

NORTH CASTLE HISTORY



WAGONWHEEL RESTAURANT

**Armonk, New York
during the 1930s**

THE NORTH CASTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 26

--

1999



The North Castle Historical Society

440 BEDFORD ROAD ARMONK, NEW YORK 10504

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

I must say that it is an honor to be President of The North Castle Historical Society.

To be presiding at the turn of the century is especially meaningful! This unique event offers me the opportunity to be a voice that reminds us not only how much we look forward to the future, but how priceless is our past. In order to have a solid future, we must have firm foundations. So, more than ever, our history and our historical places should be acknowledged and treasured!

Read this booklet; read all of our booklets (available at all of our town and school libraries and also for sale at Smith's Tavern). Read, come visit, be proud. Our community needs its citizens to be informed about our history and to have fun finding out about it at the same time.

Become active in the affairs of our community. The North Castle Historical Society has numerous opportunities for your participation. Please contact us -- let's be informed volunteers together!

Sincerely,

Joan Krantz
Joan Krantz

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SCENES FROM OUR PAST

The Wagonwheel Restaurant

by Doris Finch Watson

It often happens that finding an old photograph or a scrap of ancient paper will bring back a flood of memories. For long-time residents it can awaken old interests and reminiscences of the "the way we were" – and for new residents it can reveal part of our past. That is what history is all about.

Recently, an old photograph of an Armonk spot called "The Wagonwheel Restaurant" (see front cover) opened a well-spring of recollections for several townspeople. Their reminiscences* paint a colorful picture of a bygone era, one reflecting a lifestyle of more than a half century ago.

The Wagonwheel Remembered

The Wagonwheel Restaurant was a well-known gathering place, crowned by a fancy sign depicting a wagon wheel. It stood atop a hill no longer in existence. That particular hill was called the "little hill" while the hill where Smith's Tavern and the Hillside Church stand was called the "big hill." The so-called little hill was located west of the intersection of North Greenwich Road and Route 22, and was cut away and the road leveled when New York State changed Route 22 in the late 1960s. All the buildings on the little hill were destroyed to make way for the highway of today. (Originally Route 22 passed by the Armonk Methodist Church and St. Stephen's Church and it is presently called Bedford Road. Niles Avenue used to connect directly to Route 22.)

The Owner

The Wagonwheel's owner was George P. Schmaling, well known in and around North Castle for his many interests. He is remembered as a business owner back in the 1930s and 1940s who was an excellent chef, one who served "out of this world breakfasts" according to one long-ago customer. Another former customer recalls having a full turkey dinner for \$1.35 and a roast beef dinner for \$1.50. The restaurant had a counter as well as booths, and the curtains at the windows supplied a homey

atmosphere. In addition to the restaurant, Mr. Schmaling operated gas tanks, which were located to the left front of the Wagonwheel. His son, "Phil" pumped gas. Before starting this station, Mr. Schmaling owned a gas station across from the well-known old Log Cabin.¹

The Lifestyle

George Schmaling was called "Buck" by everyone. Among his varied interests, he played drums and was the leader of the Armonk Fife and Drum Corps, which was organized after the founding of the Armonk Independent Fire Co., Inc. in 1930. The Corps played for the Fire Company at various fire parades and Memorial Day parades. A long, hilarious poem entitled "Buck's Yankee Doodle Band" was written by his friend, "Al." Young, and it is printed at the end of this booklet for your enjoyment.

Another facet of George Schmaling's active life found him serving as Chairman of the Armonk Republican Club. In 1960 he and New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller were photographed together addressing Armonk Republicans at a gathering in the famous Log Cabin Restaurant.



¹ Please see the 1979 and 1982 issues of *North Castle History*.

There is an interesting tale concerning another of Buck's varied hobbies, which was target shooting. The story goes that several local men, including Ralph MacDonald, Maynard Allen, Walter Bell, Sr. and Buck, practiced their pistol shooting out of a back window of the Wagonwheel Restaurant. They stacked sandbags out back and shot at a target which was on a clothesline-type arrangement that allowed them to pull the target back after each round was completed so each man's score could be tallied. Reportedly, they used a muffle box to keep the sound down. Later, their target practice moved to the range located on Walter Wohlfeil's farm on Byram Lake Road. The restaurant became more peaceful.

One early resident recalled that busses with disabled veterans from a Soldiers' Home would stop at the Wagonwheel on the way to visit the Danbury Fair. Buck Schmaling operated his business for many years, finally selling it to a person named George Frank, who continued the Wagonwheel tradition of good food served in a friendly atmosphere.

The Tax Collector

Buck Schmaling made time in his busy life to serve on the North Castle Planning Board from 1939 to 1941. But perhaps Buck is best remembered by some as the Receiver of Taxes for the Town of North Castle, a post he filled for fifteen years, from 1946 to 1961. The tax bills he issued had a personality all their own, including his original poems, his humor and his friendly greetings with holiday decorations surrounding the bill – perhaps in an effort to ease the pain of paying tax bills. Fortunately, some of the unique items Buck produced have been preserved. They tell a lot about him, and are a lasting tribute.



GEORGE P. SCHMALING
Receiver of Taxes
TOWN OF NORTH CASTLE
ARMONK, NEW YORK



PERSONAL
RECEIPT

No. 1947

General Town and District Greetings for the Year 1947 A PERSONAL WISH FROM YOUR RECEIVER OF TAXES

Mr. & Mrs. Roy Farrington
Armonk, N. Y.

DEC. 25	A MERRY XMAS	XX	XX
JAN. 1	A HAPPY NEW YEAR	XX	XX
PENALTY		XX	XX

PAID IN FULL
DEC. 25, 1946

RECEIVED BY TAXES

Donated to the collections of The North Castle Historical Society by Mr. and Mrs. John Schnoor. Mrs. Schnoor (Eleanor) is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Farrington.

But to people who frequented his restaurant, Buck is remembered for his camaraderie, his excellent food and his coffee ... coffee which John Schnoor says, "was always made with Martinson's blend and real cream and sold for ten cents when some places sold coffee for five cents ... but it was worth it!"

It is interesting to note that at one point the Wagonwheel Restaurant was offered for sale with a piece of land 100 x 100 (not including the gas station) in the following listing quoted from an old real estate sheet:

"As a restaurant	\$8,000
As a house	\$7,500

"Completely equipped restaurant, can easily be renovated to an attractive house. Gas pump and station separate. Could bring income. Owner will take back mortgage."

A Time for Change

At the latter part of the 1960s, New York State made payments to those who owned property on the little hill, and they were ordered to leave. The buildings were demolished and the little hill was leveled. The new Route 22 came through Armonk.

The "little hill" is gone. The Wagonwheel Restaurant and the Gas Station are no more ... but the many memories and the old photograph are with us – a bit of treasured history of "the way we were."



*** Special Thanks to the following who graciously shared their memories: John and Eleanor Schnoor, Walter Ray Bell, Jr., Marguerite Lewis, Joseph Genkerell, Bumpy Taylor, Pat Farquhar, Ralph and Ruth Kuhn.**

* * * * *

Corrections to the 1998 Issue of *North Castle History*

Regrettably mistakes do occur. Please correct the name to Julian Howay (not Haway) in "The Banksville Community House" article. In "The Windmill Club Turns Fifty" article please correct the date of incorporation from 1848 to 1948.



