

Lewisboro Town House



Picket fence on Main St. leading to the Keeler House. Keeler House in the 1940s. Now the Town House.
Photos courtesy of Maureen Koehl.

The Lewisboro Town House was originally built as a residence c.1870 by Edwin Studwell to replace an older home. The home's Victorian style and mansard roof made it one of the nicest homes in town. Edwin was the half-brother of John Jay Studwell, the father-in-law of George W. Mead. John Jay Studwell's daughter, Sarah, built Mead Chapel in Waccabuc after the death of her husband, George W. Mead.

The Studwell Farm in South Salem had 6 milk cows, 5 pigs and one horse. Rye, wheat, oats and corn were grown in the fields behind the house. The farm was often the site of local town fairs and festivals.

Edwin died at the age of 100 in 1903. His son, Edwin A., lived in the home until his death in 1916, when the farm went to auction and was bought by Henry M. Post of NYC as an investment and rental property.

In 1922, Thaddeus Keeler bought the home and property for his growing family and moved from their small farmhouse and sawmill across from St. John's Church. In 1926, Thad sold 42 acres of pastures and farmland to the Truesdale Lake Corporation. He and his sons did the logging and clearing of this land, later flooded to form the south end of Lake Truesdale.

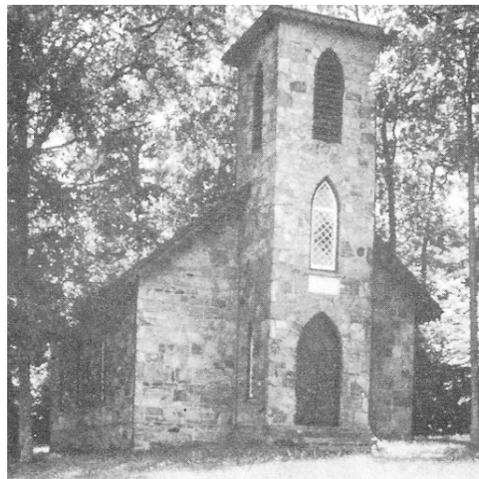
In 1948, the Keeler family sold their home and 7 acres to the town of Lewisboro. The home was renovated for use as town offices and the additional land was later used to build the post office, library and highway department.

Town offices were originally in private homes or businesses and beginning in 1936, office space was leased by the town. The Studwell-Keeler home opened in March 1950 as the first permanent Town House for Lewisboro since the original "town meeting" in 1747 and remains the center for our town's governing offices to this day.

St. John's Episcopal Church



Keeler Farm on Spring St. Sawmill is on the right.
The water tower at Farvue Farm is in the distance.



St. John's Episcopal Church in 1910
Photos Courtesy of Maureen Koehl

Episcopalian services have been held in South Salem since 1750. In 1853, Stephen Hoyt willed land to the church where services had been held outside for years. This beautiful fieldstone church was completed at a cost of \$2,250 with members quarrying the stone nearby and carving the pews and alter railings themselves. Other church furnishings were donated or made by local craftsmen. St. John's Parish includes St. John's Church and St. Paul's Chapel in Vista.

Will Keeler, the village harness-maker, built a farmhouse for his family across the street. Thad Keeler, a distant cousin, took ownership of the farmhouse in 1897. Thad was a carpenter, a farmer and owned a sawmill. He was well-known in the area for his square dance calling. His ability to fiddle and call at the same time was considered a rare talent. He was the great-grandson of Jeremiah Keeler, a Revolutionary War hero. Thad's whole family was musical and often hosted "Keeler Calling" square dances on the second floor of his barn for area families. The first floor served as the saw mill.

Thad's family eventually outgrew the farmhouse and sold it to St. John's Parish to serve as a rectory when the Keeler family moved to the larger Studwell house (now the Town House). The parish sold the house to the town in the early 1970s to raise funds for the construction of a new parish hall behind the church. The old farmhouse has since held the Lewisboro Police and the Parks and Recreation department. It now serves as a satellite office for the New York State Police.

Farvue Farm



The Farmhouse. Photo courtesy of Pelham Rising 2013.



Water Tower at Farvue Farm. Photo courtesy Maureen Koehl.



