

**JAY
TROY
WESTFIELD**
Orleans County,
Vermont

A COMMUNITY PROFILE

Prepared for the
Vermont Council on Rural Development



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A Note to the Reader:

Just as a community is never finished modifying, adapting, and organizing its natural, political, and social environments, an attempt to profile those dynamic processes must be a work in progress. Materials below are organized to reflect community characteristics and resources. Please join us in this profiling effort and call attention to major omissions, inaccuracies, and errors of fact.

Thank you,

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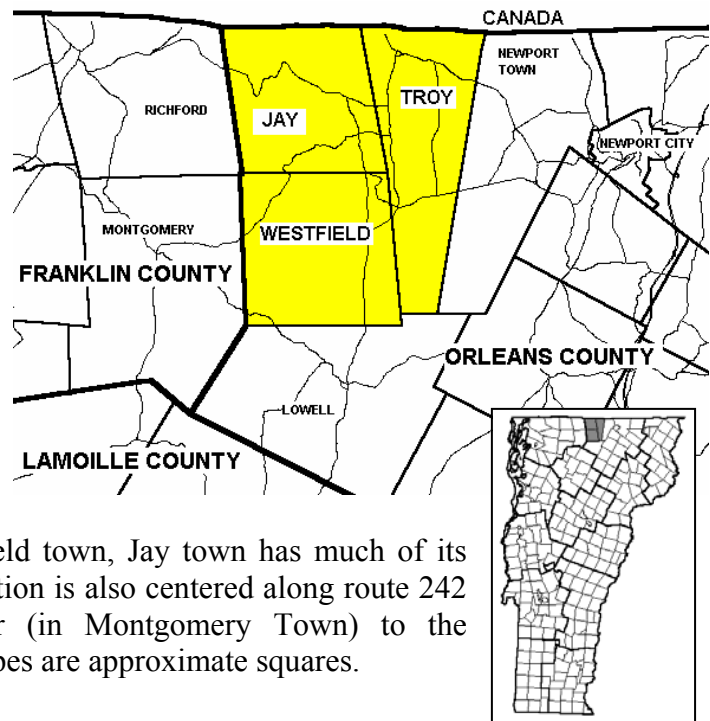
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1. LOCATION AND DEFINING FEATURES

These three Orleans County towns are located just west of Newport Town and City. The trio comprises the northwest corner of the county. Jay and Troy both border Canada to the north. Just south of Jay, settlement in Westfield (altitude, 825 ft.) clusters along Route 100 and is centered on an unincorporated area called Westfield. This cluster lies just 1.6 miles from a second unincorporated area called Troy, to the northeast on route 100. The population cluster in Troy is further defined by the county road 101, running due north through the incorporated cluster, to the village of North Troy some 6 and ½ miles and just south of the Canadian border. Like Westfield town, Jay town has much of its population on its eastern flank. Jay’s population is also centered along route 242 running from Jay to Montgomery Center (in Montgomery Town) to the immediate west. Jay and Westfield town shapes are approximate squares.



In terms of “defining features,” we recognize, of course, that a site visit will challenge and augment many of the observations in this profile. However, one could describe Jay as dominated by Jay Peak. It is visible from many view corridors all over the region (see more detail in *Natural Resources* below). One important local feature of Troy might well be the cluster of civic buildings so integral to life in North Troy Village. In Westfield, it might be the small but noteworthy town green, another historic and modern locale where townspeople meet. We will count on townspersons to correct and build upon these materials.

2. CIVIC STRUCTURE

Jay Town

Jay was chartered on November 7, 1792 and again on December 28, 1792. The story behind Jay’s other, previous names, Wyllis and Carthage, captures a bit of the history of the period. As a town, Jay is unique in holding two charters; the first, covering 7,600 acres in the southern section was issued to Governor Thomas Chittenden in lieu of several hundred pounds the state owed him for back salary. The December charter covered 15,360 acres to the north and was given to John Jay (the great New York statesman) and a colleague in appreciation for Jay’s assistance in settling the land dispute with New York and thereby opening the door to Vermont’s becoming the fourteenth state in the Union.

