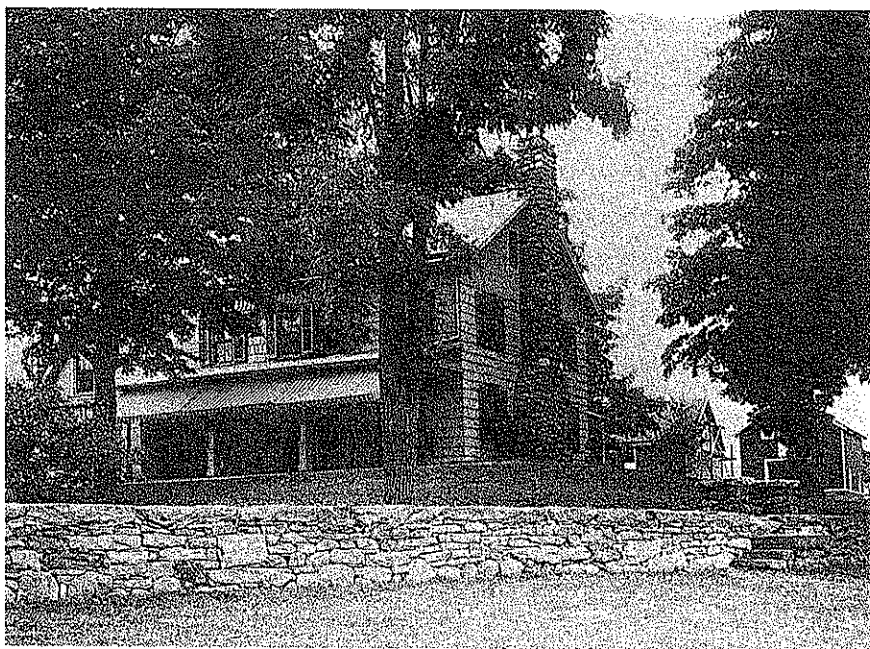


NORTH CASTLE HISTORY



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

REDBROOKE FARM MAIN HOUSE, about 1912

THE NORTH CASTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 31

--

2004

REDBROOKE FARM

Here is the story of both a river that has flowed for centuries, and of the ancient land through which it flows. The story encompasses not only the trail of owners, but the lifestyles and responsibilities of those who lived throughout the decades.

Through the centuries many changes occurred, and in the early part of the twentieth century great estates were being built in North Castle. This tells about the development of one of those great estates – REDBROOKE FARM – and the people who dwelled there then ... and now.

The fieldstone covered main house still stands today at the corner of Redbrooke Place and old New York-Danbury Post Road (now Bedford Road or Route 22) as a proud reminder of North Castle's Great Estates of the past.

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

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THE NORTH CASTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The North Castle Historical Society

440 BEDFORD ROAD ARMONK, NEW YORK 10504

A Message from the President

Dear Friends:

Preserving historic sites and remembering our traditions are vital to our community. By working together we can continue this mission so that those who follow us may experience and value our local heritage.

During 2004, our docents hosted drop-in guests and scheduled groups at Historic Smith's Tavern Educational Complex. Our first Pre-School Event was initiated and our outstanding Colonial Crafts Days for Byram Hills and Valhalla fourth grade students continued. We appreciate the Pre-School Association and the Byram Hills Parent-Teacher-Student Association for their invaluable help in presenting these programs.

Two significant history programs were presented this year. Constance Quarrie arranged for "Treason of the Blackest Dye" detailing the Benedict Arnold and Major John Andre conspiracy and the connection to North Castle through the Wrights/Sands Mill historic site. "This is North Castle... THEN and Now", a special program presented by North Castle Town Historian Doris Finch Watson, featured slides and commentary about large estates and historic sites of North Castle.

Our 26th Annual Armonk Antiques Show was a great success and a first-class show! Don't miss being a part of the 2005 upcoming Show on April 23 and 24 at Byram Hills High School.

We are a group of exceptionally dedicated volunteers who make things happen. If you are not actively volunteering, please join with us. Come share your vision... your ideas... your energy... your commitment. Come share your friendship and be a part of our community.

Sincerely,

Robby Morris, President

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“REDBROOKE”

ANOTHER GREAT ESTATE OF THE PAST

**by Doris Finch Watson
North Castle Town Historian**

As the story of this great estate called REDBROOKE FARM began to unfold, some perplexing questions remained unanswered:

When and Where did the name originate?
Was the name associated with an important place or location?
Was it always used or spelled the same way?

A careful search of various early North Castle maps and records disclosed that there was (and still is) an ancient stream called the Red Brook starting on the east side of the highway, meandering under (and sometimes over) the old New York-Danbury Post Road, (one mile north of Cox Avenue) then flowing toward the northwest through its embankments and base of soil made red by iron oxide, and finally continuing its journey to join the Byram Brook flowing southward to Long Island Sound. It still continues that course today.¹

The name of that ancient stream called “Red Brook” has been used and recorded in North Castle for three centuries, dating back to the early 1700s. March 8, 1722 was the earliest date a careful search revealed. That was when the “Public Road” from Bedford Village through North Castle was laid out. In the description of points to be passed it recites in part:

... and so along Comonk pond, up another ridge till you come to Cleke’s brook, so over Cleke’s Ridge, across ye northeast end of Nicholl’s field and over Red brook ...²

¹ See insert copy of 1901 map showing Red Brook’s route and name.

² In *History of Westchester County*, Volume 2, J. Thomas Scharf quotes from “Entries of Highways in County Records”, Scharf’s article on page 633.

time when property owners living along the roads had to take care of the stretch of highway assigned to them at the Annual Meeting, for in those days no road services were provided by the town government. Roger Lyon was assigned the same task for the next three years.⁴ If those early narrow roads, which sometimes followed old Indian trails, were to be at all passable during times of ice, snow and mud, then it was the responsibility of the assigned person to keep them open.

By April 6, 1762 the same section of road responsibility was assigned at the Annual Town Meeting as follows, "Anthony Tripp to keep the roads in good repair from Red Brook to Bedford Line, to Chestnut Ridge."⁵ And so it went on for many years, with new men getting their assigned duties for various stretches of roadways. Red Brook is last mentioned as a road assignment in the Town Minutes of April 4, 1786⁶, for during the following year a new improved system using numbered road assignments was instituted. At times the name "Red Brook" appeared as two words, sometimes as one.

