



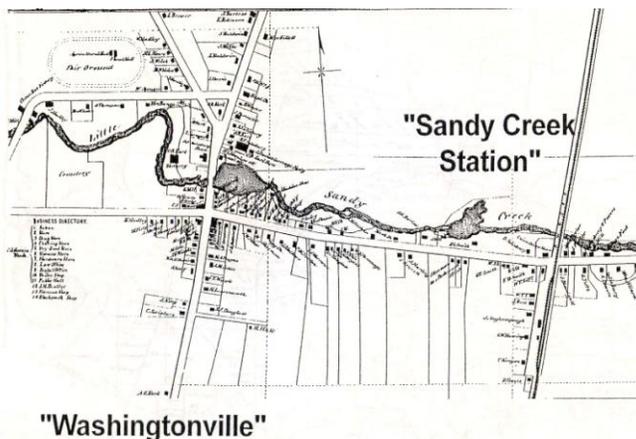
Early Sandy Pond

Sandy Pond or Ontario Bay or North Pond or Big Pond is one of several glacial ponds located along that portion of the eastern end of Lake Ontario lying between Selkirk and Southwick's Beach. Sandy Pond is roughly five miles long and three miles wide with all but the northern end located in Oswego County. It is at this point the Lake and Ponds are bordered

along the shore by sand dunes, which run for nearly five miles. A channel draining both North and South Ponds breaks the dunes in the middle.

The Pond is fed by several creeks located on the other shores. With only the original outlet as a drain into the lake, it must have been a very muddy, weedy body of water, truly named a pond. Wigwam Cove was the earliest name for the western shore of the Pond, most appropriate as it is thought to have been the site of an Indian Village located near the old Wigwam Hotel. This western shore and adjoining lakeshore were fishing grounds for the Onondagas.

In October 1675, Samuel De Champlain, French troops and about 300 Huron Indians marched against the Iroquois nation with the plan to subjugate them and secure their domain to the French. Champlain writes of crossing the St. Lawrence River, proceeding southward toward the enemy's country. The Indians with him concealed their canoes in the woods near the bank. "We traveled by land about four leagues over a sandy plain, where I observed a very pleasing and fine country, watered by numerous small streams (Oswego County) and two little rivers which empty into said lake, and a number of ponds and prairies, where there was an infinite quantity of game, a great many vines and fine trees, vast numbers of chestnuts, the fruit of which was yet in the shell. It is quite small but well flavored." (Oswego County History 1895)



It was thought desirable to have a local name for the little settlement where the Salt Road crossed Sandy Creek.

Dr. Ayer and Anson Maltby proposed "**Washingtonville.**"



The **California Block** received its name from the fact that the money with which it was built came from the *California Gold Rush* by Minot Pruyn in 1854. The block had many times been threatened by fire during its years, including small fires from defective chimneys at various times and the burning of nearby buildings such as the P. D. Clark Hotel, the Seeley corner, Bulkley block, Scripture barns and several minor fires. Never did the gong blow or the fire bells ring but what it was expected it must be the

California Block, F. N. Sargent recalled, and the end finally came on January 9, 1912.

Hon. Danforth E. Ainsworth grew up in this area and married Annie Porter in 1874. They settled in this community where he began his law practice. After leaving Sandy Creek they lived in Albany for many years where he was a member of the State Assembly, the State of Education Department, and the State Attorney General's office and later in private law practice. Because both of the Ainsworth's were civic minded and generous they planned a memorial, a library in their former home town. They both died before the library was dedicated and formally opened on October 25, 1928. The **Ainsworth Library** is located on the site of the burned California Block.



The tannery, established by John B. Smith in 1826, and destroyed by fire in 1883, which involved a loss of \$150,000, is well remembered. The tannery furnished employment to a large number of men, and it was an irreparable loss to the community when its operation ceased. Upon the site of the tannery, buildings were erected by the **Sandy Creek Wood Manufacturing Company, Ltd.**, for the manufacture of pie plates, hardwood veneer and butter dishes.

It commenced business Oct. 1, 1884.



