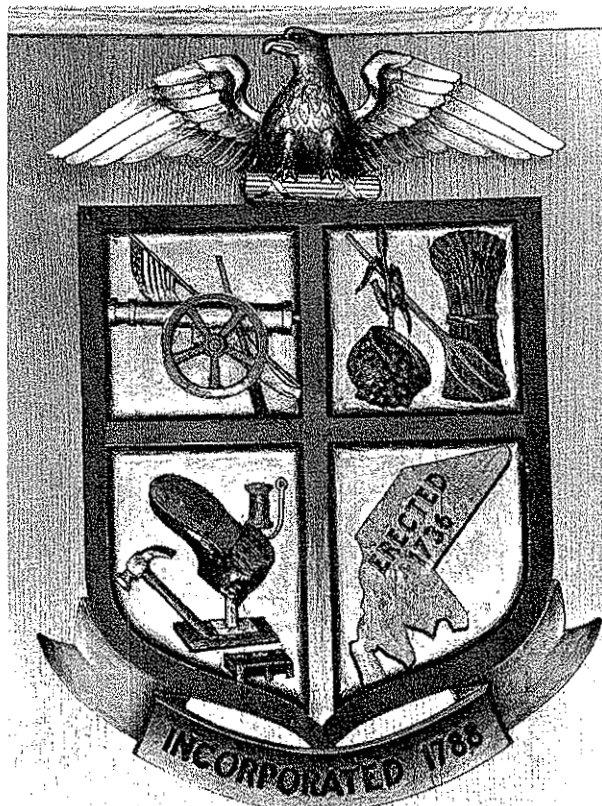


NORTH CASTLE HISTORY



Official Seal, Town of North Castle, New York

(Photograph by Richard Koenig)

THE NORTH CASTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 24

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1997

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The North Castle Historical Society

440 BEDFORD ROAD ARMONK, NEW YORK 10504

Dear Members and Friends,

April 4, 1997 marked the 26th anniversary of the founding of The North Castle Historical Society. Our Society continues to pursue the goals of the founding members – by preserving the history of our community, educating our young and old alike, continuing to research the history of our families and buildings, giving tours of our historic buildings, holding colonial dinners, presenting Colonial Crafts Days, offering Antiques Shows, and holding monthly meetings. Much time and energy are needed to keep Smith's Tavern Educational Complex a busy and interesting site.

This is my third and last letter as President. I personally wish to thank all of you for your faithfulness in being members of The Society. Your payment of dues and your active participation in our various functions throughout the year are vital. A special thanks to all of the Trustees of our Society.

Please keep informed about various activities through the Society Newsletter. Join our knowledgeable docents on Sundays from 1:30-3:30pm, April through mid-December. Contribute to our publications and archives. Remember our Christmas Party each December. Come and usher in your personal Colonial Christmas with special friends in a special place!

Let's continue to pursue together the dreams of our inspired founding members!

Sincerely,

Constance M. Quarrie

Constance M. Quarrie
President

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NORTH CASTLE'S SHOEMAKING INDUSTRY

by Doris Finch Watson

The true importance of the local SHOEMAKING INDUSTRY is prominently depicted by the placement of shoemaking implements in the beautiful official seal of the Town of North Castle.¹

In the mid-1800s the making of shoes was an important cottage industry in Armonk, Middle Patent, Banksville, Pound Ridge and adjoining communities. Unfortunately, little has been written about this large scale occupation in this area of Westchester, with only brief references to it in a handful of books. One reference source states that in Pound Ridge "almost 150 families were shoemakers".² North Castle had 221 families involved in shoemaking in 1850.³ This number did not include all of the local dealers, manufacturers and distributors. For some residents shoemaking was a full-time occupation. For numerous others in North Castle and neighboring communities, it played a major role by providing an important "extra income" source.

