

THE GREAT SACANDAGA LAKE

As far back as the 1860's there was contemplation of building a reservoir to curb the floods in communities along the Hudson River. The Sacandaga Valley had to be flooded. Seventy-five years later there are still pros and cons about the immense project which began in 1927 and ended in 1930 when the Conklinville Dam was completed and the gates closed. The twenty-nine mile sector was filled with water and parts or the complete areas of the hamlets of Osborne, Day, West Day, Sacandaga Park, Fish House, Cranberry Creek, Batchelerville, Benedict, Conklinville, Mayfield and Northville were covered. Most residents resented this huge undertaking as their "Sacandaga Valley" was unique, the home of generations of families. The fishing and hunting areas excelled and now complete farms and homes had to be destroyed.

An area to be flooded were the low swampy grounds of the Vly, a sportsman's paradise. Most of the Vly residents lived along a road from Summer House Point three miles southeast of Munsonville.

In the early 1920's people realized that their lands were to give way to the vast project of creating the reservoir. People were given the right to move their homes and farm buildings which many did. They were given until 1929 to complete their moves. Others watched their houses which had remained in their family for generations, now being burned. Churches and schools were moved or torn down. Trees and brush was burned which now accounts for the large supply of driftwood. Twenty-two cemeteries with nearly 4,000 bodies were removed to other burial grounds.

The F. J. & G. Railroad received less than ten million dollars for their loss of the railroad line connecting Mayfield, Northville and Broadalbin, and the seven hundred fifty acres of Sacandaga Park, the Coney Island of the Adirondacks was history.

Residents previously living in the area were very bitter and saddened over the whole flooding situation so few were anxious to work on this project, so most employees were from other parts of the country or Canada.

Many small bridges had to be torn down and others built where necessary. They included Fish House bridge, Northville bridge, and Conklinville bridge just to name a few. The Mayfield Historical Society is fortunate to have a beam from Osborne bridge and I am sure that there are many others in the area.

Since 1930, hundreds of camps, year round homes, restaurants, marinas, bathing beaches and camp grounds have sprung up on land and water. Many of the people who had to relinquish their properties have long gone but others are enjoying boating, swimming, skiing, etc...

In the fall when the Great Sacandaga is low, one can walk out for miles in search of arrowheads and other goodies, the former inhabitants reluctantly left behind.

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