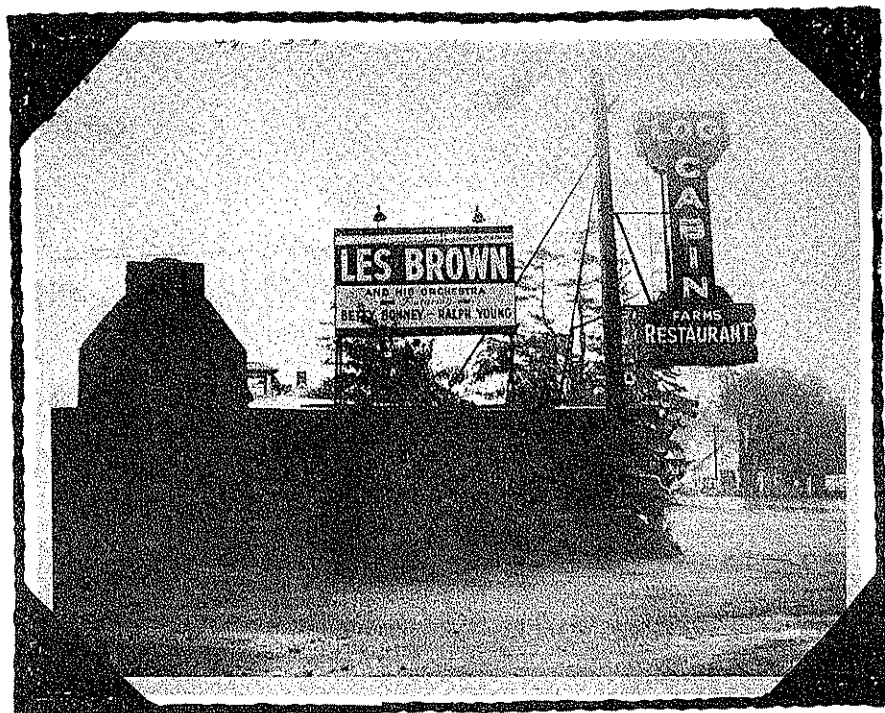


North Castle History



Armonk's Log Cabin gained greatest fame in Big Band Era.

Vol III

The North Castle Historical Society

1985

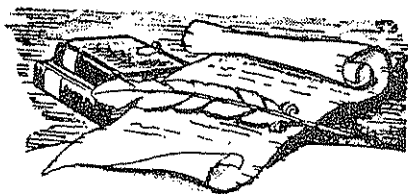
The Jazz World in Armonk
1935 - 1942

North Castle's First Subdivision
North Castle's Early Transportation

The North Castle Historical Society

Bedford Road, Armonk, New York 10504

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members and Friends,

The lifeblood of The North Castle Historical Society is the volunteer. Whatever success we have achieved in membership growth, fundraising, building restoration, educational programs, historical exhibitions, library services and a host of routine maintenance chores is primarily due to dedicated and available volunteers.

The record of volunteer accomplishments is impressive and heartwarming. Impressive as the record is, there are still unlimited horizons before us — horizons that can be reached only with additional volunteer help.

Whatever talents you have to offer, whatever time you want to contribute —somewhere in the Society's many endeavors and operations is a place where you can make a meaningful contribution.

Come, join us! Make a commitment! If that is more than you are ready for now, how about a short-term trial? We would appreciate hearing from you. For more information, stop by the Tavern any Tuesday morning, or give me a call.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Guy H. Papale". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial "G".

Guy H. Papale

THE JAZZ WORLD IN ARMONK — 1935-1942

By James D. Hopkins

Photo: Collection of Sybil Hussar

Big Band jazz flourished in the 1930's and early '40's all over the country. Jazz is of course the original contribution of America to the art of music. It was slow in coming, compounded as it was from the rhythm and blues of black sources, with additions of creole songs, Scotch-Irish folk ballads and country hoe-down. In the '20's there were large orchestras playing dance music — Paul Whiteman and Ben Bernie and Vincent Lopez, for example — but the music was sedate, predictable and sweet. Popular songs followed the pattern, though there were traces of jazz intermixed in some of the tunes.

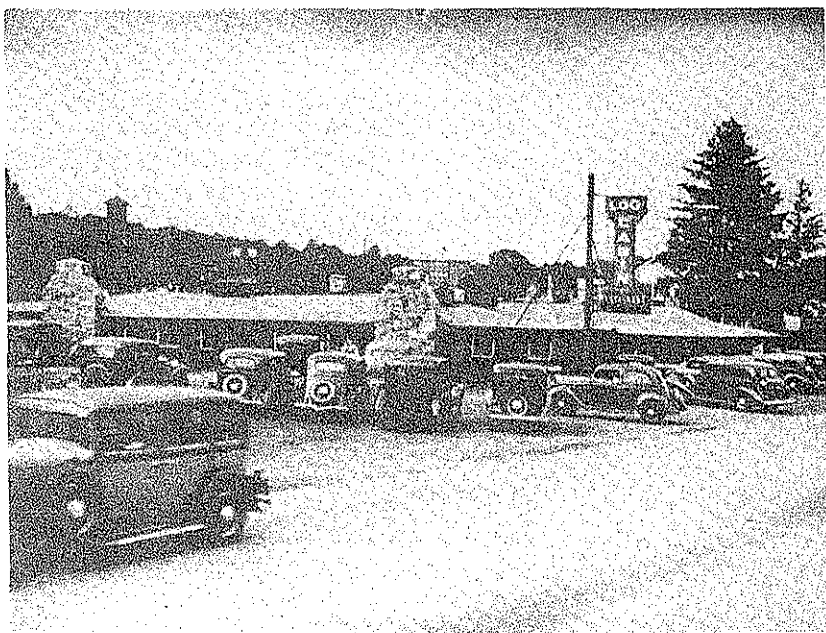
Armonk, for undefinable reasons, during the '20's and '30's was a center where dances were held. I suppose it was mainly due to the existence of Mechanics Hall on Maple Avenue across from where the firehouse now stands. As long as I can remember — seventy years — the hall has been there, first serving as the home of the lodge of the Junior Order of the American Mechanics and a quasi-community center, later as an auction house, and now as a business place. As I recall, in the good weather a dance was held almost every week on a Friday or Saturday night in that period of time under the auspices of a local organization seeking to raise funds, or the Jolly Ten, a group which had no purpose other than to run dances for the pleasure of its members and their friends. A four piece orchestra was hired to play from nine o'clock to one, and refreshments were available at an additional cost to the price of the ticket, which was usually fifty cents. There was a certain etiquette attached to these events, but that deserves a separate story.

The dances were attended not only by local residents, but also by people from Mount Kisco and White Plains and Round Hill and Pleasantville and their environs as well. I am not sure why this was so. The automobile was naturally a factor, and it might have been that Armonk, isolated as it was in a corner of Westchester next to Connecticut, was attractive because of its very isolation.

In the '30's, however, Big Band music entered the scene in Armonk. Westchester has of course been recognized as a cradle of swing; Glen Island Casino is properly considered as one of the first places to have sponsored jazz and make it respectable. But following in the wake of Glen Island Casino, many other spots in Westchester — along the Boston Post Road at the Post Lodge, Loyal Inn, Lawrence Inn, Larchmont Casino, and Playland Casino, and along the Bronx River Parkway at Murray's and Schmidt's Farm — were presenting swing orchestras.

