

# North Castle History



Historic Dayton house (shown in pre-fire photo) saved from fire. Photo by Lindsay Welling from files of Del Pietschker.

# *The North Castle Historical Society*

Bedford Road, Armonk, New York 10504

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*Dear Members and Friends:*

**North Castle History** was first issued in the Spring of 1974. Ten volumes have preceded the one you are now holding and these ten volumes represent the dedicated efforts, the love of history, and countless hours of hard work in research, writing, editing and production by a small group of people . . . but most importantly by the person who has been the Editor and Chair of the Editorial Board from Volume 1 through Volume 10.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to put together words that would appropriately express the debt of gratitude owed by your Society to Barbara Massi. For ten years she has been the driving force behind the publication of **North Castle History**. On behalf of the Trustees and members I would like to just say "thank you" and "well done!"

And now, please join me in welcoming our new Editor, Norman (Bud) Stone, and wishing him much success with **North Castle History**.

Sincerely,

Guy J. Papale

## THE DAYTON HOUSE

### Historic House Saved From Fire

by Richard N. Lander

On June 17 (Father's Day) one of the oldest homes in North Castle was partially damaged by fire. The fire, centering in the roof of what the author presumes is the oldest part of this ancient home, did serious damage to the structure. Only the valiant efforts of the Armonk Fire Company with the assistance of the Banksville Fire Company saved the house from complete destruction.

This article is an attempt to trace the history of the house and property and the interesting persons who have lived there.

Like so many other houses in Armonk we do not know and cannot tell exactly how old the house is or the date of its erection. The early history of the property is told in an unrecorded deed given to David Dayton on January 12, 1756 by Robert Flewelling and Hannah, his wife, which states "a farm of land" purchased by Flewelling from Thomas Golding (Golden) on December 20, 1755. The deed further recites said farm was purchased by Thomas Golding from his son Benjamin Golding and William Carpenter (no date) and that Benjamin Golding received his title from Silas Carpenter. Again the last recited transaction is undated.<sup>1</sup>

Exactly how did Silas Carpenter come into possession we cannot tell. We do know that this property was just inside the boundary of Anne Bridge's Patent,<sup>2</sup> and that the adjoining owner on the south was George Dennis. George Dennis and Ephraim Golding and others purchased from William Bond a ninth interest in this patent on September 11, 1729.<sup>3</sup> Therefore it must be presumed that Carpenter or his predecessors in title purchased from the neighbor Dennis or Golding or some other grantee from the patentees. As the deed in 1756 describes the property as "a farm" indicating partially cultivated land, no doubt the house or some part thereof was there in 1756.

Silas Carpenter, the first owner of record, was one of twin sons born to Timothy and Phebe (Coles) Carpenter on July 15, 1737, the seventh child in a family of ten. He married Phebe, the daughter of Joseph and Hannah Fowler of North Castle; they had seven children. We do know he resided and farmed for the remainder of his long life on King Street in the Town of Greenwich. He died April 22, 1832 aged ninety-five years, outliving more than half of his children. His life span crossed Colonial times to the Administration of Andrew Jackson, seventh President of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

His successor, Benjamin Golding, purchased the farm from Carpenter (probably speculation). He was the son of Thomas and Mary (Coles) Golding and grandson of Ephraim the patentee. Little is known of Benjamin Golding;

much more is known about his prominent brother, Joseph, a well-known Tory, who left the country at the close of the Revolutionary war. It is probable that Benjamin too followed the fortunes of the royal cause and left for Canada.

Benjamin sold the farm to his father Thomas Golding, one of the earliest settlers and leading citizens of Colonial North Castle. Like most of the early settlers he was born on Long Island in 1697 then moved to Westchester and played an active part in the civil government of our town. He was the son of Ephraim Golding who was one of the purchasers, with George Dennis of one ninth of Anne Bridge's patent. He died in North Castle in 1759. He seems to be the one who purchased the second parcel across the road, on the west side, from the house which from that date to 1928 was always conveyed with the homestead property. This purchase was from William Carpenter, another of the sons of Timothy Carpenter and an older brother of Silas. This purchase probably took place upon William's move to Nine Partners, Dutchess County.<sup>5</sup>

From the Dayton deed we know Thomas Golden sold the property on December 20, 1755 to Robert Flewelling. Flewelling was bound by kinship to the Goldens, his daughter Phebe having married Thomas Golden's son Joseph (the Tory). His ownership of the property was brief. (This transaction must also have been for speculation for on January 12, 1756 he sold the property to David Dayton.) To complete the record, Robert Flewelling died in North Castle in July 1768 leaving three sons, the progenitors of the Flewelling family in North Castle and Northern Westchester.<sup>6</sup>

With the purchase of the premises by Dr. David Dayton, the property became a lasting permanent home for him and his family and, for the next 125 years, the Daytons lived on the premises and were responsible for the additions to the original house. Since their arrival and departure it has been known as the "Dayton Place."

