

HISTORY of BLEECKER, NY  
FROM HISTORY OF FULTON COUNTY  
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THIS is the central town of the north line of the county, its boundaries being Hamilton county on the north, Mayfield on the east, Johnstown on the south, and Caroga on the west. Its surface is hilly and mountainous, gradually rising toward the northern border, where the highest summits reach an altitude of more than 2,000 feet above sea level. Ledges of rock crop out in every part of the town, creating a formidable barrier to good roads and also to agricultural pursuits. Notwithstanding this, however, farming is carried on in the more fertile portions of the town, but the crops consist mostly of hay and potatoes. Stony creek, which rises in the southwest part of the town, flows in a northeasterly direction through Mayfield and thence into Hamilton county, is the most important stream in Bleecker. It finds an outlet in the Sacandaga river, and is of great service to those engaged in lumbering, as it enables them to float their logs down to the Hudson, finding sale at the extensive saw-mills at Glens Falls and Fort Edward. Within the limits of the town are several small lakes or ponds, among which may be mentioned Chase's lake in the northern part, Woodworth's in the southeastern corner, and Peck's pond in the southwestern corner. They form both the source and the outlet to many small but rapid streams, which are in many cases utilized for mill sites in a profitable manner.

The most important industry of the town is lumbering, and although much of the valuable timber has been cleared away, the sound of the woodman's axe, and the busy hum of the saw-mill are familiar to the inhabitants. Tanning was carried on quite extensively for many years, but at present nothing is being done in that line and it is not probable that it will be resumed.

Bleecker was formed from Johnstown, April 4, 1831, but a part was

reannexed to that town in 1841, and then in 1842 a part of Caroga was taken off. The town derives its name from Barent Bleecker, who was contemporary with Glen and Lansing, the three having purchased a large tract of land in this region April 4, 1793. The other portions of the town were embraced in Chase's and Mayfield patents, the former granted March 23, 1792, and the latter, June 27, 1770. Mr. Simms is to be credited with the following notice of Chase, to whom one of these patents was granted:

"William Chase, the patentee, was in early life a sea captain, and in the revolution became an American privateer. He was captured and taken to Europe, and while there visited France. After the war he removed from Providence, R. I., to Hoosick, N. Y. At the latter place he built a bridge, by constructing which he was enabled to purchase some 12,000 acres of land in the western part of Fulton county. A large tract of land adjoining his, and which Chase intended to buy, was subsequently sold in Albany by auction, and was purchased by Barent Bleecker, Cornelius Glen and Abraham G. Lansing. It was known as Bleecker and Lansing's patent. Failing to secure this tract of land, on which he seems to have set his affections, Captain Chase was heard to exclaim, with an oath, 'I would rather have lost my right in heaven than a title to this soil.'

The town contains 36,668 acres, with an assessed valuation of \$53,790. The fact that no railroad enters the town and that there are many acres of waste land within its borders accounts for its low valuation.

**Early Settlement.**—When Bleecker was first settled, its territory was included in the township of Johnstown. Through it ran an old Indian trail, leading through what is now Bleecker village, passing the old pine tannery in the north part of the town, and entering Hamilton county. The wilderness was first settled permanently about the year 1800. Among those who located there were James Morse, William Rood, Hiram Lindsley, William Egan, Gad Hamilton, Samuel Shaffer, Frederick Mills and others, a majority of whom were from New England. Within a few years others also settled in the same vicinity, among whom may be mentioned John Donaldson, William Bowler, Henry Lippart and several others. William Chase, to whom the patent for 12,000 acres of land was granted, built a grist-mill on West Stony creek, a short distance east of Lindley's Corners, about 1804, being the first mill of the kind erected in the town. Lindley's Corners was also the site of the first rude house of unhewn logs built in the town, but by whom is not known. The first house of hewn logs was located on the Caroga road, west of the Corners, and was built by Martin Hopfield. The first frame house was built on the site afterwards

occupied by John M. Peter's house at Lindley's Corners, which was for a number of years a place of considerable business importance. It is situated near the centre of the town, and was at first surrounded by a large portion of the early settlers, but the erection of Richard & Company's tannery (known as the "Bleecker Tannery"), near the south line of the town, led to the formation of Bleecker village, which attracted the local business. It is a remarkable fact that the first brick house in the town was not built until 1874, being erected in the western part, near the Caroga line, by John Holler.