In the decade preceding this recognition of Jay, several forces displayed an interest in this specific land area. Initially 60 officers of a Connecticut line regiment, led by two officers from

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the Wyllis family, had petitioned Vermont for a northern land grant. The petition was honored by the legislature in March of 1780 for a town to be called Wyllis. This grant was forfeited in 1782 for reasons unknown, although Swift suggests we might assume the locale was a bit too northerly and remote. In October, 1783 the legislature, pressed to meet a debt to Governor Chittenden of 350 pounds, voted that it be paid by issuing one half of the forfeited rights in the town of Carthage to the Governor. Of unknown origins, this was the first reference to the Carthage place name. Still short on money, the legislature decided to pay Surveyor General Ira Allen's salary with land, telling him he could sell the rest of the forfeited rights in Carthage. Having no luck in selling the land, Allen basically returned the land to the state, negotiating title to a piece located elsewhere. Allen and Chittenden's political opponents turned these (and presumably other land dealings) into campaign issues and Chittenden was defeated in the 1789 election. In 1792, despite the acknowledgement that the Chittenden had done nothing wrong, legislators had moved on to address new and different challenges and eager to acknowledge Jay's statesmanship fixed the area's name at Jay.

The town was slow to be settled. No population is recorded in either the census of 1791 or 1800, and a post office doesn't emerge until 1836, closing in 1905. The post office was referred to as "Jay," indicating the longevity of a cluster in the immediate area of the unincorporated village. Today (at least through the late 1970s) most of the townspeople receive mail services from the office in North Troy (Swift, 1977, p. 362-3).

Troy Town

Troy was chartered on October 28, 1801, initially as a town called Missisquoi (sometimes Missiskouie¹). Originally the area had been granted as two separate parcels, each containing just over 11,000 acres. These were Avery's Grant (one of many to Avery in Vermont) in 1792 and a second piece of land granted to John Kelly, also in October, 1792. No significant settlement occurred under either of these grants and the town's name was changed from Missisquoi to Troy on October 26, 1803.

It is reported that, by 1803, the emerging community was doing a good business in potash and pearlsh with Troy, New York. That connection may well have led Vermonters to change from Abenaki to Greek names. This was a period in the US when a classical revival was influencing Americans to rename places using ancient Greek titles, although this most typically happened to towns with names from British aristocracy. On another historic note, Swift calls attention to the fact that the second piece of the land given Governor Chittenden as the legislature sought to settle its debts was probably here in Troy. For more details see 1977: p.370-71.

The first post office in town was established at a residential cluster in South Troy in 1823, designated simply as Troy. A second office opened in 1828 at North Troy. Through the late 1970s both post offices in Troy were reported to be still be in operation.

¹ Swift reports many variations in the spelling of the Abenaki word Missisquoi, generally considered to mean "great grassy meadow" indicating the importance of the alluvial plains to both nomadic and seasonally settled pre-white cultures.

Westfield Town

Chartered on May 15, 1780, Westfield was one of six towns granted as part of a fund-raising effort. Colonel William Williams of Wilmington, Vermont, among others, had served on a legislative committee that came up with the solution of selling these lands for raising funds. Only two grantees paid their granting fees on time and were chartered that May: Enosburg and Westfield. Out of several explanations for Westfield's town name, the most plausible is that it was named after the Honorable William West, Esquire, a distinguished resident of Scituate, Rhode Island and one of several New England legislators supporting statehood for Vermont. West sold this and other lands he had been given for his political services in 1785, and there is no record of him ever visiting the area.

Westfield's only post office was located in the village in 1830 when the population of the town was just over 350. Although last reported in 1977, we assume the post office still serves inhabitants, numbering 503 in the 2000 Census, a 19% increase from 1990.

