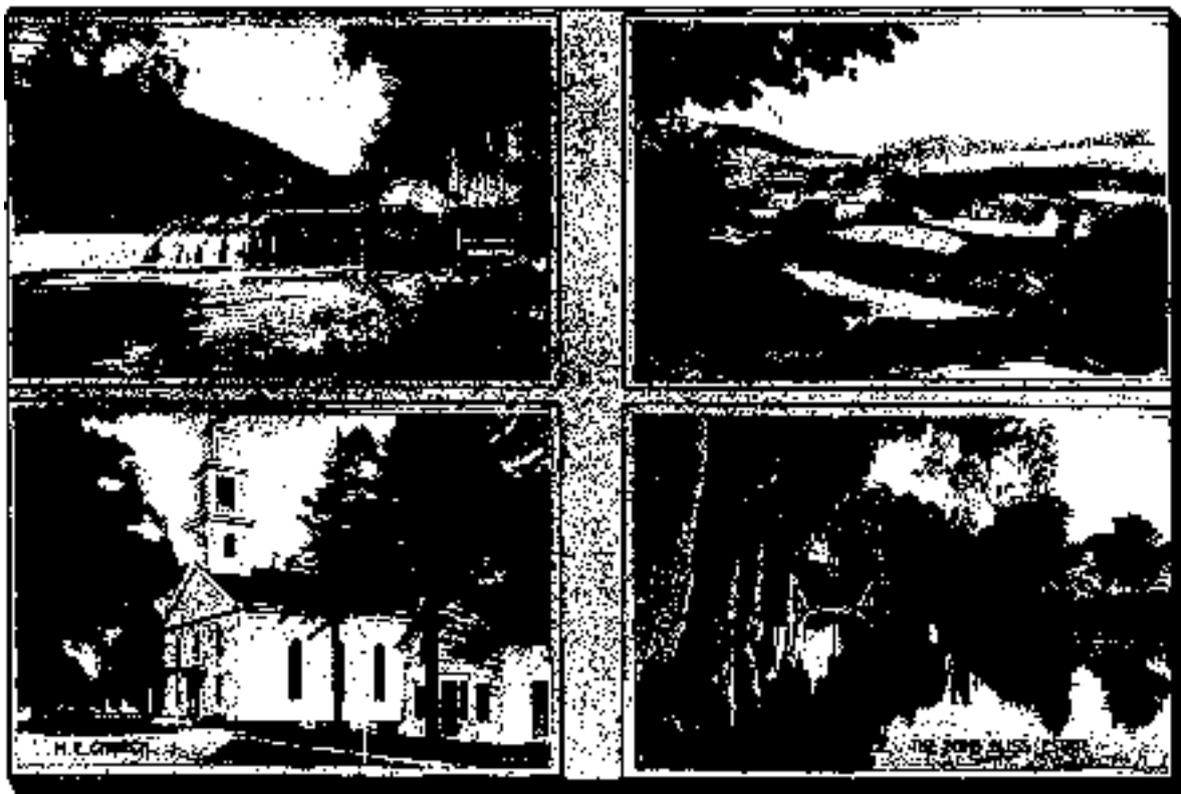


Fly Creek Area Yesteryear



FLY CREEK AREA YESTERYEAR

The Fly Creek Area in Post Cards and Pictures

Published by the Fly Creek Area Historical Society 1990

This booklet is a Decentralization Program which is made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council of the Arts. In Otsego County the Decentralization Program is administered by the Upper Catskill Community Council of the Arts. The booklet is also made possible with funds provided by a very generous anonymous donor.

Acknowledgements

The Fly Creek Area Historical Society wishes to thank the New York State Historical Association for permission to reproduce ten pictures from its special collection. We also thank those members who loaned pictures for this book: Hazel Talbot (Mrs. Hess); Ronald Bouton; Francis A. Clark; Larry Gardner; Sally Rezen (Mrs. Paul); Peter Martin; and Robert Jones.

A special thanks to Franklyn Rollins for enlarging and reducing many photos to fit our book; to Bill Deane and Florence Michaels (Mrs. Paul) for writing and editing the captions; and Peter Martin and Maxine Potts (Mrs. Howard), who spent many hours with Mr. Deane and Mrs. Michaels in selecting and arranging the pictures.

We are grateful to all who helped in any way to get this project completed.

