NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

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Editor
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WOODWARD LAKE aka WINNE POND

(Located about 1 1/2 miles north west of Northville)

In 1927 Bob Woodward , one of America's wealthiest businessmen bought 126 acres of land in Gifford's Valley from John A Willard. He had big plans to develop the land into building lots and build a dam to land seaplanes.

Mr. Woodward was the son of Frank and Cora Woodward, the owners of the JELLO company. He had bought the formula for making gelatin into a palatable dessert using flavors. The combined words derived from the Latin "gelati" meaning to congeal" As the for the "O" part, it was often added to a business name simply because "O" is pleasing to the eye. The family became multi-millionaires from this business and other enterprises.

Many lands were purchased from local folks in Giffords Valley to add to the 126 acres. A large main house was built. The dam was built, the waters filled the pond but the sea plane landing was soon abandoned because he forgot to investigate the down draft of the mountains in the Adirondacks. Landing was difficult and not practical.

Discouraged, Mr. Woodward sold the property to Dr. and Mrs. Burchard Winne in 1940. The Winnes spent summers at their new estate, where their family enjoyed swimming, fishing and canoeing.

MUSEUM

Judy Marino donated a sign that she found in her house, on the corner of First and Bridge. Dr J. Edward Grant had lived, and had his doctors office there. We are grateful for people like Mrs. Marino who are aware of the value of local historical artifacts, pictures, and documents,, and are generous enough to donate them to our museum.

There were 600+ people that visited the museum this summer.

Woodward Lake aka Winne Pond

Located in Gifford's Valley aka (Johnny Cake Hollow)

Collins Gifford Valley Road

Gifford's Valley Road

Former location of NNHS School House Museum

Additional Facts about Woodward Lake/Winne Pond

The sale of the estate to Camp Wego Inc. of NJ, in 1939, for a boys and girls camp did not materialize, so Woodward sold it in 1940 to the Winne's. The Winne's sold it in 1980.

The Winne Family became part of the community and allowed many of the young folks to fish in their "pond". Many pickerel were caught They also took some of the local kids for rides in their canoes.

Perry Cramer was a caretaker of the Winne property.

Lewie Decker lived near by and had many tales to tell about living near the "pond".

In 1990 Janet Winne Meter and her husband, Warren, still owned a piece of property that the Giffords Valley one room school house was situated on. They were selling the property and offered the school house to the Northville Northampton Historical Society. The Town of Northampton agreed to allow NNHS to move the school house into the village to South Main Street on the Town Municipal property. It wasn't long before it became the NN Historical Museum. Today it holds local history, and local archives and is open to the public.

The Winne's called their summer estate "Wild Acres"

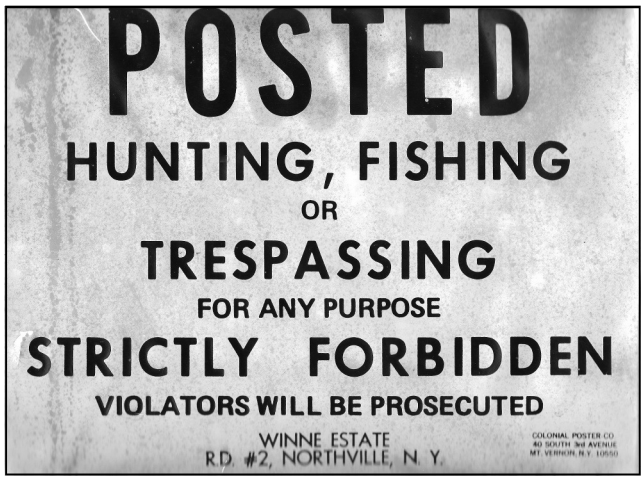
Paul Bradt installed a pumping station to use the water for his gravel and sand business.

"It was our summer place when we weren't in school or getting together for family reunions. The family enjoyed the place for many years but as the next generation came of age it became harder to travel due to distance, school, work, family obligations and the passing of older family members."

Mel Meter

The road the property is on is still a dirt road (2018)

We lived in the house across the road from the dam, and swam and fished with long bamboo poles near the dam until we moved in 1943. I remember canoeing with Barbara and Janet. During the war, our school was encouraging people to buy war bonds. Mrs Winne bought one to my credit for $100. Wow. Larry Cramer

