacob Nicholas and Zachariah Fellows. Other Dutch and English pioneer families following were Wynant Van Alstyne, John Bowman, William Butts, John Carmichael, Philip Feller, Nicholas Fellows, Philip Gardner, Job Gilbert, William Gowlin, Elias Gregory, Stephen Gregory, Andreas Miller, Henry Miller, Henry Moul, Eleazer Peck, Michael Rykert, Frederick Shaver, Joseph H. Sibbey, Solomon Taylor, and

annals of the town we find those to be three commoners, when well "yoked" and ringed. April 3, 1821, it was voted that a fine of \$1 dollar shall be collected on every man who does not cut his Canada thistles in the open land on his farm or on the highway running through or adjoining the same, provided he is notified that there is thistles growing.

Marcy Rose to Fame.

Many residents have attained distinction for their services to the public. It would be difficult to single out any for special mention. There is account, however, of one young man who made his appearance in the town of Sand Lake with his clothes tied up in a cotton handkerchief. He was directed to a farm "on the mountain," where he chopped wood nights and mornings to pay for his board, while he taught school in the neighborhood. That young man, whose name was William L. Marcy, though familiarly known as "Patches" Marcy, from this humble beginning became Surrogate of Rensselaer County, Justice of the Supreme Court, Governor, New York State Senator, Secretary of War, and finally Secretary of the State of the United States.

The present town officers are: Clifford C. Hastings, Supervisor; Lillian Kennedy, Town Clerk; Albert Flaxmeyer, Superintendent of Highways; Christopher Smander, Superintendent of Welfare; Assessors, Elmer Hogle, Fred Cropsey and Edward Harriman; Collector, Albert Teal, and Justices of the Peace, Henry Karl, George Clapper, Clyde D. Rescott and John Pohl.

The first census in 1814 showed a population of 3,293 and eight slaves.

West Sand Lake.

As we ride along the concrete road in our automobile from De-freestville, entering the town of Sand Lake from the west, we stop on the brow of Hayner's Hill—to look at the scene before us. We see the Wynantskill wending its way to the Hudson, and snuggled in between wooded slopes a little village, with church spires over-topping the green of the elm-bordered streets. We cannot but exclaim with the poet Goldsmith, "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain." In this picturesque setting we see the attractive village of West Sand Lake.

Abram Frere settled on the land that was formerly owned by Epharim Hastings. Here at an early date, 1768, William Carpenter and Joshua Lockwood built the first grist mill. This waterpower has been utilized almost continually since that time. In later years it was the power station for the Troy and New England railway. Then in January, 1912, the Wynantskill Hydro Electric Co. was formed by Clifford C. Hastings and brother, Douglas Hastings, thus giving to the town the first electric lights.

The first line ran from the power station to West Sand Lake, then it was extended to Averill Park, gradually taking in the whole town and part of North Greenbush and Poestenkill. In 1927 their franchise rights were sold to the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation.

After the consolidation the Sand Lake Springs, Inc., with Douglas Hastings, President, was organized in February, 1930, for the distribution of spring water, this plant being located near the old mill. In February, 1933, this old landmark was razed by fire. The old brick building housing the power plant was sold to the town, and a tool house and town garage was erected by the town southeast of Averill Park in the summer of 1933, to provide work for the unemployed during the economic depression that had begun in 1929.

Barnhart Uline and Nicholas Fellows kept the first tavern in the settlement. In 1840 Burton Thomas, Jacob Hagaman and Frost Myers petitioned Washington for a Post-office in the village. Mr. Myers became the first Postmaster, keeping

the mail in a cupboard in the wagon shed. Lillian Clippely says: "Had the mail from Wynantskill in little canvas bag for \$39 a year. Charles J. Ryemiller is the present Postmaster."

Barnhart Uline had a grist mill on the present site of Brookner mill on the Wynantskill and on the place now owned by Prof. E. M. Clark was a yarn mill. Further up the river, before the Revolutionary War, Joseph H. Sipperly built a sawmill, this being the site of the present Thermo Mills.