Dedication:

We dedicate this book to the Memory of

HOWARD W. POTTS
Grand Lecturer Emeritus
Grand Lodge, State of New York
Free & Accepted Masons

His was a life of Dedication, Dependability and
Talent in promoting Brotherhood among his Brethren.



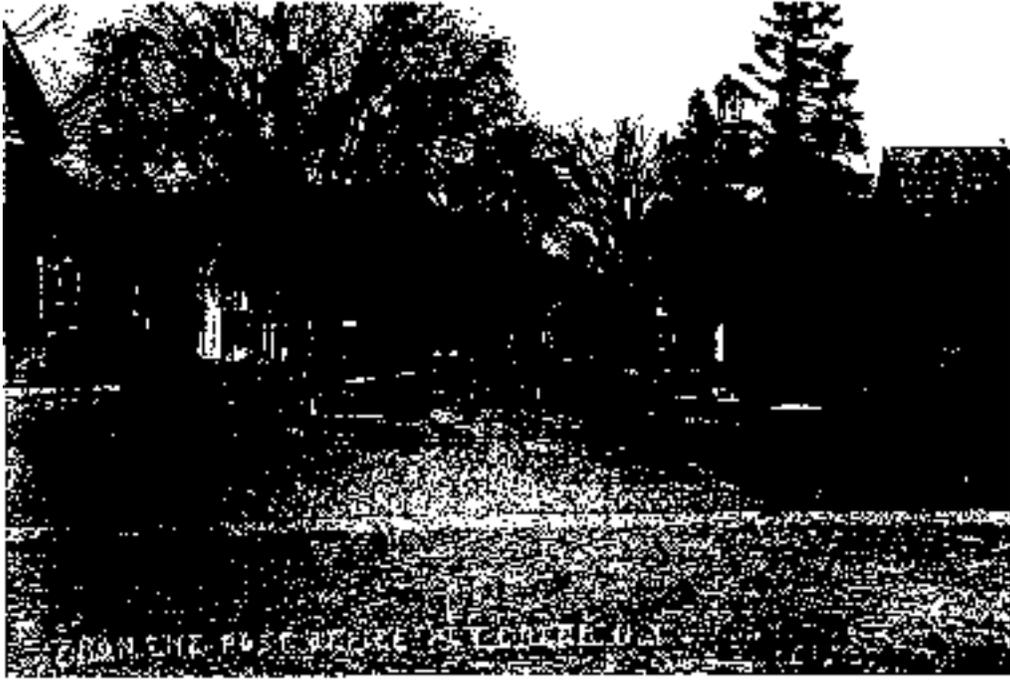
COURTESY OF NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Located just off Route 28, atop the first hill west of Cooperstown, this building was owned between 1851-87 by George Potts, great-grandfather of Howard Potts (to whose memory this book is dedicated). Around 1900, it was purchased by the Brown family, and in 1943 it became the fish and Game Club House, still owned by the Cooperstown Sportsmen's Association, Inc. Behind the house was the Cooperstown airport.



COURTESY OF NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Located on Route 28, just west of the Oaks Creek bridge, this hotel was owned by Charles Potts and his brother over a century ago. It was the site of such gala events as New Year's Eve parties, wedding receptions, and subscription dances, with the wives preparing delicious repasts. Drinks were served at the beautiful mahogany bar. The hotel changed hands several times, and was last known as the Oakville Hotel. It was razed in 1989, land is now the site of the Bennett Marine outlet.



A view of Church Street, looking northward. The second building on the left is the current Post Office; across the street from it is the Fly Creek United Methodist Church.



Route 28 is a dirt road in this view looking east from the four-corners. The house on the far left belonged to the parents of Jean Turner Knapp. The Fly Creek Foundry and machine shops were located just past the bridge on the left, before the current location of Hahn's Fly Creek Antiques (formerly the Bliss home, and the Murdock home). The building on the right was the Kinney Hotel.



Route 28 West, showing H.J. Aufmuth Sons General Store (far right) before it was moved back from the road. The Post Office was in this building at one time, and George Bailey's undertaking supplies were stored in the basement.



Sibley's Store, now the Crossroads Inn. The awning advertises hats and caps, cigars and tobacco, among other things. On the far left is the Badger homestead.