At the end of the Bronx River Parkway at Kensico Dam and a few miles further north was Armonk. It was a comfortable driving distance from New York, and the trip was free from cumbersome traffic controls on the parkway and along Kensico Reservoir on Route 22 — about an hour's time from Manhattan and the Bronx. More than this, there were already two established places in Armonk which could accommodate large audiences — the Log Cabin and Rhineland Gardens (later known as Blue Gardens).

One might ask, nevertheless, what would entice a big band to play in a small town for a month's or more engagement. The answer was that by the magic of radio a band could obtain exposure to many thousands of listeners and thus build a wide reputation. A New York radio station, such as WEAJ, WJZ, or WOR, broadcasting on national networks, would send an announcer and sometimes an engineer to Armonk and transmit the dance music for a half hour or so via the telephone wire to the studio and thence over the waves to the entire eastern seaboard. For that reason, a band would agree to play outside the urban centers in order to receive the recognition which otherwise would be difficult for it to get, except by many engagements in many places. This was true of Glen Island Casino in New Rochelle and Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, and it was true of the Log Cabin and Rhineland Gardens in Armonk.



This is not an antique car rally. It's how the Log Cabin parking area looked every weekend in the late 1920 — early 1930 period. It was an easy drive from New York City even then and was famous throughout the burgeoning metropolitan area.

II

The story of the beginning and gradual development of the Log Cabin is a fascinating one. It all originated with the automobile and good roads. Frank Webster lived in a house just south of the intersection of Route 22 and Route 128 at the Armonk Methodist Church. The house stood on the west side of Route 22, close to where the brick office building is presently. A low stone wall bordered the road in front of the house. Mr. Webster, watching the considerable traffic flow on Route 22 on Sundays, when people from New York City and southern Westchester took rides in the country, began selling from the stone wall cider, cake, coffee and honey — all of which were home-made — to the hungry travellers on their way home.

It was a successful venture from the start, and in 1916 Mr. Webster built a small shed from which the products were sold. His nephew, Webster F. Schmaling (a cousin of George P. Schmaling, later the Receiver of Taxes and a mover and shaper of events in North Castle), returned from World War I in which he had served as a pilot in the Air Corps and joined Mr. Webster in the enterprise. Soon afterwards Mr. Webster became ill and sold the property to his nephew.

Mr. Schmaling conceived the idea of a log cabin as a drawing card to sell the products — a merchandising ploy to identify his business which was later emulated by Howard Johnson and the fast food chains. The first Log Cabin was a simple affair, erected around 1921; it was one large room in a one story hewn log building, with a long counter, made of logs, in the center of the room. At first, bread, butter and cheese were laid out on the counter, and the customers helped themselves and paid on their honor. Cider and apples and homemade pies and cakes were also sold. Later he sold corn, other vegetables, homemade doughnuts and ice cream, in time adding a soda fountain.

The Log Cabin was immediately successful, a kind of a landmark for families out on a weekend jaunt, and during the summer and fall Mr. Schmaling was hiring over 20 people to help him serve customers.

In 1929 Mr. Schmaling sold the Log Cabin and property surrounding it to August Hussar for \$165,000. Mr. Hussar extended the Cabin by building a large dining room and dance floor, still in the simple architectural motif of the original construction. The Log Cabin thus became two different operations — one, catering to the weekend trade, and two, serving patrons in a restaurant and club setting. Mr. Hussar carried out the decor by furnishing the restaurant wing with stuffed animal heads, inverted cider jugs as light fixtures, and imitation branches and leaves over the walls and on the ceilings. As a result, this part of the Cabin was dimly lit — a feature said to be preferred by the customers.

When Prohibition was abolished in 1933, liquor and beer were served at the table in the restaurant wing. Shortly thereafter Mr. Hussar introduced a ten piece band to play for dancing. Between the two types of operations it was estimated by *Fortune* Magazine in a story written in September, 1934 that the Log Cabin was serving about a million visitors a year. Indeed, at that time Mr. Hussar employed 56 people in the business.

Again, in 1936 and in 1937 extensions were added to the dining room, still in the same rough-hewn style. The first in 1936 included a large kitchen to accommodate the growing restaurant trade; the second in 1937 was an ell-

shaped wing off the restaurant section. The *North Castle Sun* said in a contemporary article that the Log Cabin could now seat a thousand diners. Moreover, it was clear that with such capacity and its proximity to New York City the Log Cabin was a logical choice as a show place for the ever developing big band scene.



Before expansion Log Cabin was also a well known place to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, plus mouth-watering home-made doughnuts. Model T car was early 1920's vintage.

III

The Log Cabin first had house bands — that is, bands which more or less were permanent fixtures and did not play under contract for specific engagements. The first that I can find mentioned in the press was Bill Whelpley's in 1934. Bill Whelpley was a local musician, hailing from White Plains, and his orchestra had previously played at dances around the country. I am not sure for how long a period Whelpley was at the Log Cabin; what is sure is that it must have been for a short time, because an advertisement in the *North Castle Sun* in March, 1936 said that Parker Lee's orchestra was beginning its fourth year there, which would mean that Lee must have been playing there in 1934.

Lee headed a typical house orchestra, professional but not in the emerging swing approach. It was a sweet band and rarely played outside the set musical scores supplied by the music houses. After a little more than three years, he left and was replaced by Ray Schafer in November, 1936.

Schafer continued in the same mode as Lee. His side men were local musicians, and sometime in 1938 Elaine Bell (now Leavens), an Armonk

native, became the vocalist in his orchestra. In my memory, however, Schafer was more venturesome than Lee, more apt to depart from the music sheets to improvise and permit the lead instrumentalists to solo. Schafer's orchestra remained at the Cabin for about three years; the *North Castle Sun* mentions him as performing there in November, 1939; I cannot find when it ended its long stay.

What is clear, nevertheless, is that between that date and May, 1940 Mr. Hussar had made arrangements with the main radio stations in New York — WEAF, WJZ, WOR, and others — for live broadcasting of band music from the Log Cabin late in the evening. The broadcast usually occurred between 11 and 12 pm., and consisted in one long dance session of several numbers or sets, each introduced by the announcer from the station, with the noise and the hum of the crowd in the background, both on and off the dance floor. Because the members of the band responded to the crowd, a tide of excitement and brilliance flowed from the music that could not be duplicated from records of the same orchestra playing the same tunes. This can be discovered today by comparing the off the air recordings with phonograph records made by the bands. There is a chemistry between musician and audience in the radio broadcasts obviously lacking in the studio performances. Of course, for another reason, the musicians reacted to the opportunity provided by the broadcast — that they knew they were playing to a far larger audience than could be expected either from records or the limited listeners at the club, and the financial rewards derived from a reputation made over the air could be enormous.

In addition, each of the orchestras broadcasting were represented by agents who made sure that the opening night of the engagement was attended by music critics, newspaper columnists and jazz enthusiasts. The band's performance was reported in the New York papers and rated by the critics in jazz magazines. George T. Simon, then a critic for *The Metronome*, was frequently at the Log Cabin and wrote about the orchestras playing there. Nick Kenny, radio columnist for the *New York Mirror*, often mentioned the Log Cabin and, indeed, composed a poem about Mr. Hussar dancing with Sybil, his daughter, then 11, on her birthday. Walter Winchell, then at the height of his power, Bernard Sobol of the *New York Journal-American*, and columnists on the *World-Telegram*, *Daily News* and the *Sun* made weekly references to the orchestras performing there; and, consequently, the attendance each night and especially on the weekends kept increasing.

