

History of North Hoosick

In the 1700s a wooden bridge crossed the White Creek, then known by its Indian name SanCoick. The most recent bridge at this site was known as the Dublin Bridge. Today it has been replaced with a culvert.

Tory Van Schaick owned a grist mill powered by the waters of White Creek at the time of the Revolutionary War. The mill was caught up in a skirmish August 14,1777, between a British force led by Colonel Baum and a detachment from the American Army under the command of Colonel Gregg. The British seized the contents of the grist mill and the Americans destroyed the bridge, causing Colonel Baum to send for help.

The mill that Mr. Van Schaick owned became known as the "Old Grist Mill." During the 1800s it was sold several times. The mill fell into disrepair and had to be rebuilt. John H. Burk, whose father rebuilt the mill, was the last owner. He said that he had all the work he could do supplying feed for the local people. Feed for animals and flour for home use was made from crops of wheat, oats, and buckwheat - common grains grown on the surrounding farms. The Grist Mill burned and was not rebuilt. Along with the grist mill was a sawmill and cider mill. Their owners and exact locations have not been recorded. Some of these mills operated into the early 1900s.

There were two other mills built on White Creek upstream from the mills at Dublin Bridge. One mill was built near the White Creek Pool by Walter Shurwood in the early 1930s. He ran a beater for making paper and experimented with improving the equipment for the paper industry. The second was a scythe mill built where the White Creek comes close to the Cobble Hill Road (Now Robert Cooks' farm) since the 1960s. The mill operated until the use of horse drawn mowing machines became popular.

J. G. Byers owned a farm located from the north side of Cobble Hill Road to the property now owned by John Calhoun (The Auction barn) north of Telford Road. The well on the property was pure enough to be used in the making of soda water. The J. G. Byers Bottling Company was established in 1877. The Company produced and marketed bottled soda water that became very popular. Some of the bottles with the company name embossed on them are on display at the Louis Miller Museum in Hoosick Falls. When the bottling company ceased to operate, J. G. Byers' son Gordon ran the farm for some years. The farmhouse was located at the corner of St. Croix Road and Route 67. It was sold to Fred Dowling and Jean Seffler in the 1930s or early 1940s. The house became a restaurant and bar known as "The Old Byers House." Mr. Dowling left the business and later Jean sold it to a Mr. Safford Rudnick who enlarged it and renamed it The Merry-Go-Round Bar. Unfortunately, it burned June 10, 1966.

The mills at Dublin Bridge were not the only mills in North Hoosick in the 1800s.(Just a short distance downstream from the railroad bridge that cross the Walloomsac River was a dam that powered a carding mill that was built about 1807. After a time it became a woolen factory then owned by Timothy McNamara. The mill was sold in 1840 to Thomas and Samuel Fowler, who ran

it as a flannel factory. The next owner was O. R. Burnham and Son of New York who converted it into a shawl mill. The mill burned in 1876.

Not far from this site, there was a chair factory located on property now owned by Ira Fisk. Chairs were manufactured there around the turn of the century. The family of Emily Hunter has three of these chairs in their possession. The factory was powered by the water at the same dam as the former woolen mill. After the chair manufacturing, it became a paint factory.

The home of the R. H. Stevens family of the Stevens and Thompson Mills was located on Route 22 a short distance south of the now existing North Hoosick Fire House. It was built in 1879-80. Fred Dowling bought the Stevens home and ran a restaurant and bar there named The Crestwood. It burned in 1950 and was not rebuilt.

The home of the George Thompson family was built in 1880. It was a large house of wood and an elaborate barn of brick. This was located on Route 22 next to the Stevens Mansion. The property was bought by Larry and Judith Peterson in 1965. They made their home there until it burned on December 26, 1980. They remodeled the barn and made it their home and are living there now.

In 1880, Perry Eldridge built a hotel that is located in North Hoosick at the intersection of Routes 22 and 67. He sold it to Charles Hathaway in 1907. Its name became the Hathaway Hotel. In 1909, Ida B. Delaney bought it and the name, Delaneys' Hotel, remains today. The next owner was Fredrick Goss, who acquired the hotel in 1960. An outbuilding burned and Mr. Goss's son lost his life in the flames. Franklin and William Tate bought the hotel. They sold it to Donald Walker in 1972 and he ran it until he sold it to Marjorie Johnson. Ms. Johnson operated it as a tavern, but it was unsuccessful and closed in 1985. Financial difficulties arose between Mr. Walker, Ms. Johnson, and Franklin Tate, who held the mortgage. After the problems were settled it was sold again for the sixth time. Lee and Vechae Chronolai owned the hotel from 1985 until 1994. During this time it remained empty.

Controversy arose when the Stewart's Ice Cream Company became interested in the property. Many local people and some from other localities protested. Larry and Diane Stevens were able to purchase it in 1994. Through their efforts, it is listed on the Historical Register. They have been in the process of restoring it to its original condition with hopes of operating it as a bread and breakfast. The outside has been repaired and painted and work is continuing inside. The building has become an icon for the community.

A short distance upstream from the woolen mills, a dam was built for the mill that was eventually owned by Stevens and Thompson Company, who manufactured wallpaper. The wooden dam was replaced in 1910 by a concrete dam that is there today. The houses on Baby Lane were built and owned by the Stevens and Thompson Paper Mill Company.