3. NATURAL RESOURCES

Obviously, these towns are heavily influenced by the natural resource base. Farm and forest land dominate in all three. Jay and Westfield share a series of peaks defining the northern most chain of the Green Mountains. The peaks immediately related to Jay Peak form a critical part of the local, regional, and even, one might suggest, the international landscape. These peaks dominate the area and are visible from all three towns and many points throughout the Northeast Kingdom, including being part of a panoramic landscape visible from Burke Mountain, from the fire tower near Lake Elmore, from the town lookout in Brownington, as well as many areas to the west and from vantage points along the broad alluvial river plain formed by the St. Lawrence River in Canada. It is reported "on a clear day, one may view the streets of Montreal to the northwest, the White Mountains to the east, and Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks to the south and west." Troy has no very high peaks. The only hill usually appearing on town maps is the 1,200 foot high Warner Hill on the western outskirts of North Troy village. On the other hand, with the exception of the Jay Peak Ski Area, Troy enjoys a historic built infrastructure, e.g. sites of old mills, civic buildings, the covered bridge, and so on.

The spectacular northern spur of the Green Mountain chain runs from the southwestern most corner of Westfield, due north through western Jay to the Canadian border. It is further identified as the northern-most section of Vermont's famous Long Trail. From the south to the north, the following named features emerge: Hazens Notch (altitude 1700 ft.) by Hazens Notch State Park and Natural Area, Sugarloaf Mountain (2543 ft.), Strawberry Hill (Long Trail State Forest), Buchanan Mountain (2,940 ft.), Domeys Dome (2,820 ft.), Gilpin Mountain (2,940 ft.), Little Jay (3,182), Big Jay (3,786 ft.), Jay Peak (3,861 ft.) and North Jay Peak (3,438 ft.). Ironically, of all the "Jay" named peaks in this area, only North Jay Peak actually lies in Jay Town. Big and Little Jay lie 1/10 of a mile west of the Westfield Town's western border in Montgomery Town. Jay Peak, Jay State Forest and Jay Peak Trail all lie in Westfield Town. Of the three towns, we have found evidence of a talc quarry in Troy, owned by Vermont Talc (with mills in Chester and Johnson), and a second, older quarry in Windham.

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While the mountains in the western portions of these towns provide often spectacular skylines, there are a number of significant local “viewsapes,” including those from Hazen’s Notch, the state forests, the long trails and especially around the River Road Covered Bridge in Troy. Other infrastructure-enhancing local civic structures include the cluster of activity in North Troy Village, exemplified by the close proximity of the town fire station, the library, Troy Elementary School, the Town Hall and the Post Office. Moreover, the underutilized railroad and accompanying railroad bed is still an important resource to the village town and region.

4. TABLES

Table 1. Natural Resource Information

| | Jay | Troy | Westfield |
|---|-------|-------|-----------|
| Area of Land, Sq. Miles | 33.9 | 35.9 | 39.8 |
| Area of Water, Sq. Miles | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| % Private/Public Conserved Land 1999 | 21.9% | 10.9% | 16.1% |
| Change in Forest Land to Developed Land, Acres, 1970-90 | 39.8 | 46 | 2 |
| Change in Forest Land to Non-Forested Land, Acres, 1970-90 | 67.6 | 162.6 | 88.1 |
| Change in Non-Forested Land to Developed Land, Acres, 1970-90 | 5.1 | 10.9 | 0.7 |

Source: VT Indicators Online <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>

Table 2. Family and Household Information, 1990-2000

| | Jay | Troy | Westfield | Orleans County | Vermont |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|-----------|----------------|---------|
| Number of Families, 1990 | 105 | 427 | 125 | 6,514 | 144,895 |
| Number of Families, 2000 | 115 | 432 | 141 | 7,153 | 157,763 |
| % Change in Families, 1990-2000 | 9.5 | 1.2 | 12.8 | 9.8 | 8.9 |
| Number of Households, 1990 | 127 | 555 | 153 | 8,873 | 210,650 |
| Number of Households, 2000 | 158 | 617 | 200 | 10,446 | 240,634 |
| % Change in Households, 1990-2000 | 24.4 | 11.2 | 30.7 | 17.7 | 14.2 |
| Average Household Size, 1990 | | | | | |
| Average Household Size, 2000 | 2.7 | 2.53 | 2.45 | 2.45 | 2.44 |
| Average Family Size, 1990 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.8 | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| Average Family Size, 2000 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 3.0 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Table 3. Town, County and State Population, 1790-2000

