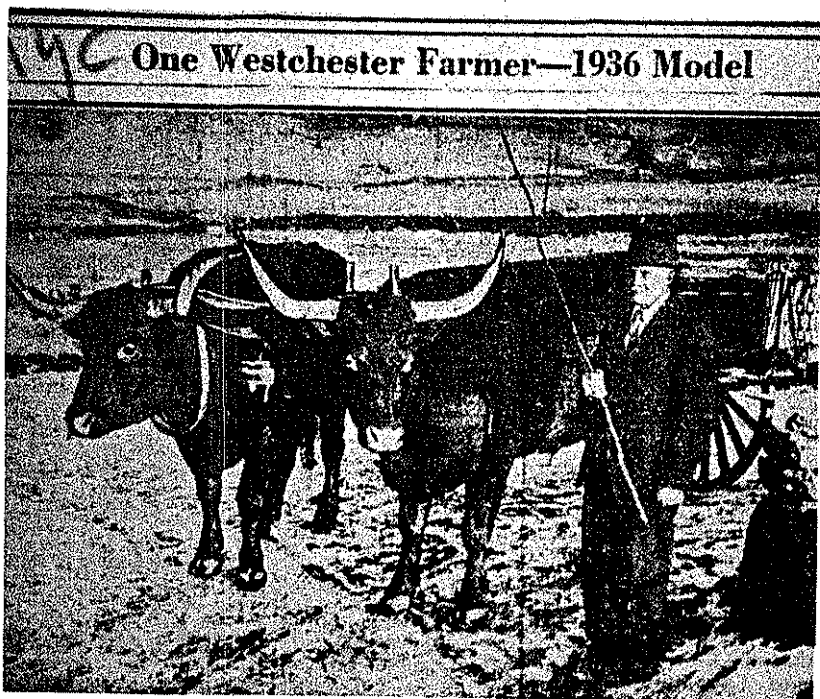


NORTH CASTLE HISTORY



JUDGE GEORGE E. MEAD
and
HIS PAIR OF OXEN - 1936

(Photo appeared in the Daily Item Newspaper, January 8, 1936)

Volume 21 *The North Castle Historical Society* 1994

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KEN MAINS, Our First President

by Doris Finch Watson

Back in the Spring of 1971 it was Ken Mains who was the spark that ignited the interest to form The North Castle Historical Society. Several people with a love of history had talked about it for years, but somehow an organizational meeting was never called until Ken put the pressure on. In return (and over his protest) we elected him the first president of the newly formed organization called The North Castle Historical Society. He served that post for two years and continued to work on behalf of The Society for many years. We owe Ken a great debt of gratitude, and we miss him and remember him fondly.

Kenneth R. Mains (1935 - 1994)

Ken was born in Mount Vernon, New York in 1935 where, as a youth he participated in the Boy Scouts of America, achieving their coveted highest honor of Eagle Scout. His family moved to Armonk around 1957 where they established Mains and Mains Electrical Company.

After graduating from Westchester Community College he was employed by AT&T. From 1958 to 1960 he served with the United States Army. In 1960 he married Sadie Marie Vinson and settled in Armonk where they raised their two daughters, Linda and Diana. During this period he worked for AT&T at night and at the family's business during the day.

Ken was a very proud Grandpa of Diana's children, Carolyn and Jimmy. Linda's son, Arnold, was born after Ken's death.

In 1976 for America's Bicentennial celebration in North Castle, Ken built by hand from native wood an authentic wigwam for the Indian Village at Wampus Town Park. He was part of the North Castle Revolutionary Militia that marched in the 1976 parade and the Town's Anniversary parade in 1986.

Our strongest memories of Ken are of his quiet, modest, soft-spoken demeanor. He always preferred to be a 'behind the scenes' historian. His research shows attention to detail and unique organizational ability. During the 1980's the *Westchester Historian* published his research on the car manufacturers of Westchester County and this work has recently been edited and republished by Karolyn Wrightson in her local history column for Gannett Suburban Newspapers.

Ken and his wife, Sadie Marie, gave The North Castle Historical Society a copy of their 1980's project which indexes all known copies of *The North Castle Sun* and *The North Castle Monitor*. Months of hours were needed to produce this most important addition to our knowledge of our town.

We are all indebted to Ken and Sadie Marie Mains for this work, for their demonstrated love of community and for their friendship. We continue to mourn Ken's passing from among us.

The North Castle Sun and The North Castle Monitor **An Indexing Project by Ken and Sadie Marie Mains**

Following is Ken's explanation of the project:

"About The Papers

"The North Castle Sun was started by Alvah P. French in October of 1913 (See October 26, 1923, 1:1). The first issue that is still in existence is Vol. 12, dated January 23, 1914. Originally carrying eight pages measuring 7x11 inches, sizing was changed on November 5, 1915 to 11x14 inches (with periodic size reductions) and reduced to four pages.

"Alvah P. French's name appears for the last time on the July 9, 1926 issue. Beginning October 7, 1927, William J. Dietrich became editor. During Dietrich's era the paper became heavily Armonk oriented.

"Most extant issues between 1914 and the first few publications of 1928, were bound and preserved by the North Castle Public Library.

"Near the end of this phase of the project missing copies of this paper, during the 1928 to 1930 period, were uncovered by Lois Holmes of The North Castle Historical Society. Her cooperation permitted their inclusion here. Subsequent to that reopening of the project it was learned that Hank Johnson had been able to rescue some additional papers. These papers have since been donated to The (North Castle) Historical Society and are covered in this work. Once we thought we had finished the project, we took the first draft to Dick Lander. He reopened the project by producing more missing issues from his closet. They were also covered.

