

NORTH CASTLE HISTORY



Collections of The North Castle Historical Society
Donation of Mr. R. Eugene Curry

**COWS BEING DRIVEN TO PASTURE
BANKSVILLE ROAD ABOUT 1915**

NEAR PRESENT-DAY 44 BANKSVILLE ROAD, ARMONK

THE NORTH CASTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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North Castle Tavern
Special Designation
Listed on the New York State
and National Registers of Historic Places

The North Castle Historical Society

440 BEDFORD ROAD ARMONK, NEW YORK 10504

December 31, 2008

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to the 35th edition of North Castle History. I can assure you that you will enjoy this year's articles about life in our town in the past century. Just as these articles bring the past back in their own evocative way, having the opportunity to actually touch and feel history can be even more fulfilling. Thus, I would like to challenge each of you who is reading this to visit our wonderful complex of buildings at Historic Smith's Tavern. Make a pledge to yourself to come with a friend, a spouse, a child, a grandchild, or any combination. Enjoy an hour of being guided through one of the oldest buildings in Westchester, with many rooms restored to much the same as they were more than 200 years ago. Visit the one-room East Middle Patent School House (especially great with a child) and see how amazingly different schools were just a generation or two ago, with its ink-welled desks and potbelly stove. Peek into the Brundage Blacksmith shop that served North Castle's working horses for much of the 19th and first half of 20th centuries. And we won't let you leave without a look into the Quaker Meeting House, built in 1798, and meticulously restored to the way it was when North Castle's active Quaker community met there weekly.

So enjoy our 2008 booklet, and please come visit us. We are open on Sunday afternoons from 2:00p.m. to 5:00p.m. and Wednesdays from 2:00p.m. to 4:00p.m. beginning in April and continuing to December.

It is your Historical Society, and you are the ones that enable us to bring our local history alive in so many ways.

Jack Paschke
President

MEMORIES OF COHOMONG WOOD

by Camilla Ruth Cole Smidt

This personal recollection, handwritten in pencil on old, lined yellow paper was written by the late Mrs. Smidt. It was found amongst papers donated to The Society by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sylvestri in September 2006. Mrs. Sylvestri is a daughter of Mrs. Smidt, who wrote the recollection in 1978 for an oral history presentation to Mrs. Ming's elementary school class.

I am very pleased and flattered that Mrs. Ming and my granddaughter, Kimmy Sylvestri, have asked me to tell you a little about our area. I think they asked me because I've lived here so long and because I'm getting old and have lots of memories and know some things about the "Olden Days".

You have been studying about the Colonial Days, Indians and Revolutionary War. So, I thought I would tell you today about what I remember of my youth here. I had thought I would talk to you "off the top of my head" but so many things came back to me I had to write them down and have decided to read them.

I've lived here since I was nine years old, which was in 1917¹, the time of World War I. Last year, 1977, we had lived here for 60 years so when my children and grandchildren visited us last summer I ordered a very large cake from Carvels (as I have 15 hungry grand-children). I had asked the store to write on it "Happy Birthday, Cohomong Wood"² – with the dates 1917 – 1977³. We had candles on it and sang toasts and made speeches. It was a fine celebration.

Until I was nine we spent our summers in various places in rented houses – Lenox, Massachusetts; Pleasantville, New York; and Sarles Street in Mt. Kisco, New York. My parents were always looking for a place to buy and took my two younger sisters and me to all sorts of houses that

¹ If Mrs. Smidt was 9 years old in 1917, then she would have been born in 1908.

² There are several spelling variations, which include Cohamong, Cobomong and Cobamong.

³ The September 13, 1917 issue of The New York Times reported that Dr. Rufus Cole purchased 360 acres which were the country estate of Richard Harding Davis and that he also purchased an adjoining plot of 32 acres on the Armonk-Bedford Road belonging to Oliver D. Stewart. The Cole family was living at 960 Park Avenue, New York City.

were for sale⁴. When we saw this lovely wooded place and the two lakes we all decided we liked this the best. The upper lake is near the house and is artificial. That is, it was man-made⁵. It was scooped out of a swamp and fed by springs. A long dam was built at one end to hold the water. It was stocked with bass and soon all sorts of wildlife appeared and settled in. Their descendants are still there – muskrats, black snakes, geese, various kinds of ducks and birds and turtles and frogs – great big bullfrogs.

When my grandmother visited us in the summers her bedroom overlooked the lake; she often said at breakfast that she had heard cows mooing or big old men talking loudly during the night down by the lake. What she really heard were the big bullfrogs, and we used to tease her. All of us learned to swim in this lake and in the summers we swam there almost every day. We had a canoe and a rowboat, and we did a lot of fishing. In the winters we skated on it (and still do).

The lower lake, which is far in the woods, is a natural one. It is a crater and the only one on the Eastern seaboard of the United States of America. A crater is made by a volcano, which erupts from the center of the earth. It could be from one explosion or by many explosions that the top of the volcano is blown away or sinks in and leaves a very deep hollow, like Crater Lake in Oregon. The water in it comes from rains and melted snow. Our lake is so deep that no one has been able to measure to find the bottom. There were many stories told about this lake. One was that a man drowned in it, and his body was found miles away in the Rippowam River. This lake was called Cohomong Lake by

⁴ According to a biographical memoir written in 1979 by C. Phillip Miller for the National Academy of Sciences, Mrs. Smidt's parents were Annie Hegeler and Dr. Rufus Cole. Dr. Cole was the first Director of the Hospital of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. He was appointed in 1908 and retired in 1937. His research specialized in the study of human disease and pneumonia. At the age of 94 he traveled to Washington, D.C., to receive the Kovalenko Medal from the National Academy of Sciences. He contracted pneumonia and died there on April 20, 1966. Dr. and Mrs. Cole had three daughters: Camilla Ruth "Camie" Cole Smidt, Elizabeth Anne "Betsy" Cole Botzow and Mary Hegeler Cole Childs.

⁵ Richard Harding Davis, noted author, playwright and journalist, had the lake constructed. He was reportedly the model for the 'Gibson Man' – a handsome and self-assured male created by artist Charles Gibson. Mr. Davis bought the property in 1903. The lake was dug at the foot of the hill on which the home was to stand. Next he built a water tower and then the house, which he called Cross Roads Farm, keeping the original name of the place. He moved to the new home during July in 1905 according to writings of his brother Charles.

the Indians, which meant "fishing place near the boundary", the boundary being the line between New York State and Connecticut, which is in Banksville. Around the lake is quicksand which means one could be sucked down in it. Cows were said to have been sucked down who wandered too close from their pastures. The only times we ever went close to it were in the winters when the lake and edges were frozen. Sometimes we walked on it and occasionally skated on it. Fishermen fished through holes in the ice and caught large pike. Our family got our ice from this lake, as there were no electric refrigerators in those days. A wide path was made from the driveway through the woods to the lake and wooden ramps were built over the rocky and steep areas and over the edge of the lake. A pair of work horses would be driven down harnessed to a huge kind of sled. The ice was cut with large special saws into blocks and then piled on the sled. The horses dragged it up hill through the woods, and then the ice blocks were stored in an insulated icehouse, which was built like a thermos, and sawdust was put between the layers of ice so it would not stick. Many trips had to be made all winter to fill the icehouse and the ice had to last all year until the next winter. A cake of ice was brought to each house several times a week and placed in iceboxes. Ice picks were used to break it up. The ice was cut from the lower lake because it was almost always thicker there. However, when there were a few very hard and cold winters the ice was cut from the upper lake.