White-Flomatic Corporation, formed in 1933, moved from its location in Hoosick Falls to the Stevens and Thompson Paper Mill in 1943. In 1959 the name was changed to Flomatic Corporation. The company manufactured brass valves for water systems, casting and finishing their

products at that location. In 1990, the foundry had to be closed due to environmental restrictions. In 1996, the corporation, including the business office, sales and production, moved from North Hoosick to Glens Falls.

In 1885 Hugh Allen and son Edward Allen established a general store they operated for about 15 years. They sold groceries and dry goods, stocking almost everything one needed in that period of time. This store was located near the North Hoosick Community Center building. This building is now owned by Mr. Fox who runs an antique shop. When the Allen's operated the store the road intersection was located near the store, a short distance south of where it is located today. Across the road from Allen's store was a hotel run by Pat Word. Mr. Flynn, a barber, had his barber shop in the hotel. When the new road was built in 1932 the hotel was moved to its present location next to the Post Office. It is now a private residence. The North Hoosick Post Office is the second smallest Post Office in the United States.

A shoe shop was located north of the hotel. The railroad depot was located near Joan Hathaway's home and is said to have been standing in 1928. There were two blacksmith shops in the area. One was located in a barn that was part of the property that the late Thomas and Ellie Allen owned until their death. Their home was located just east of Urbon Transmission garage today.

Thomas Allen, who was a cousin of Ed Allen, ran a store, meat market and gas station where Stewart's is today. He delivered meat throughout the area with horse and wagon. Mr. Harry N. Weir, who lived in the large stone house on White Creek Road, ran the Texaco Oil Company for this area. He bought Thomas Allen's business. It remained a gas station until it was sold to Stewart's Ice Cream Company in 1994.

F. Chase Hathaway owned property on Route 67 across from where Jean's Dinner is located today. He ran a store there until John and Eleanor Houston bought it and ran a general store, including groceries and dry goods. It burned on September 5, 1967, but they continued the business in a little building that was on their property. John Houston died in 1968 and Eleanor sold the property to a Mr. Parker who built a small building and ran the store until he moved to Florida. There is a used car lot located there now. Tony Urbon now owns the property and operates a garage and automatic transmission shop next to the car lot.

F. Chase Hathaway also built the existing drive-in theater that opened in 1947. It was still in operation in 2001. It is one of only 500 outdoor theaters in the United States. In their heyday there were 24 drive-ins in the Capital Region and now there are only six.

Franklin Tate built a diner next to Delaney's Hotel and ran it for several years. It was operated by several managers and is now owned and operated by Kelly Abbott and her brother, Kevin Sausville.

Compiled by Gilbert E. Wright, 2001. My sources were Ira Fisk, Helen Hogan and Emily Hunter who resided in North Hoosick all of their lives.

July 2007: Marilyn Robinson from White Creek has provided some additional information on the Byars family:

I read in the North Hoosick Fireman's history that J. G. Byars (He was known as the Governor and was the first to come to the area). The first we knew of him he lived next to White Flomatic (in the house straight through the old bridge) but documents state that he owned "an old, well-preserved two story frame house where advance guards of British troops were housed, as well as two or three farms along the river. On the farm where the old house stood was a large spring..."

There is a lot about the family that we don't know, a lot we know but can't prove and some just common sense. For example, the great spring which fed the Soda House was supposed to have come from the Byars Farm. The Bottle Works was in business in 1877, but Grandpa Byars didn't buy the farm until at least 1905, and if water ever came from there it was a long ditch because the farm ran from Cobble Hill to the North Hoosick Road and not to Calhoun's farm. We don't Believe Grandpa (J. G. Byars III) ever owned the soda house but rented it. Grandpa came from Westerly, RI in 1889 with his first wife but we do not know where they lived. If the soda business was started in 1877 (Which is the date on the bottles), it was started by J. G. Byars along with his son J.G. Byars, Jr. We do not know what the G. stands for and we also are not certain how closely related these two were to James Gilbraith Byars (My grandfather known as J.G. Byars, III.) We do know that he came to North Hoosick in 1889. We do not know where he lived but my father was born in the double house that was next to the Governor's on Factory Hill. He was born in 1905 and my aunt was born in 1907 in the house that was later the Merry-go-round, so we assume Grandpa bought that farm between 1905 and 1907.

It seems that all the Byars were born in Scotland. A relative, Kenneth Adler, had research done there and found that almost all of them were spinners in the woolen mills before they came to North Hoosick. There may have been a sheeting mill somewhere on Factory Hill in the 1800's which caused them to come to North Hoosick from Connecticut and R.I.

There is a picture of the soda house with several family member which we recognize, making us think they might have been living in the house next door. We do know that Margaret Byars Kimpton Spaulding lived in that house in the early 1900's. Also, the farm was sold to Fred Dowling and Jean Sheffer and opened as the merry-go-round. Sometime after Fred left to open the Crestwood it was sold and it was quite some time after that it was opened as the Old Byars House featuring the Merry-Go-Round bar. My Dad, Gordon Bears, ran the farm from the time he was in high school until 1935 when we moved to White Creek. My grandfather never was a farmer but hired someone to run the farm before Dad took it over. We left North Hoosick several years before the bottling works went out of business and Dad worked there only to deliver soda and beer locally. My mother and Dad lived in the house next to the farm from the time they were married until we moved to White Creek.

We keep searching and thinking and maybe someday we will get this all pieced together correctly. Thanks to you for wanting to help get things on an even keel and if you have any information to share please let me know.

By Marilyn Robinson, 2007