Henry Wallace at Farvue Farm. Photo courtesy Life Magazine May 14, 1956

The beautiful hilltop property of Farvue Farm has been farmed since the 1700s. The large white farmhouse was built by Ebenezer Wood in 1875 and had been in the Wood family for generations.

In 1905, the farm was sold to Frederick Winant, a wealthy investor from NYC, as a summer and weekend home for his family. The Winant family enlarged the farmhouse and in 1910, hired Thad Keeler to build the iconic water tower over a well on the property. Son John Gilbert Winant became governor of New Hampshire in 1924. He was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain in 1941.

In 1919, the estate was sold to N.B.H. Parker, an executive with the Library Bureau. The family spent weekends and summers on the farm. William Sheldon was hired as year-round superintendent of the large farm. A Danbury Fair prize-winning pig named "Bob" was described in the 4-7-1922 *Katonah Record*: "It may be that Sheldon's Bob is happy because he is part of one of the finest estates in Northern Westchester County. From this farm a view for many miles may be had in all directions of the finest farming lands, woods and lakes." It was during this time that the property was first called "Farvue Farm."

Henry Agard Wallace purchased the farm in 1945. His family had been experimenting with hybrid corn since 1926 in Iowa and founded the Pioneer Hybrid Seed Co. Wallace's extensive agricultural background led him to be appointed as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture (1933-1940). He served as Vice-President under FDR (1941-1945) and Secretary of Commerce under Truman (1945-46). In 1948, he ran for U.S. President with the newly-launched Progressive Party, but was defeated.

After his public service, Wallace focused on genetics at Farvue farm. His breeding experiments with chickens led to a superior egg-producer called "Wallace's hen." He also experimented with the genetics of strawberries and gladioli.

Wallace and his wife, Ilo, were well-liked in the community and attended many town events. Wallace died in 1965 of ALS. Ilo remained on the farm until her death in 1980. The farm remains in the Wallace family and is maintained as a private green space and tree farm. The water tower on the hill remains a historic landmark in our town.

The Agnew Estate and Dairy Farm



Senator George B. Agnew's home and gardens as they were featured in the 1918 Architectural Record. The house, gardens and stone barns later became part of Lewis Kahn's Greendale Dairy Farm.

George B. Agnew was born into a wealthy family in 1869 in NYC. He graduated from Princeton University and became an executive in the mining industry. In 1901 he was elected to the NYS Assembly followed by two terms as a NY State Senator from 1906-1910.

While serving in the NYS Senate, Agnew married Emily Dutilh Grugan in December 1908. Like many other wealthy New Yorkers, Senator Agnew and his new wife desired a weekend and summer home in the country. In 1909, Agnew purchased six lots from six different South Salem farmers to put together his 350 acre country estate and farm. His mansion, *Brookside*, named for the Waccabuc River which ran down the east side of his property, had 29 rooms, eight baths and eight fireplaces. The home was featured in the October 1918 Architectural Record. The gardens, tennis and badminton courts and extensive stonework were designed by the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. The large stone barns built in 1919 near the State Rd. (Rt. 35) were once part of the dairy farm on the Agnew estate.

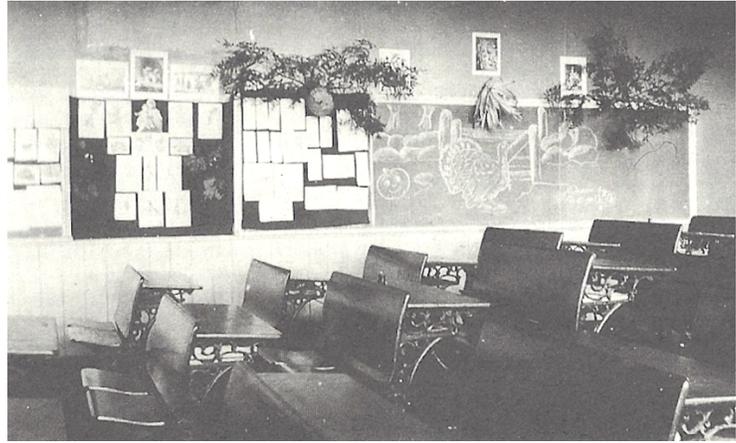
Following the Senator's death in 1941, Agnew's family sold the mansion and much of the land to Lewis I. Kahn in 1945. Kahn named the property, *Greendale Farm*. Throughout the 1940s and 50s, he sponsored square dances for the community in his large stone barn. Elisha Keeler (Thad's son) was the caller. Over the next 20 years, Kahn experimented with several ventures on the farm. He converted a home on the grounds into the *Brookside Convalescent Home* in 1959. In 1960, he built a small "lake" on his property on the other side of Rt. 35 (now JT farm). The model homes he proposed to build around the lake were never built.