Background

Many early farmers had their own vats for tanning leather which came from skins or hides of animals used chiefly for their food value. When the skins were tanned and dressed, the leather was used to make shoes for the family. Early shoes were shaped "straight", with no distinction between the right and left foot.⁴ Sometimes leather was used by a traveling shoemaker to make shoes for the entire farm family. He was called a journeyman because he traveled from place to place seeking work, using his hammer, lapstone, crude knife and awl to fashion shoes. Early records often listed shoemakers as "cordwainers" because they made shoes of cordovan.

¹ See the photograph and explanation of the Town Seal on the front and back covers of this issue.

² Susan Cochran Swanson and Elizabeth Green Fuller, Westchester County, A Pictorial History (Donning Co., Pennsylvania, 1982) p. 64.

³ 1850 Federal Census of Westchester County for the Town of North Castle.

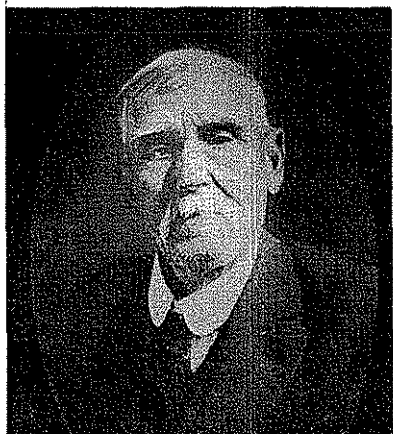
⁴ R. Tucker Wilcox, The Dictionary of Costumes (New York: Scribner, 1969).

As the population grew, the demand for shoes increased and tanneries were established by local entrepreneurs. The "manufacturers" saw great opportunities in shoemaking. They cut the leather using patterns, and the pieces were then taken to stores or shops for distribution to families. A record was posted to each family for the number of pieces they took home. When the hand sewing and cobbling work was completed, the finished shoes were returned for credit. There was a regular bartering system. The storekeepers' old account and day books provide a remarkable record of people involved, prices paid for the shoemaking, various purchases made by the families, and the settling of accounts at the end of each month. Some shoes made for the Armonk manufacturers and dealers were sold locally, but most were sent by wagons to Saw Pits (now Port Chester) where packet boats would carry them to cities. Some Middle Patent and Banksville shoes were sold locally, but most were hauled by wagon down to Lower Landing⁵ (today called Cos Cob) and shipped by packet boats, such as the *John Romer* or the *Shippan*, to New York City or other distribution points.

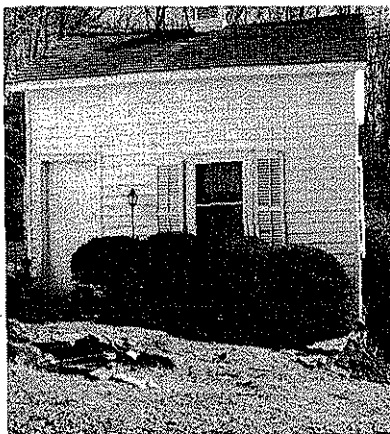
Shoemaking Families

When the cut pieces of leather were brought home from the store every family member knew the importance of that "extra income". Thus, the housewife, children and grandparents often worked during the day and when the farmer finished farm chores, the entire family would gather around the kitchen table and work by the glow of kerosene lamps. Although many families kept their shoemaking materials and tools in the house, some families built a little "cobbler's shop" in the backyard. When they were no longer needed for shoemaking, many were torn down; those remaining became storage sheds. Few of them remain today: one on Hickory Kingdom Road, one on Middle Patent Road and another on Bedford Road. Using these tiny buildings meant that the cobbler's bench, hammers, lasts and forms could all be kept out of the house, probably to the delight of the homemaker!

⁵ William E. Finch, Jr., The Stanwich Parish (unpublished). Mr. Finch is Historian of The Town of Greenwich, Connecticut.



(Photograph by Doris Finch Watson)



(Courtesy of Marie Worden)

Located on Middle Patent Road, the old cobbler's shop pictured above is one of the few remaining in North Castle. It was used by two generations of the William Worden family. The present owner is Susan Anderson. Marie Worden's grandfather, William Bussing Worden (1845-1925), pictured above, worked and lived on Middle Patent Road.