Theodore Brundage
1839 – 1907



Clara Brundage
1843 – 1908

A NORTH CASTLE FARMER'S 1886 DIARY

The following article is reprinted with permission. It first appeared in the Westchester County Historical Society *Bulletin*, Volume 25, 1949. The diary entries illustrate the farming life prevalent in North Castle fourteen years before the turn of the last century. Not only does Mr. Brundage detail the weather, he itemizes the price of staples such as flour, as well as the money received for fruits and vegetables grown on his farm. His wife and daughter sewed shirts, which Mr. Brundage sold in Port Chester and Bedford Station.

"THEODORE BRUNDAGE, 1839-1907, NORTH CASTLE FARMER

by Richard N. Lander

The 1886 diary of this good citizen faithfully portrays the life of that day. At the crossing of the Banksville Road with the Peck's Land Road¹ he owned 57 acres – the present Walter S. Gifford estate. This property was close to the proposed right of way for the N.Y., Housatonic and Northern R.R. (Westchester Historical Bulletin, April-July 1946) and within a mile of the Connecticut State line. Mr. Brundage was a loyal member and conscientious official of the Middle Patent Methodist Church (Westchester Historical Bulletin, January 1948) and voted the Prohibition ticket. His wife (Clara Armenia Palmer²) and his daughter (Clara who had married William J. Brundage, they lived with her parents) finished shirts cut out in nearby shops. At Brundage Corners, near Armonk, was his brother Maurice the well-known blacksmith³. The

¹ This is not a reference to the present-day Peckslan Road in Greenwich, but rather a reference to the Peck family's land in North Castle.

² Armenia was the daughter of Alvin and Catherine Palmer. The 1850 Federal Census for North Castle shows Alvin, age 32, Catharine, age 24, and Armenia, age 7, listed between the Joseph Eisanhart and the Mary Johnson households. The Alvin Palmers are shown on the 1851 Sidney and Neff map living between S. Foster and J. Foster on the Mt. Kisco Road just before the Cox Avenue intersection. Alvin Palmer died in 1891, age 78 years. Catherine, his wife, died in 1902, 77 years old. Both are buried in the Middle Patent Rural Cemetery: Theodore, Armenia, William J. and Clara Brundage are also buried in the same cemetery.

³ See *North Castle History* booklet, 1981, Volume 8.

family Bible records and the diary are published by the courtesy of a nephew of Theodore Brundage – Mr. T. William Brundage of Armonk.

January

Fri. 1st. Clear and pleasant. I went up on Chestnut Ridge after Laura and Delieh who spent the day here. I called on the Derby's. Will made 13 calls. Surprise party here at night.

Sat. 2nd. Clear. Went to Armonk to the mill. Paid Maurice⁴ \$1.25 for work on wagon.

Sat. 16th. Clear. At night I went to Derby's Pond⁵ to see the skaters. about 50 was there.

Tues. 26th. Clear. I went to Bedford Station with shirts. received \$2 for it.

Fri. 29th. Rain. Yesterday I paid the taxes \$17.58. Armenia and I went to Armonk to Mrs. Palmer's store. Will received \$12.25 bounty money on woodchucks; 25 cents per head.

February

Mon. 1st. Clear. I went to Port Chester with shirts. At night Trustee and Sunday School meeting at the church.

Tues. 2nd. Clear. In the afternoon Will and I went to the Quarterly Conference held at Bedford.

Fri. 5th. Clear. 10 below zero.

Sat. 6th. Clear. I went to Greenwich. The harbor was froze out as far as Captain Island.

Mon. 15th. Clear. At night I went to Trustee and Stewart meeting at C. E. Brundage's to take some action on the pastor living in Middle Patent.

Wed. 24th. Clear. Will and Clara went to Singing School.

March

⁴ Maurice Brundage's Blacksmith Shop was on the old Danbury and New York Post Road. He also operated a Carriage Shop.

⁵ The only Derby family listed in the 1850 Federal Census for North Castle is Abraham, age 30, a shoemaker; Elizabeth, age 34; George, age 5; Mary E., age 3; Emily A. age 10 months; and Jesse Smith, age 13, living with the family. The household is listed between Sarah Bussing, a widow, 86 years of age and William Worden, a shoemaker, age 39; his wife, Angeline, age 38; and children, Sarah, age 17; Eunice, age 7; and William, age 4.

Tues. 9th. Cloudy. Will and I went to the Auction at Samuel B. Ferris – clock sold for \$100.

Wed. 17th. Clear. We went to the gift tree⁶ at Dr. Ralph B. Griswold's house (Banksville).

Fri. 26th. Clear. I took the oxen to the shop.

Sat. 27th. Rain and snow. I bought a ton of hay of J. Green \$20.

April

Thurs. 1st. Clear most of the time. I went to Bedford Station, bought one bag of Timothy seed, paid \$6.60 for it. Will grafted for David Brundage and others, received \$1.40 for it.

Fri. 2nd. The roads dry. I went to Armonk with 2 barrels potatoes, received \$4.

Sun. 4th. Snowed some. Will went to church, Rev. Evart H. W. Barden preached farewell sermon.

Mon. 5th. Snow and rain. I went to Armonk, bought a barrel of flour, price \$6.75.

Thurs. 8th. Cloudy. Will went to Greenwich, bought a plow, price \$4.25. Began to plow for onions.

Sat. 10th. Clear. Sowed the onion seed.

Sun. 11th. Cloudy. Will and I went to church. New pastor, Rev. Edward H. Dutcher was there. Clara went to Chestnut Ridge Meeting at night.

Tues. 20th. Clear. Armenia and I went to Round Hill, bought 4 rolls of paper for the wall.

Sat. 24th. Two thunder storms. Armenia papered the hall.

Fri. 30th. Clear. Began to plow for corn. Will and I helped Hunter get his ox out of the mire, we got home about 9 p.m.

May

Fri. 7th. At night rain. Finished planting potatoes. I went to Bedford Station, bought 22 ½ yards of carpet, price \$16.88.

Mon. 10th. Rain some. Will went to Port Chester and hired the Wishard place (neighboring farm) for the year.

Thurs. 13th. Rain. We planted corn until the rain drove us off.

Sat. 15th. Some rain. Will and I went to Quarterly Conference – church has been newly carpeted and the wall in the choir room painted.

⁶ A custom, as explained by North Castle Town Historian Doris Finch Watson, of attaching cards, notes and money to a tree or large limb from a tree and then presenting the gift tree to a couple in celebration of a wedding anniversary.

Sun. 16th. Clear. We all went to church morning and evening. The Presiding Elder preached. Chestnut ridge church set apart from this church. In the afternoon Will and I went to the funeral of Elnathan Finch⁷ who lived in this house years ago and built the Seting (sic) room.
Sat. 29th. Clear. We went to Milton Point fishing, (had) good luck.

June

Sat. 12th. Clear. Will and I worked at father's at fences. (Harrison Brundage⁸, the present John Shedd residence).
Wed. 30th. Will went to Mt. Kisco and bought me grain cradle, price \$3.25; one mowing and one bush scythe, 2 hand rakes.

July

Fri. 2nd. Clear. Will and Clara went to Greenwich, received \$11.50 for 5 barrels of apples.
Wed. 7th. Clear. We cradled rye at Wm. H. Brundage, received \$4.
Thurs. 8th. Clear. We cut rye for Coles D. Brundage, received \$2.50.
Mon. 19th. Cloudy some. We cut wheat for Father and raked our rye.