West Sand Lake had four churches. The oldest, Zion Lutheran, was founded in 1790. A log meeting house was built on the farm now owned by Irving Clippely, about a mile southwest of the village. The old tombstones in the cemetery nearby may yet be seen. In 1861 the old building was removed to the present site on the Troy Road near the "corners." In 1837 because of a difference of opinions in moral questions, part of the congregation withdrew and formed the Second Lutheran Church, with Rev. John D. Lawyer as pastor. In 1927 the congregation voted to reunite with the mother church. Rev. George H. Kling was the last pastor. The name Trinity Lutheran Church was given to the united churches. Rev. Harry W. Sammond is now the pastor. In the rear of this church is the old cemetery. To provide for its upkeep and improvement, the Trinity Lutheran Association was formed May 14, 1929.

The Society of Methodists was formed earlier, and about 1825 a small house of worship erected, which took the name of Methodist Episcopal Hedding Chapel. Rev. Samuel Howat was one of the first ministers. In 1845 the present edifice was erected. On May 13, 1854, a second certificate of incorporation was secured and it became the Methodist Episcopal Church of West Sand Lake. Rev. Marcus W. Fuller is its present pastor.

The Salem Evangelical Church (German) was organized in 1845 at the present parsonage, at that time the old Lutheran Church of Rev. J. J. Margquart. In 1849 the old school house built in 1840 was dedicated as a house of worship. The present frame edifice was erected in 1886 at a cost of \$7,000. Rev. Lester W. Driftmyer is the pastor at this time.

Organizations.

The oldest civic organization is the West Sand Lake Volunteer Fire Company, which was organized during the year 1872. In April, 1874, a hand-drawn apparatus, which can still be used for emergency purposes, was purchased from the S. Button Company of Waterford for \$650. February 17, 1876, incorporation took place and it became known as the "Incorporated Fire District of West Sand Lake." On December 9, 1925, a modern motor-driven pumper apparatus was purchased at a cost of \$5,035. The only original charter member of this organization in active service is John Schumann. Mr. Schumann, joining before incorporation, has been for 60 years an active fireman. Burton A. Thomas was President and Treasurer of the first board. The Chairman of Commissioners at this time is Clyde D. Rescott and Foreman of the company is Nelson A. Brookner.

According to records West Sand Lake Grange No. 283 was the first Grange organized in Rensselaer County. The date of organization was January 5, 1875. The first Master was Henry D. Uline. After a period of suspension it was reorganized as Grange No. 949. In the summer of 1932 the Grange purchased the property formerly known as Cedarhurst, a large boarding house, situated on the old Clippely farm on the banks of the Wynantskill. This has been converted into a pretty home for this fraternal order. Fayette Thomas, the oldest living Past Master, became a member in the fall of 1875. His nephew, Fayette Bink, now occupies the position of

West Sand Lake
Organizations

folded

The Pythian Sisters were organized in 1894 with Lodges at Averill Park, Sand Lake and Glass Lake. Joseph N. Weger is now Chancellor Commander. In July, 1924 the Pythian Sisters were organized with Mrs. Phoebe Cure, Most Excellent Chief. The present incumbent is Miss Sara Weger. In the fall of 1927 the Knights built the attractive Pythian Temple, where they now hold their meetings, at a cost of \$12,000.

The Elmwood Cemetery Association was formed in 1906 with Fayette Thomas, President, and Madison Youngmans, Treasurer.

From 1908, for about six years, the Rensselaer County Fair Association held its annual fair on the grounds in the rear of the Methodist Church. This land since having been purchased by the district for the site of a contemplated new school house.

The first district school house in the western part of the town was built on the present site in 1840. The one now being used was erected in 1848. In 1854 a high grade select school was established in the basement of the Second Lutheran Church but long since suspended.

