

## An Abbreviated History of the Town of Dix

The Town of Dix was formed from Catlin in Chemung County on April 17, 1835 and was named for the Hon. John A. Dix. Early Town records were destroyed by fire and little is known of the organization and the officers thereto.

However, settlers came into the Town several years prior to its organization. In the year 1800, Jacob Mills and son Jacob came in from Cumberland County, PA, as did the Mathias Miller family. Other families that arrived prior to the formal organization were the Cleveland family in 1810; the Nichols family in 1816; the Hackett, Crout, Haskins, Palmer, and Perry families in 1818; the Piper and Hitchcock families in 1820; and then the Lane, Easting, Frost, Cornell, Bronson, Royce, Crawford, and Townsend families in 1823. The Bennett, Eddy, Phelps, Lee, Evans, Cole, Rood, Sanford, Gano, Tracey, Lybolt, Hughey, and Wedgwood families followed in 1824-1835.

There were four active communities in the Town of Dix: Beaver Dams, Moreland, Moreland Station, and Townsend. Nevertheless, the less active Wedgwood Station should be included as well.

The hamlet of Beaver Dams was situated on the Syracuse, Geneva and Corning Railroad in the southwest corner of the Town. It received its name from the fact that two beaver dams existed in its vicinity. A post office was established in 1843 with David Davison as Postmaster. Beaver Dams had one general and two grocery stores, one blacksmith, one wagon shop, a tannery, a cooper shop, a shoe shop, a tailoring store, and two millinery shops. It also had one each Methodist, Episcopal and Universalist churches, a public school, a depot, express and telegraph office, and one Justice of the Peace, with a growing population from around 250 people initially.

The hamlet of Moreland is located about two miles northeast of Beaver Dams in the southern part of the Town. Moreland was originally named "Crawford's Settlement" after Judge John Crawford and was later changed to Moreland. The first post office was established in 1826 with Judge Crawford as the first Postmaster. The Community, having a population of 200, had one general store, one grocery store, three blacksmiths, one harness shop, two shoe shops, a sawmill, a grist mill, Baptist and Union churches, and a common school.

The hamlet of Townsend, located west of the Village of Watkins Glen, was on the tract of land purchased by Claudius Townsend and the name has remained. The hamlet, having a population of about 200 people, contained a general store, a grocery store, three blacksmiths, one harness shop, two shoe shops, one millinery shop, a saw mill, a grist mill, single Baptist and Union churches, and a common school.

James Wedgwood (of the then famous Wedgwood family) erected a depot on the Syracuse, Geneva and Corning Railroad south of Watkins Glen. Known as Wedgwood Station, a small general store was established in the depot to help the many families that settled in the nearby area.

The Village of Watkins Glen is situated largely within the Town of Dix. Watkins Glen has been known as Salubria, Jefferson, Watkins, and finally, Watkins Glen.

Watkins Glen is the County Seat for Schuyler County. For twenty years, the attempt to establish a county seat triggered a battle between Watkins Glen and Montour Falls with the rivalry being relentless. After a number of court cases, the final settlement was in favor of Watkins Glen and the skirmish finally ended in November 1877.

The names of those involved in establishing the village included Dow from Connecticut and John W. Watkins and Dr. Samuel Watkins from New York City. Dr. Samuel laid out and mapped the village, built the Jefferson House, several stores, family dwellings, and flour and saw mills. Dr. Samuel Watkins originally named the village Salubria. He changed it to Jefferson in 1842. It was named Watkins in 1852 with an estimated population of 100. It became Watkins Glen in 1926.

The prominent person identified with interest in Watkins was the Hon. John Magee who came from Bath, N.Y. He established coal businesses, a boat building business, a steam flouring mill, and was very active in bringing railroads into the area. Other businesses included carriage making, a lumber business, a box and barrel factory, the malt business, a foundry and machine shop, breweries, a "select" school, three public schools, and churches of many faiths. Well-known buildings no longer existing are the Magee Manor, the Jefferson House and the Glen Springs resort. Many other businesses and buildings having historical value have not been listed.

Watkins Glen is widely known for tourism. Visitors travel here from all over the world to view the famous Watkins Glen gorge. As an attraction, it gained popularity through the promotion efforts of Morvalden Ells and officially opened to the public on July 4, 1863. Nature comes alive as one walks the one and a half miles viewing the deep and winding gorges, cascading waterfalls, pools, rock formations, and cliffs that vary in height from one hundred to three hundred feet. In recent years a light and sound show was offered in the evenings.

While the Glen gorge remains the number one attraction in the Town of Dix, in 1948 the birth of road racing occurred and through the leadership of several local enthusiastic and diligent individuals, Watkins Glen became a home for Grand Prix racing. The aspect of road racing has continued to grow and with the exception of a few years, Watkins Glen has maintained its worldwide recognition for having an exceptional racetrack offering Indy-style and NASCAR racing.

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Town of Dix, Schuyler County