| | 1790 | 1800 | 1810 | 1820 | 1830 | 1840 | 1850 | 1860 | 1870 | 1880 | 1890 |
|--------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| JAY | | | 28 | 52 | 196 | 308 | 371 | 474 | 553 | 696 | 641 |
| TROY | | | 231 | 277 | 608 | 856 | 1,008 | 1,248 | 1,355 | 1,522 | 1,673 |
| WESTFIELD | | 16 | 149 | 225 | 353 | 370 | 502 | 618 | 721 | 698 | 763 |
| LOWELL | | | 40 | 0 | 314 | 431 | 637 | 813 | 942 | 1,057 | 1,178 |
| MONTGOMERY | | 36 | 237 | 293 | 460 | 548 | 1,001 | 1,262 | 1,423 | 1,642 | 1,734 |
| NEWPORT CITY | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NEWPORT TOWN | | 50 | 112 | 52 | 284 | 591 | 748 | 1,197 | 2,050 | 2,426 | 3,047 |
| RICHFORD | | 113 | 442 | 440 | 704 | 914 | 1,074 | 1,338 | 1,481 | 1,818 | 2,196 |
| ORLEANS CNTY | 37 | 1,032 | 4,593 | 5,300 | 10,883 | 13,634 | 15,707 | 18,981 | 21,035 | 22,083 | 22,101 |
| VERMONT | 85,341 | 154,395 | 217,913 | 236,433 | 280,685 | 291,948 | 314,120 | 315,098 | 329,760 | 332,286 | 332,407 |

| | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | %change 1990-2000 |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| JAY | 530 | 513 | 368 | 274 | 230 | 243 | 197 | 182 | 302 | 381 | 426 | 11.8 |
| TROY | 1,467 | 1,686 | 1,869 | 1,898 | 1,869 | 1,786 | 1,613 | 1,457 | 1,498 | 1,609 | 1,564 | -2.8 |
| WESTFIELD | 646 | 613 | 490 | 448 | 354 | 358 | 347 | 375 | 418 | 422 | 503 | 19.2 |
| LOWELL | 982 | 1,086 | 1,005 | 725 | 615 | 643 | 617 | 515 | 573 | 594 | 738 | 24.2 |
| MONTGOMERY | 1,876 | 1,721 | 1,658 | 1,386 | 1,208 | 1,091 | 876 | 651 | 681 | 823 | 992 | 20.5 |
| NEWPORT CITY | | | 4,976 | 5,094 | 4,902 | 5,217 | 5,019 | 4,664 | 4,756 | 4,434 | 5,005 | 12.9 |
| NEWPORT TOWN | 4,026 | 4,793 | 1,187 | 1,193 | 1,064 | 966 | 1,010 | 1,125 | 1,319 | 1,367 | 1,511 | 10.5 |
| RICHFORD | 2,421 | 2,907 | 2,842 | 2,544 | 2,646 | 2,643 | 2,316 | 2,116 | 2,206 | 2,178 | 2,321 | 6.6 |
| ORLEANS CNTY | 22,024 | 23,337 | 23,913 | 23,036 | 2,1718 | 2,1190 | 2,0143 | 2,0153 | 2,3440 | 2,4053 | 2,6277 | 9.3 |
| VERMONT | 343,641 | 355,956 | 352,428 | 359,910 | 359,231 | 377,747 | 389,881 | 444,732 | 511,456 | 562,758 | 608,827 | 8.2 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Table 4. Housing Units, 1990-2000

| Source: Census | Jay | Troy | Westfield | Orleans County | Vermont | U.S. Bureau |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|-----------|-------------------|---------|----------------|
| Total Housing Units, 1990 | 333 | 641 | 265 | 12,997 | 271,214 | 5. |
| Total Housing Units, 2000 | 417 | 734 | 339 | 14,673 | 294,382 | |
| % Change in Housing Units, 1990-2000 | 25.2 | 14.5 | 27.9 | 12.9 | 8.5 | |