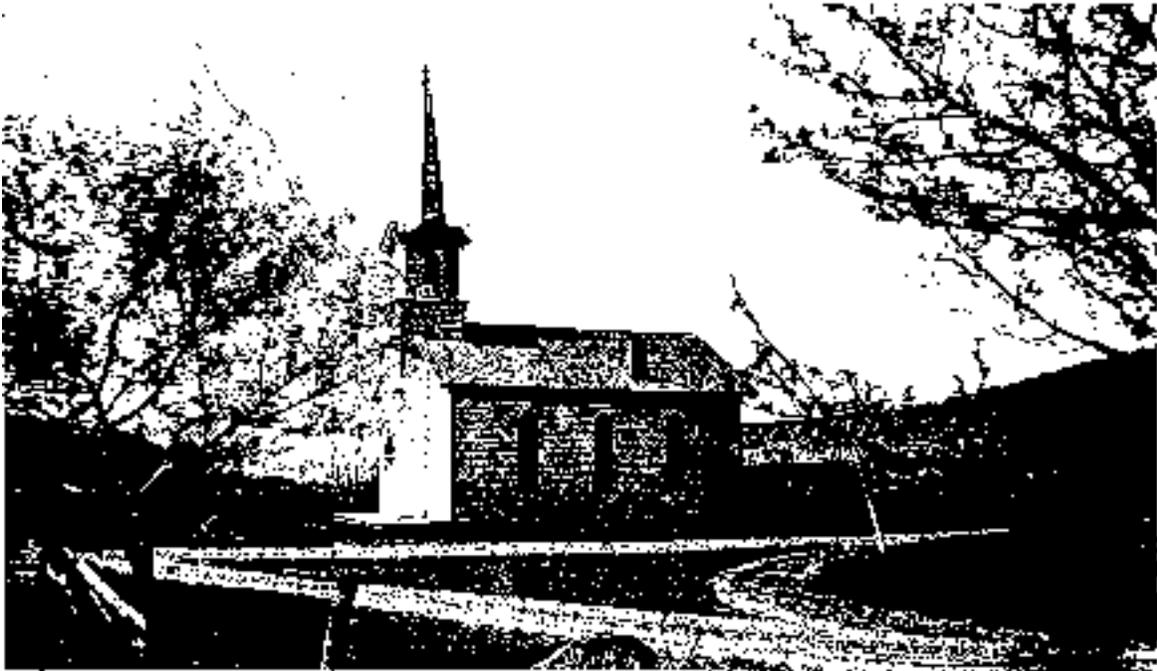


COURTESY OF NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Sprague District School was housed in this one-room schoolhouse, with no electricity or running water, for 155 years beginning 1791. It was located seven miles north of Fly Creek, on County Road 26, just north of the Sprague Cemetery and near the present home of Clyde Yakos. The building was moved to Fly Creek in 1949, where it stands just below the old town buildings on County Road 26.



George Johnson, Sr. built a saw mill and grist mill on Oaks Creek at Johnson's Mills (now Cat Town) about 1795-96. One of these mills is pictured above. The grist mill ceased operation around 1903 and was torn down in 1915. The saw mill was operated by Johnson's grandson until 1920.



The Fly Creek Valley Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1882, about six miles north of Fly Creek. Built on 41 square rods of land (acquired for one dollar), the building was erected at a cost of \$2000, and dedicated by Rev. A. J. Cook on January 3, 1884. The church was discontinued when Rev. W. H. Swope left in 1926.



This S. H. EldFrkin hop farm was located 3½ miles north of Fly Creek, just beyond the Knapp farm on County Road 26. Hops were a very important crop in area agriculture until the early twentieth century.



The Presbyterian Church was located north of the cemetery, across Cemetery Road from the Grange Hall. It was organized in 1828 with 21 members, and Rev. Samuel Manning was the first pastor. The building, capacity 200, was erected in 1840 at a cost of \$1600. It was razed in 1937, four years after services were discontinued. Clinton Truax salvaged the timbers to construct a home on the site, and a bronze plaque on a boulder reminds passersby about the former church.



Rev. Seth Mattison organized the First Methodist Episcopal Society of Fly Creek in 1810. It was incorporated in 1835, and the building was erected (cost: \$1500) and dedicated on June 9, 1838. Various improvements have been made to the church building, the only one still standing in Fly Creek.



The Universalist Church, located adjacent to the south side of the Grange Hall, was organized in 1805, the first church of this denomination in New York state. The building was erected in 1820, remodeled in 1861, and razed a half-century ago. Among the preachers were E. E. Peck, Edmund Jarvis, and Charles Kramer, who served both the Cooperstown and Fly Creek Churches until services were discontinued at the latter (1925).

