

Who are the Slingerlands?

The hamlet is named after the prominent Slingerland family. The first known Slingerland is Teunis Slingerland, a “trader at Beverwyck” who is first noted in colonial records in 1654 upon his marriage to Engeltie. One of their descendants is John Albert Slingerland who came to the hamlet in about 1790. In the early 1800s the hamlet was known as Normanskill (the creek is just north-west of the hamlet). By 1866 it was known as Slingerlands Corners, soon simplified to just Slingerlands. For about two weeks in November 1891, the name was changed to Ruxton. This did not sit well with the family, who soon got the name changed back to Slingerlands.

What was the village like in 1886?

“The village contains 44 dwellings, 50 families, 230 inhabitants; a commodious brick school-house and M.E. Church, printing establishment, hotel, marble and monumental works, store, 2 blacksmith shops, wheel wright and paint shop, shoe shop, cigar manufactory, R.R. station and several fine residences....Being near the city, it affords many conveniences to those who seek for rural pleasure and the quiet of home life. A physician and lawyer represent the professions.” *Quoted from Howell & Tinney’s 1886 Bi-Centennial History of Albany County*

What makes this district historic?

The Slingerlands Historic District represents a hamlet that grew along a road built in the late eighteenth century. Later, this route was developed as a plank road, traveling from the city of Albany to the rural “hilltowns” in southern Albany County. Three major stages of development can be seen.

In the earliest stage, homes in Slingerlands were scattered farm-houses on large acreage built between c. 1790 and the Civil War. Constructed in the Federal and Greek Revival styles, these houses are concentrated either on New Scotland Road or on old roads adjacent to New Scotland.

The second stage of development came after 1863 when the Albany & Susquehanna Railroad, later part of the Delaware & Hudson Railway, was built between Albany and Binghamton. The railroad allowed for convenient commuting into Albany from Victorian-era villas set on large suburban lots that had been subdivided from the farms.

Finally, in the second quarter of the twentieth century, widespread commuting by automobile became possible. Slingerlands continued to develop as a suburban locale centered on the automobile with houses built in twentieth century styles such as Bungalow and Colonial Revival. *Summarized from the National Register nomination.*

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also brought ready access to Albany by way of a short train ride.

(17) Sprong House (698 Kenwood Avenue)

Jessie White Sprong bought this house in 1886 from Albert I. Slingerland. J. White, as he was known, was an executive with the D&H Railway. In 1885, he was the Assistant General Passenger Agent; by 1889 he was the Comptroller and Purchasing Agent for the entire Northern Railroad Department. Sprong and his wife raised three children here: Harwood, Florence and Elizabeth. After Elizabeth’s death in 1960, the property was sold to the Claytons. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

(18) Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail

Passenger service on this section of the D&H line ended in the 1930s. Freight service continued through the 1990s with the actual rails being removed in 2004. In 2010, Albany County completed the purchase of 9.1 miles of rail bed from the Canadian Pacific Railway to create the trail. In June 2011, Albany County, the Town of Bethlehem and the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy partnered to open a 1.9 mile section of the trail to the public. The ultimate goal is to open the entire trail from Albany to Voorheesville.

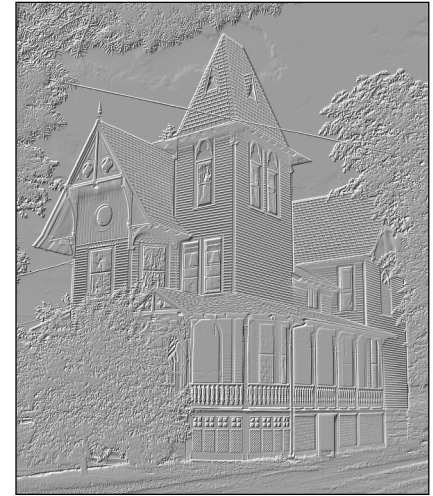
(19) Bridge Street

Most of the properties along Bridge Street have Albert and Catherine Slingerland in their deed history and many have a connection to D&H Railway employees. We know that number 23 was once occupied by railroad conductor E.W. Muzzy. Given the location’s proximity to the railroad (the tracks ran behind the homes on the south side of the street) this is not surprising.

(20) Albert I Slingerland House (36 Bridge Street)

Albert I. Slingerland was something of a real estate mogul responsible for the construction of many of the fine Victorian-era homes in the hamlet. At the time of his death in 1896, Albert owned 14 or 15 houses, as well as two farms in the hamlet. Many were built for railroad executives. He and his wife Catherine lived here until 1854. This c.1840 Greek revival farmhouse was individually listed on the National Register in 1997 and recognized for the preservation of the home and its outbuildings.

A Walking Tour of the **Slingerlands Historic District**



In 2012, the Slingerlands Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes New Scotland Road from Couse Lane to Helderberg Parkway, Mullens Road and Bridge Street. As you walk along the tour, please be sure to admire all the lovely Victorians, rustic bungalows and tidy Colonial Revival homes.

Walking tour prepared by town historian Susan Leath
and Peggy Sherman. September 2012

(1) Pine Hollow Arboretum

The arboretum is a unique 25 acre forest environment that highlights more than 3300 trees and shrubs arranged esthetically while maintaining a natural setting. Started by John Abbuhl 45 years ago, the arboretum opened to the public five years ago.

(2) Conning-Fraiser Farm (1458 New Scotland Road)

This Federal style brick home was built for Andrew Conning about 1848. Note the unique brick work and decorative details. Conning's grandfather, also Andrew Conning, was a Revolutionary War veteran whose burial location is noted on the nearby historic marker. This 130 acre farm was later sold to the Fraiser family, whose daughter Catherine married Albert I. Slingerland.

