

12. The Mill, postcard from personal collection of Sue Thompson

CHAPTER 5 - Enfield Falls

In the southeastern part of Enfield is an area called Enfield Falls. The major portion of the hamlet of Enfield Falls was located on the south end of Enfield Creek. The area supports a gorge, which contains 12 waterfalls. The main fall is called Enfield Falls or Lucifer Falls. Halfway down from the west end of the gorge there is a recess in the rocks with ragged walls and a rocky floor; it was called the "Devil's Kitchen" and it is from those rocks where it probably received the name.

Isaac Rumsey, a pioneer settler, built a gristmill in 1817 on Enfield Creek. Locally grown grains, corn and wheat, were ground into different grades of refined flour both for family and livestock consumption.

Gilbert Budd opened up a sawmill down the creek from the gristmill. A general store, shoemaker's shop, carding factory, blacksmith shop, tannery, shingle mill, additional saw mills, and a hotel were also located near the mill.

In 1822 Keturah (Dunlap) and Charles Woodward, who originally came from England, built a house one-mile west of the hamlet of Enfield Falls. The house was built of stone gathered from the surrounding area. The house has always been referred to as the "Old Stone House."

A daughter (Elizabeth Woodward) was born to Charles and Keturah in 1828. The Woodwards eventually had 13 children.

In 1830 Charles and Keturah Woodward invited their friends (Mr. and Mrs.) Robert V. and Henrietta "Nettie" Cone Wickham of East Haddam, Connecticut to visit Enfield Falls. Nettie Wickham enjoyed the glen and hamlet that the couple purchased land there in 1833² from Gilbert Budd. The land included the upper part of the glen and "Lucifer Falls". They then built and managed the Enfield Falls Hotel.

The Hotel stood on the elevated, flat, open spot across Five Mile Creek and North of and roughly opposite the present stone and timber pavilion. The area is still plainly identifiable since it is bordered on both sides by large, old maple trees planted in two perfectly straight lines. A description³ of the hotel area was given by Charles Thurber in 1887⁴, "Just beyond a white school house⁵, turn to the left down a step pitch into the little village of Enfield Falls. The small, neatly kept hotel down a green lane to the left will provide you with a dinner or lunch...".

The hotel had a second-story porch that ran the entire length of the front of the building. The second floor supported a large ballroom where many dances were held on a Saturday night. Near the hotel a



13. Picnic area at R.H. Treman State Park, postcard from personal collection of Sue Thompson

wooden sign was posted which read “Admission to the Falls 10 cents”. The Wickhams tended⁶ the many paths and bridges which were located through the gorge and to the Falls. The guests of the Hotel enjoyed the scenic walks through the gorge. Guests were also able to stable their horses at the hotel and were served excellent meals.

July 27, 1853, Mr. H. C. Wickham of the Enfield Falls Hotel advertised in the Ithaca Chronicle Newspaper. The ad stated that the Enfield Hotel at Lucifer’s Falls was ready for reception of visitors, and considerable improvement was recently made in the walks through the ravine and that the descent of the Falls was more easily accomplished. The hotel was reportedly well known and advertised from 1853 to the 1880’s.

Henrietta and Robert operated the hotel together until Robert died December 8, 1865. Henrietta died in Painted Post, New York on January 29, 1892. Robert and Henrietta are buried in the Budd Cemetery, which is located across from the Enfield Falls Community Center on Gray Road.