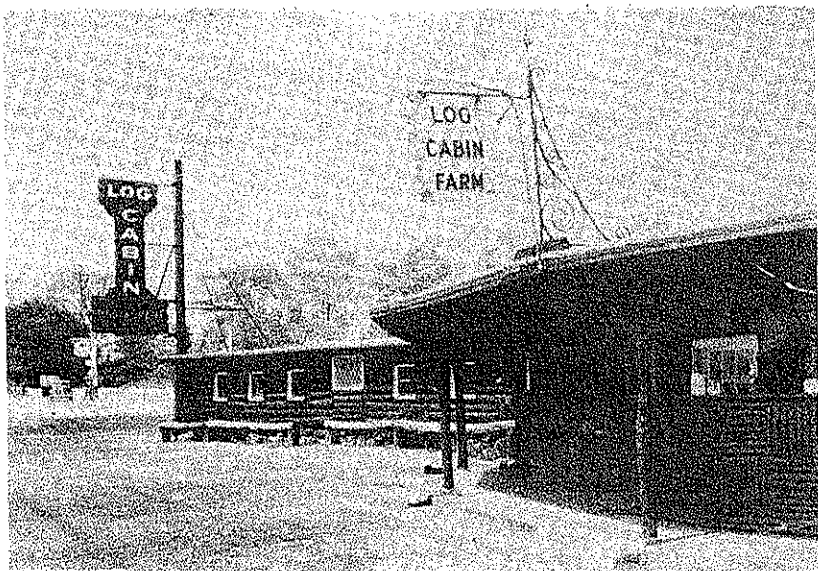
The contracts between the orchestra leaders and the owner provided for performances nightly, except on Monday. On Monday night other musicians played, sometimes a name band, but more likely, a group recruited from other orchestras then performing in New York, also free on Monday nights, or free agents without regular employment. Sybil Hussar recalls some of the great names in jazz history playing on Monday night at the Cabin — Tommy Dorsey, Gene Krupa, Eddie Condon, Charlie Barnet, Buddy Rich, Joe Venuti, Alvino Rey, Vaughn Monroe, Jack Teagarden and many others. These musicians were so skilled that they could perform together without previous rehearsal, and with and without scores. Unfortunately, there were no broadcasts on Monday nights, so that their performances, priceless today, have been irretrievably lost.

The orchestras I have been able to place at the Log Cabin in the 1940's follow:

1. Ray Herbeck opened on May 9, 1940, coming directly from the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. He led the band and also played saxophone. Originally, he had started in the Guy Lombardo tradition of a sweet band, but when he came to the Cabin, he had changed his format to a "more modern, swinging band ... and drew accolades", in the words of George T. Simon. His female vocalist was Betty Benson. Herbeck was at the Cabin until October, 1940, leaving to perform in a stage show at the Paramount Theatre on Broadway.

2. Herbie Holmes succeeded him, opening on October 27, 1940. His female vocalist was Nancy Hutson. His orchestra was more traditional and settled, and he remained until July 1941, according to the *World-Telegram*.

3. His replacement was Les Brown, who began his engagement on July 9, 1941, after two weeks at the Strand Theatre in New York. Les Brown is, of course, still active today, playing for Bob Hope's television shows here and around the world. In 1936 he had organized the band at Duke University; in the summer of 1937 he had played at the Playland Casino. His orchestra did not really begin full operation until 1938, playing thereafter at the World's Fair in 1940.



Young Les Brown (left) as he appeared regularly at Log Cabin in Armonk. Later his group became famous as the "Band of Renown." Nancy Hutson and Herbie Holmes were among the popular teams who were regulars at the weekly dance-ins at the widely known North Castle restaurant.

Doris Day, the later movie star, started her career with Les Brown, joining the band in August of 1940. However, she had left the band in the winter of 1941 to marry a musician in the Jimmy Dorsey band. Sybil Hussar remembers that she sang with the band at the Cabin on occasions when the regular vocalist took a night off. At the Cabin the vocalist was Betty Bonney; his male vocalist was Ralph Young, who later achieved great success as one of the Saddleir duo, performing in night clubs both here and abroad.

According to George T. Simon, it was at the Log Cabin that the band found itself. He recounts that "the guys had a ball" in Armonk, where the members played tennis and outdoor sports. Brown's first hit record — "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio" sung by Betty Bonney — was made at this time. Betty Bonney sometime later went with Frankie Carle's orchestra under the name of Judy Johnson.

Brown stayed at the Cabin until September, 1941, and then went to the Blackhawk Restaurant in Chicago. The fame of his orchestra steadily grew until it became known as one of the top bands in the country.

4. Bob Chester brought his band to the Cabin in September, 1941. It had played at first in the style of Glenn Miller, then in the height of his popularity, but then had developed its own distinctive sound at the time it came to Armonk. Betty Bradley was the female vocalist. The orchestra made many records under the Victor Bluebird label, some at the period of its engagement at the Cabin. While in Armonk, Chester and his wife lived in the former J. Hobart Cox house on Cox Avenue, near Breezemont.

When Frank Sinatra was first becoming recognized in New York, as he says in his foreword to Simon's book on the big bands, he rehearsed regularly with Chester's orchestra.

5. Teddy Powell replaced Bob Chester late in 1941. Simon describes his band in his book as one of the finest of the times; he says that it "set magnificent moods ... and played consistently good music." One of the side men — Jack Satterfield — later played with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra as lead trombonist. Powell's female vocalist was Peggy Mann, who later on sang with the orchestras of Larry Clinton and Enoch Light. There was little doubt that the Powell band was a huge success, for its stay at the Cabin lasted until July, 1942.

6. In August, 1942 Joe Marsala and his band came to the Log Cabin. Marsala was a consummate jazz artist on the clarinet. He had started in Chicago where he was a part of the Chicago school of jazz; he had then moved east to New York and headed a sextette at the Famous Door on 52nd Street — a spot where many noted jazz musicians played. In fact, 52nd Street itself was considered to be the top jazz locale in the country, for it was the address of many jazz clubs such as the Hickory House, Jimmy Ryan's, Eddie Condon's, the Onyx Club, among others.

Marsala's wife was Adele Gerard — "the Swinging Harpist." There were very few harp players who played jazz — Casper Reardon, for one — and she provided a pleasant contrast to the brass which characterized the drive of Marsala's band. He played in a looser and more innovative vein than most of the bands of the period. He was the composer of several songs while at Armonk, among them being "Little Sir Echo", featuring Adele Gerard, and "Don't Cry, Joe." His side men included Buddy Rich, Joe Bushkin and Carmen Mastren, all of whom were judged as among the best jazz musicians on

their instrument.

Marsala and his wife lived on Cox Avenue in the former Osborne house. By this time, of course, World War II occupied every one's thoughts. The *North Castle Sun* records that on Columbus Day, 1942 the town held a War Roundup on the Armonk Airport to further the war effort, and that Joe Marsala and his orchestra opened the ceremonies.

Marsala presumably remained at the Cabin until the end of 1942. Gas rationing by this time had gone into effect and the consequent restriction on driving and the draft eventually spelled the cessation of remote radio broadcasts and the engagements of jazz orchestras at places outside the urban centers. After the war big bands were not so much in evidence; rock and roll music gradually became the favorite of the post war generation.

I should say a further word about the bands which played on Monday nights or for short stays at the Cabin. Sybil Hussar tells me that she recollects hearing the bands of Mal Hallett, Tony Pastor, Gray Gordon, Van Alexander, Charlie Spivak, Shep Fields, Chris Cross, Ina Ray Hutton (who had an all female orchestra), Jan Savitt, Johnny Long and Bobby Dukoff (whose wife, Anita Boyer, was a singer who performed with Tommy Dorsey and Artie Shaw). Lawrence Welk played there at the beginning of his career, according to Simon in his book, "Simon Says." All of this adds up to the fact that during this period the Log Cabin was the background for a large number of swing orchestras of the era, certainly a fair sampling of what was the best bands of the time.

