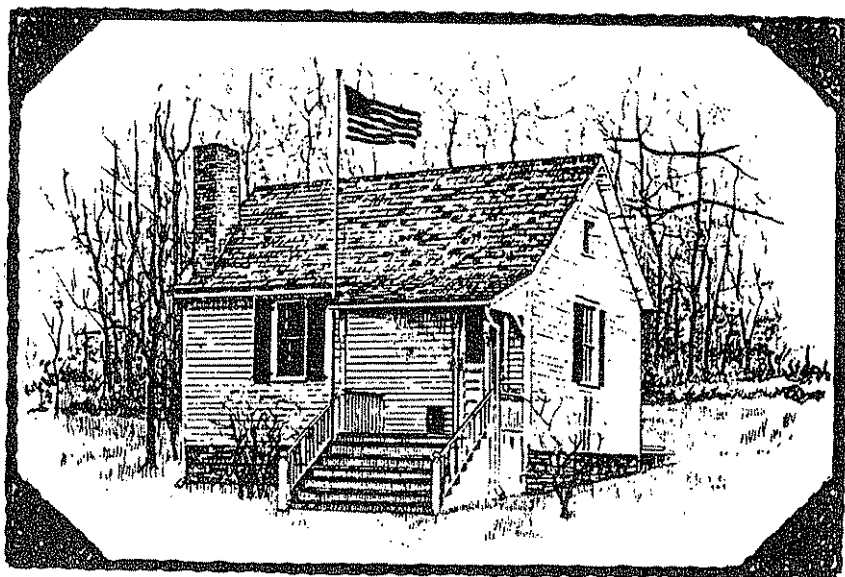


# North Castle History



Moving a schoolhouse was a significant project in a very eventful year in North Castle.

Drawing of East Middle Patent School

Vol XIII

The North Castle Historical Society

1986

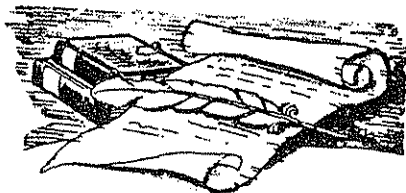
Celebrating 250 Years  
A Commemorative Address

The Lyon Family  
Moving a Schoolhouse

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# *The North Castle Historical Society*

Bedford Road, Armonk, New York 10504



## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Members and Friends,

Anyone visiting our headquarters complex at the corner of Cox Avenue and Route 22 should be amazed when they learn that the North Castle Historical Society is only 15 years old. Through the unstinting efforts of many volunteers, and the generous contributions of residents past and present, we have managed to bring history alive for residents of our town.

In past years, Smith's Tavern and the blacksmith shop have offered our residents the opportunity to see what life was like in North Castle before our current hustle and bustle. With the determined efforts of a number of volunteers under the capable and hardworking guidance of John Schnoor, 1986 saw completion of the renovation of the East Middle Patent one room school. A fitting opening for our newest addition was the multigrade class, held at the school for two days late last June, with the children and teacher Linda LaPine replete in costume of an earlier time. We're delighted to see the many school children who come to see our exhibits and to participate in a Colonial Crafts Day which we offer each spring for them.

We hope that each of you will visit our exhibits this year. Don't forget we're open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1-3:30 P.M. And, if you have a little spare time, we'd like to ask if you could help on some of our projects; different talents are needed; so please give us your help. Give me a ring and we'll talk about how you can help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan R. Shimer".

Susan R. Shimer

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## NORTH CASTLE REVISITED

By Barbara Massi

1986 is an important milestone in North Castle's history. 250 years ago, on April 6th, 1736, the settlers in the area gathered to hold the first town meeting:

*April ye 6<sup>th</sup> 1736*

*"At A Lawful Town Meeting for to Choose town officers in North Castle.*

*Moses Quimby Clerk*

*George Dennis Supervisor*

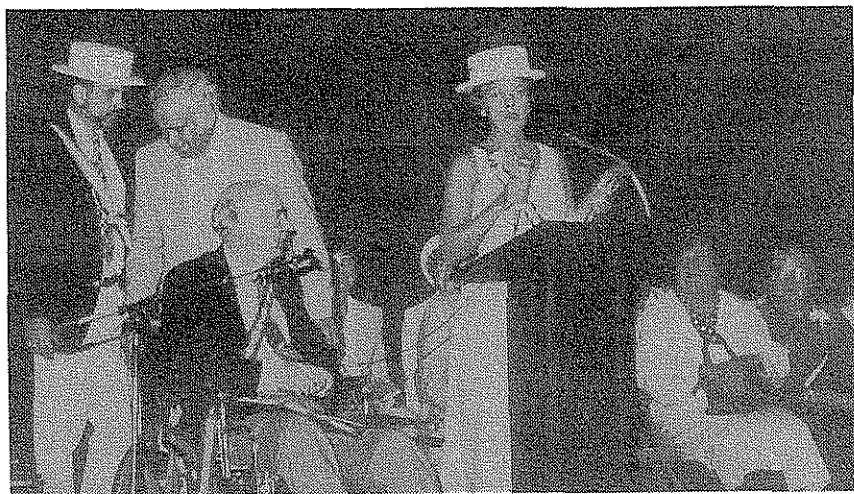
*Jonathan Ogden, Constable*

*Shubel Rowley*

*Assessors*

*Benjamin Carpenter*

*Samuel Dean, Shubel Rowley and Joseph Green, Highway Masters. Jonathan Ogden, Pounder. Samuel Dean and John Merritt, Fence Viewers and Prisers of Damages."*



Co-Chair Barbara Massi addressing assembled celebrants.

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With those words the Town of North Castle was formally organized. We can only assume that the meeting consisted of additional discussion. However, nothing further was recorded.

Early town meetings were held only once a year, primarily to elect positions of responsibility, and to resolve a problem or two: ... *"that all Rams that is found upon the Commons from the First day of August to the first day of Nov. shall be taken up and Gelt."* As the town grew, so the meetings grew and sometime during the latter part of the 19th Century it became necessary to hold them more than once a year. Eventually they became more commonly known as Town Board meetings, and today they are held twice a month.

A different kind of town meeting was held in March, 1985. This gathering consisted of citizens from townwide organizations who were invited to plan a 250th Anniversary celebration in 1986. Suggestions were put forth by a previously formed Steering Committee: a Ball, Historic Site Tour, Concert in the Park, Parade, Commemorative Service, and Festival. During the next few weeks an Executive Committee was formed to carry out each phase of the celebration which had grown to include commemorative signs around the town, historic site plaques (self-supported by homeowners with houses built prior to 1800), commemorative items, and bunting draped on buildings of businesses and organizations throughout the town (also self-supported). The second volume of *Historical Records of North Castle, 1791-1848* was in the process of being planned, written and printed by a Publication Committee which had begun working on the book in 1984. This 375 page book was published last April.

