

## **The Century of Restructuring (1914-present)**

Since the First World War, the general population movement has been out of rural areas and into urban and sub-urban regions. The development of the automobile as a quick and easy means of individual transportation has led to many changes in rural development. As family farms have dwindled, areas have had to deal with aging populations and more consolidated resources. In Warren Township, the process was already underway by the post-Civil War period. The changes of the twentieth have only accelerated the existing changes.

Historically, the Great Depression was a major factor in the rapid decrease in Warren Township population. Entire communities of farmers lost their property to the bank, the store, or for taxes. The government responded to the crisis by establishing State Game Lands in the 1930's. This move consolidated areas that would be returned to wilderness and provide recreational attractions for sportsmen.

During roughly the same period, two lakes in Warren Township were being developed as recreational facilities: Highland Lake and Lake-O-Meadows. Of the two lakes, the first to develop lakeside cottages was Highland Lake. These facilities attracted an increasing number of summer vacationers to the relative peace and quiet of Warren Township. Over the past decades, many of these city residents who discovered the beauty and serenity of our township have decided to use Warren Township as either a seasonal residence or as a retirement home.

Since the 1950's, the development of major business in the greater Binghamton metropolitan area have attracted a certain number of sub-urban commuters to the pastoral landscape of Warren Township. The ease of automobile transportation to journey the roughly 30-mile distance, combined with an affordable tax structure has made Warren Township an attractive bedroom community. The ease and efficiency of the internet and other electronic means of global communication make it increasingly feasible to telecommute to work, while at home. This is an alternative to relocating to a more expensive area and an aid to developing home businesses, both of which are very well suited to Warren Township.

As traditional family farms continued to fail during the subsequent decades, a growing number of Amish families have bought up several farms in our township, and the neighboring townships. By diligence and hard work, they continue to turn dilapidated structures into efficient agricultural producers. They have added to the entrepreneurial spirit of our township by building shops and stores. And the Amish provide a sense of a old fashioned era of the horse and buggy, which is itself an attraction for the urban vacationer seeking a place to "get away from it all." As we look forward, we are always reminded of our past. Warren Township provides a memory of a slower pace of rural life that is a welcome relief in an increasingly hectic world.

This serves as only a brief introduction to the history of Warren Township. Please excuse the many omissions and incomplete details. We hope to prepare a more complete study in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheldon Lee Gosline

28 July 2003