



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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Ketchum's Store

A few years ago I wrote a story about the "everything" establishment in Wynantskill, namely Houser's Store. However, there was a general store that preceded Houser's that dated back to the mid-19th century which was the only store in Wynantskill and it too sold everything.

The store was built in 1863 by Philo Westphall and was located at the corner of West Sand Lake Road and Main Avenue. This was an ideal location for a store as it sat on a stage coach route from Troy all the way to Boston. In 1880 a sixteen year old lad named Sanford B. Ketchum went to work for Westphall. Ten years later he purchased the store and operated it for 31 years before selling it to Iva Puffer and her family.

The store dealt in flour, feed, farm equipment, groceries, clothing, shoes, china, kitchen ware, furnishings, harness, peppermint lozenges and even a farm wagon. A portion of the store was the Wynantskill post office. Ketchum served as assistant postmaster and later postmaster until he retired in 1940- a 50 year career.

Many times the store was the gathering place for village inhabitants. After the mail was sorted the place was turned over to amateur philosophers and checker board experts.

Most days were uneventful. Except possible the time two young boys decided to burglarize the post office. They did gain entry and secure a few dollars but they were quickly

apprehended. Also, twice in the early automobile days, trucks failed to negotiate the turn from the West Sand Lake Road and smashed head on into the store. There was another time when an automobile headed straight for the post office while Mr. Ketchum sat in a chair by the window and watched it skid into a telephone pole at the last minute.

Ketchum sold the store in 1921 to the Puffer family who continued to run it until 1941 when it was torn down because the bridge over the Wynantskill was widened. The location near the creek had caused flooding problems for many years. The Puffers then moved the store and the post office across the street to Main and Orchard. When Mrs. Puffer died in 1958 the post office temporarily moved to the corner of Main and Dodge. By then Houser's Store had become the "everything" store in Wynantskill.