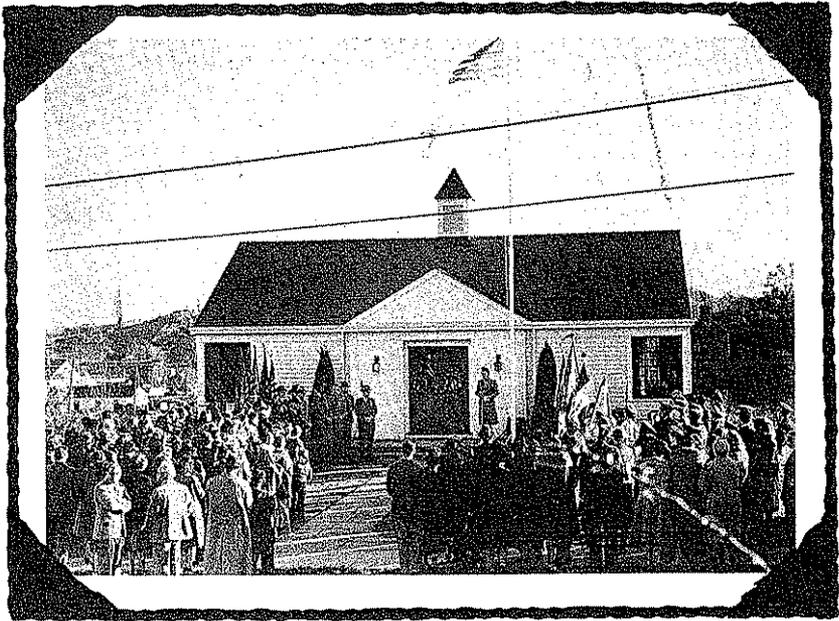


North

Castle

History



The NORTH CASTLE LIBRARY. At the Dedication of the original building in October 1941, the North Castle Free Library was hailed as a "haven of free thought in a totalitarian world."

THE NORTH CASTLE HILLS

PATHS THAT UPWARD LEAD

The North Castle Historical Society

Bedford Road, Armonk, New York 10504



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

This issue of North Castle History, like our previous issues, is a tribute to the many volunteers who have made The North Castle Historical Society possible. It is they who have written the articles you read, and who edit and put together the final copy. Volunteers have made all the past works of our Society possible. They have raised and contributed the money and devoted the many hours of hard work to insure that our heritage is recreated and preserved here in North Castle. Smith's Tavern, the Brundage Blacksmith Shop and the East Middle Patent School were all restored with the money and hard labor you have contributed. Our library begins to take shape thanks to our volunteers, and the annual Colonial Crafts Fair has come about because of our volunteers. The Society's complex is open every Wednesday and Saturday from 1:00 to 3:30 P.M., because our docents contribute their time, knowledge and enthusiasm. I want to take this opportunity again to thank all of our volunteers for their continuing efforts.

Yet, as I thank our past contributors and look forward to their continued involvement in bringing our heritage to North Castle, I must report that the Society will change. We still need and look forward to the efforts of our volunteers, but, as we grow, we find that we also need the assistance of a professional. This means that 1988 will be our last year as an exclusively volunteer organization. Next year, through a grant from the Town of North Castle, we will have funds to secure the expertise of a part-time professional. We hope that with such professional assistance we will be able to offer displays and exhibits at Smith's Tavern, the Brundage Blacksmith Shop and the East Middle Patent School which will be of even greater interest to you, our members and friends.

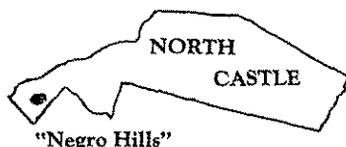
Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Susan R. Shimer in cursive script.

Susan R. Shimer

THE NORTH CASTLE HILLS

An Afro-American Community in the Mid-Nineteenth Century



By Edythe Quinn Caro

On the 1851 Sidney and Neff map of Westchester County, in the southeast corner of North Castle bordering Harrison and White Plains, there appears an area labelled "Negro Hills."¹ By the middle of the 1800's, the area had an Afro-American population sufficient in number to acquire the designation.

The Federal Census of 1850 identifies the Afro-American families living in close proximity to white families whose surnames appear on the map in the area adjacent to "Negro Hills." Ten Afro-American families, totalling 47 persons, are enumerated.² Their family names are Hatfield, Johnson, Seymour, Cornell, Butler and Barker, all surnames shared with white families in North Castle and surrounding communities, usually indicating a slave-owner relationship in the past, if not for these individuals, then for their ancestors. The 1867 and 1872 Beers maps identify the black landowners in the area of "Negro Hills" and subsequent census manuscripts offer additional information.³

My extensive research for my Master's thesis⁴ revealed that these families were members of a larger Afro-American community which I refer to as "The Hills," including families in North Castle, Harrison, and White Plains. The largest portion of the population resided along Stony Hill Road in the adjacent section of Harrison.⁵ Research also revealed that "The Hills" was the largest concentration of Afro-Americans in Westchester County through 1870. The settlement was a community with a church and school, and a kinship network.

Any discussion of this Afro-American community begins with questions about its origins, i.e., how did these blacks come to own this land and settle here. The standard explanation of the origins of the black community was the account included in the section on Harrison, in Scharf's 1886 *History of Westchester County, New York*. It stated:

*... When the Quakers of Purchase liberated their slaves, they settled them upon their rough lands in the northwestern portion of the town of Harrison, and thus the negro community, still existing northeast of the village of White Plains, was begun.*⁶

This statement was reprinted verbatim in Volume One of Alvah P. French's *History of Westchester County of New York*, published in 1925, and was usually quoted whenever the community was discussed. While the Minutes of the Purchase Meeting and the New York Yearly Meeting document that the Friends freed their slaves and made settlement with them for their prior service, the details are not known.⁷

The 1886 account is far too simple. It does not take into consideration the role of Methodist-Episcopals, especially in North Castle, who, under religious dictate, freed their slaves as well as other area residents who, under state laws of gradual emancipation or through social and economic pressure, manumitted their slaves. Many of the free blacks in "The Hills" bear surnames belonging to non-Quaker residents. I believe that the nucleus of free black settlers in "The Hills" attracted free blacks from other towns in Westchester and Long Island.

Although the Afro-American community of "The Hills" existed from the late 1700's through the 1930's, I have concentrated on the mid-1800's as the focus of my thesis and this article. Here I am narrowing my focus to only North Castle families and on those aspects of the records which reflect North Castle history.

Although the 1850 census enumerator⁸ assigned the occupation "laborer" to the ten heads of households in the North Castle section of "The Hills," my research indicated that these men performed agricultural tasks, more skilled and varied than the common designation "laborer" implies, as well as worked their own plots of land as farmers. The enumerator also listed property values for three of the heads of families:

"Value of Real Estate Owned"

Daniel Cornell	\$1000
Elisha Cornell	1000
Moses Hatfield	500

While not representative of prosperous economic status, these land values are equal to or greater than those listed for many white family heads. Ownership of property was one of the most important factors in the stability of "The Hills" community. It was also a factor in qualifying these free black men for voting. Beginning in 1821, New York State established qualifications for black voting rights, including a property qualification of an "unencumbered freehold of \$250 or more on which they had paid taxes." Despite repeated attempts at repeal, the qualification remained in effect until the 15th Amendment of the Federal Constitution voided it in 1870.⁹

Documents pertaining to school districting for "The Hills" from 1838 through 1847 offer an excellent illustration of the premise that this Afro-American settlement crossed town boundaries, and was composed of Afro-American populations from sections of the three adjoining towns of Harrison, North Castle, and White Plains. Federal census records from as early as 1800 show the cluster of Afro-Americans in the area, and a real estate indenture of 1837 described black property holders' boundaries in "a place commonly [called] the 'Hills'."¹⁰ However, none of these sources demonstrated the multi-town relationship as thoroughly as do these school documents. These school records also illustrate an early segregation practice rarely identified or acknowledged in New York State.

The handwritten School Report, dated January 1, 1839, concerned School District Number One which was formed partly out of North Castle and

partly out of the adjoining town of Harrison. This combined district resulted when children in the Quarry Heights section of North Castle lived too far from their regular district school, Number 8, to easily attend. Such problems were "alleviated by the school commissioners of North Castle meeting with the commissioners of the adjoining towns to set off one or two families or whole neighborhoods by agreement to the district in the adjoining town." The trustees for this combined district were Frederick Stephens of North Castle and Gilbert Shelly Sr. and Caleb P. Horton of Harrison.¹¹

The trustees reported that during the past year, ending December 31, 1838, there were 101 children over age five and under age sixteen residing in District One, 25 in North Castle and 76 in Harrison. The report listed the names of parents/guardians and the number of children residing with each. In North Castle, there were, I believe, three black parents/guardians listed, with the number of children residing with each, as follows: Isaac Cornell (1), Thomas Johnson (3), and Moses Hatfield (3), totaling seven children. In Harrison, nine black parents/guardians are listed with a total of 23 children. Among those listed are family names which will continue throughout the history of the settlement. However, only 30 children attended school during that time, 10 from North Castle and 20 from Harrison, and the document did not specify which children attended.¹²

In light of later segregated school districting, I find it is significant that at this stage, the blacks were **not** identified by race, although they were grouped together at the end of the lists. Whether this reflects the geographical or racial clustering is not clear.