The parsonage, to the left of the United Methodist Church, was erected c. 1901. Rev. W. H. Swope was the last resident pastor of the Otsego Circuit in 1927, when Fly Creek and Cooperstown were united as one charge. The parsonage was rented out, then sold; it was repurchased in 1979 and used by resident pastors Thomas Doyle and Michael Willis. The parsonage was rented out from 1988-90.



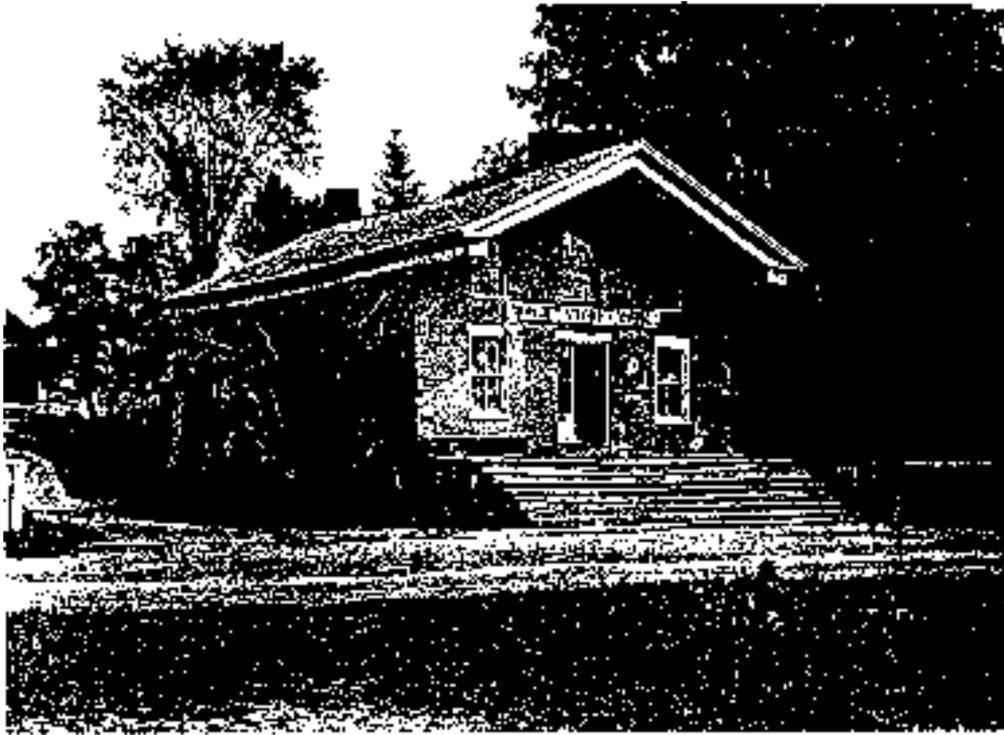


This Oakville blacksmith shop was located across Route 28 from Bouton's Greenhouses, left of the drive of Ruth Yule's former property. The last smith was named Proctor.

