

The Town of Johnsburg: A Treasure Trove of Adirondack History

Home to the historic Adirondack Railway and the site where Theodore Roosevelt learned he would become the 26th President of the United States, the Town of Johnsburg's roots run deep and span wide. Situated in northwestern Warren County in upstate New York, Johnsburg's storied past and abundant natural beauty serve as the foundation for the area's present-day vitality.

In 1778, John Thurman, an enterprising New York City merchant, purchased the 25,200 acres of land now divided into the Town of Thurman and Town of Johnsburg. Thurman and Johnsburg are named in honor of their founder. In 1805, Johnsburg was partitioned from the original Town of Thurman and is comprised of six hamlets: Bakers Mills, Johnsburg, North Creek, North River, Riparius, and Wevertown.

Proximity to natural resources, including the Hudson River, Adirondack Mountains, and notable garnet mines, created diverse and flourishing industries. Success in logging, mining, agriculture, and outdoor tourism were particularly influential in Johnsburg's development. [Town of Johnsburg Historian](#) and longtime resident Deana Wood, whose ancestors came to Johnsburg in the mid-nineteenth century, describes the town's early residents as survivors, crediting their resourcefulness for Johnsburg's growth.

Ms. Wood shared that, along with the railroad completed in 1871 by Thomas Durant, Johnsburg once featured a graphite mill, calico mill, river log drives, tanneries, and bottling works. Its granite mines still supply the industrial granite used in sandpaper and other abrasives to the international market. She notes these achievements "only scratch the surface" of Johnsburg's historical and industrial contributions.

The Town of Johnsburg's prime location made for an ideal destination for outdoor sports enthusiasts and led to key innovations in the ski industry. According to Ellen Schaefer, a Board member of the [Johnsburg Historical Society](#) and [North Creek Depot Museum](#), both the first ski tow and first ski patrol were launched in Johnsburg.

Johnsburg's vibrant past, and the dedication of community members like Ms. Wood and Ms. Schaefer to preserving the town's legacy for future generations, make it a mandatory destination for anyone interested in learning more about the history of the Adirondack region. If you've never been to this fascinating and picturesque locale, it's time to put a visit to the Town of Johnsburg on your summer itinerary.