When my parents and we girls first came to look at this place, Chestnut Ridge Road was crudely paved from Route 172 to the end of Mr. Arthur Butler's property, which is where the Yaegers' Riding Stable is now (1978). Their buildings were Mr. Butler's farm buildings. Mr. Butler had this done (that is, the road paved) at his own expense. From there on the road was a pair of ruts that had been worn by wagon wheels. Just beyond, where now is the Smiley's entrance to their driveway, there was a layer of rocks. This was so steep and rough that all of us except the drivers had to get out of our old-fashioned car and push it over the ledge until and after my parents bought the place we did this every time. Finally my father paid to have the road paved from the Butler's place to Route 22, but it was much narrower than it is today. The reason he paid for it was because only the Butlers and us Coles lived on the road and naturally the Town did not want to use the taxpayers' money for only two families.

When we first looked at the place it was very wild, no lawns, no gardens. The house was very run down and there was a row of dead poplar trees in front of it. No one had lived there for some time. It had belonged to Richard Harding Davis who was a famous writer and correspondent. One of his assignments was to report to the newspapers about the building of the Panama Canal. While he was there he had the upper lake made here. I have a letter that he wrote to his contractor after getting his bills in which he angrily said he thought his lake in North Castle was costing more than the whole Panama Canal. He called his place "Cross Roads Farm⁶". He spent a good deal of time here with his wife who was an actress (Bessie McCoy), but was known as the "Yama Yama Girl". She was very popular on the stage as a singer and dancer. Mr. Davis wrote some of his many books and plays here. In his lifetime he wrote several books and short stories.

He loved the wildness and naturalness of the area and would not allow anything to be changed. General McRoberts, who lived across Route 22, sometimes got angry with him when they met on horseback because Mr. Davis would not do anything about the tent caterpillars on his property,

⁶ Author Justus Miles Forman in his novel The Blind Spot described the setting and the house. "It was a broad terrace paved with red brick that was stained and a little mossy, so that it looked much older than it had any right to, and along its outer border there were bay-trees set in big Italian terracotta jars; but the bay-trees were placed far apart so that they should not mask the view, and that was wise, for it was a fine view. It is rugged country in that part of Westchester County – like a choppy sea: all broken, twisted ridges, and abrupt little hills, and piled-up boulders, and hollow, cup-like depressions among them. The grey house sat, as it were, upon the lip of a cup, and from the southward terrace you looked across a mile or two of hollow bottom, with a little lake at your feet, to sloping pastures where there were cattle browsing, and to the far, high hills beyond. There was no magnificence about the outlook – nothing to make you catch your breath; but it was a good view with plenty of elbow room and no sign of a neighbor – no huddling – only the water of the little lake, the brown November hillsides, and the clean blue sky above. The distant cattle looked like scenic cattle painted on their green-bronze pasture to give an aspect of husbandry to the scene." Mr. Forman was among the 1,198 passengers who died on May 7, 1915 when The Lusitania was torpedoed. His body was never recovered.

⁷ According to the July 3, 1912 issue of The New York Times Ms. McCoy and Mr. Davis married less than a month after his divorce from his first wife, Cecil Clark, the daughter of a wealthy Chicago manufacturer. The ceremony was a quiet one held at his 'Mt. Kisco' home. The August 31, 1931 issue of Time magazine reported that Elizabeth Genevieve McEvoy ("Bessie McCoy") had died the previous week in Bayonne, France. The couple had one child, a daughter whom they named Hope. Ms. McCoy's famous song included the words: "Maybe he's hiding behind the chair, ready to spring out at you, unaware. You'd better run to your Mamma, for here comes the Yama, the Yama man."

and the caterpillars were coming over to the General's property. Richard Harding Davis said he didn't want to disturb the balance of nature. In the summers he let the Boy Scout troops of the area pitch tents and camp out in a meadow by the lake. He also had a small zoo by his back door. When we first came the cages were still there but were empty. The names of the animals were on each cage and I remember one was Rici-Tici-Tavi, a mongoose, like the one in Kipling's story. He raised Chow dogs and had a kennel in which we found many, many prize ribbons he had won, but they were faded and dusty by then.

Earlier I mentioned General Samuel McRoberts. His place across from us on Route 22 is called "Soundview". When we were younger and he was alive, we often went to his house, which is like a castle. On the upper floors, from the windows facing south, one could and can see Long Island Sound and on clear days Long Island too. Mrs. McRoberts was an invalid for many years, and we used to go upstairs to take her flowers and books to read. She enjoyed having company. General McRoberts often played golf with my father and rode horseback with him in our and his woods. We girls sometimes rode with them too. He had a very large white horse that was extremely lively. My father had a roan named Peggy. She was quite gentle so I rode her sometimes, and I can remember her pulling the lawn mower. However, whenever my father met the General on the bridge paths, Peggy would get so excited at seeing the General's horse that it was all my father could do to control her. After a while she would calm down and be her old gentle self again.

We moved into "Cohomong Wood" (the name my parents gave this place) about a year after they bought it⁸. It took all this time to raise and rebuild the big house, to build the barn, shed, icehouse, garage, cottages and long driveways. They wanted to have a farm so they bought horses, cows, chickens, and pigs. They had to find and hire help to take care of all of these. There was little machinery then so most of the work had to be done by horses and manpower. The only machine I really remember was a stone crusher. Large rocks were put into this and as it crushed them they were sorted and various sizes came out in piles, the smallest

⁸ The house stands today on Bedford Road in Armonk. Gen. McRoberts' property was also called "The Ledges on the Bedford Village State Highway."

⁹ Richard Harding Davis died in the house on April 11, 1916 a few days before his 52nd birthday. He was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on April 18, 1864. His father, Lemuel Clarke Davis, was a newspaper editor and his mother, Rebecca Harding Davis, was a novelist.

was gravel. This was fascinating and we often stood and watched it work. As you can imagine, it was terribly noisy. These rocks were used to build the long driveways. We were very happy to settle in our very own house with all its lovely property, flower garden and vegetable garden. My sisters and I had to work in the gardens and pick vegetables and berries and fruits, shell peas and string beans for canning, but it was fun. Often we milked cows, collected eggs, helped curry the horses and gave garbage to the pigs.¹⁰

We took long walks along the road and through the woods and discovered all sorts of interesting things. We found old foundations of little houses and root cellars and in one place a huge pile of clam and oyster shells, so there must have been a fish market there. In another spot we found a large pile of bits of leather so there must have been a shoemaker there. We learned later that in this area many shoes were made, as this was the occupation of most of the farmers during the long winter months.

In our woods we discovered a cave and were told that the Leatherman¹¹ had often slept there. I know you have heard about him and read about him in the wonderful book by Mrs. Glass, which I recently read too. He died in 1889, twenty-eight years before we moved here. When we visited the cave we could picture him all dressed in leather from tip to toe. His clothes were probably made from deer skin as there were and still are many deer in Westchester County. We still have raccoons, possums, squirrels, foxes and rabbits, but in those days there were quite a few bobtail cats. These are quite large, have hardly any tail, have very pointed ears and look very fierce. Only a few years ago we saw one several times near our driveway close to Chestnut Ridge Road.