Research shows yet another early use of the name "Redbrook". The first school in North Castle District Four, way back in 1816, was named "Redbrook School", and it stood just south of where Redbrook Place is located today. John Tripp gave the tiny piece of land, 14 feet by 22 feet, and the lumber to build the school was cut on his land. The little Redbrook School served the children there for over half a century.⁷

The Red Brook – or the Big Ditch

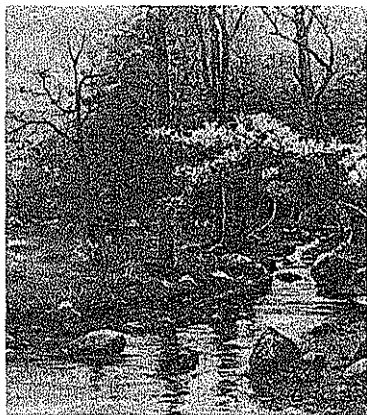
The stream was mentioned repeatedly, not only in town minutes or school records, but in many early deeds, sometimes referred to as the "Red Brook" and/or the "big ditch". Thus, through years of use and recognition, the Red Brook became an established local landmark. Years passed, and by the twentieth century the words "Red" and "Brook" became joined together and an "e" was added, perhaps to add a touch of distinction, as in REDBROOKE FARM, the name given to the farmland through which the brook flows.

⁴ Ibid, pages B32 and B33.

⁵ Ibid, page B35.

⁶ Ibid, page B76

⁷ North Castle History, Volume 9, 1982, page 11 and Westchester County Map of 1851 by Sidney and Neff, showing District School and properties of Nash and Tripp.



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV



Collection of Doris Finch Watson

TWO VIEWS OF THE RED BROOK

The left view was reproduced from Redbrooke Farm stationery dating back to about 1910. The right view shows the stream as it appears today (2004).



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

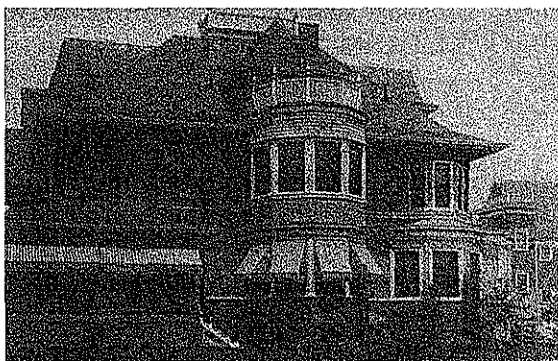
A PORTION OF THE ROCK WALL IN FRONT OF THE MAIN HOUSE SHOWING "REDBROOKE" CARVED IN STONE

Finding the Farm

The story of REDBROOKE FARM is one of triumph and tragedy. Typical of the early 1900s, affluent gentlemen from New York City were purchasing large tracts of land in both Fairfield and Westchester Counties on which to build their summer "cottages" or estates, where

they could commute to and from their peaceful country settings to their places of business. One such gentleman was States D. Tompkins.

Mr. Tompkins owned a large home in Flatbush (Brooklyn), and he was looking to find a special country place where the lifestyle would provide a welcome change for himself and his family.



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

TOMPKINS HOME IN BROOKLYN



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

TOMPKINS HOME, "REDBROOKE", IN NORTH CASTLE

The two dirt roads are presently Redbrooke Place to the left and Bedford Road (Route 22) going straight ahead. Even though the roads were unpaved, Mr. Tompkins installed catch basins, similar to the one appearing in the left foreground of the photograph.

States Tompkins enjoyed hunting and fishing, and he began checking property in Westchester, particularly in North Castle. He looked with great interest at the large farm owned by Louis D. Brundage, walked the fields and observed the flowing brook, known as Red Brook, winding its way through the rocks and woodlands. THIS was what he wanted. Mr. Tompkins' decision was made, and so on July 2, 1908 he completed the purchase from Mr. Brundage and became the owner of what he would call his "REDBROOKE FARM"⁸.

The Background

As with much property, the 180-acre farm that States Tompkins purchased on both sides of the highway had a long list of former owners and co-owners. Of special interest is the current discovery that at one time, back in the 1830s, a large portion of this land was owned by Samuel P. Smith (of Smith's Tavern) and at other times by such recognized names in North Castle history as Hiram Finch⁹, or Andrew Nash¹⁰ and others. One deed for a portion of this property, mentioning Red Brook, was dated April 22, 1839 from Samuel P. Smith, and reads in part, "All that certain tract or parcel of land, situated in said North Castle and bounded as follows: Northerly and easterly by the ditch commonly called Red Brook, southerly by Andrew S. Nash's land"¹¹ It seems the desirability and ongoing value of that land was known to many.

The Setting

As Mr. Tompkins began to develop his working farm, he found the commute to and from New York City was not too difficult or long, attested to by the ancient mileage marker set along the roadside near his home. That particular marker reads "38 Miles from New York", and tradition says that Mr. Tompkins moved it from the edge of the narrow road and encased it in his stonewall to protect it.¹² Today, it is still visible and remains exactly where it was set into the stonewall nearly one hundred years ago. Back in the 1770s milestone markers were placed at

⁸ Westchester County Clerk's Office, Division of Land Records, Liber 1841, page 429.

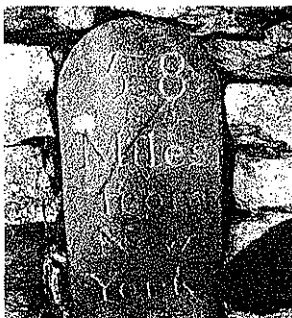
⁹ Ibid, Liber 1512, page 439.

¹⁰ Ibid, Liber 1324, page 34.

¹¹ Ibid, Liber 84, page 457.

¹² North Castle History, excerpt from article by Richard M. Lederer, Jr. on Milestones, Volume 16, 1989, page 24.

every mile along the New York-Danbury Post Road to set the rate for the number of miles the mail and/or passengers were carried¹³, as well as to orient and benefit the stagecoach drivers whose responsibility it was to deliver the mail and to locate the various taverns with sleeping facilities that had been established for the stagecoach passengers.



Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

MILEAGE MARKER – 38 MILES FROM NEW YORK

The Tompkins Family

States DeGrote Tompkins II, named for his father, was born January 14, 1869, the son of Mary Mesick and States D. Tompkins, a collateral descendant of Daniel D. Tompkins who served as Governor of New York and as Vice President under President Monroe during both of his terms in office.¹⁴ The Tompkins owned property in Chatham, New York and later in Brooklyn. As a young man States Tompkins met and married Mattie Benedict. They had two children, a daughter, Mildred, and then a son, his namesake.¹⁵ Mr. Tompkins began a career in manufacturing special bags designed for carrying coal and/or blocks of ice, and in the early 1900s became a successful businessman, owning his own company, a manufacturing entity located in Brooklyn, New York. It was during this period of time, 1907-1908, with his successful business and his growing family, that Mr. Tompkins made the decision to look into expanding his holdings out into the country. Thus, REDBROOKE

¹³ Ibid, page 27.

¹⁴ Book of Knowledge, The Graphic Society, Inc., Book 11, page 3948 and Tompkins Family Genealogy papers.

¹⁵ Tompkins Genealogy shows that the daughter of States and Mattie was born in 1895 and their son, States, was born in 1901.

FARM came into the picture – and developing and perfecting his farm, or country estate, became an important part of his life ... and his dream.



States D. Tompkins II
b. 1869 – d. 1919



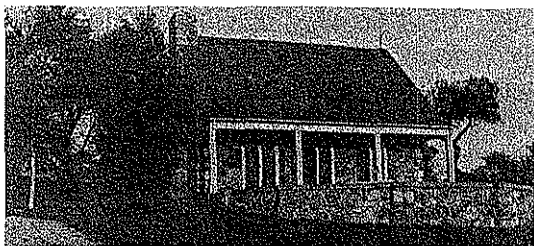
Mattie Benedict Tompkins
b. 1868 - d. 1955

Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

Farm Life

The farm scene must have been a busy one. Cherished old family photographs (shared with the author by the owner's grandson) help us to understand the enormity of Mr. Tompkins' undertaking. The first concern was the main house; then came the work of improving old or erecting new buildings for a variety of usual farm animals, plus exotic birds such as peacocks; erecting the separate "casino" or game building for ping-pong and leisure fun activities; building the stables, garages, windmills, stonewalls and tennis courts. Each season meant plowing the fields, planting and then harvesting the crops. The tasks were endless. Mr. Harry Schnoor (father of the late, well-known John Schnoor) was employed as estate superintendent, and many employees were hired, including local people, to handle the variety of ongoing duties.¹⁶

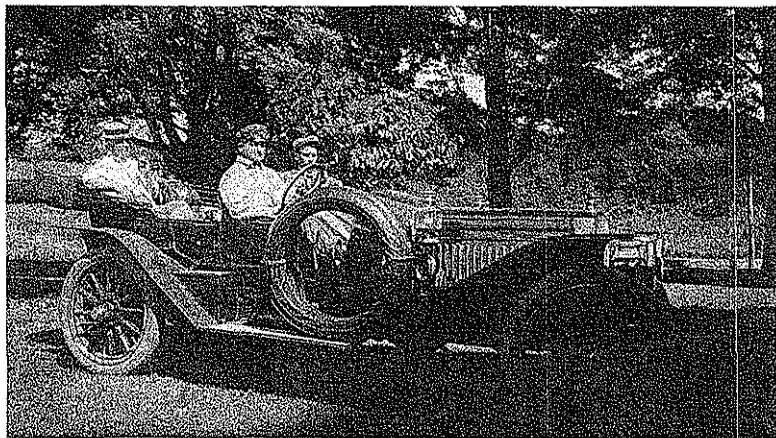
¹⁶ Superintendent Harry Schnoor's daughter-in-law, Mrs. John Schnoor, related her memories of his employment at Redbrooke Farm. Harry brought his wife and two boys, four-year-old Richard and baby John, to Armonk from Brooklyn to fill the position of Superintendent for States D. Tompkins at Redbrooke Farm. The Schnoor family became an important part of North Castle Community life.



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

"CASINO" OR GAME BUILDING AT REDBROOKE

According to family lore conveyed in a note from his grandson, Mr. Tompkins "always made sure that the Farm was in ship shape order, with everything neat and tidy and in its place. The Farm, therefore, had a full compliment of help to keep it running the way Grandfather wanted it."¹⁷ His grandson went on to say that there were stories of many friends who came to visit, to hunt and fish and to enjoy the country setting.



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

STATES D. TOMPKINS, II AND ONE OF HIS TOURING CARS

¹⁷ This quote is from written comments given to the author by the Tompkins' grandson, States D. Tompkins IV, who lives in Greenwich, Connecticut.

It was evident that Mr. Tompkins cared about his estate staff. As one example of his concern, when he learned that his farmhands liked baseball, he sponsored their baseball team which played in the Armonk area, and furnished both the team's equipment and the uniforms emblazoned with a large "R" for Redbrooke.



Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

REDBROOKE BASEBALL TEAM

[L-R] Seated in front: John French, Frank Johnson. Seated 2nd row: Ernest Sniffen, Timothy Mahoney?, Arthur Downes, Albert MacDonald, William Turnier? Standing: Unknown, Edward Robbins, Herbert Flint.

A Time of Tragedy

Eleven years had passed since 1908 when Mr. Tompkins first bought and then began to develop Redbrooke Farm into a great estate. He took great enjoyment and pride in his REDBROOKE FARM country estate. However, in the year 1919 unplanned change was beginning to take shape. Unexpectedly, Mr. Tompkins became seriously ill, and doctors advised surgery. He entered the hospital for what was believed to be a routine operation. Sadly, he did not survive, and he died on May 23, 1919 in his fiftieth year.¹⁸ He had achieved his dream ... his Redbrooke Farm.