A fund-raising letter was mailed townwide in October of 1985 and in six months over \$21,000.00 was raised. Two newsletters were sent to residents to keep them abreast of the activities, signs were placed under the existing "By Grant of Indian Chiefs" signs in North White Plains and Banksville, and metal signs were erected along roads leading into North Castle in each area of the town identifying that area and signifying the anniversary year.

The Anniversary Ball was held Saturday, April 5th at the Canyon Club in Armonk. This enchanting and elegant affair included a cocktail hour, hors d'oeuvres, a prime ribs dinner, carafes of wine and a centerpiece at each table, and dancing until 1:00 a.m. A plaque was presented to Richard N. Lander in honor of his 40 years as Town Historian, and at midnight an anniversary cake was cut as the 400 enthusiastic revelers sang "Happy Anniversary" in a toast to the Town of North Castle! Supervisor John A. Lombardi read a proclamation declaring that the official celebration had begun. It was now April 6th 1986, 250 years from the date of the first town meeting held on that date in 1736. The celebration would continue for two months!

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Each week a vignette on the town's history was published in the North Castle News, commemorative items went on sale, the North Castle Adult Education Committee sponsored a four part series of lectures and slides entitled "Early Days in North Castle," The North Castle Historical Society continued its year-long exhibit "Capsule Views of North Castle History," and the Armonk Lions Club dedicated its annual Fol-de-Rol to the anniversary, calling it "Twelve Score and Ten."

The Historic Site Tour was held on May 31st, at which time many historic landmarks across the twenty-six square miles of North Castle were visited. This tour by bus included a stop for refreshments at historic Smith's Tavern, headquarters of The North Castle Historical Society. On Friday night, June 6th, the 26th U.S. Army Band stationed at Fort Hamilton, New York gave a very captivating and memorable concert. Although plans called for the concert to be held outdoors, the program had to be moved to the Byram Hills High School auditorium because of rain. The enthusiasm of those who attended was not dampened by the rainstorm outside, however, and reflected the upbeat tone of a variety of music from Sousa, to Southern, to "New York, New York," a few of which were sung by the band's vocalists. Three encores were necessary before the audience would allow the concert to end!



Local residents carry the colors in anniversary parade.



Grand Marshal Richard N. Lander led the anniversary parade.

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The weather forecast did not look good for the Parade, Commemorative Service, and Festival to be held the next day, Saturday, June 7th. However, because of the necessary commitments to bands, performers, speakers, food concessions, etc., who could not give a rain date, the Committee had decided early on that these events would have to be held rain or shine. Fortunately the Committee had made contingency plans to use the H.C. Crittenden Middle School and rent a 200-foot tent as insurance against rain. This would not help the parade, however, and although the rain had stopped by the next morning, the clouds remained threatening.

The parade started promptly at 10:00 a.m. as the church bells rang and fire horns blew. It was led by the North Castle Revolutionary Militia — town history buffs carrying the American, State, County and North Castle\* flags, guarded by three Continental soldiers. Next came the Mount Kisco Ancient Fife and Drum Corps who set a lively pace for those who followed: the Grand Marshal, the 250th Anniversary Committee, Honorary Chairmen, the Town

\*an anniversary gift from the Armonk Lions Club

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Board and other officials, and three divisions of marchers including a Revolutionary group, numerous North Castle organizations which included residents of all ages, four other bands, firetrucks, a smattering of antique cars spotted throughout the parade, a number of very unique and appropriate floats, large Belgian draft horses pulling a wagon, a clown on a high one-wheeler, and an old fashioned big bike.

Although it started to drizzle lightly as the parade approached Main Street it did not deter the marchers or the viewers who lined the parade route, many of whom were there not only to enjoy the parade, but to cheer on their marching friends or relatives. The organizers and town officials, who were placed in a reviewing area after they marched, expressed amazement at the turnout of marchers, the professionalism of the bands, and the beauty and creativity of the floats. The parade ended at the Crittenden School complex where the Commemorative Service stage had been set up. As the drizzle continued, however, it became apparent that the Commemorative Service would have to be held in the Crittenden School auditorium, and the school's stage was prepared to accommodate the guest speakers as the audience filed into their seats. The service was at once scholarly, humorous and nostalgic — a profound exercise in the reflective mood of the occasion.

The drizzle continued, at times becoming more than a drizzle, and although the Festival was called "A Day in the Park," the park was so wet it could not be used. The variety band, hired to play at the Gazebo all day, moved from the Gazebo to the auditorium and back again, finally setting up under the food tent where the barbershop quartet entertained. The 18th and 19th Century crafts were set up in the school's cafeteria, and the two huge Air Kastle bounces were put in the gym. Organizations' displays that couldn't remain outside were put into the hallways, and the Revolutionary group, hired to encamp, display, and perform two battles, moved from the soggy ballfields to the cafeteria where they demonstrated military life during the Revolution while periodically performing drills on the school's driveway. The sheepshearer and sheep, as well as the Armonk Airport display, settled under the school's portico while a video replay of the parade was shown throughout the day in the school's foyer where the technological displays had been set up. A magician and organ grinder wandered through the school.

Although the turnout for the June 7th events was lower than anticipated because of the rain, it was obvious that a good time was had by all those who attended.

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The Committee expressed its gratitude that the many events surrounding North Castle's 250th Anniversary were so well received. A detailed *Program of Dedication and Celebration*, passed out on June 7th, will give the reader an indication of the tremendous effort put forth by those many dedicated North Castle residents who donated time, talent, and money to make North Castle's 250th Anniversary a success!

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**Steering Committee:**

Richard N. Lander (Chairman, appointed by the Town Board), Pat Bresha, Rebecca Kittredge and Gene Matusow (Town Board Representatives), Barbara Massi, Guy Papale.

**Executive Committee:**

Richard N. Lander, Co-Chairman; Barbara Massi, Co-Chairman/Coordinator; Marguerite Lewis, Secretary; Irene Sandford, Treasurer; Rebecca Kittredge, Gene Matusow, Liaison to Town Board; Bruce Barnard, Historic Site Tour Chairman; Piers Curry, Fund Raising Chairman; Walter Ehoodin, "A Day in the Park" Co-Chairman; Guy Papale, Concert Chairman; George Pouder, Historic Site Plaques Chairman; George Renner, Parade Chairman; Carole Steinberg, Ball Chairman; Norman Stone, Publicity Chairman; Doris Watson, Program Chairman.