Reports generated for the period of April 8 through August 8, 1839, and for the "quarter ending October 15, 1839," listed "teacher's wages due on Colored Peoples children." Among the 12 black parents assessed were at least four North Castle residents, identified below in caps:

Parent/Guardian	4/8 - 8/8 1839		Quarter end 10/15/1839	
	Days	Assess.	Days	Assess.
MOSES HATFIELD	108	\$3.24	34	\$1.02
Jeremy Mitchell	15	.45	47	1.14
Esop Gall	33	.99	24	.72
Wm. Jackson	150	4.50	92	2.76
HARRY ODELL	2	.06		
H. Halstead	12	.36		
LEWIS HATFIELD	8	.24		
Rich. Barker	26	.78	9	.27
Abrm. Griffin	22	.66	19	.57
Aaron Purdy	6	.18		
Charles Pine	15	.45	14	.42
STEPHEN AMOS	15	.45	39	1.17
	Total	\$12.36	Total	\$8.34

In these two reports "Colored People" are separated from the white parents/guardians, but they all attend the same school district, Number

One.¹³

On May 26, 1841, the Sixty-Fourth Session of the New York State Legislature amended the 1812 act relating to common schools. Paragraph 15 of Chapter 260 stated:

*A school for colored children may be established in any city or town of this state, with the approbation of the commissioners of common schools of such city or town, which shall be under the charge of the trustees of the district in which such school shall be kept; and in places where no school districts exist, or where from any cause it may be expedient, such school may be placed in charge of trustees to be appointed by the commissioners of common schools of the town or city, and if there be none, to be appointed by the superintendent.*¹⁴

Almost two years after its enactment, the local commissioners officially acted on this clause in the amendment. On March 4, 1843, a handwritten document reported the "formation of a new school district partly out of the towns of White Plains, Harrison and North Castle for Colored Children." The document described the boundaries which would constitute the colored school district and these conform to my configuration of "The Hills" settlement. The Commissioners of common schools for the three towns decided that it was "expedient to have Trustees distinct and apart from the trustees of the District where the school house is situated" and they appointed Joshua Horton of Harrison, Samuel U. Fisher of White Plains, and John Cox of North Castle, all white men, as trustees of the Colored School.¹⁵

The next extant document, the printed School Report for 1845, described the operation of the Colored School District Number 6, and was dated January 1, 1846, almost three years after its establishment. The district trustees reported that the school house for District Number 6 was situated in Harrison, and the district was formed out of Harrison, North Castle, and White Plains. school had been kept by a qualified teacher for ten months of the preceding year. The school district was obligated to report the number of children over five and under sixteen years of age who were eligible by age and residence to attend. In 1845, 40 black children were of school age. The report listing their parents/guardians included black families who would be prominent throughout the history of the community. The list for North Castle follows:

Residing in North Castle	Children
Moses Hatfield	1
Elisha Cornell	2
Thomas Butler	1
Harry Barker	3
Thomas Johnson	3
Alfred Seymour ¹⁶	4
Total	14

Thirty-three of the forty black children attended, twenty-one students from Harrison, nine from North Castle and all three of the White Plains' children. However, few attended for any appreciable amount of time.¹⁷

This low attendance¹⁸ should not be attributed to disinterest in education,

especially not at a time when education was seen by Northern blacks as a means to achieve advancement and eventual equality. The low attendance was more likely due to economic factors. As clearly explained by the *North Castle Historical Records* editors:

[T]hough the schools were common, they were not free; rates or tuition were assessed against the parents. The more time a child spent in school, the greater the tuition paid by the parent. Only by declaring themselves paupers could the parents exempt themselves from the payment of rates. School funds were generated by state aid, supplemented by local taxes in an amount not to exceed the state aid, and by the tuition collected. Not until 1849 did education become free. Thus, within [this] period . . . it is probable that some children were withheld from school for some portion of the year, due to the imposition of the rates.¹⁹

The report for the 1845 school year also listed the school books in use in the district as follows: "The New Testament, Olney's Geography, Webster's Spelling Book, Elementary Spelling Book, and other smaller books for beginners." These correspond to the books listed for School District No. 5, the school for white children.

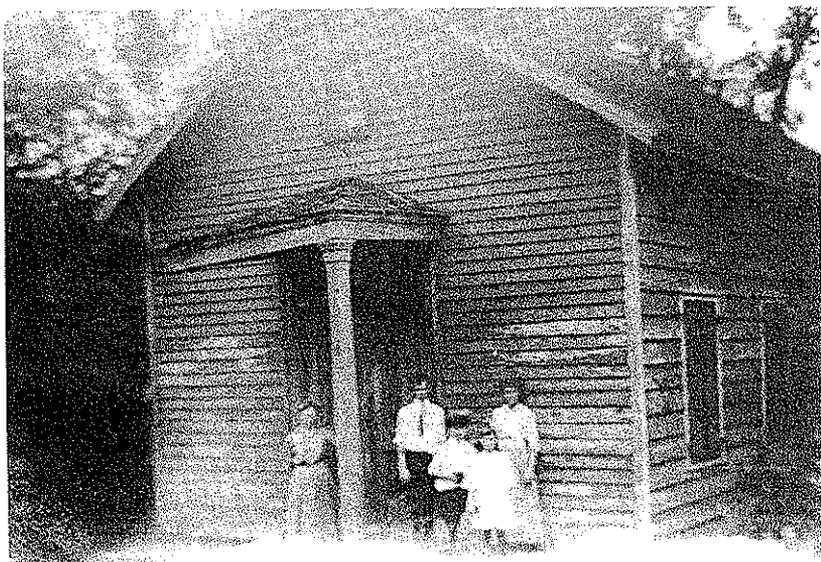
An Article of Agreement, dated March 17, 1854, between Philemon F. Shearwood of Harrison and Frederick Stephens of North Castle, establishing "the right to make road or way over a certain piece of land," included a reference to "the Colored School House lot." The description placed the colored school on or near the site of the "African Church," on Buckhout Road, at the west end of Stony Hill Road, in Harrison. This agrees with a reference in the *History of Westchester County*, published in 1886. Its history of Harrison mentioned:

a small frame building was erected in the northwestern part of the town of Harrison, just over the line of North Castle, which was used by the colored people as a schoolhouse and chapel.²⁰

It was not unusual for a black congregation to allow their house of worship to be used for a black public school. We do not know exactly how long Colored School District Six was in operation. Colored schools were officially abolished as a consequence of New York State's Civil Rights Act of 1873. According to that Act,²¹ no citizen, on account of race or color, could be "excluded from the full and equal enjoyment" of public facilities, "common carriers" and "common schools." Of course, de facto segregation maintained what the state law abolished.²²

During these early years, the common school may not have been the only source for education for blacks. In the Afro-American community, the church was the central institution, promoting education and abolition as well as religion. The "African Church" or "chapel" mentioned above probably offered Sunday school. Its history demonstrates the participation of blacks and whites from both Harrison and North Castle.

On May 1, 1844, five black men, all residents of the North Castle section of "The Hills," acting as trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Zions Church of Colored People of the Town of Harrison,²³ agreed to a mortgage with



Old colored church, Buckout Road, about 1918. Shown are some members of the Cerak family on a historic visit to the abandoned church. Listed on the back of the original photograph, which was in a collection of Paul Cerak are: "Mama, Edna, Albert, Paul, Aunt Minnie." The church, which was just over the North Castle line in Harrison, is no longer standing. NOTE: Paul and Albert Cerak, later local historians, lived in the area and became interested in the preservation of the history of "Negro Hills."

Charles A. Purdy, a white resident of Harrison. Land, measuring approximately one quarter of an acre, had been deeded to these trustees by Frederick and Deborah Stephens of North Castle, for use as a church or meeting house lot. The money borrowed in this mortgage may have been used to finance the building of a church on the property. The trustees were Aaron Halsted, Moses Hatfield, Alfred Seymour, Henry Seamore, and Daniel Cornell.²⁴

Although the exact circumstances for the deeding of this property and the organization of the church are not known, historical accounts attribute white Methodist-Episcopal church members in the area as assisting in the founding of the black church. In the 1886 *History of Westchester County*, the origin of "The Church in The Hills" was described as follows:

. . . The colored people originally attended the Methodist Episcopal Church on Broadway, in White Plains. As early as 1845, and possibly four or five years earlier, a fund was raised by subscription . . .