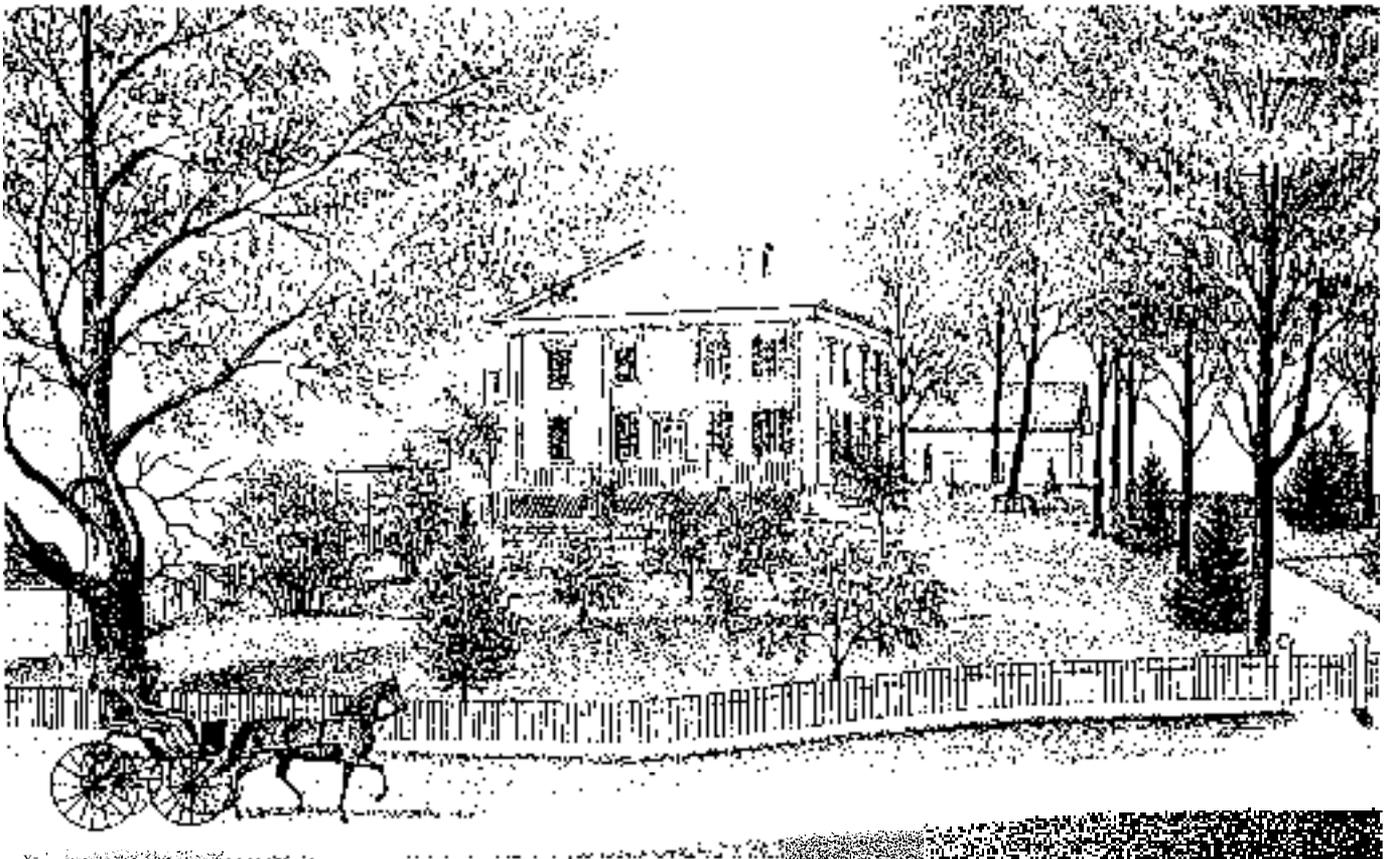


COURTESY OF NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Oneonta-Herkimer trolley stopped at Oakville to pick up passengers and freight. The small building was a shelter for trolley patrons. Across Route 28 from this was the Potts Hotel, later called the Oakville Hotel, which was demolished in 1989.



Brick store once located in Oaksville, on the road that leads to the Stone House. The bricks were made of clay taken from Oaks Creek. Built by Col. Russell Williams in 1825, the store was gutted by a fire in 1903 and it was never repaired.



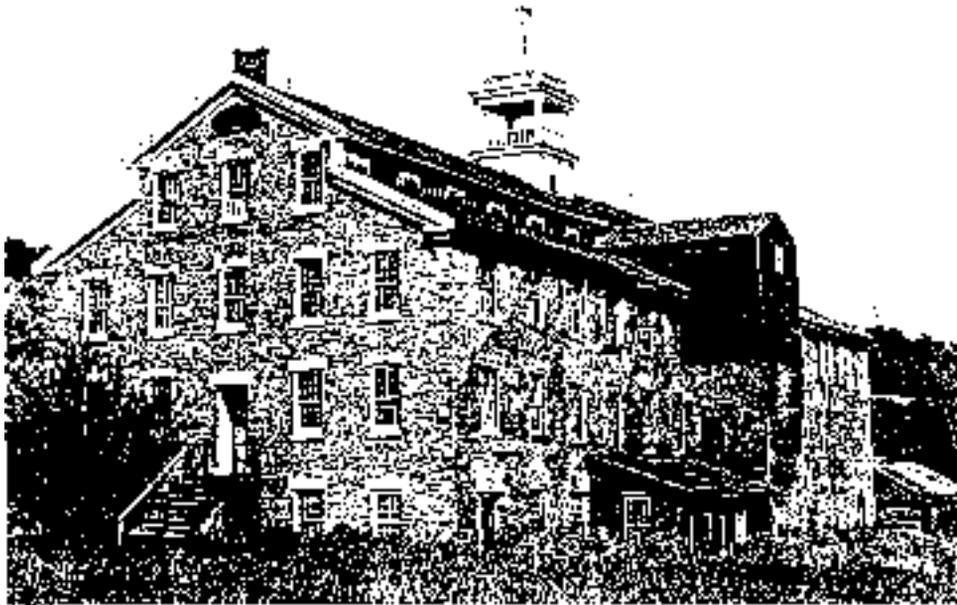
Now an Oaksville bed and breakfast called Toad Hall, on the north side of Route 28, this stone mansion was owned by the Childs family in its hey-day. It was built in 1828, and was once used as a wire factory. The wooden addition in the rear was erected around 1850.