**Sub Committee Chairmen:**

Beverages: Carole Steinberg; Bunting: Rebecca Kittredge; Commemorative Items: Eileen Herbert, Ann Putalik; Crafts: Susan Shimer; Entertainment: Marlene Ehoodin; Flowers for Stage: Dorothy Alexander, Maggie Limburg; Food Concessions: Frances Bernard, Nancy Wallach; N.C. Organizations' Displays: Barbara McGrath; Park Preparation: Dave Ammerman; Signs (Metal): James R. Caruso; Signs (Wooden): Dr. William Peacock, John Schnoor; Special Assistant to Chairmen: Lynda Fisher.

**Publication Committee:**

Richard N. Lander and Barbara S. Massi, Co-Editors, Priscilla Cypher, Hon. James D. Hopkins, Helen Manner, Lewis J. Massi, Thomas R. Parker, Irene Sandford, Norman M. Stone, Doris Finch Watson.



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## NORTH CASTLE — 1736-1986

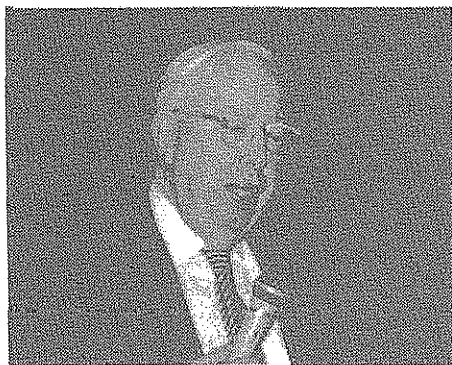
### *Commemorative Address on the Occasion of North Castle's 250th Anniversary*

By James D. Hopkins

I join with all of you in expressing my deep admiration and gratitude to Dick Lander and Barbara Massi for the masterful way in which they have planned and brought to fruition all the many parts of these exercises marking the passage of 250 years since the founding of North Castle. The entire celebration in an appropriate and inspiring style shows respect for, and belief in, the traditions of our town. Dick and Barbara and all your co-workers, you have performed magnificently.

250 years! One quarter of a millennium, one eighth of the measurement of the calendar *anno domini*. A considerable span of time in the recorded history of people. Put in a different and more personal light, it represents eight generations, which means that all of us here today have had more than 250 direct parents, in blood lines, in that period of time. We are apt to speculate over such a length of history whether its course might have been shifted if certain events had not occurred. As Pascal said, the Roman Empire might have taken a different path if Cleopatra's nose had been shorter. And if Major Tallmadge had allowed Andre to return to New York without uncovering the treachery of Arnold rather than holding him at Sands Mill, perhaps the Revolution might not have succeeded. Very likely, there are other parts of our history which might have changed, given a different set of events, but it is enough today to look back and appraise the changes that have taken place.

Yet, though there have been changes between 1736 and now, some things have remained the same. The land which attracted the early settlers and attracted us to live here has not changed very much. The fields, the rolling hills, the spines of the ridges, the sloping valleys, we still see as the settlers saw them,



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Judge Hopkins

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after they had cleared the land. The forest which they cut is slowly returning on the fringes of the old roads which still serve us, originally little more than tracks through the woods, but now paved, and a high speed thruway lately built thrusts like an arrow through the countryside. But the land itself looks largely as it was 250 years ago.

And the people who came here in the beginning of the eighteenth century are essentially similar in character to us. The liberty they sought is the liberty we cherish, their independence of spirit is our independence. One writer spoke of the settlers here in a letter which he sent in 1741 as "disputatious", a word which I take to mean that they did not agree with him. Many of the settlers were Quakers who were the dissenters of the day. They had been banned in the colonies to the east of here and came to North Castle where liberty of conscience was accepted. The population of the town in 1736 was a mixture of people of varying shades of belief, and strangers were not turned away. Today it seems that we are still "disputatious", if I read correctly recent events occurring in the Town Board and in the recent election. That is an attribute which I hope will not be lost in the future, for we need many points of view to reach the most satisfactory answer to our problems.

Nor do the records of the past show any great change in the questions arising. The minutes of the first settlers in 1736 reported no more than the election of town officials — an important piece of business, of course. In the second meeting in 1737 the people voted on two issues — one, to ordain that rams found running at large on the common would be gelded, and the other to license John Hallock to build a mill on Wampus Brook. These actions tell us much about the inhabitants. They had adopted the English custom of a common — a place open to everyone in the community — a piece of early zoning legislation, and they were at the same time exercising a kind of environmental control over the use of town waterways.

Compare the actions of the first meetings with the meetings of the town in the fifty year intervals following. In 1786 the town meeting was devoted largely to the appointment of roadmasters for the purpose of maintaining and building roads, a purpose which we still find imperative. In 1836 the town meeting for the first time elected the Justices of Peace, an office filled previously by state appointment. In April of 1886 the minutes of the Town Board recognize the long tenure of Louis Long as Justice of Peace and the passage of a resolution thanking William Creemer for his outstanding service as Town Clerk.

In April, 1936 the minutes of the Town Board had grown to five ledger pages long and dealt with such matters as repairing the concrete pavement of Cox Avenue, the distribution of welfare payments, the defense of an action brought by the City of New York relative to town assessments on reservoir land, and a revision in the boundary line between the town and the City of White Plains. And in the meeting of the Town Board in April of this year the problems of waste disposal through a regional scheme, the consideration of several zoning applications, and the approval of the sale of town owned property, were all topics of decision.

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From a review of the minutes of the meetings just described, it seems to me that the affairs of the meetings were generally the same, given the perspective of the complexity of later life. The proper use of the land, the needs and welfare of the people for better communication and transportation, the election of qualified persons to represent them — these subjects are woven as common threads in the fabric of the life of our people throughout the centuries.

The great changes since 1736 are therefore not in the land or in the people, but in the cultural complexion in the world about us. The most significant change is of speed in transportation and communication. Let me give two examples which illustrate the point. Richard Lederer in his book on place names says that North Castle is derived from the Indian fort which stood on the hill southwest of where we are now. It is occupied today by the international headquarters of IBM, the preeminent manufacturer of computers in the world. In 1889, a little less than 100 years ago, the resolution of the Town Board thanking William Creemer for his labors in copying the early minutes speaks prophetically of the time when electricity — the giant force then stirring — would record the minutes by the whisper of the Town Clerk instead of tedious handwriting. Second, a little further to the south of IBM lies the North American headquarters of Tandberg, a maker of fine tape recorders. The products of these two companies symbolize the change in life since 1736. And, of course, even further south of us, lies the Westchester Airport, part of which is in our town.