Who were these shoemaking families? Shoemaking account books⁶ show that many accounts were carried in the names of women including: Mrs. W. H. Dayton⁷, Mrs. John Fowler, Mrs. Lorenzo Mead, Mrs. William Zar, Mrs. William Bird, Mrs. Thomas Davis, Cordelia Miller, Sarah Bodey, Marie Brundage, Mrs. Simeon Sarles, Mrs. Isaac Reynolds, Mrs. Horace Ferris, Mrs. Augustus Lockwood, Mrs. Steve Finch, Mrs. George Reynolds, Mrs. W. D. Bird, Phebe A. Banks, Mrs. Theodore Jones (see below), Rachel Platt, Mrs. Edward Finch, Mary E. Mills, Mrs. W. Clarke and many others.

The names listed above are just a few of the many ladies who had accounts. That seemed practical because it was the woman of the household who usually brought the finished shoes back for credit; who picked up new pieces of leather to be worked; and who made purchases such as sugar, tea, coffee, salt, thread, silk material or

⁶ Record Books of Hobby, Van Ranst & Parker. See reproduction of their billhead with this article.

⁷ Mrs. W. H. Dayton lived on Mead Road in the house later owned by Mr. and Mrs. R. Eugene Curry and now owned by their daughter, Meg, and her husband, Don Gregg.

George W. Brundage shows the following on November 24, 1855: "6 pr. @ 14 \$.84" and "6 pr. @ 16 \$.96".

Although the women did the stitching of the shoes, it was the men who did the cobbling, hammering away at their cobblers' benches. One of the last Banksville cobblers was Lorenzo Mead (1814-1900), who worked at his cobbler's bench upstairs at Finch's Store⁸. That cobbler's bench is now a treasured possession in the Watson home, and a photograph of it including some of his tools appears with this story.

A young shoemaker, who later became widely known, was Silas Derby (1822-1900). He was born in Middle Patent and began working on shoes at the age of fourteen.⁹ He continued shoemaking until he saw the need for transportation from Banksville to Greenwich and back. In 1861 he opened his stagecoach business, which he operated for nearly forty years. He was known for "his mode of dress, the trim of his whiskers and his cheery YAP to his steeds".¹⁰ At Derby's death in June, 1900, "The Greenwich Graphic" devoted almost the entire front page to recounting the story of his life and included a large picture of him with his stagecoach.

Church Groups Made Shoes, Too

In 1847 The Middle Patent Methodist Episcopal Church moved from the original 1826 church building into the present structure. Money was imperative, and when the church women saw an opportunity for income, "The Middle Patent Methodist Episcopal Sewing Society" delved into shoemaking.¹¹

Word spread, and when the Banksville Baptist Church¹² (built in 1853) needed funds, the Baptist ladies took up the cause. They formed the