August

Mon. 2nd. Shower at night. I went to Bedford Station, bought barrel of flour price \$5.75 and a wash bowl & pitcher price \$1.
Fri. 13th. Clear. Will and Clara went to Greenwich and Port Chester, received \$3.50 for 2 barrels of pears.
Wed. 18th. Clear. We all went to the Salt Water Pick nick.

⁷ Elnathan Finch, like the author of the diary, was also married to a Palmer, Margaret H. Palmer. Margaret died May 2, 1884, at the age of 83 years. Elnathan was 86 years of age when he died in 1886. Elnathan was appointed Overseer of the Roads, District #4 for five one-year terms: 1824, 1828, 1835, 1836 and 1846. *North Castle Town Records*, Volume 2, page 61 describes Road District #4 "Round Hill Road from Banksville-Bedford Road to the State line and Mead Road to the State line; Banksville Road from Round Hill Road to Mianus River (Giffords Lake). Other Overseers for District #4 from 1824 until 1846 were David R. Hobby, Ezekiel Brundage, Gideon Palmer, Joseph Feeks, Silas Sutherland, Horace Green, Jonathan Hunt Green, and Edgar L. Brundage

⁸ The Harrison Brundage household is listed next to the S. P. Smith household on the 1850 Federal Census for North Castle.

September

Sun. 5th. Cloudy. In the afternoon we went to the Grove Meeting on Chestnut Ridge.

Tues. 7th. Clear. Began to dig potatoes.

Sun. 12th. Thunder shower. We all went to church. temperance lecture.

Tues. 14th. Clear. W. H. Mead called with a book, Grant's life (the General Personal Memoirs), price \$3.50.

Wed. 15th. Clear. Bought a horse of H. H. Johnson, price \$165.

Mon. 27th. Cloudy. County Fair began. Singing School.

October

Wed. 6th. Clear. Picked apples.

Mon. 11th. Clear. Will went to Port Chester with 6 barrels of potatoes. \$12.

Wed. 20th. Clear. Will went to Greenwich with 4 barrels hand picked Greening apples. \$1.25 per barrel. Benjamin Husted's barn burned.

Tues. 26th. Cloudy. We bought 3 calves of B. Searles, price \$24.50.

November

Tues. 2nd. Clear. Will took 5 barrels of onions to Armonk, \$11.25. We went to the Polls, voted Prohibition. (Griffin, Prohibition candidate for Congress, 14th District, had 734 votes; James Wood, Republican, 9,744 and Wm. G. Stahlnecker, Democrat, 10,001.)

Wed. 3rd. Clear. The painters are painting the church.

Sat. 6th. Cloudy and some rain. Finished husking corn. Bought 2 pigs \$4.

Mon. 29th. Some cloudy. We killed pigs. Paid school tax \$4.05.

December

Fri. 3rd. Clear. Cut wood.

Sat. 4th. Cloudy. Skating on Derby's Pond.

Fri. 10th. Clear. Sold 50 lbs. of chickens to W. S. Smith \$5.50

Sun. 19th. Clear. All of us went to church at night, the man⁹ that paints (scripture texts) on rocks was there.

⁹ See North Castle History booklet, 1978, Volume 5.

Wed. 22nd. Clear part of time. I went to Chestnut Ridge after 7 barrels of apples with the oxen.

Thurs. 23rd. Cloudy and some rain. At night we went to church to the Christmas tree. I received a book.

Sat. 25th. Clear. Christmas Day. Will went after his father and family (Chestnut Ridge) and brought them down to dinner.

Fri. 31st. Rain and hail. Will and I thrashed rye.

FAMILY RECORD

Marriages

David Brundage and Elizabeth Lockwood; December 12, 1793.

Harrison Brundage and Mary E. Purdy; February 6, 1839.

Theodore Brundage and Clara A. Palmer; November 7, 1864.

Eugene Tompkins and Evelina Brundage; December 6, 1865.

Edwin C. Brundage and Julia M. Knapp; October 16, 1872.

Thomas P. Brundage and Mary E. Banks; September 18, 1873.

Maurice W. Brundage and Lizzie Clark; February 10, 1875.

Harrison Brundage and Josephine Briggs; September 8, 1875.

William J. Brundage and Clara A. Brundage; October 2, 1883.

Births

David Brundage; March 25, 1768.

Elizabeth Lockwood; September 26, 1772.

Allen Brundage; August 29, 1794.

Sarah Brundage; July 14, 1796.

William Brundage; November 22, 1802.

Eliza Brundage; June 24, 1805.

Annis Brundage; September 22, 1807.

Hetta Brundage; November 22, 1809.

Harrison Brundage; February 16, 1811.

Mary E. Purdy; August 29, 1815.

Theodore Brundage; December 3, 1839.

Clara A. Palmer; November 22, 1843.

Evelina Brundage; July 10, 1841.

Harrison Brundage; September 3, 1843.

Edwin C. Brundage; March 18, 1847.

Thomas P. Brundage; January 9, 1849.

Maurice W. Brundage; June 3, 1852.
Clara A. Brundage; October 26, 1867.
William J. Brundage; August 16, 1859.

Deaths

David Brundage; April 20, 1829.
William Brundage; April 18, 1853.
Elizabeth Brundage; March 10, 1857.
Helen Brundage; January 15, 1869.
Eliza Cox; May 15, 1874.
Sarah Hopkins; September 25, 1874.
Mary E. Brundage; October 22, 1875.
Annis Cox; September 9, 1889.
Hetta Banks; November 23, 1889.
Harrison Brundage; February 12, 1891.
Maurice W. Brundage; October 30, 1905.
Theodore Brundage; October 6, 1907.
Armenia Brundage; November 7, 1908.
Alvin Palmer; December 3, 1891.
Catherine Palmer; August 4, 1902.
Thomas P. Brundage; October 12, 1917.
Harrison Brundage; July 26, 1918.
Eveline Tompkins; January 6, 1920.
Edwin Brundage; January 27, 1921.
Julia M. Brundage; April 5, 1923.
Josephine Brundage; April 23, 1924.
Clara A. Brundage; May 28, 1927.
Eddie Brundage; March 28, 1934.
Anna Alley Brundage; January 16, 1937."



COUNTY LORE SET LANDER COURSE
Excerpted from the Reporter Dispatch Newspaper
Wednesday, September 17, 1958 Edition

by Madelaine Wilson

"Tell a child, 'I remember when...' often enough and you may make an amateur historian out of him. That's what happened to Richard Norman Lander, thirty, a Westchester native who comes from a long line of Westchester people.

"... Restoration of old abandoned Westchester cemeteries is a favorite project of Dick Lander. Together with James R. Caruso, supervisor of the Town of North Castle, and Alvah See, North Castle commissioner of highways, he is part of the three-man 'Cemetery Committee' which searches out and cleans up old deserted burying grounds in their town¹.

"They have fixed up six, still have two yet untouched. One already restored "nice and tidy" is the Roger Lyon² burial ground at Coman Hill. In it there are only about 12 identifiable graves. Another 35 have fieldstone markers from which time has erased all identification. Local tradition has it that these are graves of American soldiers who died in a field hospital after the Battle of White Plains. Lander heard this story from the late Judge George E. Mead, ninety-three who had heard the story in his boyhood.

"... The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery³... is south of Route 22, marked by the tall shaft erected by the late Charles G. Banks, attorney and one-time president of the village of New Rochelle, who designated in his gift of six acres of land to the cemetery that a final resting place should not be denied any person, regardless of creed, class or financial condition.

