

Historical Site of Four



The Cornell-Birdsall House

North Castle

June 5, 1976

The members of the Historical Site Tour Committee of the North Castle Bicentennial Committee are proud to provide you with this booklet. All of the sites you will be visiting today were erected before 1800 and are here described in some detail.

HISTORICAL SITE TOUR COMMITTEE

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COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS

The North Castle Historical Society, League of Women Voters, Byram Hills PTA, North White Plains PTA, Green Acres Garden Club.

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WEST AND SOUTH TOUR

North Greenwich Road:

Dayton House 148 No. Greenwich Rd.

Palmer House 61 No. Greenwich Rd.

Corner Rte. 22 and Cox Ave:

Brundage House, 441 Bedford Rd.

Smith Tavern, 440 Bedford Rd.

Byram Lake Rd. and Rosanne Dr.:

Quaker Cemetery

Cox Avenue:

Quinby House, 82 Cox Ave.

Methodist Cemetery

Quaker Meeting House

Bowron House 120-124 Cox Ave.

Andre Monument

Mt. Kisco Rd.-Route 128

Townsend House Main St.

King Street

David Lane House, 280 King St.

William Lane House, 1 The Crossing

North White Plains:

Reuben Wright's Mills Monument,
Route 22

Miller House Virginia Rd.

Miller Hill

NORTH AND EAST TOUR

Route 22 - North:

Gedney-Lyon House, 605 Bedford R

Middle Patent Rd.:

Sands-Smith House

Middle Patent Rural Cemetery

Banksville-Bedford Rd.:

Benony Platt House

Widow Banks House

Banks-Guion House

St. Mary's Church Rd.:

Finch House

Mianus River Rd.:

Hobby Hill Farm

Clarissa Lyon House

Daniel Smith "Little House"

Daniel Brown House

Hickory Kingdom Rd.:

Palmer House

Banksville-Bedford Rd.:

Widow Brush House

Round Hill Road:

Winus Palmer House

Banksville Road:

Elias-Feeks House

WEST AND SOUTH TOUR

DOCTOR DAVID DAYTON HOUSE

On January 12, 1756, Robert Flewelling recorded a deed of sale for forty-five acres, including a house and other "improvements," to Dr. David Dayton for the sum of 181 pounds. The deed of sale also notes that Mr. Flewelling purchased the land from Thomas Golding on December 12, 1755, and that Thomas Golding purchased the land from his son Benjamin and from William Carpenter, and further that Benjamin Golding had earlier purchased the land from Silas Carpenter.

Dr. David Dayton (1731-1812) was already a doctor when he came to this house in North Castle in 1756. He maintained a practice in Rye. During the years 1771-1777 he was Supervisor of the Town of North Castle, and was a man of some prominence during the early Revolutionary period.

The house remained in the Dayton family until the 1880's. Others lived and farmed there over the years, and it subsequently came into the possession of a New York businessman, Sidney Cohen, who made some changes to the house until it looks as it does today. He passed the house down to his son, who sold it to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Hordyck.

GILBERT PALMER HOUSE

It would appear from the 1756 deed of sale to Dr. David Dayton that the land on which this house is situated was his at the time, as his property went south as far as the "Colony line" (Connecticut border), on what was then probably considered the Danbury Post Road.

Gilbert Palmer is first mentioned in our Town's records in 1763, and was continuously active in Town service with the exception of the Revolutionary War years. The year "1772" is inscribed over the porch, raising some question as to the actual date of the house. There have been additions to the house over the years. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Green.

DAVID BRUNDAGE HOUSE

This house was probably built around 1760-1770, and was owned for many years by Thomas Hopkins. For some time it was occupied by David Brundage, who purchased it from the Hopkins heirs in 1812. At his death in 1839, the property passed to his son Harrison; later to his son, Thomas P.; and lastly to his son, Thomas William. The four successive generations of Brundages farmed, and were active in religious and civic affairs in the town for over one hundred years.

The house became part of the holdings of John W. Sterling and Yale University, and in the late 1930's was restored. Tradition says that this house was also fired on by the British on their retreat from Bedford in the summer of 1779, and saved by the exertions of the American Militia. Local lore also tells that this farmland has a buried treasure, never found, hidden by the owners to deceive the redcoats.