As previously discussed, the frame building, erected by this subscription, was reported to have served as schoolhouse and chapel. The *History* continued:

*Religious services were conducted there for a number of years by white people belonging to the White Plains Methodist Episcopal Church.*²⁵

I have not found any Record of Incorporation for the Methodist Episcopal Zions Church of Colored People of the Town of Harrison. However, during the 1830's, several white Methodist-Episcopal churches were incorporated in White Plains and North Castle. For example, the First Methodist-Episcopal Church of White Plains, founded in 1795, was incorporated in 1834. The Second Methodist-Episcopal Church in White Plains was incorporated in 1838, and the North Castle Methodist-Episcopal Zion Church²⁶ was incorporated in 1835.²⁷

In 1839, a Missionary Society of the Methodist-Episcopal Church was incorporated, with annual meetings to be held in New York City. The declared purpose of the Society was to "diffuse blessings of education, civilization and Christianity." Included among its founders were several men with Westchester surnames, e.g., Hall, Valentine, Gale, Burling, and Disbrow. In particular, Hall is a significant name in the history of Methodism in North Castle. James Hall, the leader of the North Castle church during its early years, was a friend and confidant of Bishop Francis Asbury and other Methodist preachers. His son Jonathan was also an active church member.²⁸

Black church history in New Rochelle offered a strikingly similar pattern to the process of church organization in "The Hills." On March 12, 1842, the "Colored People of the town of New Rochelle and the adjoining town" held a public meeting "at the house of Hannah and William Stephens," to appoint trustees for a society called "the Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, New Rochelle, Colored. According to black community history, around this time (1841), four black men, trustees of this Colored People's Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, purchased property for their church building. Here too, the church was reported to have also served "as the first home of the Negro School." The participation here again of a couple named Stephens is worth noting. This black church later became St. Catherine's A.M.E. Zion Church of New Rochelle.²⁹

"Methodism at North Castle" by Town Historian Richard N. Lander, which appeared in Vol. 14 of this journal, documented the importance of New Rochelle and North Castle as centers of Methodism and prominent sites of visits by Bishop Francis Asbury. This famous Methodist circuit-riding preacher and advocate of emancipation began visiting North Castle in 1787. Lander explained: "By the year 1791, the North Castle church was the focal point of all Methodist work in the area."³⁰

Although "The Church in The Hills" is traditionally referred to as the "Asbury Colored Peoples Church of Harrison, New York," the official documents which I have seen, do not use that title. However, the Asbury in that title, of course, referred to Bishop Francis Asbury. The use of the word "colored" in church titles in the 1830-40s referred to the attempt by blacks to remove their religious institutions from association with the often unpopular "back to Africa" colonization movement.³¹

"The Church in The Hills" seemed to be associated with the white Methodist-Episcopal Church, rather than being a member church of the

independent African Methodist-Episcopal (Zion) denomination. In Westchester County, most black M-E congregations (and AME and AMEZ churches) did not independently incorporate until mid century or after the Civil War, as will be noted later.

In the 1850's, "The Church in The Hills" was reported to have purchased additional land and the trustees at that time were John Francis, Henry Seamore, Richard O'Neil, and later William Henry Barker, prominent and long-time "Hills" residents.³²

On December 10, 1870, five black men from Harrison, set their "hands and seals" to a certificate incorporating the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of the Town of Harrison. These trustees³³ were residents of "The Hills" but the church they were organizing, according to the rites of the Methodist-Episcopal Church, was independent of the original "Church in the Hills."³⁴

The 1886 *History of Westchester County* included the following report:

A division occurred among the colored people, however, and a number of them, under the leadership of Richard O'Neil, withdrew, and, after worshipping for four or five years in private houses, erected the present church, on Westchester Avenue. The edifice was dedicated August 29, 1874 . . .

The original congregation continues to hold meetings in the church, in the northwestern corner of Harrison. The membership is small.³⁵

Although several of the trustees are listed in the 1870 and 1880 census manuscripts as living in "The Hills," they later moved, along with others, to a row of houses on Westchester Avenue on the Harrison/White Plains border. St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church, the "colored church" on Westchester Avenue, is designated on an 1881 map of White Plains as an "A.M.E. Ch[urch]." As such it would bear out the county history's text.³⁶

A variety of factors may have influenced the initial division: personality conflicts and tension in the "Hills" community, the pending moves out of "The Hills," especially to Westchester Avenue, a push towards independence from local white leadership in the Methodist-Episcopal Church, and increased missionary activity within the A.M.E. and A.M.E.Z. conferences to organize new churches. In the early 1850s and again in the post Civil War years, a number of A.M.E. and A.M.E.Z. congregations were organized in Westchester. After years of assistance from the Methodist-Episcopal Churches in White Plains and North Castle, the blacks were probably anxious for their own organization with religious and secular autonomy, self-government and full self-expression.

"The Church in The Hills" was demolished sometime before 1930 but the sizeable foundation remains; the deed to the property and its adjacent cemetery are held by Mount Hope A.M.E. Zion Church of White Plains. Mount Hope A.M.E. Zion Church of White Plains. Mount Hope A.M.E. Zion Church on Lake Street is the direct descendant of "The Church in The Hills," rather than the Westchester Avenue Church. Throughout its history up to the present day, Mount Hope's membership reflects its origins. Many of the members' surnames repeat family names from "The Hills."³⁷

FOOTNOTES:

1. Sidney and Neff, 1851 Map of Westchester County, reprinted in Richard N. Lander and Barbara S. Massi, eds., North Castle Historical Records, Vol. 2 (Armonk, N.Y.: Town of North Castle: 1986), p. 286
2. Additional Afro-American families are located elsewhere in North Castle and one such family headed by Pompey Banks is discussed in the addendum.
3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, New York, Westchester County, North Castle (hereafter cited as U.S. Census, 1850). The transcript of the 1850 Federal Census for North Castle is also reprinted in Lander and Massi, Vol. 2, pp. 287-348. F. W. Beers & Co., Atlas of Westchester County, "Town of North Castle," 1867, 1872.
4. Edythe Quinn Caro, "The Hills in The Mid-Nineteenth Century: The History of a Rural Afro-American Community in Westchester County, New York" (The Bronx, N.Y.: Lehman College, City University of New York, 1988) Master's thesis (hereafter cited as Caro, "The Hills"). Westchester Tricentennial Historic Markers Committee, A Guide to Westchester County Tricentennial Historic Sites, (White Plains, N.Y.: Westchester Department of Parks, Recreation & Conservation, 1983) no pagination.
5. In 1983, "Stony Hill" was designated as one of sixty Westchester County Tricentennial Historic Sites.
6. J. Thomas Scharf, ed., History of Westchester County, New York (Philadelphia: L.E. Preston & Co., 1886), Vol. II, p. 717.
7. Alvah P. French, ed. History of Westchester County of New York (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1925), Vol. I, p. 42. Society of Friends, "Minutes of the Purchase Quarterly Meetings," (1746-1777) and "Minutes of the Purchase Monthly Meetings," (1777-1812) (Purchase [Harrison], N.Y.; located in the archives of the Society of Friends Yearly Meeting, Haviland Reading Room, New York City). John H. Light, "The Purchase Quakers and The Black Settlement of Stony Hill (Purchase [Harrison], N.Y.: State University of New York, College at Purchase, 1986) unpublished senior thesis.
8. U.S. Census, 1850, #62, #68, #369. Caro, "The Hills," especially the chapter, The Population of The Hills in 1860.
9. Carl Nordstrom, "The New York Slave Code, Afro-Americans in New York Life and History (Jan. 1980) Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 20-21.
10. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Second Census of the United States, 1800, New York Westchester County, North Castle. New York, Westchester County, Records of Deeds, "Thomas H. Burling & Wife to Jeremiah Mitchell," 1 March 1837: Liber of Deeds, No. 109, p. 62.
11. "School Report, 1839, District Number One" (Harrison and North Castle, N.Y.), in the private possession of Richard Lander, Town Historian, North Castle, N.Y. Lander and Massi, Vol. 2, p. 47.
12. "School Report, 1839."
13. School Record Book for District One, in the private collection of Paul Clark, Harrison, N.Y., pp. 6, 8, 9, 10.
14. New York, Statutes (1841), "Common School Amendment," Chap. 260:15.
15. "Commissioners of Common Schools Report: Formation of a New School District Partly Out of the Towns of White Plains, Harrison and North Castle for Colored Children," 4 March 1843, in the private possession of Richard Lander, Town Historian, North Castle, N.Y.
16. Seymour was also spelled Seymore and Seamore. Further on in text, I have chosen to consistently use the Seymore spelling, unless an exact quote includes a different spelling.
17. "School Report, 1846, District Number Six" (Harrison, North Castle, and White Plains, N.Y.), in the private possession of Richard Lander, Town Historian, North Castle, N.Y.
18. For example, 25 children attended less than two months; three attended more than two but less than four months, two attended more than four but less than six months, two attended more than six but less than eight months, and only one student attended more than eight but less than ten months.