"A portion of this monument, a bronze marker reads in part, is dedicated to the unknown and unmarked graves in this cemetery in the dust of eternal sleep."

¹ Today, New York State Law requires Towns to maintain abandoned cemeteries.

² See *North Castle History*, Volume 13, 1986 for further details.

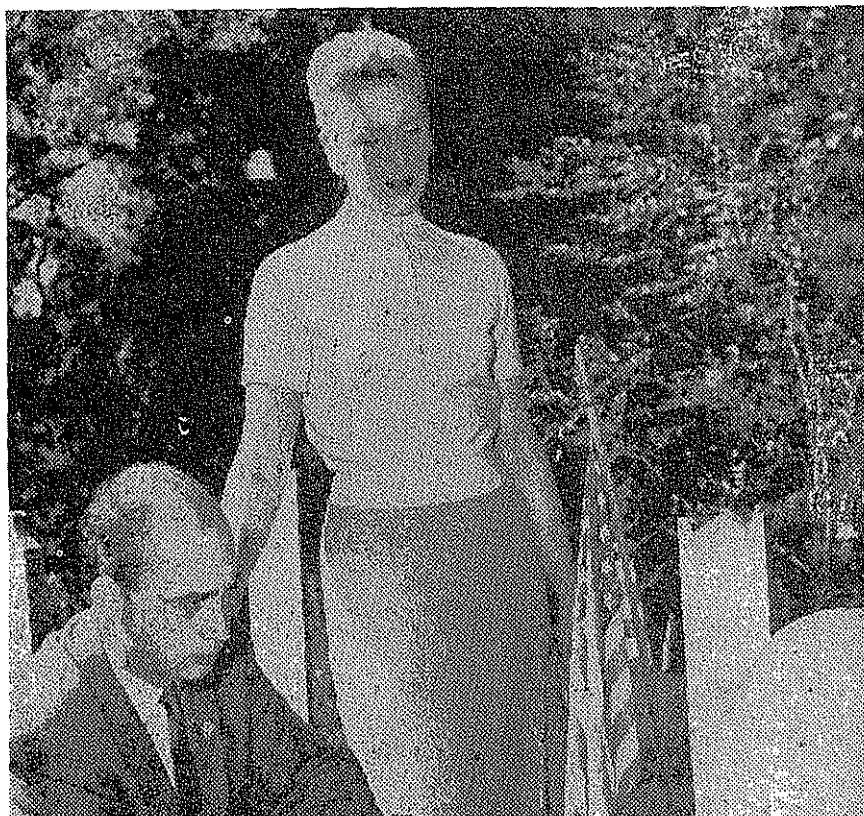
³ Samuel Banks' farmland where he was buried in 1743 is now The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery.

"In complete sympathy with his historical projects is Lander's wife of 15 months, the former Jean Ellen Holmes of New York City, a Hunter College graduate who is technologist with the General Food Research Center in Tarrytown."



In an April 5, 1903 article the Mount Kisco Recorder newspaper reported that the cemeteries of Armonk included Episcopal, Methodist, Quaker on Sands' Hill, Wampus Pond, Briggs, Townsend, Smith on George Yerks' farm, Tucker on Albert Waterbury's farm, and the Indian cemetery on the John Platt Tripp farm. The article reads in part "Dear reader, you should visit some of these cemeteries and see what interest these good people take on the lots where their forefathers and foremothers are now resting."

During 1999 the tradition continued with an ad hoc Cemetery Committee headed by Barbara Massi and including Betsy Rusk, Anne Nisenholtz, Dana Coakley, Ray Bell, John Fava, and Hal Schaller met several times to inventory gravestones and clean gravesites.



RICHARD N. AND JEAN (HOLMES) LANDER IN 1958 EXAMINING A GRAVESTONE IN THE MIDDLE PATENT RURAL CEMETERY.

**THE AMERICAN VENUS,
A 1925 Movie with Scenes Filmed in North Castle**

by Sharon Tomback

"A new movie play, *The American Venus*, is in (the) process of formation and will soon be released for the edification of the general public. Miss Fay Lanphier, the California bathing girl who won first prize at the Atlantic City beauty contest, will take a leading part. The play is full of pep and action and many of the most exciting scenes are being 'shot' in different parts of Middle Patent.

"One particular stirring incident was staged on Saturday last when a heavy touring car containing the hero and heroine and a supposedly drunken passenger was made to crash thru (sic) a picket fence and plumb into a large tree planted alongside the remodeled Brinkerhoff homestead now part of Dr. Paterno's estate. It certainly was thrilling and was witnessed by a large impromptu audience."¹

Frederick Stowers based his movie script on a story written by Martin Townsend. The screenplay was directed by Frank Tuttle and was produced by Famous Players-Lasky for Paramount. J. Roy Hunt was responsible for the photography. Larry Hitt and Frederick A. Foord (sic) were art directors for the film. Jesse L. Lasky and Adolph Zukor presented the film which was released January 25, 1926.²

Variety's January 27, 1926 issue reported that the cast included:

Mary Gray: Esther Ralston
Miss Alabama: Fay Lanphier
Chip Armstrong: Lawrence Gray
Hugo Niles: Ford Sterling
Mrs. Niles: Edna May Oliver
Miss Bayport: Louise Brooks
Horace Niles: Kenneth McKenna
King Neptune: Ernest Torrence
Neptune's son, Triton: Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

¹ The North Castle Sun, Friday, September 25, 1925 published by Alvah P. French. Subscription rates for the year were \$1.50. A single copy was five cents.

² The New York Times, January 26, 1926, page 25, column 2.

John Gray: William B. Mack
Sam Lorber: George DeCarlton
Artist: W. T. Benda

Variety ended their review with the following derision. "Out in the sticks the beauty contest stuff may mean something, but on the merit of the film itself there are grave doubts. ... Just lots of female flesh and silk bathing suit beauties, all dressed so that the maximum of sex appeal will be reflected on the screen. It may give some of the old boys a kick, and then again it may not."³

"The story is woven about the Atlantic City Beauty Pageant and two beauty creams. It opens with W. T. Benda, the artist, painting the presentation of the golden apple to Venus, the first winner of a beauty contest. Unsatisfied with his model for the goddess, he and his friends have the brilliant idea of staging a pageant of beauty from which the American Venus may be chosen. ... Niles the rival manufacturer, resorts to fair and foul means to prevent her winning, and there is a hair-raising automobile chase trying to get Mary back in time for the final judging...."⁴ Reportedly it was this scene which was filmed in Middle Patent during the latter part of September 1925.

Some sources report that the scenes for the movie were filmed in Astoria Studios in Queens, New York, and on location in Atlantic City, New Jersey. However, the North Castle Sun article reveals that some of the action scenes were filmed in Middle Patent.

The story revolves around the competition between two cosmetics manufacturers. The daughter of one is engaged to marry the son of the other. The daughter, with the encouragement of her father's public relations employee, decides to enter The American Venus Beauty Pageant to upstage the family business rival by claiming that her father's cold cream made her beautiful. Just before the final judging and presentation, Mary's father falls ill and she returns home. Her friend, Miss Alabama goes on to win the title.

Then in its early years, the Miss America beauty pageant was under scrutiny. Famous Players-Lasky worked with the pageant organizers so

³ Some other films appearing at the time were "The Big Parade", "The Skyrocket", "Nell Gwyn" (starring Dorothy Gish) and "Dance Madness".