Though the new way of life makes some things easier, and North Castle slowly joins the growth of the huge metropolitan region surrounding the City of New York, I venture the hope that the characteristics of our land and people will not change, that we shall continue to foster the preservation and spread of those qualities which we hold to be the essentials of the good and peaceful life. That is, to follow the pursuit of liberty and happiness, the understanding of what independence of mind and freedom of debate means in that pursuit, and to maintain always a sense of responsibility for the generations to come. We must never forget that we are the beneficiaries of the strength and courage of the people who survived the savage raids of the Revolution and the vigorous assaults waged against their ideals from time to time.

Our aspirations model their ideals. No doubt, we would look different to them, and our speech might be strange, yet they would recognize that our ideals do not differ from theirs. We are still a diverse people, who welcome the stranger into our midst to share our ideals. Each fifty years of existence has brought problems, and we should expect problems will arise in the future, and they will be confronted, I am sure, under the example of the past and the strength of the ideals by which we have prospered, with calmness and courage.

2036 — here we come! I am confident that the traditions of today and the past will be as strong then as they are now.

June 7, 1986

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## THE LYON FAMILY OF NORTH CASTLE

*a memoir of a family who really did pledge their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor in the cause of American independence.*

By Richard N. Lander

### THE LYON FAMILY

#### I

Two distinct branches of the Lyon family settled in colonial North Castle. Both of these families descended from a common ancestor, Thomas Lyon of Byram Bridge, known as Thomas Lyon of Rye, born in England about 1621. He died at Byram Neck, Greenwich, CT, in 1690.

His great grandson, Roger Lyon, was born December 14, 1715. The son of John and Hannah (Banks) Lyon, he moved from King Street in Rye, NY, to North Castle about 1749/50. He purchased extensive property along the Danbury Post Road (Route 22) and Chestnut Ridge down to and crossing Byram Lake to the top of Byram Mountain.

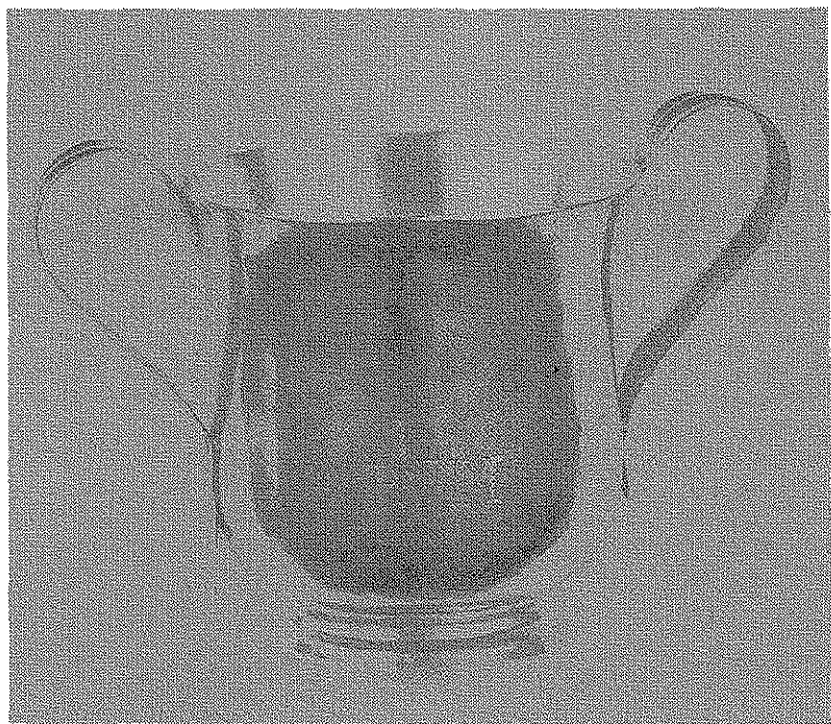
Here he led the life of a yeoman farmer, though probably in much more style than most of his neighbors, as he kept slaves and seemed to have lived like a country gentleman. The site of his homestead still may be seen near the junction of Route 22 and Chestnut Ridge Road, where extensive foundations and stone walls mark the spot to this day.

Known far and wide as *Captain* Roger Lyon from reputed service in the colonial army during the French & Indian War, he was definitely the leading citizen of the neighborhood. He held several town offices, including Overseer of the Roads, Assessor, and Overseer of the Poor.

He married in Rye, Mary Wilson, daughter of Samuel and Mary (Ogden) Wilson, of King Street, Rye. They had seven sons: Roger, Justus, Samuel, Gilbert, John, Daniel and Joseph; and two daughters: Glorianna, wife of Andrew Sniffin, and Sarah, wife of William Wright.

When the momentous events of the American Revolution came, despite their position as landed gentry, Captain Roger and all seven sons joined the patriot cause. While there are references to Captain Roger serving as a captain in the Middle Battalion, later the Second Regiment of the Westchester Militia, his age and approaching blindness must have greatly curtailed his active service.

Roger, the oldest son, served as a private in the Second Regiment of the Westchester County Militia, Justus, the second son and John the third son, held the same rank in the same regiment. The fourth son, Samuel, began in the ranks of the same regiment but his abilities soon earned him the rank of major in the Third Regiment. He became one of the outstanding patriot leaders of North Castle and was captured by the enemy at least twice during the war years. After one of these captures he escaped from prison in New York City, working his way back to North Castle by way of Long Island.



**Captain Roger Lyon's cup.** This is the silver cup from which General George Washington is reputed to have drunk on his visit to the Lyon homestead. It was preserved in the Lyon family for many years and presented to the Westchester County Historical Society, its present owner, fifty years ago. Picture courtesy of the Westchester County Historical Society.

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The fourth brother, Gilbert, spent some time in active service with the Continental Army and was present during the Saratoga campaign. He also served as first lieutenant and later captain in the Second Regiment, Westchester County Militia, under Col. Thomas Thomas.

The two youngest sons, Joseph and Daniel, both of whom enlisted when they were still in their teens, served in Captain David Hobby's Company in the Second Regiment, Westchester County Militia, during the entire war.

Captain Roger knew George Washington well, so well in fact, that General Washington and his staff stopped at Captain Roger Lyon's homestead on Chestnut Ridge while passing through Westchester to White Plains. Preserved to this day in the collection of the Westchester County Historical Society, is an exquisite silver cup monogrammed with the initials of Captain Roger and his wife, Mary, from which Washington is reputed to have drunk on that occasion.