19. "School Report, 1846." Lander and Massi, p. 24.
20. New York, Westchester County, Records of Deeds, "Article of Agreement [between] Philemon F. Shearwood and Frederick Stephens", 17 March 1845, Liber of Deeds, No. 263, p. 165. Scharf, Vol. II, p. 716.
21. The Civil Rights Act of 1873 had been proposed by William H. Johnson, president of New York State's black convention, who vigorously campaigned for the Republican Party and black equality. He had gained able assistance from Republican Assemblyman, James Husted of Westchester County, who introduced the bill.
22. Carleton Mabee, Black Education in New York State, From Colonial to Modern Times (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1979), pp. 199-202.
23. Hereafter this church is cited as "The Church in The Hills."
24. New York, Westchester County, Record of Mortgages, "Indenture: Trustees of Methodist Episcopal Zion's Church to Charles A. Purdy," 5 December 1844, Liber of Mortgages, No. 88, pp. 183-185.
25. Scharf, Vol. II, p. 712.
26. The Methodist Society (Church) was organized in North Castle which then included New Castle) in 1787.
27. New York, Westchester County, Record of Religious Societies (White Plains, N.Y.: Westchester County Archives), Vol. B pp. 23-26, 36-41, 53-55 (A-0086(2)S).
28. New York, Statutes (1839), "Act Incorporating Missionary Society of Methodist-Episcopal Church," Chap. 136, p. 113. Richard Lander, "Methodism at North Castle," North Castle History (1987) Vol. 14, pp. 7-14.
29. Brenda and Ronald Smothers, 300 Years: Blacks and New Rochelle: Glimpses of History (New Rochelle, N.Y.: New Rochelle Council on the Arts, 1983), p. 9.
30. Lander, pp. 11-12.
31. Mildred Mitchell and Mae Malone, Mt. Hope A.M.E. Zion Church: History and Memoriam (White Plains, N.Y., n.d., circa late 1970s) no pagination (hereafter cited as Mt. Hope. Jacqueline L. Holland, The History of St. Charles African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: A Manifestation of the Black Church in America (Sparkill, N.Y.: 1983), p. 7.
32. Mt. Hope.
33. The trustees were Richard O'Neil, James Johnson, William Thompson, George Griffiths, and Thomas L. Brown. Richard O'Neil is reported to have donated land for the church.
34. Record of Religious Societies, "Certificate of Incorporation of the Colored Methodist-Episcopal Church of the Town of Harrison," 9 October 1870, Vol. B., p. 336. Mount Hope.
35. Scharf, Vol. II, p. 716.
36. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, and Tenth Census of the United States, 1880 New York, Westchester County, Harrison (hereafter cited as U.S. Census, 1870 and U.S. Census, 1880). Map: "Village of White Plains," 1881, 97 (White Plains, N.Y.: Westchester County Archives, A-0055-27-0).
37. Mount Hope. Mrs. Earle of Mount Hope to Edythe Quinn Caro, October 1987.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Edythe Quinn Caro was the municipal historian for the town/village of Harrison from 1982-1985. She received her Master's Degree in American History from Herbert H. Lehman College (The Bronx) of the City University of New York.

Edythe has moved to Knoxville, Tenn., where she has accepted a teaching assistantship at the University of Tennessee/Knoxville, and is working on her Ph.D.



*Books are keys to wisdom's treasure;
Books are paths that upward lead;
Books are gates to lands of pleasure;
Books are friends. Come, let us read!*

1988 is the 50th Anniversary of the North Castle Public Library (formerly the North Castle Free Library). The following article, by one of its founders, is from a booklet printed in 1963 to commemorate the library's 25th Anniversary.

PATHS THAT UPWARD LEAD

By Esther G. Hall

The year 1963 is a double milestone in the history of the North Castle Public Library. It is the twenty-fifth anniversary of a community-directed enterprise. It is also the beginning of a new era of expansion, spear-headed by the erection of a new wing, an addition so much larger than the original building that it will indeed be a case of the tail wagging the dog.

To appreciate the history of the library one must picture the hamlet of Armonk as it was in 1938 when a station wagon was a curiosity and commuters were "hill-toppers," so called because the handful of them were mainly estate owners whose houses traditionally were on elevations. Armonk, which is still an amorphous, unincorporated community, was then, as now, the seat of government of the Town of North Castle and contained about a third of the township's population of just over 3,000. (Present official estimate: 7,200 of which Armonk has 4,600.)

Town headquarters were behind the present auction gallery on Maple Avenue¹ and noisy public hearings packed the tiny courtroom at the rear, which more recently has been a cabinet shop. The police (four) had their station in a booth jammed against the present Armonk Market. The opposite (west) side of the block was vacant except for the drugstore, the Whippoorwill corner building and a long, ramshackle bar which looked as if it would topple in a heavy wind.

Landers' general merchandise store on the northeast corner of Main and Maple was the social center where on winter afternoons old-timers, in high-topped boots, gathered to gossip around the pot-bellied stove. Whippoorwill was the only school. It had a meager library collection, considered by many residents to be a "silly frill" and any attempt to push through an item for books at the annual school budget meeting brought heated arguments.

However, it was this very lack of reading material for children that germinated the idea of a town library. Miss Julia Bennett, a real estate agent, saw the need through the eyes of an invalid North Castle child who longed for books. In 1936 she wrote to the American Library Association and to the

state library extension division for information on starting a library.

At Whippoorwill School two teachers pondered possibilities of establishing a library, with the needs of children especially in mind. Emily Stephens Golden was the home economics teacher. Lucille Ainsworth Kittredge taught fourth grade and ran the school library. They visited neighboring public libraries and discussed the matter with Mrs. Warren J. Hall, juvenile author and mother of four, who was enthusiastic.

Learning of their mutual interest, Miss Bennett and the teachers got together and invited five others to meet with them on February 20, 1938. Thus was born the first Executive Committee, the volunteer group which would fluctuate in size during the ensuing years but whose primary business would always be the daily operation of the institution.

Two women associated with the Chappaqua Library were invited to that first meeting, at the conclusion of which a dream had been launched into reality. Each of the following founders assumed a major job: Mrs. Hall, committee chairman, head of book buying and publicity; Mrs. Golden, head librarian; Mrs. Kittredge, assistant librarian in charge of accessioning books; Miss Bennett, finance chairman and head of a drive for donated books; Mrs. Carolyn Greenacre (an ex-school teacher from Colorado and mother of Mrs. Hall), maintenance and social events; William F. MacDonald Jr. (White Plains banker and father of three), treasurer; Harold C. Crittenden, (Whippoorwill principal and father of three), secretary; Mrs. John Crowley (Armonk teacher), in charge of repairing donated books.

The group drew up a list of prominent North Castle men to invite to become trustees of a free library association. The Board of Trustees would take charge of incorporation proceedings and would help raise funds and act as advisors. Happily, all the men accepted and on March 6, 1938, met with the Executive Committee. Everyone was enthusiastic and agreed that speed was of the essence. Incorporation work would be undertaken immediately by Carroll M. Snyder and attorney James D. Hopkins, to be completed in time for the association's organization meeting set for April 6th, just one month away.

A membership drive would be launched within a week. Anyone contributing \$1.00 or more would be a member and entitled to vote on April 6th. C. R. Agnew Jr. agreed to handle special gifts and Mrs. Kittredge a house-to-house canvass with Miss Bennett acting as general drive chairman. Warren J. Hall, who then published a weekly in Armonk, the *North Castle Sun*, offered to push the library campaign in the paper and furnish free publicity fliers for boxholders. A large thermometer would be erected on the Methodist Church corner to record the campaign's progress. Setting a budget goal presented problems since the library had no home and estimating future rent was difficult, to say the least! However, a goal of \$750 was bravely decided upon.

One month later on April 6th the North Castle Free Library Association was formally organized at a meeting at Whippoorwill School. Following are the first trustees elected and their present status: Courtney C. Brown, Dean

of Graduate School of Business Administration, Columbia University; Paul C. Lehr, retired-former clerk of the Westchester County Surrogate's Court; Carroll M. Snyder, deceased — former industrial engineer and a Supervisor of North Castle; James D. Hopkins, justice of Appellate Division; Luke L. Benz, investment counselor; R. Eugene Curry, institutional manager and New York University adjunct professor; Warren J. Hall, journalist, *New York Daily News*; William F. MacDonald Jr., vice president County Trust Company; T. Darrington Semple, retired executive; Dr. Rufus Cole, retired researcher of Rockefeller Institute; Walter S. Gifford, retired chairman of the board of A.T.&T.; Harold C. Crittenden, retired Armonk School principal; C. R. Agnew, Jr., public relations in outdoor recreation; Richard P. Limburg, investment banker. The trustees in turn chose Mr. Brown as their president.

The newly formed association heard encouraging reports. The drive had already netted \$708.18. Equally important, the library would soon have a home. Contractor Clarence Abrams had offered to put up a building annexed to the then Women's Republican Club headquarters on Maple Avenue and to rent space to the library for \$18.00 a month. The space would include a reading room 16-by-20 feet, a lavatory and small storage closet. There would be shelf space for 3,000 volumes. The building would be completed by mid-summer. Mr. Crittenden offered whole-hearted school cooperation, including temporary space at Whippoorwill where donated and purchased books could be stored and sorted until the library was completed.

Progress was rapid that spring. The drive brought in \$1500. Everyone involved helped with two or three jobs. Volunteers enrolled for different committees. Books piled up at the school, hundreds donated, and boxes of new books choked the post office. Aline Bernstein, noted New York stage designer, worked out an unusual decorating scheme for the room, shades of blue for walls and shelves, maroon accessories. Draperies were hemmed. Unfinished new tables were stained and waxed by the maintenance committee and Mr. MacDonald. School children refinished a donated desk. Finally, with 1600 books on its shelves, the library opened July 26th to serve the public five days a week at a total of 17½ hours weekly. During the next two months, 300 borrowers were enrolled. In August Mrs. Greenacre began the now traditional summer program, telling stories to 20 children each week. For its first Book Week observance, the Executive Committee arranged to have juvenile authors speak at the school assembly and every class visited the town library to see new children's books. Eighty visitors jammed the small room for a Book Week tea. January of '39 found 72 volunteers working in eight departments. Special noon openings for school children went into effect. And volunteer librarians, Mrs. Hamilton Hadley and Mrs. F. H. N. Hawkins arranged the library's first exhibit — costumes and art objects related to books about foreign countries. The exhibit was staged in an adjacent room which by then the library had rented for book storage.