¹⁰ According to family information, Dr. Cole completely remodeled and enlarged the house. He had it raised three feet and had ten feet added to the dining room. The loggia was Mrs. Cole's idea, a copy of one in her grandfather's house. The murals were copies of Pompeian paintings, now in a museum in Naples, Italy, and were painted by Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey (born 1862, died 1946), who also painted the murals in the Library of Congress.

¹¹ Refer to The Society's publication North Castle History, 2004, pages 21-24, for more information about the Leatherman.

There was a bridle path to the cave, and there was an open space in front of the cave, which we liked to use for picnics. Usually we drove our Shetland pony, Prince, in a wicker type cart. We would put all the food in the cart so we did not have to carry it. Prince, like many Shetlands, was smart and stubborn. When we came to a hill he would stop, turn around and look at us, and if we didn't get out, he would start backing down and no kind of urging would persuade him to go ahead. In the end we got out and walked.

Our family became interested in the history of the early settlers in our area. It is known the first ones came from Stamford, Connecticut and moved to what is now Bedford Village where they had bought land from the Indians. Bedford green was the center of their settlement. These people had been fishermen and made their living fishing Long Island Sound. In Bedford they became farmers and hunters, but after a period of time they outgrew this settlement and some of them looked farther inland for new land. They liked the section bordered between what is now Route 22 and Chestnut Ridge Road, so they bought a large tract from other Indians and started farming again. If you drive or walk along Chestnut Ridge Road you will see many, many stone walls which show that these people had small farms and pastures. The rocks in these walls came from the fields they made after cutting down trees and plowing the land.

On the edge of our property, right by our gate on Route 22, is the original Coman School¹². It was built about 160¹³ years ago and was made of natural stone. It is a one-room building where one teacher taught eight grades. My family lived in New York City in the winters where my father worked and where my sisters and I went to school. In the summers and on weekends we lived here. Our school term ended in May so we were here for the last school day at Coman School in June. The children of the men who worked for my parents and lived on our place attended this school. We knew them well and played with them a lot. On the last day, graduation day, my mother and we three girls would go to help celebrate. We took lots of cookies, cakes and lemonade. At the

¹² Refer to North Castle History, 1978, pages 20-28, "The Four Coman Hill Schools" by Constance Quarrie.

¹³ Additional research revealed that Mrs. Smidt was in error regarding the stone school building. There was a school at or near this site since about 1813, however the stone building was constructed in 1915 on land sold to the school district by Gen. Samuel McRoberts for \$1.00 and using stone and materials donated by him.

beginning of the day everyone pledged allegiance to the American Flag, said a prayer and some of the children recited poetry. The eight grades were given their diplomas and some prizes were awarded. Then everyone had a picnic and played games. We loved this day and looked forward to it each year. Mrs. Ferris, who lived at Paines' Corners, close to the blacksmith's shop at the foot of the hill, was trustee of the school, and my mother often helped her keep books and see about improvements. During World War II, after the school was no longer used as a school, a group of women in the neighborhood used it to make bandages for the Red Cross. My mother was very active in this project, and we often went with her to help. After the school was closed it stood idle for many years. Finally a few years ago the Town auctioned it off, and a Mr. and Mrs. Adams bought it, dug a well, renovated it and moved in and are very happy living there now.

You probably know the history of the remains of a building close to your school, but I'd like to tell you how I remember it. It was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Watkins¹⁴ and was a very large and formal stone house. My parents went there to dinner parties once or twice a year. It was built on the side of a hill and so it was quite damp. The Watkins decided to move away and much later sold the house to the owners of a famous restaurant in New York City, called "21".

These people named it the "Embassy Club". They did over the whole house, made a large dining room on the first floor and made a large outdoor dining place on a terrace, surrounded by gardens and lighted by pretty lights. Next to this was a swimming pool and by its side they erected a dance floor and had a fine orchestra to play. In those days we danced the fox trot, waltz and sometimes the Charleston. It was said that the top floor of the house was used for gambling, which was against the law, but none of us ever went up there. By this time we were in our late teens. We went with our friends and sometimes our parents went too as they and we all liked to dance. This was one of our favorite spots and one of the few public places in the United States where one could dance out-of-doors. On a starry, moonlit night it was perfection. In Europe (mostly in France and Germany) there are many outdoor places to do this. When the fire broke out it was a terrible one. We went up and

¹⁴ Refer to The Society's publication North Castle History, "The Story of a Grand Building", 1995, pages 23-30.

watched the firemen try to put it out, but to no avail. We were sad, as we had spent many fun evenings there.

Before the IBM Company bought the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Agnew, who lived there with their four children, we often went to visit them. We played tennis on their court, swam in their pool, and loved to go to their stables to see their many horses, as all six Agnews were ardent riders. They had a huge orchard and so many apples that Mr. Agnew asked their caretaker to sell them from a stand by their gate every fall. There was a large house near this gate where the caretaker, Mr. Hendry, and his wife lived. When IBM built their buildings and changed the property, this whole house was moved down to Armonk behind the police station and is known as the Hendry House. It is used for the senior citizens, meetings and recreation. So it is nice that this old house was saved and has become so useful¹⁵.

My mother, Mrs. Cole, was an active member of the "D.N.A." which had its headquarters in Mt. Kisco. "D.N.A." stands for District Nursing Association. This group raised money to engage trained nurses to go to take care of people in their homes who were sick, not sick enough to be in a hospital or sometimes they were just out of the hospital. There was no branch in Armonk, and my mother felt there should be one. She suggested this to Mrs. Hendry and between them they got a group to join and to raise money. Soon they had it well organized. Meetings were often held at our house, sometimes very large ones, and my sisters and I helped get ready for these, served tea and coffee and food and helped entertain the ladies after their business meeting. Mr. and Mrs. Crittenden¹⁶ came sometimes. He is the principal for whom the Armonk school is named. Once he showed slides he had taken in Hawaii. He was a fine and likeable man.

In 1937 all of us were very excited when Merle Vandenberg, Public Enemy No. 1, was caught in Armonk. The newspapers had been telling us for months how bad this man was and how many robberies he had committed all over the country. It seemed as though he would always elude the police. In those days crime was rare and no one locked their

¹⁵ Refer to North Castle History, 2000, for more information about the Agnew property, the IBM purchase and the Cornell-Birdsall House, located at 17 Bedford Road which some call "the annex".

¹⁶ Harold C. Crittenden, for whom H.C. Crittenden Middle School is named, was an uncle to North Castle Deputy Supervisor Councilwoman Becky Kittredge.

doors or cars and it never occurred to anyone that anything bad could happen. Yet, this man kept on robbing and escaping. It was a big event when Sgt. Hergenhan¹⁷ and Pvt. Hendricks caught him. They became national heroes overnight. We knew these officers well.¹⁸

Willard Hawxhurst had been made chief of police for North Castle in 1929. When he retired he went to work for Mr. Butler on Chestnut Ridge Road, as a teamster. That is, he was in charge of the work horses and did the plowing and mowing and brought in the hay and ice. Later when Mr. Butler died, Mrs. Butler sold the place and Mr. Hawxhurst was looking for another job. Just at that time my husband's family, who lived in Cornwall-on-Hudson, needed someone to be in charge of their place. We suggested Bill Hawxhurst, and he took the job and was there for a long time.

Bill was a great worker and one of our favorite people. His wife had taken courses in a hospital to learn to take care of newborn babies and young children, and when Kimmy's mother (my daughter) was a baby she took care of her on the weekend she was christened in Cornwall. Mrs. Hawxhurst was a lovely person and all who knew her called her "Hawkie".