The mansion and five acres were sold to a private owner after Kahn's death in 1964. The rest of the property was sold separately to private owners. In 1970, Holly Enterprises converted the mansion into *Holly House*, a residence for seniors 55 and over. When *Holly House* closed in the 2000s, the home was converted back into a private residence and remains a private home today.

Old Cross River Schoolhouse



Cross River Schoolhouse c.1895
Photo Courtesy Maureen Koehl.



Double benches inside the schoolhouse.
Photo Courtesy Maureen Koehl.

The Cyrus Russell Community House first served as the Cross River Schoolhouse from 1868-1940. It replaced an older schoolhouse in disrepair. The new schoolhouse was furnished with “seats, writing tables, two privies” and a fence. It was one of six “one-room” schoolhouses consolidated in 1940 to form Lewisboro Elementary School.

In 1948, a community center was needed for the growing town. The population in Lewisboro doubled from 1940 to 1950 and almost doubled again by 1960. The old schoolhouse and lot were cleaned and repaired and the Cross River Community House became host to many classes, activities and meetings for the town residents. In 1952, the town purchased the building from the school district for \$500. When Town Supervisor Cyrus W. Russell retired from politics in 1970, the building was renamed The Cyrus Russell Community House.

Cyrus Russell was born in 1897 in the large brick home of his great-grandfather, Gideon Reynolds, on the Old Post Rd. (Rt. 121). Gideon ran a stagecoach from NY to Danbury until 1849 with the arrival of the railroad. He built the Brick House about 1829 as his home and a stagecoach stop. Cyrus Russell attended the Cross River Schoolhouse and would walk to school or take a horse and buggy. Russell later recalled “One teacher taught about 60 youngsters in grades ranging from first to ninth. A teacher rarely lasted more than a year.” He and his classmates shared double seats and desks.

Russell started his service to Lewisboro in 1936. He served as town councilman, town clerk, building inspector and eventually Town Supervisor beginning in 1961, serving four terms. When Russell died in 1971, he was remembered by Supervisor Al Jordan this way: “He was a man who grew up in the community, devoted his entire life to the community and to his church and town, friends and neighbors.”

Old Cross River



Cross River in the 1920s after the Dam was completed.
Photo courtesy of Maureen Koehl.



1914 Postcard of the fountain and trough built as a memorial by Dr. Pearce Bailey for his wife.

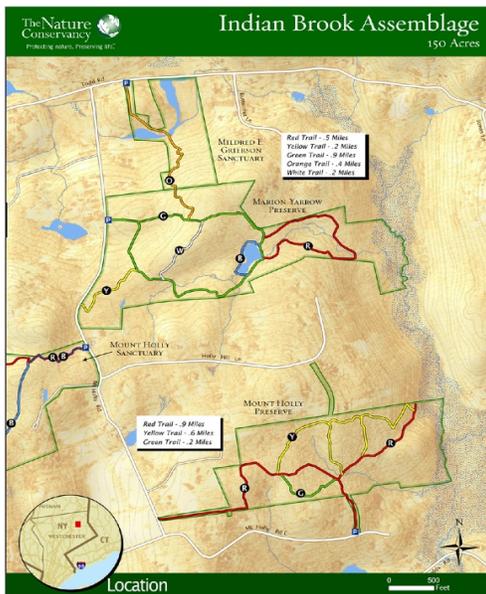
Early in the 1900s, the NYC Department of Water Supply claimed much of the southern half of Cross River to build a “storage reservoir” of clean water for NYC residents. More than 20 buildings were lost to the flooding or moved to new locations. “The residents of the condemned localities go about in a melancholy way,...there is no talk about the haying, no concern about the corn or potatoes.” (Katonah Times 5-7-1914)

Construction of the massive dam took two years. When the dam was completed and “the lake” was filled in 1908, the hamlet adjusted to its new reality. Ed Smith’s blacksmith shop (now the Bait and Tackle store) was open for business as was the re-built Hunt’s General Store, moved to its present location from land claimed by the reservoir. It is now the Fifth Division Market. Wealthy New Yorkers continued to build large country estates in the area to spend their summers and weekends in the country.