¹⁸ Tompkins Genealogy records the date of death as May 23, 1919. He was buried in Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, New York on May 25, 1919. Three years

Mrs. Tompkins, as a young widow with an eighteen-year-old son and an older daughter, found herself faced with business decisions and the necessity of handling a large country estate, as well as carrying on family responsibilities. As time passed, she was unable to operate Redbrooke Farm in the style and to the standard set by her husband, and it became necessary to put Redbrooke Farm on the market. Executors for Mr. Tompkins' estate were Mildred Tompkins Hutchinson, his daughter, and Frank M. Tompkins, his brother. Redbrooke Farm was officially sold, along with furnishings, tools, equipment, two geldings, a truck, oil paintings, and even stuffed animal heads that hung in the "casino". Everything went with the final sale on September 20, 1923 to the Jamestone Company, a New Jersey corporation, for \$55,000.¹⁹

The Jamestone Company then sold to Brensam Realty Corporation on January 12, 1925²⁰, and five months later Brensam sold to C. T. Silver, Inc. on June 12, 1925. The sale to Charles T. Silver was reported in a front-page newspaper article attesting to the interest created by the sale of such an important and desirable piece of land. That sale was reported at \$89,000.²¹

New Ownership – New Approach

Charles T. Silver, the new owner, viewed Redbrooke Farm with a different idea. After the sale was completed another article appeared in "The Sun", North Castle's local newspaper of that era, regarding Mr. Silver's Redbrooke Farm purchase. It stated that he planned to divide, develop and sell the land and read:

He has placed it in the hands of real estate brokers who will direct the general policy of the development and sale. The land

later his family decided to have his body disinterred and moved to the family mausoleum in The Chatham Rural Cemetery in Columbia County, New York. He was interred there on September 16, 1922 next to his parents. His wife, Mattie, was laid to rest there in 1955.

¹⁹ Westchester County Clerk's Office, Division of Land Records, Liber 2452, page 353.

²⁰ Ibid, Liber 2544, page 400.

²¹ The North Castle Sun newspaper, Armonk, New York, ran a front-page article on the sale of Redbrooke Farm in Volume 12, Number 29, May 29, 1925.

is admitted to be the most attractive in this section of Westchester County.²²

As the years passed, various people made many changes. New additions were made to the main house, including upgrading and encasing it with stone, adding a second floor to the wing and changing the window styles. Regarding the old Red Brook, the long, narrow strip of land through which it flows was held in the hands of the City of New York Water Supply.²³ In 1929 C. T. Silver, Inc., after owning the place for four years, sold to Walter B. Cooke.²⁴ A little over twenty years later Walter B. Cooke dismantled the old, largest barn on the estate and built a new house in the area where the great barn had stood.

Over the years many changes occurred in the ownership of various sections of the farm: Walter B. Cooke sold to Herman Goldstein²⁵; Mr. Goldstein then sold to Theodora Goldstein; then Theodora Goldstein sold to Herbert L. Scofield.²⁶ Sections of this desirable land were conveyed back and forth.

In 1968 Herbert Scofield received approval for a subdivision plan for the area south of the main farmhouse. Map No. 15728 in the Westchester County Land Records Office shows the Farm's old main entrance road would become a drive named Redbrooke Place, and it would end in a cul-de-sac leading to three additional building lots. The original main farmhouse is shown on the plan with its own driveway leading from Bedford Road.²⁷ During 1967 Herbert L. Scofield and Peter and Eilene Laurence exchanged the main farmhouse property.²⁸ The author's recent visit to that area confirms that all of the subdivision plans were accomplished.

²² Ibid, Volume 12, Number 39, August 7, 1925.

²³ The detailed Map of North Castle, 1942 published by Dolph and Stewart, clearly shows the Red Brook as being in the hands of the "City of New York Water Supply".

²⁴ Westchester County Clerk's Office, Division of Land Records, Liber 2987, page 243.

²⁵ Ibid, Liber 4627, page 350.

²⁶ Ibid, Liber 4373, page 350.

²⁷ Ibid, Map Number 15728, January, 1968.

²⁸ Ibid, Liber 6745, page 245.

Then in 1970 Walter Cooke sold a large section of the farmland north of the main house to Mr. and Mrs. Louis Versames.²⁹

More Development

Mr. and Mrs. Versames surveyed the property, and once again new plans took hold. They erected a new road, which they named Nash Place in honor of the Andrew Nash family who had once owned much of the land. Mr. and Mrs. Versames sold sections along their new Nash Place, and today there are four homes there. The old farm stable/garage building is now part of the newest home and serves as a recreation room, while the remainder of it serves as a garage and storage area.³⁰ The old windmill is now minus its vanes in the rotating top section, which is shown in the early photograph, but the remaining water tower still stands beside Nash Place.



Collection of States D. Tompkins IV

WINDMILL AT REDBROOKE FARM

The top is missing, but the base stands beside Nash Place today (2004).

²⁹ Ibid, Liber 6958, page 405.

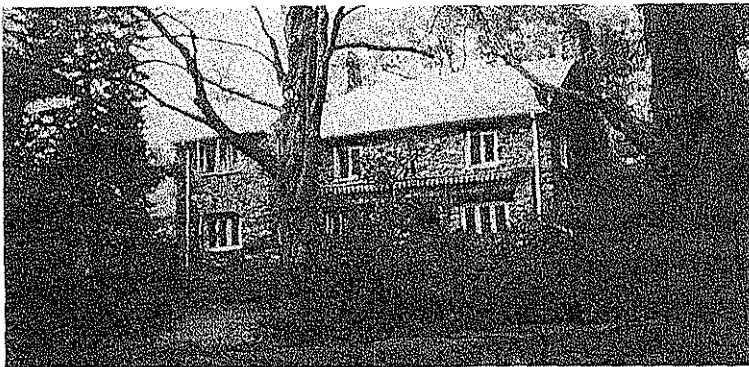
³⁰ Author's interview with Mrs. Louis Versames.

On April 7, 2000, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Laurence sold the stone-covered Redbrooke Farm main house to Mr. and Mrs. Michael Feigin, the present owners.³¹

The old “casino”, or the game building, has been converted into an attractive home, and newer homes have been built along the two drives. The century-old stonewalls continue to enclose the property, although new entrances have been opened in the wall to create the new drives. Thankfully, the 38th Milestone still remains embedded in the stonewall that runs along Route 22. The Milestone has survived since the 1770s.