"Because we had not remembered The Historical Society's unbound collection, The North Castle Monitor was used to cover August 29, 1929 (vol. 1, no. 9) to May 19, 1932. Begun under Robert M. Hart, this paper changed editor on February 11, 1932, when Robert M. Mackenzie took over. The last copy of the paper is dated May 19, 1932. The Monitor was a much chattier paper resulting in a much greater volume of notes. The Town was more evenly covered from North White Plains to Banksville. Eventually, two reporters wrote under their own "by lines": Charlie Kaiser's rich sense of humor and gentle moral castigation had been unidentified in the old Sun; James D. Hopkins was a young college kid with a writing ability far surpassing his years. Kaiser invented "Armonk K. Nutt" between collecting eggs and raising White Leghorns. Young Jimmy Hopkins would try to infuse some intellect into the locals through book and theatre reports and keep Charlie Kaiser on his factual toes. A study of these two will someday provide us with an interesting story. The Monitor can be found bound at the North Castle Public Library.

"About This Work

"The work contained here is a byproduct of a search for information on the Quinby telephone line. Since the line went out of existence prior to the start of a North Castle newspaper there was only a 1000:1 chance that it might be mentioned in a flashback article. On that tiny chance, it was decided to read all local newspapers available. After a few papers were covered I realized that there were things here that others might be interested in, if they knew where to find them without doing what I was doing.

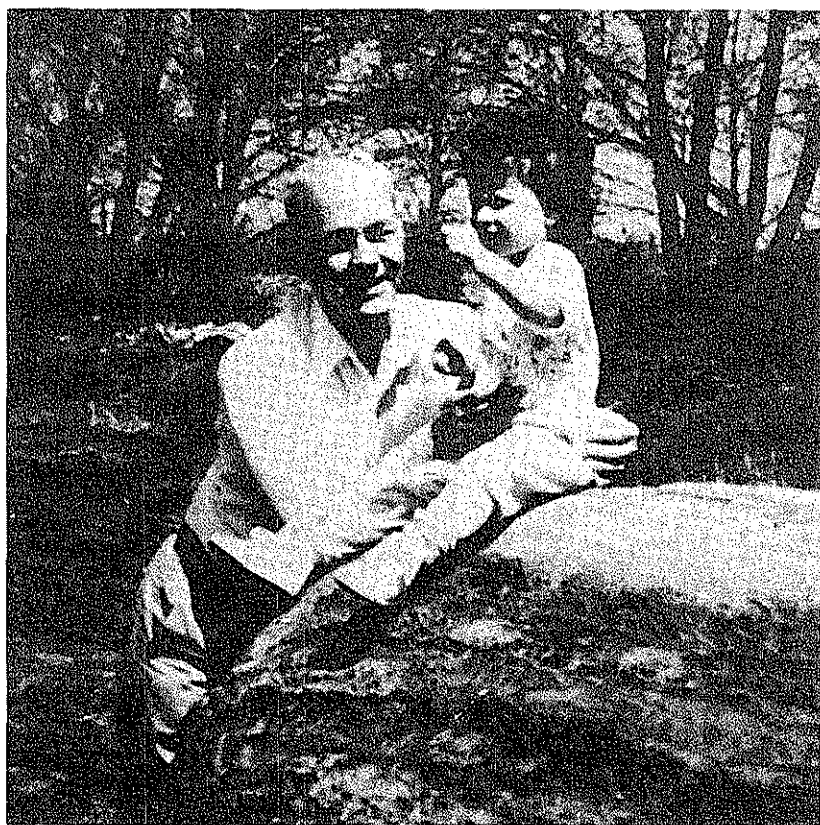
"I began taking notes on things of interest to me. This depended solely on my frame of mind at any particular sitting. There was no preorganization of standards or methodology. Things like church activities were nearly constant in small towns like this and listing of every happening would be too time consuming and voluminous. The same applies to people visiting other people and birthday parties. The papers carried scattered reports pertaining to happenings in Valhalla. Most of these were not included in this work because I considered North Castle my focus.

"I tried to get all deaths, marriages, and information that identified married women to their maiden names.

"The project started off as a moderate one and grew larger logarithmically. My wife, Sadie Marie, volunteered her magic fingers and layout ideas to make the notes presentable. Any mistakes she did not catch were mine originally with the exception of what the newspapers did to some people's names.

"This is not an inclusive work because it was not an intended work.