(3) Conning-Couse Farm (1471 New Scotland Road)

The property was originally part of the 150 acre David Couse farm. Couse sold 6 acres to William Conning in 1865. The house probably dates to this period, although it could have been a tenant house on the larger farm. The 1865 census notes that Conning was a carpenter living here with his wife Temperance and children Amanda and Ellen.

(4) Community United Methodist Church and Parsonage (1497 & 1499 New Scotland Road)

In 1830, a group of Methodists formed in Adamsville (now Delmar). In 1871, a dispute over where to build a new church led to a split, and the Slingerlands church was established. Albert I. Slingerland donated the land and building. The bell tower features a Meneely bell cast in West Troy, NY in 1877. Albert I. Slingerland used materials left from the old Adamsville church to construct the parsonage in 1872. He offered the lot and house to the church for \$1,700 in April of 1873.

(5) District School #9 (1500 New Scotland Road)

Built in 1908, this school replaced an earlier smaller school. In 1930 District #9 centralized with others to form the Bethlehem Central School District. The last eighth grade graduated here in 1931 with first through sixth continuing until 1946. At that time the building was converted to apartments by the Zautner family.

(6) Ironweed House (1511 New Scotland Road)

In 1876 Albert I. Slingerland sold this property to Charles Hammond. Hammond was the Director of the Northern Division of the Delaware and Hudson Railway. In 1926 the home was sold to the Dillenbecks. Scenes *Ironweed* starring Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson were filmed here in 1987.

(7) Firefighters Memorial Park (1516 New Scotland Road)

The park was established in 1978 as the Slingerlands Park. In 1997, Don Veltman approached the Town Board to change the name to the Firefighters Memorial Park. The memorial honoring all of Bethlehem's fire districts was installed in 2003.

(8) Mohawk Market (1526 New Scotland Road)

One of Slingerlands' oldest commercial buildings, this sturdy brick structure, has seen a number of uses over the years including a general store and post office.

(9) Home Lawn Hotel (1545 New Scotland Road)

The Home Lawn Hotel enjoyed a prominent location in the hamlet accommodating travelers and summer boarders. At the turn of the twentieth century, proprietor Rufus Zelig hosted banquets and dances and the hotel served as a destination for automobile

and sleighing parties from Albany. In the 1920s it gained notoriety for selling liquor during prohibition years. Originally built about 1850, the building is now a private residence.

(10) Albany-Schoharie Plank Road toll gate location

When it opened in 1859, the Albany, Rensselaerville, and Schoharie Plank Road incorporated parts of modern day New Scotland and McCormack Roads. At toll gates along the way, travelers paid to use the road. For example, a four horse stage coach was charged 12 cents. Plank roads were a road improvement fad in the mid 1800s that quickly fell out of favor as the wooden boards soon rotted.

(11) Slingerland Printing Company (1565 New Scotland Road)

Cornelius H. Slingerland established the Slingerland Printing Company in 1879. Conveniently located near the D&H Railway line, the company specialized in printing for the railroad, including timetables and other railroad forms. Posters, election forms, and items like paper, envelopes and twine rounded out the business. In 1935, the company was sold to the Burland Printing Company which kept the Slingerland name, later becoming the Bethlehem Printing Company. By 1946, the building had been converted to apartments.

(12) Tollgate Restaurant (1569 New Scotland Road)

Opened in 1946, the Tollgate Restaurant was established in 1949 by Robert and Arthur Zautner.

(13) Slingerland House (1575 New Scotland Road)

The rear portion of this home dates to about 1790 when John Albert Slingerland leased land from the Van Rensselaer Patroon. John Albert married Leah Britt on February 3, 1799 and raised seven children here. An 1807 receipt notes that John Albert paid his annual rent of 17 bushels and 46 pounds of wheat to the Patroon. The front section of the house was added after the property was deeded to John and Leah's son, John I. Slingerland, in 1842. John I. was elected to the New York Assembly (1843-44, 1860-61) and the United States Congress (1847). He was known for his work for tenant rights, early versions of the Homestead Act, and his role in the beginnings of the Republican Party.

(14) Font Grove Road

Font Grove was a 600-acre estate amassed by Albany businessman Col. James Hendrick after his marriage to Slingerland native Anna Wands in 1858. The estate included a thriving dairy farm, greenhouses for his horticulture business, 12 houses and assorted barns and outbuildings. The estate was broken up upon his death in 1899.

(15) Miner House (1599 New Scotland Road)

The original part of this house was built about 1850 by fruit farmer Charles Bender. William H. S. Miner bought the property in 1914 when he retired. At that time Miner operated the largest milk distribution company in Albany. He improved and developed the property and gave the house its current style and flair. His daughter Ruth Miner was a well known personality in the hamlet. She was a lawyer, founder of the Bethlehem Women's Republican Party, and a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1940, 1944 and 1948.

(16) Freight House (Kenwood Avenue)

The Albany and Susquehanna Railroad came through in 1863. The freight house, built in 1864, was the first passenger station. In 1870, after a bitter fight with robber barons Jay Gould and James Fisk, the railroad was leased in perpetuity to the Delaware and Hudson Railway. In 1888 a new and larger passenger station was built and the freight house was moved to its current location. The 1888 passenger station was located about where the rear of the fire department is now. It was demolished in 1960s to make way for a new fire station. Originally envisioned to transport coal from eastern Pennsylvania to the markets of Albany, the railroad
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