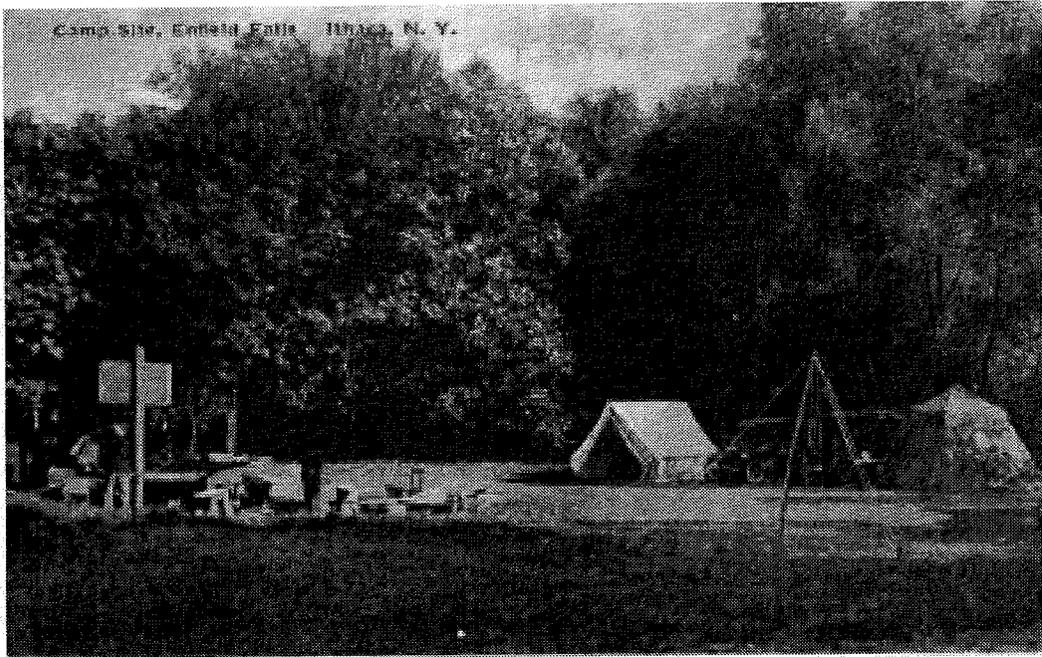
Hotel proprietors changed throughout the years. According to the Tompkins County 1868-69 Directory Mrs. Wickham operated the hotel.⁷ James Bowen was proprietor⁸ of the hotel according to the 1870 census⁹. Henry Teeter was proprietor of the hotel from 1888 until 1891.¹⁰ Dwight Rumsey was proprietor from 1892 through 1895. From 1871 to 1916 the following families owned the property where the hotel stood – Gillette, Frear, Jayne, Tryon, Rapson, VanKirk, and Treman¹¹.

The Hotel was still standing in 1916, although “the roof had fallen in, and the upper part of the building was practically demolished”.¹² The Enfield Falls Hotel burned sometime before 1920.

Charles Budd was the first postmaster in 1882 for Enfield Falls. The post office was located in the converted parlor of his residence, just across the stone bridge north of the grist mill on the west side of the road. The post office was discontinued in 1902.

Isaac Rumsey’s 1817 gristmill burned in the 1830’s. Jared Treman¹³ replaced the Rumsey mill after it burned. This mill was in use from 1839 to 1917. A “Millers” cottage was also built in 1839 next to the grist mill. The grist mill was sold in 1850 to Robert Halsey. Jared Treman then moved to Trumansburg, New York.

In 1915 Robert H. Treman (Jared Treman’s Grandson) arranged for Leroy H. VanKirk of Enfield to buy for him the upper part of the glen, which was once owned by Robert V. and Henrietta Wickham.



14. Camping at the Upper R.H. State Park, postcard from personal collection of Sue Thompson

The purchase of the land included a cottage, an old hotel site, the main falls, the rock gorge part of the upper falls, a total of 40 acres. He took ownership of the land on January 7, 1916. In 1916 he purchased the grist mill. He had the mill boarded up to preserve it until it could be restored. Between 1924 and 1926 restoration of the grist mill started. In 1927 the grist mill was opened to the general public with all the same internal and external appearance as it had when the mill was in full operation.

The grist mill escaped total destruction on July 7, 1935 from a flood, which overtook New York's Southern Tier. In a 72 hour period the area experienced 9.5 inches of rainfall. According to the Finger Lakes State Parks Commission, The State Conservation Department reported that Enfield Glen was the most affected by the flood of all the recreation areas in the State. Preliminary estimates from the Parks Commission Office revealed a total damage to Enfield Glen at \$321,000. Three hundred thousand (300,000) cubic yards of road gravel and thousands of trees were washed from Enfield Glen. The Park concession building was wrecked and a storage structure as well as two C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps) trucks were carried away. The log dam and mill pond above the grist mill were both destroyed in the flood.

Robert Henry and Laura Treman gave Enfield Glen to New York State in 1920 with the stipulation "That it be forever preserved as a public park free to all visitors."

After the Glen was given to the State, a Commission was formed known as the Enfield Falls Reservation Commission with Robert H. Treman as its chairman. The Commission existed until 1924 when ten counties in the region were placed under the Finger Lakes States Parks Commission, of which Robert Treman was President.

On September 23, 1929 a 12 by 18 inch tablet was set in the wall of the Enfield Glen by friends of the Tremans. The tablet reads:

"This glens singular charm was recognized and rescued for the people of New York by Robert and Laura Treman, some of whose friends set this tablet here in loving appreciation of their gift of Enfield Glen to us all."