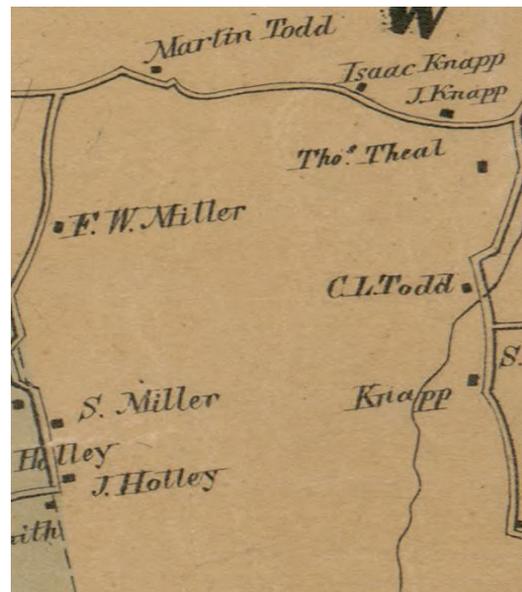
Dr. Pearce Bailey, a nationally known neurologist, built his large Tudor estate in Cross River in 1909. The estate was built in a “most desirable location, situated on a hill overlooking the new Cross River lake.” (KT 12-11-1908) He named his estate *Four Winds*, from the book of Ezekiel 37:9-10 “From the four winds come, O Spirit...” He would later organize a group of prominent physicians to establish the first general hospital in Northern Westchester (NWH).

Edith Bailey, Dr. Bailey’s wife, was an ardent suffragette who gave many speeches in and around NYC and held fundraising events at Four Winds. She grew up in Madison Square not far from Senator George B. Agnew and would often good-naturedly mock his views on women. Sadly, in 1912, Edith died at the age of 43, leaving four young children. The next year, Dr. Bailey built a memorial stone watering trough and drinking fountain on a corner near the estate in her honor. The inscription reads “Spirits of Water, Earth and Sky, All gather here, Where once dwelt one who like the spring, Was sparkling, sweet and clear.” After Dr. Bailey’s death, Dr. Charles Lambert, a noted psychiatrist, opened *Four Winds Hospital* in 1925 on the grounds of the 180 acre estate.

Indian Brook Assemblage



Courtesy of the Nature Conservancy and the Lewisboro Land Trust



1858 map showing the family farms in this area prior to the preserves.

Throughout the 1800s, this area served as farmland and pastures for the Holly, Miller, Todd and Knapp families among others. The Indian Brook flows just east of the area.

By the 1970s, large donations of land for conservation were being made in Lewisboro. The environmental movement at this time led to the explosion of outdoor recreation and the proliferation of trails in our area. Several local families in the 1960s and 70s donated property to conservation organizations to ensure that the land would remain in its natural state.

The Indian Brook Assemblage consists of three separate preserves: The Marian Yarrow Preserve, The Mildred E. Grierson Preserve and the Mt. Holly Preserve. These three preserves were originally donated to the Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy was founded in 1951 to conserve land and clean water for people, but also to protect diverse wildlife habitats. It is now a global organization with more than one million members.

In 1996, the Lewisboro Land Trust (LLT) was formed to protect open space in our town and to educate adults and children about environmental stewardship and responsibility. Ownership and management of the Indian Brook Assemblage was transferred to the LLT from the Nature Conservancy in May 2020. Old growth forests, lakes, streams, wildflowers, a waterfall and many forms of wildlife are found throughout the 130 acres of the assemblage. There are 4.5 miles of marked trails to explore.

We are grateful to the Lewisboro families who preserved and donated this wildlife-abundant, undeveloped land for future generations to treasure.