I have told you about various people who lived here and I think I should tell you about my father, Dr. Rufus Cole, who is Kimmy's great grandfather. He is a famous man in the medical world. He was the director of the Rockefeller Hospital for Medical Research in New York City. When he wasn't directing he worked in his laboratory and before World War I, he discovered a serum that could cure some types of pneumonia. He also discovered that there are many types of pneumonia.

Collections of The Society
DR. RUFUS COLE

¹⁷ John C. Hergenhan later became police chief. The old Armonk Fire House, 40 Maple Avenue, was recently remodeled for use as the John C. and Goldie Hergenhan Recreation Center and funded by a very large donation from their daughter Joyce Hergenhan.

¹⁸ Refer to North Castle History, 1996, pages 17-24, "The Capture of Public Enemy Number One" by William Gerald Hendricks.

When we entered the War he was sent to Texas with some other doctors to help cure the many young soldiers who had pneumonia and were in training camps there. Unfortunately there was not enough serum for so many, so quite a few died, which made my father sad. He was in Texas a very long time, and we missed him.

He had to retire when he was 65 so he and my mother moved here to stay all year round. He wrote two large volumes about English history of the Queen Anne period. Long after these were published and he was 80 years old, he took up painting. He painted lots of lovely pictures of this place and also of Byram Lake and of flowers. He never took a lesson in painting. It seemed to come naturally.



Collections of Doris Finch Watson

STROLLING THROUGH COHOMONG WOODS¹⁹

Just before he was 94 years old, he was to receive a gold medal from the National Academy of Sciences in Washington. He had received many medals before from universities all over the world, but he felt this one was special. He went to Washington to receive it, but caught pneumonia there and died three days before the ceremony and before his 94th birthday.²⁰

¹⁹ Dr. Cole wrote a paper entitled "The English Garden" and read it before the Charaka Club, February 21, 1940. The paper and this photograph were reprinted into booklet form.

²⁰ Refer to footnote number 4 herein.



Both Photographs - Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS
 Previous Owner of Property
 which he called Cross Roads Farm

COHOMONG WOOD
 PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS
 CROSS ROADS FARM



Collection of Doris Finch Watson

FRONT GATE ENTRANCE TO COHOMONG WOOD

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH WHITE PLAINS

Oral History by Joseph T. Miller

(Pictures, descriptions and footnotes have been added to enhance the details.)

Hon. Joseph T. Miller presented the following Oral History at the Charter Meeting of The North Castle Historical Society held at the North Castle Library in Armonk on February 29, 1972. Mr. Miller worked as North Castle Town Clerk for 35 years. He also served as a Fire Commissioner and a Town Councilman. His family moved to North Castle when he was two years old. He developed a keen interest in history and contributed greatly to our knowledge. He was a charter member and also served as a Trustee of The Society. Joe died December 11, 1975, and the 1976 publication North Castle in the American Revolution was dedicated to his memory. A Memorial Tribute by Richard N. Lander appeared in the 1976 issue of North Castle History.

In its early history the great swamps, called white marshes due to the low white fog that hung over the area, and the rugged rocky hills, called the Hills of North Castle, made this area almost a forbidden if not an undesirable place for early settlers. Yet these hills and swamps were to become dramatically historical.

These impassable swamps covered the following present areas: The Kensico Dam Plaza, the railroad yards including Conklin-Pfister's lumber yard¹, both sides of the Bronx River and the North White Plains Shopping Center, which, by the way is built on piles that go from 60 to 100 feet deep into swamp muck for foundation.

These swamps have now almost disappeared as a result of drainage and fill-in operations but not before they frustrated the 30,000 British and Hessian soldiers from dislodging Washington's ragged army from the hills of North Castle, especially from Miller Hill and Mt. Misery², the two rugged hills that faced these swamps. The last shots of the Battle of White Plains were made from the cannons on Miller Hill against the British on Travis Hill located just west of and opposite the present North White Plains Railroad Station.

¹ www.thoughtsanddivisions.com/autobio/child1.pdf (2007) In his autobiography Genius without Genius, John Franklin recounts his memories of growing up in Valhalla after 1936. Adolf Pfister & Sons ran a lumber company on Broadway next to Hammond's Candy Store. The property afterwards was used for a luncheonette business. At the turn of the century the Pfisters ran a grocery store and the post office for old Kensico.

² Bolton, Jr., Robert, A History of the County of Westchester, (New York, NY) 1848, page 447, wrote that Mt. Misery is so-named because a large body of Indians was surprised and cut to pieces by the Huguenots in retaliation for a "descent upon New Rochelle".

During these operations in 1776 General Washington occupied the Miller Farm House on Virginia Road as his headquarters³. (By the way, these Millers were no relations of mine.) This same farmhouse was owned and operated as a chicken farm in the early 1900s by Charles Kaiser, Sr. who later became Armonk's postmaster and a feature writer for the early North Castle News.⁴ The War of 1776 was the first historical event for the North White Plains area that disturbed the peace and well being of its few inhabitants.⁵

The next historical event was the building of the Harlem railroad from New York to its terminal at North White Plains in the 1830s, i.e., before the railroad was extended to the north.

The Bronx River was relocated, lowered and great swamps were drained and areas filled in for the railroad yards and sheds. The end of the railroad line gradually brought real estate speculators and small developers to these parts. One developer called his development "Terminal City" and another one "Washington's Headquarters".

During these early historical events the rugged hills of North Castle from Hall Avenue north to the present Rye Lake were being settled by runaway slaves from the South and also by slaves freed by Westchester landowners, especially by the Quakers who considered it sinful to keep a slave. The hills, as stated in the book Historic White Plains⁶, were called "Nigger Hills". A small church and graveyard called the African Church was built on Hall Avenue at the present division line between the towns

³ Gen. Charles Lee, second in command to Gen. George Washington, headquartered at the Miller House. Editors James Grant Wilson and John Fiske point out in Vol. III, page 659, of Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography that Gen. Lee was a reluctant follower and often acted and spoke against Gen. Washington. After the Battle of White Plains Gen. Washington left Gen. Lee at North Castle with about 7,000 men. When Gen. Washington sent orders to follow, Gen. Lee disregarded them as well as subsequent orders. Gen. Lee wrote that in furthering the War America had no chance of success.

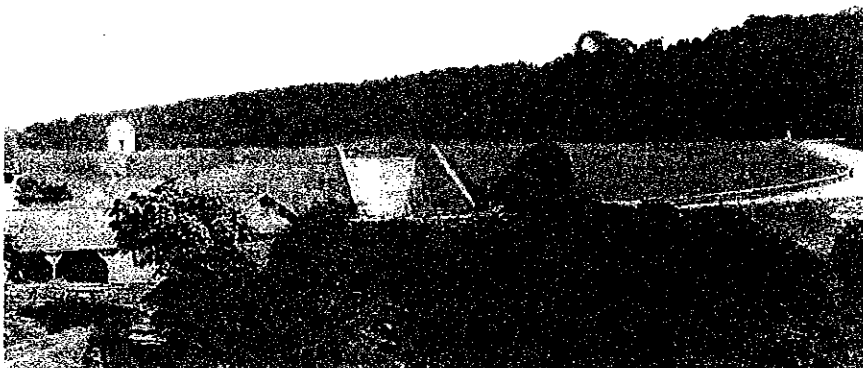
⁴ Refer to North Castle History, 1995, pages 31-32. Charles Kaiser, a son of Charles Kaiser, Sr., lived on a Round Hill Road farm near the intersection of present-day Banksville Road, Armonk. He, like his father, kept chickens.