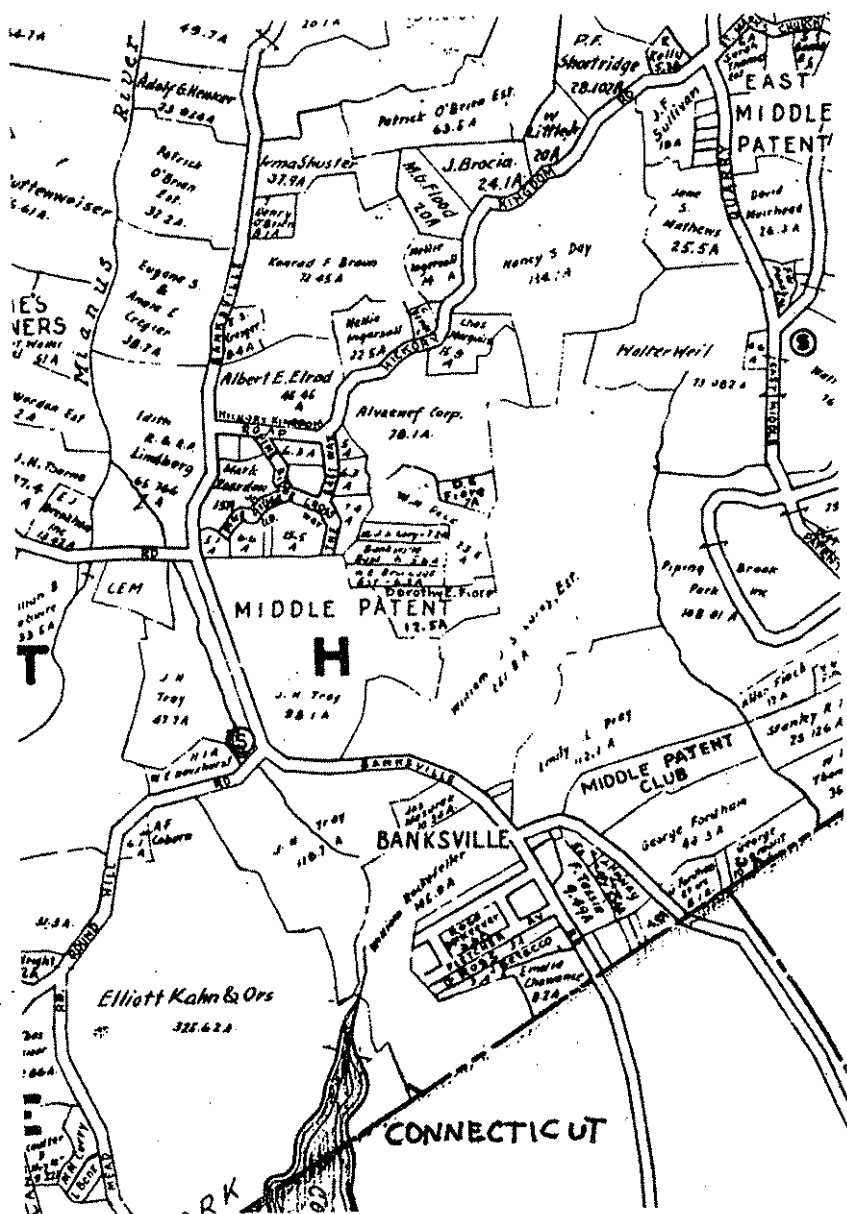
"By (the) 1932 (edition) , my original project was suffering from the loss of time diverted to this so that is the last year of this segment. Anyone is welcome to carry on from here but please let us know so that duplication of effort does not occur."



Ken Mains and Granddaughter Carolyn, April 29, 1993
(Photo courtesy Mrs. Sadie Marie Mains)

Mr. and Mrs. Curry's Peaceable Kingdom

The map was drawn in 1942 by Dolph & Stewart.
(Map M-30 from The North Castle Historical Society's Map Collection.)



A TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE R. EUGENE CURRY
A Founding Member of The North Castle Historical Society
1900 - 1994

Last February, our community lost R. Eugene Curry. His contributions to The North Castle Historical Society, Armonk Lions Club, St. Stephen's Church, North Castle Town Board, North Castle Road Naming Committee, the Mianus Gorge Preserve, Middle Patent Church, the Middle Patent Rural Cemetery Association and the Banksville Community House will remain for generations after us.

As a tribute to Mr. Curry, and for an insight into his extraordinary character, your editors offer excerpts from Mr. Curry's 1991 Thanksgiving address to a gathering at St. Mary's Church at the intersection of Hickory Kingdom, East Middle Patent and St. Mary's Church Roads in East Middle Patent.

A Peaceable Kingdom
by R. Eugene Curry

"In 1930, after we had gotten settled in our farm home on Mead Road, Margery began to drive about the countryside. One day, she came home quite excited saying that she had found another world, and so it was, a Peaceable Kingdom...

Farming and Mining

"This had been farm land, rolling fields and woodland. Oxen had been used, especially in building stone walls. Jim Todd told of seeing sixteen pairs of wooden ox yokes hanging in an old Hobby barn. Nearby, George Mead was plowing with oxen into the 1950's. Andrew Muirhead told of raising vegetables to be sold in Stamford, and we know that apples, potatoes and other crops were shipped by steamer to New York out of the lower landing in Cos Cob Harbor at the end of the Mianus. Shad fish were caught far up the Mianus River.

"There were several mica and feldspar mines, one of them open to the public in the Mianus Gorge Preserve. In 1939, after World War II began, several were reopened to obtain molybdenum, for hardening steel. Just over the hill from this Church, off Kingdom Ridge Road, there was a pit where trees were cut up and burned to make charcoal."

Among the Families

"The roads were dirt until in the 1930's Allie See obtained waste from the feldspar mine owned by John Kinkle in Bedford. Later oiling made the roads of today. Before that, many springs and thawing made automobile passage almost impossible. Robert Ingersoll, Sr. kept a team harnessed to rescue cars near his home on Hickory Kingdom Road. His sons, Robert (and wife Bert) and Steve (and wife Amanda) had their homes there also. We lost Steve this year, but we all remember his outdoor sawmill with huge logs sawn by the roadside.

"...Jim Todd tells of finding a quotation from one of the Hobbys: 'I have a thousand apple trees dancing on my hillside!'

"The Pons home at the joining of East Middle Patent and Mianus River Roads, now the Piers MacDonald home, was a stopping place for the stage coming up through Stanwich. Here, also, cut leather was distributed for piece work on shoes, done by lamplight in the winter months. Some of the ladies stitched shoes to raise money for the horse sheds at the Middle Patent Methodist Episcopal Church nearby. Grain was being ground as late as WWI in the mill which still stands with its dam and is now a residence at Miller's Mill Road.