⁴ The Public Ledger, January 12, 1926

closely before and during the filming of *The American Venus* that there were rumors the final result of the beauty pageant was rigged. Miss California, Fay Lanphier, went on to be crowned the real Miss America as well as the fictional American Venus... as Miss Alabama.

Louise Brooks (who played Miss Bayport) had been engaged in a tryst with Charlie Chaplin prior to filming *The American Venus*. When they parted, Louise was left with her memories and a check for \$2,500. Her costuming in the movie leaves her virtually topless for many scenes, a detail which was overlooked by the New York censors but not by others.⁵

Louise Brooks' 'past' included performing as a Scandal/Follies girl and posing for semi-nude portraits for society photographer John De Marjian, who agreed to withdraw the photographs after Brooks sued him.⁶

The performance of an eighteen-year-old Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. was not noted. George Raft and the Stanley Syncopators performed a rousing rendition of the Charleston. Louise Dose performed two solos and was praised by the reviewers. Some sources reported the color scenes by Technicolor garish and others thought the color enhanced the film. Many of the reviewers approved of Mr. Lowenstein's arrangements and use of familiar jazz music.⁷

The American Film Institute Catalog lists *The American Venus* as a comedy, item "F2.0118" with the following description:

"Mary Gray, whose father manufactures cold cream, is engaged to sappy Horace Niles, the son of Hugo Niles, the elder Gray's most competitive rival in the cosmetics business. Chip Armstrong, a hot-shot public relations man, quits the employ of Hugo Niles and goes to work for Gray, persuading Mary to enter the Miss America contest at Atlantic City, with the intention of using her to endorse her father's cold cream should she win. Mary breaks her engagement with Horace. When it appears that she will win the contest, Hugo lures her home on the pretext that her father is ill and she misses the contest. Chip and Mary return to Atlantic City discovering that the new Miss America has told the world that she owes all her

⁵ Louise Brooks: The New York Movies: The Internet Movie Database Ltd.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The Public Ledger, January 12, 1926

success to Gray's cold cream. On this note Chip and Mary decide to get married. Black and white with color sequences (Technicolor). 35mm. 8 reels, 7,931 feet, 92-113 minutes."

In a biting editorial written to movie theater owners, Harrison's Reports rants "If you have been expecting something big because of the wide publicity that has been given this picture you will be sadly disappointed, for it is only mediocre. It is mildly amusing here and there because of Mr. Sterling's pantomimic work, and some melodramatic thrills have been attached to it, these being caused by a chase of an automobile; but neither the thrills nor the Ford Sterling mild comedy can lift it above the mediocre level. The only striking feature about it is the technicolor scenes; they are extremely beautiful. But some of them will, no doubt, prove offensive to church going people, particularly in the small communities, because of the fact that women's legs, backs, sides and abdomens as low as below the navel, are shown aplenty. ... Jesse Lasky has his girls wear nothing under the bathing suits, with the result that the women's outlines of their breasts are clearly seen. In places there isn't even the thin cloth of the bathing suit to cover the flesh. ... Let no one of you make the mistake of thinking that if you will make money with *The American Venus* you ought to play it. Think of the aftermath; if you play it, it will cost you many times more than the profits you will make, first, by estranging the family and church element, and secondly, by arousing the reformers against the motion picture theaters in general. If today there is agitation in some states about an imposition of a heavy tax on theater receipts, it may be traced to some such film as this. ..."⁸

The North Castle Historical Society acknowledges with grateful appreciation the assistance of the Film Archives Section of The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, New York.

The North Castle Sun newspaper reported filming for another (unnamed) movie in both the April 23rd and April 30th, 1915 editions. Scenes for "The Reckoning" were filmed at Kensico during May, 1915. The July 30th, 1915 issue of the newspaper reported that Tannhauser Films was shooting scenes in North Castle for a movie murder. The August 14th, 1914 issue reported "The famous Tannhauser Film Company is making excellent use of the rugged scenery of the Town of North Castle and with their player folks are depicting many thrilling plays to appear during the coming winter in the theaters of the United States. Our lakes, vales and mountains provide the necessary background whereby perfect results are attained." In the fall issue of *Conversations* published by the Mamaroneck Historical Society, Joseph J. Rigano related that Tannhauser was a very small studio located on the Post Road in New Rochelle, New York.

⁸ Harrison's Reports. January 30, 1926, page 18 and February 13, 1926, page 28.

STREET LIGHTS FOR ARMONK

as reported by The North Castle Monitor
Thursday, August 7, 1930

BIG TIME FOR ARMONK AS LIGHTS ARE TURNED ON

Occasion Is Gala Event With Speeches, Decorations.
Cigars to Men, Cream to Women.

Elaborate Ceremonies marked the turning on of the lights of Lighting District No. 2, Armonk, Friday night.

Supervisor J. Hobart Cox threw the switch that illuminated the Armonk Village streets. More than 600 people witnessed the program, which was at Kromer's Corners.

On the speakers' platform were Supervisor Cox, Dr. George Clark, health officer, Justices Kanze, Pietschker and Mead, T. William Brundage, Town Clerk and Harry Hunter, Superintendent of Highways.

Patriotic Bunting, American Flags, paper streamers and other colorful decorations had transformed Kromer's Corners into a veritable mardi-gras scene and a holiday spirit prevailed throughout the village. Aides passed through the crowd and presented cigars to the men and ice cream cones to the ladies in observance of the event.

Dr. Clark urged that the progressive attitude of the residents be continued in keeping with the almost unlimited resources and beauty of the town of North Castle.

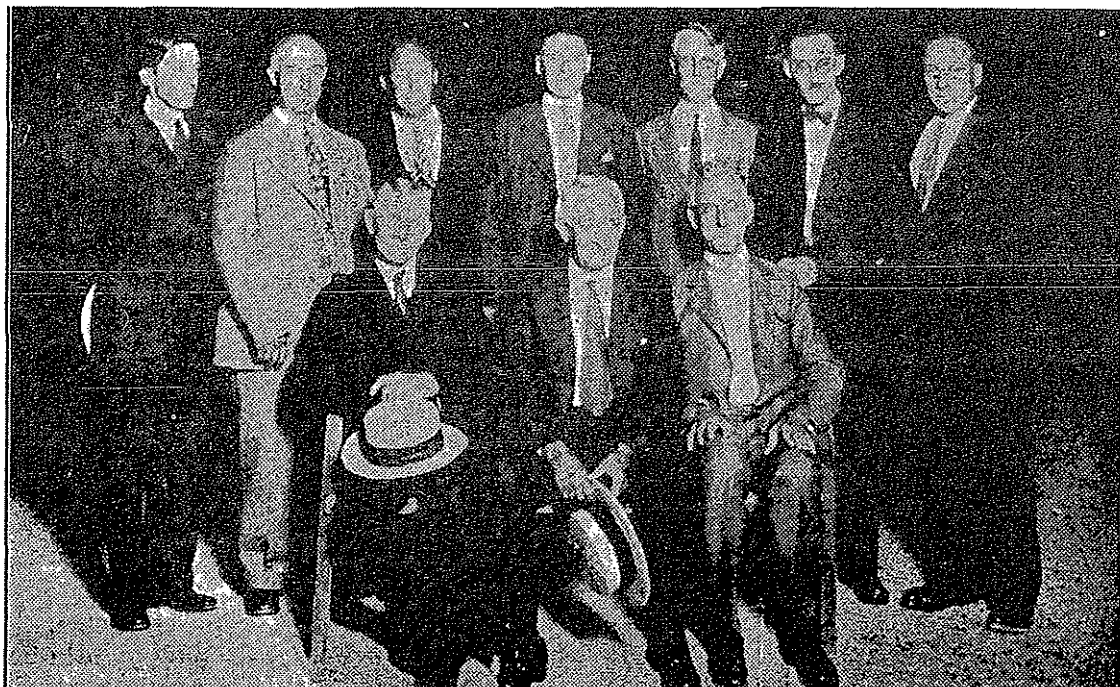
Judge Pietschker said the lights may help in the war on "petters".

