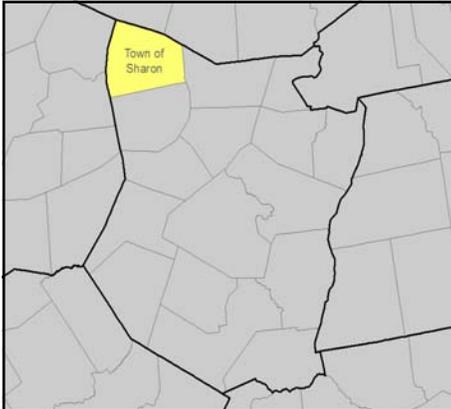


Location

Location of Town of Sharon



The Town of Sharon is the North-western most town in Schoharie County. The Town is bordered on the west by the Towns of Cherry Valley and Roseboom in Otsego County, and on the north by the Towns of Canajoharie and Root in Montgomery County. The Town shares its eastern border with the Town of Carlisle, its southern border with the Town of Seward, and completely encircles the Village of Sharon Springs. Sharon is about 40 miles from the City of Albany, 32 miles from Schenectady, 23 miles from Amsterdam, 18 miles from Cooperstown, and 8 miles from Cobleskill, all as the crow flies.

History



Originally named Dorlach, the Town of Sharon has its European based roots that date back to perhaps the mid-1700s when Dutch and German religious folk settled the area to find a better life and religious freedom. At the time this area was at the border of the American Frontier and the settlers found themselves living near members of the Iroquois. Trades and purchases between the settlers and the Indians took place for items such as food, blankets, furs, and despite English authority, land. With the onset of the Revolutionary War, many area residents were split between the Tories and the Patriots. In July 1871 the Battle of New Dorlach took place at an area near the current grounds of the Walmart distribution center. For security reasons some of the Loyalists fled to areas around Albany. After the war, many of the Tories were forced off of their land or fled to Canada.

At the end of the Revolutionary War this area found itself divided between Albany and Tryon (later Montgomery) Counties and later

in 1791 part of Otsego County. New Dorlach was annexed to Schoharie County in 1795 when the County was formed from parts of Otsego and Albany Counties and in 1797 as a homage to Sharon, Connecticut, was renamed Sharon when the County was subdivided into six towns.

As the Town began to repopulate after the war, farming became the preeminent use of property. Mostly self subsisting, farmers grew flax, barley, oats, corn, and wheat and raised chickens and dairy cows. The farms were connected via footpaths and horse trails, and the farmers would barter and sell extra goods or materials for other items or services in need.



The developing trade between farmers in the region created the need for an organized system of transportation and by 1810 there were two turnpikes that ran through Sharon. The Great Western Turnpike that connected Albany with Western New York, and The Loonenbergh Turnpike that connected the Great Western Turnpike just west of Sharon to Athens, NY on the Hudson River. In 1825 the Erie Canal opened roughly ten miles north of Sharon and proved to be a more efficient mode of transport for people and goods.

Between the early to mid 1800's the farming community began to shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture. It was the transportation systems that allowed for this change by allowing the farmer to import needed items to run the farm and export extra commodities to local markets or faster modes of transportation. The existence of the turnpikes in Sharon gave rise to some of Sharon's hamlets while other hamlets formed around mill locations located around waterways or strategic stops for travelers. In the latter half of the 1800's, the D&H railroad extended a line into Cherry Valley with a passenger and freight depot in Sharon Springs.



The existence of the mineral springs led to a tourism boom in the mid 1800's. Beginning with a boarding house in 1825 the tourism industry in the Village of Sharon Springs led to the development of grand hotels and natural parks. By the 1840's Sharon Springs had become an important destination for summertime recreation with over 10,000 people a summer visiting the mineral springs.



A combination of events led to the downturn in tourism for the Hotels in the Village. In October of 1929, the Great Depression began, thus contributing to a lack of expendable income. In 1932 the D&H ceased its passenger service to Sharon thereby terminating a source to supply great amounts of tourists an easy access to the Village. By the 1940's automobiles had become a reliable source of transportation and US Route 20 became a major source of tourism. By this point though, the style of tourism had been altered from an "all inclusive" hotel package to the more independent philosophy that the automobile reflected.