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An account of this event can be found in Bolton's History. The story is told that Captain Lyon, being blind, handed the cup to Washington, saying, "General, the ladies say you are a very handsome man, but I cannot see."

To this Washington replied, "Tell the ladies I am afraid they are blind as yourself!"

Captain Roger survived the revolution and lived to see the formation of the United States, dying at his homestead May 13, 1797, aged 84. His will, a most interesting document, gives a wonderful account of his extensive holdings: To son Roger, the farm he lives on in Bedford. To son Justus, the farm he lives on in Bedford. To son Samuel, all my lands east of Chestnut Ridge Road and north of the Post Road in North Castle and Bedford. To son Gilbert, all the lands adjoining Coman Pond and a lot of land in "Sawpitt" (Port Chester). To son Daniel, the north part of the homestead farm from Bedford town line south along the Chestnut Ridge Road and across Byram Lake. To son Joseph, the south part of the homestead farm "where I now live" from John Forman's north along the Chestnut Ridge Road to the land I have given Daniel. To son John, all the lands on the south side of the Danbury Post Road (Route 22) adjoining Aaron Forman's land.

The will divides other lands in Rye and the East Patent of North Castle among all seven sons, share and share alike. He leaves to daughters Sarah Wright and Gloriana Sniffin, my slaves 'Pate' (Patty) and 'Roser' (Rosa).

This will was probated in Westchester County Surrogate's Court June 3, 1797, with sons Major Samuel and Captain Gilbert as executors.

The sons of Captain Roger had their share of successes and disappointments in life and a brief account of these is included here.

Roger, the eldest, remained in Bedford, dying there in 1824. He had four children and his descendants lived there until the early 1900's.

Justus lived in Bedford, dying there in 1815, and his descendants lived in Bedford, Ossining and South Salem until recent times.

Gilbert left North Castle for Eastchester about 1818, where he died shortly thereafter in the fall of 1819. Among his ten children was David W. Lyon, who returned to North Castle, where he kept a grocery store at Coman Hill. Later David moved to White Plains. His son, Gilbert S. Lyon, became County Treasurer of Westchester County from 1866 to 1872.

John lived in North Castle until his death in 1815. Of his three sons only Abraham lived beyond young manhood. In 1827 he sold his share of the Lyon holdings (including the family cemetery) to John Bussing. The subdivision which includes Lyon Court and Lyon Place occupy part of that property.

Daniel seems to have been the most unfortunate of the brothers. He was a farmer and drover, and seems to have had serious financial difficulties resulting in the loss of his farm. His lands at the north end of Byram Lake were purchased by his brother, Major Samuel Lyon. Daniel Lyon was still living in North Castle in 1833. His date of death is unknown. The author presumes he is

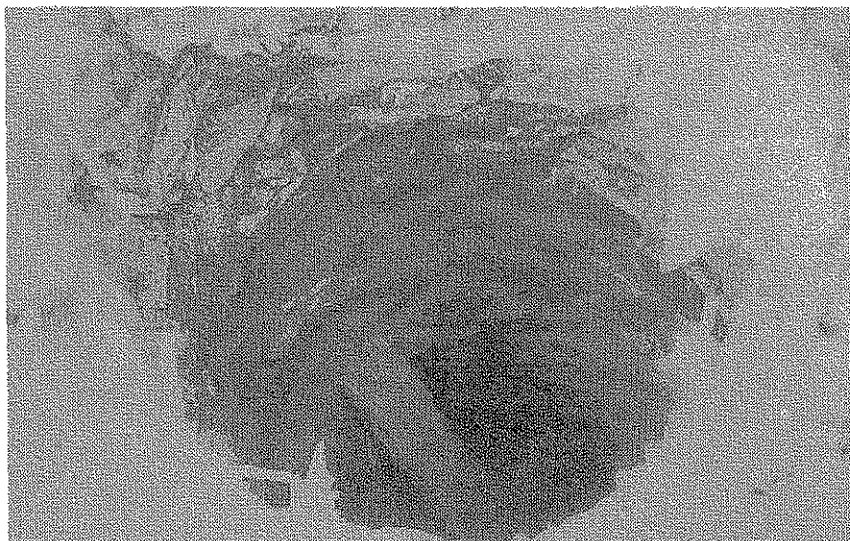
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buried in an unmarked grave in the Ferris Cemetery next to his wife and son, Smith, in Bedford. We have no knowledge of his seven children except a son, Smith Lyon, who predeceased him.

Joseph lived on the homestead farm of Captain Roger until 1815/1816, when he sold it to his brother, Major Samuel, and moved presumably to New York City. He was still living there in 1833, when he made an application to receive a pension for his war services. He worked as a messenger for attorneys, among them James A. Hamilton, son of Alexander Hamilton. His date of death is unknown. The location of his residence was probably New York City with one of his children. All trace of his eight children has been lost.

The most successful of the brothers was Major Samuel, who resided at times in North Castle, but later Bedford. He married first Mary Lounsberry, daughter of Nehemiah and Sarah (Webb) Lounsberry. She died January 10, 1792, and he married second Elizabeth Fleming, daughter of Dr. Peter and Sarah (McDonald) Fleming, both his wives being from Bedford. All seven of his children were from his first marriage.

Major Samuel was well acquainted with George Washington and was a close friend of John Jay. When Jay was out of the country for periods of time on diplomatic business for the United States, Major Lyon had charge of his large estates in Bedford.



Captain Roger Lyon's well, on the northwest corner of the foundation, at the site of his homestead on Chestnut Ridge.

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Major Samuel died January 23, 1819, and his will, dated April 7, 1818, gives some insight into family history. He recites that he bought the farm of his brother Daniel and gave that farm to his son, Samuel, and he confirms that gift. He then states he purchased the farm of his brother Joseph, formerly "the homestead of my honored father," and gave it by deed of trust (1816) to my two sons, John, of Bedford, and Samuel, of North Castle. He confirms that gift and recommends that if John wishes to sell his half that Samuel buy it.

John Lyon of Bedford, the son of Major Samuel, died shortly after his father on April 3, 1820. He left a widow, Sally (Smith) Lyon, and seven children. These heirs sold their half of the homestead farm to brother Samuel.

Thus Samuel Lyon of North Castle acquired all of what Captain Roger had called his "homestead farm." Samuel was born April 11, 1787, and married Rosalinda Fowler, daughter of Moses and Ada (Crane) Fowler. They had ten children.

This Samuel Lyon, like his father and grandfather, became one of the leading citizens of the town, serving in many official capacities, including Overseer of the Roads, Commissioner of Highways, and as a Justice of the Peace. The census of 1850 reveals him to be the wealthiest citizen in town.