William Conroy, representing the Westchester Lighting Company, read a statement on behalf of the corporation.

The program closed with songs.



THE ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPH ARE FROM THE COLLECTION OF
DORIS FINCH WATSON



OFFICIALS AT THE STREET LIGHTS AUGUST 7, 1930 CEREMONY

(standing left to right) William Conroy; T. William Brundage, Town Clerk; Harry Hunter, Highway Superintendent; Mr. B. Timm; Dr. George Clark, Health Officer; Judge Edward Kanze; and Mr. H. Prindel; (seated left to right) Judge George Mead, Supervisor J. Hobart Cox and Judge Arthur Pietschker.

TOWN MEETINGS

by Sharon Tomback

"The town meeting was a democratic process, bringing together the eligible electors of the various communities in the town once during the year to select its officers and to make decisions concerning its well-being. ...The minutes over the years evidence the selection of the same individuals for various town offices – an outcome not too surprising since the people of the town knew each other well and the capacities of one another had been tested by performance. The minutes in fact show the promotion of certain men to higher positions in the space of several years and their continuation in office over decades."¹

In 1801 New York codified the laws concerning town meetings. Chapter 78 of the Laws of 1801 authorized the annual election of a supervisor, town clerk, three to five assessors, one or more collectors, two overseers of the poor, three commissioners of highways, as many constables, fence viewers and pound masters as necessary and as many overseers of the highways as there were road districts. The law stipulated that the town meeting should only be held the first Tuesday in April, during the daylight hours, and that it should last no longer than two days.

Highway commissioners directed those persons (freeholders over 21 years old) assessed for roadwork. An assessed person could pay 62 ½ cents per day to commute his labor. A team of oxen or horses used for one day was considered equal to three days of a man's labor. If a man refused to work, did not appear on his appointed day or failed to pay instead of work, his fine was \$1 a day.

Town Meeting, 1799²

(Misspellings and punctuation errors are intentionally replicated.)

AT A Lawfull Town Meeting held this 2nd day of April 1799 in and for the Town of North Castle, for the purpose of choosing and Electing Town

¹ North Castle Historical Records, 1791-1848, Volume 2, published by the Town of North Castle, New York, 1986.

² Until 1855 the town meetings were held at Smith's Tavern, now the headquarters of The North Castle Historical Society.

Officers, and to make such prudential Laws as the Inhabitants of said Town shall think proper by Virtue of an Act of the Legislature made and provided

John Smith, Town Clerk

Abel Smith, Supervisor

James Guion, Constable and Collector

Peter Lyon, Samuel Banks, and Israel Townsend, Assessors

Peter Lyon and Daniel Tripp, Poor Masters

Israel Townsend, Daniel Tripp and Isaac Webbers,

Commissioners of High Ways

*William Robbins, Jeremiah Green and Solomon Rundle, Impounders
and Damage prisers*

Road Destricts

No. 1 David Dayton

No. 2 Solomon Rundle

No. 3 Gilbert Lyon

No. 4 Winus Palmer

No. 5 Joshua Knapp

No. 6 Levi Meed

No. 7 Silas Lounsbury

No. 8 Abel Smith

No. 9 Caleb Brigs

No. 10 Othenal Sands

No. 11 Selah Moger

No. 12 Ritchard Smith

No. 13 Benjamin Lane

No. 14 Samuel Robbins

No. 15 Nathaniel Purdy

*Voted by Voice of the Town that the fence Viewers and Damage prisers
should be allowed Six shillings per day when called out*

*Voted by Voice of the people that Deborah Smith and Child is to be kept
at the opsion of the Poor Masters*

*Voted by Voice of the people that the Land that belongs to Elleck Mosher
to be sold at this House on the 10th day of April Instant for the Benefit of
said Town*

Voted by Voice of the people that the sum allowed Rachal fees for building her House by the Town shall not exceed Ten Dollars

Voted by Voice of the people that the Child of Deborah Smith is to be put out at the Discretion of the poor Masters

Voted by Voice of the people that the money due from Robert Murphy to the Town shall lay over until next year

Voted by voice of the people that there should be the sum of one Hundred Pounds to be raised by Tax for the Support of the poor for the year ensuing

The overseers of the poor for the Town of North Castle has sold the Lot of Land that formerly was in the possession of Ellick Mosher for Nineteen pounds at Publick Vendue

Voted by Voice of the people that the Road proposed to be laid out from Nathaniel Purdy's across to Harrison Town that they would not consent to its becoming a Town Charge, that if the Supervisors should agree to its becoming a County charge then they agree to its being Layed out by the Commissioners of the Town

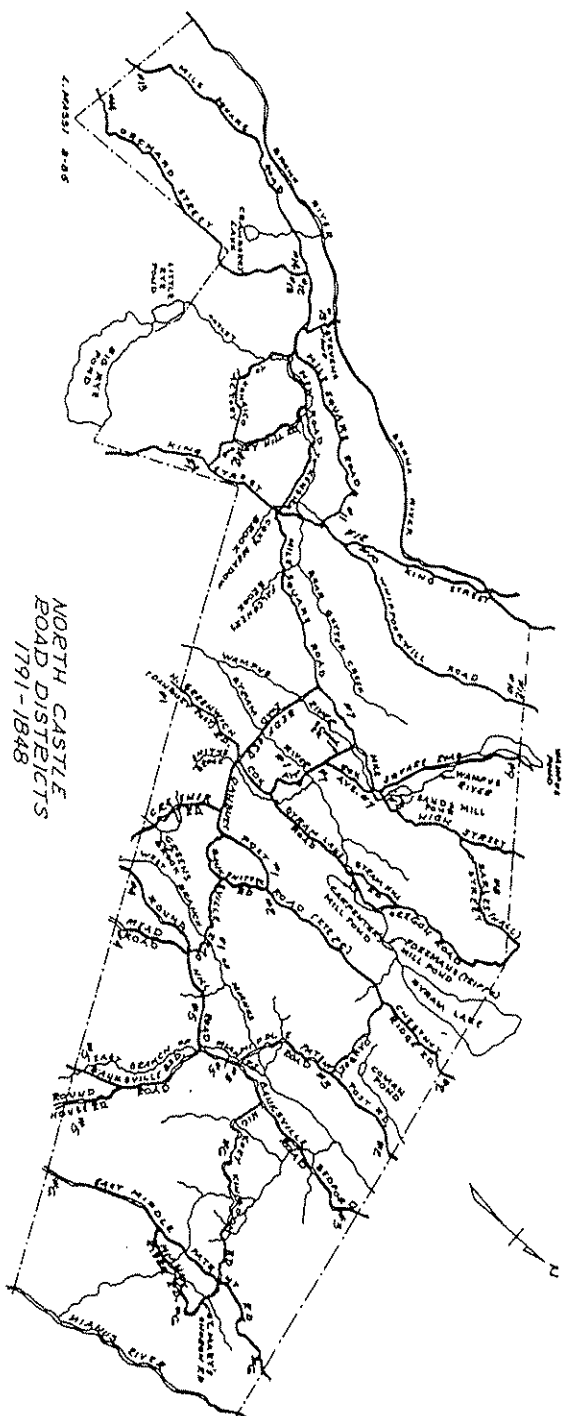
Similarities with 1999

Consider carefully the similarities between these 1799 Town proceedings recorded 200 years ago and our current Town concerns. Serving one's neighbors as an official of the Town was considered then, and is now, both a duty and an honor.