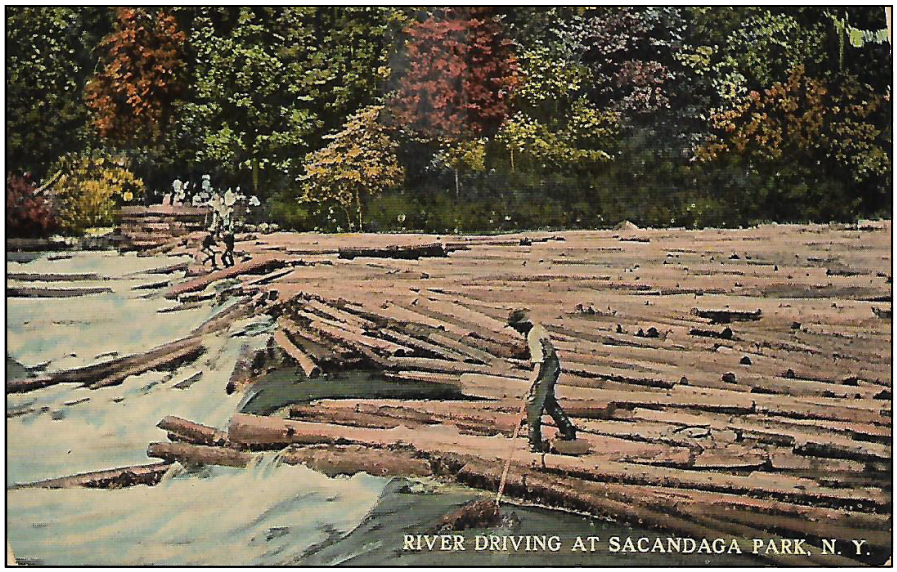


Mrs. Winne with
Warren and Janet Winne Meter and their children

Woodward Camp (1932)
latter owned by the Winne Family

RIVER DRIVERS

Definition of a river driver is a man who drives logs down streams, and prevents their lodging on shoals or being otherwise detained in their passage. (Wikipedia)