Dr. David Dayton was by far the most well-known and interesting person who lived in the old house. His ancestor Ralph Dayton from Ashford County Kent in England arrived in New Haven about 1641. A shoemaker by trade, he married Alice Triton. Ralph moved to Easthampton, Long Island, and then to a remote village, North Sea on Peconic Bay. He died in 1658 leaving a son Robert, born in 1628. Robert lived in Easthampton, married Elizabeth Woodruff and spent his entire life there and died in 1712. His son, Beriah Dayton, born in 1672, married Jane Miller, lived and died at Easthampton in 1746. His son Beriah Jr. born 1709 married Susannah Sandford and died there in 1791.<sup>7</sup> David Dayton was a child of this last marriage.

David Dayton was born August 13, 1731 and at an early age moved to Westchester County, probably first settling in Rye and arriving in North Castle in the winter of 1756 when he was twenty-four years of age. The deed of those years recites that he is David Dayton, Doctor of North Castle. Where his medical education was acquired and his apprenticeship in medicine was served, we do not know, but we do know he was a practitioner of medicine and perhaps surgery.

Rev. Charles W. Baird in his history of Rye mentions Dr. Dayton as follows:

"Dr. David Daton practiced medicine here in 1768. He was a resident of New [sic] Castle and his name occurs several years previous to the Revolution as supervisor of that town. Once it is written Dayton which is probably more the correct spelling."<sup>8</sup> The Westchester County Medical Society history also mentions him among the earliest medical practitioners in the County.<sup>9</sup> Since his practice at Rye is after his arrival in North Castle, he probably practiced in both towns "commuting" to Rye, on horseback, when necessary.

Like all early settlers he farmed, but his first love must have been public service. From young manhood he held a large number of public offices, some of great trust and importance.

His first public office was Overseer of the Roads in 1763. As learned men were rare, at the age of thirty-seven, he was appointed Surrogate of Westchester County, succeeding his North Castle neighbor, Judge Caleb Fowler. He held this office until 1778, being the last Colonial Surrogate of the County. In 1771 the town meeting elected him Supervisor of the Town, again succeeding Caleb Fowler. He served as the Chief town officer during the troubled times leading up to and during the first two years of the Revolutionary war.

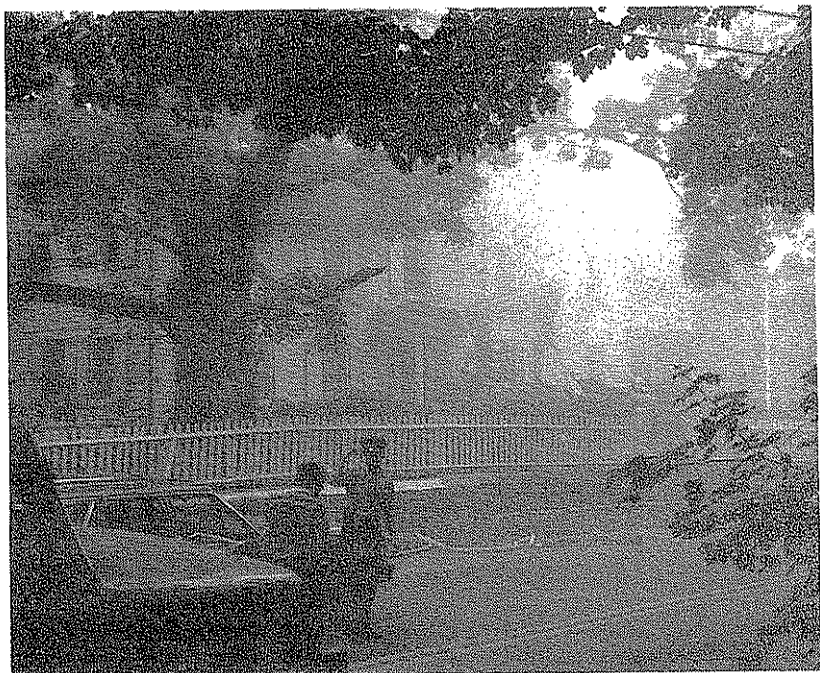
Dr. Dayton, while holding the Supervisor's office, was elected to the First Provincial Congress of the State of New York (the first session of the New York State Legislature), serving from May 22 to November 4, 1775. He evidently never sought re-election or was not again chosen for he served only this one brief term.

His larger political career stops after three high honors — one wonders what difficulties he encountered which caused this patriot leader to retire so early. He seems to have served briefly as Overseer of the Roads in 1788 and 1795. We do not know the date of his death or the name of his wife. The author assumes he was deceased prior to 1800<sup>10</sup> (See extensive footnote).

No documentary evidence shows the passage of the title to his supposed son David Dayton who continued to reside on the homestead. The old Dayton Bible, in the possession of one of his descendents, furnishes the only clues we have. Its family record shows David Dayton (2nd) born May 19, 1766 married Martha Wood, presumably the daughter of David and Sarah (Ingersoll) Wood of Bedford, born June 13, 1769 (family Bible) or June 13, 1759 (cemetery stone). They were the parents of eight children: David Jr. born September 15, 1789 died young prior to 1800; Silas born July 3, 1791; Hannah born September 17, 1793 married John T. Hopkins; Harvey born October 10, 1795; Sarah born April 20, 1798; David born September 21, 1800; Alfred born January 20, 1803; and Emeline born September 17, 1805.

