

History and Historical Structures

People and Buildings

Before the white man came to the Adirondacks, Inlet was a tourist destination. It wasn't known as Inlet until 1902, but Native Americans were enjoying their summers here in Inlet. This was the location of the summer campgrounds for Iroquois hunting parties. The Iroquois lost many of their arrows here over the years; so later, as this site was developed and built upon, arrowheads were frequently found on the ground. They used the "North Woods" for hunting and fishing purposes and the waterways and trails were their highways.

In the nineteenth century, the first whites to arrive were the guides and sportsmen who stopped at the "Head of Fourth Lake" before continuing on a highway of lakes and carries commemorated today by the annual "90 Miler" Adirondack Classic. They also stopped at "Big Moose Landing" near present day Becker's Resort and traveled to Big Moose Lake using a series of trails and skiffs, crossing Bubb, Moss and Darts Lakes. Today, visitors can walk this route from the hike/bike trail on Route 28. Before steamers arrived on the Fulton Chain, early transportation to Inlet was by foot and guide boat. Early camps erected by guides along the Chain were used to house the sports and the hospitality industry arrived to stay.

In March, 1889, five businessmen, one of which was Carthage's James Galvin, started an association called the Fulton Chain Club and later that year purchased over 6,000 acres surrounding the Head of Fourth Lake and extending to Limekiln and Seventh Lakes. They hoped to sell memberships and establish a preserve like the neighboring Adirondack League Club. They hired Fred Hess, a famous Fulton Chain guide who quickly sold his Cedar Island camp, as their forest superintendent. Hess built a sawmill at Fifth Lake from the Club's tract for lumber and club revenue. In late 1890, the Club sold Hess 30 acres, which he soon partitioned, on the shores of Fourth Lake by the "inlet" to Fifth Lake. Fred Hess built "Hess' Inn" in 1892-1893 and in 1893, the Club sold land to the builders of Rocky Point Inn. Hess sold his hotel to William Moshier in late 1896 who renamed it "The Arrowhead" when Hess opened a newly built hotel next door during 1898 which he named "Hess Camp". Charles O'Hara arrived in 1896 and built the Inlet Inn on the channel to Fifth Lake. Duane Norton purchased Club land in 1898 for his Seventh Lake Hotel.

Town of Inlet Comprehensive Master Plan – Draft November 4, 2009

The Fulton Chain Club's failure to attract investors prompted the directors to subdivide the shores of Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Limekiln Lakes into lots which were sold for \$200 for campers. From 1895 to 1902, pioneering families with names like Delmarsh, Harwood, Murdock, Tiffany, O'Hara and Kirch bought lots from James Galvin, the Club's local agent, built homes and stayed. The increase in residents and transportation needs, as well as the long distance to County offices at Lake Pleasant, helped to convince Hamilton County to partition the area of Morehouse north of the South Branch of the Moose River in November 1901 and "erect" the new "Town of Inlet".

William Moshier donated land in 1900 for the Church of the Lakes. Moshier's Company also owned the Fifth Lake mill at this time and he briefly operated a

stage-steamer transportation line to Raquette Lake. Heavily in debt, Moshier lost the Arrowhead to his brother-in-law Albert C. Boshart in 1904 and left for Massachusetts. Boshart soon subdivided unused Arrowhead property into village lots for stores. In November 1907, Charles O'Hara purchased the property. The Arrowhead burned in September 1913 and O'Hara rebuilt it adjoining his Inlet Inn. What is now Arrowhead Park was once the site of this second Arrowhead Hotel. In 1963, the O'Hara family donated the Arrowhead property to the Town. The hotel was demolished and we have the popular Arrowhead Park patrons enter by passing the original hotel's stone light towers. Inlet's Main Street (Route 28) results from Boshart's village lots sold to Charles O'Hara.

Fred Hess sold his Hess Camp to Henry Covey in 1903 and left to operate hunting camps in Maine. Covey sold Hess Camp to Philo Wood in 1908. Wood had been the first proprietor of Big Moose Lake's Hotel Glenmore (1900-1902), leaving to operate the famous Forge House (1903-1907) on Old Forge. Wood expanded Hess's hotel and renamed it "The Wood" in 1908, operating it until the 1940s. Today this hotel survives as "The Woods Inn", a popular hotel, restaurant and host of family events. Many other summer resort hotels sprang up in Inlet: The Neodak Hotel, The Araho Hotel (now Holl's Inn), and the Parquet Hotel. So it was that Inlet continued to be a summer tourist destination.

