

Riparius / Riverside

Riparius is a small hamlet lying along the Hudson River between Loon Lake and Wevertown.

Originally called Riverside, the name was changed by the Post Office Department in 1886 to avoid confusion with a Riverside in another part of the state. Riparius in Latin means "belonging to a riverbank."

Riverside was formerly called Folsom Landing, named for Jonathan Folsom, who owned land on both sides of the river. When the settlers first came through this territory Folsom established a ferry across the river as a short cut from Chester, saving a detour of many miles.

In 1863 the Adirondack Railway Company was formed with the plan to extend the line north of Saratoga. In 1865 tracks had been laid north to Hadley, extended to Thurman in 1869, and reached Riverside in 1870. The present station was built in 1919.

The campground on the east side of the river was organized in 1871-1872. It was built as a meeting place where ministers could preach. A tabernacle was built which was a small platform with a roof over it. This was used as an altar for the ministers. In 1908 the tabernacle was enlarged so people could sit under cover. Methodist ministers would gather for a week in July and preach sermons.

After many years of fording the river, a strong interest developed for the construction of a bridge over the river. Construction of a one-lane suspension bridge with wooden towers at each end in 1872 at a cost of \$15,000 and operated it as a toll bridge. Toll rates were three cents to walk across, five cents to lead a horse, fifteen cents for a team, thirty cents for a tally-ho. Known as the Folsom Landing Central Bridge, Warren County purchased the original bridge in 1919 and replaced it with the present one which is 309 feet long.

The first school meeting in Riparius was held on April 13, 1894, where those present voted to build a school house. Seymour Armstrong donated the land and \$500 was raised to construct and equip the schoolhouse to be completed by August 1894. Before this, children attended school in Wevertown or the Millington district about three miles north of Route 8 on the River Road.

The first post office, established February 24, 1886, was in the D&H Railroad station. After many moves and several postmasters, the office now resides next to the Riparius firehouse.

The Methodist Church was built in 1900 on the west side of the river near the railroad tracks. When the bridge over the Hudson was replaced in 1919 it was moved to the east side, its present site.

The original grain store built in 1893 below the railroad station operated until it burned in 1930 and was rebuilt the same year. Downriver, too, a small factory that made bowling pins also burned down.

Socony Oil Company established their plant at Riparius about 1892. In the beginning their products were delivered by mules, then by horse and wagon, and trucks when they came into use. The name was changed from Standard Oil Company to Socony Vacuum Oil Company in 1933. At the present time the buildings are no longer in use.

A bottling works was built near Stanley Brook close to the railroad tracks. The bottling works delivered by mules at first and later by horse and wagon. That took three days for a round trip as far north as Blue Mountain Lake, a distance of thirty-seven miles. As things progressed, the horse and wagon were again replaced by trucks.

Shares of creamery stock were sold in 1917 to 1919 to build a creamery. It was built near the railroad tracks and was to take care of the farmers' surplus cream, but the business failed because the farmers felt they weren't paid enough for their cream and there wasn't enough cream to run the creamery full time.

A late summer fire in 1947 in the southern part of this hamlet spurred the community into realizing a fire department was necessary. A meeting was held to discuss organizing a fire department and the department held its first annual meeting May 14, 1948. The firehouse was completed in 1954 and stands improved today as a monument to the energy and united efforts of the citizens of Riparius.

The original Riverside Hotel was located where Osterhout's house now stands. After it burned the new hotel was built closer to the railroad station. During prohibition the hotel made an excellent hiding place for rum runners on their way from Canada to places south. The deteriorating building was taken down in the 1960s.