Topography

The county is part of the glaciated Allegheny Plateau and extends southward from the lowlands of the Mohawk Valley to the northern ranges of the Catskill Mountains. The northern part of the county is mainly a dissected limestone plateau and is a westward extension of the Helderburg escarpment. (Maps 2A and 2B)



The terrain in the Town varies from hilly with steep slopes in the southwest to nearly regularly spaced areas that are flat and level. Dotted throughout the Town -drumlins are distinctive glacial features that are present, resulting in many of the hillsides facing north and south, with ridgelines oriented in a generally east to west fashion. Elevations range from just over 1960 feet at the peak just west of Engleville Pond to about 780 feet where Brimstone Creek leaves the County. In the Northern portion of the Town there is a significant

difference in elevation that leaves impressive views of and across the Mohawk River Valley.

Karst terrain occurs within the limestone areas of the Town and where present, it is common to have problems when drilling for water and designing septic systems.

Soils

The soils in Sharon consist of 4 major soil associations: (Map 3)

Darien-Nunda—Soils in this association are deep, nearly level to moderately steep, somewhat poorly to well drained, and are found in the northern most extent of the town in an east-west orientation.

Honeoye-Farmington—Soils in this association are deep and shallow, nearly level to steep, well to excessively drained and are found in an east west extent with US Route 20 roughly in the middle.



Nassau—Soils in this association are shallow, nearly level to steep, well drained, strongly acid, shaly and are found on the west and south western boundary of the town.

Mohawk-Honeoye—Deep, gently sloping to steep, well and moderately well drained that exists primarily in the south western portion of the town oriented in a northwest to southeast fashion

Watersheds

Two main drainage basins bisect the Town that flow to the Mohawk River and the Schoharie Creek. The Mohawk River basin consists of two sub-basins. The northwestern basin flowing to Canajoharie Creek and the northeastern to Flat Creek. West Creek flows from Bowmaker Pond to the Cobleskill Creek before making its way to Schoharie Creek (Map 4).

These waterways and tributaries should remain unimpeded from development to allow them to



follow their natural course for the purposes of flood control and water quality.

There are several State designated wetlands scattered throughout the town. (Map 5) These are 12.4 acres or larger. State Law requires there be a 100 foot buffer from the edge of State wetlands to any development. Federal wetlands are likely to exist throughout the Town, however these are currently not inventoried and mapped. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has jurisdiction over these wetlands if they are connected to navigable waterways. If a Federal wetland is suspected on the property, The USACE should be contacted prior to construction.

Visual and Historic Resources

Many of the aesthetic qualities important to the residents of the Town of Sharon are represented by historical buildings, scenic views, and unique geology throughout the Town. Identified in the community survey specific locations include Bowmaker Pond, The Beekman Mansion, Helderburg Escarpment, and views from Route 20, Beechwood Road, Engleville Road, Lynk Road. However, the rural landscape itself with open space and operating farms is very much as important as any specific location.



Town Demographics

As of the census of 2000, there are 1,843 people, 678 households, and 484 families residing in the Town. Population decreased 3.9% from 1990. The racial makeup of the town is 98.2% White 0.6% Black or African American, 0.2% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.1% Asian, 0.4% from other races, and 0.8% from two or more races. 1.2% of the population are Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 678 households out of which 33.0% had children under the age of 18 living

with them, 57.2% were married couples living together, 9.0% had a female householder with no husband present, and 28.6% were non-families. 23.0% of all households were made up of individuals and 10.9% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.64 and the average family size was 3.10.

In the town the population was spread out with 27.4% under the age of 18, 6.8% from 18 to 24, 27.0% from 25 to 44, 22.5% from 45 to 64, and 16.3% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 38 years. For every 100 females there were 99.5 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 90.6 males.



The median income for a household in the town was \$36,413, and the median income for a family was \$40,417. Males had a median income of \$31,167 versus \$25,972 for females. The per capita income for the town was \$18,639. About 10.8% of families and 15.1% of the population were below the poverty line, including 20.8% of those under age 18 and 10.2% of those age 65 or over.

Land Use in Town

(Collected from Real Property Tax Assessor Code July 2008)

By parcel count, residential land as a category has the greatest use at 53%. Single-family residential is the single most predominant land use in the Town of Sharon at over 28%.

Not surprising, the next two largest categories are vacant land at 27% and agriculture at just under 10%.

The number of active farms has significantly reduced over the years. Today larger farms include the Larkin, Sherman, Kleinberger, High Hill, Vetter, Key, and Craft farms. Most of these farms are located in Schoharie County Agricultural District #3 (Map 6). Agricultural Districts