



# NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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## BLACKSMITHING IN GREENBUSH

Recently when I had to visit my car dealership to replace some tires, I thought what it must have been like say 150 years ago when you had to replace a horseshoe.

In earlier times the blacksmith was an important and almost indispensable man in town. Horses were necessary to perform heavy farm work, transport goods to markets and people to church. Repair of horseshoes kept society going.

A blacksmith's tools included the forge, where the charcoal burned, the bellows which pumped air into the fire and the anvil on which the hot iron was pounded into shape. There was a barrel of water in which the hot iron was plunged.

When horses were fitted, they were tied by their halter to the wall. Fitting oxen was much more difficult. Because of their great weight oxen couldn't stand on three legs while the other was being worked on. Blacksmiths had to use an ox sling to lift the animal off the floor.

In studying our local history, I have been able to identify several local blacksmiths working in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Daniel Defreest and Abraham Lansing had shops in or near Defreestville. Nicholas Frank operated along present day Route 43. Two well-known families established businesses in Wynantskill. Oliver Frazee was the son of a local well known judge and Philip Vanderzee and later his son ran their shop on

the corner of Main Avenue and West Sand Lake Road.

The Vanderzees adapted to changing times: they turned their blacksmith business into an auto repair shop which lasted into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Getting back to my wait at the car dealer: they have a courtesy van to take you to work during repairs-I doubt if the blacksmith provided such service.