This David Dayton Junior served in several public offices: Overseer of the Roads 1804 and 1811, Impounder and Fence Viewer 1807-1808, Overseer of the Poor 1805-1809, Commissioner of Highways 1810-1812, and Assessor 1811-1812. These last two offices he was holding at the time of his death. He died on January 11, 1812,<sup>11</sup> left the widow Martha and the seven children the homestead.

For the next sixty-seven years the old house was occupied by the Dayton children: David, Emeline, and Sarah, all of whom never married, and the



**CONSIDERING POTENTIAL** for total destruction, local volunteer firefighters turned in admirable job of saving historic Dayton house from blaze. North Castle police aided work by preventing onlookers from crowding up. On-the-scene photos of fire by Barbara Massi.



widow Martha Dayton who was the matriarch of the neighborhood. They were later joined by sister Hannah Hopkins whose marriage was not a happy one.

The public record is literally filled with deed transactions of the brothers and sisters and the widow as they acquired the interests of the other brothers and sisters who had moved away.

In 1814 the oldest son, Silas, conveyed all his interest to his mother, Martha Dayton.

In 1826 Alfred sold his interest to his brother, David Dayton.

In 1828 Harvey Dayton's Share was sold at a Sheriff's sale to pay debts owed to his sister Sarah, she being the purchaser.

In 1829, in an effort to place the title of the premises (as much as they legally had to convey) into the head of the household, Hannah Hopkins, her husband John T., Sarah, and Emeline conveyed their interests to their brother David. Thus by 1829, David was in possession of six sevenths of the property. He farmed the property for the rest of his life taking care of his sisters and they making a home for him and their mother.<sup>12</sup>

The widow Martha Dayton still owned the share she purchased in 1814 from Silas and her dower right as the widow of David Dayton. The aged widow died on September 30, 1854 owning one-seventh of the premises without leaving a will. Therefore, her numerous descendants, most of whose interests had been purchased before, again held claim to her share of the real estate.

As Hannah Hopkins had predeceased her mother, dying in 1852, her surviving children, James Hopkins and Mary Elizabeth Ireland, conveyed to their uncle, David Dayton, their interest in his homestead in 1860.

Sister Emeline died in December, 1871. David Dayton must have been ill for some period prior to his death for he gave Sarah two deeds for the premises, one in 1874, the other in 1875 both of which were recorded four months before his death on August 17, 1876.

"Aunt Sallie" lived on alone in the old house except for her housekeeper, until her death March 25, 1879. Knowing that her end was near about two years prior to her death (Jan. 16, 1877) "she sent for" Squire John B. Wyckoff, the local judge, to draw her will. The last of the Daytons made bequests regarding the family possessions, but the real estate was subject to unusual provisions. The old lady was evidently loath to see the property leave the family's possession. She therefore asked her heirs to purchase it, giving a numerical order of who had first choice. The will specifically enumerates the right of purchase as follows: 1) James Hopkins, 2) Nancy Elizabeth Ireland, 3) Alonzo Dayton, and 4) Franklin Dayton. She appointed her nephew, James Hopkins, the then town supervisor, as her executor.<sup>13</sup>

The appraisers valued the premises at \$5,000, which none of the chosen wished to pay, and evidently the heirs could never agree on a price to sell to an outside party. The Hopkins heirs finally despairing of ever settling the estate, brought an action in the New York State Supreme Court to purchase the interest of all the heirs and partition and sell the premises. The usual proceed-

ings were held and Charles Haines, Esq. of Bedford Hills, the court-appointed Referee, sold the premises to James Hopkins for \$2,325, the highest sum bid at the public auction in May 1882.<sup>14</sup>

James Hopkins held the property only a brief time before conveying it to his son, A. Smith Hopkins, in April 1883. Smith Hopkins and his young family lived there until he purchased the much larger William S. Brown farm north and west of the Dayton property. He sold the premises in April 1887 for \$4,000 to Joseph Johnston.

Joseph Johnston and his family lived there from 1887 until his death, March 3, 1907. He farmed as had the Dayton family before him. From 1901 to 1905 he served as Commissioner of Highways of the Town of North Castle. At his death, he devised the farm to his wife, Catherine Johnston, who died a resident of Greenwich, Connecticut, October 16, 1918. Mrs. Johnston and her son, Lewis Edward Johnston, who never married, remained on the farm for a period of time after the death of her husband. Ed Johnston, as he was known about the village, farmed to some extent but they evidently moved from the premises to Greenwich about 1919 and for some years the property was rented with son Joseph I. Johnston being rental agent.