The Park was renamed Robert H. Treman State Park in his honor, after his death in 1938.

It was placed on the face of the rock wall slightly to the left of the long stairway, which winds down the face of the cliff on the south side of the ravine from the lookout to the lower level. After the Tremans



15. C.C.C. Camp No. SP-6. Photograph courtesy of the DeWitt Historical Society.

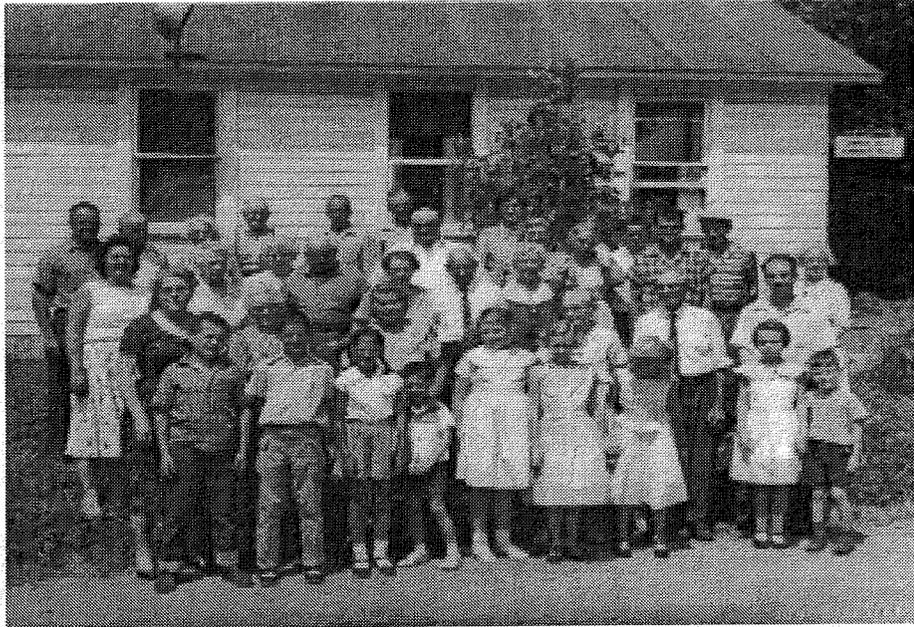
donated the property to the State in 1920, most of the hamlet's remaining buildings disappeared. Some of them were demolished to provide parking for the automobile tourists of the 1920's. A Victorian-style house that had been assigned to the park caretaker caught fire and burned in 1927. A 1929 aerial photo of the entire upper end of the park shows no fewer than four buildings on both sides of the old entrance road opposite the mill. All of them disappeared before 1960. Various park superintendents and caretakers lived in the Charles Budd house, the former Enfield Falls post office, after 1924. In 1979 it was demolished. This left the Park Commission buildings built in 1929-1930, the pavilion dating from 1928, the mill and the 1839 miller's cottage as the only improvements remaining within the boundaries of the former hamlet of Enfield Falls.

In 1913, Leopold D. and Theodore W. Wharton began movie production in Ithaca. In 1914, the brothers established Wharton Studios, Inc. Streams, gorges, and parks were frequently used for filming scenes. Enfield's Treman Park Gorge was used for part of the setting for "The Great White Trail." The movie was a controversial film regarding the "white slave" (prostitution) trade. The film was finished for the 1917 season. The movie industry of Ithaca ended in the 1920's.

During the Depression, from 1933 to 1941, a C.C.C. camp was at Enfield Falls, less than a mile southwest of the mill on Fishkill Creek. This was Company 1265 at Camp SP-6 at one time consisting of more than 100 young men. They lived first in tents and later in wooden barracks complete with mess and recreation halls, and shower and infirmary buildings. These C.C.C. men were responsible for much of the carpentry and stone masonry found throughout the park today. The extensive damage caused by the July 1935 flood was repaired by the men from the C.C.C. Camp. Initials and names of some of these men inscribed in the cliff walls may be found in various places in the glen, often with the letters "C.C.C." and the number "1265" proudly added, along with the date."