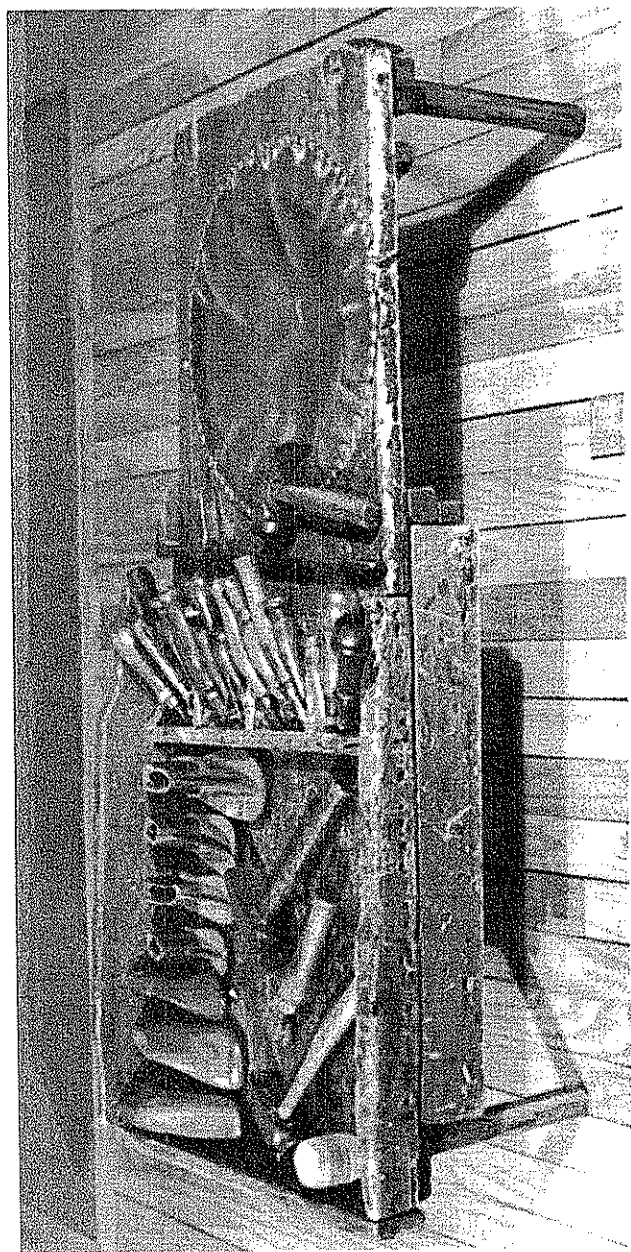
⁸ Lorenzo Mead was a cousin of Marvin N. Finch, store owner.

⁹ The Greenwich Graphic, Greenwich, Connecticut 30 June 1900.

¹⁰ Frederick A. Hubbard, Other Days in Greenwich (New York: J. F. Tapley Co., 1913) p. 61.

¹¹ Record Books of Hobby, Van Ranst & Parker, 1855.

¹² The Banksville Baptist Church building was pictured on the front cover of *North Castle History*, Volume 3, 1976. The building was converted to a residence in 1975.



The antique Cobbler's Bench pictured above was used by Lorenzo Mead in Banksville and is now in the Watson home. The wooden Lasts and metal Forms, cobbler's hammer, awl and other tools are spread on the bench. The cobbler straddled the bench, sitting on the leather circle facing his tools and work area. (Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)

Thursday Oct 20th 1859

Mrs Lorenzo Mead

Re 14 pr at 20 2.80

✓ 3 pr at 12 .36

194 Out 36 pr

Dr to 2 spools silk 80 1.60

Charles R. Mead

Re 6 pr at 12 72

✓ 325 Out 12 pr to Mead

12 pr to Mead

Dr to Mead .58

17

Page of the Day Book showing the 1859 account of Mrs. Lorenzo Mead. Note that 17 pairs of finished shoes came IN and 36 pairs went OUT to be completed. "Thursday, Oct. 20th, 1859. Mrs. Lorenzo Mead. 14 pr. at 20. 2.80. 3 pr. at 12. .36. Out 36 pr. Db. To 2 spools silk 80. 1.60." (Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)

Methodist E. Sewing Society 195

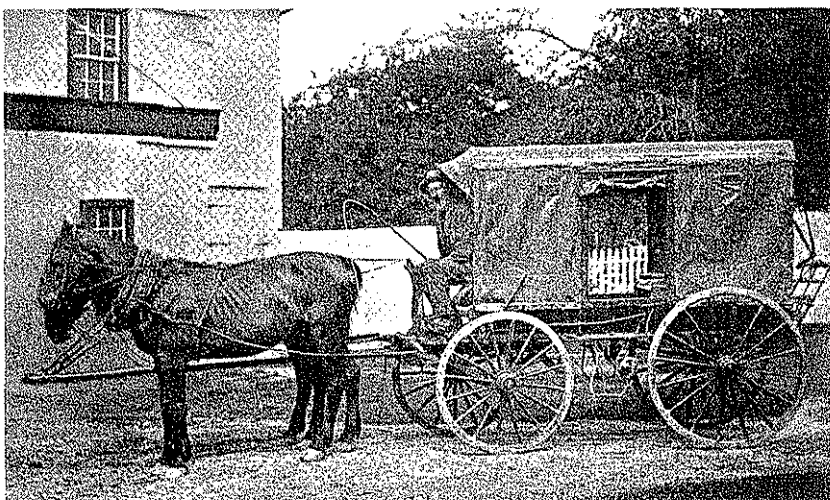
Aug 29 To Cash	5.04	July 8 48 pr.	14	5.04
Aug 29 To Cash	16.00	Sept 27 In 36 pr.	14	5.04
Sept 27 To Cash	1.68	Oct 18 In 12 pr.	14	1.68
		Oct 25 In 30 pr.	14	4.20
		Nov 12 In 36 pr.	14	5.04
		Nov 22 In 12 pr.	14	1.68
				80.30