The house is now the property of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Z. Gray.

SMITH'S TAVERN

Probably all or portions of this house ante-date the Revolution. Its earliest known owner was Benjamin Hopkins, who later leased it to Ichabod Ogden. Ogden was there during the Revolution and the militia had a headquarters there. On the retreat of the British from the burning of Bedford, July 1779, it was supposedly fired on by them, but saved by the local militia.

After the war, about 1790, Captain John Smith bought the house and acreage and opened a tavern. In 1798 he was elected Town Clerk and from approximately 1800 to 1855 the Annual Town Meeting and the Town Board met there. In 1830 Captain John's son Samuel P. Smith was elected Town Clerk and he served from that date to 1855.

At its greatest extent Samuel Smith's operation accommodated overnight travelers on the Danbury Post Road; kept a store which housed the first Post Office, "North Castle" 1800; and catered to all local trade with thirsty palates. After the death of Samuel Smith in 1884 several families lived and farmed there. In the early twentieth century it became the property of John W. Sterling and then passed into the hands of Yale University. It was extensively restored by its later owners, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Datlowe, who later sold it to the Hillside Church, the present owner.

THE QUAKER CEMETERY

This plot of ground was set aside by the Friends Meeting of North Castle, presumably about 1771, as the first recorded interment dates from that year. It is a common field stone, inscribed "S N 1771." The cemetery was used from that date until the eighteen-nineties, when all interments ceased. As the number of Quaker families in the area declined and the prominent local families sought plots in the newer cemeteries, few interments were made after 1860.

There are plots and memorials of most of the leading families of Quaker faith: Brundage, Carpenter, Cocks, Dayton, Husted, Palmer, Sands, and Tripp. Interred in the cemetery are three former Supervisors of the town: John Palmer, James Hopkins, and Job Sands (who, it is said, gave Armonk its name). Also here lies the remains of Joseph Waring, a soldier of the Revolution; Martha, the widow of Doctor David Dayton, Supervisor during the Revolution; John Sands the mill-owner; and David Brundage, founder of the family whose numerous descendants played so large a part in the history of the town. Also there is Abigail Waring Husted, who was born during the Revolution and lived through every Presidential administration from Washington to Hayes.

MOSES QUINBY HOUSE

The earliest recorded owner was Moses Quinby, a nephew and apparent namesake of the first town clerk of North Castle, who owned the house during the Revolutionary period. The farm covered some 160 acres. In the 1770's another house was joined to the original small structure, increasing the number of rooms from 4 to 8. In 1797 Quinby sold the property to Thomas Sands, of Sands Mills. Other owners included Sam Mellis (1820) and Robert Cocks (1851) until the house came back into the Quinby family in 1858. It was here that Howard Quinby began

to acquire a famous collection of Indian relics, and from the dining room of the house operated a switchboard for the town's 15 telephone subscribers, whose circuit he also constructed. In 1933 the then-owners, Mr. and Mrs. Warren J. Hall, added the East wing.

All during this time the road was not more than a narrow winding country lane, and the house was set back from it. However, the advent of highway 684 caused the widening and heightening of Cox Avenue and the destruction of several outbuildings.

This home is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Watson.

METHODIST CEMETERY AND CHURCH SITE

This cemetery and monument mark the site of the Old North Castle Methodist Episcopal Church, the mother church of Methodism in this part of Westchester County. In April of 1788 this property was deeded to the Church Trustees by Samuel Sands and Martha, his wife, the deed reciting "with the Church building thereon erected." Evidently Samuel would not give the land until he saw the Church building up and a reality.

The Church owes its beginnings to a visit by the Rev. Thomas Ware in the Fall and Winter of 1786. Two groups of worshippers were organized, one at Mile Square (Armonk) and the other at James Hall's on Sarles Street. These groups joined together to form the North Castle Methodist Episcopal Church, and selected their Church site between their two first meeting places.

In June of 1787 the great Methodist Bishop, Francis Asbury, visited the group, preaching twice, morning and evening, and a large group came to hear. This visit sealed the formation of the Church and construction on the building began in 1787. Many of the great and famous names of American Methodism preached within its walls: Francis Asbury, Freeborn Garrettson, Jesse Lee, Peter Moriarity, and a host of others. From this society were formed the churches at Bedford (1806), New Castle (Mt. Kisco-1824), Middle Patent (1825) and Kensico (1835).