The camp was closed in 1941. In 1943 the camp was transferred from the Federal Government to the Park's Commission. After World War II the buildings were auctioned off and removed from the site.¹⁵

Members of the C.C.C. became involved in the community as was remembered by Helena Schaber, "They would bring up a truck full of C.C.C. people to the church every Sunday. The Saturday night dances, they would come up to the Grange Hall. That's how Doris Hansen met her husband. They would bring up a truck full of young men on Sunday mornings to church. That's where they met the young people. They were kind of lonesome, they were from country homes, they would visit with young and



16. Enfield Falls Community Group

old, they didn't get to go home very often. The people would try to make it pleasant for them."

Not all of the Enfield Falls Community was located at the falls. Located on the current Grey Road, east of the falls area, is the Enfield Falls Community Building. The Home Bureau of Enfield Falls had scheduled a dance at the Building for July 13, 1935, but it was canceled due to the immense flooding of the area.

1935 Flood - Unique Point Of View At Upper Enfield By Eva Boberg Krayniak

From the panoramic view, which I had from my parents' farm on the south slope of the hill facing Enfield Creek above Enfield Falls (now called Robert H. Treman State Park), I watched the terrible power of water at flood stage.

The wooden bridge spanning the Hines Road opposite our driveway, which is on the Enfield Falls Road (now Route 327) withstood the pounding of the water until the weight of fallen trees and rocks became too much for it, and it washed away down the creek. The creek eventually swelled to a depth of about twenty feet as evidenced by the undercut south banks.

Before I was born, the main highway from Ithaca (the Enfield Falls Road) curved around our property and went straight up the south hill to join with the since abandoned Brewer Hill Road (reopened as the last mile of Bostwick Road) joining with the Bostwick Road, Applegate Road and Harvey Hill Road. It did not continue toward Enfield Center as it does now. Our mail box stood near the bridge at the side of a road washed out by the flood, which intercepted an extension of the Hines Road coming down the hill from the bottom of our driveway to the bridge. That section of road was built at the same time as the stretch of highway was completed to continue the Enfield Falls Road to the Trumbulls Corners Road. Don McFall had left his tractor parked on this land belonging to his parents Edna Rockwell McFall and Frances McFall.

I watched as the bank kept crumbling in closer and closer to Don's tractor and our mailbox. A tractor—sized boulder eventually tumbled into the water and gradually disappeared down the swollen stream. Then the tractor followed. Eventually the whole bank up to the main highway was covered with water and I saw enormous uprooted trees wash down the swollen creek to go down over Lucifer Falls on their way toward Cayuga Lake.

Farther down the stream the water covered all the property on the North side of the road where Ed Georgia lived (a cook at Enfield Falls C.C.C. The C.C.C.'s were one of many "alphabet" agencies developed by Franklin D. Roosevelt to combat the Great Depression. The young men at the military style camp were recruited from families in poverty (largely from New York City) and built stone bridges and stairways throughout Enfield Park. The Georgia's used to have a lawn in front of their house, wiped out completely. Because the creek re-routed itself, the highway was rebuilt uncomfortably close to their front door steps, as can be seen to this day. The Georgia's spent a terrified night in the loft of their barn, climbing up the hill in the morning to get dried out and to stay with us for a month until they could find a high and dry house to live in.

Next to them was a tiny store and gasoline station owned by Mrs. LaBar who also built a house across the road, near the creek. As a little girl, I liked to visit her and was amused by the high boots, which she wore whenever she went out into her garden because she thought she might see a snake. She made me turn out my pockets before she invited me into her house for cookies. Sometimes I would be carrying baby snakes, which I had learned to be harmless from our hired man Chester Rea, the preacher's son. Although not related to the flood story, Chester was a boy of great potential, collecting snakes and insects for Cornell University. He was shot by the Japanese at the end of World War II, having survived years of imprisonment and the agonizing death march at Bataan.

Mrs. LaBar's store and house were washed down Enfield Creek with all her furnishings. No trace was found of any of her furniture, even a piano.

We were cut off from civilization for about a month (good early practice on living from cellar supplies during present-day heavy snow storms) because of the washed out highway below us and the bridges above us. Eventually we were able to drive a round-about dirt passage at the back side of the Georgia and LaBar property to get to the highway and replenish groceries.

Nature will eventually bring us another big flood to raise havoc among the buildings in the valley below us (just as the California earthquakes come back). But I am quite happy to live high up on the hillside, listen to the roar of the water below us and stay snug in the snow until it goes away.

Today there is a group "The Friends of Mill" who support the Enfield Falls area including the Mill. They help out by giving tours of the mill, historic research of the area, and small maintenance of the upper park with permission of the Robert H. Treman State Park officials.