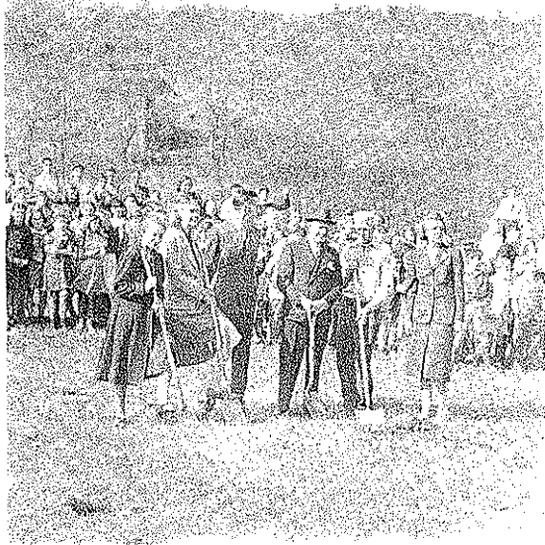
In the spring of 1940 Mrs. John A. Hill, a librarian and member of the book purchasing committee, started a Book Review Group which met monthly at members homes. That same spring, in the finance drive, two house-to-house canvassers, Mrs. James Stilson and Mrs. Harold C. Crittenden, were soliciting dollar memberships one Saturday afternoon. Driving in a gate on route 22, they found themselves in the midst of cars. An outdoor cocktail party was in progress. They contemplated flight. Then, reluctant to return another time, they sought out the host who, glass in hand, greeted them genially. He heard their brief story, then summoned his secretary, who was hovering nearby, and told her to fetch checkbook and pen. The secretary suggested that he mail the library a check but he insisted upon giving it to his two hard-working visitors. Hastily they thanked him and departed. Back on the highway they glanced at the check. Five hundred dollars! But could it be good? It was. And the elated library family decided not to put the money in the budget but to lay it aside for the day—if and when—a building fund might be started.

That vague day was not far off. Trustee president Brown, concerned by the library's expanding needs, approached fellow-trustee, Richard Cohen, who owned considerable village property. In March, 1941, it was announced that Mr. Cohen had given the library a building lot, 75-by-100 feet ideally opposite the school, in memory of his father, Sidney S. Cohen. The trustees decided that a building fund campaign should be launched at once to raise \$5,000. Mrs. Hall headed the drive with Mr. Brown handling the all-important special gifts and Mrs. Leonard Smith (then assistant head librarian) in charge of the canvass. A startling challenge was given the townspeople when an anonymous donor — revealed at the end of the drive to be Mr. Gifford — announced that he would match all contributions up to \$3,000.

Laurence M. Loeb, White Plains architect, and his associate, Henry H. Moger Jr. of Armonk, drew up the plans and specifications of an attractive, modernized colonial structure, without charge. Clarence Abrams contracted to put up the building at cost and by eliminating certain items the cost was to be kept at \$6,200. The library, 40-by-26 feet, contained on the main floor a vestibule and large reading room with one wing for children and the other for adults, and in the basement a workroom and stacks, unfinished kitchen, hall, furnace room and social room designed for community meetings.

On April 28, 1941, ground was broken at a ceremony attended by library friends and all Whippoorwill classes. In May, Dr. Charles V. Paterno, owner of Windmill Manor on Route 22, gave the library \$1,500. He specified that this gift be spent: first, to pay for items left out of the contract, such as completing the kitchen; second, to purchase furniture harmonious with the architectural design. By this time the total building fund donations, including the Paterno and Gifford gifts, totaled over \$9,000.

The same excitement that had preceded the library's first housewarming three years before now speeded preparations for the fall opening of its own building. But where before there had been only a few to carry the load, now



The groundbreaking ceremonies in the spring of 1941. From left to right are: Mrs. Emily Stephens Golden, Mrs. Warren J. Hall, the author, Henry Moger, Dean Courtney Brown, Clarence Abrams and Mrs. Leonard Smith. The picture is looking south toward the Hussar property. The 19th century barn on the right belonged to Griffen Gale; the 19th century barn on the left was part of Brookside Farm. The Armonk United Methodist Church is also in the background, to the left of the picture.

there were 72 volunteers. Master-minding of the huge task of transporting 5,000 volumes without disturbing their alphabetical order was carried out by the new head librarian, Mrs. Leonard Smith. School benches turned upside down became troughs and whole shelves of books were transported by truck and carried into their new home. Mrs. Bernstein supervised the selection of furnishings. The Book Review Group made and hung draperies. A tempting display of new titles selected by Mrs. Hawkins, head of adult book buying, was ready.

On the afternoon of October 11th, a parade progressed from the rented quarters to the present building. At the end of the line came the Armonk Independent Fire Department engine bearing the last load of books and the outdoor sign, in the form of an open book, which was to be re-hung on its new, waiting post. After speeches on the steps, the school band played as the flag was raised. Then the building was formally opened for inspection by the 400 residents present.

The opening of these doors widened the scope of library activities. In

March, 1942 a Hobby Show run by Mrs. Hadley, assisted by Mrs. Luke L. Benz and Mrs. R. Eugene Curry attracted 400 viewers. Eighty-eight North Castle residents entered 108 exhibits. That spring Mr. Cohen deeded the institution an additional 25-by-100 foot piece of land on the west side of its property line.

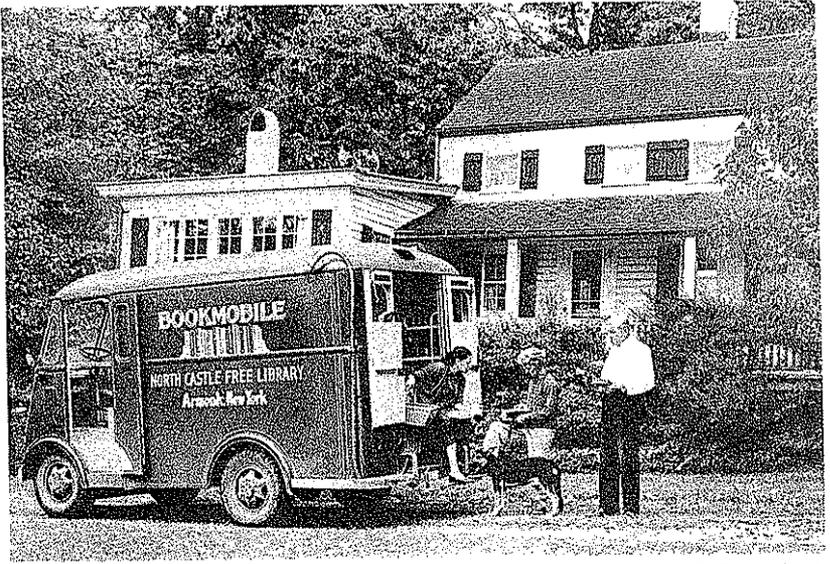
In June Dr. Paterno announced that he was giving the library \$5,000 worth of landscaping and immediately the transformation from bleak surroundings to woodland loveliness began. All day for days huge trucks churned up Whippoorwill Road from Windmill Manor. They deposited 220 cubic yards of top soil, 180 yards of fill, 300 yards of stone, 16 trees with trunks as thick as 15 inches, 300 shrubs and plants and 2,000 square feet of sod. To the west, a high retaining wall was built. In front, stone walls and pillars appeared. Flagstones marched up to the door. A thick hedge of Canadian hemlocks embraced the grounds. In all, Paterno's gardeners spent 1,200 man hours in addition to the work of his masons, foremen, truck drivers and steam shovel operators.

Indoors, book business burgeoned. The 1,000th borrower was enrolled. In January, 1943 Mrs. Hill became the second Executive Committee chairman. Her first project was to arrange a surprise dinner held in the social room in honor of Mrs. Hall, at which occasion the room was dedicated to Esther Greenacre Hall. Gradually World War II began to affect Armonk and serving the public became a desperate game for the Executive Committee. Gas rationing decreased borrowing and eliminated Book Review Group meetings. Fuel rationing hit the library. The thermostat couldn't be raised above 55 degrees. Librarians clumped about the reading room in snow boots and ski outfits and sorted cards with numb fingers. For two weeks there was no oil at all. Trustees Curry, Cohen and Dr. Alvin Coburn enlisted in the armed forces.

Yet despite oil problems, with careful regulation the library was able in the winter of 1944 to initiate a program of monthly book reviews for every class in Whippoorwill. Head librarian Mrs. Hadley supervised the year-round children's program. During the summers, small children attended story hours but juniors gathered at the library to make Christmas cards for soldiers and to stuff fracture pillows. Spring of 1944 began another custom — the presentation of a book to the eighth grade graduate who had made the most progress in English.

In November of 1944 Mr. Gifford gave the library \$5,000 in memory of his son, Lt. Walter Sherman Gifford, who had been killed in a plane crash in the Pacific the previous July 31st. He requested that \$500 of that amount be set aside as a memorial fund, the income to be used to buy books in the fields of his son's special interests — literature, history, and the sports of mountain climbing and skiing. The remaining \$4,500 was to be used to expand library service.

It was decided that a bookmobile could best expand services throughout the entire township. All yearly operating expenses were to come from the Gifford fund with the exception of additional book purchases which the



In 1946, the Bookmobile came into being and served the readers of North Castle for 14 years.

Pictured in the Library are: Esther G. Hall, Emily Hadley, Julia Bennett, Margaretta Datlowe, Bertha B. Hopkins.



main library would pay for. A slightly used 1½-ton panel truck was purchased from A.T&T. The Executive Committee drew up designs for its interior which would provide shelving for 650 books and two tiny check-out tables. Trustees Curry and Snyder handled conversion problems. Operation of the truck had to wait, first for the conclusion of the war and, secondly, until the United Nations Organization decided whether or not it would take over Fairfield County, Conn. and 42 square miles of North Castle for its world headquarters. [Another story for another time.]