As the children of the Johnstons and the children of two of the deceased children could not agree as to the disposition of the property or the settlement of Catherine Johnston's estate, another partition action was begun on November 1, 1927. The Supreme Court appointed Mortimer C. O'Brien, Esq., a prominent attorney of White Plains, to sell the property, which he did in August 1928.<sup>15</sup>

The purchaser of the property was Sydney S. Cohen of 25 West 43rd Street, New York City. Mr. Cohen was a prominent real estate broker in the city. He was an entrepreneur of the highest order. He bought, sold, and operated his own properties and managed for others. One of his most famous acquisitions was the world-famous Apollo theater on 125th Street in Harlem. He also owned a small chain of department stores located in several smaller cities of New Jersey and Connecticut. When he arrived in Armonk he purchased several other large parcels of property, the most well-known of these being the Briggs estate located at Main Street and Whippoorwill Road in downtown Armonk. He was a superb businessman, a visionary, and actually began studies and plans for an apartment house on those premises. His sudden death in 1936 ended his extensive plans for his Armonk holdings.

Mr. Cohen and his family used the Dayton homestead for a country residence, and he spent considerable time and money beautifying the old home and its grounds. He created a pond from the brook behind the house, planted trees, rebuilt walls, and constructed new outbuildings. Upon his death he left the premises to his widow Dorothy, and upon her death the house was devised to the Cohen's surviving child, Richard S. Cohen.

Many citizens of Armonk remember Richard Cohen with affection for, like his father before him, he took great interest in community affairs. One of his generous acts was the presentation to the North Castle (Free) Public Library of the land on which the library was erected in 1942. This gift was in memory



of his father, Sydney S. Cohen.

About 1940, he began to sell acreage parcels from the old Dayton farm to the many new families who were coming out of the lower metropolitan area to the country. The earlier sales were made of the land along the Connecticut line south of the home, a later parcel to the north (Roth Nursery property).

On February 5, 1954 he sold his residence, the old Dayton farmhouse, and 5.59 acres to Robert Stewart Kilbourne III and Barbara his wife. The Kilbournes lived there three years when they sold the house to Lewis Calder, Jr. on October 23, 1957. Mr. Calder held the house until January 16, 1961 when he sold the house to the present owners, John G. and Catherine Hordyke.

This ancient house is one of the landmarks of our town and it is to be hoped by our society and many in the community that the Dayton house will be rebuilt and spared for other generations to come.<sup>16</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. Deed from Robert Flewelling to David Dayton dated January 12, 1756 unrecorded-copy in possession of the author.
2. Original text of Anne Bridge's Patent can be seen in *A History of Westchester County* etc. 1881 edition by Rev. Robert Bolton, vol 1 page 704 (shows William Bond on one of the nine proprietors).
3. Deed from William Bond, Gentleman to Francis Pelham, Benoni Merritt, George Dennis and Ephraim Golding dated September 11, 1729. Recording date is not known. Liber G. of Deeds page 87.
4. *History and Genealogy of the Carpenter Family in America 1639-1901* by Daniel Hoagland Carpenter. The Manor Press Jamaica Queens, New York 1901.
5. Manuscript notes on the Golden Family Correspondence between the author and Charles W. Golden. Clearwater, Florida, 1976-1977.
6. Collections of the New York Historical Society. Volume VII Abstracts of Wills 1766-1771. New York: printed for the Society, 1898.
7. "Some Things We Know." A manuscript Family History of the Hopkins, Daytons, and related families by James D. Hopkins. Armonk, 1960 (used by permission of the author).
8. History of Rye, Westchester County New York 1660-1870 etc. by Charles W. Baird. New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., 1871.
9. History of the Medical Society of the County of Westchester, 1797-1947, published by the Medical Society, 1947.
10. David Dayton's public affairs can be found. Records of the Town of North Castle vol. 1, 1736-1848. Manual of Westchester County Past and Present. Civil List to date 1898, Henry T. Smith Publishers, White Plains, NY. The New York Red Book. James Malcom, Editor. Albany, New York: J.B. Lyon Company Publishers 1924 edition.
11. Dayton family Bible in possession of one of his descendants, Elizabeth Smith Blohm and administration papers. Estate of David Dayton, Westchester County Surrogate. File 15/1813.
12. Tombstone in Friends Cemetery, Armonk, New York and Dayton family Bible.
13. Estate of Sarah Dayton. Probate file Westchester County Surrogates Court. File 86/1879.
14. Partition Action: Mary Elizabeth Ireland and another vs. James Hopkins as executor of the last will and testament of Sarah Dayton, deceased et al. defendants. Westchester County Clerks Office File #6279J.
15. Partition action: Ella Stilson et al., plaintiffs vs. Francilia Johnston et al. defendants. Westchester County Clerks Office File 5009-1927.

## DOCTORS OF NORTH CASTLE

### Third in a Series

by Paul Charry

His full and formal name was Mortimer M. Cohn, M.D. But to everyone who knew him, he was Monty, *the doctor*. He practiced general medicine in Armonk from 1946 to 1973, during which years he became the beloved local doctor and a friend to most of the people who lived here in those years.

Monty Cohn did his pre-med work at New York University, then took his medical degree at the University of Basle, Switzerland. In 1938, while awaiting an internship appointment at Beth Israel Hospital in Newark, N.J., he met the Resident Dietician, a girl named Josephine. Appropriately, they met on Valentine's Day. Their meeting developed into a romance that culminated in marriage in 1940.