Unfortunately, nothing now remains of the Log Cabin, for it burned to the ground on December 19, 1965. On its site now stands the office building on Old Route 22.

IV

The story of the establishment which finally was known as the Blue Gardens varies considerably from that of the Log Cabin. The building was located approximately on the site of the present bowling alleys on now Old Route 22. (At the time of its existence the building fronted directly on Route 22.) Originally it was the creation of Lorenzo Landolfe, an attorney practising in Harrison, who constructed it in 1927. It was a long, rambling one-story building with a fairly sizeable dance floor, surrounded by tables which could accommodate about 600 patrons. Over the dance floor was suspended a crystal, many-faceted chandelier; during the latter part of the evening the house lights were dimmed and small beams of light of different colors were trained on the chandelier, reflecting bits of colored rays throughout the room. The orchestra, a house band, played from a stage at the edge of the dance floor.

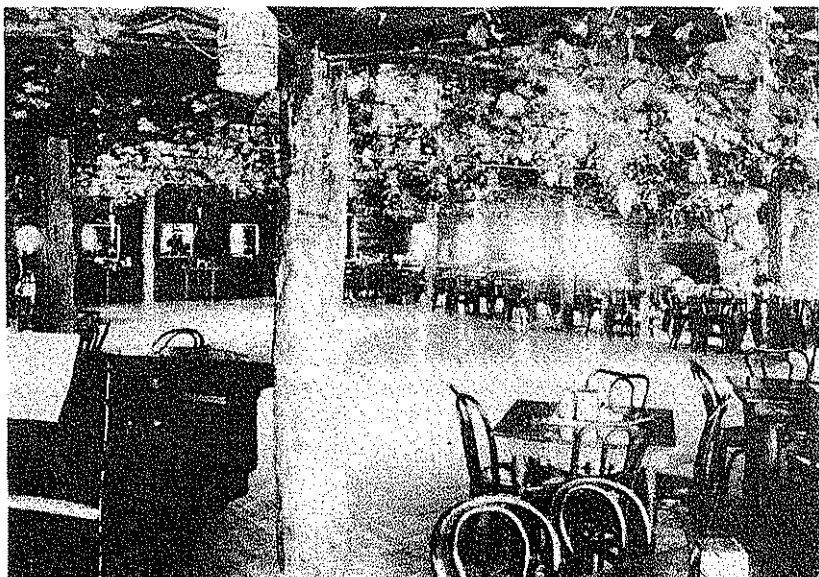
Landolfe called the restaurant the Westchester Palais D'Or, unquestionably patterned after the Palais D'Or, then a large restaurant-night club on Broadway. Unhappily, the depression caused the failure of the Westchester Palais D'Or in 1929 and Landolfe lost his property through a mortgage foreclosure.

It was soon re-opened as a Chinese restaurant under the name of the Asia. It continued operations much in the same fashion, with a house band. Apparently, it was not successful, for the lease was not renewed in 1932.

In April, 1932 Bill Reiber, who had been in charge of a country club, now defunct but then on the site of the present Canyon Club, rented the building; after refurbishing it, he opened a restaurant-night club which he called Rhineland Gardens. In addition to an orchestra, he featured a floor show. This consisted of several acts — adagio dancers, vocalists, comedians — introduced by a master of ceremonies. At the start the master of ceremonies was Peter Higgins, a well-known singer who had performed on the Keith-Albee circuit and had just finished a long and popular engagement at Keith-Albee Theatre in White Plains. Later Higgins was succeeded by Charlie Strickland, who maneuvered a miniature upright piano around the perimeter of the dance floor, singing ditties to the patrons at the tables. It was Strickland who composed a song in praise of the Armonk Independent Fire Company. (I wonder whether the tune or the verses have survived.)

The Rhineland Gardens flourished under Mr. Reiber. In the beginning only house orchestra and not name bands played there. Mr. Reiber brought in name bands when the practice of broadcasting on the air from remote sources took hold. He decided in 1939 to discontinue his operations in Armonk and opened a restaurant in Elmsford on the Saw Mill Parkway known simply as Reiber's; the restaurant now has the title of Razzberry.

Rhineland Gardens was almost immediately taken over by Sal Sava and Abe Abel, both of Port Chester. Again, it was re-decorated, and they christened it as Blue Gardens. Sava and Abel ran the restaurant in the same manner as Mr. Reiber had, using name bands broadcasting over the radio.



The Lob Cabin's dance floor was large, even by today's standards. All dressed up and spotless, it welcomed huge throngs every weekend and was long a favorite place to dine and dance. Complete dinner in 1933 cost \$1.25! New Year's Eve reservation was \$2.50!

The bands that played at Rhineland Gardens and Blue Gardens, as I have been able to identify them from memory and such records as exist, are as follows:

1. Before the first name band arrived, during the early part of the Reiber management, the orchestras playing there were constituted of musicians from within the county. The orchestra at the time of the opening of the Rhineland Gardens in April, 1932, according to the *North Castle Monitor*, was Ernie Golden's. In August, 1937 the band at the Rhineland Gardens, from an account in the *North Castle Sun* was led by Alexander Jahn.

2. Somewhere in this period — probably shortly after Jahn — the McFarland Twins and their band played at the Rhineland Gardens. The McFarlands, both saxophonists, were lookalikes, and as Simon says in his book, "The Big Bands," were "handsome ... and looked like football heroes ..." Before organizing their own band, they performed with Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians, and so, in the Waring tradition, they entertained with a glee club and vocalists out of the personnel of the band. Their sound was similar to Lombardo.

3. Also, sometime in this period, Bill McCune's orchestra performed at the Rhineland Gardens. McCune was a graduate of St. John's Law School; so far as I know, he never practised law. His band was distinguishable from others by a rhythm and style somewhat like the band of Hal Kemp. Both McCune and the McFarland Twins were heard over the air from radio stations in New York City. While playing at the Rhineland Gardens, McCune and the members of the orchestra lived at the home of Mrs. Agnes Smith, across the way from the club.

After the war McCune re-established his band, and I remember seeing him at the Astor and McAlpin Hotels in New York. In fact, Sybil Hussar recalls that on one Monday night McCune played at the Log Cabin.

When the Blue Gardens opened in October, 1939, the *North Castle Sun* reported that Spud Murphy and his 14 piece band was playing there. Murphy had had considerable experience in the jazz field, but more as an arranger for leading orchestras like Benny Goodman's than as a performer. His band played intricate arrangements which anticipated the music of Stan Kenton, and, unfortunately, did not attract a following.

5. Dean Hudson was at the Blue Gardens during the latter part of 1940 and the beginning of 1941. His orchestra was mainly made up of former students at the University of Florida, of which he was a graduate. He is reputed to have been the first swing band leader to enter the armed services on the outbreak of World War II.

6. Mel Marvin replaced Hudson in January, 1941. His was a sweet band, using the title, "Take It Easy Music."

7. Sometime in this period Red Norvo and his band played at the Blue Gardens. Norvo was married to Mildred Bailey, a legendary jazz singer. He is still active as a jazz musician on the vibraphone and is thought to be one of the most creative performers in the jazz world. His influence, however, has been probably more perceptible in small groups than in swing bands. Before coming to the Blue Gardens he had played at Murray's on the Bronx River Parkway at Tuckahoe.