Of his ten children, three of his four sons grew to maturity: Osmond C., John Newton and Samuel Augustus. Osmond C. sold his interest in the homestead as a young man and moved to White Plains, where he died in 1891. John resided on the Lyon property and died there in 1885. His brother Samuel Augustus — unmarried — lived on until February, 1895. Known far and wide as Gus Lyon, he was the last of the Lyons to live on the homestead farm. For many years after his death the farm was owned by Dewitt Sarles, his nephew, son of his sister Mary Narcissa, the wife of Horace B. Sarles of Ossining. In the early 1940 era his estate sold the farm to Eugene Meyer. It is presently being developed for residential purposes, the developer reserving the site of the old Lyon farm as a greenspace area.

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## II

The second branch of the Lyon family trace their descent from Jonathan Lyon, born at Greenwich CT, June 1, 1706, the son of Thomas Lyon, Jr., and Abigail (Ogden) Lyon, his wife. Jonathan was therefore the grandson of the original Thomas Lyon and cousin of John, the father of Captain Roger.

Jonathan arrived in North Castle about 1748 and settled on the Danbury Post Road north and east of Smith's Tavern and south of Cousin Roger at Chestnut Ridge. His holdings were never as extensive as Roger's but were on both the east and west sides of the road — approximately present day Windmill Farm and Coman Hill School.



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Prior to moving to North Castle he married Elizabeth Mead, daughter of Samuel and Hannah Mead of Greenwich. They had seven children: Jonathan, Elizabeth, Elnathan, Israel, Phebe, David and Peter. (Phebe was married to Roger Lyon, Jr., son of Capt. Roger.)

Jonathan seems to have lived the life of a yeoman farmer and probably due to age — nearly 70 — was never a soldier in the militia. However, four of his sons were outstanding patriots. He died probably in late 1783 as his will was probated on January 24, 1784. For some unknown reason his will is recorded in the office of the Court of Appeals in Albany. In his will he remembers his three grandsons, all named Jonathan Lyon, and use of one-third of his lands in North Castle to his wife Elizabeth during her natural life. He also leaves substantial sums of money to sons Jonathan, Elnathan, Israel, David and all his lands in North Castle to his youngest son, Peter. (Peter being the youngest probably stayed on with his aged parents while the older brothers struck out for new locations.)

Of Jonathan's sons, the eldest, Jonathan, Jr., moved to Bedford and was a Paymaster for the Army and is reputed to have had charge of payments to the French troops (Lafayette). Jonathan's house in Bedford was burned by the British in retaliation for his vigilance in frustrating British and Tory raiding parties. The *Lyon Memorial* reports an interesting physical characteristic about Jonathan — that he was distinguished for a remarkably luxuriant growth of hair, worn as was customary in that day in a queue. His hair was so long that when he was sitting in a chair it could be tied in a knot under the seat of the chair. He died in Bedford in 1787. Some of his descendants remained in Bedford while others moved to western New York.

Elnathan removed shortly before the Revolution (1774) to Clinton (Dutchess County) New York, where he died in 1810 and his descendants resided for many years. Some descendants were buried in the Lyon cemetery on Elnathan's farm near Clinton Hollow, NY.

Israel Lyon was a well known patriot who moved to Bedford and settled on a farm on the Danbury Post Road, not far from the North Castle town line. He served as a private in the Second Regiment of the Westchester County Militia, and also was a member of the Committee of Safety for Westchester County. His home was burned by the British on their retreat down the Post Road from the burning of Bedford in July, 1779. He died at Bedford in 1817. Many of his descendants remained in Bedford but some moved to Delaware and Chenango counties.

David Lyon saw much service during the war and was a captain in Col. Alexander McDougall's First New York Regiment. He later served in the Second Westchester County Militia. He died at North Castle in 1787. His large family of children scattered throughout New York State and some of his children reached Lyons, Wisconsin.

The youngest son, Peter, born May 17, 1743, remained in North Castle living on his father's farm and became one of the leading patriots in the

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community. He was enrolled as a private in the Col. Thomas Thomas Second Westchester County Militia, but how much service he actively saw is not recorded. He, like his brother, also served on the Committee of Safety in 1775/76. He evidently represented the civil authority in that portion of the town, being appointed a Justice of the Peace by the newly formed State of New York. Nothing better illustrates the importance of the Lyon cousins to the patriot cause in North Castle than Philip Pell's letter to Robert Benson, December 22, 1780, in which he reports Delancey's tory raiders came up to North Castle on December 18 and "took up (captured) Major Samuel Lyon, Captain Gilbert Lyon and Esquire Peter Lyon, the principal supporters of that part of the country." One of the most interesting items regarding Lyon as a judge is the assertion that in the *Christian Advocate* of July 18, 1895, "that Major Andre was brought before him after his capture." (September 23, 1780.) Beside serving long terms as a Judge — as early as 1778 until as late as 1814; Peter served as Town Clerk 1787-1788; as Supervisor 1807-1809.

In March of 1806 Peter sold part of his farm (50 acres) to his son, Jonathan. In March, 1818, he conveyed another 100 acres to Henry Rundle. By 1818 he was living in New York City and in 1819 he purchased a house and lot at 37 Pump (Canal) Street in New York City, where he resided until his death. His death occurred on the most appropriate day for an old patriot — July 4, 1824. (His executors sold his last North Castle real estate December 21, 1825.)

Prior to his leaving North Castle Peter and his family joined the Methodists and he served briefly as one of the first trustees of the North Castle Methodist Episcopal Church (Armonk).

By his marriage on December 10, 1766 to Jerusha Palmer, daughter of Peter and Jerusha (Wines) Palmer he had nine children: Mary, Phebe, Sarah, Jonathan, James H., Samuel, Edward, Anna and Peter Palmer.

The oldest son, Jonathan, became a Methodist minister and served as a circuit riding preacher in the New York Conference from 1807 to 1816. He twice served his home church at North Castle — 1809 and 1811. He retired to New York City, where he had a contracting and building business. He died in May, 1849.

The second son, James H., spent many years as a teacher and became the proprietor and principal of the Irving Institute, a well known academy at Tarrytown, NY. He died at Tarrytown November 10, 1844.

The third son, Samuel, went west to Ithaca, NY, then to Canandaigua, NY, and finally (in 1830) to Ann Arbor, MI, where he died shortly after moving there in November, 1830. He was always in the mercantile business.

Edward, the fourth son, went west to Seneca Falls, NY. Nothing more is known of him.

Peter Palmer, the youngest son, lived first at 37 Pump Street in New York City. He was a dry goods merchant, doing business at 106 Division Street. Later he moved to Brooklyn and died there February 13, 1879. None of the children of Peter Lyon's sons ever returned to live in North Castle.