Of the nine issues voted, six involved taking care of the poor, two assessing and collecting monies, one laying out a new road and one involved viewing fences and assessing damages.



The adage that says as often as things change, they surely remain the same holds true in this comparison. Town officials were concerned then, as now, with keeping order between the citizens (impounders, fence viewers and damage prisers), maintaining the roadways, collecting taxes, and taking care of the poor. During a proofreading Editor Marge Moore realized that the clerk used "dollars" and "pounds" interchangeably when recording the Minutes. Could this be indicative of the relative newness of the nation?



NORTH CASTLE
ROAD DISTRICTS
1791-1848

NORTH CASTLE ROAD DISTRICTS 1791 - 1848

(from North Castle Town Records, 1791-1848. Drawn by Lewis Massi, 1985.)

Citizens of North Castle
"TOWN MEETING"

FRIDAY, MARCH 22nd, 8:00 P.M.¹

SCHOOL HOUSE

ARMONK

Subject:

"The UNO Headquarters and North Castle"

Purpose of Meeting: To formally organize an association representative of the home owners, tax payers, and voters in the Town of North Castle—

1. To act as a two-way channel of information between Federal, State, County, Neighboring Town and UNO Officials on the one hand, and the people of North Castle on the other hand.
2. To provide a locally convenient point of contact where every individual may register his or her opinion regarding the location within our Town of any part of the UNO Headquarters and to put on the record the extent to which any definite proposal for such Headquarters will affect the property or other interests of the individual.
3. To help individuals to protect themselves against unwarranted injury or hardship.
4. To safeguard the political integrity and future development of the Town of North Castle.

In response to the growing demand for such an association, the undersigned volunteered as a Temporary Organizing Committee. Permanent officers and Committee Chairmen will be elected at this meeting. Nominations will be made by the Nominating Committee, and others may be made from the floor. After the Permanent Organization is completed, everyone present will have opportunity to take part in a general discussion.

* *

No one knows, at this time, to what extent the UNO site may encompass North Castle. It may be more or less than the site already recommended. It may be in an entirely different section of

¹ The year was 1946. See *North Castle History*, Volume 22, 1995, pages 13-18 for further information regarding the United Nations Organization.

the Town or County. To a large degree the final decision will depend upon what the people of North Castle want and the prompt and effective presentation of the Town's attitude to the proper officials. We are confident that these officials sincerely desire to know your attitude and that they wish to handle the whole matter so as to produce the greatest goodwill. We are also confident that these officials will be glad to recognize and cooperate with this association.

Even though you may not live in the site previously recommended, your interests may become directly involved. In any event, the future of the Town should be of vital interest to you. COME TO THIS MEETING. TELL YOUR FRIENDS. MAKE THIS YOUR ASSOCIATION AND HELP MAKE IT TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL NORTH CASTLE.

“CITIZENS OF NORTH CASTLE”

TEMPORARY ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

John A. Hill, Chairman
Willard C. Wheeler, Vice-Chairman

Mrs. W. B. Hubbell, Secretary
Walter L. Weil, Treasurer

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

First District

(Bedford Village, Banksville)

Dr. A. F. Coburn

Second District

(Armonk)

Hamilton Hadley

Harry J. Hunter

Chester B. Tompkins

Mrs. Michael Genkerell

Richard S. Miller

Third District

(North White Plains)

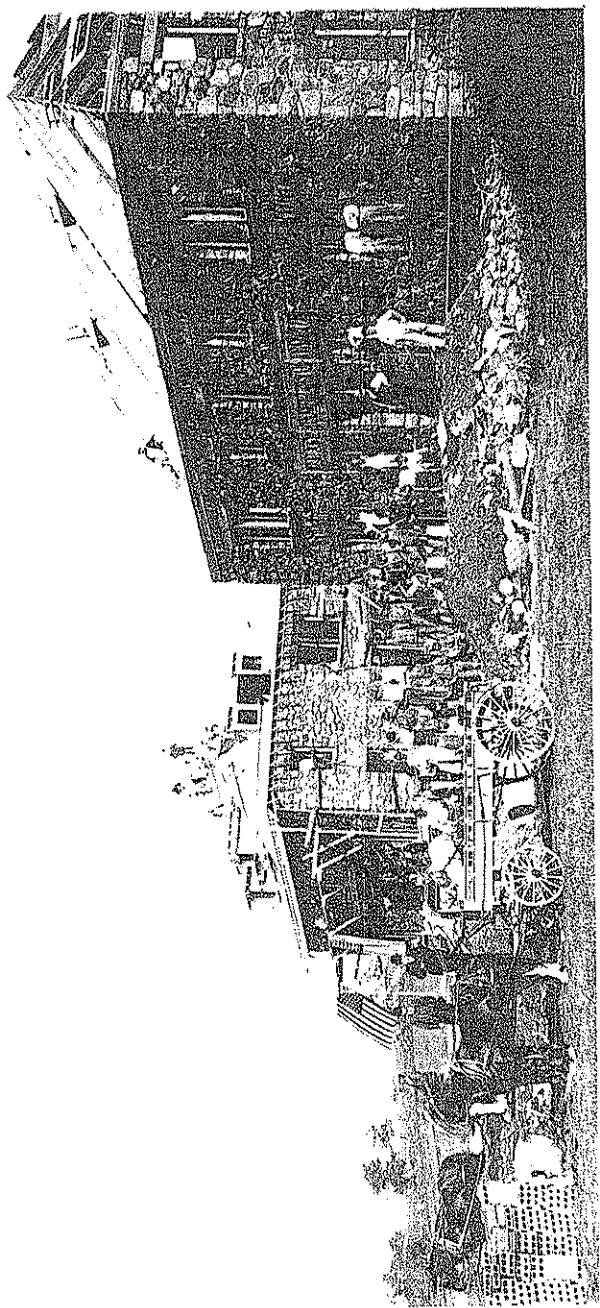
Charles Gambino

Perlle R. Rose

Herman Wuttke

*This is the first communication addressed to the citizens of
North Castle by this Committee or any member thereof.*

**APPRECIATION TO DORIS FINCH WATSON FOR SHARING THIS
ANNOUNCEMENT OF A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WHICH OCCURRED
MANY YEARS AFTER THE 1799 MEETING DETAILED ELSEWHERE IN
THIS BOOKLET.**



Jennie Clarkson Home, North White Plains, under construction. (The undated photograph was donated to the collections of The North Castle Historical Society by Ms. Ella A. Field, North Salem, daughter of Clark Sheeley. Sheeley Brothers [Clark and Alfred] were the builders of the Jennie Clarkson Home.)