Ledger Page for The Methodist Episcopal Church Sewing Society showing Debit and Credit columns. "Methodist E. Sewing Society. August 29 To Cash 5.04. To Cash 16.00. To Balance 1.64. July 8 48 pr. August 16 In 36 pr. 14. 5.04. Sept. 27 In 36 pr. 14. 5.04. Oct. 18 In 12 pr. 14. 1.68. Oct. 25 In 30 pr. 14. 4.20. Nov. 12 In 36 pr. 14. 5.04. Nov. 22 In 12 pr. 14. 1.68." (Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)

The Middle Patent Methodist Episcopal Sewing Society sewed shoes to help raise money for the Church. The picture of the building shown below was taken about 1915. Note the horse barns (no longer standing) were at the rear of the building. In winter Finch's deliveries were made by sled and "Rouse" the dog often went along for the ride. (Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)



Silas Derby made shoes as a young man. In 1861 he established the Banksville Stage (shown here) which he operated for almost forty years. (Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)



"Banksville Baptist Sewing Society" and began sewing shoes. They, too, had their own account. Both Sewing Societies would allow their earnings to accumulate and then take the payment in cash to help the Churches.

Manufacturers * Agents * Dealers

Who were these men? In Armonk, John B. Acker was a Shoe Agent and Dealer in Ladies' Shoes. His business was located on the west side of the old main road leading north to Sands' Mills. To the south of the Acker business was the T. R. Smith Shoe Store. Both Matthew O'Brien and John Sherwood were Armonk shoe manufacturers. Another thriving business was owned by W. Cox, a shoe manufacturer located near Sands' Mills, close to the mill pond.

One of the best known Armonk shoe manufacturers, Hiram Finch (1817-1897), lived and had his business near the present main entrance to Windmill Farm. He owned a general store and ran the mail and passenger stage line from North Castle to Kensico and Port Chester, in addition to being the proprietor of a thriving shoemaking business. A portion of his obituary reads, "He was a large manufacturer of shoes, and gave employment to numbers of people in this vicinity."¹³

Working on shoes meant long, tiresome hours, whether it was holding the needle or pounding the hammer. One of our great poets, John Greenleaf Whittier, worked on his father's Massachusetts farm in the little shoemaker's shop, and some of his poems reflect that experience. This portion of his poem "The Shoemakers" speaks from the heart:

"Rap, rap! Upon the well-worn stone
How falls the polished hammer!
Rap, rap! The measured sound has grown
A quick and merry clamor.
Now shape the sole! Now deftly curl
The glossy vamp around it!
And bless the while the bright-eyed girl
Whose gentle fingers bound it!"

¹³ From the obituary section clipped from an old untitled and undated newspaper. Mr. Finch died February 18, 1897.

Although not classed as Shoemakers, Richard Coyt and Lawrence Quigley produced Shoe Lasts. Made of wood, the Last was one of the most important factors in the making of shoes, for it was the wooden form which determined the size and shape of the shoe and had much to do with "fit". The Lasts had to be made to proper sizes reckoned by the old measure called the "barleycorn", which was equal to a third of an inch.¹⁴

In the center of Banksville, Capt. John Banks (1811-1887) operated a general store and shoe business. He was a descendant of one of the earliest North Castle settlers¹⁵ and a large land owner. He helped to develop the town which now bears the Banks name. His obituary appeared in Westchester and Greenwich papers stating that he was very highly respected, that for many years he was a storekeeper and manufacturer of Ladies' shoes, that he was a deacon in the Banksville Baptist Church, and that he "could tell a good story and laugh heartily".¹⁶ Banks' daughter, Ann Maria Banks (1836-1915)¹⁷ grew up in Banksville and married Joseph Silkman Hobby.