Joseph Eastman, an influential resident, who lived in the northern part of the town, was chiefly instrumental in bringing about the erection of a school-house there (the first in the community), in 1824.

Among the many tanneries that have been operated from time to time within the limits of Bleecker, the first was built by William I. Bellinger and others, at what is now Bleecker village. This old establishment went to ruin nearly thirty-five years ago. Hiram Deming, of the well remembered firm of Smith & Deming, was for a long time engaged in tanning in this town, their plant being located in the northeastern portion. Among the first events may be mentioned the first blacksmith shop, which was built and operated by Gad Hamilton north of Lindley's Corners; also the first tavern, which was conducted by S. S. Eastman near the south line of the town. The first store was built and managed in connection with Richards & Hamlin's tannery at Bleecker village.

Bleecker village, located near the outlet of a small lake on the south line of the town, is the only important settlement within its limits. The land upon which it is situated was formerly owned by Isaac Van Nostrand. Hiram Van Denburgh, who has been for many years a resident of this place (holding at different times the office of supervisor of the town), owns and controls large lumber tracts within its borders and conducts two saw-mills, one at Bleecker village and another nine miles farther north. The former mill has been twice destroyed by fire, and Mr. Van Denburgh is at the present time engaged in reconstructing it. Unfortunately these calamities have occurred at that time of year when the damage was most severely felt. Mr. Van Denburgh is also the present postmaster, the office having been established in 1844 by the appointment of E. A. Campbell. The village also contains a Methodist Episcopal Church, of which more will be said, a school-house, a store, and about twenty dwellings.

Among the religious societies that have had an existence in the town, but are now extinct, may be mentioned the Presbyterians, who built the church at Bleecker village now owned and occupied by the

Methodists. It was erected by the former denomination in 1855, and was placed under the pastoral charge of Rev. Abijah Green. The society had an unpromising existence of nineteen years: at the end of which time, in 1874, the church property was leased to Hiram Van Denburgh for a term of ninety-nine years, the consideration being one dollar. Shortly afterwards it was taken in charge by the Methodist Episcopal Society, by whom it has since been occupied.

The Christian denomination also had an existence in Bleeker at one time, and held services in the school-house of district No. 1, at Lindley's Corners.

The Methodist Episcopal Society did not have a stated house of worship prior to their occupancy of the edifice built by the Presbyterians, but persons professing the Methodist faith have lived in Bleeker since its earliest settlement. Such well remembered circuit preachers as Ephraim Goss and William F. Hurd came through there during the early part of the present century. Since the society has occupied its present location, its pulpit has been filled by many pastors now prominent in the Troy conference. Among those who had this charge during the period of its connection with the church at West Bush, may be mentioned Revs. Edwin Gence, John Wesley Coons, a local preacher; Edward Taylor, in 1876; Amos Osborn, in 1877; John P. Crane, in 1878—79. The following pastors have held the appointment since 1883: H. M. Munsee, April 1883—April 1885; G. H. La Grange, April 1885—May 1887; C. A. Beaudry, May 1887—April 1888; B. M. Grant, jr., April 1888—April 1890; G. H. Marvin, April 1890—January 1892; Joel Hall, April 15, 1892 until the present time. Pastor Hall preached his first sermon for this church on May 1. The church has twenty-five members at present, and conducts an active Sunday-school of which Ivory L. Bartlett is superintendent. It also conducts a Sunday-school at Lindley's Corners, which is held in the school-house, and of which Casper Peters is superintendent.

The Evangelical Methodist Church (composed of Germans), is the oldest religious organization in the town, its date being 1850. The church edifice of this society is located about three miles north of Bleeker village on the old plank road.

The Lutheran Church, built in 1852, is also located on the old plank road, and is distant in a northwesterly direction from Bleeker village about two miles.

The Roman Catholics worship in a neat edifice about four miles northwest of Bleeker village.