Another step forward in the history of education took place in August 21, 1934, when the voters of the school district met at Firemen's Hall and voted to consolidate the district of West Sand Lake with the central school district embracing the town. A new schoolhouse for the first six grades will be built on the site known as the "old fair grounds." The seventh and eighth grade pupils will be transported by bus to Averill Park. The school board is composed of the following Trustees: Harold Harrington, Chairman; Mrs. Charles R. Miller and Rutherford Hayner, Clerk; James H. Bailey, Collector; Mabel Bame, Treasurer; Ann Liaback.

Burton A. Thomas, the oldest child of Peleg R. and Free Love Thomas, was born in Stephentown July 25, 1809, early became identified with the history of the village, being one of the earliest surveyors of the county, laying out many public roads in this and other states, and surveying a large portion of Rensselaer County and surrounding territory. One of the earliest lawyers in the town was Cornelius Snyder.

A paper known as the Lutheran Herald was established at West Sand Lake in the year 1844 by Rev. Henry L. Dix, being long since suspended.

Averill Park-Sand Lake

The village of Averill Park, picturesque located on the banks of the Wyanetskill and near the beautiful sheet of water, Crystal Lake, was named so in honor of the Averill family, of whom James A. Averill was a prominent member. Through his efforts, the Averill Park Land Improvement Co. was organized; this added to the fact that Averill Park was the northeast terminus of the Troy & New England Railway, helped to develop it more rapidly than other villages of the town. Because of their close proximity to the beautiful chain of lakes, Averill Park, Sand Lake and Glasshouse villages are becoming important summer places. As the village of Averill Park merges with Sand Lake so their history is interwoven.

Thomas and Calvin Thompson made an early settlement in Sand Lake village. One of the earliest physicians was Dr. Uriah M. Gregory, who located near Sand Lake village, while his brothers, Gus and Gregory was a Methodist minister. Daniel M. a glass manufacturer and storekeeper, and Eben a homemaker and tanner. About 1790 William Butz, who had served in the Revolutionary War, located in Sand Lake and John Upham, another patriot, located near Rocked Lake.

The name of the first tavern kept is unknown. The second

one was kept by Thomas Thompson. This property became a popular resort as all the stages stopped there. Later proprietors of this hotel were Franklin Averill, James H. Gaby and Joseph B. Ryder. About 1820 a hotel was built at Sliter's Corners (Sand Lake) by Clement Sliter after whom the hamlet was first named. This old landmark still stands and dispenses hospitality under the genial proprietorship of Crist Crappe for the last 50 years. Mr. Crappe died April 23, 1932, at the age of 83 years.

Averill Park has since earliest days, because of its valuable water power, been a manufacturing village. In 1800 near the present site of Faith Mill, Thomas Thompson erected a saw mill and a forge. A woolen mill was built on this site in 1825 but the building was destroyed by fire. In 1836 it is recorded that there were two sawmill factories, two cotton factories, a grist mill, a saw mill and a large tannery. In March, 1875, Andrew J. Smart of Troy conducted a paper mill which produced 700 tons of paper annually. Today manufacturing of knit wear is carried on by the Faith Knitting Mills, Inc. with William D. Mahony, the President, as the General Manager.

The oldest church organization in this vicinity was the First Presbyterian Society, which was organized December 21, 1808, with Rev. John Keyes, pastor. The present house of worship was erected near Sand Lake Corners in 1835. Previous to this date the members worshiped in the church belonging to the Baptist congregation, the building being known as the Union Church. The latter society was incorporated in 1831 with Rev. Calvin C. Williams as minister. The present pastor is Rev. John O. Stephens.

The Methodist Society had a church at this point about the year 1830. It has been impossible to find a record of the first pastor. The present incumbent is Rev. W. L. Wees. St. Henry's Roman Catholic Church had its origin about 1838, when services were first held at the house of M. Cusack, by Rev. H. Hopkins of Troy. In 1869 a church was erected and dedicated, the first services being held April 17, 1870. The first priest in charge was Rev. Father Gabriels. Rev. Charles Windblat is in charge of the parish at present.