The Simeon Brady Estate



The Simeon Brady Estate built in the early 1800s.
Photo courtesy of Maureen Koehl



Photo courtesy of the Brady Family

This beautiful Greek Revival home, built c. 1825 by Simeon Brady II, replaced an earlier home built by his father, Simeon I, on the property. The iron gates and fencing are said to have come from Tammany Hall in NYC, where a Brady relative was a politician. The Brady family ran a very successful dairy farm and cattle business in Goldens Bridge. By 1880, Edward Brady, a son of Simeon II, ran the largest dairy and cattle business in Westchester and Putnam counties, owing in part to the coming of the railroad to Goldens Bridge.

This property dates back to pre-Revolutionary times and was the site of at least two visits by soldiers looking for food and supplies; a friendly visit by Patriots and a raid by British Tories. Mary Brady and her eleven children stayed home while her husband, Simeon I, was fighting in the Continental Army. The Tories drove off the cattle, stole their new clothes and ransacked Simeon's store. It is believed that the two man-made caves on the property were used as hiding places by the family during such attacks. It is also possible that the caves served as a hiding place for slaves as part of the Underground Railroad.

The property contains the stone ruins of old outbuildings and mills: a grist mill and an apple cider mill. Applejack cider (hard cider) was very popular at the time and the Brady family was known for their cider. Building foundations for poultry, horses and cattle also remain.

The Brady Family slowly sold off their holdings, and the mansion and 5 acre property eventually fell into disrepair. When the Cusati Family bought the 7,992 sq. ft. house in 1975, the house was in very poor condition after being abandoned for several years. The Cusatis meticulously renovated the mansion and property over time. They retained the beehive ovens, original fireplaces, ceiling beams and rare chestnut flooring with handmade nails. They have collected many old tools and relics from the 19th c. dairy farm on the property. Thanks to the Cusati family, the magnificent mansion continues to serve as an historic Lewisboro landmark to this day.

Mountain Lakes Park



View of Lake Waccabuc from Lookout Point
Courtesy of Half Pint Hikes



Port of Missing Men
Courtesy of Maureen Koehl

Henry B. Anderson, a prominent attorney from NYC, bought up 1800 acres of farms and forest in 1906 in North Salem, Lewisboro and Connecticut. He built ten miles of roads in anticipation of creating a development similar to the country club community of Tuxedo Park across the Hudson River. In 1907, on Titicus Mountain, Anderson built a 20-room mansion overlooking Waccabuc and the Twin Lakes for his family. He also built a restaurant called the *Port of Missing Men*, after a popular book of the time by Meredith B. Nicholson. Both buildings were eventually abandoned and dismantled.

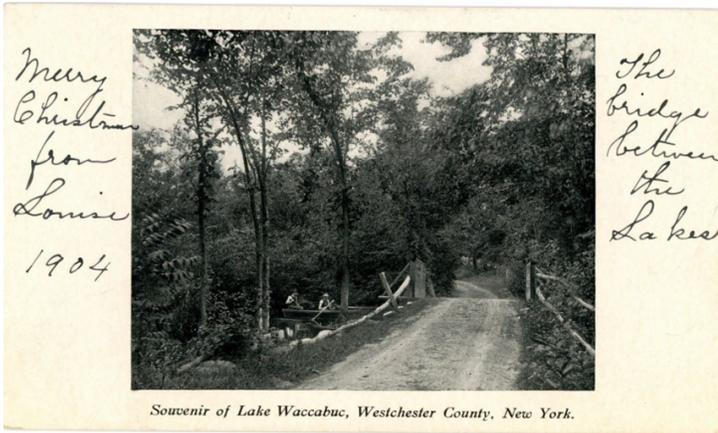
Westchester County surveyed the property in 1955 looking for a public recreation area and camp to replace the outdated county facilities at Croton Point. Native hardwood forests, rock formations, lakes, streams and incredible mountain views characterize the land and seemed a perfect fit. Unfortunately, Mountain Lakes in Westchester Inc., a development firm, beat the county to it and purchased the property in 1957. By 1963, after many negotiations in the courts, the county finally purchased the land from the development company to form the county's northernmost park. Sal J. Prezioso, New York and Westchester Parks commissioner, was instrumental in the acquisition.