"Among the old families, we have mentioned the Hobbys. Another was Abel Miller. He had a brick and mason building business in Brooklyn and commuted in the 1880's to New York, driving horse and buggy to the Greenwich railroad station. His children, born and reared here, include Emma (mother of Doris Finch Watson), Nellie (wife of Robert Ingersoll, Sr.), and son Frank who lived in the William G. Foulke, Jr. home of today. Frank Miller was the father of our beloved Richard Miller, known to many here for his loving care of the St. Matthew's burial grounds. Richard left us two years ago...

"In 1916, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Cohen purchased the Gouverneur Morris place on Miller's Mill Road, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Cummings, III. Daughter Anne (Cohen) married William B. Heller and they have maintained their home here, and also their daughter Susan, three generations. We lost this good neighbor, William Heller, beloved by all, this month. He served in public office under (New York City) Mayor Lindsay and was active in many voluntary organizations. In the house next to the Cummings home was the Stephen Bonsal home, from 1900. He was a famed correspondent, covering the Spanish American War and WWI, and sat at the side of President Wilson at the Versailles Peace Conference, 1919. Son Dudley Bonsal was off to Dartmouth and

Harvard Law School in the 1920's, then built his own home of today on St. Mary's Church Road... Mr. Silvey, of the New York Telephone Company, lived in the Harold T. White home of today. Mrs. Silvey and Margery founded the Middle Patent Garden Club in 1933...

"Walter and Hope Weil purchased the Percy Elliott pig farm in 1931. They converted the old barn with its great timbers into a very nice home...Daughter Hope married Benjamin F. Levene, Jr. and they had their own home on Hope Farm...

"William and Elizabeth Siesel and daughter Janice also came in the early 1930's and soon Henry F. Winterling came along to marry her and they had their own home adjoining. William Bradford and Dorothy Hubbell came in 1932..Sadly, the first casualty of WWII in North Castle was Captain William Bradford Hubbell, Intelligence, Army Air Corps on the Alaska front in 1943. Dot...lives here to this day. Jim and Alice Todd came in 1936; others of that time were John and Henrietta Lockwood, John Sterling and Polly Rockefeller...Donald McElroy built a small bachelor cottage...

"Among those arriving in the 1940's were the Godino family, Scott and Grace Reiniger, Ted and Lucia Faithful and daughters, Ralph and Winifred Bugli and sons, Robert and Margaret Parke and many others. Aage Jensen and his friend built the home next to this church (building). Later, Clifton Daniels and his wife Margaret Truman Daniels rented the white house opposite this church..."

(Ed: St. Mary's Church was built in 1853.)

East Middle Patent School

"The one-room school on East Middle Patent Road involved the entire community. Richard Miller told of Elvin Chase, a teacher in the early years of the century. He carried a heavy cane which he used on the children, wore a derby hat, had a gold chain across an ample bosom, and lined the children up and piped them into the schoolhouse. His successor, from 1916 to 1961, was Geraldine McCoy Lanfair. She came as an 18 year old to live with Clarissa Hobby, the sole trustee in the colonial home now that of Ron and Betsy Atkins, Hobby Hill Farm. Soon the mail carrier, Lawrence Lanfair, wooed and wed Geraldine, and they built their own home nearby. Mrs. Lanfair had all eight grades in one room. She started and stoked the stove in the room for many years. Later a furnace and oil burner were installed, and indoor toilets in the basement. ...out of her modest salary, (she) gave a silver dollar to each

student for perfect attendance for a year. Kenneth Levene treasured seven of these silver dollars.... (Geraldine) and Larry lie in the St. Matthew's Church burial grounds."

(Ed: See North Castle History, Volume 10, pages 28-31 and Volume 13, pages 25-26 for a full discussion of the East Middle Patent One-Room Schoolhouse now relocated to The Historical Society's educational complex.)

Mianus River Gorge Preserve

"On December 12, 1953, an important event took place, the founding of Mianus River Gorge Preservation Committee, now the Mianus Gorge Preserve. This has been a vital pioneer project in a national movement. Thousands come to walk quietly along the trails, restoring their souls. For the past six years, Anne Hubbell French has reached out beyond her duties as Executive Director to help found the Mianus River Watershed Council, in two states and five towns...." *(End of excerpts from Mr. Curry's speech.)*

Mr. Curry, a graduate of the Harvard School of Business Administration, made a career as a real-estate developer in Westchester County before World War II. During the war he served with the United States Navy as a lieutenant commander and deputy chief of the naval base at Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands.

He is survived by his wife, Margery Metheny Curry; two daughters, Margaret C. Gregg of Bethesda, Maryland and New York City, and Janet C. Harrison of Williamsport, Pennsylvania; two sons, Dr. Renwick E. of Atlanta, Georgia, and John P. of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and 14 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

When Mr. Curry celebrated his 90th birthday, your editor greeted him with a hug and kiss. Always charming and cheerful, with his ever-present fresh, seasonal flower sprig pinned to his lapel, he responded "Oh, my! You make me feel like a young man of 89 again!"

His life touched all of us who were blessed to know him. He lives in our memories. We miss him very much.



Mr. R. Eugene Curry and Mrs. Margery Curry

(1988 Photo Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)

St. Mary's Church Building

St. Mary's is one of the earliest Episcopal church buildings in the area.

Owing significantly to Rev. Alfred Partridge, rector of St. Matthew's in Bedford, St. Mary's was incorporated on December 29, 1851. It was not until two years later that a church building was erected. J. Thomas Sharf wrote in 1886 in his *History of Westchester County* that "...exclusive of timber, blinds and furniture" the sum of \$1,623.13 was expended.