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Peter's daughter, Phebe, married Harrison Palmer, son of Gilbert and Sarah (Harrison) Palmer of North Castle. He was a farmer and tavern keeper (Smith's Tavern) in North Castle. He held several town offices — Town Clerk 1791 to 1798, and Justice of the Peace.

She joined the Quaker Church of her husband's family and became an eloquent speaker at their meetings. They moved to New York City, where he was a well known dry goods merchant. He died in 1814. Phebe lived until 1849.

Her sister Sarah married Abner Higgins and lived in New York City. After his death she married Joseph Harper, one of the famous publishing brothers. It is also interesting to note here that Jonathan Lyon's daughter, Jane Freelove, married the youngest Harper publisher, Fletcher Harper.

The youngest daughter of Peter — Anna — married William Britt. A ship joiner, he worked in, and resided in New York City. They alone returned to North Castle and resided south of Armonk on the Mile Square Road (on the way to Kensico). They attended the Purchase Quaker Meeting and are buried in the Meeting House yard.

None of the Lyon descendants live in present day North Castle. This brief family history has been written as a memoir to remember an outstanding patriot family who fought and sacrificed for the cause of our independence.

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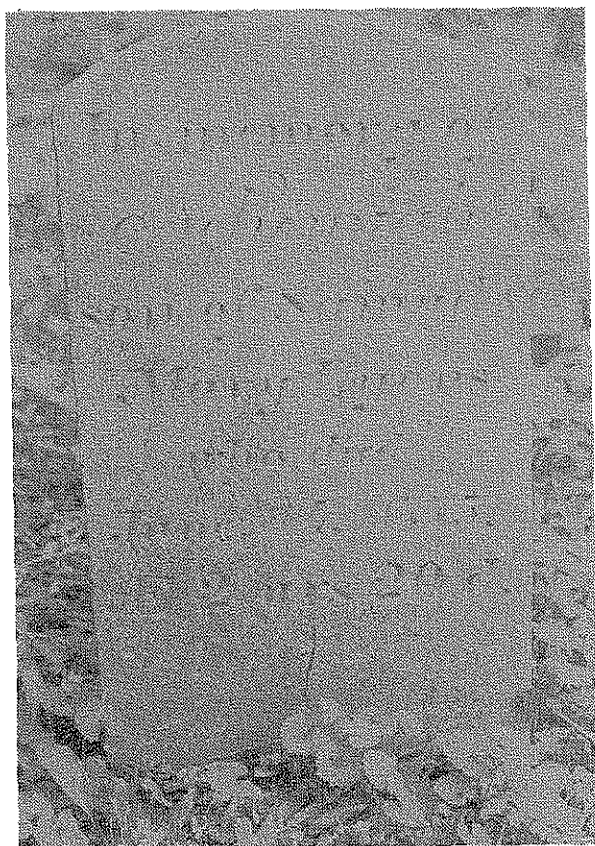
## LYON CEMETERY

By Richard N. Lander

Photographs (July, 1986) by Jonathan H. Lander

No written record has been found by which Captain Roger Lyon set aside the land that later became the Lyon family cemetery. Indeed, he does not even mention it in his rather lengthy will.

However, the location was most appropriate, situated on a high point of land in a lush meadow across from his homestead farm. One could stand in the yard near the house and look across the Danbury Post Road to the last resting place.



Oldest legible stone in Lyon Cemetery: Nehemiah, son of (Major) Samuel and Mary Lyon, died June 14, 1775. Little Nehemiah was named for his grandfather Lounbury of Bedford.

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By the terms of his will the land surrounding the cemetery was devised to his son John (1748-1815) who lived and died on this farm and was laid to rest in the cemetery.

The first mention of the cemetery is found in a deed from John's son Abraham when he sold the farm to John Bussing in 1824. The deed conveys a 58-acre parcel and closes with these words: "Excepting the reserve of a burying ground with a driftway thereunto containing 2 rods as formerly laid out opposite the house of Joseph Lyon." (In the division of Captain Roger's lands the homestead was willed to son Joseph.) This reservation has been repeated in every deed of conveyance for the property until modern times.

Westchester's earliest historian, Rev. Robert Bolton, when preparing his first edition (1848) visited the Lyon farm and cemetery. "On the eastern shore of the lake (Byram) is situated the estate and residence of Samuel Lyon, Esq., whose family have long been settled in this part of town." He then goes on to describe Captain Roger and his entertainment of General Washington and the famous drinking story, noting that the silver cup used on this occasion is still preserved in the family.

Here follows a brief description of Major Samuel's capture, being surprised in the night by a party of Totten's Refugee Corps: "The marauders, after most inhuman treatment, plundered the house and farm and carried off their prisoners to New York." At the same time they captured the Major's brother, Captain Gilbert Lyon, a half-mile up the post road and carried them both off to the Sugar House prison in the city.

Bolton now recites: "Opposite the site of the old residence on Lyon hill, lies the family cemetery which contains, among other memorials, the following:"

In  
memory of  
Major Samuel Lyon  
who departed  
this life  
January 23, 1819,  
AE 71 years, 8 mo. and 9 days

In  
memory of  
Mary, wife of  
Samuel Lyon  
who departed this life  
January 10, 1792  
AE 45

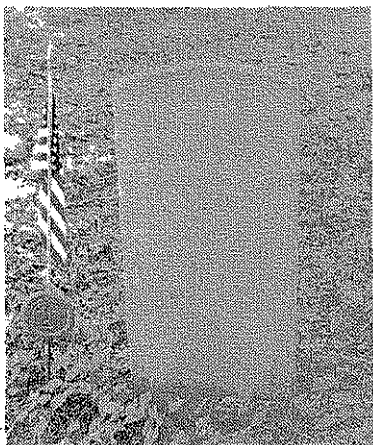
The Bussing family resided for many years on this farm and also buried their dead in the plot. Thus John Bussing (1784-1865) and Phebe (Clark) Bussing (1785-1856) and their children can be found there.

The last burial is probably that of Andrew Sniffin Nash (1795-1879), a prominent citizen and grandson of Andrew and Gloriana (Lyon) Sniffin, who was interred there January 9, 1879 by the Rev. Cornelius W. Bolton, Rector of St. Stephen's Church and brother of Robert, the historian.

Samuel Lyon (1787-1860), the son of Major Samuel, and known as "Squire Lyon" (many years a Justice of the Peace) resided in the homestead farm until his death. He and his wife, the former Rosalinda Fowler (1791-1844) were interred in the cemetery.

