

TABORTON

The village of Taborton is located in the northeastern part of the Town of Sand Lake, at an elevation of some 1450 feet. This small mountainous community saw its first settlers in the 1770's.

During the 200 years since, it has had at least three different names. "East Sand Lake" was its first designation, then came "Georgetown" in honor of George Horton who was born there on October 20, 1792. And finally it was named "Taborton", meaning "promised land", the name we all know today.

Early in the 1800's lumbering became big business on Taborton Mountain. George Horton, Gideon Butts and Richard Knowlson formed one of the first lumber companies. Saw-mills sprang up everywhere. First powered by water, later by steam, they made sizeable fortunes for their owners.

During the Revolution or shortly after, Timothy Bowerman or Bowman as we know it today settled near the two ponds that now bear the family name, "Bowman".

In January of 1852, the Rev. G. Bochert, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ghent, Columbia County, visited this area for the purpose of inviting the German-speaking natives to worship in the small log meeting house standing on the wooded hillside between two ponds, Big and Little Bowman. It was decided to have Rev. Bochert conduct services in the meeting house every two weeks.

The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church was built about 1860. The lot on which the church was built was sold with the stipulation that it be used and occupied for the Evangelical Protestant Meeting House and for no other purpose whatever.

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Welcome to East Sand Lake, Georgetown, Steam Mill, now Taborton.

It was originally part of the VanRensselaer Land Grant and sparsely settled.

The first road, a military highway for the French and Indian War, was built through this area from Bath (Rensselaer), to Deerfield, Mass in 1752. In his book Taconic Trails, E.T. Heald states that George Washington was said to have traveled this road to take command of the Revolutionary troops at Cambridge. (But this has not been proven).

About 1825, the Eastern Turnpike was built.

Taborton was loaded with hardwood trees, and there were several saw mills in the area. Most were run by water power. The foundation of one, just off Eastern Turnpike, is still intact. This one was run by water from a stream flowing north out of Big Bowman Pond.

The first steam saw mill in the area was operated by Gideon Butts, George Horton & Richard Knowlson at the eastern end of Little Bowman Pond. This was in business around the 1820's. The land holdings of George Horton (900 acres) gave this area the name "Georgetown", and sometime later was also referred to as "Steam Mill".

It is interesting to note, Big Bowman is a tributary of the Poestenkill, and Little Bowman is a tributary of the Tatsawassa, flowing in a southerly direction.



Another water powered mill was located near the corner of Taborton and Teal Road. It was operated by Conrad Teal, and later converted to steam by his son John Teal.

Besides the lumber industry, a very significant part of the area's commerce was charcoal burning. Hardwood makes the best charcoal, and Taborton hardwood charcoal kept the Rensselaer Glass Factory at Glass Lake operating, and later on, the steel mills and stove foundries in Troy. It was also used for home heating and

for cooking. In Taborton, charcoal burning was a lucrative cash business for the early settlers and lasted until a little more than a decade ago.

Firewood was also cut and sold in the city.

Ice houses were common, and ice was also sold in Troy. The ice was packed in sawdust to insulate against melting, and was also transported by wagon.

A caravan of wagons would leave the mountain Sunday afternoon, bound for the city, and would return late Monday night.

Collars and cuffs are what made Troy famous, but these were also handmade in the homes of people in Rensselaer County, Taborton included. The whole family worked to earn what was referred to as "Hard Money", used for the necessary evil of paying taxes.

Barter could work well with grocers and suppliers, but the tax collector wanted cash.

Ferns were picked in the fall and sold to florists for floral decoration. They would put 25 ferns together and tie them up.

They were paid 50 cents per 1000.

Princess pine and mountain laurel were also picked and made into roping for the holidays. Also evergreens for Christmas wreathes and grave blankets.

The cranberry is a native American wetland fruit. The berries thrive in a special kind of wetland and soil. Such is the case of Taborton's Cranberry Vly.

Blueberry picking has always been a source of income for the mountain people in early August. The best blueberry pies in the world come from right here.

Ginseng root was picked for medicine, and also goldthread was picked and sold as an effective mouthwash and gargle.

If you want a real American experience, you have to try Spruce gum. It became the first commercial chewing gum.

Traditional farming was also carried on, but with the rocky soil and short growing season, this proved to be difficult.

Around 1879, a fourth class Post Office came to Taborton. It was in the home of Conrad Malkmer on Little Bowman. The Post Office was run first by Rev. Ewald of Zion Church. Mr. Malkmer took over the Post Office and also ran a store at this location. His ledger says that John Timber bought an axe for one dollar and a box of tobacco for 45 cents. Then he paid the balance of his bill with twenty dollars worth of charcoal. Later, his daughter Minnie ran the business. The Post Office closed in 1944.

There were three one-room schoolhouses on Taborton Mountain. The Lower Taborton School, or Miller School, or District 9, were names for the schoolhouse that is about 1½ miles up from Sliters Corners, or what we now call Sand Lake.

The second school was the Taborton School (School 11) on the shore of Little Bowman (right behind us). This was built in 1847

and resembled a little red barn. Reverend Egli of Zion Church taught here.

The third school was just over the Town of Berlin line. All three schools started around 1850 and closed with the formation of the Central School District.

There have been two churches on the mountain, one is right here, the Zion's UCC, and the other was a Methodist on Taborton Road, near the intersection of Kipple Road. The Methodist Church has been long gone, but this church celebrated it's <sup>150<sup>th</sup></sup>~~175<sup>th</sup>~~ anniversary last year.

At the South end of Big Bowman there is a windmill that was used for pumping water. It is still there today, at the end of Lawson Road.

We have a pic of Mary Momrow's Grill, or later called the Taborton House. And a good time was had by all.

Big Bowman Pond, Taborton

Kipple Rock, highest elevation in the town. - Where's Ernie?

Gundrum Homestead on Eastern Turnpike, c. 1925.