The property was owned by John Raven. See *North Castle History*, 1983, Volume 10. Neil S. Martin reported that John Raven said in 1904, "I have raised all my children here. If the Jennie Clarkson people think it can help their children, they should have it." Raven's Lake View Hotel was used as a temporary children's home before it was burned as a fiery prop for an early motion picture, name unknown.

THREE LEGAL NOTICES

Fences, Cattle, Trespassers

The Colonial Laws of New York From the Year 1664 To The Revolution detailed the laws under which early settlers lived in the Province of New York. In the section dealing with cattle and fences, the laws read in part (misspellings intentional) "Every person interested in the improvement of Common fields inclosed for Corn or ther Necessary use shall from time to time, make and keep his part of the fence Sufficiently strong and in constant repair, to secure the Corn and other fruits therein, ... All Catle and hoggs shall be markt with the publique mark of the Town to which they belong and the private mark of the owner, ... That whatsoever Swing or greater Cattle, horses excepted shall be found in the woods or Commons unmarked are Lyable to Poundage"

In 1743 the Town of North Castle enacted laws against "Rams running on the Commons from the first of August to the first of November." Hogs could be "Commoners" if they had "good sufficient yokes well put on." Horses were prohibited from running on the Commons unless they were "well side Hopped." The laws further stated that "any person that keeps any Cattle that is brought out of any other Township shall pay ten shillings for the good of the Town."

By 1789 the laws called for a ring in the nose of any hog over the age of two months and a payment of "two shillings each for ringing the same". Rams were to be gelded. If rams were found in another person's "enclosure he may geld them and if they die the owner shall loose them."

A "Notice to Trespassers" in the April 24, 1914 edition of The North Castle Sun newspaper evidenced a conservationist's attitude. "To the persons hunting and placing traps on my land, I give notice that in accordance with the Laws of New York, that land has been set aside for the 'propagation and protection of game,' and that, therefore, persons hunting upon it are guilty, not only of trespass, but of a misdemeanor, and are liable to heavy damages. The game is not preserved to benefit the owner of the property, but solely that the game may be protected. The owner does not shoot over the property, nor will others be permitted to shoot there. Richard Harding Davis. Cross Roads Farms."

"BUCK'S" YANKEE DOODLE BAND

by "Al." Young

We have a Drum Corps in our Town
Of which we are very proud.
Whose fame has spread for miles
around

And I tell you when they meet to
play
They always draw a crowd.

Buck Schmalting is the Leader,
and He is just as slick as grease
He acts just like a monkey
when they start to play a piece.

The band was started in the incubator
on the hill

And the boys all joined in with a
right good will to get their
uniforms and instruments

They had to get some dough
So they ran a dance at Rhineland
And gave us quite a show.

Then they started in to practice
down at the old Town Hall

Trying to get ready for the coming
Firemen's Ball

The drums – how they rattled and the
fifes blew loud and shrill

All the neighbors closed their
windows –

Up their backs went a chill.

The Janitor tried to stop them but his
pleadings were of no avail

He swore he'd go to Raven and have
them put in jail

But that wouldn't do a bit of good
Wohlfeil would only go their bail.

And so they beat and pounded
while outside the rain came
pouring down

And 14 men inside the Hall
knew nothing of a shower in town
They were busy getting ready for the
Coming Firemen's Ball

Over and over the bugles blowed
three years
Life would have been better and the
neighbors would have shed fewer
tears

And the Janitor would no doubt
given three rousing cheers
And in the Town there would be no
music for the ears.

Now this will soon be over – the
boys are coming fast
And soon will be elated so let our
patience last
And when the boys go marching by
and we hear the sweet refrain
We'll all stand up and cheer
for Buck's Yankee Doodle Band.

Now this Band is Armonk's very
own

Every man lives right here in Town
and if you care to listen I'll tell
who they be

From Sol Arillio right up to Captain
See.

When Bus Mack goes to practice
he closes all the windows and the
doors

And while he blows that fife –
down his back the water pours
And his wife is nearly frantic
with the heat and with the noise
And wishes Bus had never joined
The Yankee Doodle Boys.

George Holmes who is handy with a
butchers knife
is learning how to fife
morning, night and noon
we hear him play that Yankee
Doodle tune.

Art Hendry is a drummer
He's of Wenga Farm renown
Beats on a drum his Great Grand Dad
beat on in Boston Town
When the Boston Indians spilt the tea
They started one big war
Now Art is pounding it again
In Buck's Drum Corps.

Now comes along the Bugle boys.
There's Lester, George and
Russel
They are the lads that fill the joys
And make the drummers hustle.

The folks along the avenue
are worried over Steve and wish
he'd bid to drumming a fond
Sweet Adieu
O Why! O Why! Did Buck ever give
A snare drum to you.

Our sympathy goes out to Harold
Babcock's wife
Her lot is a happy one with Harold
Learning how to fife
His neighbor Jackson says he'll stay
at home no more
For Yankee Doodle rings in his head
until his brains are sore.

Harry Donnelly's chickens have
stopped laying
Since Harry got his fife
And have been in hiding afraid of
their life
They just can't get to the playing

of Yankee Doodle on Harry's
fife.

The bass drummer is certainly a wow
Steve Farquhar can certainly beat
that drum and how
Steve a Scotchman so they all do tell
But he isn't a bit afraid to give
that old bass drum h - - -

And now we have Harold Lape -
he's Buck's right hand man
And can step in and take the place of
anyone in the band
First he blows a bugle and then he
blows a fife
But when he beats a drum boy -
run for your life.

Now Wohlfeil has joined the Band
music he can't understand
So Buck gave him the symbols to
whang
And when those symbols begin to
clang
All the neighbors wish that they
could hang
Buck and his Yankee Doodle Gang.

And now that I have told you this
I must prepare to die
For when Buck hears this
he'll blow me to the sky
But if by chance some friend
I leave behind
Just whisper in old Buck's ear
and say **I THOUGHT
HIS BAND WAS FINE.**



From a scrapbook belonging to Roy
Farrington and donated to The North
Castle Historical Society by his
daughter Eleanor (Mrs. John)
Schnoor.

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Family \$25 * Individual \$15 * Sustaining \$35 * Seniors \$10
Business \$100 * Life Member \$250 paid once

**The North Castle Historical Society is chartered by The Regents of The
University of The State of New York.**

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Sharon Tomback, Editor
Marjorie Moore * Doris Finch Watson
Richard Koenig, Photography

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NORTH CASTLE HISTORY, VOLUME 26, 1999

Cover Picture

THE WAGONWHEEL RESTAURANT

As the 1990s closed we began to hear about a new megatrend for the 2000s – a return to a time of uncluttered, unhurried simplicity.

The photograph appearing on the front cover of this issue evokes thoughts of such a time in North Castle.

Pictured sometime during the 1930s, the simple one story building suggests a “homey” feeling. The white picket fence and small shrubs add to the sentiment. The two early automobiles remind us that once our personal transportation was basic and simple.

The sign atop the building depicts a wagon wheel with eight spokes and underneath the words “**WAGONWHEEL RESTAURANT**”. Evidently the owner wished to convey the idea of restaurant first and the name of the restaurant second because the word “restaurant” is twice the size of the word “wagonwheel”. The light pole has a sign atop showing a bell and the words “Public Telephone”. The small sign in front of the white picket fence reads “Mount Pleasant Ice Cream”.

Perhaps history is the best teacher. Hopefully a return to uncluttered, unhurried simplicity will be a megatrend of the 2000s.

Reprints of *NORTH CASTLE HISTORY*
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Armonk, New York 10504