In the meantime, Mrs. Hall, Miss Bennett and Mrs. Hill organized the bookmobile department. Hundreds of books donated to the separate bookmobile collection were accessioned. Women drivers and truck librarians were recruited. Routes were mapped. In November, 1946, the big truck cautiously made its first trip to Banksville and the Middle Patent School. By the end of six months, five routes were being served by 12 volunteers. The musical horn's gay "Annie Rooney" chime brought children, mothers and puppies scurrying from rural homes. Routes increased to seven when two days were required to handle all the pupils at the North White Plains School.

Eventually town highway laborers, who had prophesied that the truck was top-heavy and that those "fool women" would soon tip it over, became reconciled to the library's idiosyncrasy and gaily saluted drivers. Inside the truck the women debonairly took their punishment. A restraining bar left off a shelf by mistake meant a cascade of books onto the head of the helpers, swaying in the aisle on the ottoman. A box of alphabetized cards unanchored on a table could shower the interior in an instant and cause hours of critical snarls. Among the most stalwart drivers who survived years of service were: Mrs. Edwin C. Lindstrom, Mrs. Vincent J. Cunningham, Mrs. C. P. G. Fuller, Mrs. Joseph T. Willits, Mrs. James Robison, Mrs. John Macchia, Mrs. Benz, Mrs. Sanford Agnew, Mrs. John Wiggins, Mrs. Clarence Kolstedt, Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Robert A. Lord. The last five headed the department at various times.

The women looked forward to serving the people on their pet routes. School children were delightfully appreciative. A mother greeted the traveling librarians with the proud announcement that her two-year-old, upon hearing the chimes, had said his first sentence: "Book-bill come today." At one stop, two neighbors involved in a feud always hesitated behind living room curtains when the truck arrived. One waited until the other had completed her visit to the bookmobile. Inadvertently one day they arrived simultaneously. The amused driver drew them into a discussion of books and the two departed considerably reconciled.

In the main library, serious efforts were being made to get a perspective on its functions. Trustee president, Dr. Joseph T. Willits, made an exhaustive study on the local library's relation to the community and a comparison with other libraries of comparable size. In January 1947, Mrs. Hill completed four years as Executive Committee chairman and Miss Bennett took the post for one term. Ever since the library began, Miss Bennett had kept complete scrapbooks of all publicity and other pertinent information—a task which

she kept up for 19 years when she turned it over to another volunteer. Mrs. Walter L. Weil, wife of a library trustee, bound the 1938-1948 volumes for permanent preservation and later Miss Bennett herself bound volumes of 1948-1955.

During the four-year administration of Mrs. Samuel Datlowe as Executive Committee chairman, the library began its now traditional program of promoting the talents of local people. In 1948 she was assisted by Ralph Jaeger and Frank Foster in staging the first showing of paintings by North Castle residents. There were no empty walls on which to hang pictures, so the committee laboriously covered all the shelves with huge cloths. These had to be hung late Friday evening after library hours and removed immediately after the show closed. However, the 150 viewers found the effect dramatic. And so did the *Wilson Bulletin* which printed an account of the show written by the chairman, accompanied by a photograph. By 1949 when the second art show was held, the library was equipped with large folding display screens. That year the first annual exhibit of pictures taken by amateur local photographers proved highly popular.

Over the years the library's fame as a unique institution run by volunteers and supported by contributions spread far beyond the township. On April 21, 1951, the *New York Times* ran an illustrated feature article about the library. And in its issue of January, 1952, *Nation's Business* devoted a lengthy piece to the institution.

Gradually the township was changing from a rural atmosphere to one of semi-suburbia. A handsome Town Hall had been erected. Wampus School had been built. New borrowers poured in, requesting the latest and best titles. Hours of home work and many meetings were required of the adult book buying committee. Among those serving for long periods on the committee were: Mrs. Hawkins, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. William H. Frank, Mrs. Datlowe, Mrs. Robert Burbank, Mrs. James D. Hopkins, Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Floyd Hardy, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Curry, Mrs. Golden and Mrs. Alfred Meyer. It was the custom for all members of book-buying committees and for all Executive Committee chairmen to serve as librarians so that they might know the reading tastes of the community.

Important back-of-the-scenes activities continuously carried on were those of the workroom committees which repaired old books and prepared new ones for the shelves. Mrs. Crowley was in charge for a long period and Mrs. James Stilson for five years. Other faithful workers included: Mrs. Michael Barbe, Mrs. Gordon Thomas, Mrs. William H. Frank, Mrs. Roelof Ermshaus, Mrs. Greenacre, Mrs. Datlowe, Mrs. Arthur Gray, Mrs. Hans Peter Luhn, Mrs. Robison, Mrs. Alfred Meyer. Mrs. Hopkins, who had handled the children's program for two years, became head librarian in 1949 and found it necessary to schedule 20 librarians. By 1952 clerical work alone was so heavy that the trustees hired the first part-time secretary.

While Executive Committee chairman (1952-1955), Mrs. Burbank, who was also interested in politics, foresaw the day when the library would have to have a professional director and felt that the township would be willing to

give tax-support for his services. To head librarian Mrs. Meyer and her successor, Mrs. Frank, the lack of adequate shelf space was a growing problem. Stacks began to project into the main reading room. More shelves were built downstairs. Storage stacks overflowed with bookmobile volumes. The truck itself was housed a mile away on the Agnew estate and at the beginning and end of each trip had to be driven to the library, parked on Whippoorwill Road and loaded with books lugged from the basement.

Following the death of trustee Carroll M. Snyder in June, 1951, large donations were given in his memory to the library. These formed the basis of a fund which grew to \$4,500 and was used to erect the first library wing to house the bookmobile and its collection of 3,000 titles. The Carroll M. Snyder Memorial Wing was dedicated at an Open House November 15, 1953.

Cooperation with the school district reached a new high the same year with the opening of a branch library on April 13th at Wampus School. The school district equipped a basement room and furnished money for books. Mrs. James Lulejian organized the project and supervised the town library volunteers who prepared the books and circulated them. She was succeeded by Executive Committee member, Mrs. D. John Heyman, assisted by Mrs. Guy Papale. Today Wampus library is entirely a school project. In 1953 Mrs. Lulejian became head of the North Castle Free Library's children's department.

In the main library it was becoming increasingly difficult to serve the hundreds of juvenile borrowers. Small children had no place to browse. Young people had no place to do reference work. In 1954, Edward F. O'Brien Jr., president of the North Castle Players, suggested that the library sponsor "Blithe Spirit." The production netted the library over \$1,000, which became the basis of a fund to build a children's room above the bookmobile quarters. Mrs. David M. Heyman contributed \$2,500. Other large donations helped pay for the attractive room and its furnishings at a cost of approximately \$8,000.

Architect Robert Burbank designed the children's wing without charge, as he had the bookmobile room. Mr. Hall was chairman of the building committee, as he had been for the main structure and first addition. Mrs. Robison, who had been chosen Executive Committee chairman in January, 1955, assisted by Mrs. Frank, spent many hours deciding on color schemes and furnishings. Local women hemmed yards of draperies for the gay, sun-filled room. Mrs. Theon Hoyt, who succeeded Mrs. Lulejian in May as Children's Librarian, happily arranged children's books on the ample shelves. On November 13, 1955 a dedication tea was held. Board president Robert A. Lord presented each guest with a dedication program — his personal gift of the day. Among those present who happily saw the wing as more than a children's room were Mrs. Malvin K. West and Charles Elson, who had longed for—and still do—more space for their special large exhibits. Also pleased was Mrs. Jack Frishman who was—and still is—hospitality chairman and needed room for serving tea graciously at special

occasions.

In the perspective of library history, the year 1955 will always stand as a turning point. For 17 years the institution had trudged along a road whose destination was always improved service to the public. But by then it had reached a crossroads and its burden was heavy. It needed the assistance and guiding hand of a professional. Gradually this need had become apparent in the '50's to leaders in the Executive Committee—Mrs. Burbank, Mrs. Frank, Mrs. Robison and others.

At its January meeting in 1955, the Executive Committee discussed at long length the necessity and probability of getting tax support to pay for a professional librarian. After discussing the matter with trustees, Mrs. Robison requested the state library extension division to send a representative to Armonk to give advice.

Prepared in advance with statistics sent to him concerning the library and the township, the representative came to Armonk on April 13th and met with both the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. His report, recommending professional assistance, was then carefully studied. As a result, trustee president Mr. Lord formally presented the Town Board with a request for funds to pay for a library director, together with a petition to that effect bearing many signatures.

For the first time, the town's budget included a library item—\$5,000 for the salary of a professional library director for the year 1956. The item was unopposed at the annual budget hearing and in July Robert Barron became our first director. Probably no one was more pleased than Mrs. Armand Tellier who had become salaried part-time secretary the year before and still donated time as a librarian—as she does today. With the advent of a director, the role of head librarian ceased to exist. Mrs. Frank became the first chairman of volunteers, a position she held until 1958 when she was succeeded by Mrs. Hardy. Although the town now paid Mr. Barron's salary, the ever mounting annual budget for operational expenses still had to be raised through fund drives to be conducted by such energetic chairmen as Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Luhn, Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. Mortimer Cohn and Mrs. J. Wesley Johnson Jr.