The old Church was used by the local Methodist congregation until June of 1872, when the present Church at the corner of Main Street and Bedford Road, in Armonk, was completed and dedicated. In October of 1875 this historic building (of which no picture exists) was taken down and its lumber sold for \$67.50. It was rebuilt into a shoe shop which once stood on Maple Avenue.

In the cemetery, dating back to 1787, are interred Gilbert Thorn, town clerk of North Castle during the Revolution; James Hall, a pioneer Methodist Layman and confidant of Bishop Asbury; and Caleb Kirby, also a prominent Methodist, New Castle Supervisor for twenty years, and the man for whom Kirbyville (Mt. Kisco) was named.

THE QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

The Quaker Meeting House was built in June of 1776 -- at least this is the date carved above the door frame of the entrance on the south side of the building. This Meeting was an offshoot of the Chappaqua Meeting, and the act of creating the new Meeting actually took place on October 26, 1796, twenty years after the Meeting House was erected. Probably the old North Castle Meeting (Shappequa) had two houses for the communion of the members who resided in

the respective areas of its jurisdiction.

We do know that during the great Orthodox--Hicksite Controversy in 1828, the Meeting divided with the Orthodox meeting outside under the trees, and the Hicksites, the larger group, meeting in the house. In 1872 the Armonk Meeting was discontinued. The house was sold to the neighboring farms, who changed its interiors into a carriage house. Over the years it was owned by members of the Carpenter, Cox and Purdy families and is now owned by George S. Leisure, Esq.

The building is about 50 feet by 30 feet, and its massive beams and supports are all carefully dovetailed and held together with wooden pegs. The outside walls are covered by hand-hewn shingles, secured with hand-made wrought iron nails. One of the Purdys recalled that, during their occupancy in the early 1900's, visitors to their home often took off a shingle, smoothed one side and then drew or painted pictures on it as a souvenir! The Purdys kept a supply of similar shingles ever on hand so that each original board could be immediately replaced.

WILLIAM BOWRON HOUSE

The original (right-hand part) of the house was probably built in the 1760's by Quakers, who in 1776 built their Meeting House on adjoining property. Note that the original road ran directly by the house and intersected here with Old Mt. Kisco Road prior to going into Sands Mills.

William Bowron had a business in New York City selling milk from door to door, and used this as his country home.

It was later owned by Jacob Bowron Carpenter (1812-1876), son of Sarah Bowron and Rees Carpenter, who owned much of the Sands Mills property.

Much later the actor John Drew lived here, and during that time many theater people came here to spend their leisure time away from the city -- John, Ethel and Lionel Barrymore among them.

This house and the Quaker Meeting House are now owned by George Leisure.

COL. JAMESON'S HEADQUARTERS MONUMENT (ANDRE'S MONUMENT)

This stone marks the site of an old barn which was destroyed by New York City during the winter of 1904, as it was on watershed land. This barn was the quarters of Lt. Col. John Jameson of the Continental Army, a temporary American outpost in Westchester County. Here, on September 23, 1780, the three Patriots Paulding, Williams, and Van Wart delivered the captured British spy, Maj. John Andre, to Col. Jameson's jurisdiction.

Jameson clearly misunderstood the importance of his prisoner and started him under guard back to West Point and the conspirator, Benedict Arnold. However, Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge, an intrepid and resourceful young officer, who had some experience in intelligence gathering, prevailed upon Jameson to bring Andre back to North Castle. This was done, Andre having already reached Peekskill. Another hour or so and the plot, even though discovered, might have allowed Andre to escape. Tallmadge saw the prisoner on his return, and had him held overnight. Very early the next day he was sent on to Col. Sheldon's headquarters at South Salem.

The monument was erected in 1930 by the Armonk Business Men's Club. The only survivor of that committee of leading citizens is Ralph L. McDonald, the chairman. The stone was selected from the remains of McCracken's Mill dam near Byram Lake by Harry Hunter, the Commissioner of Highways. Mr. Vito Merlo designed the monument, which was unveiled September 23, 1930, on the 150th anniversary of the event. Supervisor J. Hobart Cox presided over an appropriate ceremony, and over 500 people were in attendance.

