

We have rented a horse-drawn carriage from the local livery. We start out on our carriage tour by turning onto Mill Road from the Albany-Sand Lake Plank Road. Our first point of interest is the beautiful Victorian home of the Kane Family (#1 on the map below and the map on page 1).



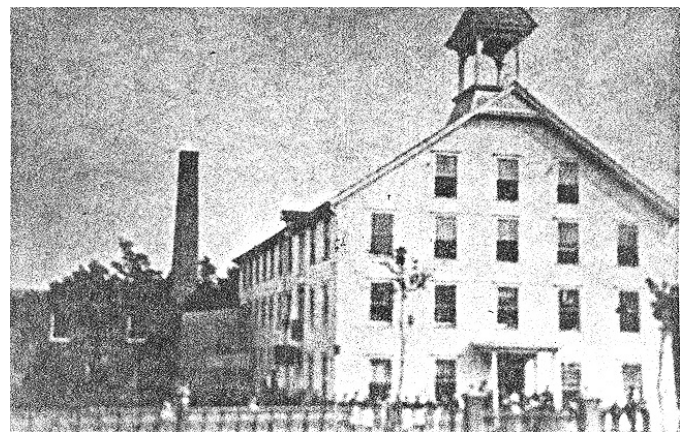
This house was built in the late 1850s by James Akin and acquired by Nicholas and Pierce Kane about 1870. The two Kane brothers, born in Ireland, came to this country and settled in West Troy. Both had an early introduction to the textile trade at the mills of Roy & Co. and became experts in knitting.

Pierce Kane was a superintendent of James Akin's mill in Sand Lake, and, about 1880, Nicholas T. Kane bought the Mill. At his brother's death in 1887, Pierce Kane became the owner.

Continuing along the road and looking to the left you can see the Hosiery Mill (#2) — a two-story wood frame building on the bank of the Wynantskill. The factory manufactured a medium grade of general hosiery, furnished employment to 85 persons, and used 360,000 pounds of raw material to produce 30,000 dozen pair of hosiery per year. The mill's five knitting machines were operated by waterpower from the Wynantskill.

Continuing down Mill Road we come to the A.B. Knowlson Beverwyck Factory (#3), on the site of the former John VanHoesen 1829 mill. In 1866, Knowlson had purchased the property and constructed a hosiery factory. This mill was destroyed by fire in 1874. A new mill was built by Andrew Knowlson and became known as the Beverwyck Hosiery Mill. The new mill was a large three-story wood frame building. The factory manufactured Gents, Ladies and Children's Beverwyck Hosiery, and knit shirts and drawers. A 16-foot fall of water was used to run its knitting machinery.

The Beverwyck Mill ran into financial trouble and closed its doors in 1896. (Today, some 100 years later, the upper Faith Mill building is at this location. If you look closely, you will see a small stone building — a remaining part of the boiler house of Andrew Knowlson's Beverwyck Mill.



Before passing the mill, look up to the right and see the George Arnold home, built when Arnold owned the Sand Lake Cotton Factory.

Proceeding a short distance further along Mill Road, you come to the Sand Lake Cotton Factory (#4), operated as Arnolds, Hunt & Co. It was operated by The Arnold family until about 1875 when it failed. It was sold at auction in 1876 to Isaac McConihe.

The Averill Park factory manufactured cotton warp, both white and colored. It was a rather large operation housed in a 120' x 40' foot three-story wood frame building. The factory contained 2500 spindles using 7200 pounds of raw material a week. Its monthly payroll of \$600 paid 40 employees. The factory failed in 1886; the machinery was removed and the mill abandoned.

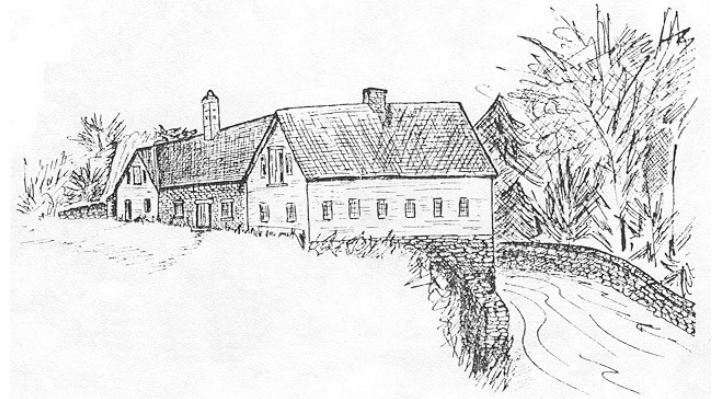
Isaac McConihe, the last owner of the mill, was born in Troy, March 31, 1830, the son of Judge Isaac McConihe. He earned a degree from Hamilton Collage in 1849. McConihe was also president of the Troy Hosiery Co in Albia. As well as his involvement in manufacturing he was active in the City of Troy. He was an Alderman in 1853, Mayor in 1860-61 and Police Commissioner in 1880. Isaac McConihe died January 10, 1903.

A few rods down the road and across a wood bridge, note the sound of the horses hooves on the wood planking as we come to the site of the 1820 Albertson cloth dressing factory (#5). On Albertson's death it became Rubin Chapman, then Clark and Hopkins. In 1846, Cornelius Schermerhorn had a wool mill on this site. Schermerhorn operated the mill until 1868, when it was sold at auction.

William H. Cary bought the mill and operated it as a knitting mill until his death in 1875. It was then auctioned on the steps of the Rensselaer Court House. The mill was equipped with three sets of knitting and other machinery, shafting, hangers, pulleys, steam boiler and pipes, tools and implements used in operating the mill, soaps, oils about 10 cords of wood, paper boxes, box board, etc. The mill never operated again after that 1875 auction. No sign of the mill can be found today, but across the road is the home that Albertson built in the early 1800s.

