



A LOOK AT NORMANSVILLE

From the Vale of Tawasentha to the Yellow Brick Road, Normansville has captured the imagination of many. Nestled on the banks of the Normanskill, the village is located on both sides of the river under the Delaware Avenue bridge. Today the east side is part of the City of Albany, before 1870 all of it was located in the Town of Bethlehem.

Native Americans were the first to appreciate the beauty, and possibilities of this remarkable river. Petanock, Secktanock, and Tawasentha are early Indian names. Normans Kil comes from early settler Albert Bratt, the Norwegian. He arrived in April of 1637 and established a saw mill on the creek. Soon it was known as the Norwegian's Creek, or Normans Kil in Dutch. Bratt was an interesting character. His activities included saw milling, tobacco farming, orchards and the fur trade. His daughter Engeltie married Teunis Slingerland who also farmed along the Normanskill. (Today's hamlet of Slingerlands was called Normanskill until about the 1860's when it became known as Slingerlands Corners.)

Early on the community here was known as Upper Hollow. By 1893 it was known as Normansville. The Normanskill provided the water power for a variety of mills along the river including grist mills for grinding grain, saw mills for cutting wood, carding mills to process wool fiber and even mills for creating paper. Ice warehouses were also found. The 1900's brought a hotel, dance hall and even a sandy beach called Normansville Park.

Much has changed since those bustling days. Normansville today is a quiet community of homes that still retains its sense of history.



The Albany and Delaware Turnpike Company, chartered in 1805, built a wooden bridge over the Normanskill. It is reported to have been carried away in the spring freshet in 1868. By this time the Turnpike Company had abandoned the road and the Town of Bethlehem built a new, two truss iron bridge. Here you can see the iron bridge being replaced about 1900. Note also the Normansville School on the hill to the left and Pappalau's ice house and dam on the right.



The “high” bridge carrying Delaware Avenue being constructed in 1928.



Agriculture has a long history on the banks of the Normanskill. Archives records are unclear exactly where on Rockefeller Road this picture of a barn was taken. The Normanskill appears to be on the right.



The Harder Mills were located on the west side of the creek. It is reported that when the mill was torn down, the lumber was used to build other Normansville houses. Some of the mill houses are also still standing on Mill and Rockefeller Roads.