

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Jay Town

The population cluster here, centered in an area called, logically, Jay, is approximately 4 miles from Troy Town's southern settlement. The population in Jay is clustered at an altitude of approximately 922 feet. The Town consists of 23,040 acres. As indicated, the ski area has and will continue to draw attention to this area, not only from within the region but externally.

Troy Town

Troy Town consists of 22,616 acres. As indicated above, Troy enjoys two distinct population foci, Troy village (at an estimated altitude of 764 ft.) to the south and North Troy, an incorporated village in the north of this town. Troy village is now ignored by the Census and assumed to be unincorporated, though identified through the 1960s as an incorporated place (Bearse, 1966). Troy's town shape approximates a north-south "standing" rectangle slightly wider at the northern border abutting Canada. Swift notes that the town had a significant population cluster from 1841 to 1851 at an area known as Troy Furnace, an iron smelting furnace built to process iron ore mined just east of the Missisquoi River. She notes that several different companies failed over the years trying to produce and sell iron. A hamlet of Phelps Falls, just north of Troy Village, on a bend of the Missisquoi River, took the name from John Phelps who settled there from Derby in 1816 and built a sawmill, gristmill, and carding mill at the falls. These mills operated through the 1830s. Another settlement, Stevens Mills was named after brothers who ran a sawmill there in the late 19th century.

Ray Bearse, in the Vermont Guide written in 1966¹, described the area as follows:

North Troy is an industrious community with well-shaded streets bordered by clapboarded residences. Being a gateway between the United States and Canada, it has had a turbulent border history. The early settlers were a high-spirited, reckless lot with a strong love for excitement. They lacked the more staid and regular habits of some of their neighbors to the south. In May, 1812, when an invasion from Canada seemed imminent, a special town meeting was held at which the selectmen were authorized to purchase muskets, bayonets, powder, and a hundredweight of lead for the town's defense. The men of Troy were ready for a fight, whatever the odds, but the British never came. The Weyerhaeuser Company manufactures plywood products. It is one of the largest industrial plants in this section. 1.1 miles north of North Troy, is the U.S. Customhouse. (1966:p373-74).

Bearse's remarks, though dated, are continued here as they provide an interesting commentary and complement the numbers below. His reference to the British in the early 19th century is a part of the heritage of this area that Mosher captures in his works on the Northeast Kingdom. One early wave of immigration into Northern Vermont (and specifically this area) can be traced to French Canadians who fled rural Quebec. Generations later, they are an obvious cultural resource in these communities.

Troy Village lies on a slight elevation of an open plain in the eastern Missisquoi valley, its drab houses radiating from a small triangular common. The red-fronted garage that faces the green on the west was originally a church, as its lines reveal. The Grange Fair held annually in this village is an event of local importance. Since there are no special grounds, the straight, level Main Street serves as both midway and race track. Lacking in major or distinctive attractions of sophisticated appeal, this fair is truly festive in a kitchen junket way, a real community celebration. A Kraft cheese factory and a creamery are the sole industries.

Troy Falls is a beautiful natural cascade in the Missisquoi River. The falls are seen best from the high rocky promontory that rises precipitously above the boiling white waters of the deep gorge below. A favorite spot locally for summer picnics and autumn corn roasts is the small adjacent grove, out of sight from the falls, but still within

¹ based on materials compiled for the Federal Writers Project issued in 1935.

sound of their cool music.

At the site of the Boston and Troy Iron Mine, its old stone blast furnace still stands on the bank of the Missisquoi. Thought it is beginning to crumble now, this furnace, 24 feet square and 30 feet high, is still suggestive of the magnitude of the iron industry that once existed here. Despite the excellent quality of the products of this mine and blast, it was finally abandoned as being too far from the markets for profitable operation. The iron markets set on the international boundary line between Vermont and Canada were cast here. (1966:376).

Westfield Town

The Westfield Village area has an elevation of 825 feet. The town is comprised of 21,402 acres. Virtually all of the settlement of the town is on the eastern edge. The western area, as mentioned above, contains more than a dozen peaks over 2,000 feet high. The Westfield green is a significant common area, shaded by maple trees and located on level ground at the edge of the larger alluvial plain around Route 100. Records indicate a former church nearby, having fallen into disrepair through the early 1970s, noting that it may be a resource for its historical significance, erected in 1818. In 1966, Bearse also notes the Hitchcock Memorial, a square white building with a clock tower. The building contains the local library with a museum of natural history; quite unusual in a village of this size. During the war of 1812, the inhabitants were apprehensive of a British invasion from Canada. The barn of Captain Mead Hitchcock was converted into a blockhouse refuge, but fortunately never had to be defended. Bearse also notes that traditionally the village has drawn families retired from nearby farms. The aforementioned Hazens Notch represents another tie to Vermont's history. Again stimulated by concerns for British expansion into the region, the nearly 2,000 feet high "Notch" just south of Sugarloaf Mountain, is the northern terminus of the old Bayley-Hazen Military Road, which begins at Newbury in Orange County. Built by Generals Bayley and Hazen during the Revolutionary War, the military road was a possible invasion route to Canada. Less tenuous ties to the past have served to stimulate "by-ways" in other regions of the state and country.

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