

The Troy Times  
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### Old Sand Lake

Interesting Reminiscences by a <sup>Veteran</sup> ~~Veteran~~ Contributor  
The Days of the Pioneers-The Strong Men of That Time-  
Then and Now.

The recent meeting of the Albany Presbytery at Sand Lake leads to some reminiscences of the church in which it was held. The latter was built in 1836, and during its construction the congregation held worship in the ballroom of Elster's Tavern; the leader in this movement being Colonel Knowlson. Previously the Presbyterians and Baptists had used jointly the church at Old Sand Lake (now Averill Park), but this was found so undesirable that a separation took place, and the latter acquired its sole use. The pillar in the Baptist Society at that time was Isaac B. Fox, a self-made man who started with a sawmill but became a merchant at Glass Lake and was noted for probity and liberality. He bequeathed the Baptist Church \$1,000, equal to thrice that sum at present, and was succeeded in church work by his son Albert, whose excellence is still fresh in memory.

### Origin of Name

Glass Lake derives its name from a peculiar <sup>feature</sup> ~~feature~~ in its history. Shortly after the War of 1812 a company was formed for the purpose of making glass and as a large factory was built its <sup>origin</sup> ~~origin~~ in the lake was thus called. The cheapness of wood was a great inducement, and the Superintendent was Thomas Frothingham, a Revolutionary soldier, who enlisted as a private but reached the rank of Major in the Continental Army and who also held a seat in the State Senate. This factory was several years in operation, but could not stand the hard times which followed the war, and hence passed into the possession of its chief creditor, Andrew Brown of Albany. Mr. Brown's daughter and only child married Col. Richard J. Knowlson, and the newly wedded pair established their home at Glass Lake. It was said that they were the handsomest pair ever married in Albany (within memory) and their lives were of equal beauty. Colonel Knowlson spent a great deal of money improving his farm, which was a great benefit to the working class.

### <sup>Folk</sup> ~~Folk~~ Poor Folks Lived

Times were very hard then, and everybody was painfully poor. The chief staple of life was Indian meal and potatoes, with pork if they had been able to raise a pig. Few owned watches or even clocks, and time was reckoned "sun an hour high" or "two hours," as the case might be. When prayer meetings were announced from the pulpit at "early candle light" every family was expected to bring a candle. Laboring men went in rags, as clothing was very dear, and the best make at the factory in Old Sand Lake was satinot, a combination of wool and cotton now out of use. Yes, too poor even for tobacco, ... was but little used.

## The Coal Burners

The next money then was ...the coal burners on the mountains. They were a peculiar class and had but little intercourse with the people in the valley. A coal burner would dig a pit, filling it with wood and then making a fire which turned it into charcoal, and the latter found ready sale in Troy or Albany. A "coal bin" (as it was generally called) held 100 bushels, which brought from six to ten cents a bushel, and hence the coal burners had more money than farmers, but this business long since passed away.

## Stage Times

It was an exciting scene when the stage came rolling in and stopped at Spencer's Hotel for breakfast. This was the chief transit between Troy and Boston, and one day an extra coach arrived containing one passenger, a stout-built man with a very impressive face, and as he stepped out at Spencer's he was recognized from his portraits as Daniel Webster, who took this way to reach Boston. Such an extra must have cost him \$40, but Daniel Webster never stinted for money. The regular time for such a journey was two days, but Webster probably went faster.

## A Sand Lake Artist

One of the men of note reared in Sand Lake was William Lockwood, the artist. He early displayed this taste and on maturity felt the ambition to paint a great picture. He changed his name to Heybrandt Lockwood and determined to depict "The Last Judgement" - doing other work for a support. At last he finished his great picture, which was exhibited in New York and was bought for the Baltimore Cathedral. The price was \$15,000, but the painter was then worn out and died soon afterward - but he was the only American artist that attempted that tremendous subject. Some of Lockwood's pictures are still preserved at Sand Lake.

## Common Resort

Fox's store was the common resort for evenings, as a New York paper was taken, and the news discussed. Mr. Fox also had interesting books, among which I found good reading, and then Colonel Knowlson also had a fine library, where I found one book as rare that I may mention its name: "Carysall or the Adventures of a Guinea," which in its day made a sensation. Sand Lake then had its little Anti-Slavery Society, and this at a time when such meetings were rubbed in Troy, and the Knowlsons, Eliters and Gregorys, with others kept up the agitation. Dr. Charles Gregory then made pills, which had a good sale, and his house is still standing, and so are three of the Knowlsons, the Foses, the Butts, and other prominent men of that day. Fishing, too, was then good, and Crooked Lake was so full of perch that I have caught them two at a time. A fisherman (William Hart) used to send a basketful often by the stage to Troy, where they brought eight cents a pound - ready dressed - which paid him well.

## A Summer Resort Now

Now little people then expected Sand Lake to become a summer resort, for then nobody went anywhere, but now the lake country is doing better service than ever, and Sand Lake is much superior to the

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