In 1957, trustee president Robert H. Bethke engineered the association's first major reorganization in 19 years. The previously all-male Board of Trustees was enlarged to 30 to include the women on the Executive Committee and the latter was replaced by a small operating committee. That same year 1,000 volumes at Whipoorwill School were reorganized by such town library experts as Mrs. Hoyt, Mrs. Lulejian and Mrs. Robert H. Bethke.

On July 26, 1958, the library celebrated its twentieth birthday with an Open House attended by 100 people, many of them workers in 1938.

In 1958 the library was one of 32 libraries in the county to join the Westchester Library System. Through the System, 500,000 volumes owned by member libraries would be available for loans. Centralized ordering of books, as well as cataloguing, carding and delivery of books to individual institutions was planned — promises which today have been fulfilled.

Special WLS grants for reference books and the providing of special consultants were also to become an invaluable service.

Over a ten-year period leaders had, from time to time, investigated the possibility of buying property adjacent to the library. In 1958 president Bethke made definite offers to the current owners, to no avail. Then the Louis Calder Foundation acquired the land and in January, 1959, Mr. Bethke announced that the Foundation had given the library an ideal lot, 100-by-100 feet, adjoining its boundary on the south. At the same time the Foundation made a gift of \$500 for the annual budget and one of \$400 to be used for "something permanent." The trustees voted that the latter amount should form the basis of the "New Wing Building Fund."

Suppressed excitement permeated the library air during the following months. The trustees were definitely working toward complete tax support! New board president O'Brien appointed a Library Support Committee consisting of Robert Lord, chairman, Mr. Barron, John Macchia, Mrs. Robison and Mr. O'Brien. The committee explored the possibilities of both school district and town tax support. The former proved impossible. The committee found representatives of the Town Board appreciative of the library and understanding of its fiscal needs — so much so that by September the trustees began to work out anticipated organizational changes. Mr. Bethke headed a committee to prepare a realistic 1960-1961 library budget to present to the Town Board. When the Town Board presented its annual estimate at a public hearing in December it included an item of \$13,000 for the full annual operational expenses of the library. The item was passed without opposition. Assisting with formulating that important budget item was the last of Mr. Barron's many contributions to the library, for in September, 1959, he resigned. He was succeeded by Miss Elizabeth Kingseed in November.

On January 13, 1960, the North Castle Free Library Association held its most historic meeting since it organized in 1938 — a meeting that was its last as an organization but would transfer its spirit and continue its community-minded activities to a new group, the Friends. At that meeting the association voted to transfer the ownership of the library, with physical assets of \$100,000, to the Town of North Castle. Monies and funds would be transferred to the Friends. The old association was then dissolved.

That same evening the Friends of the North Castle Free Library was formally organized. A constitution drafted by Mr. Lord and Mr. Macchia was adopted. It provided for 21 or more directors and a small Executive Committee. Purpose of the Friends would be to carry on all activities involving volunteers and to raise funds for library projects not included in the town-financed budget. Officers elected were: Mr. O'Brien, president; Mrs. Hardy, vice-president; Alexander Pinney, treasurer; Mrs. Lindstrom, secretary. Mrs. Hardy was appointed chairman of the Executive Committee.

The members then heard electrifying news. The late Samuel Lee Stedman was giving it \$15,000 for the New Wing Building Fund. Mr. Stedman, who was then a partner in the investment banking firm of Carl M. Loeb, Rhodes

and Company of New York City, had been a trustee of the former library association since 1957. Well aware of the building's limitations, he expressed the hope that sufficient additional funds would be acquired soon to erect a wing, expertly designed, to meet community needs for many years to come. The Friends began work at once to bring that hope to fruition.

In accordance with the required outline for tax-supported libraries, the Town Board in February appointed five official trustees. The library director would be responsible to the trustees who would, in turn, be responsible to the Town Board for the management of the library. The five appointed were: Orrin Sherman, Mrs. Hall, Levon Nahigian, Henry Rice and Mr. Lord. Serving as ex-officio members would be the president of the Friends (then Mr. O'Brien) and two town councilmen, Richard Lander and Morris Steve Mudge.

As the main library's service had been expanding, the bookmobile's had been decreasing. The advent of the two-car family obviated the need of rural house-to-house stops. North White Plains School was establishing its own library. Rural schools were to be centralized. And the bookmobile memorial fund was exhausted. So was the old truck! By the time it was retired in 1960 it had circulated the grand total of 102,904 books.

When the bookmobile's first faint death-rattles were heard, long-time library trustee, Mr. Nahigian, and his wife, who lived in North White Plains, had become determined that some substitute form of library service must be created for their area. In 1960 the North White Plains Fire Department gave them a small, rent-free space in the firehouse to use as a library branch. The project was so successful that the Town Board supplied funds to convert a larger space in the firehouse into adequate and attractive headquarters. Today, entirely run by North White Plains volunteers, the branch circulates books supplied by the North Castle Public Library. (Note: after the town took over the library, the name was changed from "Free" to "Public". However, the Friends organization still retains, with affection, the word "Free" in its name.)

In April 1961, Mr. Elson became president of the Friends. He appointed the following architectural committee for the new wing: Mrs. Samuel Datlowe, chairman, Mrs. Kolstedt, Mrs. Burbank, S. R. Vandivort and Miss Kingseed. Mr. Sherman, as president of the town library trustees also served. During that year the committee met almost weekly. It visited neighboring libraries. It studied the future physical needs of the library. It interviewed numerous architects. In July it selected as architect the man who had designed the original building, Henry H. Moger.

Also hard at work making calls for personal solicitations were members of the building fund committee: Max Stolper, chairman, Mr. Pinney, Dr. Benjamin Levine, Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Elson. When Mr. Stolper moved out of town, his chairmanship was taken by Sidney Liebowitz. The spring, 1962, issue of *News Notes*, the quarterly bulletin of the Friends edited by Mr. and Mrs. Warren Donahue, was devoted to the proposed wing. It carried simplified drawings of the additions and announced that over \$37,000 had

been raised for them. In May, the North Castle Players' productions of "Mr. Roberts" netted over \$1200 for the fund. That fall the town let out bids for the wing. (The wing when completed, will, like the present building, become the property of the town.) All bids were too high. Although the Friends' building fund had, by November, grown to the impressive figure of nearly \$60,000, ways would have to be found to cut estimated building costs.

During this busy period the traditional annual art show was not overlooked. Far from it! For the first time it was held outdoors, on the Methodist Church lawn. Mrs. Eugene Bruno was in charge. One hundred artists, both local and out-of-town people, exhibited.

In 1962 much was to happen in the daily operation of the institution. Good news in January was the employment of Mrs. Hoyt as part-time children's librarian. Bad news on June 1st was the resignation of Miss Kingseed as library director. For seven-and-a-half months, while the town library trustees sought a suitable successor, an incredibly heavy burden fell upon the volunteers and part-time paid staff. Ironically enough, the summer's circulation was the highest in history. Sixteen volunteer librarians — and their scheduling chairman, Mrs. Donahue, in particular — worked over-time. Mrs. Johnson recalls that period as the most hectic in her 11 years on the library desk. Trustee president Sherman helped the paid staff daily with reports and fiscal accounts. Added responsibilities were assumed by Mrs. S. R. Vandivort, workroom chairman, and her assistant, Mrs. Albert Heyde, both of whom had been working for over three years.

In mid-January of this year, the long pull ended when James W. Stevenson, professional librarian, took the helm as library director. He came to us from the Queens Public Library in Jamaica, L.I. and quickly adjusted himself to the unusual situation of working with scores of volunteers — most of them women.

Just as Mr. Stevenson had shown patience in handling his volunteer helpers, so has architect Moger shown forbearance in making innumerable revisions of his plans for the wing.

Simplified drawings of the Friends' additions are shown in this booklet. Revisions have not altered their fine basic structure. Economies have been effected by leaving the interiors of the all-purpose room, kitchen and future meeting room uncompleted. However, in the words of Mr. Liebowitz, president of the Friends this year, "We are confident that, when they see the wing erected, residents will wish to help complete all rooms, as well as to contribute such important items as additional shelving and furnishings."

Library statistics for the year 1962 speak for themselves in pointing out the need for more physical space. Shelves were crowded with 16,115 volumes. Circulation reached an all-time high of 37,241 and borrowers totaled 2,271. This year, as of October 1st, 1,606 more books, pamphlets and magazines have been added to the stock.

On November 16, 1963, the Friends of the North Castle Free Library will hold an Open House to celebrate both the library's twenty-fifth birthday and the breaking of ground for the new wing. Once again old friends of the

library will gather to meet new ones. Once again the library will be gay with flowers supplied by the Green-Acres Garden Club which has, since 1939, decorated for special occasions as well as supplying year-round arrangements. There will be many other such traditions to recall and new vistas to glimpse.

Surely on that day all North Castle residents should look backward with pride on their library's history and forward with gratitude to the Friends' amazing accomplishment — the new wing.

Our Library in the past and in the present has always been a symbol of the generosity of the people of North Castle who have given warmly of their devotion, time and monies.

Our dream for our future is now on the threshold of becoming a reality with precious funds provided through myriad gifts, large and small, from every corner of our township. All of us are grateful to everyone who has made this possible and in particular to those who gave most significantly.