The Ever-Changing Scene

Today, cars travel at high speeds passing over the stream called Red Brook on Bedford Road (also known as Route 22), with drivers perhaps not even noticing the brook or the post sign reading “Redbrooke Place” just a mile north of Cox Avenue. Where once barns, windmills, silos, chicken coops and stables stood, surrounded by planted fields, now those acres hold several landscaped homes and buildings with different drives and entrances.



Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

“REDBROOKE” MAIN HOUSE AFTER IT WAS ENCASED IN FIELD STONES AND THE WINDOWS WERE CHANGED

³¹ Westchester County Clerk’s Office, Division of Land Records, Liber 12038, page 00015.

The multitude of changes to the old farm and fields took place over many years, and few passersby know or give thought to the fact that a century ago all this was once part of a great 180-acre estate called REDBROOKE FARM. The ancient stream, still called "Red Brook", after hundreds of years continues to meander through its winding course – and the word "Redbrooke" now means "Home" to all who dwell there. The future may bring new and varied changes, which only time will disclose, but may the name REDBROOKE always remain a proud name in North Castle's history.

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13. Westchester County Clerk's Office, Division of Land Records, White Plains, New York, Libers 935, 84, 666, 268, 935, 1841, 1324, 408, 1324, 2987, 2577, 1512, 2452, 457, 6958, 12038, 2544, 4627, 4373, 6745, 6958, also Map 15728.

14. Westchester County Map, Whitlock's, Plate 52, New Haven, Connecticut, 1901.

Acknowledgements

Mr. States D. Tompkins IV, the grandson, graciously shared his time with the author and assembled old photographs and records for use in this article. His help and enthusiasm are appreciated.

Special thanks to Mrs. Louis Versames for her recollections.

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Thanks to Carol Gregg of the Chatham Town Hall, Chatham, New York for helpful information.

To Mr. Jesse DeGroodt, Chatham Rural Cemetery, Chatham, New York, thank you for filling in the blank spots for names and dates.

Accolades go to Editor Sharon Tomback for her research, dedication and excellent work in all areas of our annual publication – and beyond.

Lindsay "Pete" Welling should be thanked a thousand times for the time years ago he spent taking hundreds of photographs and gifting The North Castle Historical Society with pictures and slides that are treasured views of North Castle. We use them gratefully.

A NORTH CASTLE HUNT – BOTH PIGS ESCAPE¹

Yoinks – Tally-ho! 159 Hunt 2 Pigs

One hundred and fifty-nine hungry men roamed through Armonk, N.Y., yesterday hunting pork chops on the hoof – as guests of the North Castle Town Police.

The safari was organized by Police Chief John A. Hergenhan after two porkers escaped from a pen behind the home of Frank Lacko, a baker, on School Street, Armonk. The discernible purposes of the hunt were (1) to get volunteer help in rounding up the pigs before they did any damage and (2) to get the town's name in the papers.

Brings Bow and Arrow

The Chief wasn't the only one to see the publicity value of the hunt. Doyle Day, 301 W. 29th St. [New York City], for example, showed up with a bow and arrow, although all the other would-be hunters carried shotguns.

Another gagster, deservedly nameless here, put in an appearance, while the hunters were beating through the woods, with a pig he claimed was one of the missing porkers. Hergenhan took one look and spiked the story as a fable.

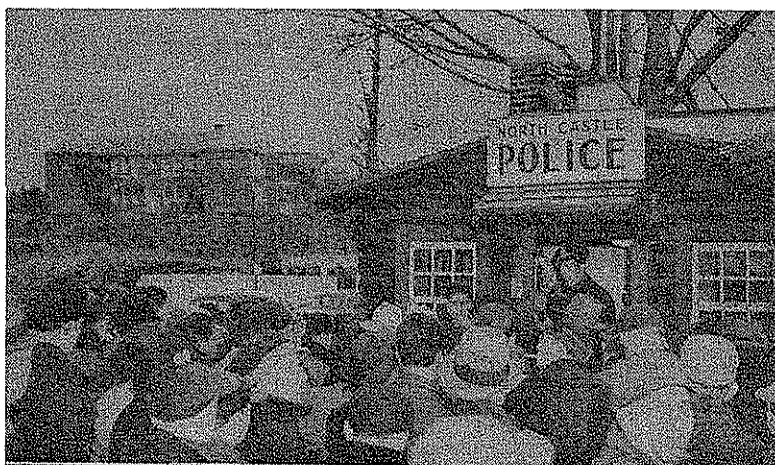
The gagster returned to Ridgfield, N. J. But, his mission wasn't entirely a flop. Photographers made a few pictures.

Chief Hergenhan, who marshaled the hunters in front of the police booth on Route 22 in the heart of Armonk for final instructions before starting the hunt, had one stern warning for the nimrods. "If it has antlers, it's not a pig," he said.

By nightfall the hunters were weary of both the hunt and the gag. But the pigs were still at large.²

¹ Excerpted from The Daily News, March 5, 1945. Mr. and Mrs. John R. Schnoor donated the clipping to The North Castle Historical Society in a scrapbook of the period.

² The reverse side of the clipping contains a somber reminder of that time. Bruce W. Munn reporting from Paris wrote that the American 9th Army tank forces "smashed to the Rhine at Homberg yesterday [March 4, 1945], bringing the great Essen Krupp works within artillery range..."



Reprinted from the Daily News Newspaper, March 5, 1945

NORTH CASTLE POLICE HEADQUARTERS, 1945

The Police headquarters were in a log cabin “booth” on Main Street (incorrectly called Route 22 in the article) in Armonk. Note the open view of Whippoorwill School pictured in the left background.



Reprinted from the Daily News Newspaper, March 5, 1945

THE SUBJECT IS PORK
Can you name any of these hunters?

THE LEATHERMAN HE SLEPT IN NORTH CASTLE

by Sharon Tomback

Tramp? Beggar? Recluse? Introvert? So many legends and traditions surround the man that we cannot discern facts from fiction. He dressed in a leather outfit of breeches and coat made of patches of leather sewed together with leather strips. He used a large walking stick. He wore a leather hat low on his head. He wore boots of leather fastened to layers of wooden soles. He carried a leather bag. He was the "Leatherman".