Today St. Mary's Church building and property are maintained by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Armonk.



Pen and Ink Drawing, 1983, by Hal Schaller

(Item 85-51-2 from the collections of The North Castle Historical Society)

THOMAS AND WILLIAM WRIGHT, MILLERS AT MILE SQUARE by Sharon Tomback

"Hello, Mrs. Tomback, my name is Don Wright. I'm from Mattydale, New York. I think I may be a descendant of William Wright who was born in North Castle in 1753." And so began a 1993 telephone call leading to several other calls, letters and, finally, a visit to Armonk in the Spring of 1994.

One Saturday morning in early February, 1994, I received another call. *"Hello, Mrs. Tomback, this is Chuck Wright from Wickenburg, Arizona and I have over twenty years invested in Wright family research."*

The North Castle Historical Society is indebted to both Don and Chuck (Edwin Charles Wright, Jr.) for sharing their documented research. Both descend from William Wright (born 10 January 1753 North Castle, Westchester County, New York and died 22 January 1838 Cocksackie, Greene County, New York) and his wife Sarah Lyon (born 25 August 1753, North Castle, Westchester County, New York), a daughter of Roger Lyon, Sr. and a sister of Roger Lyon, Jr.¹

William Wright was a son of Thomas as evidenced by this deed of sale²:

"THIS INDENTURE, made this eighth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty four. BY AND BETWEEN THOMAS WRIGHT, of the West Patent of North Castle, in the County of Westchester and State of New York, Miller, of the first part, and WILLIAM WRIGHT, son of the said Thomas Wright, of the other part. WITNESSETH, that for and in consideration of the sum of TWELVE HUNDRED POUNDS of good current money in gold and silver to him the above named Thomas Wright well and truly paid at sealing and delivery hereof by the above named William Wright, the receipt whereof the said Thomas Wright acknowledgeth by these presents and therefor have given, granted, bargained, and sold, aliened, confirmed and conveyed unto him the above named William Wright, his heirs and assigns, ALL that farm of land situate, and being in the abovesaid West Patent of NORTH CASTLE, together with all the houses, barns, mills,

¹Greene County, New York Records, Will Book D, pages 179-183 and Probate Box 481, Package 10640.

²Westchester County, New York Division of Land Records, Liber K Deeds, Page 55.

orchards, meadows, mill dams and ponds, together with all other profits, privileges and appurtenances thereon or thereunto belonging or any ways appertaining, bounded as followeth: BEGINNING at a certain walnut tree standing by the Milesquair Line at the southeast corner of the premises herein granted, and runing (sic) westerly with the Mile Squair Line till it comes to the fence of a certain peace of meadow formerly belonging to Joseph Fowler, then runing the several courses of that fence to the road that leads from Thomas Wrights to the Mile Squair crossing, said road runing northerly along said road to a heap of stones, then westerly to a heap of stones lying on the partition line between the premises herein conveyed and land formerly belonging to Joseph Fowler, then northerly along the said partition line to the road that leads from the Mile Squair to Moses Quinby's crossing, said road runing westerly along the road to a heap of stones, then northerly to the corner of the land of James Brundidge, then easterly to the road southerly along the road to a heap of stones crossing the road runing easterly to a stone fence, then southerly along the stone fence to a board fence, then along said board fence and brook to the road that leads from Thomas Wrights Mill to Timothy Carpenters, then southerly along said road to the first mentioned walnut tree. Containing within the above described bounds one hundred acres, be there more or less..."

Thomas and his son William Wright operated the mills located at the present-day intersection of Route 128 and High Street from about 1764 (per Chuck Wright) until 1790 when William Latting purchased the property from William Wright.

Hallock, Birdsell, Wright, Latting, Sands, and Knowlton Owned the Mills

History records that on 5 April 1737 John Hallock was granted permission at the second North Castle Town Meeting to build a mill on Wampus Brook; it was sold at public auction in 1757 to a Mr. Birdsell who sold the property to Thomas Wright (by 1764) who sold the property and mills to his son William Wright in 1784. William sold to William Latting in 1790 who sold to Thomas Sands the same year. John Sands took over and operated the mills from 1794 until 1831. William and Job Sands operated the mills from 1856 until 1876. Ingersol Knowlton and his wife owned the mills from 1876 until 1898.

About 1904 the buildings were torn down by the New York City Water Department.³

Major John Andre

During the American Revolution a large barn at Thomas Wright's Mills was being used as headquarters for a detachment of the Continental Army. On 23 September 1780 Major John Andre, a British spy and associate of General Benedict Arnold, was captured in North Castle and held in the barn before he was taken to Tappan, New York for trial. Major John Andre was executed by hanging on 2 October 1780.⁴

William Wright's Pension Application

William Wright (son of Thomas), at 79 years of age and living in Coxsackie, New York made application on 27 November 1832 for a Pension for serving in the Revolutionary War as a Lieutenant in the New York Troops. He was allowed \$279.93 per year for twenty-one months of service, Pension \$11906. He swore that he was born in North Castle on the 16th of January 1753 and that in the spring of 1777 he was commissioned a First Lieutenant in Captain Jacob Purdy's militia company in Colonel Thomas Thomas' regiment. In the fall of 1777 his detachment was put under the command of Major (later Colonel) David Hobby stationed at Middle Patent. Early in the spring of 1778 they were stationed at Roger Lyon's house and by that fall at the home of Anthony Tripp. William's application states:

"In the Spring of 1779 and according to the best of the deponents recollection in the month of April there was again a detachment ordered to be taken from the regiment of the said Col. Thomas Thomas and then put under the command of Richard Sacket a captain of one of the companies ... and were stationed at Wrights Mills in the town of North Castle.... That in the spring of 1780 ... was stationed at a place called Purdys Ridge in the said town of North Castle... That the 14th day of February 1781 he with thirteen men of his detachment was taken prisoner by the enemy and carried to Long Island and there detained as

³Research of Edwin Charles Wright, Jr.; Wickenburg, Arizona, 1994 and North Castle History, Volume 7, pages 25-27, "Addenda to Sands' Mills" by Richard N. Lander.

