

Timeline for Onanda Park and Rochester Point

Onanda means Fir or Pine Tree, stands for strength and simplicity

- Pre-European Settlers: Like the other points along the lake, Point Rochester was likely visited for seasonal activities by the area's Seneca Nation residents. Water access made the points desirable sites for hunting and fishing activities, and possibly some agriculture.
- 1804 *The Academy Tract, three thousand acres in the southwestern corner of the Town of Canandaigua, is donated by Oliver Phelps in support of Canandaigua Academy
- 1810 *The first settlement in the Academy Tract on land known as the Eaton Farm, containing about 300 acres in the northeast corner, including the Bell's Point area, now called Rochester Point.
- 1859 Still known as Bell's Point and the Ontario County Atlas shows a house south of the creek with the name Miss Lake associated with it.
- 1872 **Shale Rock Farm – Purchased by William Lewis Foster. The point becomes known as Foster Point.
- 1911 W. L. Foster passes away. YWCA first rents the property and uses the old house as a place where members (adult working women) can rest and enjoy recreational activities.
- 1916 Map of Town of Canandaigua still refers to the north part of the point as Foster Point, but shows a large structure south of the creek called Point Rochester Hotel. The south part of the point subsequently becomes known as Point Rochester.
- 1919 YWCA purchases *Shale Rock* with 27.5 acres from the W. L. Foster Estate. (12.5 acres on the lakeside and 15 acres on west side of the West Lake Rd. south of the creek).
- 1921 Babcock Hall is built as a dormitory for campers.
- 1930's The YWCA starts using the camp for junior campers as well as adult women.
- 1938 Crouch Hall is built for indoor recreation activities.
- 1954 The YWCA purchases 47 acres, known as the "Domm Property" on the uplands side of West Lake Rd., adjoining and north of the 15 acre glen property.
- 1955 A Fund Raising Campaign is approved by the Community Chest to thoroughly modernize the camp. The success of the campaign results in the camp beginning to appear much as it does today. Twenty cabins are built for campers – ten at the uplands "Teen Hill" and ten for younger campers at the

lakeside. Babcock Hall is split into several parts and renovated to become Babcock, Gorham and Heoho.

- 1960 The opening of the modernized camp is celebrated in June.
- 1961 The total camp attendance is 504 girls, 5th to 12th grade over an eight-week session.
- 1982-88 Camp Good Days and Special Times shares the facility with Camp Onanda, offering summer outdoor programs for children with cancer.
- 1989 The Town of Canandaigua joins with the N.Y.S. DEC and the N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to acquire and preserve this choice piece of land. The Town leads the way to keep this land from private development, and preserve year-round public access to the lakefront.
- 1990 Onanda Park officially opens.

By Ray Henry, former Town Historian

Sources:

* History of Ontario County, New York (1788 – 1876) by Prof. W. H. McIntosh

**The Foster Family, by Mary K. Foster December 25, 1997

Truesdale, Carol, *When Camp Onanda Gives Her Call; Camp History on Canandaigua Lake*, 2015, History Press, Charleston, SC,

The history of the YWCA camp from 1919 to 1961 was compiled by Bertha Arlidge in November 1961