

Important Places

1813-1913

Darrowsville was once a populated hamlet in the southern part of the Town of Chester. It was partially in the mile strip that was taken from the Town of Warrensburg and given to the Town of Chester by the Warren County Board of Supervisors in November 1855. There were once two churches, a district school, a hotel, a grist mill, a sawmill, a blacksmith shop and a wagon or carriage shop. There were two early pit mines in that area, one for feldspar, which was carried as ballast by sailing vessels and used in the manufacture of fine china. The other mine was a silver mine where enough silver was found to plate homemade utensils. Darrowsville got its name from James Darrow, an early settler. Of the two churches, the Methodist Episcopal Church did not survive. This church was organized May 31, 1856. By 1867 it had disappeared. The other church, the Wesleyan Methodist Church is reported to be one of the first churches formed by the Wesleyan Methodist movement. At a convention of Methodist Church leaders held in Utica in 1843 the Wesleyan Connection was formed. The prime focus was protesting slavery which was condoned by the southern Methodists. The Darrowsville Wesleyan Methodist church, first called the "Warrensburgh Class" and then the "Darrowsville Class", was organized July 14, 1843 by Myron Tripp of Chester. The church building was built in 1845. Thomas Baker was an abolitionist minister who served from 1845 to 1855. He was active in the Underground Railroad and helped to build the church. This church has been documented as being a stop of the Underground Railroad. Today there is Darrowsville Road, a sawmill, a cemetery adjacent to the site of the Darrowsville Wesleyan Methodist Church and the homes of those who still say they live in Darrowsville.

Igerna was once a community in the northern part of the Town of Chester. A sawmill operated by Hamner Meade and a brick factory were once mainstays of the economy as well as farming and lumbering. There were cider mills and a tavern and it was a change station for stagecoaches. Three school districts operated in that area – Mead, Byrnes and Vanderwerker. Three churches served Igerna residents. The North Chester Baptist Church continues today as the Grace Bible Fellowship and the Seventh Day Adventist Church is still operating. The Methodist Episcopal Church, opposite the Igerna Cemetery, was torn down. There were several stores, one at Byrnes Corner and one next to the Methodist Episcopal Church. The post office was established in 1889 and closed by the post office department in Washington, DC in August 1914. Today there is an Igerna Road, the two surviving churches, and several cemeteries which tell the names of those who lived and worked in Igerna, as well as the homes of those who call Igerna home.

Starbuckville derived its name from Isaac Starbuck who started a tannery there about 1845. He and his brothers Edward and George operated the tannery for a time and then began to operate a wholesale shoe manufacturing business. The settlement of Starbuckville was once a thriving community. Several mills, including a carding mill and a grist mill, operated in and around the mill dam. There was a hotel, "The Sunnyside", on the south side of the bridge that

was built by Edgar Bentley in the late 1870's. There was also a district school and several boarding houses for the tannery workers. The shoe manufacturing building burned in 1870 and the hotel was destroyed by fire in 1905. The other buildings have either burned, fallen town, or been remodeled. In 1947 the Crossroads store was opened by Beecher Brainard. It continues to operate as 'The Crossroads' by the West family.

1913-2013

Natural Stone Bridge and Caves – Located in Pottersville, this natural attraction has been in the hands of the same family since it was received as payment for services in the American Revolution. Jacob VanBenthuisen originally built a sawmill on the property. It was transformed in the mid 1940's so the public could visit the caves and walk the trails. It has been a major tourist attraction since.

Dynamite Hill Recreation Area – The property was purchased by the Town of Chester in 1962 as a recreation area for the town. In 1963 it was designated a wildlife refuge and game study area by the Town Board. The area offers downhill skiing with a tow rope; a tubing area and a toboggan area; a ball field, hockey rink, hiking trails, a warming hut, and a covered picnic area. In 2010 a snow-making machine was purchased. The Town continues to work on enhancing this area for the use of the public.