⁴North Castle History, Volume 7, pages 28-31, "Major Andre, The West Point Connection" by Ruth N. Bartlett.

a Prisoner of War for ten months and was discharged some time after the surrender of Cornwallis."

Dennis Wright's Deposition

In a supporting deposition given at Balston, Saratoga County, New York on 12 April 1833, Dennis Wright, who also received a Pension (S16302) for Revolutionary War service, avowed:

"... he has been well acquainted with William Wright ... being a brother of said William ... & this deponent further says that he saw William Wright under arms with Lieutenant Mosier and Lieutenant Wright Carpenter at Frogs Neck, at the time Morrisena was taken and burned..."

The North Castle Wrights are a family with ancestral roots in County Norfolk and County Essex, England and descendants from New York to California.

North Castle Town Clerks, 1736-1885

1736-42	Moses Quim(n)by	1880-81	Forman W. Miller
1742-54	Benjamin Smith	1881-83	Mervin R. Baker
1754-59	Nathaniel Meritt	1883-84	William H. Creemer
17659-70	Benjamin Smith		
1770-78	Gilbert Thorn	(From <i>History of Westchester County</i> by J. Thomas Sharf, 1886)	
1777	Independence, no Election		
1778-87	Andrew Sniffin	1884-85	Mervin R. Baker
1787-88	Peter Lyon	1885-86	William H. Creemer
1788-89	William Wright	1886-1906	C. W. MacDonald
1789-91	Thomas Ferris	1907-13	George B. Clark, MD
1791-98	Harrison Palmer	1914-23	Edwin F. Acker
1798-1830	Capt. John Smith	1924-31	W. Wm. Brundage
1830-44	Samuel P. Smith	1931-33	Alfred Young
1844-45	Thorn Sands	1934-39	John M. Crowley
1845-55	Samuel P. Smith	1940-75	Joseph T. Miller
1855-56	Floyd G. Cox	1975-85	Kathleen M. Baroni
1856-57	David Carpenter	1986-	Annemarie Kelly
1857-60	Job L. Townsend	(From Town Clerk Kelly)	
1860-62	James Hopkins		
1867-75	Charles Raymond		
1875-76	Edwin R. Hopkins		
1876-80	William H. Creemer		

REMEMBERING TONY ELLRODT

by Doris Finch Watson

For many years Anthony "Tony" Ellrodt gave countless hours of his time, encouragement and expertise to The North Castle Historical Society. Tony was a dedicated Society member who will be missed.

The Annual Armonk Antiques Show, where Tony took such an active role, is a tradition of The North Castle Historical Society, and this November 12th and 13th marked the Show's sixteenth year. Many of you will remember that during the first eleven years of the Show, Tony Ellrodt served as Chairman, working with contracts, arranging space, securing Society volunteers to man the various departments of the show, as well as helping dealers before, during and after the show.

Each of those eleven years Tony and his wife, Janet, graciously contributed a beautiful piece of antique furniture to serve as the first prize for our Annual Antique Show Raffle, thus helping to greatly increase revenue for the Society. In order to present these beautifully restored pieces, Tony worked long hours in his shop at their home, refinishing them to perfection, including the lovely brasses.

Tony had a great and continuing interest in the progress of the Society, where he served on the Board of Trustees, the Acquisitions Committee and the House Committee. He was always interested in the various rotating exhibits and loaned many of his own antiques for various displays.

When the Society purchased Smith's Tavern in 1977, his expertise in the field of antique furniture was invaluable as he helped and guided those of us on the furnishings committee to acquire many of the pieces that are used and displayed in the Tavern today.

Tony and Janet have one son, Dr. Gray Ellrodt, and a granddaughter who live in California. Their daughter, Cecily Stone, lives in Armonk with her husband, James, and their two young children.

Tony's continuing interest and work throughout the years in preservation and restoration, combined with his kindness, dedication and warm sense of humor, made him very special. We treasure our memories of him.



Tony Ellrodt is pictured presenting one of the beautiful chests which he and Janet donated and which he refinished for the Antiques Shows.

(Photo from the collection of The North Castle Historical Society)

THE HONORABLE JAMES R. CARUSO

August 28, 1906 to July 2, 1994

by Judge Susan R. Shimer

This summer we suffered the passing of an important citizen of North Castle, a wonderful man and a friend of The North Castle Historical Society. James R. Caruso was born in New York City, settled in Westchester County in 1925, worked his way through college and law school as a drummer in his own band, began the practice of law in White Plains, and in 1948 moved to our community, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Jim Caruso immediately became involved with North Castle, while continuing his involvement in civic activities outside of our town. Starting in 1941, he was active in the Sons of Italy, Antoni Meucci Lodge, serving for many years as its orator; also for many years, he was a member of the White Plains Lions Club, and, from 1968 to 1969, its president. He also served on the Board of Boys Towns of Italy, Westchester Chapter, with the Elks, the Knights of Columbus, was a parishioner at St. Patrick's Church in Armonk and a member of the White Plains Bar Association, serving as its president from 1947 to 1948. In 1946, he organized the Westchester Chapter of the American Committee on Italian Migration, chaired the Committee for a number of years, and continued to serve until this year; in recognition of his service he was awarded its Silver Bowl Award.