ISRAEL TOWNSEND HOUSE

We are told that Israel Townsend and his wife Phoebe Weeks moved to North Castle around 1776 from their Oyster Bay, Long Island home, to escape problems prevalent there during the Revolution.

The oldest part of the house faces the street, and the structure was unusually large for the period. It had some 16 rooms, a large kitchen, two very large open fireplaces and a Dutch oven. Israel and Phoebe Townsend had ten children. They located their family cemetery high up on the hill behind their house and it was here that they were buried in 1832 and 1836. Their son, Israel, born in 1791 and his wife are also buried there, as are later family members.

The house has had a variety of owners and tenants over the years and at one time it was a restaurant.

In the 1920's a fire that raged in the woods north of the house set fire to a barn and another house on this property which at the time was owned by the Wago family.

DAVID LANE HOUSE

David Lane served as Town Assessor as early as 1738. According to a copy of an old land deed now on display in the North Castle Library, his family was from Rye and in 1741 his father, Samuel Lane, gave him approximately seven acres in Rye.

The New York Historical Society has a surveyor's map of December 1, 1762 indicating that David Lane had 237 acres along King Street, "the road being deducted". This land was part of the original West Patent granted by King William III, and it was purchased from the original patentees (Robert Walter, Leigh Atwood, Cornelius Depeyster, among others) by Benjamin Smith, Caleb Fowler, and Joseph Sutton. They in turn sold the 237 acres to David Lane for the sum of 103 pounds 16 shillings. The deed of sale was recorded April 22nd, 1764, a little more than a year after the survey had been made for David Lane.

This building was the main house of the farm consisting of barns, stables, orchards and meadows. According to the 1779 tax list, David Lane's real estate holdings and personal estate were very high.

The present owner, Dr. David Hays, very generously provided use of copies of the original survey and original land grant for study.

WILLIAM LANE HOUSE

William Lane appeared on the 1779 tax list for North Castle as a substantial taxpayer, exceeding David Lane, who probably was his father.

Both the David Lane and the William Lane houses are noted on the 1778 Erskine-DeWitt maps, made by George Washington's noted geographer. This property was part of the original 237 acre purchase made by David Lane.

The present owner, Anthony Ellrodt, has a letter dated 1826 in which Lane gave the house and 90 acres to his son for \$5.00, but reserved the right to use the cider mill on the property, and to store apples there! The house later belonged to Charles Purdy, and then to his son Stephen, who was living there during his term as North Castle Supervisor from 1855 to 1860. The woods in the back of this house were known as the Dark Valley, and the northern branch of the Bronx River rises here.

REUBEN WRIGHT'S MILL MONUMENT

Reuben Wright was a Quaker miller. By damming Bear Gutter Creek he created a mill pond and located his operations in an area exactly opposite the monument now located on Route 22. His mills were a popular meeting place for George Washington and his staff and there is a record that on July 21-25 1778, a board meeting of general officers was held there. It is further noted that Washington's bill for lodging at the mills was paid on the 25th! It is also believed that the captured spy, Major Andre, was taken to Reuben Wright's mill in 1780 before being taken further north to Thomas Wright's (Sands) Mills. The area was named Kensico in 1848, and in the 1880's the first Kensico Dam and lake were built. With the construction of the reservoir and the new Kensico Dam between 1908 and 1917, all the buildings were demolished.

The following words are on the monument:

Near this site stood
Reuben Wright's Mills
Headquarters of General Washington
from July 20th to 25th 1778 also
occupied by other revolutionary generals

The Mills were in old Kensico Village
now inundated by the waters
of Kensico Lake

These millstones were placed by the
White Plains Chapter of D.A.R. October 28, 1932
on the 156th anniversary of the
Battle of White Plains 1776

The millstones came from the old Grist Mill that belonged to John Horton in 1776, later called Deutermann Mill, located on Lake Street in White Plains.

MILLER HOUSE

(Known as Washington's Headquarters)

This small farmhouse originally was surrounded by a farm tract of some 600 acres, acquired by the Miller family in the colonial period. The house was probably built by John Miller about 1738. He had eight children and one of his sons, Elijah (born 1728) married a near-neighbor, Anne Fisher. They first lived in a house on a hill above the Fisher's house, and had seven children. About 1770 they moved into this house, and put on an addition to it on the west end. This included a parlor with corner fireplace in the front, a bedroom with fireplace in the rear, a small porch off this bedroom, and two more bedrooms on the second floor of the addition.