⁵ Refer to North Castle in the American Revolution (Armonk, NY) 1976.

⁶ Rosch, John. Historic White Plains (White Plains, NY: Balletto-Sweetman Inc.) c.1937.

of North Castle and Harrison. The hills also sheltered a few white settlers and hermits.⁷

The building of the first Kensico Dam and Lake (also called Valhalla Lake) in the 1880s called for a bridge over the Bronx River and swamp area for a roadway into Valhalla. This was the connecting link that brought North White Plains to Valhalla for a joint school district, shopping area and mailing address. To this day the Clarkson Home maintains its Valhalla mailing address.⁸



Collections of The Society

THE FIRST KENSICO DAM

The next historical event was the acquisition of the hills and surrounding areas by the Village of White Plains and by the City of New York for watershed purposes and for the building of the present Kensico Dam. This required the relocation of the colored folks from the hills to rows of small houses that were built on Westchester Avenue just north of Anderson Hill Road and were known as "Blackberry Row". The Kensico Dam project also required the building of a great many small homes, called "Camps", on North Broadway and Clove Road to help accommodate over 1,000 workers and their families. A great many descendants of these workers still live in North White Plains and

⁷ The Society published two articles on this subject written by Edythe Quinn Caro. Refer to North Castle History, 1988, pages 3-12, and 1989, pages 13-22.

⁸ Refer to North Castle History, 1999, page 31.

⁹ In 1892 Blackberry Row was a row of about 25 primitive houses including St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church, a small frame building, dedicated in 1874. "One would think himself suddenly transported from Westchester County to some Southern plantation in the days of slavery ..." reported The New York Times on December 26, 1892.

comprise almost 50% of the population. A large swamp in front of the dam was drained and filled in to form the present Kensico Dam Plaza.

Horses, mules, steam shovels, steam engines (called "Dinkys") were the tools for the job. A small gauge railroad was built to Quarry Heights and to Rye Lake for the sand, gravel and granite that were used to build the dam.



Collections of The Society

A DINKY AT THE NEW KENSICO DAM QUARRY AREA

The home of a former Town Supervisor, Joseph B. See¹⁰, was located on a knoll where now stand 30 homes on Kensico Knoll Place. His home was taken for watershed purposes and turned into a community recreation center and still later into a public school called the Valhalla Camp School. Our former Police Chief John Hergenhan graduated from this school.



Collections of The Society

JOSEPH B. SEE, 1895

¹⁰ Joseph B. See served as North Castle Supervisor from 1884 until 1900. The New York Times, December 8, 1895, termed him "A Father of Good Roads." At that time he was exhorting the Westchester County Board of Supervisors to adopt a system of County roads, saying, "Poor roads spoil a good market ... The joy of a good market is clouded by the grief of a poor road ... the disgraceful condition of most of our public highways makes it imperatively necessary that some action be taken by this board...."



Collections of Valhalla Schools

CAMP SCHOOL

"This building, located on Nethermont Avenue, was a private home when it was bought by the New York Board of Water Supply for use as a school for the children of the Kensico Dam workers. Night classes were held here to teach the immigrant workers how to read and write. In use from about 1909 to 1918, Camp School was replaced by the North White Plains School."¹¹

A new Route 22 was built to Armonk. The old one is near the bottom of the lake together with the old Village of Kensico.¹² A small hospital was built at the northeast intersection of North Broadway and Hillandale Avenue. I recall the commotion around this hospital on a tragic day in April of 1915 when eight men were killed outright and six more died later in an accident during the construction of the Dam.¹³

A passing historical event or "An Excitement" for the area was the first automobile race in America called the Briarcliff Race of 1908. This race passed in front of the original dam.¹⁴

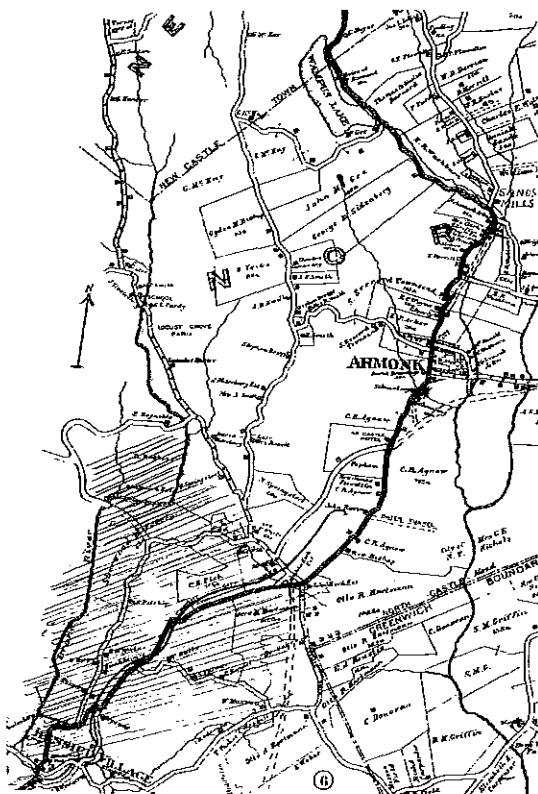
¹¹ www.valhalla.k12.ny.us/kensico/schools.html; Valhalla School District website.

¹² Refer to North Castle History, 1983, pages 3-22.

¹³ The New York Times reported Francisco Carlino, Sebatino Cesare, Salvatore DeFleece, Coperperz Honosz, Michael Angelo Mortinello, Andy Murke, Arfio Orrato and Angelo Virgellette were killed and Arfio Candarella, Acunapi Dygoni and Francisco Mandallus wounded. The foreman in charge of blasting, Rosario Guiliano, and his assistant, Ezcepia de Vigilies, were arrested. Company officials concluded that water in one of the many cups in the rock surface conveyed current to the dynamite and caused the accident.

¹⁴ Refer to North Castle History, 1981, pages 23-35.

The New York Times reported in its April 24, 1908 issue "Valhalla presented one of the gayest sights on the course ... fairly bristling with flags and banners. The entire front of the fire engine house was occupied by a high grand stand while the engine, covered with an old piece of canvas, stood outside ready for an emergency. The headquarters of the Maja car had established a grandstand on the roof of its building overlooking the main street of Valhalla, through which the racing cars passed..."



Collections of The Society

PART OF THE 1908 RACE ROUTE¹⁵

North Castle map from the E. Belcher Hyde 1908 Atlas. Shaded area has been added to show Kensico Reservoir; dashes were added to indicate new roads. The darkened road shows the route of the Race.