Bill and Paula Schaeffer purchased three stained glass windows salvaged from the Toddsville Methodist Church. This one lists eight former pastors of the church: Reverends Ripley, Wrigley, Wheeler, Southworth, Williams, Thomas, Colgrove, and Pearce.

The Toddsville Stone Store was built in 1828, and sold dry goods, hardware, produce, and general store items. Rufus Steere operated it in the nineteenth century. In 1944, the building - located in lower Toddsville near Alice Platt's residence - was moved to the Farmers' Museum, where it still stands as the "General Store". Next visit there, take note of the unusual three-dimensional advertising sign above the door.





The Union Cotton Mill was built in 1808 by Charles W. Smith, and located in Toddsville on the west bank of Oaks Creek, south of Route 28. Sheeting, ticking, and calico were among the products manufactured there. It ceased operations about 1897, and nothing remains of the building. |



The Toddsville Methodist Church was served by Fly Creek pastors between 1881-1900, until it was put on the Hartwick charge. The building was converted into a dwelling in 1951, and is located across the road from the residence of Gerald & Helen Rogers.



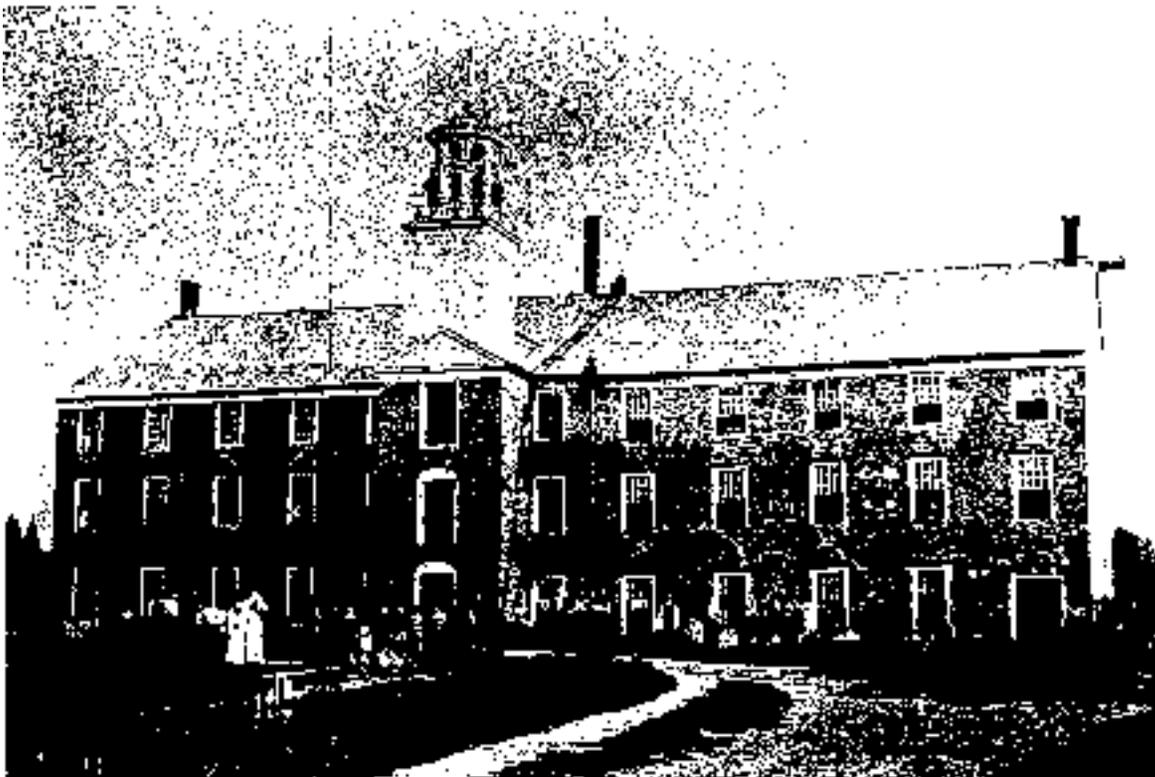
This home was built in the early-nineteenth century, on what was once known as Copperhead Smith farm. The right half of the building housed hop pickers during the fall harvest. The home once belonged to Rufus and Martha Drake Wikoff. It is now owned by the Francis A. Clarks.