The newlyweds went off to Osgood, Indiana, where Monty became the doctor in the local Citizens Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) camp for six months. While working in Osgood, Monty applied for appointment as Physician at a Sioux Indian Reservation at Cheyenne, Wyoming. He was accepted and stayed there until he entered the army for service in World War II. Among other experiences among the Sioux, Monty learned to become an expert basket weaver and maker of other Indian items.

By 1941, Dr. Monty was called to military service. Shortly after Pearl Harbor and the United States' direct involvement in the war, he went to Europe but was there only a short time before being transferred to North Africa, where he participated in the allied invasion of November, 1942. He stayed in North Africa until June, 1944, and moved to Augusta, Georgia, completing his military service there in the autumn of 1945. The Cohns' first child, Carla, was born on April 22, 1945, in an army hospital in Augusta.

Leaving Augusta and the military life behind them, Dr. and Mrs. Mortimer M. Cohen and daughter headed for New York in October, 1945. He entered Columbia University to take a refresher course in medicine and ready himself for re-entry into civilian practice. While studying at Columbia, he and Jo started to think carefully about their future and where they would like to settle down.

Monty decided to just ride through Westchester and Putnam counties. He started at the north end and stopped in various villages and hamlets. One place attracted him more than others — a hamlet just above the middle of Westchester County named Armonk. Checking his medical registry, Monty found there was a Dr. Clark practicing in Armonk.

Monty stopped in at a local pharmacy (owned by Ben Marx) and enquired as to whether the community could use another physician. "Doc" Marx, the pharmacist allowed that Dr. Clark was "getting pretty well along in years,"

and suggested that it might be worthwhile for Monty to have a chat with the local police chief, John Hergenhan. The talk with "Hergy" left the definite impression that Armonk was ready for a young doctor.

The next step for Monty was to show the community to Jo. Her reaction was all-important. To his delight, she felt the area was exactly what they had been dreaming about.

With Chief Hergenhan's help they found a suitable house. The closing was scheduled for November, 1945, but they struck a snag. At the time the new United Nations was contemplating Armonk as the principal residential area for delegates. A moratorium was imposed on house sales for a time, but —happily for Jo and Monty and North Castle— the UN changed its mind and the Cohns became North Castle property owners in March, 1946.

In their small house on Main Street, daughter Nancy was born in August, 1947, and in October, 1950 the family was completed with the arrival of son Jonathan. The Main Street house was too small for the comfort of a family of five, and the Cohns bought a different, larger place on Whippoorwill Road in 1953.

Monty Cohn gave the community that he loved deeply many services as both physician and resident. He was a founding member of the North Castle Players, a member of the Armonk Fire Department, Emergency Police Surgeon, School Physician. At one point he was designated Police Surgeon to serve both the Police and Fire departments.

Dr. Cohn served as a member of the board of directors of Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, the nearest hospital to the locale of his practice, and he also was affiliated with St. Agnes Hospital in White Plains.

For more than 20 years Monty Cohn served his patients in North Castle not only with expert medical treatment, but also with the deep concern and affection which made him a truly "good doctor."

Then, in 1968 he suffered a mild heart attack. He continued to practice, but found the severity of Westchester winters increasingly difficult to bear. Reluctantly, he and Jo sought a milder climate. In 1973 they moved to Florida, but visits to Armonk were frequent.

When people in town learned the Cohns were going to move, plans were launched to provide a big sendoff that would show them how special a place they occupied in the town's heart. In July, 1973, an entire day was officially set aside and designated as "Monty Cohn Day." A celebration was held in the town park, attended by most of the population of North Castle.

In 1981, on June 26, Monty Cohn died at the age of 70. He returned to his beloved North Castle for burial in Middle Patent Cemetery.

When Monty and Jo Cohn moved into Armonk it was their fondest wish that this would prove to be their permanent and ideal home. They fell in love with the open atmosphere of the town. They reached out to the people and the people, in turn, responded. It was a mutual admiration society. It was also a classic example of the small town American doctor, serving his community, supported by a wife who worked to relieve the pressures on her husband. She never wavered — no matter how many middle-of-the-night calls came —

standing beside Monty in the finest tradition of the "doctor's wife."

No emergency call went unanswered. It was not at all unusual to see Monty speeding up Main Street in his little Karmen Ghia to answer a call in the middle of the night. He was in every sense the knowledgeable general practitioner. Those midnight calls ranged from a sick child to an auto accident victim; from an elderly person's collapse to a woman about to give birth. There are many residents of North Castle today who were delivered by Monty Cohn.

When you entered his Armonk office, instead of the stereotype medical office, one had more the feeling of entering a friend's living room to talk over a problem. No matter how busy or pressured he might be, he would listen patiently and then prescribe. While he may not always have pleased everybody, his batting average was extremely high.