8. In July, 1941, Carl Hoff played at the Blue Gardens, according to George Simon in his book, "Simon Says." Hoff had been the conductor of the Lucky Strike Hit Parade orchestra, a popular radio program. His female vocalist was Louanne Hogan, and his male vocalist Bob Haymes, the younger brother of Dick Haymes.

9. Hoff was succeeded in October, 1941 by Dick Shelton. I have no memory of Shelton, nor can I find any information about him, save a fleeting reference in the *North Castle Sun*.

When World War II broke out, it was likely that Shelton was still at the Blue Gardens. However, the Blue Gardens suffered the same loss of patronage which the Log Cabin experienced as a result of the war and did not continue the name bands afterwards.

Indeed, the Blue Gardens did not survive the war, for in a spectacular blaze which the Armonk Independent Fire Company was unable to contain it was destroyed on a windy night in December, 1942 — just 23 years before an equally uncontrollable fire consumed the Log Cabin.



The Green Farm

JOSEPH WARREN TOMPKINS

JOSEPH WARREN TOMPKINS
1839

John Rogers
Elisha B.

Bear Gutter Brook

Abraham Knapp
2209'

3

THE CONT

438'

25

495'

Harmon

660'

10

Demarest
493'

11

Isaac Tompson

John Gardner

412'

6

525'

12

Miller Robbins
636'

James Robbins
1761'

Samuel Palmer
1910'

Oil Mill Road

Hill Road

Bear Gutter Brook

Samuel Fisher

Samuel + John Fisher
2185'

Harmon Demarest

1632'

13

Gilbert Skelly
410'

289'

4

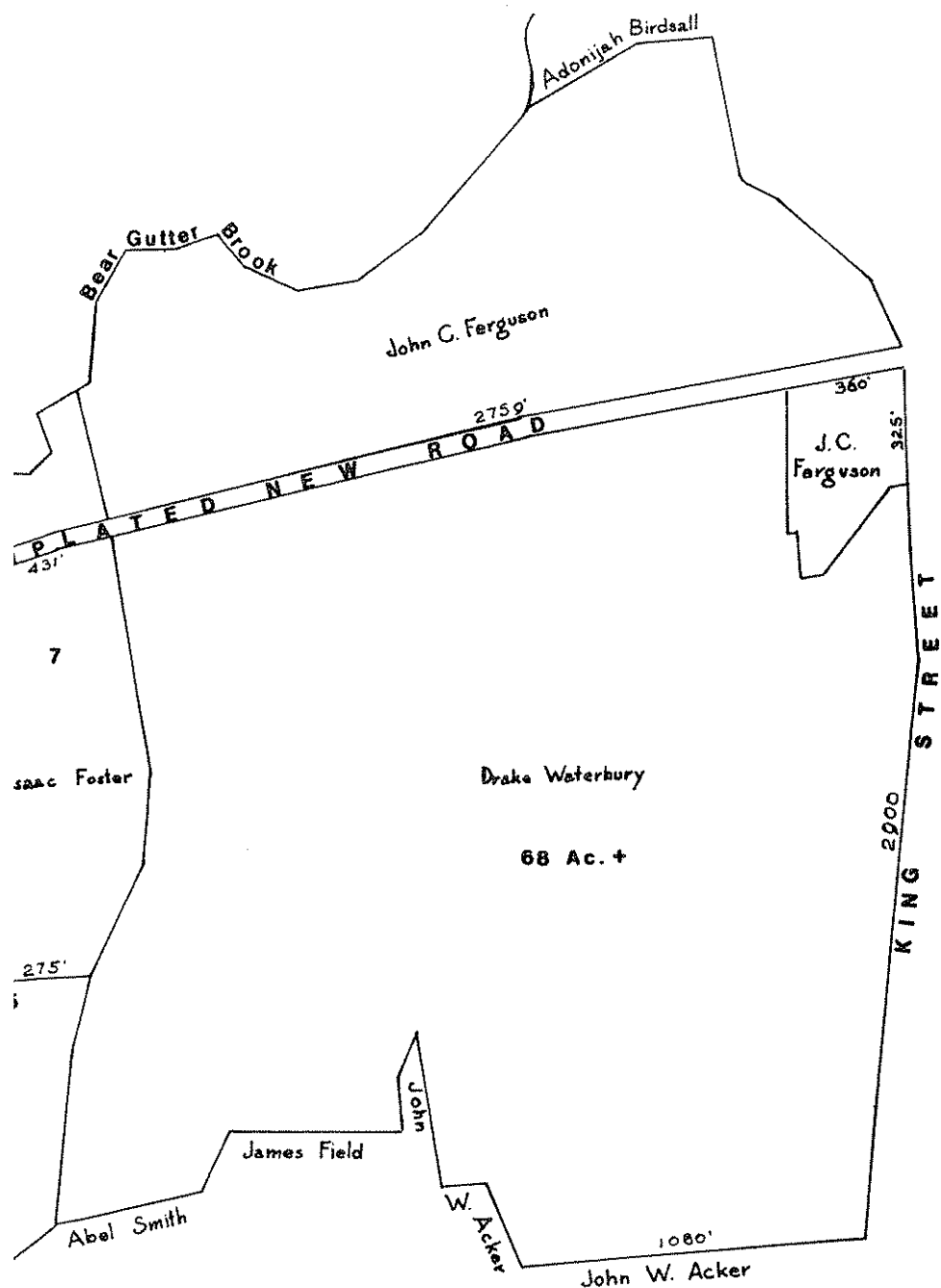
Sands Sutton

1131'

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Reconstituted by Richard M. Lederer, Jr.



Purists might say that swing — or middlestream jazz, as it is at times called — is not truly in the blues idiom and therefore not jazz in the classic sense. Perhaps this is so, but in the 20's and 30's when jazz was treated by many as vulgar, and by some as even immoral, and hence to be ignored or condemned, the public acceptance of swing was a pivotal factor in the final admission of jazz into American music.

The generation which brought this change about cannot forget the sound of the swing bands — the thrust of the beat of the drum reinforced by the bass fiddle, the sharp attack of the trumpets, the throaty growl of the trombones, in contrast to the more lyric swell of the saxophones, accented by the filigree tones of the clarinet and the embroidery of the piano notes, all coalescing into a torrent of rhythmic force that induced an irresistible excitement. It is a memory easily recalled because the bands which produced that sound were so accessible — both on the air and in the clubs.

Presently, of all the leaders of the bands that played in Armonk in those days, only Les Brown and Red Norvo are still active. All the others have disappeared from the scene, with the inevitable consequence of loss in style and approach and the changes in our cultural appetite. Live music is an expensive commodity today, but more than that, the visual impact of television has largely supplanted the programs of music on the radio. Except for a small minority, radio broadcasts concentrate today on classical music, or the kind of music appealing to the current generation — country or western or rock and roll.

Each generation has its own fashions, its own tempo. It would not be surprising if jazz re-emerged as the vogue of another time. As part of that renaissance, as part of the history and development of jazz, the two establishments in Armonk may be justly recognized as showcases for swing bands and jazz musicians. Each of them — the Log Cabin and the Blue Gardens — were contributors to the movement of the time and so should be remembered.



Today, this simple contemporary office structure occupies the spot where thousands of revelers once dined and danced to the music of some of America's best known bands.