Gender Breakdown, 2000 (percent)

| | Jay | Troy | Westfield | Orleans County | Vermont |
|--------|------|------|-----------|-------------------|---------|
| Male | 51.2 | 50.3 | 50.3 | 49.6 | 49 |
| Female | 48.8 | 49.7 | 49.7 | 50.4 | 51 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 6. Age Breakdown, 2000 (percent)

| | Jay | Troy | Westfield | Orleans County | Vermont |
|--------------------|------|------|-----------|-------------------|---------|
| Under 5 years | 7.0 | 5.4 | 4.4 | 5.7 | 5.6 |
| 5 to 9 years | 8.0 | 6.1 | 5.4 | 6.7 | 6.8 |
| 10 to 14 years | 6.6 | 8.6 | 7.4 | 7.8 | 7.5 |
| 15 to 19 years | 6.8 | 8.2 | 6.0 | 7.2 | 7.5 |
| 20 to 24 years | 5.9 | 6.2 | 6.0 | 4.9 | 6.2 |
| 25 to 34 years | 11.3 | 12.5 | 9.7 | 11.5 | 12.2 |
| 35 to 44 years | 17.6 | 15.6 | 13.1 | 15.3 | 16.7 |
| 45 to 54 years | 13.1 | 14.8 | 19.9 | 15.3 | 15.4 |
| 55 to 59 years | 7.3 | 5.6 | 7.0 | 6.0 | 5.4 |
| 60 to 64 years | 7.0 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 4.6 | 4.0 |
| 65 to 74 years | 6.8 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 6.7 |
| 75 to 84 years | 1.6 | 4.3 | 7.0 | 5.5 | 4.4 |
| 85 years and over | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 1.6 |
| Median age (years) | 38.8 | 37.0 | 43.9 | 39.3 | 37.7 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Table 7. Employment and Income

| | Jay | Troy | Westfield | Orleans County | Vermont |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| % Unemployment Rate, 2000 | 7.9 | 7.0 | 8.6 | 5.9 | 2.9 |
| % Population Working in Town of Residence, 1990 | 16.3 | 16.4 | 20.1 | 20.5 | 20.2 |
| Annual Average Wage, 2000 | \$17,230 | \$22,252 | \$18,006 | \$23,177 | |
| Median Family Income, 1989 | \$34,500 | \$22,468 | \$29,821 | \$26,469 | \$34,780 |
| Median Household Income, 1989 | \$31,875 | \$20,785 | \$27,857 | \$22,809 | \$29,729 |
| Poverty Rate, 1989 | 14.4 | 21.2 | 10.9 | 14.9 | 9.9 |

Source: VT Indicators Online <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Jay Town

The population cluster here, centered in an area called, logically, Jay, is approximately 4 miles from Troy Town’s southern settlement. The population in Jay is clustered at an altitude of approximately 922 feet. The Town consists of 23,040 acres. As indicated, the ski area has and will continue to draw attention to this area, not only from within the region but externally.

Troy Town

Troy Town consists of 22,616 acres. As indicated above, Troy enjoys two distinct population foci, Troy village (at an estimated altitude of 764 ft.) to the south and North Troy, an incorporated village in the north of this town. Troy village is now ignored by the Census and assumed to be unincorporated, though identified through the 1960s as an incorporated place (Bears, 1966). Troy’s town shape approximates a north-south “standing” rectangle slightly wider at the northern border abutting Canada. Swift notes that the town had a significant population cluster from 1841 to 1851 at an area known as Troy Furnace, an iron smelting furnace built to process iron ore mined just east of the Missisquoi River. She notes that several different companies failed over the years trying to produce and sell iron. A hamlet of Phelps Falls, just north of Troy Village, on a bend of the Missisquoi River, took the name from John Phelps who settled there from Derby in 1816 and built a sawmill, gristmill, and carding mill at the falls. These mills operated through the 1830s. Another settlement, Stevens Mills was named after brothers who ran a sawmill there in the late 19th century.