Monty Cohn was an outstanding example of what has now become a rare member of American communities — the country doctor. That is precisely what he was, and along with his professional skill he had what it took to instill a sense of pride in his community and its medical services. That's why people in North Castle still talk about him, remember him, and miss him.

16. General note: This article could not have been written without extensive research in the Westchester County Clerk's Office, Division of Land Records nearly thirty deeds were abstracted whose titles and pages are too numerous to be cited in each instance referred to herein.

The author expresses his appreciation to Hon. James D. Hopkins whose entire lifetime has been spent in this neighborhood and whose recollections as both boy and man of his ancestors, the Daytons, the Johnstons, and especially Sydney Cohen have been most helpful and much appreciated.

17. DAYTON FAMILY — For many years it has been thought that David Dayton, 1731-1812, married late in life Martha Wood and this marriage produced the eight Dayton children. Judge Hopkins in the first draft of his manuscript family history felt that a second David fathered this family. However, he later reversed himself in his manuscript family history ascribing the children to the doctor. The author of this article as well always thought these children were fathered by the doctor, beginning at his fifty-eighth year and the last just seven years before his death (1812) when he was seventy-four. We are now sure this is not so, that the doctor had a son David born May 19, 1766, and he married Martha Wood born June 13, 1759 or 1769 (The family Bible says June 13, 1769 but her tombstone would indicate she was born June 13, 1759) and that he is the father of the eight Dayton children and the person who died on January 4, 1812.

There are some clues that may verify this. A David Dayton was married and had a family, most of whom left North Castle for Dutchess and Ulster Counties. Charles N. Dayton, in his book *Dayton Record* states that Cornbury Dayton, born after 1755; Frederick Dayton, born 1757; Joseph Dayton, born 1762; and Gilbert Dayton of Harrison, New York, no birth date, were children of a David Dayton and Ruth Clapp, his wife. *He does not mention another son David.* However, David, being born on May 19, 1766, could fit this pattern of children. The author's conclusion is that David Dayton, Jr., 1766-1812, is the son of the doctor and a new problem is now apparent — who did the doctor marry, when did he die, and who, besides David, were his children? Perhaps the abrupt end of his political career referred to in the article was his death.

18. JOHNSTON FAMILY — Joseph Johnston and Catherine, his wife, had seven children: 1) William, 2) Mary, who married Mead, 3) Sarah Jane, who married Edward Scoffield, 4) Elizabeth, who married David K. Allen, 5) Louis Edward, unmarried, 6) Joseph I., and 7) Alice, unmarried. At the 1928 auction sale of the farm, Elizabeth J. Allen purchased the ten-acre parcel on the west side of the Greenwich Road separate from the rest of the property sold to Sydney Cohen. Elizabeth was the wife of D. K. Allen, the well-known hardware merchant in Greenwich. At her death she left the ten-acre parcel to her brother, Joseph I. Johnston, who, prior to his death, presented the property to the Town of North Castle. This undeveloped park land is held by the town today and is called Johnston Park. For many years Joseph I. Johnston was the general manager at D. K. Allen's store.
19. COHEN FAMILY — Sydney S. Cohen and his wife Dorothy had two children, Richard S. and Dorothy. Dorothy was tragically killed in an air crash with her newly married husband, leaving Richard as the sole surviving child. Richard S. Cohen presented the land on which the North Castle Public Library stands as a memorial gift in memory of his father, Sydney S. Cohen. Sydney Cohen was extremely interested in the Boy Scouts of America and for some years completely financed Troop 2 in Armonk.

## ARMONK SCHOOLS 1923 - 1961

by Harold C. Crittenden

Common School District No. 5, Towns of North Castle and New Castle, was formed in 1923 by the consolidation of three small districts. One was District No. 6, a one-room school known as the Whippoorwill School, on Whippoorwill Road, later the home of Mr. and Mrs. Morton Engleman. Another was District No. 4, a one-room school known as the Webster School, (as Miss Lillian Webster taught there for many years) located on Cox Avenue. It became the home of Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Duberman. The building was moved about 300 feet east to the present location and remodeled as a home. The third, known as the Armonk School, was located on the north side of School Street, almost opposite the north end of the present Wampus Avenue, and became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Merton Sinistore. It was a two-room school with Miss Dorothy Poole, who later married Herbert Jones and now lives in Canajoharie, N.Y., as primary teacher and Miss Lula Aldous, now Mrs. Lula West, as upper grade teacher and principal. At present, Mrs. West is teaching science in the junior high school.

In 1923, after consolidation of these three districts, a new building, the front of the present Whippoorwill School and the part that has the pitched roof, was voted at a cost of \$100,000, and made ready for occupancy in December, 1924. From September until December of that year, the old schools had to be used. Miss Anna LaFever had replaced Miss Webster in the Webster School but resigned at the time the move was made. Harold Crittenden taught in the Whippoorwill School. Following entry into the new building at Christmas time in 1924, the distribution of teachers was as follows: Miss Poole, 1st and 2nd grades, Miss Mary Brundage, 3rd and 4th grades, Miss Aldous, 5th and 6th grades and Mr. Crittenden, 7th and 8th grades and principalship. Ben Smith was custodian. The Board of Education then consisted of Julius Raven as chairman with Mrs. Kathryn Hopkins and William F. MacDonald as the other two members. Edwin Acker was clerk and T. Wm. Brundage, treasurer.