Elijah Miller took an early active role in the Westchester County Militia and died August, 1776 while in camp. Two of his sons, John and Elijah, both privates in the Westchester County Militia, died in camp of a fever December 22, 1776.

The house was occupied by General Washington three times: October 1776, summer of 1778, and 1781. The Widow Anne Miller was General Washington's hostess during these visits; she lived to be 96 years old and died in 1819. A daughter, Sarah Miller Cornell, lived on there until she died in 1838 aged 84. Other families lived and farmed there after the Millers, including a former Armonk Postmaster, Charles Kaiser.

On the urging of the Westchester County Chapter of the D.A.R., Westchester County purchased the house in July 1917. It underwent some restoration and was opened to the public on October 29, 1918. It is now operated as a museum by the County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

Of particular interest is the enormous sycamore tree just outside the bedroom window on the west side, which undoubtedly was there at the time of General Washington's visit. The house is built in the Rhode Island farmhouse style of the period.

MILLER HILL

Looking south, down the Bronx River Valley, from the park on top of Miller Hill, one can see where on October 28, 1776 the Redcoats of Sir William Howe marched in parade ground formation against the motley patriot army of General Washington, whose troops extended easterly in a long line to Silver Lake (along the hills behind Handelman's Nursery).

From this high vantage point you can see the railroad tracks and the County Center, and to the west a rise of ground. This is Chatterton's Hill where the fighting took place on October 28th, and where the British troops forced the Americans to retreat but not without considerable losses to themselves. General Howe then waited for re-enforcements. A providential rain further delayed the British attack. Washington, under the cover of night, slipped away from his former lines that cross North Broadway moving northwards. (One can see today Washington's first lines in White Plains which are marked by a cannon and mound of his entrenchments and a bronze sign on a monument.) His army retreated unnoticed to Miller Hill, Mt. Misery and other hills of North Castle to what was going to become an impregnable position.

It was Howe and the British forces which retreated and left the field to Washington, who may be said to be the true victor of the Battle of White Plains.

NORTH AND EAST TOUR

THE JAMES GEDNEY - LYON HOUSE

James Gedney built this house and it was sold to John Lyon in 1762. Upon his death it became the property of his son, Walter S. Lyon, and in turn passed to his sons in 1820.

By 1833 Elizabeth Lyon had acquired the house and property and she left it to Abraham Lyon. He deeded it to John and Mary Bussing, who sold it in 1887 to Charles Anderson.

The next owner was Samuel McRoberts who owned it from 1922 to 1948 when it became part of his estate.

It is presently the home of Clifford James, Architect. In replacing the old inside wall, Mr. James found charred timbers and beams, probably scars from the British return march after the burning of Bedford in July 1779.

SANDS - SMITH HOUSE

This early saltbox was restored in 1951 by Mr. and Mrs. John N. Thorne, Jr., and the righthand (kitchen) wing was added at that time.

The house and farmland, once owned by the Sands family, was later the property of Henry Smith, and his widow continued to live there after the Civil War.

During the restoration of the house, the Thornes discovered that manure had been used as insulation between the beams and the inside and outside walls. With bitter cold winters and only fireplaces for heat, the manure helped to keep out the cold and wind.

Interestingly, after the Thornes removed the front porch (which had been a later addition) they found a large flat rock in their back yard area, which seemed ideal for the front step. When they had it carted to the front of the house and turned it over, to their pleasure they found an early footscraper attached to it. The front step had come back to its original position of the seventeen hundreds!

MIDDLE PATENT RURAL CEMETERY

The oldest portions of the Middle Patent Cemetery were on the farm of Samuel Banks, a pioneer settler of the Middle Patent. Here his body was laid to rest upon his death in 1743, and over the years, around Samuel's grave, were clustered the graves of his children and descendants. Due to the large Banks family marrying into the families of their neighbors, soon other relations began to bury in the Banks ground: Finch, Hobby and Sutherland. By 1780 the hill had become the recognized community burial place, and the Reynolds, Ferris, Bussing, Smith, Peck, Platt, Lounsbury, and Rundle families began to bury nearby.