Almost 100 structures were built to fit in naturally with the rustic landscape. The boys and girls camps opened in 1965. Although not a popular prospect at the time for the park's neighbors, Camp Supervisor Mort Hyman believed firmly that "children of various faiths and backgrounds and races have to develop a code of ethics to survive in a group and they have to learn to respect each other's rights." Disadvantaged and handicapped county children are still invited to "Camp Morty" to swim, boat and hike in a country setting with an "emphasis on environmental awareness and sustainable living in a cooperative setting."

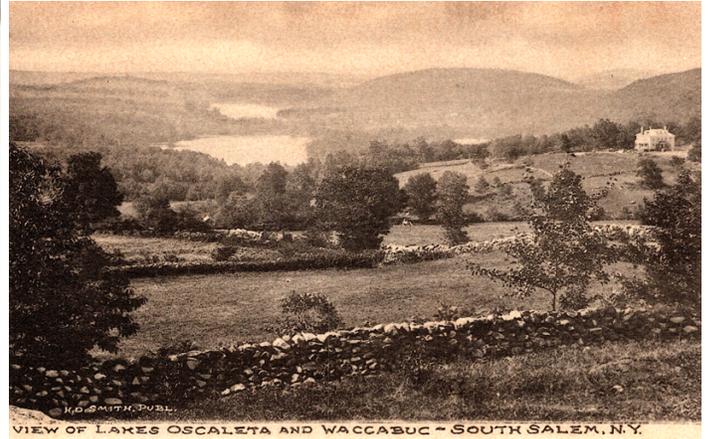
The park offers hiking, fishing, biking, skating and snow-shoeing for all Westchester County residents. Lean-tos, yurts and cottages may be rented for an overnight experience as can be a beautiful hall overlooking the lake, perfect for weddings. The park's natural wonders and resources will hopefully be enjoyed and protected for years to come.

The park is home to Bailey Mountain (976'), the highest point in Westchester County.

The Three Lakes Area



1904 Postcard of a canoe traveling under Oscaleta Rd. from Lake Waccabuc to Lake Oscaleta.



1905 Postcard showing the Three Lakes. A glimpse of Lake Rippowam is on the right.

Originally the land of Chief Catoonah, the Three Lakes Region and Mountain Lakes Park were later part of the “oblong” agreement between New York and Connecticut in 1731.

The Three Lakes are Waccabuc, Rippowam and Oscaleta. Rippowam and Oscaleta are often called the “Twin Lakes” because of their similar shape and proximity. Some geologists believe that they were all one lake formed by a glacier 20,000 years ago. While the three lakes have natural streams and wetlands connecting them, channels dug by the NYC Water Supply in the 1870s to increase clean drinking water for NYC residents serve as the main connectors between the lakes.

The Waccabuc Hotel was built on the Mead St. end of the Lake Waccabuc in 1857. The summer resort advertised a wonderful country experience with “No Tramps! No Bar! No Malaria!” The hotel burned down in 1896, but is credited with changing the name of the lake back to a form of its original Algonquin name from the more common “Long Pond.”

Beginning in the late 1800s, summer camps began to emerge along the shores of the three lakes. Residents of lower Westchester County and NYC traveled north to enjoy a few weeks of clean water and clean air in South Salem and Waccabuc.

Twin Lakes Village was developed in the 1940s as a year-round community between Lake Rippowam and Lake Oscaleta. Many homes originally built as summer camps on the lakes were converted to year-round homes and new homes were built on undeveloped property.

The north side of Lake Rippowam has remained in its natural state due to the presence of Mountain Lakes Park.

Old Lewisboro Elementary School



The Kindergarten-8th Grade School on Bouton Rd in 1941. Note the new school bus from Tator's Garage. The unique wooden fence in front of the building still stands today.

Lewisboro Elementary School (LES) was formed when five of the town's "one-room" schoolhouses were consolidated in 1939. This union was first proposed in 1919, but was voted down by town residents. Twenty years would pass before area children would be educated according to their age in separate classrooms. Children that could previously walk or ride their horse to school would now ride a bus to the larger, centrally located school building.

When LES opened in December 1940, there were 140 children in grades one through eight, five teachers (one from each schoolhouse) and the Principal. Kindergarten was added in 1945. After graduating from LES, students attended the closest high school in New Canaan, Ridgefield or Katonah.