His political activities are legion. He was active in the Young Republicans of White Plains. He worked on the election campaigns of Dwight Eisenhower and Nelson Rockefeller. He helped organize and was a very active member of the Westchester chapter of the Columbian Republican League. Most residents of North Castle first knew Jim Caruso as our Town Attorney for several years. He only gave up that position, after being elected Supervisor of North Castle, an office he held for four terms from January 1, 1954 until December 31, 1961. While Supervisor, he also served as a member of the County Board of Supervisors, the legislative body of Westchester County prior to the present County Board of Legislators. During his term as Supervisor, he was involved with others in helping to bring IBM to North Castle.

On Labor Day weekend in 1959 the town's very successful Wai-Jo softball team, which reached the state championship, went to the national championship in Cleveland, thanks to Jim's fundraising efforts.

After stepping down as Supervisor, Jim Caruso remained popular both in North Castle and in the County of Westchester, and continued his interest in our community. He was a friend of the Society, and our public officials including our then newly elected and present Supervisor, John Lombardi. In 1972 with the support of Supervisor Lombardi, Jim was nominated for and elected County Court Judge, serving from 1973 to 1977. He also served as Acting Supreme Court Justice from 1975 to 1977. Upon reaching mandatory retirement age, Judge Caruso resumed the practice of law as counsel to Stephens and Buderwitz, now Stephens, Buderwitz and Baroni, our present Town Attorneys, where he remained active through 1991.

While serving North Castle and Westchester County in important positions, Judge Caruso remained a friend to many of us. All of us knew Judge Caruso would help with a problem, that he never had a bad word about anyone, was always cool, calm and collected and willing to help with matters relating to our town. Whether playing his drums, participating in softball games, pitching horseshoes in Chief Hergenhan's backyard, or acting as a gracious host happy to receive visitors next to the Italian fountain in the backyard of his home, he always enjoyed seeing people. Our memories of him are full of joy.

Of course, his family remained most important. He was a loving husband to his wife of 56 years, Helen Mayer. He was a caring, loving and strict father to his son, Robert J. Caruso of North White Plains, and to his daughter, Carolyn Hunsicker of Switzerland. Later he had considerable pride in his grandchildren, Robert's son, 13-year-old-Paul Robert, and Carolyn's three children, Suzanne Rapetti, a civil engineer, John Hunsicker, who lives in Tampa, and Karin Hunsicker, a Californian who works for an environmental agency. Jim even became a great grandfather to a set of twins, children of grandson John Hunsicker.

His willingness to help others was evident to us in The North Castle Historical Society. When the Society was formed in 1971, Judge Caruso was extremely supportive, recognized that its existence was vital for our town and became a life member. He was very proud of our Society and worked hard to insure that it could secure and restore the properties which form our complex. In 1977, when The Society had the opportunity to purchase Smith's Tavern, Judge Caruso supported our efforts, and in 1979 served on the committee to raise funds for the rehabilitation and restoration of the Tavern. In 1981, Judge Caruso helped to raise the necessary funds for our next major acquisition, the Brundage Blacksmith Shop. Later, he was involved in the protracted and successful attempt to acquire the Quaker Meeting House.

While that effort was underway, the Society had the opportunity to acquire the One-Room East Middle Patent Schoolhouse. Again Judge Caruso worked diligently to assure that our bid of \$1.00 to the Bedford School Board for the acquisition of the schoolhouse was successful. More recent members may remember Judge Caruso because they were fortunate enough to be greeted by his friendly smile and warm interest at the various functions which he attended as long as he was physically able. Our community owes him a great debt of gratitude. We miss him very much.

(The Author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of numerous persons in the preparation of this article, including the Honorable John Lombardi, Doris Finch Watson, Sal Argento, Elwood Clark and Robert J. Caruso.)



Judge and Mrs. James R. Caruso
(Photo Courtesy Robert Caruso)



(Photo Collection of Doris Finch Watson)

REYNOLDS FARMHOUSE
by Doris Finch Watson

Located on Hickory Kingdom Road in the eastern district of North Castle, this farmhouse was built by Horace B. Reynolds (1814-1891). The next owner was David Hobby Reynolds (1818-1874) who lived in it until his death. He lies in The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery. The house was purchased by Jane and Abel Miller who lived in Brooklyn, New York and spent summers on the farm until they moved there permanently with their children. Their daughter, Nellie and her husband, Robert Ingersoll, continued to live in the house. They operated a chicken business on the farm, adding rows of chicken houses along the hillside to the right of the house. After Mrs. Ingersoll's death the farmland and house were sold and the home was torn down in the 1970's.