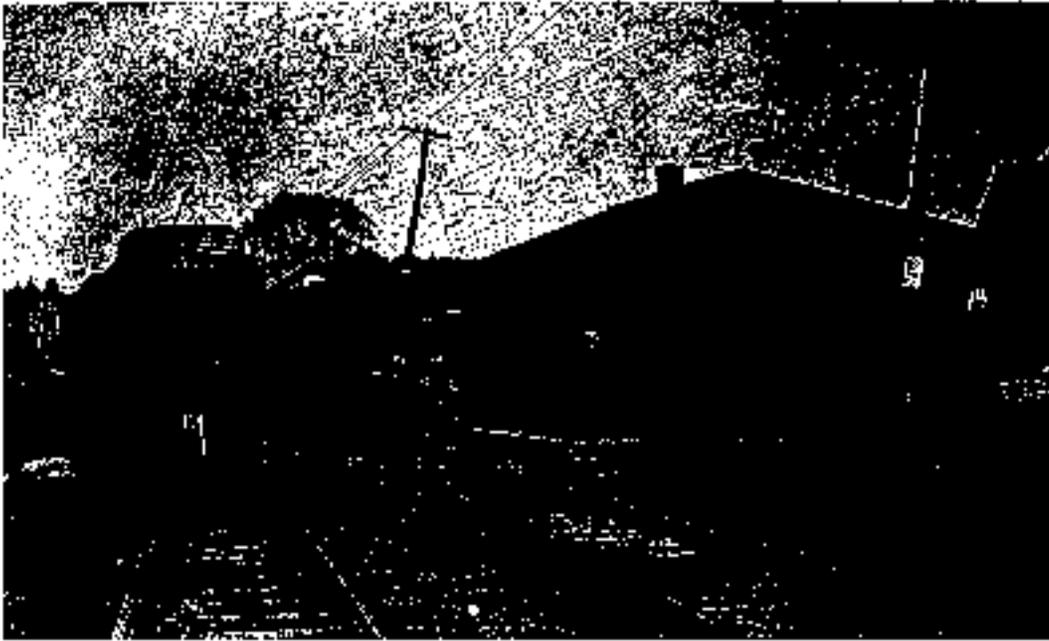
This farm was owned by Zadock Fitch in 1810. The barn was built on the site of the old saw mill by the Holbrook brothers in 1897, when they were living on this Copperhead Smith farm. The barn was torn down during the 1960s.



Bridge over the dam at Oaksville, leading to the cotton mill.



Oaksville Mill, built early in the nineteenth century, had carding machines for both cotton and wool. It employed many people for many years.



A trolley car stops at the Oneonta & Herkimer Trolley Station in Fly Creek.



A view from a hill northwest of the Fly Creek trolley station. In the background, at the left, are the Presbyterian Church, village cemetery, Grange Hall, and Universalist Church; the two churches have since been razed. In the foreground are a cheese factory, the trolley station, and the home of Ceylon Cook.



The trolley system was supposed to cross over the Mud and Chalk Lakes in Fly creek. Unbeknownst to planners, the swamp had once been a 50-foot deep body of water, which had been filled due to the erosion of its feeder streams, causing a "bottomless pit" effect. For days men labored to fill the bogs only to return every morning to find ties and rails suspended in air minus roadbed. After funds were depleted, the idea to cross the lakes was abandoned.