Collections of The North Castle Historical Society, Postcard E-82

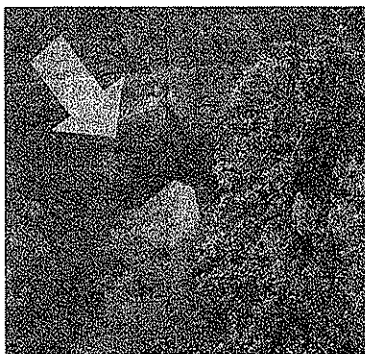
THE OLD LEATHERMAN

His travels extended for over 300 miles in Connecticut and New York. The Leatherman appeared with a regularity and pattern; some said he made his circuitous route every thirty-four days; some said every three months; some said longer. Reuben Whitson testified at the inquest conducted at the time of the Leatherman's death that the Leatherman passed his house every two months.

The Leatherman avoided people, except to acquire food. Apparently, most people avoided him too. However, James Frances Rodgers, a

young amateur photographer from Branford, Connecticut, reportedly was permitted to make seven photographs of the Leatherman.

He slept in barns, crude huts and caves. History records that one of his caves is in Armonk located on the bluff just behind and to the south of the old bowling alley site. It is also known as Bet Heliker's Cave.¹



The Reporter Dispatch Newspaper, September 23, 1963
Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

THE LEATHERMAN'S CAVE AND BET HELIKER'S CAVE ARMONK, NEW YORK

He carried his possessions in a leather bag measuring about two feet square. He wore it slung across his back using two carrying straps, which were attached to either side of the opening at the top of the bag and arranged to go around his body, fastened across his chest.

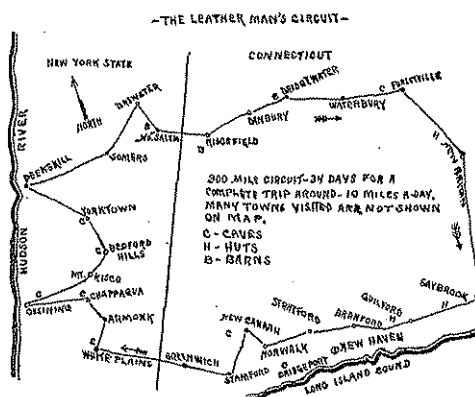
According to newspaper stories of 1885, the Leatherman was ill in his cave near Woodbury, Connecticut where some local young men found him and nursed him back to health. They reported the leather bag contained a French prayer book printed in 1844, his pipe and hatchet, a small tin pail, a small spider (cooking pan), a jackknife and an awl. Allison Albee wrote that in a History of Bristol, Connecticut, A. M. Bartholomew reported a small package was carried in the bottom of the bag and no one was allowed to touch it. Others reported old boot tops, an ax, pieces of leather, knives and forks, and a pair of scissors. Miss Elizabeth Fisher of Middletown, Connecticut said there was a tin box in

¹ Reportedly Bet Heliker was a hermit who inhabited the cave around the time of the Revolutionary War. Young or old, male or female remain mysteries.

which he kept money and that her father gave the Leatherman a quarter once. When turned over to the Connecticut Historical Society, the bag contained only a small purse gathered at the top, a leather mitten with the thumb attached by a thong and an item resembling a dog's muzzle.

Mr. John L. Birdsall exhibited the Leatherman's attire and the articles found in his hut at the time of his death. Large crowds came to view these items displayed in the window of Mr. Birdsall's cigar store in Ossining. Later the items were exhibited at the Globe Museum and the Eden Musee, both in New York City.

On March 24 and 25, 1889 at Sing Sing, New York Dr. Joel D. Madden and Dr. Charles S. Collins testified at a Coroner's Inquest that the immediate cause of death was blood poisoning resulting from a cancer that had destroyed his lower jaw and affected his throat. Henry Miller, a carpenter living in Mt. Pleasant and helping to construct the Croton Aqueduct, testified that he and his wife found the body near the hut used by the Leatherman on the George Dell farm.



Reprinted from the Patent Trader Newspaper, October 26, 1972
Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

THE LEATHERMAN'S REPORTED ROUTE

The Leatherman was buried in the Sparta Cemetery near Ossining, New York. He was buried as a public charge in an unmarked grave. In 1937 the Ossining Historical Society located and marked the gravesite.

Mr. H. P. Palmer of Mount Kisco, New York wrote that the Leatherman frequently stopped in a store in the lower part of the village, that he

purchased necessary supplies, without begging, and would point at the items rather than speak. The New Haven Register for August 2, 1931 reported that housewives would find coins in hens' nests and would know the Leatherman had helped himself and paid for the eggs.

Who was the Leatherman? No one knows. One story, told by Mrs. Aaron Taylor who lived between Bedford Village and Pound Ridge, was printed in the Mount Kisco Recorder. According to Allison Albee, Mrs. Taylor said the Leatherman was born in Lyons, France in 1834, that he was apprenticed to a tanner, fell in love with the tanner's daughter, and her parents opposed their marriage. Lovelorn and dejected, he wandered aimlessly the remainder of his life. Many stories were told regarding his identity. Absent proof, he was generally known as Jules Bourglay.

Some say that more than one man wore the costume and the title. Mr. Martin Holmes of Bedford Hills, New York, born about 1860, reported in 1937 that he remembered two leather men, that one was frailer than the second and that he was about ten years younger than the second.

Certainly, the Leatherman "character" remains a matter of great interest and curiosity today, just as was true during his lifetime.

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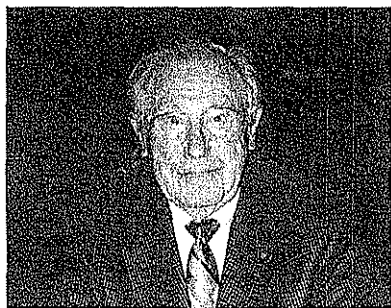
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FRIENDS REMEMBER HAROLD J. ("HAL") SCHALLER



Courtesy of Mrs. Ann Schaller

HAROLD J. ("HAL") SCHALLER

Comments from Bill Moore

This kind, gentle man was also a person of great strength, remarkable ingenuity and great artistic ability.

He graduated from Cooper Union in architecture in 1938. Imagine a more difficult time to find a job in architecture. But Hal did find one, as a draftsman for H. K. Peacock, a memorials company that he later acquired. It continues to operate as a family business.