Around 1840 the original hill was nearly filled and the owners of the adjoining farms sold plots, adjacent to the old cemetery, to the descendants of the original settlers. By 1875-1880 the Victorian section of the cemetery was laid out and developed. By the turn of the Century the large portion of the ceme-

tery was overgrown and neglected, and Shadrich R. Close, a local citizen, decided something must be done to both beautify and preserve the ancient burial ground. On November 5, 1905, a meeting was held at the Middle Patent Methodist Church, at which thirty-three people were present. It was voted to organize a cemetery association.

As a result of this meeting, on April 13, 1907, The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery Association was incorporated. In sixty-nine years the cemetery has been transformed by new roads, walls, plantings and a lake into what is not only a beautiful resting place serving the community needs today, but also a treasure house of local history pertaining to the pioneer citizens of yesterday.

Three former supervisors of the Town are buried here: Guy B. Hobby, Joseph S. Hobby and T. William Brundage, and probably a fourth, Nathan I. Green. Fifteen veterans of the Revolution, including Col. David Hobby, and soldiers of the Civil, Spanish American, two World Wars, Korean and Viet Nam wars are buried in the cemetery.

BENONY (BENONI) PLATT HOUSE

Presently the home of the Hon. Richard P. Limburg, former supervisor of North Castle, this two-story Colonial house dates to circa 1760. The front portion is the original part; the back wing and righthand wing were later additions.

Benony Platt was a Patriot leader, serving as Captain in the Second Regiment, Westchester County Militia, New York, under the command of Colonel Thomas Thomas. He owned the grist and saw mill located just off the present Banksville-Bedford Road, near Middle Patent Cemetery.

This is the house which was later owned by the Knapp family, and for those familiar with the fascinating story from the diary of Hannah Knapp (see "North Castle History" Spring, 1975 - a periodical publication of the North Castle Historical Society), this is the home where Hannah grew up.

THE WIDOW BANKS' HOUSE

The background of this house goes back to one of the earliest families in The Middle Patent -- the family of Samuel Banks who was buried in 1743. Samuel's two sons lived near each other, farther north than their father's home, which stood near Middle Patent Cemetery. John, the younger son, lived on the west side of the road leading to Bedford; and Samuel on the right side, in this house. Samuel, Jr. died in 1773 at age fifty-six; and his widow, Deborah, lived in the house during the Revolutionary War.

This early house began as a "half house." The north half was built first, with its very low ceiling downstairs, and later the other half was added, but with a higher ceiling. Thus, the upstairs ceilings have adjusted heights on the two different sides in order to make the roof line come out even. The two very early fireplaces were removed in the 1930's by the present owner, Mrs. Irma Schuster, when she and the late Mr. Schuster installed new heating.

This house remained in the Banks family during the Revolution and passed on to Ezra F. Banks, who died in 1880.

Note the beautiful stone wall, built with the help of oxen, noting particularly the very large stones near the bottom.

THE BANKS - GUION HOUSE

This house, with gambrel roof structure, was built by Jonathan Banks in the 1780's, and was willed to his son, Samuel Banks (there were several generations named Samuel Banks) and Samuel's wife, Charity Banks.

They sold it in 1804 to James Guion and wife, Martha, who in 1862 sold it to the Smith family. Elroy Smith, (the kind benefactor of The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery) lived there for many years.

In the 1920's it was sold and called "The French Hospital" and served as a nursing home. It passed through other hands (once owned by North Castle Councilman Steve Mudge) and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Pouder.

It is called the Banks-Guion house, for those two families owned it for over eighty years.

THE DANIEL B. FINCH HOUSE

This small house is located on what was once the main road from that area into Stanwich Parish. Today it is called St. Mary Road. The house nestles into the hillside and is thought to have been constructed originally as a three-quarter house, probably remaining that size for many years. Later additions to the front and a wing on the right greatly altered the appearance and size of the house.

During the mid-eighteen hundreds, it was the home of Daniel B. Finch, who inherited it from Jonathan Finch, Jr. He was deeded the land by his father and mother, Jonathan Finch, Sr. and his wife, Jerusha.