SALUTING BARBARA MASSI, RETIRED - AGAIN!

by Sharon Tomback

A "HATS OFF" SALUTE TO BARBARA MASSI INITIATOR AND EDITOR OF NORTH CASTLE HISTORY

Barbara initiated the publication of *North Castle History* in 1974 and continued as editor until 1983 when she retired. In 1987 we coaxed her out of retirement to take the editor's reins again. She served until this year when she retired, again! **Thank you Barbara Massi for your gifts of written history which enrich us all!**

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RANDOM NOTES ON WINDMILL FARMS, ARMONK, NEW YORK

as recalled by Carlo M. Paterno

"In 1919, my father, Dr. Charles V. Paterno, purchased the original acreage on Route 22, three miles north of Armonk in Westchester County, then known as North Castle Farm, comprising about 268 acres. As I recall, this property was owned by the estate of a Mr. Brown who built the new manor house on the crest of a little knoll back from Route 22. The original home stood near the main road but burned before Dad bought the property. All of the lumber in the house came from farm property and the beautiful paneling in the living room was made from the local oak trees. Originally my father offered the estate \$85,000, but the asking price was \$125,000. At the time of my father's offer, he told them he intended to reduce his offer if it was not accepted within 60 days. The executor of the estate did not believe my father was serious and there was a rather long period of negotiating, but my father finally bought the property for \$68,500. Over the years, contiguous properties were acquired and the farm wound up with a total of 1,270 acres.

"One of the original projects I can remember was the planting of 1 1/2 million evergreen seedlings in 1922. Dad was under the impression that a state law was about to be passed which would prohibit the destruction of our forests by cutting down Christmas trees each year... However the law was never passed, but for years we sold Christmas trees and would take in a gross of as much as \$10,000 at Christmas time... In a few years the trees required transplanting and my father employed 'farmerettes' from New York City who wanted to come to the country for the summer. However, most of these women were not accustomed to the back-bending job of weeding and transplanting trees and they would only stay about three days... Later on, the problem of keeping the grass trimmed around the trees was becoming costly. It was suggested to my father that he purchase some

goats which would eat the grass and not eat the evergreens. My father hired a sheep herder from Italy and bought about 500 goats from Kansas City. Everything worked out just fine until the Spring arrived at which time the goats ate off all the new growth on the evergreens which resulted in dissolving this operation.

"During the Depression, my father felt it was unwise to just give money to people who needed it for food. Instead, he hired anyone who wanted to work for \$0.50 an hour on a daily basis. Not only did he provide jobs for the unemployed local residents, but he also built a mile-long stone wall in front of the property on Route 22. This wall, which was built in 1931 and 1932, is still standing. Dad felt that by so doing the people managed to retain their pride and therefore did not have to go around begging.

"Over the years, Dad was continuously building bridle trails throughout the property, many of which have turned out to be roads presently in use at Windmill Farms... Dad also built lakes and windmills, and all of the windmills were functional. In the back of the farm, Dad had an enclosed area which he used to raise deer and would spend hours training them to draw carriages for the amusement of my children.

"Dad graduated from Cornell Medical College, New York City, as a medical doctor in their first graduating class but really never practiced medicine. While serving his internship at Bellevue Hospital, his father died and he was forced to complete an apartment house which was only partially finished. This actually started him on his building career and he never went back to medicine...

Dad spent a great deal of time grafting trees at the farm. I remember the time Dad performed over 200 grafts on hickory trees so that they would produce good nuts. In order to protect the graft, he wrapped each one with a brown paper bag. We had a very hard winter that year with a great deal of snow, and the wind made the paper bags rattle to the point where the bags attracted rabbits. The rabbits in turn encircled the trees and ate

the bark. This killed the trees, and naturally the grafts never grew. We had one big walnut tree in back of the farm house which Dad had to operate on nearly every summer, so he really turned out to be quite a tree surgeon.

"In 1938, Dad purchased the Westchester Embassy Club which is presently known as the Bel-Aire Country Club. During Prohibition, the Embassy Club was operated by Jack and Charlie of the 21 Club in New York. When Prohibition went out, business fell off and my father added this property, together with the Byram Lake Country Club and the Silver Estate, to his holdings.

"In 1907, the year in which I was born, Dad built a castle on Riverside Drive in New York City. It was made of white marble and became known as the Paterno Castle. This is where I was brought up. When Dad acquired the farm in 1919, I was a lad of 12; we spent our summers on the farm in Armonk and the winters at the castle. The original property was known as North Castle Farm. Its name seemed a natural to me as the property was located north of our residence in New York City. Dad and Mother spent many enjoyable years on this lovely piece of property in Westchester County.

At the time of my father's death (1946), I discovered a sealed letter which was to be opened by me after he passed away. The purpose of the letter was to attempt to influence me to live on the farm in Armonk with my family as he had enjoyed so many happy years there. However, I had already become established in North Salem and my friends were in Northern Westchester so I did not want to start life over again in a new location.

As a result, I offered the property for sale and finally came to the conclusion that I should establish Windmill Farms, Inc., a real estate development firm, as I owned the property and had some knowledge of real estate development. I built 6 miles of road with a water supply system, and about 60 homes until I sold the property in 1954..."

COVER PICTURE

The front cover picture is from The Daily Item, Port Chester, New York, newspaper issued January 8, 1936 showing 72 year old **Judge George E. Mead** of Middle Patent who plowed his fields with his pair of oxen.

Maureen McKernan wrote in her accompanying article that Judge Mead was retiring from public service in North Castle after fifty years and that he had not missed a town meeting during that time.

Judge Mead confessed he had missed one the day he was elected inspector of elections. He said, *"I did not attend that meeting to cast a vote for myself because it was my wedding day."* He married Amanda Birdsall *"the last Tuesday in March"* in 1886. *"It was a gray, rainy day. The roads were deep in mud..."*, he related.

He used his oxen to plow the fields of his 82 acre farm near Bedford which provided *"a sight to stall summer traffic on Banksville Road"*. The taxes in 1936 on his 82 acre farm were \$700 annually; the house was lit by oil lamps and heated with coal stoves.

Reprints of **NORTH CASTLE HISTORY**
may be ordered for \$4.50 each from
The North Castle Historical Society
440 Bedford Road
Armonk, New York 10504