NOTES

Sybil Hussar gave me much of her time and memory and loaned me the collection of newspaper clippings, books, magazine articles and photographs which she has accumulated concerning the Log Cabin. In particular, I borrowed "Simon Says" by George T. Simon (Galahad Books, New York; 1971), which is a selection of his contemporaneous writings in the *Metronome* during the time in question; this contained references to the Armonk scene. She also let me have the September, 1934 issue of *Fortune* (Vol. X, no. 3), in which is the story of the origin and development of the roadside business in America; the story has a large section devoted to the Log Cabin. I am most thankful to her help and the material.

My wife, Marguerite Lewis (my sister), Lucy Rodgers and Goldie Hergenhan gave me the benefit of their memories about the bands in Armonk, and I am grateful to all of them for their assistance.

"The Big Bands", also by George T. Simon (The Macmillan Company, New York; 1967), supplied me with an abundance of information about the bands mentioned here, including facts concerning their personnel. It was crucial in certain instances in fixing time spans.

The volumes of the back issues of the *North Castle Sun* and the *North Castle Monitor* in the North Castle Library for the period covered by this article were scanned by me and furnished a great deal of data, especially as to the history of the Log Cabin and the Blue Gardens. I am indebted to the Library and its staff in affording me the time and space to examine the files.

For general background interest on jazz in America, I drew on "Jazz: A People's Music" by Sidney Finkelstein (The Citadel Press, New York; 1948), and "Eddie Condon's Scrapbook of Jazz" by Eddie Condon and Hank O'Neal (Galahad Books, New York; 1973).

I am wholly responsible for any errors or omissions in the article. I have tried to be as accurate as possible, but in dealing with people and events of fifty years ago, it is inevitable that memory may be at fault. Please excuse such defects as you see.

NORTH CASTLE'S FIRST SUBDIVISION

By Richard N. Lander

In present day North Castle roads are cut through fields and woods in locations this North Castle native once thought impossible to develop. New houses spring up like mushrooms in forest glens and on rocky hillsides. Since the close of World War II to the present day hundreds of beautiful Colonials and interesting Contemporary dwellings have emerged on our landscape. Truly this is the day of the subdivision and the real estate development. To the casual observer this is a new process but to the trained eye of the native this is a longer story.

The author has always traced the beginning of subdivisions in North Castle to "A Map of Saint Stephen's Church Property" surveyed for the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of St. Stephen's Church. The map made in 1853 by Nehemiah Searles, Civil Engineer and Surveyor, is the original plot plan upon which present downtown Armonk is located. The map, consisting of thirty-seven lots, covered all the property on the east side of Main Street (Route 128) from the Methodist Church Corner to the south line of the present property on which the A & P shopping center is located. It then ran eastward to Wampus Brook with lots on both sides of Maple Avenue (a street laid out as a result of the subdivision) thence to Bedford Road (Old Route 22) and along the north side of the road back to the Church Corner. (There are some changes in this map as Maple Avenue originally ran west of St. Stephen's Church; its route was later rerouted to the east side of the Church.) This subdivision was designed to secure a firm financial foundation for the new St. Stephen's parish. In this it was not successful but it did lay the foundations of Armonk Village.

However, quite by accident I have discovered an earlier subdivision within North Castle. (Some time ago I began a project of making a map attempting to depict what North Castle looked like circa 1800-1830, showing property lines and a chain of owners' names on each parcel. Nearly five years and an estimated three thousand abstracted deeds later, some sixty-five percent of the town has been mapped. Using volume 4, plates 8 and 46 of the G. M. Hopkins & Co. magnificent *Atlas of Westchester County*, and the City of New York Watershed, taking maps as principle guides, an interesting picture of early North Castle appears.)

The newly found subdivision lies at the northern end of the present-day Kensico Reservoir partly above and partly under the water, and stretches from King Street on the North to Cooney Hill Road on the South. Eleven deeds from Joseph Warren Tompkins and Mary Smith Tompkins, his wife, convey lots by number (3 to 13) on a "Map of the Green Farm" made for J. Warren Tompkins by Edward Carpenter and James C. Carpenter, Civil Engineers and Surveyors March 30, 1839. Each deed besides giving the lot numbers also gives a complete metes and bounds description using compass bearings and the distances in chains and links.

The author, never having heard of the Green Farm map, began to check for a copy of this find. The first place, the Westchester County Land Records Office, yielded no clue. Next, the Title Guarantee Company, the largest, oldest, and best-known title insurance company, whose tremendous ("plant") records department houses not only their old records, but also the files of the old Westchester Title and Trust Co. and the old Lawyers Westchester Mortgage and Title Company. Again an extensive search revealed nothing. Later, all of the old engineering companies were asked if they had a record of the Green Farm. Ward Carpenter & Co. (the oldest), Fowler Engineering, and Ralph L. MacDonald had no tracing or copy of the map and none had ever had reference to it or heard of it.

Curiosity now thoroughly aroused, the author consulted his friend Richard M. Lederer Jr., Scarsdale Town Historian, an outstanding map expert about the possibility of reconstructing the "Map of the Green Farm." Accordingly, during the summer of 1984, Mr. Lederer took the author's abstracted deeds and completely redrafted the map. (Chains and links were changed to feet.) Herewith, in this edition, for the first time since the original was lost, appears "A Map of the Green Farm" as subdivided by Joseph Warren Tompkins in 1839. The author is greatly indebted to his friend's generous gift of skill and time to produce this finished product for all to see.

A History of the Property Known as the Green Farm

As early as Revolutionary times, John Griffin,¹ a prosperous farmer and storekeeper resided on an extended estate stretching partially along the upper Mile Square Road (Old Post Road) to and across King Street, south to Cooney Hill Road. On the east his holdings extended to lands of James Field and Abel Smith whose property formed the upper end of Cooney Hill Road. The farm stretched westward to Bear Gutter Brook, now under Kensico Reservoir.

After the death of John Griffin in late 1826, his executors, Thomas Carpenter, Charles Field, and Edmund Griffin, sold most of his holdings to Oliver Green,² a prominent citizen of nearby New Castle, the date being June 22, 1827. The consideration cited being simply the then significant sum of forty-five dollars an acre or \$7,875.00.³ (One other parcel north of those holdings, 72 acres along the east side of the Mile Square Road, was sold to Drake Waterbury for \$1260. It is now part of the lower I.B.M. property.)⁴

Oliver Green removed to his new holdings, but on April 18, 1831 he and his wife Jemima, conveyed them to his son Oliver F. Green⁵ for the sum of one dollar, other considerations are not mentioned.

Oliver F. Green was a prominent citizen and while living in North Castle served as Justice of the Peace. On June 20, 1835, he and his wife Miriam sold the farm to his son Dewitt Clinton Green, the purchase price being eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000.00).⁶ Oliver F. Green removed to Sawpitt (Port Chester) in the Town of Rye. This large farm or investment must have been too great for the younger Green to carry and he sold it back to his father on October 11, 1837 for the same consideration, eleven thousand dollars.⁷ The elder Green who evidently did not wish to return to farming in North Castle sold the farm on February 28, 1838 to Joseph Warren Tompkins, a prominent attorney of White Plains, New York. The price being \$9,000.00 subject to two mortgages which totaled \$3,250.00 which Tompkins agreed to pay.⁸

