



The Town of Liberty, incorporated in 1807, is nestled in the Catskill mountains just ninety miles north of New York City. The town has not only played an important role in both our state's and nation's history but continues today as the release valve for the pressure cooker that is New York City.

Historically, Liberty has been a leader among towns in so many ways. Throughout the town's history Liberty has been welcoming to all religions and ethnicities when other areas were not. The cultural diversity shown here is unrivaled for a town of our size. A generation of entertainers got their start in Liberty at the world famous Grossinger Hotel during the "Borscht Belt" era. Grossingers started the all inclusive concept for hotels and inspired the movie "Dirty Dancing". Every day was a "Who's Who" of actors, sports stars, and political figures parading through the lobby of that grand hotel. Grossingers may have been the most famous, but countless more hotels were here providing the fresh air, clean water, and wonderful food that made Liberty the place to vacation. When air travel was in its infancy Otto Hillig's airplane, "Liberty", began its journey here; taking off from the local golf course en route to Copenhagen in 1931.

The fresh air of the mountains that pulled so many people here to vacation also brought many here to regain their health. The Loomis Sanitarium was one of the premier Tuberculosis treatment facilities in the early 20th century; combining the quality air, healthy living and accessibility from New York City.

As New York City grew in the late 1800 and early 1900's, Liberty was a key part of that growth. The numerous dairy and chicken farms provided much needed milk and eggs to residents there. The Ontario and Western Railroad provided those necessary provisions to the rapidly growing area.

The Town of Liberty is also resilient; although the hotels of the Borscht Belt are gone, this area remains popular with second homeowners in search of weekend getaways. The mountains provide that necessary relief of the daily stresses. Liberty's Parks and Rec department maintains two parks; Walnut Mountain and Hanofee park. Within these two parks are a town pool, softball fields, a soccer field, hiking trails, disc golf, sand volleyball, basketball, fishing and playgrounds. Pavilions are also available for use. The Town buzzes every weekend as people fill the area to look at the foliage, go fishing, hike the rail trail, take in a show or just to soak up the peace and quiet. Although only ninety miles, it can feel as if you are a world away.

The story of Liberty is not complete, the contributions that the Town of Liberty has made to the history of the State of New York, New York City and to the United States are subtle in ways and yet extremely valuable and continue to this day.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider the Town of Liberty for your documentary.

Sincerely

Kort Wheeler

Town of Liberty Historian