The village has always taken an active interest in education. One of the first schools stood about half way between Averill Park and Sand Lake. There were several well conducted private schools, one of these kept by Dr. Joseph H. Elmore, and another by Mr. Jaynes at Sliter's Corners. The Sand Lake Academy, established in 1843 and conducted by Mr. Weston in the present Ryder hotel, was the first grade school in town. The Sand Lake Collegiate Institute, which occupied the old Averill Hotel, was the first preparatory school in town. It was organized in 1852 by William H. Seram.

By far the greatest educational movement came in 1929, when the districts of Averill Park and Sand Lake, consolidating with adjoining districts, built a Central School on the flat between these two villages. Provision for a four-year High School course was made. The original building was erected at a cost of \$124,000, with a seating capacity of 426. The first principal was Elmer H. Stahlman. In June, 1933, there were seven High School and eight grade teachers and a total enrollment of 423 pupils. In order to make room for ever increasing numbers a new addition is under way at this time. August, 1934, which will cost \$40,000, with additional space for 126 pupils.

Second Library in County

In April, 1908, \$100 having been subscribed, the Sand Lake Library Association was organized in the house of Thomas Thompson, eight years after Troy Library was

organized. This was a circulating library.

One of the representative institutions in the town is the Mutual Fire Insurance Society of Sand Lake, Poestenkill, Berlin and Stephentown, organized March 21, 1878. The first President was Joel B. Peck, with Arthur M. Peck, Secretary. The office is located at Sand Lake.

The Averill Park and Sand Lake Fire Company was organized October 2, 1900, with 35 charter members. Ebenezer Martin was the first Foreman. In 1902 a hand-drawn two-wheel chemical apparatus was purchased, and in 1907 a hand-drawn gasoline pumper. In 1927 an up-to-date motor-driven Seagraves pumper was purchased at a cost of \$9,000. A smaller apparatus for emergency work will be purchased this coming winter. The present Foreman is Frank Hack.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows' local lodge was organized August 18, 1892, with Alfred Shaver as the first Noble Grand. Charles Raver of Averill Park now occupies that position. December 13, 1924, the sister organization of the Rebekahs was formed, with Mrs. Willard Van Der Zee the first Noble Grand. The present incumbent is Mrs. William Hayner.

The Sand Lake Union Cemetery

Association was organized June 7, 1847, at the house of Calvin Sliter. In 1840 William P. Van Rensselaer conveyed to the association three acres in the vicinity of Sliter's Corners. Another acre was obtained in 1847 from Eben W. Carmichael, which, with the former ground, was neatly laid out into a rural cemetery.

On the shores of Crystal Lake is a pretty amusement park and picnic grounds. In the autumn of 1898, on the return of the Second Regiment of Troy from Tampa, Florida, at the close of the Spanish-American War, this spot was used as an encampment ground.

Glass Lake

Glass Lake, a short distance from Sand Lake village, was early known as Rensselaer Village, when the Rensselaer glass factory was in operation on the banks of Glass Lake, formerly known as Glass House Lake.

In 1800 Stephen Van Rensselaer sold to a glass manufacturing company of Sloans, Albany County, 5,000 acres of land near Glass Lake. One of the principal promoters was James Kane. Buildings were erected and under the supervision of Major Thomas Frothingham a fine quality of glass was made. As the sand in that vicinity later proved too dark, it was obtained from Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The manufacture of cylinder and window glass continued until 1853, when the buildings were destroyed by fire. The business was conducted at that time by A. R. and S. H. Fox.

One of the pioneer families was Gottlieb Gatter. He, with his six sons, engaged in glass making. Daniel M. Gregory had a store near the glass works and in 1820 John Bowers had a tavern there.

Other Hamlets

South Sand Lake (Sliters Postoffice) is a small hamlet in the southwestern part of the town. About 1840 John Miller built a hotel here. The Postoffice was established in 1852.

Taborton, located near Big and Little Bowman Ponds, in the mountainous district in the northeastern part of the town, attracts many summer visitors. Early settlers were David and George Horton, who had a store and sawmill at this place.

While this town does not boast of being the oldest town, its citizens may look with pride at its past record, and the present generation will continue to keep Sand Lake's name among the first as loyal, progressive and ever achieving.