Joseph Warren Tompkins⁹ was an attorney of considerable standing and repute in Westchester County and was well-known for his abilities in court and for land speculation. During his life he bought and sold hundreds of parcels of county real estate; he seemed to just happen to show up at every foreclosure sale and buy in. Joseph W. Tompkins was well born, the son of George Washington and Charity (Purdy) Tompkins, his uncle was Daniel D. Tompkins (1774-1825), himself a prominent attorney, judge, Congressman, Governor of the State of New York 1809-1817 and Vice President of the United States 1817-1825. It was Joseph W. Tompkins who subdivided what he called "The Green Farm" and gave North Castle its first subdivision. Tompkins, as was his custom, quickly made two sales which show on the subdivision map as unnumbered parcels. The first April 1, 1839 to John C. Ferguson for \$4,500.00 for four parcels, two of which show on the Green Farm map. Parcel 3 was a parcel at the corner of King Street and a proposed new road and on which stood the old Griffin or Green "Cider Mill, Carriage house, grocery, and other buildings." Parcel 4 was on the north side of the new road, 23 acres of acreage. Also included in this purchase were two other parcels not shown on the map: parcel 1, "On which the dwelling house stands" of 8 acres at the north-end corner of Mile Square Road and King Street, later known to Armonk natives as the "Crystal Spring Hotel Property" also parcel 2 a small triangular parcel of 2 acres located between the junction of King Street, Mile Square Road, and the proposed new road.¹⁰ On April 1, 1839 he conveyed a large parcel of 68 acres including the right of way to the former Griffin and Green barns and barnyard to neighboring farmer Drake Waterbury for \$3,640.00.¹¹ The balance he subdivided into 13 lots, which he conveyed as follows:

Record of Deeds for Subdivision

date	recipient	L:p	Lot	acres	price
5-1-1839	Gilbert Shelly	85:402	13	5	\$190.00
5-1-1839	Miller Robbins	85:483	12	4	149.62
5-1-1839	James Robbins	85:381	6	9+	345.00
9-21-1839	Harmon Demarest		4	11	
			10	2+	490.00
12-23-1839	Isaac Foster (Colored Man)	87:369	7	8+	320.00
10-30-1839	John Hatfield	88:268	8	4+	196.25
1-1839	Samuel R. Palmer	90:119	5	11+	280.00
5-1-1839	Abraham Knapp	105:209	3	11¾	500.00
4-1-1841	Isaac Tompson	105:330	11	2¾	76.00
12-21-1847	John Gardner	301:325	9	6	150.00

Interesting Features to Note

Tompkins constructed a new road from the head of King Street as far as Cooney Hill Road at which point the then existing road went to White Plains. (The original Mile Square Road went down the now big peninsula in Kensico Lake and can still be walked for three and one half miles.) Lot number 4, conveyed to Harmon Demarest, is referred to as the "Long Meadow." Its shape on the map makes a very long lot in Bear Gutter Valley. On Lot number 3 was an oil mill, evidently one of the many ventures of the late John Griffin, and the deed to Abraham Knapp gives rights to adjoining owners in particular John C. Ferguson and Elisha B. Tompkins west of Bear Gutter Brook the right to lower excavate and open the channel of Bear Gutter Brook until it passes the "old Oil Mill Dam." An old road is repeatedly recited in the subdivision deeds which abut it and is to be kept open as a right of way for the benefit of all lot owners. This road referred to as the "Oil Mill Road" ran from Cooney Hill Road through the farm to the Oil Mill which was on Lot 3. The Oil Mill road was necessary to serve the Mill as the new road was not there. When Kensico is at low water, the upper end of Tompkins' "new road to White Plains" can be seen about 200 feet west from the present relocated (1914-1916) Route 22. Some of the owners built houses and lived on their lots — notably, Samuel Palmer, Harmon Demarest, and Isaac Tompson. Others simply used them as additional farm land, John Gardner. Others like the Robbins used them for wood lots. Later deeds to property did not mention lot numbers and so the plan of lots was lost. In 1907 they were among the condemnation parcels on "Map of Section 7 of Southern Aqueduct, Kensico Reservoir." Nine parcels and nine owners premises went into the holdings of the New York City Watershed and the Map of the Green Farm disappeared forever.

FOOTNOTES:

¹John Griffin, a prosperous Quaker farmer and storekeeper, lived for many years at the "head of King Street," where he had extensive real estate holdings. At his death in 1827 he left his widow the following items: Widow Esther Griffin, son 1) Emmanuel; 2) John I; 3) Job; 4) Solomon; 5) Children of a predecessor son Daniel; 6) Children of a predecessor son David; Daughters 7) Phebe Underhill; 8) Hannah Griffin; 9) Anna Haviland; 10) Esther Field. From the will of John Griffin, dated January 21, 1826.

²Oliver Green (? - 1835) a prosperous farmer first residing in New Castle and the North Castle where he died October 4, 1835. He was married to Jemima Forman and left three children: Parthenia, wife of John Hoag, Freelove wife of Joshua Watson Bowron M.D., and Oliver F. Green. (Westchester County Probate file 32/1836 Bowron)

³Liber 31 of Deeds, page 288.

⁴Liber 29 of Deeds, page 276.

⁵Liber 42 of Deeds, page 89.

⁶Liber 60 of Deeds, page 543.

⁷Liber 76 of Deeds, page 377.

⁸Liber 78 of Deeds, page 103.

²Joseph Warren Tompkins was born February 18, 1804, son of George Washington and Charity (Purdy) Tompkins. He married Mary Smith of Bedford, N.Y.; born 1804; died February 19, 1864; daughter of Jotham and Abigail Smith.

Their children were: 1) Marion 1839-1889; 2) George Warren 1841-1868; 3) Harriet 1843-1843; 4) Florence (no dates-infant); 5) Jotham Smith ????-1902.

He had a second wife which the Tompkins genealogy gives as Sarah Walton; however the White Plains Rural Cemetery records show the following burial in the lot: Sarah (Foster) Tompkins; died May 24, 1921; aged 74. Her birthdate being 1847 would indicate a younger second wife.

Joseph Warren Tompkins (1804-1874) "Graduated Union College 1822 and immediately after began the study of law in the office of Minot Mitchell of White Plains, (then a leading member of the Westchester County Bar). He was admitted to practice in 1825, opened an office in White Plains and commenced the practice of his profession under the most favorable auspices. He soon commanded a large and lucrative business which he retained to the end of his life. Up to within a few years of his death, he had been employed in nearly every case of magnitude in this and the adjoining counties of Putnam and Rockland. Mr. Tompkins died at his residence in White Plains, August 23, 1872 in the seventy first year of his age. He left a wife and two children. He was a strong advocate before a jury and in the trial of a good case he had few equals." ("The Bench and Bar" by Hon. Isaac N. Mills from a *History of Westchester County* by J. Thomas Scharff, L.E. Preston & Co., Philadelphia, 1886.)

During the search for a map of the Green Farm, the fascinating file containing the probate papers of Joseph Warren Tompkins were extensively examined. Joseph Warren Tompkins married Mary Smith (1808-1864), daughter of Jotham Smith (1780-1825) and Abigail Smith (1784-1837) of Bedford. They had five children: Harriet born and died 1843, Florence, ?, George Warren (1846-1868), Marion (?-1889) and Jotham Smith (?-1902).

¹⁰Liber 83 of Deeds, page 452.

¹¹Liber 83 of Deeds, page 459.

NORTH CASTLE'S EARLY TRANSPORTATION

By Norman M. Stone

As civilization has progressed one of its most essential ingredients through the ages has been transportation. The degree of sophistication in transportation has always been an indication of the stage of civilization. This is true of North Castle and Westchester County as well as of every other place.

Getting from one place to another was and is basic to all kinds of human endeavor. Good or bad transportation has often meant success or failure in peace or in war.