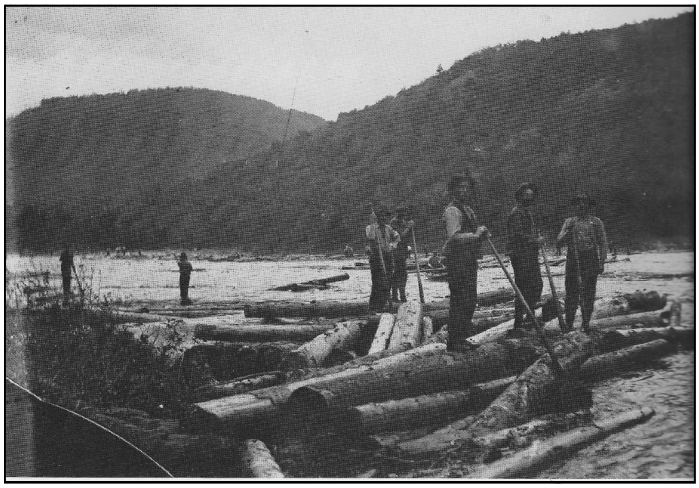


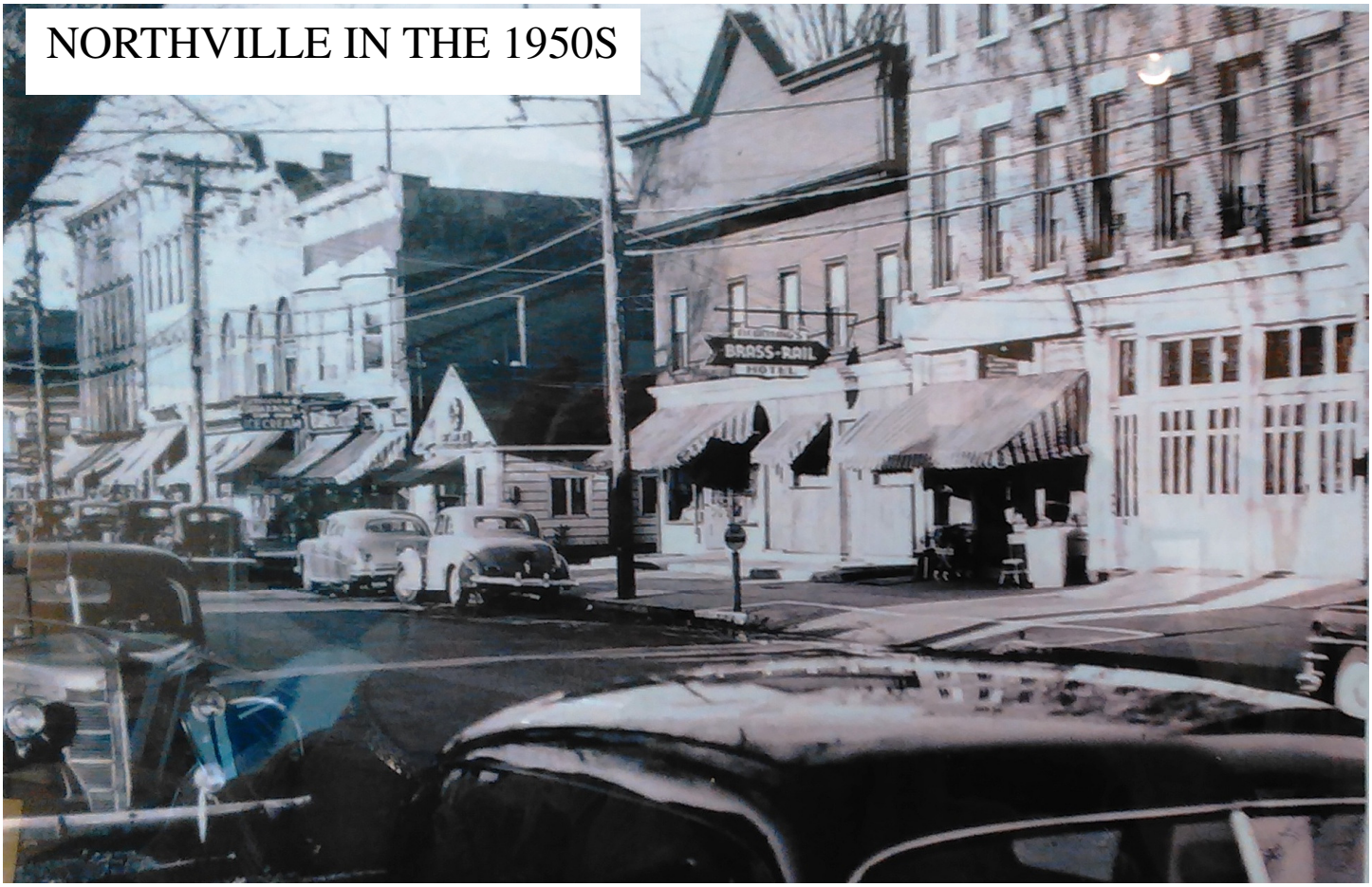
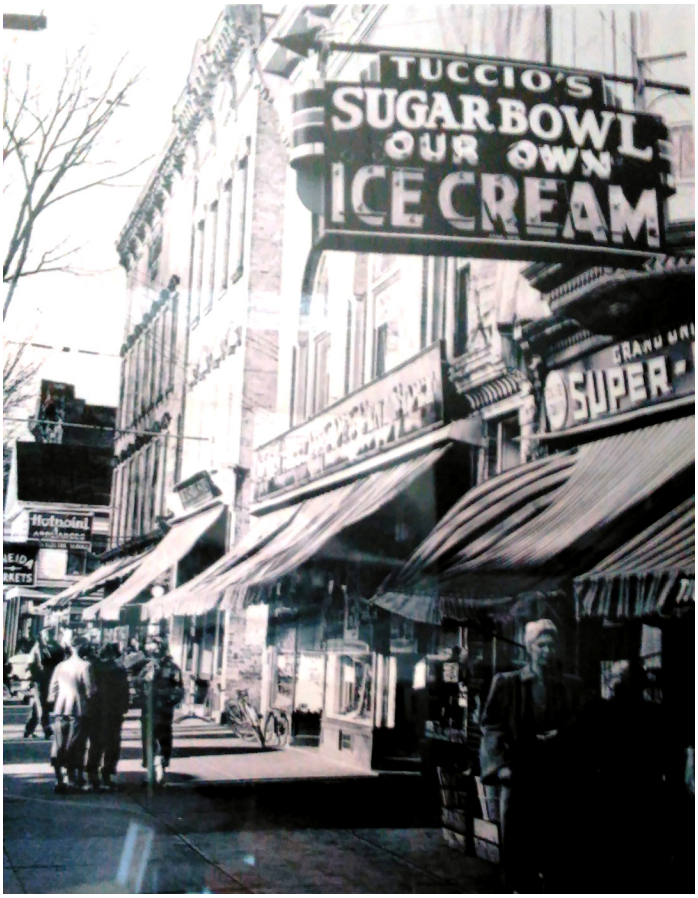
Lumber camps had "Shanties" that housed the lumberman while they spent their winter days cutting logs, They would cut them to about 13 feet in length, then haul the logs with oxen or horses over iced trails to the riverbank. The logs were then decked onto "rollways". In the spring when the snow thawed and the water levels rose, the logs were rolled into the river to float to the mills.

River Drivers were needed to guide the logs along their journey to the lumber mills. This job required some understanding of physics, strong muscles and extreme agility to be able to stand on wet and rolling logs. Many lost their lives when they fell, often being crushed by the logs. They got hazardous duty pay for this.

If the logs "jammed", a river driver was rushed to the scene to try and break it up, using peaveys, pike poles and sometimes dynamite. If the logs jammed, it could cause a dam which would cause thousands of logs to stack up and raise the water level causing a flood.

Lumbering was big business in the Northville area. A chosen few became river drivers. I wish that I could identify their names in these pictures. . I personally knew of one man that was a river driver, Ernest Culver, from Chestertown, Wells, and Northville. They often danced 'Jigs' to keep their bodies nimble.



Picture compliments of Marge Decker re: Lewis Decker's book, "Fulton County, A Pictorial History"

NORTHVILLE IN THE 1950S