

Historic Buildings – The First Hundred Years

Dunn Mansion

In 1840, John and Catherine (Roosevelt) Dunn erected a Greek Revival mansion on the South Johnsburg Road. Catherine Dunn's grandmother was a sister to John Thurman, the founding father of the Town of Johnsburg. The Dunns had seven children, four of whom married into the Davison, Bowen, Armstrong and Smith families. The last Dunn to reside in the home was Margaret Ann, who died in 1893.

Arvin Hutchins is credited with adding the two-story side porches to the house around the turn of the 20th century. Although he never actually owned the property, he operated the place as Hutchins Lodge, being the first to use the home as a business investment. It is not known when this arrangement was terminated.

By 1916, George and Mae Smith (grandson of John and Catherine Dunn) had turned the home into a successful summer resort, known as Smith's Adirondack Inn, which provided employment for area people. Vacationers for the tourist home were motored to Johnsburg from the Riverside Station during the 1920s and 1930s. During this time, several buildings were erected, such as a screened pavilion where parties and dances were held.

Another building, which remains standing today, is an eight-unit bedroom facility. Following the death of Mrs. Smith in 1938, George moved into the graphite house at the top of South Johnsburg Hill, where he died in 1948.

Prior to his death, George Smith had sold his property to Mr. and Mrs. Albert Garz of Brooklyn, N.Y. Renaming the resort Mt. Crane Lodge, Elfriede Garz operated the business until her death in 1953. Mr. Garz later made repairs to the interior of the house, but discontinued using it as a tourist establishment. Currently the Dunn house sits vacant, awaiting new owners to bring this house back to its former glory.

Johnsburg Methodist Church

In 1798 John Thurman met David Noble, a convert to Methodism under the preaching of John Wesley in Ireland. Thurman persuaded him to visit his new colony in what is now called Johnsburg with the result that at about 1800 the David Noble moved his family from the city, erecting a log house in the new colony and began clearing off the forest.

For many years the primary Methodist preaching in Johnsburg took place at David Noble's private dwelling, but as the size of the congregations increased, the meetings were held in the school houses of two adjoining neighborhoods. The Church was incorporated in 1838. A relative of John Thurman, Catherine Dunn, donated a lot for erecting a church; a contract was left to Summer Nelson to furnish materials and build the structure. When he failed to complete the job, John Dodgson took over the contract and finished the church in 1843.

In 1892 a bell tower was erected and a bell, dated 1892, was cast by the Meneeley Company of West Troy, New York.

In 1907 the Globe Furniture Company from the state of Michigan provided the alter chairs which are still in use today and in 1956 a small electric organ was purchased and in 1996 a computerized organ was obtained.

The Gables

In 1870, Dr. Thomas Durant, promoter of the Union Pacific Rail Line and the Adirondack Railway purchased a building known at the Coleman House located in the middle of town and adjacent to his rail line. He remodeled the house extensively. After Dr. Durant's death, the property eventually was purchased by Dr. Lee Somerville. In addition to the beautiful house, the property had large stables, a greenhouse, a chicken house and several other out buildings. Down near the railroad tracks was a large vegetable garden, beside a walled spring that overflowed into a small trout pond. There was even a kennel for the dogs. Around 1919, the property was being considered as a possible tuberculosis center however, a petition was presented to the Town Board protesting this use. Dr. Somerville continued to use the property until his death in 1934. According to the "North Creek News of June 18, 1947, Gabra Baroudi purchased the property of the late Dr. Somerville and remodeled the house into fourteen apartments. "Extensive repairs were done to the interior of the building which Mr. Baroudi has christened "The Gables." Another article that was written about the property noted that it was used in World War II by the War Production Administration as the headquarters for Mosher's Trucking Co. in the hauling of titanium and magnetite from National Lead Mines at Tahawus to the loading plant next to the rail line at North Creek.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, March 22, 1959, that fire alarm sounded at 3:45 am. It was a cold winter and that night the temperature was near zero with gusts of winds from 20 to 30 miles per hour. The Fire destroyed "The Gables", never to be rebuilt, and left six families and 22 people homeless. Johnsburg Central School was closed that day because the school buses could not get through the village and the whole community mourned the passing of a landmark in the community.