Old records and deeds indicate that there was a family burial ground located near an orchard in the vicinity.

Today this charming house is the property of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Parke.

HOBBY HILL FARM

One section of this house is believed to be pre-Revolutionary; three rooms on the ground level (the foundation is built into a slope) contain three very early fireplaces, one with a massive timber lintel, another has a brick oval bake oven. The house has a total of eight fireplaces.

Asa Hobby, who had lived on property to the east of this farm, acquired the house and lands about 1844 from Jehial Worden, who had been deeded the farm by his father, Stephen Worden. Stephen Worden had purchased the farm from Jonathan Finch, who owned great amounts of acreage in that area.

Proof that this was a working farm is recorded when Albert Hobby, son of Asa, died and the estate tax proceedings listed: "3 young cattle, 8 cows, 2 pair oxen, 2 horses, 4 wagons, 5 pigs, 50 chickens," miscellaneous farming implements, and "400 gallons of vinegar!"

The house was restored about 1940 by the late Major Fred N. Oliver. Extensive restorations were done by the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald R. Atkins, who continue to call it "Hobby Hill Farm."

THE CLARISSA LYON HOUSE

This farm, with its 100 acres, was part of a 160-acre farm which belonged to Daniel Smith. Smith deeded it in 1815 to his son Daniel L. Smith, and a few years later it passed to Benjamin Smith, Jr.

Later it was owned by Asa Lyon and was the home of his daughter, Miss Clarissa Lyon (1826-1921). Due to her long occupancy in the house and because some of the present older generation still remember her, it is called "The Clarissa Lyon House." She was related to both the Hobby and Palmer families of that neighborhood.

The original kitchen, with its large fireplace and bake oven, is located on the ground (basement) level. The great central chimney has two additional fireplaces on the main level and two others in the bed chambers on the upper floor.

An interesting appurtenance is the double-chamber rootcellar fashioned with a central rock roof.

Mr. and Mrs. James Todd, the present owners, who purchased the house and acreage in 1936, have done extensive renovations over the years, but the house still maintains its early charm.

DANIEL SMITH "LITTLE HOUSE"

This early house on Mianus River Road, is the type known as a "half house," and it was owned by Daniel Smith before 1800. On February 12, 1816 he deeded it to his son, Daniel L. Smith, including 150 acres of land, "bounded on the east by the Mahanas (Mianus) and on the west by the road."

Daniel L. Smith died in 1824, and Samuel Smith was his executor who deeded 100 acres "and appurtenances" to Benjamin Smith. This left about 59 acres in the original estate, and it must have been difficult to settle the estate, for many relatives became involved in various deeds in 1825.

By 1867 it was referred to on a map as the Daniel Smith Estate, apparently still unsettled.

For many years it was lived in by George Hall, who died in 1933. It is owned now by Mrs. Lucia Turner Faithful.

THE DANIEL BROWN HOUSE

This early house in East Middle Patent is pre-Revolutionary. It remained in the Brown family for generations. Daniel Brown served as a Private in the Revolution, and his family were Patriots.

The center of the house once had a Dutch door, now replaced by the central row of windows. That section is the very earliest, but the left-hand portion is also believed built by the time of the Revolution. No improvements or major changes took place until it was purchased in 1925 by Mr. Fred Pons. Mr. Pons put in central heating, lights, enclosed a porch and added a new kitchen wing as well as additional bedrooms.

The early part has two beehive ovens -- one in the cellar and one in the earliest "kitchen." Water came off the roof and was stored in a cistern as late as 1926.

When the shoemaking industry was a local industry (1840-1890) leather was

distributed from the house to neighbors who wished to stitch shoes in the evening glow of kerosene lamps -- done as an added source of income.

The original road (now Mianus River Road) came within ten feet of the front of the house until about 1932 when the road was changed to ease the very sharp curve.

The house is now owned by the Babcocks.

THE JAMES E. PALMER HOUSE

Located on Hickory Kingdom Road, near the intersections of East Middle Patent and St. Mary's Road, this house has been greatly altered. It was once the "Farm House" on a vast farm, and in recent years the fine early fireplace was uncovered during alterations.

In the eighteen hundreds it passed to James E. Palmer (who died in 1894) and his wife, Eliza Lyon (who died in 1914). The small building, which still stands near the farm house, served as a shoe shop when shoes were an important industry in North Castle from 1840-1890.