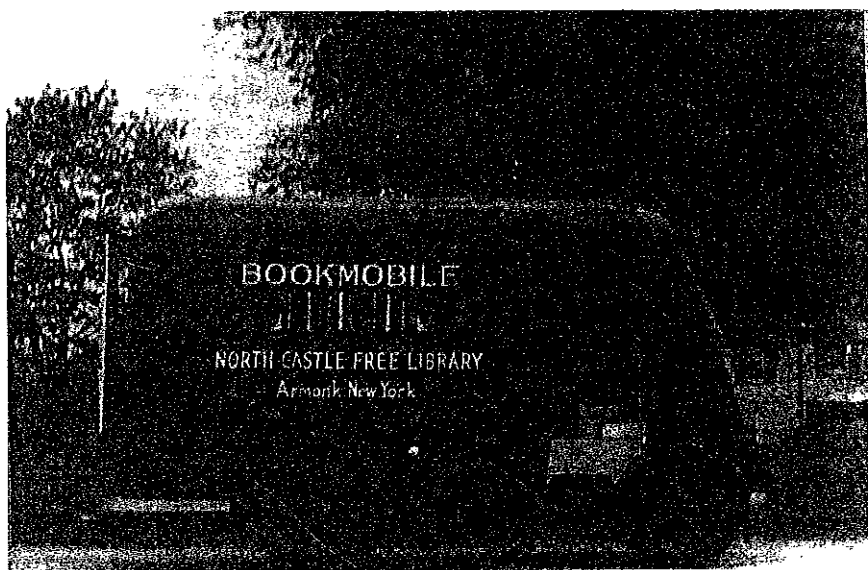
What does the future hold for this area that is now built up with one and two family homes in an ideal location for easy living, surrounded by green spaces with County Parks, watershed properties and lakes, hard-paved roads, sewer and water facilities, shopping centers and marvelous transportation? Will we be forced to have apartments? I will leave this speculation for you to ponder.

¹⁵ The 1908 Briarcliff Automobile Race was the first Westchester automobile race and the first international stock car race in America. Twenty-two automobiles representing five countries were entered.

THE MAGICAL BUS – NORTH CASTLE LIBRARY’S BOOKMOBILE

by Sheila Smith Drapeau

There was a time in Armonk when a musical bell that rang out through the streets created almost as much excitement as that of an ice cream truck. Its peal was filled with the promise of mystery, adventure, poetry and prose that brought the world to one’s door. It was the bell attached to the North Castle Free Library’s Bookmobile, and it rode around Armonk, Banksville and North White Plains delivering fun and fulfillment to those residents eager for a good read.



Collections of the North Castle Public Library

NORTH CASTLE’S ONE AND ONLY BIG BLUE BOOKMOBILE PROUDLY SHOWS OFF ITS LOGO

To find the driving force behind our library’s Bookmobile one must turn back the pages of time to 1936 when a local invalid child’s longing for books sparked a big idea, culminating in the creation of a volunteer free library, which, five years later resided in its own building on its present site on Whippoorwill Road East. Miss Julia Bennett, an Armonk realtor by trade and volunteer extraordinaire, was the first to take the necessary steps to find out what was entailed in starting a library.

She wrote to the American Library Association and to the state library extension division for as much information as possible. Realizing the enormity of the challenge, Miss Bennett took the idea to two Whippoorwill School teachers in town, Emily Stephens Golden, the home economics teacher, and Mrs. Lucille Ainsworth Kittredge¹, the fourth grade teacher who also ran the small school library. Mrs. Warren J. Hall, a juvenile book author and mother of four, also came on board. With five other interested North Castle residents the women came together on February 20, 1938 to create the first executive committee overseeing the library. That committee would continue to make the day-to-day operation of the library its primary concern. The library's first home was a rented annex on Maple Avenue, leased for \$18.00 a month.

In March of 1941 ground was broken for the library's new home on Whippoorwill East with Mr. Clarence Abrams, Mr. Dean Courtney Brown, Mrs. Stephen Golden, Mrs. Hall, Mr. Henry Moger and Mrs. Leonard Smith all on hand to wield the shovels for the cameras. The library opened its doors seven months later on October 11 with the last truckload of books delivered to the new building by the Armonk Independent Fire Department engine.

In 1944 the library was increasing its patronage, and volumes of books were arriving every day. WWII was raging and tragedy struck a local nerve when Armonk resident Walter S. Gifford, retired chairman of the board of American Telephone & Telegraph and a strong library supporter, lost his son, Lieutenant Walter Sherman Gifford, in a plane crash in the Pacific on July 31. According to records of the library's steady growth, four months later, in memory of the young lieutenant, Mr. Gifford donated \$5,000 to the library with the stipulation that the money be divided into two parts. A memorial fund of \$500 was to be set aside in his son's name to buy books, specifically subjects that his son enjoyed including history, literature, skiing, and mountain climbing. The \$4,500 total remaining was to forward the expansion of library services. A meeting held by the executive committee ascertained that the best use of those funds would be a bookmobile to be made accessible throughout North Castle. Operating expenses would be drawn from the established Gifford memorial fund (with the exception, it was noted in North Castle History's 1988 volume, of books bought by the main library).

¹ Her daughter is Rebecca Kittredge who has served on North Castle's Town Board for several years and is the Deputy Supervisor. Some of us know her better as "Becky".

A “slightly used” panel truck was pressed into service, bought from AT&T and sent down to a New Rochelle body shop for refurbishment, its progress duly noted in The North Castle Sun, the township’s newspaper of the time. In an archived article dated October 30, 1946 that detailed the bookmobile committee’s dedication and plans, the newspaper chronicled the entire operation, giving credit to the efforts of those whose vision was unwavering.



Courtesy of the North Castle Public Library

LOCAL PATRONS FILL THEIR ARMS WITH TREASURES

“Miss Julia Bennett has worked unceasingly cataloguing and preparing for circulation donated books as they have arrived during the past few months,” the paper noted. “She has also done the preliminary mapping of routes and, with Mrs. John Hill and Mrs. Hall, is now figuring out final details such as truck stops and safe turn arounds.”

Mrs. R. Leslie Hickson was in charge of buying adult books for the “converted truck”, the newspaper reported, detailing her search at many New York book sales seeking out new adult books for the Bookmobile shelves. Mrs. Hall ordered the juvenile titles, some 80 in all. Bookmobile committee members Mr. R. Eugene Curry and Mr. Carroll M. Snyder, were responsible for conversion specifications and the purchase of shelving for the interior of the truck.

The librarians on the routes were also selected to work together as a book purchasing committee under Mrs. Hickson’s chairmanship.



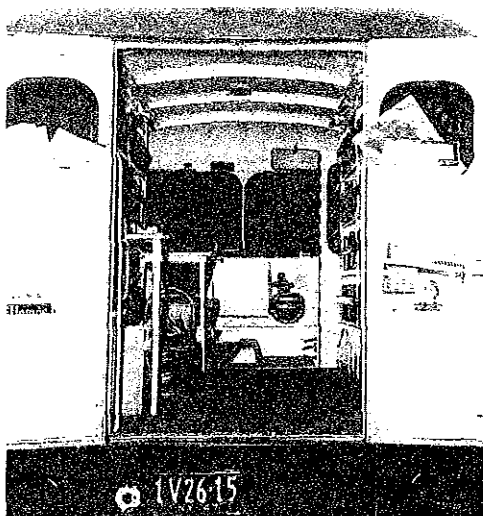
Collections of The Library

Guidelines for acquiring books were not terribly strict, as a wide spectrum of titles and subjects were important in serving the varied tastes and ages of town residents. Paperback books were in great demand during the donation drive as they conserved shelf space. Books for children, old and new, were sought after and popular adult books published within the last two years (between 1944 and 1946) were gratefully accepted.

SHELVES INSIDE THE BOOKMOBILE

Planning the routes took time and the initial four routes were cut down to two as the Bookmobile's rural schedules took shape.

