

Lakes Area Offers Great Summer

Why travel far for vacation? New York State Commerce Department designates 14 up-state counties — the 12 that the Rochester diocese comprises, plus Onondaga and Cortland counties — a vacationland entity. Mrs. Thelma Oswald, office manager for the Finger Lakes Association, discussed the thriving tourist trade in western New York in a recent telephone conversation.

"It's big business!" she exclaimed. "Each dollar it brings in is a fresh dollar from the outside. That's a good dollar." She added that communities should encourage the tourist business because it does not require expensive sewer and power facilities that many big industries do.

The Finger Lakes Association's

activities index showed that last year more than six million people visited points of interest throughout the region. Commerce Department figures showed that the tourist trade brought \$400 million to the Finger Lakes last year, Mrs. Oswald said.

The Finger Lakes, believed by Indians to be water in the cracks of a turtle's back and by white settlers to be the imprint of God's hand, left as he blessed the area, have been attracting tourists for years. The Finger Lakes Association is, according to Mrs. Oswald, the oldest tourist organization in the U.S. (formed in 1919) and the largest in New York. Business has blossomed, however, since the 1940s. "First it was hotels, then cabins, then motels, and now some of the larger chains are beginning to move into the area."

Mrs. Oswald said she believes economic hard times will benefit the Finger Lakes region. "People are going to go on a vacation, no matter what," she explained, "and we are conveniently located between New York City and Niagara Falls. We're not far from major cities like Detroit and Chicago, either. With the price of gas, people will probably drive some place and stay there."

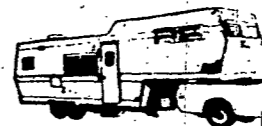
Mrs. Oswald said also that local people are becoming more aware of the interest of the region. "Of course they used to think that the grass was greener on the other side of the fence, but things are changing."

The area is definitely well-known outside of New York, Mrs. Oswald claimed, with New York State parks enjoying an especially good reputation. Within the Finger Lakes, Genesee, and Central State Park Commissions there are 19 state parks, which charge only \$1 parking fee per car, Mrs. Oswald said.



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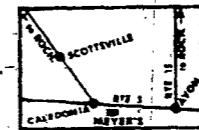


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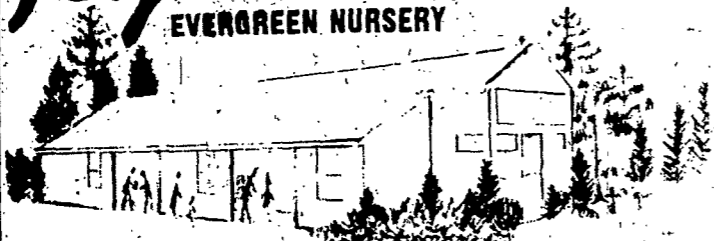
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