No pupil transportation was furnished by the district for 1924-25, as the old neighborhood schools were used for the first semester but for 1925-26, a small bus was operated under contract as consolidation had made it necessary for some children to walk quite a distance on busy highways.

During the spring of 1925, a pupil orchestra of five members was organized and with considerable effort was always able to finish the numbers started. The school continued to have an orchestra for a number of years. The first eighth

grade graduation in 1925 consisted of five pupils. Exercises were held on Friday evening, following Regents examinations. In the fall of 1925, a PTA was organized, which helped to promote and maintain good parent relations.

For the next three years there was little growth and school enrollment reached a low of 105 pupils. The school functioned without difficulty, it was new and the people appreciated having the school become a community center. Seasonal school entertainments and participation in interscholastic activities created much interest in the school by pupils and parents. Basketball baskets were installed in the double classroom used as auditorium and gym. Boys' and girls' teams were coached by the physical education teacher and they did very well in competitive games with other schools. During the seven years from 1925 to 1932 the pupils participated in an Interscholastic Activities Association that sponsored an annual spelling contest. Armonk won first prize four times, second prize once and third prize twice.

In 1928, the district began to grow and enrollment began a steady increase. With the help of everyone, a small enclosed stage was built at one end of the auditorium and outdoor playground equipment was purchased and installed. For 1929 a part-time primary supervisor was added to the staff, which helped improve the primary reading.

For 1930-31, a seventh grade teacher was added to the staff to relieve Mr. Crittenden from teaching for about one-half day to tend to the increased administrative work and for supervision. This teacher also coached the upper grade athletics and the boys kept a good record of winning 75% of the games played, while the girls were undefeated for four years, from 1937 to 1940. Armonk was the smallest school in the association and many of the teams had some ninth grade students as players.

By 1931, the school was so crowded that classes were being held in the auditorium and in the basement. An addition was voted at a cost of \$87,000.00., that made the Whippoorwill School what it finally became. Classes were able to enter the new addition at Christmas time in 1932. This provided a much needed gym and auditorium with stage. In 1931, an attempt was made to buy the property east of this school but as the price was \$40,000., it was voted down. The State Department allowed this addition to be built without the purchase of additional land and the school, as a result, was always handicapped by a lack of adequate playground space.

For 1935-36, a full-time eighth grade teacher was added to relieve Mr. Crittenden from teaching duties to give full time to administration and supervision.

In 1935, the PTA raised money to remodel a storeroom next to the west lunch room and equip it for a cafeteria kitchen, in which, for the remainder of the school year, volunteer mothers manned the cooking and serving. For 1935-36, Miss Emily Stephens managed and operated the cafeteria for what she could get and worked for her room and board at the home of one of the parents. Being a homemaking teacher, she taught this subject to the upper grade girls. In 1936-37, money was included in the budget to employ Miss Stephens as teacher and cafeteria manager. This department continued until

1947, when the teacher-manager resigned and with no shared service teacher available for this subject, and with no room in which to teach, this instruction was discontinued until nine years later, when a junior high program was established, which required that it be taught.

Also for 1935-36, a full-time music teacher was added to the faculty through private subscription. The following year, for 1936-37, at the annual meeting the salary of this teacher was made a part of the budget.

For 1937-38, a kindergarten was established. A second custodian was added to the personnel and two shifts scheduled, since the floor area had increased and many night activities made the length of the day, too long for one.

In February, 1938, by vote of the district, it was changed from a common school to a union free school district. This made it easier for administration and financial accounting and extended jurisdiction to include secondary instruction.

Up to January, 1939, there had been no office help of any kind as the district principal had been doing this work. At that time, a part-time typist was secured through the National Youth Administration. Since this could be only part-time and full-time help was needed, provision was made in the budget for 1939-40 for a full-time secretary.

For the next five years, while there was a steady increase in enrollment, due to the war, no specific changes were made, except to convert the heating furnaces from oil to coal, with only soft coal available for a year.

In 1944-45, the number of members of the Board of Education was increased from three to five. This was done because of the great increase of the work for the Board. For 1946-47, by State mandate, tenure was given to those teachers who were eligible and part-time shop instruction was established.

For the year 1947-48, Mrs. Beatrice Carter, principal of the Kapalama School in Honolulu, Hawaii, was principal of the district, on an exchange arrangement, whereby Mr. Crittenden was principal at Kapalama for the school year.

In 1948-49, a part-time physical education teacher was provided which included supervision over community recreation that was becoming quite an extensive program and needed to be coordinated with the school program, particularly since school facilities were used for recreation. For this same year, an adult education program was established, mainly with instruction in painting, square dancing, ceramics and shop. Yearly programs were continued until 1953-54, when there was not sufficient interest to meet the requirements of the State Education Department for state aid.

In May, 1949, the Board of Education and the community gave a testimonial dinner to Mr. Crittenden for twenty-five years of service.

