

Sabael

For a look at Sabael, take Route 30 southwest out of Indian Lake, go about 4.5 miles to a left turn onto Lake Shore Drive, the main part of Sabael. Lake Shore Drive hugs the western shore of the lake for several miles. On the way, you could stop at the Scenic Overlook for a panorama of southeastern mountains: Ruby, Gore, Bullhead, Chimney, and others.

Legend has it that the first person to settle here in the deep northern forest of the Colony of New York was Sabael Benedict of the Abenaki Indian tribe. In the 1760's Sabael ventured south from his home in Canada and came across a spot to his liking on a stream flowing into what would become Indian Lake. Sabael married and, with his wife, had many children who, to this day, continue to live in the Adirondacks and play a part in its history. He reportedly died in the 1855 at 110, having seen the creation of this country in 1776, the statehood of New York in 1788, and great changes in transportation, technology, and arrival of numbers of people to the Adirondacks. Seven streams flow into Indian Lake from the west, one of which is Squaw Brook. Sabael Benedict of the Abaneki tribe and reputedly the first Native American to settle on Indian Lake (thus the name of the hamlet, Sabael), buried his wife of many years at the mouth of the stream, and thus it was called Squaw Brook.

In the early 1800's, the timber industry took the Adirondacks by storm. Clear cutting—first pine, then spruce, then hemlock—fed the building boom in the south. Logging camps appeared in the area, and waterways were rearranged to allow transport of logs to the Hudson River and south. Strategic dams were built on three smaller lakes to create the 14-mile long Indian Lake which connects to the Indian River and the Hudson. Plentiful work attracted lumberjacks who immediately needed food, shelter, and other services. Soon local farms took in boarders, and boarding houses began to flourish on both sides of Indian Lake. Dance halls, eateries, stores, and house-keeping camps followed. Sabael also had its share of hermits who trapped beavers and foxes and sold the pelts in Indian Lake.

Today, there is no dance hall, but the mix of dwellings is much as it was 125 years ago. The popular 1880's Lake View House still exists but is now in private hands. Back then, hotel guests sat on its broad porch under a large, beautiful tree growing through the floor and roof of the porch. Timberlock, today a thriving resort farther down the lake, was built in the 1880's as Farrington's Hotel and became so popular that the overflow of guests stayed in tents scattered on the grounds. Smith's Cottages continue as they have been for many years.

But many of Sabael's old dwellings are gone—burned or demolished. Up on Route 30, the Griffiths, with their six children, had a farm in the 1860's where they boarded lumbermen who worked in the area. The Maples, a boarding house overlooking Indian Lake, had a store and popular ice cream parlor. The Burgess Yellow Camps welcomed guests and operated a block ice business behind the camp. On the 30 acres of Wilson's Camp were cottages, tenting areas,

horseback riding, fishing, canoeing, and hiking. Other lodges were the Locke House, Mountain View Camps, Nirvana Lodge, and Indian Lake House.

What did these places offer to visitors? Here is a marketing blurb from an early 20th century brochure:

“The Locke House is situated among the Adirondack Mountains, in a pretty little hamlet called Sabael....The surrounding scenery is magnificent in its natural grandeur. The lake is in the midst of a dense forest, which, except in a few places cleared for settlement, has been untouched by the ax of the woodsman....the climate is absolute proof against hay fever..... malaria is unknown in this region....the waters of Indian Lake are inhabited by very voracious fishthere is excellent hunting....competent guides may be secured....in the village of Indian Lake there are several well-appointed stores, telegraph, long distance telephone, barber shop....the [hotel] table is supplied with fresh vegetables, milk and butter from the hotel farm.....all beds are supplied with woven wire mattresses....Rates \$10.00 to \$12.00 a week.”

Today the Indian Lake Marina serves the community. Years ago, father and son William and Leo Kerst ran a boat landing and boat motor repair shop. The Kerst's were known for their beautifully handcrafted Adirondack guide boats, canoes, and wooden motorboats.

On the opposite shore of Indian Lake were also private homes and hotels. Living here in the late 1800's was Norman Shaw, a hermit who earned some cash from tourists who boated across the lake to have their photos taken with him. Nearby Norman's Cove is named in his honor. Camp Sabael continues as a private resort.

And, of course, we can't forget the Locke Dance Hall. A bit away from the lake to the west was Locke's Dance Hall, and farther south was Farrington's Hotel, built on the lake in the late 1800's by the family of Gertrude Farrington. It is now the thriving resort of Timberlock. Backlog Camp, a Quaker-based outdoor experience started in 1895, moved from Raquette Lake to 125 acres on Indian Lake in 1911. Other buildings in the Sabael area were the post office (which closed in 2013) and the school a school, in operation from 1869 to 1935. Now the many schools in the hamlets of Sabael and Blue Mountain Lake have been consolidated into the Indian Lake Central School System.

Today, Sabael, with its 58 full time residents and much larger summer population, no longer serves lumberjacks and fur hunters but families returning year after year, generation after generation, to stay in camps, cabins, housekeeping cottages, and lodges. Its lodgings offerings are modest, unlike its sister hamlet, Blue Mountain Lake.