"Changes in library procedure on the truck will probably have to be made as paper plans become real practice," The Sun noted in its 1946 article. "Once Middle Patent and East Middle Patent routes are thoroughly established, the Bookmobile staff will be sufficiently experienced to set up the system in the thickly populated North White Plains area as well as to cover Quarry Heights, King Street, and Whippoorwill."



Collections of The Library

DOORS OPEN TO ALL RESIDENTS

A successful maiden run in November of 1946 covered Banksville and the Middle Patent School. By May of 1947 five regular routes were on

the map, served by 12 volunteers. Two more routes over two days were added to accommodate the many students at North White Plains School. Mrs. John Wiggins volunteered to drive the lumbering one-and-a-half ton blue truck with the standing books logo on its side and she became a fixture synonymous with the Bookmobile as head of its department. Other loyal drivers included Mrs. Edwin C. Lindstrom, Mrs. Vincent J. Cunningham, Mrs. C.P.G. Fuller, Mrs. Luke Benz, Mrs. Joseph T. Willits, Mrs. John Macchia, Mrs. James Robison, Mrs. Sanford Agnew, Mrs. Clarence Kolstedt, Mrs. Warren J. Hall, and Mrs. Robert A. Lord. The last four names (and Mrs. Wiggins) were also members who headed the department over various years. Other Bookmobile library volunteers included Fran Hoyt, Dot Johnson, and Gerrie Hayman.



Collections of The Society

MRS. JOHN WIGGINS AT THE HELM

was turning corners. It was noted in North Castle History (Volume 15, 1988) that “a box of alphabetized cards unanchored on a table could shower the interior in an instant and cause hours of critical snarls.”

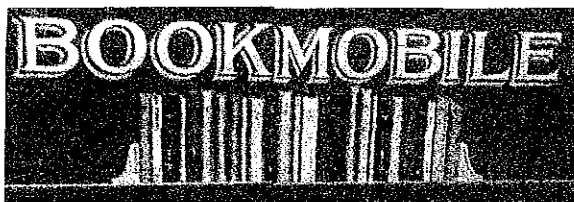
Anecdotes abound, as the Bookmobile not only brought literature to the homebound or those unable to reach the town library, it also brought people together through a shared passion for reading.

In an article dated April 20, 1951 in The New York Times, the story was reported of two neighbors – both women feuding over an old issue worthy of a Hatfield-McCoy grudge – who refused to meet at the Bookmobile. One would wait until the other left the truck before venturing out to get her book. By coincidence, they met one afternoon. To diffuse the tension – noting that the two shared a common interest in new novels – Mrs. Wiggins engaged them in a book discussion. The New York Times wrote that “icy stares melted”, and a family feud that folklore notes dated back to the Revolutionary War was placated.

Schoolchildren especially were thrilled when they heard the familiar chimes of “Annie Rooney” coming from the Bookmobile bell for it meant it was time for a new story or novel, new adventure, new learning. Each driver had her favorite routes and special tales, including the one in which a mother ran to the Bookmobile one day to say that her two-year-old son had finally spoken his first full sentence, “Book-bill come today.”

The North Castle Bookmobile had a wonderful and exciting 14-year run before it parked its treasure trove and its years of service in 1960 for the last time. But for those who remember bookmobiles the love lingers. Armonk resident Cene Blumenthal recalled with excitement in her voice her own anticipation as a little girl growing up in Michigan: “It was a treasure, a big magical bus coming down the road. It was exciting and fun.”

For those residents who remember the simple pleasures of life when North Castle was still a rural township dotted with farms and fewer cars, the nostalgic thoughts of the big blue truck still bring warm memories of books read and neighborly camaraderie forever shared.



Archives of The North Castle Public Library

LOGO APPEARING ON THE SIDES OF THE BOOKMOBILE

THE BANKSVILLE GOLF CLUB

by Doris Finch Watson
North Castle Town Historian

IT DID NOT GO AWAY EASILY. Indeed, numerous people implored the County, the Town and several officials to "save the Banksville Golf Club, not only for continuing use by its members, but to preserve its beautiful open land for the future." But in the end, it was lost forever, gone like so many other treasures of the past, where only the memories remain.

LOOKING BACK

The history of the land, where the Banksville Golf Club stood for nearly three decades, is long and diverse. During the Revolutionary War it was part of the sprawling farmland of James Banks¹, a member of the family for whom the hamlet of Banksville is named. During the 1800s it was the farm of J. Hobby². By 1893 Hobby descendants, James Burns and George Hobby, were the owners³ of that huge acreage; thus the present Hobby Farm Drive and Hobby Lane carry forward the early Hobby name for those who reside there today.

By World War II some fifty-four acres of that vast farm had been sold to George Fordham who retained ownership into the 1950s⁴. Around that period four important changes came to Banksville – all in the 1950s and early 1960s:

¹ The land of James Banks was located between the lands of Ezekiel Finch and the Widow Brush, as shown on Map No. 24, prepared by Erskine-DeWitt in 1777 for General George Washington. A copy of the map is among the collections of the New York Historical Society.

² J. Hobby is shown as the owner on a Sidney and Neff 1851 map, published by Newell S. Brown. J. Hobby continued as the owner and is shown on a map of 1858 of Westchester County, New York by F. C. Merry. In 1893 George Hobby and James Burns held combined ownership of 180 acres shown on Map No. 28, Town of North Castle, and they appear as owners on the 1900 map by Hyde and Co.

³ J. Burns and George Hobby continued ownership to 1937 as shown on Map of North Westchester published by Dolph and Stewart, New York.

⁴ George Fordham is shown as the owner on a 1942 map of North Castle by Dolph and Stewart.

1. In 1951 the Banksville Firehouse was being constructed, ready to serve Banksville and the surrounding area⁵;
2. A shopping center was built on the Connecticut side of Banksville⁶;
3. New homes were built on both sides of the state line by young people who had served in World War II and had come home to start their own places⁷;
4. Once again, there were plans for a Golf Club in the community, just as there had been on neighboring acreage way back in 1928.⁸

THE NEW GOLF CLUB

Two gentlemen envisioned that beautiful old farmland as a new Par Three 18-hole Golf Course, which would include a modern Clubhouse. Their names are warmly remembered in the community as Joe and Mike ... their full names: Joseph M. Auresto and Michael Sinistore. Nearly fifty-four acres of land were purchased from Harry Schacter on September 10, 1964⁹, and plans began to take shape. The permit to build was finally issued on June 15, 1966¹⁰. The contracting firm of Carlson and Rider were contracted to undertake the job, including removal of the topsoil, some of which was delivered to the property of the late Herman J. Steger. In a current interview, Mrs. Steger recalls that her husband and her daughters unearched many arrowheads, harkening back to the early days when the Siwanoy Indians hunted across these hills and fished in the Mianus River¹¹.

⁵ Personal records and history of The Banksville Independent Fire Company, Inc. included in the collection of Doris Finch Watson.

⁶ The shopping center is located north of the former Banksville Baptist Church and just south of the New York and Connecticut State line.

⁷ Homes were constructed on Scott Road, Scott Lane, The Avenue, Banksville Avenue, North Street, Taconic Road and Bedford-Banksville Road.

