



New Paltz Hamlet Histories: Jenkinstown

Although Jenkinstown now lies within the Town of Gardiner, a result of the creation of town in 1853, it had prior to that point been a part of the Town of New Paltz. The hamlet of Jenkinstown encompasses the area of Jenkinstown Road, Route 208 and Route 32 south and is south east of the Village of New Paltz.

Jenkinstown was originally part of the Dubois Patent of 1688, in which Governor Dongan granted Louis DuBois 3,000 acres of land in what is today Gardiner. One of the earliest homes to survive this period is that Evert Terwilliger House built in 1738 on what is today known as “Locust Lawn”^{***}. Evert received 400 acres of land by his father-in-law, Hugo Freer Jr., on which the stone house was built. He also built a possible tenant house on the outskirts of the property and by 1765 an addition was added onto the main house to be used as a tavern*. In addition to working on his “South End Farm”, Evert was also a Deacon at the New Paltz Dutch Reformed Church by 1751*. By the early 19th century the terwilligers sold the farm to Colonel Josiah Hasbrouck, one of the wealthiest men in Ulster County, and built “Locust Lawn” nearby in 1814.

Another prominent early family was the Jenkins’, who arrived from New Jersey in 1793^{**}. Lambert Jenkins was a property owner in Bergen County, New Jersey, who purchased land in the area from Cornelius DuBois in 1793. Shortly after this he built a stone house which still exists today. He and his two parents (both nearing their eighties) and eight children were the first to reside there and his wife soon followed, before giving birth to three more children*.

On July 13, 1799, Lambert Jenkins died after falling to illness. His father remained in the care of his five sons until he too passed on in 1815 at age 101. Lambert’s eldest son James became responsible for the founding of many of the early industries of Jenkinstown, building three mills, two gristmills and one sawmill in addition to a general store. As a result the community of Jenkinstown was named in his honor¹. Historian Kenneth Hasbrouck also credits James with establishing several other businesses including a Blacksmith shop, coffin maker and

millinery shop, although he inaccurately places this occurring before the family arrives in the area^{***}. A tannery also supposedly once existed near where the stream empties into the Plattekill River. James later fell into debt however his son Lambert was able to bring prosperity back to the family and the region^{*}.

The Jenkinstown School provided public education for children from roughly around 1860 to 1931. It was built on land that was part of the Freer and Jenkins tracts. The lack of room for children to play during recess caused the school to be moved to its present location at 343 Rte. 32 South. The school was subsequently closed in 1931 as a result of school centralization and was converted into a private residence^{****}. In addition to the school a post office, under postmaster George Ade, provided public services and was also located in the grocery store^{**}. Jenkinstown was served by many churches in the region and, in relation to New Paltz, associated with the First Dutch Reformed Church (1717-1773) and New Reformed Church in 1839^{*****}.

Social life in Jenkinstown was cultivated along Jenkinstown road throughout the 19th century. According to historian Kenneth Hasbrouck in his 1953 history of Gardiner, the milling area and several houses built around the grocery store once were the centers of activity for this tiny hamlet.

Although no longer in New Paltz, Jenkinstown's history, before and after 1853, has been forever linked with the Town and Village of New Paltz, through its family connection, agricultural and commercial activities.

* Thompson p. 107-110

** Thompson, Ed. *The Road to Gardiner*. 2001. 117-127. Print.

*** Hasbrouck, Kenneth. *History of the Township of Gardiner*. Gardiner, NY, 1953. 23-25. Print.

**** *New Paltz Independent* 18 Jan 1951, Print.

***** Thompson p. 95