First called the South Salem School, LES was built on 7 acres of farmland purchased from the Bouton family, whose homestead still stands down the road. Schaub Brothers Farm, further down Bouton Rd., pastured their cows behind the school well into the 1960s.

At the dedication ceremony in 1941, Frances G. Mead concluded "The new building is, indeed, a far cry from the first school building in the Town. But both have their significance, both their own eras of importance. And each is a true symbol of the workings of democracy."

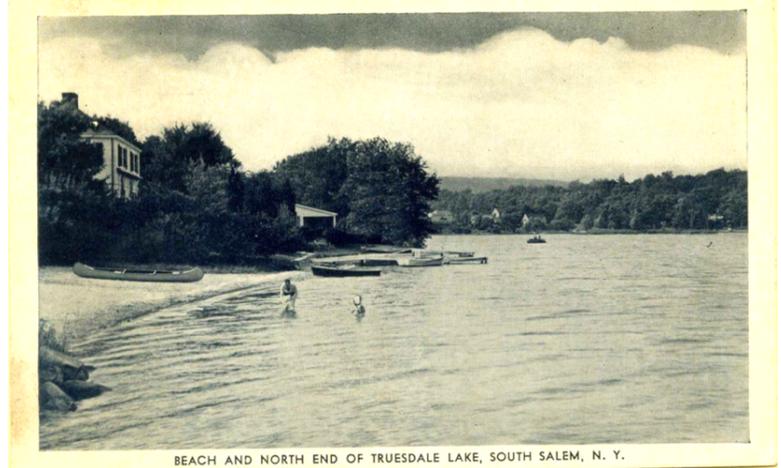
The Katonah-Lewisboro School District was formed in 1952. John Jay High School opened for grades 7-12 in 1956 and LES became a K-6 school. In 1963, Increase Miller E.S. opened in Goldens Bridge. Meadow Pond E.S. opened in Vista in 1967. John Jay Junior High School opened in 1966 and was later renamed John Jay Middle School. In 1989, 6th grade was moved to John Jay Middle School and all elementary schools taught kindergarten to fifth grade.

After serving the families of Lewisboro for 74 years, LES was closed in 2014 due to a steady decline in enrollment. Students were sent to Meadow Pond and Increase Miller Elementary Schools. The building now houses the Lewisboro Police, Justice Court and town offices.

Truesdale Lake



1858 Map of Truesdale Lake area.
The brook with two saw mills is now
on the bottom of the lake.



1940s postcard of the TLPOA beach on Gilbert St. The
houses pictured north are over the dam on Hoyt St.

South Salem was a quiet farming community in the early 1900s. The town's natural beauty was soon discovered by wealthy NYC families and many old houses were converted to summer and weekend residences as refuge from the filthy air and crowded streets of the city.

Rev. Theodore Van Norden was the 13th minister of the South Salem Presbyterian Church and a savvy businessman from a wealthy NYC family. He recognized the beauty of South Salem and its close proximity to NYC as a valuable asset. He began purchasing properties in the hamlet, including the land that now makes up the north end of Truesdale Lake. In 1907, Van Norden hired men to build a dam across the Coal Kiln Brook and form a small lake by flooding the surrounding pastures. He named it *Truesdale Lake* for the hill that borders it on the west.

The 1920s brought better roads and transportation to Northern Westchester. Many wealthy New Yorkers built large estates in the area. Developers recognized an opportunity to build smaller homes on area lakes as an escape for city dwellers. In 1926, Truesdale Lake Corporation formed and Van Norden was made a director. The corporation purchased Van Norden's property including the existing lake and 42 acres of pasture from the Keeler family (living in the Town House) to flood and form the south end of the now larger, 83-acre lake.

The corporation promoted a very exclusive and private lake colony and was successful until the Depression hit in the 1930s. Several bankruptcies eventually led to the formation of two associations, each with their own beach, to regulate and maintain the private lake. Summer cottages were converted to year-round homes after WWII and many more year-round homes were built.

Eagles, herons, swans, turtles and many types of wildlife thrive in and around the lake. Truesdale Lake has one of the oldest Sunfish fleets in the country, Sunfish Fleet #27, that still holds regattas on Sunday afternoons in the summer. There are no motor boats allowed on the lake. Skating, swimming, boating and fishing make Truesdale Lake a year-round resort for those lucky enough to call it home.