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Sometime about the turn of the century Judge Lyon's grandson, John E. Todd of Long Ridge, Connecticut removed the bodies of Captain Roger, Major Samuel and his grandparents, Judge Samuel and Rosalinda Fowler Lyon, to the Long Ridge Cemetery at Long Ridge, Connecticut. (Judge Samuel's daughter, Henrietta C. Lyon (1825-1895) having married Elnathan Todd of Long Ridge). One can understand his desire to preserve the graves of his illustrious ancestors, but one is dismayed to learn he left behind in the old burial spot the wives of Captain Roger, Major Samuel and Major Samuel's infant children.



Gravestone of John Lyon, who died November 14, 1815. One of the sons of Captain Roger Lyon, and former Private in the Westchester County Militia during the Revolutionary War. The Lyon Cemetery is located on his portion of the extensive Lyon holdings.

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The gravestones of Andrew Sniffin and his wife, Gloriana (Lyon) Sniffin, a daughter of Captain Roger Lyon. Andrew was a soldier in the Westchester County Militia and a leading local patriot. He served as Town Clerk 1777-1787, and Supervisor 1781-1784. He was one of the last Revolutionary survivors in our Town, dying on Christmas Day, 1831, aged 95.

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After the departure of the Bussings several different persons held title to and around the cemetery until the early nineteen hundreds, when the farm was incorporated into "The Ledges," the estate of Major General Samuel McRoberts. General McRoberts was a wealthy and prominent citizen who earned his military rank in World War I. He and his workmen carefully watched over the cemetery for nearly fifty years. Upon his death over 25 years ago the land was sold to developers.

Today on Lyon Court and Lyon Place the backyards of handsome colonial dwellings abut the ancient resting place. Great credit is due to this neighborhood for watching over the cemetery and to Mrs. Sherman, the owner of the lot over which the ancient right of way travels to the cemetery gate, as it is always beautifully mowed and kept open.

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#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>A *History of the County of Westchester From Its First Settlement To The Present Time* by Robert Bolton Jr. New York. Alexander S. Gould. 1848 (First Edition)

<sup>2</sup>*Lyon Memorial*, New York Families Descended from the Immigrant Thomas Lyon of Rye — Robert B. Miller, Editor. Detroit, MI — Press of William Graham, 1907.

<sup>3</sup>*Quarterly Bulletin of the Westchester County Historical Society*  
Vol 15 No 1 January 1939  
Vol 15 No 2 April 1939

<sup>4</sup>*Will of Capt. Roger Lyon*  
Liber B Page 237 Westchester County Surrogate's Court

<sup>5</sup>*Will of Major Samuel Lyon*  
Liber I Page 308 Westchester County Surrogate's Court

<sup>6</sup>*Bedford Historical Records*  
Vol VII Bedford Soldiers of the Revolution, etc.  
Published by The Town of Bedford, Bedford Hills NY 1976

<sup>7</sup>The right of way leading from the Post Road (Route 22) to Lyon Cemetery is first described in a deed from ABRAHAM LYON and MARY, his wife to JOHN BUSSING, dated May 5, 1824 and recorded May 19, 1824 in Liber Y of Deeds page 66.

<sup>8</sup>The author is indebted to Mr. Frederick C. Hart, Jr., of North Guilford, CT, for much information regarding Daniel and Joseph Lyon.

<sup>9</sup>The ancient Lyon House was totally destroyed by fire (date unknown), probably about 1910-1915.

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## HOW TO MOVE A SCHOOL HOUSE IN JUST A FEW YEARS

By John R. Schnoor

It's only a little building, so it's probably an easy job to move it. Well, the project is now complete, but it took nearly four years from start to finish to move the East Middle Patent School from its original working location to the North Castle Historical Society's compound on Bedford Road and restore it to good condition.

The project involved a lot of careful planning, a lot of hard work, and —most of all — a lot of loving help and support from many North Castle people in many ways, ranging from gifts of money to actual physical labor.

The result is a shining example of community effort and a gem of a historic treasure that in itself tells the story of one era in our history.

In 1982, once the Society received approval from the Bedford School District to move the school house, a contract was negotiated with Nicholas Brothers, professional building movers. They would move the East Middle Patent School for \$7,200. The contract was signed on December 1, 1982, but the movers would not specify a definite day for the move. They had to consider a long list of unknown factors, especially the weather. Winter rain is one of the most serious obstacles to such a job because of the potential for skidding by a heavy truck or the building itself. Another rain-related factor is mud.

To prepare the building for moving the first step was to clean out the basement thoroughly so equipment could be moved in. Bulldozers dug out the earth in front of the building so a ramp could be constructed to accommodate heavy trucks that must roll under the structure after the building was raised up some four feet.

The roof was removed and the building's gables (with lovely scalloped shingles) were lowered in one piece on top of the ceiling beams — a protective move. The building itself was cut in two and covered with plastic sheets.

As the first half of the building was loaded, the services of the New York Telephone Company and Con Edison were required for handling of phone and electric cables.

Both of those utility firms had previously sent out representatives who surveyed the project with the author of this article, so that everyone knew what had to be done and how to do it with a minimum of dislocation. Fortunately the school house measured 14 feet 6 inches from bottom to top at the highest point. The flatbed truck on which it rode added another 4 feet, bringing the grand total to 18 feet six inches. The phone company was able to raise its cables enough to accommodate this height. Con Edison did the same. If cables had required cutting and splicing, the cost would have been so great that the building probably would still be standing in East Middle Patent.



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The New York Telephone Company generously donated its services, but Con Edison charged for the job. Actually, the biggest problems occurred on the Historical Society's own property, but these were quickly resolved. One phone company truck followed the building all the way and a second truck and crew raised the cables at the new site to permit entry.

While the phone company was donating its services, Con Edison sent a bill for \$700.11. After lengthy and difficult negotiations the account was settled for \$350.05. Thus the Society got the better of the deal by one cent.

Another generous donation was from Dave Lowery Tree Service, who sent a man and truck to clear all the obstructing tree limbs from the route without charge.

The second half of the building was moved the next day in a duplicate performance.

Before the building could be set in its new location, a basement excavation had to be dug and a heavy duty ramp had to be put in place so the trucks could back down into the excavation and let the two halves of the school down. Then a new masonry foundation was constructed under the assembled two halves of the structure. A few days later the building was lowered carefully onto its new foundation and temporary steel supports were removed. Now the work of restoration could begin.

On Sunday, August 24, 1986 — 3 years and 9 months later — a dedication ceremony was held and the East Middle Patent School became a completed addition to the Historical Society's compound.

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