The following items are taken from the old town records and may be of interest:

The first road laid out by the commissioners of highways, November 12, 1831, is described as beginning at the state road, "four chains northerly from Isaac Van Nostrand's, and running to the road laid out by Mr. Burr's house." This road changes its course upwards of twenty five times. The supervisor's expenses in 1832 were \$7.42. Under date of September 8, 1831, James Leslie gave a deed of one acre of land to Nicholas Stoner, John Mead, and Jacob Mead, trustees of school district No. 4, for school purposes.

The first town meeting of Bleecker was held at the house of Gad Hamilton, on the first Tuesday of May, 1831, and the following officers elected: Supervisor, Isaac Van Nostrand; town clerk, Jonathan Dean; justices of the peace, Jonathan Dean, William Lindslev, John Mead, Joseph Eastman; assessors, Amasa Stevens, Ephraim Lindsley, Joseph Eastman ; commissioners of highways, John Mead, Elijah Lindsley, Othniel Allen ; overseers of the poor, Richard Hart, Joseph Eastman; collector, Daniel Mead; commissioners of common schools, Lodewick P. Stevens, Rilas Eastman, Eli R. Burr; inspectors of schools, Amasa Stevens, Joseph Eastman, Elijah Lindsley, Adam Long. At the same meeting it was resolved that fence viewers should have seventy-five cents per day, and that \$30 be raised for school money.

The following is a list of the supervisors of the town from its organization to the present time: Isaac Van Nostrand, 1831 ; Artois Hamilton, 1832—4; William J. Bellinger, 1835 ; Garret A. Newkirk, 1836— 7; Jonathan Dean, 1838; Garret A. Newkirk, 1839—41 ; Benjamin K. Eaton, 1842—4; David Foote, 1845 ; William Bowler, 1846; David Foote, 1847; William Bowler, 1848—9; Samuel W. Odell, 1850-1; Truman Enos, 1852; Eugene W. Enos, 1853—4; Robert Campbell, 1855 ; Zachariah J. Smith, 1856; Eugene W. Enos, 1857; Theron A. Hamlin, 1858; Eugene W. Enos, 1859; Joseph C. Zeyst, 1860; George A. Burr, 1861; ; Marshall G. Hunt, 1862—4; John M. Peters, 1865—7; Marshall G. Hunt, 1870.—1 ; Hiram Deming, 1872— 4 ; Charles Bowler, 1875—8; Philo R. Smith, 1879—80; Charles Bowler, 1881—2; C. C. Schabacker, 1883—6; Hiram Van Denburgh, 1887; C. C. Schabacker, 1888; George F. Bowman, 1889; Hiram Van Denburgh, 1890; John M. Peters, 1891.

**Town Clerks.**—Jonathan Dean, 1831 and 1837; Jacob Spaulding, 1832; William J. Bellinger, 1833—4; William W. Collins, 1835—6; James McKinlay, 1838; William Conine, 1839—40; Willard C. Wright, 1841, 1843, 1846—7, 1850; Robert A. Van Nest, 1842; Ephraim A.

Campbell, 1844—5; John D. Yenney, 1848—9; Z. J. Smith, 1851; John Rychen, jr., 1852—3; P. O. Belden, 1854; M. Van Steenburgh, 1855, 1860; John Meyer, 1856, 1863, 1866—9 and 1876; Isacher R. Ford, 1857—8; Joseph Zeyst, 1859; Hiram Van Denburgh, 1861; 1870—1; John H. Smith, 1862, 1873; Daniel Doice, 1864; Marshall G. Hunt, 1865; Wallace Yost, 1872; August Ernst, 1874—5; Francis Unger, 1877—86; Charles Sandfordt, 1887; Francis Unger, 1888—9; Lewis G. Langfritz, 1890; Charles Sandfordt, 1891.

The present officers of the town are: Supervisor, John M. Peters, jr.; town clerk, John Unger; justices of the peace, Frank Unger, jr.; Fred Berghoff, Charles Tiederman and Englebert Fisher; assessors, George Conrick, George F. Bowman and Homer Baird; collector, Jacob Hartman.