Joseph Silkman Hobby (1826-1879) was born in East Middle Patent and grew up there, the child of Allen and Joanna Silkman Hobby.¹⁸ As a young adult he watched the progress of the SHOEMAKING INDUSTRY, and he followed with interest the reports of Elias Howe's sewing machine invention of 1846. Hobby became one of the early local shoe manufacturers to apply the machine for stitching leather.¹⁹ He became one of the owners of Hobby, Van Ranst & Parker, Manufacturers of Ladies' Gaiter Boots, whose business was in the heart of Banksville.

¹⁴ The Book of Knowledge, Book Number 3 (Canada: Grolier, 1950) 854.

¹⁵ Capt. John Banks descended from Samuel Banks (1666-1743). Samuel's farmland became The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery and he lies buried at the top of the hill in The Cemetery.

¹⁶ The Greenwich Graphic, Connecticut: 19 February 1887, 3, column 2.

¹⁷ Ibid. 30 June 1900, p. 1.

¹⁸ Records of The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery, Banksville, New York.

¹⁹ Richard N. Lander, article on Joseph Silkman Hobby, The Quarterly Bulletin of the Westchester County Historical Society (White Plains, New York: Vol. 23, January-April 1947, Nos. 1-2) pp. 19-22.

Hiram Finch (1817-1897)
(Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)



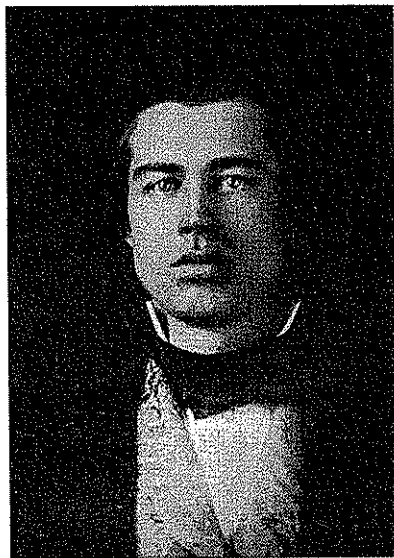
John Banks (1811-1887)
(Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)



Ann Maria (Banks) Hobby
(1836-1915)
(Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)



Joseph Silkman Hobby
(1826-1879)
(from the Collections of The Society)



Hobby led the way into adapting to the newest machinery available. The new machines his business utilized gradually cut down on the amount of hand stitching and cobbling required for each pair of shoes.

The Invoice shown below was issued on January 23, 1855, to Mr. Shubel Brush. It covers 7 lbs. of nails used to fasten shoe "uppers" to the soles.²⁰

Bankville, N. H. Jan 23 1855

H. B. Hobby

HOBBY, VAN RANST & PARKER

MANUFACTURERS OF LADDER-GAITHER SHOES

1	Nails	5	37
2	Shoes	1	14
3			
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Compliment of Mr. Shubel Brush
to his shoe

In 1856 Hobby married Ann Maria Banks. Thus, John Banks, prominent merchant and shoe manufacturer, became his father-in-law.

In 1860, Marvin N. Finch (1811-1900), who had been involved in shoemaking, took a business partner, and Finch & Derby moved into the building where Hobby, Van Ranst & Parker had operated. Thus, Finch's Country Store was "born".²¹

The End of an Era

Change was inevitable. Through the period 1830 to 1890, the work patterns were adjusted as the shoe styles changed and, as new machines were developed and perfected, they began to take the place of handwork.