World War II interrupted this promising start and his family life—he and Anna ("Ann") Lehnert, childhood friends, were married in 1940. Their marriage of more than sixty-three years produced a wonderful family of three daughters, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.¹

Hal's war experience was remarkable. Working for our intelligence services in London he prepared maps of enemy territory. He lived through much of the worst bombing of London and once returned home to find a side of his apartment blown away. His trip to Europe was by a Navy LST, a large landing craft that carried troops and tanks. From the ship at Normandy he watched the horrible slaughter of many of the soldiers they had carried across. On return trips the decks were covered with the wounded. The experience must have molded his life. But even here there was a chance to display ingenuity and practical skill. As they were preparing for the invasion, Hal and the captain decided the ship was

¹ Elaine Tuthill, Marilyn Mangels and Karen Hampton are their daughters.

insufficiently armored. So, somehow scrounging up enough steel, Hal designed and built armor plating over the most sensitive part of the ship. At least this ship came through.

Post War, in addition to being an artist Hal was an excellent businessman and one of real integrity. He built the Peacock business and became president of the large association of like businesses, the American Institute of Commemorative Art. He came to know a host of legendary Americans who asked him to design mausoleums for themselves or members of their families, including Barbara Streisand, Tommy Dorsey, Lou Gehrig, Duke Ellington, Christopher Morley, Alfred Sloan and I.M. Pei. Always modest, Hal never bragged that he had come to know any celebrities. To Hal, Peacock Memorials Co. was much more than a business -- as merely sentimental as this may sound, to him it was a way of helping people during their bereavement.

There are also his public commemorative monuments -- to the 101st Airborne Division and the Armored Division in Washington, D.C. at the gates of Arlington Cemetery, to our World War II forces in Gander, to our Korean War Veterans in Columbia, South Carolina and to the Challenger victims in Orlando, Florida. In addition, he spent much time on ecclesiastical art, beautifully designing the interior of several churches. Visit his simple monument to 9/11 victims in Wampus Brook Park in Armonk. And, when in Chappaqua, look in the Lutheran Church to see the magnificent altar window he designed.

We are extraordinarily fortunate that Hal lived in North Castle.

Harry Fullam Recollects

Harry said, "Hal was a great guy!" Their friendship spanned many years and they shared many good times together.

John Troy II Remembers Hal

Harold Schaller was a Rotarian in the true sense of the word. He was a past president of the Armonk Rotary Club and a Paul Harris Fellow, the highest service award in Rotary. When asked to help, Hal was always first in. He has done much for Armonk, the 9/11 Memorial being an outstanding example. He was an extremely artistic man and often donated paintings for charitable events. Hal truly loved North Castle. He will be terribly missed by all of us.

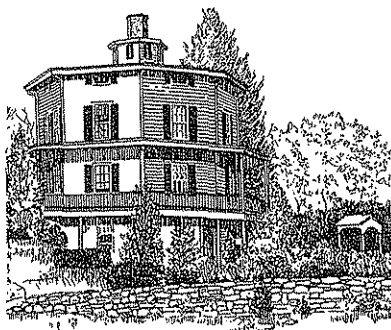
A Tribute from Sheila and George Drapeau

Hal's inspired design for North Castle's award winning 9/11 Memorial creates a timeless tribute to those who perished. His poignant design won first prize in the national public memorials design competition. Replicas stand in public spaces in Connecticut, New Jersey and California. Hal's original work stands in Wampus Brook Park, Armonk. Two other designs are notable: his memorial for James Forrestal, First Secretary of Defense, which stands in Arlington, Virginia and his Korean War Memorial, which stands in Columbia, South Carolina.

We miss his wit and wisdom, his talent and dedication and remember his willingness to share his artistry and imagination with others.

The North Castle Historical Society Salutes Hal

Hal and Ann served as Chairmen for the fundraising drive to move and restore the East Middle Patent One-Room Schoolhouse.² Hal donated drawings of some of North Castle's most historic buildings and reproduced them in a special calendar sold by The Society in 1986. More recently, he donated a beautiful framed painting of the 1798 Quaker Meeting House. His fine drawing of Historic Smith's Tavern graces our note paper.



Drawing by Hal Schaller

Collections of The North Castle Historical Society
THE ROUND HOUSE³

We remember Hal with affection and respect. We shall always recall the happy times we spent together.

² After moving, the Schoolhouse was restored on Society property at 440 Bedford Road, Armonk and a formal program of dedication was given by The Society in 1986. Refer to North Castle History, Volume 13, 1986.

³ Built on Round House Road, Banksville in the 1840s, it became the home in 1859 of Dr. Ralph B. Griswold. See North Castle History, Volume 18, 1991.

HONORING RICHARD ("DICK") KOENIG

By Doris Finch Watson, North Castle Town Historian

For over sixteen years Dick Koenig served on the Publication Committee of The North Castle Historical Society. His photography, always so professional, appears throughout the issues. There was never any doubt ... if a picture was needed, Dick would produce it, always with his quiet manner and a smile. For him, no request was too large or difficult, or too small. He loved his work and enjoyed sharing his talent with The Society.

Richard Koenig served his Country in World War II. A friend, Erling "Bumpy" Taylor, recalls that Dick Koenig, Ken Sniffen, Frank Nellis and he all left on the same day, taking the train from Katonah Station. While in service in England, Dick met Noreen MacDonough-Long. Friendship turned to romance, and they were married in London. Dick's parents, Richard and Martha Koenig, owned a large area of property in Armonk, and after the War was over Dick came back home. His wife, Noreen, who remained in England, joined him as soon as she finished her education at the Royal Academy. Their only child is a daughter, Martha Eileesh, named after both of her grandmothers. In the mid-1950s Dick and Noreen built their own home (next to the Methodist Cemetery on Cox Avenue) where they spent many happy years together until Dick's death early in 2004.



Courtesy of Noreen Koenig

RICHARD ("DICK") KOENIG DURING WORLD WAR II

While preparing this tribute to Dick Koenig, the author contacted Andy Rooney (of CBS "Sixty Minutes"), who had served with Dick during World War II, and asked if he would share his recollections of Dick. Following is the response that Andy Rooney so willingly sent:

Andy Rooney Writes of His Friend Dick Koenig

Dick Koenig and I had the best luck of our lives on the same day. We had both been shipped to England with the 17th Field Artillery Battalion and were busy with daily target practice as part of a 155mm howitzer crew when a notice was posted on our bulletin board saying that the Army newspaper, The Stars and Stripes in London, which had been a weekly since it started publication eight or nine months previously, was going to become a daily and needed reporters and photographers.