Ray Bears, in the Vermont Guide written in 1966², described the area as follows:

North Troy is an industrious community with well-shaded streets bordered by clapboarded residences. Being a gateway between the United States and Canada, it has had a turbulent border history. The early settlers were a high-spirited, reckless lot with a strong love for excitement. They lacked the more staid and regular habits of some of their neighbors to the south. In May, 1812, when an

² based on materials compiled for the Federal Writers Project issued in 1935.

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invasion from Canada seemed imminent, a special town meeting was held at which the selectmen were authorized to purchase muskets, bayonets, powder, and a hundredweight of lead for the town's defense. The men of Troy were ready for a fight, whatever the odds, but the British never came. The Weyerhaeuser Company manufactures plywood products. It is one of the largest industrial plants in this section. 1.1 miles north of North Troy, is the U.S. Customhouse. (1966:p373-74).

Bearse's remarks, though dated, are continued here as they provide an interesting commentary and complement the numbers below. His reference to the British in the early 19th century is a part of the heritage of this area that Mosher captures in his works on the Northeast Kingdom. One early wave of immigration into Northern Vermont (and specifically this area) can be traced to French Canadians who fled rural Quebec. Generations later, they are an obvious cultural resource in these communities.

Troy Village lies on a slight elevation of an open plain in the eastern Missisquoi valley, its drab houses radiating from a small triangular common. The red-fronted garage that faces the green on the west was originally a church, as its lines reveal. The Grange Fair held annually in this village is an event of local importance. Since there are no special grounds, the straight, level Main Street serves as both midway and race track. Lacking in major or distinctive attractions of sophisticated appeal, this fair is truly festive in a kitchen junket way, a real community celebration. A Kraft cheese factory and a creamery are the sole industries.

Troy Falls is a beautiful natural cascade in the Missisquoi River. The falls are seen best from the high rocky promontory that rises precipitously above the boiling white waters of the deep gorge below. A favorite spot locally for summer picnics and autumn corn roasts is the small adjacent grove, out of sight from the falls, but still within sound of their cool music.

At the site of the Boston and Troy Iron Mine, its old stone blast furnace still stands on the bank of the Missisquoi. Thought it is beginning to crumble now, this furnace, 24 feet square and 30 feet high, is still suggestive of the magnitude of the iron industry that once existed here. Despite the excellent quality of the products of this mine and blast, it was finally abandoned as being too far from the markets for profitable operation. The iron markets set on the international boundary line between Vermont and Canada were cast here. (1966:376).

Westfield Town

The Westfield Village area has an elevation of 825 feet. The town is comprised of 21,402 acres. Virtually all of the settlement of the town is on the eastern edge. The western area, as mentioned above, contains more than a dozen peaks over 2,000 feet high. The Westfield green is a significant common area, shaded by maple trees and located on level ground at the edge of the larger alluvial plain around Route 100. Records indicate a former church nearby, having fallen into disrepair through the early 1970s, noting that it may be a resource for its historical significance, erected in 1818. In 1966, Bearse also notes the Hitchcock Memorial, a square white building with a clock tower. The building contains the local library with a museum of natural history; quite unusual in a village of this size. During the war of 1812, the inhabitants were apprehensive of a British invasion from Canada. The barn of Captain Mead Hitchcock was converted into a blockhouse refuge, but fortunately never had to be defended. Bearse also notes that traditionally the village has drawn families retired from nearby farms. The aforementioned Hazens Notch represents another tie to Vermont's history. Again stimulated by concerns for British expansion into the region, the nearly 2,000 feet high "Notch" just south of Sugarloaf Mountain, is the northern terminus of the old Bayley-Hazen Military Road, which begins at Newbury in Orange County. Built by Generals Bayley and Hazen during the Revolutionary War, the military road was a possible invasion route to Canada. Less tenuous ties to the past have served to stimulate "by-ways" in other regions of the state and country.

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