Finally traveling along Mill Road we approach Garner Road. On the right is the large house that was the home of Staats T. Thompson (#6). Thompson built a paper mill on the Wynantskill across Garner Road about 1855. It produced 40,000 reams of wrapping paper using 500 tons of straw, employing 12 men and 21 women. In 1865 it became the E. & J. Merwin Paper company. It was sold again in 1875 to Andrew Smart.

Andrew Smart was from Troy but moved into the Tompkins home. In Troy, he and his brother Robert had two other paper mills on the Wynantskill. Andrew Smart was involved in local politics and served as Supervisor of the Town of Sand Lake in 1884. In 1891 the mill bulkhead and part of the dam were washed away in a flood. All the paper stock was destroyed with a loss of \$1500. The paper mill was never to reopen.



Today, only parts of the foundation of the paper mill remain. But Staats Thompson's home still remains — the present home of author William Kennedy.

By this time our horse is ready to return to the barn. But in our carriage ride of about 3/4 mile we have passed four water-powered factories that employed many people and produced knit cotton and woolen goods, warp yarn and paper. That was Averill Park in the late 1880s!

Picture credits. The map is from the F. W. Beers map of 1876, with "...the mills dams and mill ponds along the Wynantskill...shown." The "Artist's Conception" of the Staats Tompkins/Andrew J. Smart mill was drawn by Grace Patterson in 1981 and featured in a SLHS House Tour booklet.



Public(ity) Acclaim

When you begin to write an article you often receive a lot of extras. So it was when Bob Lilly asked me to do a feature on our own *Historical Highlights*. (The scope expanded.) When I asked Judy Rowe, our Town Historian, to check the early issues, she gave a well-remembered anecdote on the genesis of the Historical Society.

It began in a beauty shop when Jane vanPraag and Marie Beck got their hair done at the same time. After hearing Judy and Jane expound on history a few times, Judy recalls, Marie Beck in her schoolteacher voice exclaimed, "You two are always talking about history, history, history! Why don't you do something about getting a group started?" And the rest *is history*.

Issues of the newsletter went by the name *Facts and Artifacts* from 1974 to mid-1978. With the October-November-December 1978 issue it became *Historical Highlights*, with the Society's new logo of the glassblower and the motto — *Preserving the Past; Enriching the Future* — added to the masthead.

There have been several editors over past 25 years:

- December 1974 - April 1976 — *Kathy Fasco*
 - July 1976 - April 1977 — *Shirley Rescott*
 - July 1977 - April 1986, and February 1988 - May 1988 — *Arthea Gibbs*
 - July 1986 - May 1987, and May 1991 - April 1993 — *Barbara Mohan*
 - Summer 1987 — *Andrew Mace*
 - January 1990 - May 1991 — Dianne Freeman ("letters from the President")
 - Fall 1994 - Spring 1995 — Coulman Wescott
 - Fall 1995 - present — Bob Lilly
- All have done a yeoman job for the newsletter.

Here we wish to applaud Arthea (Artie) Gibbs. You didn't need to double-check the name of the editor. Each issue with its distinctive type-set was a dead giveaway. Artie was ever faithful in editing the *Highlights*. She also sent publicity to *The Record*, *The Advertiser* and *The Courier* as well as help prepare our house tour booklets and historical calendars. Another position she carried out so well was the Memorial Awards Committee activities.

Thank you, Artie, for being our Historical Society's best-known "Publicity Person"!

Another dedicated worker for the Historical Society was Marge Larsen. She was a Trustee, Recording Secretary and most recently our Publicity Person. She was continuously busy sorting through, cataloguing and filing memorabilia for the archives. The oral history got quite a boost from her work on that committee. You also might have found her at the Schaghticoke Fair, manning the Rensselaer County Historical Society's booth, which included all the towns, and helping out with any other jobs and committees that needed expert representation for the Society. Our thanks go to Marge for her enthusiasm and faithfulness in all the endeavors she undertook on behalf of the Historical Society. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at the passing of this really good friend.

The road these two persons have trod is a challenge to us today to continue the tasks before us with accuracy, dedication and the determination to "Give Our Best, Too"! — *Mary French*



Society News Update

Due to an increased workload at his place of business, Mark Lewis will no longer have the time to properly fulfill the office of President of the Society. As a result, we are now without a President. In the meantime, the Executive Board will handle any necessary business. A new President will be appointed at a future meeting of the Executive Board.

We wish Mark well in his new work responsibilities.

SLHS on the WWW

Last September, Mark Lewis created an Internet web site for the Sand Lake Historical Society. It is our hope that we will be able to continue this project for the benefit of the Society. Member and *Historical Highlights* "publisher" Andrew Mace has agreed to help out and to host the site. We could use other computer-literate volunteers to help out. We would also like suggestions as to what a web site might feature, and we would appreciate contributions in the form of information and images (that would be "scanned" and returned). If interested, call Bob Lilly, 674-3430.

The current URL (address) is:

www.geocities.com/Athens/Rhodes/7561/

That is expected to change; watch this space for further news!

Meeting Place

Have you noticed that recent meetings of the Society have been held at the Sand Lake Baptist Church? You should also know that this building is the oldest public building in the Town of Sand Lake. Erected in 1805, as a Meeting House for Baptist, Methodists and Presbyterians, it is a very appropriate place for "historical" meetings.

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FORWARDING/ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Sand Lake Historical Society

POB 492

West Sand Lake, NY 12196

Historical Highlights

Bob Lilly, Editor

Andrew Mace, Publisher