Transportation

As more people came to the area, demand grew for accommodations so camps were expanded into hotels and then new hotels were built. Transportation was enhanced with the completion of Dr. Webb's railroad through the Adirondacks in 1892 with stations at Fulton Chain (Thendara) and Big Moose. Highways were built from Old Forge to Eagle Bay (1899) and from Eagle Bay to Raquette Lake (1896) (most of today's Uncas Road) to connect with the new line.

Steamboats in the 1890s plied the waters of the Fulton Chain of Lakes from Old Town of Inlet Comprehensive Master Plan – Draft November 4, 2009

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Forge to Inlet giving the growing number of tourists access to the new hotels and housekeeping camps emerging along the shores of the lakes. The railroad was extended, first two miles from Thendara to Old Forge Pond (1896) and then from Clearwater (Carter Station) to Fourth Lake (north of Rondaxe Road) to Raquette Lake (1900) with stops along today's Route 28 with a station that stands today in Eagle Bay. Tourists could now come to Eagle Bay and Inlet without the lengthy steamboat rides from Old Forge through the Chain, today available to visitors for sightseeing. This railroad led to the construction of a road from Eagle Bay to Inlet and tourists had an even easier time getting to Inlet. The road was extended to Seventh Lake from the hamlet of Inlet and then in 1929, Route 28 was finished and connected Inlet to Raquette and Blue Mountain Lakes.

The Town of Inlet

Inlet became a township and hamlet in 1902 when it was decided to break off from the Town of Morehouse and form the Town of Inlet. Frank Tiffany was the first Town Supervisor and held office for twenty-four years. Charles O'Hara, the first Postmaster and the first Town Clerk, was also involved in this political subdivision and is credited with naming the town. The first church in Inlet was Church of the Lakes built in 1901. Saint Anthony's, a Roman Catholic Church, was built next to the Presbyterian Church in 1915 on a lot donated by Galvin's widow, Jennie Galvin. The Inlet Community Church was established in 1950

when a dispute over the church organ split the congregation of the Church of the Lakes. This new church purchased the camp of Anna and Rose Flanagan. Services were held in the cottage until 1970 when the present Inlet Community Church was built; the cottage became the pastor's residence. The Inlet Common School was also built in 1906 on land sold by the remaining members of the Club.

Inlet in the Modern Era

Early clientele were wealthy and would frequently vacation for the whole summer or for at least one month in the summer. But with the advent of the automobile and the resulting improvement and construction of roads, the large hotels, steamer lines and railroads quickly fell in decline. Summer long vacations had contracted to month long vacations, then week long vacations and finally with the convenience of automobile travel, weekend tourism became big in Inlet. Hotels with their elegant hospitality started to lose business to motels and cottages. The depression years from 1929 to 1932 took its toll on the wealthy and subsequently on the tourist industry in Inlet. World War II was the next significant event to have an impact on tourism in Inlet with rationing and a major focus on winning the war. In 1946, the war was won, soldiers returned home and the post-war economy was booming. The middle class grew in numbers and wealth; they bought cars and hit the road. The road led to Inlet and motels became popular. It was "a hot time in the old town" when college students found Inlet. The bar business grew, and at its peak, Inlet had eleven bars in town. Then the motorcycle crowd found Inlet. Eventually, bars burned or closed, the "bikers" were discouraged from returning to Inlet by a strong police effort, college students lost interest in an Inlet without bars and things quieted down.

There are a few buildings still standing in the Town of Inlet that date back to the late eighteen hundreds, but many of the earliest buildings have been lost to fires over the years. Today, the Inlet Supply Company, Parquet Hotel, Holl's Inn, Mary's Gift Shop and the Woods Inn survive. A comparison of today's Inlet hamlet with early postcards will reveal some original shop structures remain as do several early camps along the South Shore Road. Most of the existing camps and buildings were constructed in the period prior to the "Great Depression" in 1929 and were intended and built for summer use only. Some of these have been restored or updated for year round use, and some have been changed significantly through major additions. In recent years, a few large homes of modern design and construction have been built on previously undeveloped land or have replaced old camps that have been torn down to make room for these new homes.