With only marginal experience, Dick and I applied, he as a photographer and I as a reporter. Several days later we were called to London for an interview and, although neither of us really had much experience, we got the jobs and were transferred from the artillery to Special Services with The Stars and Stripes.

The staff of the paper lived, not in barracks, but on the town. We were given a weekly stipend to pay for food and lodging so Dick and I found a basement apartment on Curzon Street just off Piccadilly and lived there for about six months while we did our work for the newspaper in the offices of The Times of London off Fleet Street.

Dick was a great roommate. I had roommates in college but Dick was better than any of them. I don't ever recall having an argument with him. We pretty much went our own way because our assignments for the paper were usually different although occasionally Dick was on the job taking pictures for a story I was writing.

Our apartment was near Piccadilly Circus, an active area for women interested in entertaining American soldiers for money. One night we were sleeping in our basement apartment and were awakened by a thumping sound emanating from the apartment

overhead. We'd heard it before. For a few minutes we lay there silently. Finally Dick said 'Andy, they're doin' it again. We gotta get out of here.'

We moved to a better location out Bayswater Road with classier neighbors above us and below us and stayed together there until we parted when we were sent to France on different landing crafts shortly after the D-Day Invasion.

We didn't meet again until the army reached Paris on August 23rd and The Stars and Stripes started publishing in the plant of the Paris Herald Tribune.

Dick had hundreds of pictures published in the paper during his year and a half with The Stars and Stripes. Photography was different then because Dick worked with a big, bulky Speed Graphic camera. The handy 35mm Leica had just been developed, but Dick never had one and was handicapped when it came to going up front with the troops. Even with his Speed Graphic and the need to change plates after every shot, Dick continued to provide pictures for the paper on an almost daily basis.

If we're lucky, we all make more friends than we have time to keep and I have always felt bad that Dick and I did not maintain our close friendship after the War. Our careers went in different directions. We didn't live near each other and we met infrequently. Dick Koenig was, nonetheless, one of the closest friends I ever had and one of the best guys I ever knew.

Thank you to Andy Rooney for sharing with us his wonderful memories of Dick.

We at The North Castle Historical Society repeatedly use and treasure the collection of photographs Dick provided to us over the years. Dick Koenig was a gentleman. He will be remembered fondly, and he will be missed.



Courtesy of Noreen Koenig

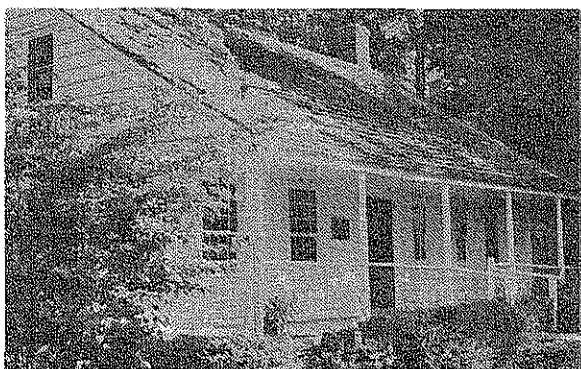
A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH OF DICK WITH HIS CAMERA

THE ELIJAH MILLER HOUSE or WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS

Where History Was Made . . . Now A Time of Concern

It was so long ago – back about 1738 – when this important segment of North Castle's history was built. The left half was added about 1770. The house stands on Virginia Road in North White Plains. It was the home of Elijah and Ann Miller and the centerpiece of a large, 600-acre working farm, stretching all the way to the top of the cliffs, now called Miller's Hill.

During the American Revolutionary War, Elijah Miller and two of the Miller sons gave their lives for the Patriot cause. The Widow Miller opened her home to General George Washington who used it as his Headquarters. In 1976 the Miller House was added to the National Register of Historic Places as one of General Washington's Headquarters during the Revolution. It is now in the hands of the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

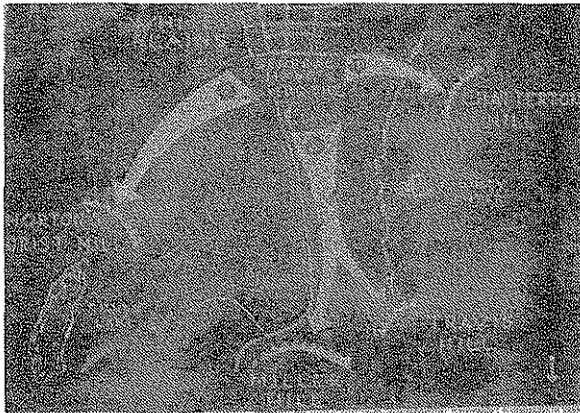


Photograph by Thomas R. Parker, 1975¹

THE ELIJAH MILLER HOUSE or WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS

¹ Washington's Headquarters at the Battle of White Plains by Thomas R. Parker, published by the North Castle Bicentennial Committee

Miller's Hill stands above the farmhouse and overlooks what is today North Broadway. Evidence of earthworks (breastworks) fortifications used during the Revolutionary War Battle of White Plains remains today. Mrs. Charles J. Dunlap and a friend saved the three and one-half acres comprising the summit of Miller's Hill and made a donation of it to Westchester County as an historic park. The White Plains Battle Monument Committee placed a large metal plaque on the hilltop showing how Washington's view of the battlefield stretched out below from Chatterton Hill on the west to Silver Lake (then Horton's Pond) on the east.



Photograph by Thomas R. Parker, 1975

**PHOTOGRAPH OF DIAGRAM SHOWING ATTACK PATHS
DURING THE BATTLE OF WHITE PLAINS**

**A metal plaque was erected by the Battle of White Plains Monument
Committee and is located on the summit of Miller's Hill.**

... NOW A TIME FOR CONCERN

Now the question arises: Will this National Register Landmark be preserved? Now is the time for all citizens to show their concern. Your notes of concern may be mailed to Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, 25 Moore Avenue, Mt. Kisco, New York 10549, to the attention of Mr. John Baker.