It is of some interest that President Harry S. Truman's daughter, Margaret and her husband, Clifton Daniels, once rented and lived in the house.

Today it is the home of Mr. Richard Prince.

THE WIDOW BRUSH HOUSE

This early Colonial house, which is located in Banksville, has a long and fascinating history. During the Revolutionary War it was the home of the Widow Brush and then passed into the Hobby family, with B.F. Hobby living there during the Civil War era. Rachel Hobby married Charles Brundage, and the house was in the Brundage family until 1924.

The building took on new life in 1925 when Mr. William Jackson acquired it, together with a neighboring home and large acreage, and formed the Westchester Women's Golf and Tennis Club, with Mrs. Manville as the first president. Tennis courts were constructed to the left of the house (where the parking area is located today), and a beautiful golf course was developed. It flourished until the 1929 financial "crash" and was followed by the Middle Patent Golf Club, with both men and women enjoying membership.

Later Mr. Jackson sold the fine old house to Antoine Gilly, and the famous French Restaurant "La Cremaillere ala Campagne" came to Banksville.

The house has had wings added, porches added and then enclosed. But its stately twin end chimneys continue to dominate this fine old building.

THE WINUS PALMER HOUSE

The early history of the house, built sometime around the Revolution, is lost. Our first known owner was Winus Palmer, who lived there in 1787. After his death it passed to his son Gideon, who resided there until his death in 1878. Next it passed to William Biddulph, the last person to farm the property. Several owners and real estate companies owned it before it was purchased by the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Gay.

This house was probably once a half house, and later a second part was erected exactly matching the first half. Mr. Gay has added the most western wing of the house.

ELIAS - FEEKS HOUSE

The Elias-Feeks house has an interesting family history. Somewhere around the close of the Revolutionary War, Christopher Elias, a deserter from the Hessian Army, came to North Castle and located on this spot. He built a small two-room house, and stayed. As he farmed and prospered, he purchased his land in small parcels. In 1815 he became a Naturalized Citizen. His daughter Ann married Daniel Feeks, and they lived and farmed their entire lives on the property. Their daughter Mary married Adam Shutts and they also spent their lives on the property. Their daughter Annie married John Bennett and, carrying on in the family tradition, they in turn spent their lives farming the property. Today, Mrs. Bennett's daughter, Mrs. Marjorie Dennison, lives in the family homestead. Over the years the house has been added to, and in 1963 remodeled by Mrs. Dennison.

The house is today one of the oldest in North Castle, and certainly takes first place of all the homes in North Castle in being in the continuous possession of one family.

FRONT COVER PICTURE:

CORNELL-BIRDSALL HOUSE

This house dates from 1780-1790 and the first recorded owner was Willett Cornell, who conveyed it to Joseph Birdsall. Joseph Birdsall lived and farmed there until his death, when the house passed to his son, Benjamin, a Quaker and prominent citizen, who farmed there until his death in the late 1880's. The property was later purchased by James E. Brundage, who sold the farm to Cornelius R. Agnew, by whom it was incorporated into a magnificent estate. The house, called North Gate by Agnew, was for many years the residence of Mr. Agnew's various estate superintendents, Harry Hunter, William C. Whipple, and finally Arthur E. Hendry. As many long-time residents recall an active acquaintance with Mr. Hendry, the house today is known familiarly as the Hendry House.

When the Agnew Estate was sold to IBM, the house was part of the transaction. Sometime later it was discovered that the house was in the right-of-way of relocated Route 22, and would be destroyed. To save the fine old structure IBM gave the house to the Town of North Castle and moved it to its present site behind Town Hall. After it was moved IBM completely renovated and decorated the house. Thus this lovely old house was saved for the community's benefit, and today houses the Town Recreation Department.

The house itself, like so many others of this vintage in North Castle, was a half house, added on to over the years. The earliest part is on the left; an addition seemingly made to it in the 1870's or 1880's is located in the center of the present building (note the different window heights), and the right addition was constructed in 1973 primarily for the use of the North Castle Adult Club.

Tradition says that near the original site of this house there was an Indian palisaded fort, or castle, thus giving our town the name of "North Castle."