By 1949-50, the enrollment had increased until the auditorium, library and basement rooms in the Whippoorwill School were being used for classrooms and as a result, a bond issue for \$18,000. for property and \$287,000. for a new building was voted, to provide a school with six classrooms and an all-purpose room, to be constructed on a 25 acre tract of land at the south end



of Wampus Avenue. In January, 1951, the primary classes were moved into the new Wampus School.

Administration increased to the point where supervision by the district principal became very limited and for the school year 1953-54, an elementary supervisor was provided. Mrs. Mary Livingstone of the White Plains Schools, assumed the duties of this position with her office at the Wampus School. This supervision resulted in a gradual improvement in and coordination of the instruction.

In 1954, Pleasantville informed the district, that in September, 1956, they would be unable to accept non-residents for the ninth grade. Studies were made by the Board and citizen committees, with the result that on April 25th, a bond issue was voted to purchase 25 acres east of and adjoining the Wampus School property and on June 15th, another bond issue for \$895,000. was voted to build a new building of 12 classrooms and core facilities to care for a junior-senior high program.

With the expansion of the district program to include secondary instruction, added district area was desirable and in June, 1956, the Coman Hill and Armonk districts voted to consolidate. The pupils from Coman Hill had been coming to Armonk as non-residents for about ten years.

In September, 1956, with the new building not completed, the ninth grade was housed and instructed in the Whippoorwill School. To make room for this, arrangements were made to have the two third grades housed in the new American Legion Building and the two fourth grades in the Social Hall of the Methodist Church.

John Carpenter was relieved of teaching duties for one-half day to serve as guidance counselor for the junior high grades. In September, 1957, grades six through nine, moved into the new North Castle Junior High School and by Christmas had the full use of the building. John Carpenter was relieved of all teaching to continue his duties as guidance counselor and be part-time administrative assistant in charge of junior high supervision. Mrs. Mary Livingstone, who has been supervisor of instruction for all grades, was made elementary principal in charge of both the Whippoorwill and the Wampus Schools and supervisor over the sixth grades in the North Castle School.

As a result of parent study and discussions in the spring of 1958, a teen-age canteen was organized in the fall of 1959 under the supervision of faculty members, assisted by interested parents. As it was well managed, this project proved to be very successful and was continued for several years.

In 1959, the Board contracted with the Field Services of Columbia University to make a complete survey of the district and the educational program for the purpose of evaluation and to determine the immediate and future needs of the district. This survey was very reassuring, crystallized the needs and was very helpful in developmental planning for several years.

In 1959-60, basement rooms at Whippoorwill were remodeled into classrooms; the cafeteria at Wampus was used for both sessions of the kindergarten and the cafeteria at the North Castle School was used for ninth grade home rooms.



**OVERGROWN FOLIAGE** and boarded windows today shut in decades of memories at unused Whippoorwill School, while Wampus School continues service to students of Byram Hills District. Photos by Norman Stone.



For 1960-61, provision was made for a secondary school principal to assume full supervision over the junior high grades, leaving Mr. Crittenden full time for administration and Mr. Carpenter for full-time guidance. Mr. Louis E. Hill was secured to fill this position. During this school year, all special classrooms were used for home rooms and even the custodian's room at the North Castle School was used for music instruction.

In December, 1960, Harold Crittenden announced that he would retire as district principal at the end of June, 1961. In May, 1961, the Board of Education and the people of Armonk honored Mr. Crittenden by setting aside May 13th in his honor. A parade was held with a program on the grounds of the North Castle School. At this time, Charles E. Pound, President of the Board informed Mr. Crittenden that the name of the North Castle School had been changed to the Harold C. Crittenden School. The children of the district presented Mr. Crittenden with a painted portrait of himself, to be hung in the foyer of the school that bears his name. A testimonial dinner was held that evening in the Rye Casino, at which time, Mr. Crittenden was given a travel certificate for \$1,200.00 for a trip to Hawaii.

During the year 1960-61, intensive studies were made jointly with the State Education Department, with the result that a centralization of the Armonk, Middle Patent and Bear Ridge Districts was approved. On June 11, 1961, this centralization was voted by a vote of nearly five to one in the affirmative. The system designated was to be called the Byram Hills Central Schools with the official name of Central School District No. 1, Towns of North Castle, New Castle, Bedford and Mount Pleasant. Opponents of the centralization immediately secured a court order restraining it from becoming effective on July 1, 1961, pending court action.

In August, 1961, Dr. Chauncey F. Benton assumed the position of district principal, and the position of business manager was added to the administrative staff.

During 1961-62, further court actions and appeals delayed the centralization until April, when a final decision from the State Court of Appeals paved the way for it to become effective July 1, 1962.

Dr. Benton resigned at the end of the school year to take effect on July 1, 1962 and Louis E. Hill, principal of the Junior High School, was appointed as acting district principal. During the year, Eugene J. Bradford was selected for the position of district principal and assumed the duties of this office in April, 1963. At this point, the era of the village school organization became history.



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