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The first newspaper was called the **Sandy Creek Times** (1862). Upon the removal of the editor in 1864 to Gouverneur, the paper was discontinued. The first number of the Sandy Creek News was published by the new firm April 1871. On January 8, 1885, F. Dudley Corse became editor and proprietor. The business increased a hundred fold, having modern facilities that compared with printing establishments in the cities. The Holstein-Friesian World was also printed by the Corse Press, with M. S. Prescott, Editor. It had a large circulation and was considered one of the best publications of its kind in the United States. The **Corse Press** was synonymous with efficiency, good workmanship and economy.

Blount Lumber Company (1894-1993) of Lacona was one of the oldest companies in this part of the state. It was established in 1894 by George R. Blount and his brother Andy. At that time the sawmills were in the woods and shipped lumber to Lacona by wagon and sleigh. Here it was graded and shipped to buyers by rail. In 1897 the first shop was built, a 24 x 30 ft. building where he manufactured rockers and sold to chair manufacturers. For many years the company specialized in manufacturing hardwood flooring. The first sawmill in Lacona was built in 1914 with logs brought in by horse-drawn sleighs. In 1923 the dry kiln was rebuilt.



The **Lacona Depot** was the hub of village activity for more than a century. The Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg (RWO) Rail line was completed through East Sandy Creek (Lacona) in the spring of 1851 and a depot opened in November of 1872. In 1891 the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad purchased the RWO and replaced the original depot with the present building. According to a souvenir pamphlet published for the centennial celebration of the Town of Sandy Creek in 1925, "one of the factors that materially

contributed to the prosperity of the town was the entrance of the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Rail line through the village of Lacona...with better facilities in transportation, new enterprises were encouraged and helpful industries were introduced." Summer residents traveled by train to stay at camps on Sandy Pond. The mail for the two post offices was brought and sent on the train and local farmers sent milk and eggs to outside markets. The area's two largest industries, Blount Lumber Company and Corse Press, utilized the train station for their products.

10 things that people would not know about our town/villages.

1. **California Block** - a "business block" built in 1854 from money that the owner acquired at the California gold rush. It was a three story building and held many businesses until a winter storm in January 1912 when it burned to the ground. (Today the site of Ainsworth Library and village park)

2. The **Plank Road** (Salt Road - Rt. 11) which connected Syracuse to Watertown and ran through Sandy Creek was built in 1849 and attributed to our early prosperity.

3. **Salisbury House/Hotel** – the first town meeting was held on the first Tuesday in May 1825

4. **Sandy Creek Newspaper (1861-1985) - Holstein-Friesian World- Corse Press**

5. **Greene Point** property has been owned and operated by descendants of the original settlers to this area. (Stephen Lindsey) The property has seen many changes over the years, from cattle grazing to the 1905 cottages that Captain Lindsey Greene and his wife, Faith, built to welcome the public to beautiful Greene Point. Today the Green Point family continues to welcome the public nearly 111 years later.

6. **Early settlers** came to the area in 1803; the first death occurred in that year (Eunice Lindsey) and the first white child was born 1805 (Laura Hurd)

7. **Sandy Creek Wood Manufacture Company** manufactured pie plates, hardwood veneer and butter dishes in 1884 and was built on the site of the first tannery (1826).

8. This town can boast from 1803 to current times **28 Doctors – 3 Optometrists –and 9 Dentists and 13 Drugstores**

9. **Sandy Pond-** In 1803 Stephen Lindsey, William Skinner and the Noyes families came here with household goods loaded upon ox-sleds along the scarcely opened State Road through Redfield and Boylston. **Rail City-** Scenic Highway Route 3- was the first steam operating railroad museum in the United States.

10. **Lacona Depot** was the hub of village activity for more than a century. Summer residents traveled by train to stay at camps on Sandy Pond. Not only were passengers traveling daily through the depot but the mail for the two post offices was brought and sent on the train and local farmers sent milk and eggs to outside markets. The area's two largest industries, Blount Lumber Company and Corse Press, utilized the train station for their products.