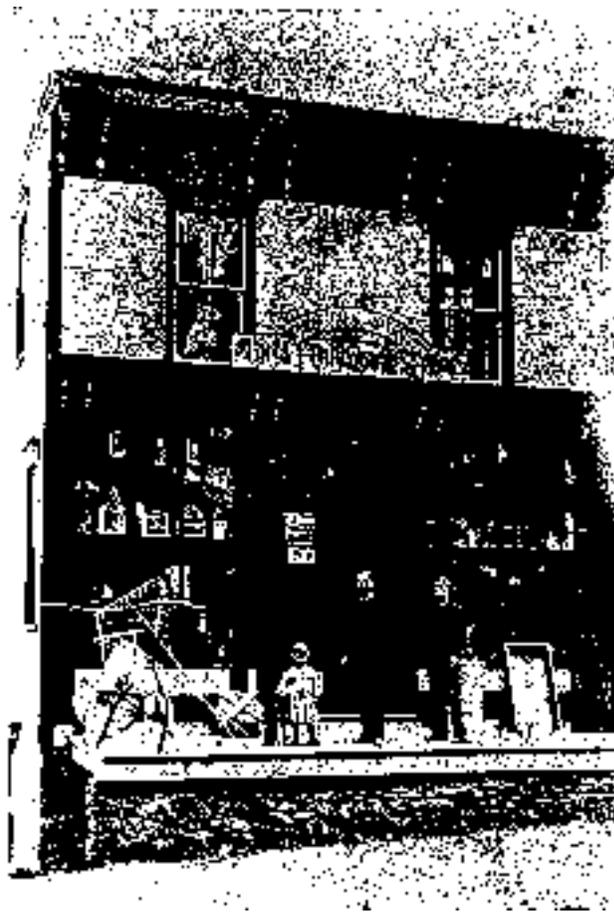
After the Mud and Chalk Lakes fiasco, the trolley track was laid around the bogs, creating dangerous curves and delayed schedules. A second attempt to fill the bogs was undertaken in 1906. It is said that an obsolete steam locomotive was toppled into the mass, along with an obsolete power-house boiler and other old equipment and rubble, to help strengthen the roadway. At last, the right-of-way became passable, although a slight tremor was perceptible when a car passed over the fill.



Carrie B. Kinhey owned this hotel from 1915-37, following previous owners Franklin Harris and Eva McLaren. Delicious meals, costing 50¢, were served to the public here. Located east of the four-corners on Route 28, just past the bridge, this building was later the home of Maynard Bunn, and was recently repaired and put up for sale.



Located on the site of the foundry last owned by William Shepherd was the private park of W. H. Murdock. Formal gardens with gas lamps were set up for evening parties in the back part of the property. Famous balloonist A. Leo Stevens later lived here, making and exhibiting hot air balloons, and teaching students from Cooperstown's Beesley School how to fly them. This is now the home of Hahn's Fly Creek Antiques on the north side of Route 28.



Howard E. Jones Tin and Hardware, located on the south side of Route 28 just past the blinking light in Fly Creek, has been continuously used as a hardware store ever since established in 1882. A son, Leonard, ran the business until he retired and sold it to the Kukenberger family.



Located on Johnston Road, north of Route 28, this farmhouse was first owned by the Williams family. William A. Wilson owned it for many years, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, with hops as the main cash crop. Hop pickers came by train from New York City during harvest season and were housed and fed by the farmer. The rear of the house was a summer kitchen where cooking for the laborers was done. The home is currently owned by Dr. Alan F. McEwan, and known as Longview Farm.



The Jarvis family started these shops (covering two acres on the banks of Fly Creek, north of Route 28) in 1813. Jarvis sold to C. H. Metcalf and H. Bliss in 1832, who in turn sold to Orestes Badger. Badger started a foundry making machinery for cotton mills, in the complex shown here. He later sold the property to William Shepherd, who owned it until about 1915.



The Fly Creek Cider Mill, built in 1856, was once one of seven mills (mostly saw-mills) on the creek; only this one survives. Located on Goose Street, it has since 1964 been owned and operated by Charlie and Barbara Michaels, who have added a gift shop and a cheese and candy shop to the edifice.



Built in the mid-nineteenth century, this house on Goose Street was part of the Peck Farm, and was later occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Fred Beach from 1919-50. It had no indoor plumbing, and saplings served as roof rafters. The house was vacant for 35 years before being demolished in 1985. The home of Florence Michaels now stands ten feet south of this site.



View looking east toward the corner of Goose Street and Bailey Road (center). Visible are the residences of Horace and Lancelot Taylor (now those of Peter & Dorothy Martin, and Richard & Alene Foutch, respectively), and Alford Wilcox (David & Janette Lyons). Note the hop fields on the Wilcox (Lee) property; the teepee-like figures are stacks of hop poles.