FOOTNOTES:

1. This was Stromak's—See Mechanics Hall, No. Castle History, Vol. 14, 1987.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Esther Greenacre Hall was born in Colorado, 1906. She came to North Castle in 1935 when she and her husband became owners and editors of *The North Castle Sun*. She resided here for about 40 years before moving to Long Island where she passed away in the fall of 1977. Mrs. Hall was the author of several children's books, and was one of the founders of the North Castle (Free) Public Library.



1963 groundbreaking for the first addition to the North Castle Library. L-R: Sidney Liebowitz, Harold Sutton, Supervisor John A. Lombardi, Gerda Steadman, James Robinson. Note Whippoorwill School to left in background.

To be continued . . . The second 25 years.

SIGHTS (SITES) FROM THE PAST

by Richard N. Lander

On a bitter cold morning in January 1905, Charles E. Waterbury (1859-1953) and his son Ernest C. (1885-1958) went to the nearly totally dismantled village of Sands' Mills. With the help of their hired man they struggled and strained to load two huge cut stone blocks on their stone boat, and plundered from that village which was being destroyed "to make a pure and wholesome supply of water for the City of New York." Once on the stone boat they and their team of horses plodded one mile down the then dirt Mt. Kisco Road (now Old Mt. Kisco Road) to the center of Armonk. When they arrived at the Armonk Methodist Church the heavy burden was unloaded and pushed together to form a new carriage block alongside the driveway of the church.

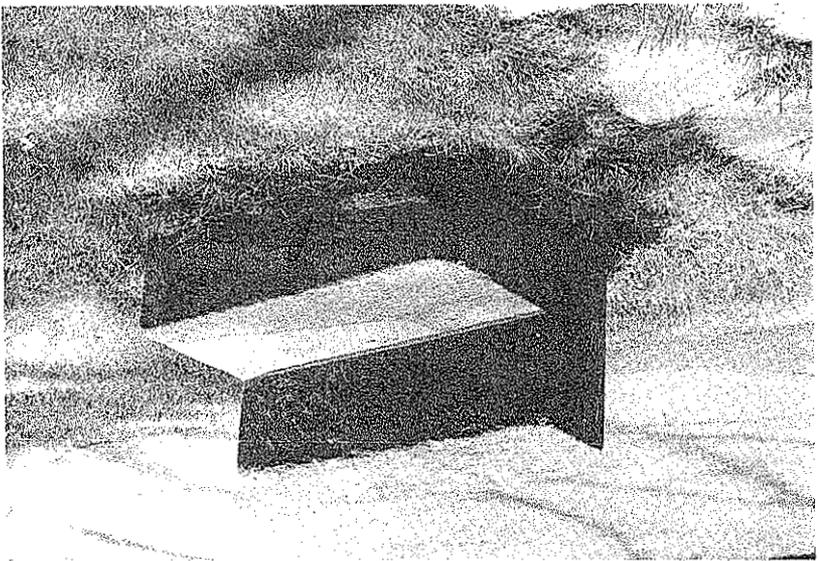
Because the original wooden horseblock had disintegrated, the trustees had numerous complaints from the ladies of the congregation who were getting their skirts dirtied and full of mud by stepping from the carriage directly to the ground, which was also quite a high step. History does not record whether Mr. Waterbury had permission to take the stones or whether they were just taken for a good cause. (It was reliably reported that the entire village of Armonk carried away much of the lumber, sash, and leftovers from Sands' Mills.) However, we will always be historically indebted to Charles and Ernest, for the stones had a history even before they got to the churchyard, and have given historical flavor to the place where they now rest.

It is also reliably reported that the stones had been quarried in Byram Mountain by Adolphus B. Reynolds (1822-1880), the premier stone-cutter of our area, for Jacob B. Carpenter (1812-1876) for the front steps of his new store at Sands' Mills, built in 1852. The store was torn down by the New York City wrecking crew and the steps were laid alongside of the road — fair game for any passerby.

With the closing of the horse and buggy era, the stones endured the passing of time by providing other functional uses. They were the speakers' platform at many Memorial Day observances after World War I and prior to World War II (they adjoined the World War I monument, erected in 1919). They have been the classroom for many a Methodist Sunday School class, and they have been the play spot of several generations of neighborhood children. The author's mother, Martha Jane Rodgers Lander, (1893-1952), and her childhood friend Florence Sniffen played there.

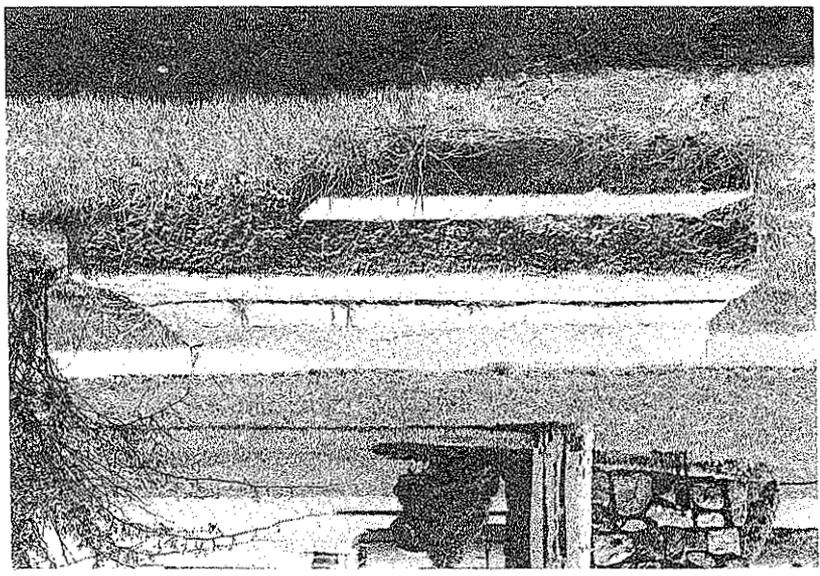
Because of their massive size and weight, they will hopefully continue as part of the Armonk scene.

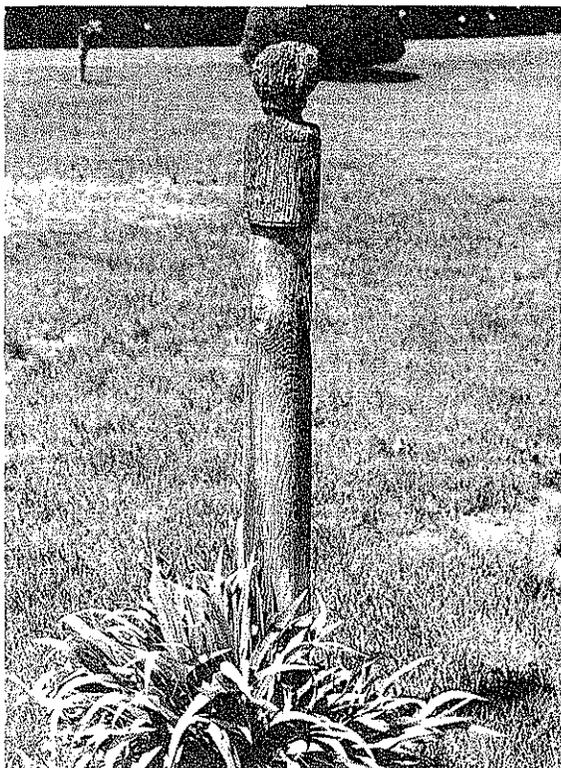
The only other carriage block or stepping stone in Armonk is located across the street at the residence of the late Ralph L. MacDonald, Sr. This did not always stand here and is not native to the spot. It was bought and rescued from another location by Mr. MacDonald probably more than thirty years ago. We have included it to show present day readers what a residential carriage step looked like. This whole neighborhood (which, coincidentally, is a historic district) is indebted to Mr. MacDonald, who was its oldest resident, and who was born and spent his entire life in this family home on Bedford Road. Mr. MacDonald took the lead many years ago in



Ralph MacDonald's carriage step located in his front yard on Bedford Road. Picture taken by Richard Koenig, 1988.

The large carriage block in the yard of the Armonk United Methodist Church. The speakers' platform for numerous Memorial Day ceremonies. Picture taken by Richard Koenig, 1988.





The last hitching post in Armonk. One of a pair made for Dr. George B. Clark, located in front of his residence on Bedford Road (now the residence of Mrs. Louis Burfeindt). Picture taken by Richard Koenig, 1988.

pursuing the zoning and residential character of what has now been designated a Historic Landmark District.

Further east along the street, in front of the residence of Mrs. Louis Burfeindt, stands the only known hitching post remaining in Armonk. I refer to this as Dr. Clark's hitching post. There were a pair of these posts exactly alike, which stood in front of the home and office of George Birch Clark, M.D. (1872-1942), for nearly fifty years the only resident physician in town. Its twin was removed in the fall of 1942 by Dr. Clark's family and taken with them to their new home. They left this one here so that it could be enjoyed by future generations.

There was, until a short time ago, a hitching post on Maple Avenue in front of the residence of Judge William K. Haviland (1846-1921) (now the Armonk Gun Shop). I asked our faithful and exacting Society photographer, Richard Keonig to photograph it. He came back reporting that it could not be found. No doubt the post fell victim to a renovation project by someone who did not realize its historic significance.

This brief article and pictures are meant to record for posterity what little is left in our village of the horse and buggy era, and to remind us how all too quickly our landmarks can disappear. Let us keep an eye on, and preserve, what is left!

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