⁸ In 1928 the Westchester Women's Golf and Tennis Club was founded. By 1934 it became The Middle Patent Golf Club. In 1947 the Westchester Golf and Tennis Holding Corporation sold the ancient Widow Brush house to Antoine Gilly, and he opened the now famous LaCremailere Restaurant in the old clubhouse. See Liber 4526, page 206, Westchester County Records in the County Clerk's office, White Plains, New York. Today LaCremailere is owned by Robert Meyzen.

⁹ Records in the Assessor's Office, Town of North Castle.

¹⁰ Section 1, Block 5, Lots 15 and 16, Round House Holding Corporation records in the Building Department Office, Town of North Castle.

¹¹ Refer to North Castle History, Volume 6, 1979, for an article "The Indians of North Castle – Our Native Americans" by Doris Finch Watson.

The foundation of the Clubhouse was dug by a nearby neighbor, George Zygmunt, who continues as a general contractor in Banksville to this day¹². It is interesting that the building arrived by being towed on two double sets of wheels and then slid onto the foundation. As the photograph attests, it was a handsome structure. It stood on the high point of the property facing southward with benches, tables and chairs in front. The clubhouse bar was kept well stocked, and drinks were enjoyed both indoors and out on the lawn chairs, where one could enjoy watching the beautiful setting sun¹³.



Collection of Doris Finch Watson

THE BANKSVILLE GOLF CLUBHOUSE

Local young men, including Joe Auresto, Jr., members of the Schupp family and others, were hired to “whip the greens” in the early morn¹⁴, and Mike Sinistore did much of the outside work on lawns, tees, putting greens, etc. Each year when the Club shut down for the winter months,

¹² Personal interview with George Zygmunt.

¹³ Personal experiences of the author.

¹⁴ Personal interview with Carl Schupp. It is essential to remove the dew from the greens in the early morning before play begins.

the snow-covered slopes held great appeal to local youths who arrived with sleds.

The kitchen of the Club was often handled by the wives, Ellen Sinistore and Wanda Auresto, and at other times by Mr. Auresto. One happy memory came to light in an interview with the author's daughter, Phoebe. She recalls as a young girl that she would sometimes go with her Dad to hit "a basket of balls off the driving range" followed by a special treat which Mr. Auresto would prepare: a slice of pound cake toasted golden brown, topped with butter and jelly. Years later, it is still a happy memory of her times at the Club.¹⁵

OUTREACH

At the Banksville Club the golf professional was Emil "Kupie" Kupetz. The Club owners and Mr. Kupetz agreed to invite children from The Banksville Community House Summer Camp to come to the Club and try their hands at golf, learn property golf etiquette, etc., all offered without charge. Each year at the closing evening program of the summer camp, the Banksville Golf Club made presentations to the children for outstanding putting, great improvement, and best swing. This generous outreach program by the golf club continued for several years and was a much-appreciated gift.¹⁶



Collections of Doris Finch Watson

"Proper grip on an iron is demonstrated by Banksville Golf Club pro Emile Kupetz for young members of Banksville Community House summer recreation program. Watching Thomas Debany's efforts are Lora Wellington, left, and Karen Sullivan. Children receive lessons once a week at the club." (Patent Trader newspaper, Saturday, August 2, 1969)

THE PROPER GRIP

¹⁵ Personal interview with Phoebe Finch Watson.

¹⁶ Records of The Banksville Community House.

CHANGES

In the 1970s Mr. and Mrs. Sinistore decided to move on, and the Aurestos continued operating the business. Members came from nearby local areas including Bedford, Armonk, Pleasantville, Round Hill, Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and even as far away as Norwalk and Bridgeport. There were scheduled competitions, awards, trophies, holiday parties and good fellowship. It had been a success. But as the 1980s drew toward a close, the Auresto family decided it was time for a change. The club members and the entire community were saddened when Joseph M. Auresto, as President of Round House Road Association, talked of selling. Concerned people sent requests to North Castle and Westchester County officials, all in hopes the Club could be bought by them so that it could continue to operate ... all without a successful answer.¹⁷

By August 4, 1987 a plan for a subdivision called North Brook Knoll, map number 23331, was submitted and received approval on July 27, 1988 from the Town of North Castle¹⁸. By date of November 4, 1988 Round House Road Associates, Joseph M. Auresto, President, sold to Gentry Properties, Ltd¹⁹. The end of The Banksville Golf Club had come ... and once again a closing ... reminiscent of the fate of the two earlier golf clubs. But there were many joyful memories and some good pictures to be treasured as happy reminders.



[L-R] Josie Pica, Joseph Auresto, and William J. Watson.

Joseph Auresto sent this photograph, taken in the early 1970s, as a gift to William J. Watson with a note saying, "Bill – I think I was giving you and Josie a golf lesson." This comment was meant as a joke between friends.

Collections of Doris Finch Watson

AT BANKSVILLE GOLF CLUB

¹⁷ Recollections of the author who was involved in the efforts.

¹⁸ Data from Assessor's Office, Town of North Castle.

¹⁹ Ibid.

TODAY

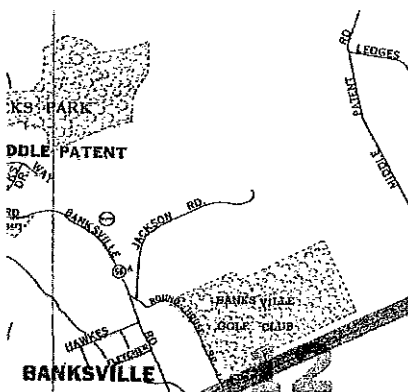
As you drive along Round House Road in Banksville, you may decide to turn in to view Hobby Farm Drive and Hobby Lane as they wind along the hills where the golf links once took precedence. But that era has passed, and now the families in those twenty-four current homes take precedence, and may they too continue to enjoy the land and those same lovely views of the setting sun.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to the following for personal interviews, for time spent in researching North Castle records, for care in providing telephone facsimile and cell numbers and for sharing memories and recollections of events:

Wanda Auresto
Valerie Baulkwill Desimone
Richard Fon
Michael Genkerell
Anna Maria Marrone
Mercedes Rogers

Carl Schupp
Doris Schupp
Jane Steger
Phoebe Finch Watson
Jeff Wuebber



Hearne Brothers Map, 1982



Google Map, 2008

MAPS SHOWING BANKSVILLE GOLF CLUB PROPERTY

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COWS BEING DRIVEN TO PASTURE BANKSVILLE ROAD ABOUT 1915

The front cover shows cows being driven to pasture along Banksville Road as it appeared in 1915. The photograph was taken in the vicinity of present-day 44 Banksville Road.

Notice that the road is unpaved and appears to be quite narrow – just enough room for two or three cows to walk abreast. The fields and pastures are separated from the road by a split rail fence. There is a large rock formation in the right background of the photograph.

Before his death, Mr. R. Eugene Curry donated a copy of the 1915 photograph and wrote that when he and his family came to Mead Road about 1929 Mr. John Bennett, father of the late Marjorie Dennison, was keeping cows and chickens and that he took his cheese, butter and eggs to Port Chester to be sold. Mr. Bennett continued farming for some time after 1929.

The man in the rear moving the cows along is believed to be Mr. Bennett.

Please forward any corrections or additions to the information presented herein and/or your constructive suggestions for improving this publication to your editorial board at The North Castle Historical Society, Historic Smith's Tavern, 440 Bedford Road, Armonk, New York 10504. If you would be willing to research and/or author an article, please let us know. Different writers and diverse perspectives are vital.

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