Early on in the European development of the western hemisphere — in 1694 to be exact — Governor Benjamin Fletcher of (England's) New York Colony sought information on the possibility of creating a route and method of transportation/travel that could be utilized for an invasion of Canada, which was French territory at the time. In the summer of that year he received a report on their investigation of the subject from William Pinhorne and N. Bayard that said "...It is impossible to march with any party of men to Canada by Land, either in winter or summer, but they must passe a Considerable Part of ye was over ye Lake (Champlain). ye Land on each side being extream steep and Rocky mountains or else a meer morasse cumbered with underwood, where men cannot goe upright, but must creep throu bushes for whole days' marches and impossible for horses to goe at any time of ye year."

Much of the new world was like that, including much of Westchester. Invention of the wheel certainly had revolutionized transportation for man, but there were many places where the wheel simply could not be used. But that did not stop man from overcoming obstacles. For one thing, the European colonists quickly learned from the native Indians how to use natural waterways for transportation. And they already knew about using horses, even in difficult terrain. When all else was of no avail, there was always the remaining alternative of traveling by foot, a mode of transport that almost never failed.

The Indians used water extensively for transportation of people and goods. They also were great overland travelers. For their land travel they developed paths leading from one stream to another. Indeed, practically the entire present-day system of travel and transportation in America is an outgrowth of the system of forest paths established by the Indians hundreds of years ago.

These Indian trails — the cornerstone of surface transportation in our country — were from 12 to 18 inches in width. They needed to accommodate only the width of one person. When they led through regions where local travel was especially heavy and constant, generations of soft moccasins wore the paths as much as a full foot deep.

The New York Historical Society, in 1847, held a meeting that was addressed by Peter Wilson, a Chief of the Cayugas. He said, among other things: "The Empire State, as you love to call it, was once laced by our trails from Albany to Buffalo; trails that we have trod for centuries; trails worn so deep by feet of the Iroquois that they became your roads of travel."

Not only was that the case from Albany to Buffalo, but elsewhere as well. Among the well worn Indian trails were two that crossed in our own backyard — Otter Trail and Bear Gutter Trail. These heavily utilized paths crossed like an "X" in the middle of what is now Kensico Reservoir. For a long time it was the major travel/transportation junction in the area, first for the Saginaw Indians, later for the colonists.

If you note the old mill stone standing on a marker beside the Reservoir today on Route 22 and follow a line directly west to the center point of Kensico Lake, you find the junction of these two trails, which were very well known to the early settlers of North Castle.

For water travel the Indians used two types of canoes. One was simply a hollowed out log; the other bark (especially birch) stretched over a frame and sealed with pitch. Early settlers learned to emulate the Indian canoe, finding it a very efficient vehicle that covered a lot of miles swiftly.

In the earliest development of the North American continent the five areas which saw the first development of transportation were: Chesapeake Bay; Eastern Massachusetts; New York Bay and the Great River of the Mountains (read Hudson); Connecticut River Valley and Long Island Sound; Delaware Bay and Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers.

As exploration moved up the Hudson it also moved east and included territory now known as North Castle. This kind of exploration began as early as 1639, when Dutch settlers occupied what they called "distant points" along the Hudson River. Transportation for exploring the Hudson was provided largely by river boats propelled by poles dug into the river bottom or bank for pushing. Farther out into deeper water, oars were used.

These boats were generally made of planks hewn from pine trees. They were anywhere from 20 to 30 feet long, perhaps three to five feet wide, two or three feet deep, with pointed ends and flat bottoms. Poling or rowing downstream was easy — the river current helped a lot. But going upstream was quite another story. A typical boat crew consisted of a steersman and from four to eight men, depending upon boat size. Each man had a pole, made of ash or hickory, with a heavy iron spike on one end.

The boat crews used either of two methods of moving their vessels. An equal number of men would stand on each side of the boat, all of them as close as possible to the front end, but facing the back. Spiked ends down, the poles would be put in the water to the bottom. With the upper ends of their poles snugly pressed against their shoulders, the men in concert would walk towards the stern of the boat as far as possible, and the boat would move forward.

The other method employed a somewhat larger boat, possibly twice as long and wide, equipped with a mast and sails. Going against the wind the sails would be dropped and poles would be used as in the smaller craft.

By the last two decades of the seventeenth century transportation in America had improved a great deal. Boston, New York and Philadelphia had grown into big, bustling cities and there was a heavy volume of travel from one city to the other. This traffic volume inspired transportation improvements and overland highways appeared.

In areas where water separated communities — such as New York (Manhattan) and its neighbors — ferry boats came into use for people along with barges for goods. Sails provided the principal motive power for both. For moving around within cities, wealthy people turned to the use of sedan chairs,

copied from Europe, carried by servants or equipped with wheels and pulled by horses.

Family carriages, pulled by two horses, began to appear on the American scene next. They were modeled after English coaches. Refinements included two-seaters and three-seaters (one seat for a driver), and chaises — a chair with a covered top of leather but no springs (and not very comfortable).

In those days relatively few people traveled very far from home or their local communities. Mostly they walked or rode a horse if the distance stretched out, perhaps to a neighboring hamlet. Crude wagons were used for carrying whatever needed to be moved and was too big for carrying. Most land travel over any appreciable distance was usually done in winter. There was more time and roads were less muddy. Snow, packed down hard and frozen, made a good travel surface. Sleighs, copied from the Indians and Canadians, were in wide use by 1700. For short winter trips snow shoes and dog sleds — also copied from the Indians — were often used.

These basic forms of transportation continued to be in general use, becoming more refined and using bigger and stronger vehicles throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. Motive power was provided by horses, water currents and wind.

Then, in the first half of the nineteenth century came the greatest development in transportation after the invention of the wheel. It was, of course, the railroad, born in England and developed to its greatest potential in the United States.

The first railroad to reach into North Castle was the Harlem River Rail Road, which stretched out from New York City into Westchester in the 1840's. As in every other place, when the railroad came, great changes followed. Communication between people and their communities, their businesses and their governments became a much simpler matter. Commercial development started where none had been dreamed of before. With the easier availability of all kinds of products and the easier and more practical means of moving around from place to place, North Castle and other Westchester communities began to grow and expand. Local farmers now had an effective, efficient way to market more and more food to the big city to the south. City people had an easier, more attractive way to get out into the country. A major change in human history took place and the world — including North Castle — would never be the same again.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

There is an unusual common thread running among the three authors of this edition of **North Castle History**. Each of them has been active in both North Castle Town and Westchester County government, and each of them also has family ties back to the earliest colonial days.

JAMES D. HOPKINS (*History of Jazz in North Castle*) has been a North Castle Councilman and Supervisor. While in the latter post he served as Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors. Then he was elected County Executive, serving in that position until he moved to the County Court; then on to the New York State Supreme Court and, ultimately, the Appellate Division of that Court — second highest in the State. Judge Hopkins retired from the bench in 1981 — the only person ever to have served as head of all three branches of County government — legislative, executive and judicial. The Hopkins family arrived in North Castle in 1740.

RICHARD N. LANDER (*North Castle's First Subdivision*) is also the descendant of a family that has been in North Castle since the early eighteenth century, settling in 1740. At the age of 18 he was named official Town Historian, a position he still holds. Mr. Lander served as Town Councilman and also in several posts in County government prior to becoming Deputy Commissioner and then Commissioner of Jurors of Westchester County, a position he still holds.

NORMAN M. STONE (*Transportation in the Early Days*) served as a member of the North Castle Town Board, then became a member of the Westchester County Board of Legislators. He is presently a member of the North Castle Planning Board. A family ancestor settled near what is now Stamford, CT, in 1654.

Photos: Collection of Sybil Hussar

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