For the SHOEMAKING INDUSTRY many events set the course and the changes gradually filtered into North Castle. In 1830 diagrams or

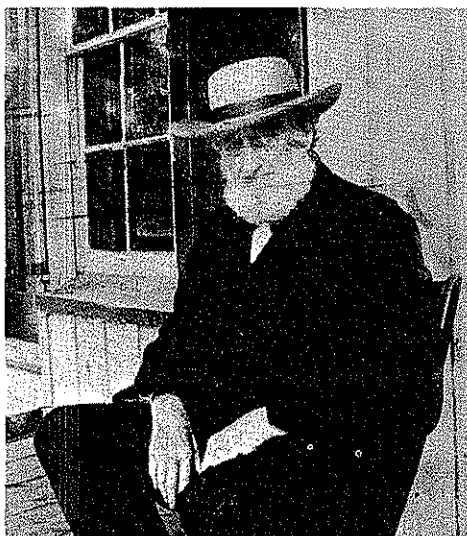
²⁰ Record Books of Hobby, Van Ranst & Parker, 1855.

²¹ Marvin N. Finch was the great-grandfather of Doris Finch Watson. His country store sold shoes, boots and general merchandise, including every item known to a country store. The business changed with the times, and it continues in operation today, through 138 years.

J. S. Hobby, F. H. Van Ranst and L. N. Parker, shoe manufacturers, operated this store in the center of Banksville. In 1860 it became Finch's Store. (Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)



Marvin N. Finch was listed as a shoemaker in the 1850 Federal Census for North Castle. In 1860 he established Finch's Store and sold shoes, boots and general merchandise. (Courtesy of Doris Finch Watson)



patterns were used for cutting shoe leather; in 1846 Elias Howe patented his first sewing machine; in 1851 the Singer Sewing Machine Company produced the foot treadle; in 1858 the Blake Machine was made to sew uppers and lowers together; in 1860 Blake and McKay perfected a sole sewing machine making sewing possible instead of using nails. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the shoemaking business had changed to a mass production basis. North Castle's SHOEMAKING INDUSTRY had been laid to rest.

A Time to Remember

Today, at auctions, antiques shows and thrift shops, collectors seek to purchase a variety of antique cobblers' benches and tools, including wooden lasts, metal forms, hammers, antique handmade shoes, and various items dealing with shoemaking. Perhaps some purchasers find fascination in the early manner of construction, but few know or could even guess the important role such implements played in the lives of many North Castle families. Hopefully, those well-worn cobblers' tools will bring a sense of enjoyment to the collectors and will provide fond and lasting memories of a way of life gone forever.

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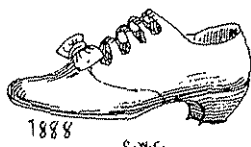
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Acknowledgments

A special "thank you" must go to Dick Koenig for his excellent photography and his untiring patience as the author kept uncovering new "old" items to be photographed. Thank you to Marie Worden for sharing her grandfather's picture. Special gratitude to my cousin, William E. Finch, Jr., for helping to save some of the old records and for sharing his great memory. Appreciation to the Greenwich Library for use of their wonderful newspaper files. A special bouquet to Sharon Tomback for her excellent help and work in all areas of our *North Castle History Booklet*.



CRACKER BARREL MAYOR YOUNG AT HEART AT 86

By Julius Mahler

[Taken from the Westchester Section of the Sunday News, November 20, 1955, page W-6.]

"Seated under a spreading maple tree near the community bulletin board Lester Elwood Ferris, unofficial mayor of Armonk, holds daily sessions.

Known to residents of Armonk as Mayor Ferris, he could easily win an election were he a politician. His only interest in politics, however, is in discussion. As a matter of fact he will talk about anything at the drop of a word.

Memory Strong

For a man his age, he has a remarkable memory. He figures he was born 19 years before the big blizzard of 1888 which makes him 86. Some say he is younger, others insist he is older. Mayor Ferris has little interest in the past, but he has prepared for the future.

In the cellar of the old barn in which he lives not far from busy Route 22 he has a fine pine coffin in which are stored a new suit and fresh linen. 'I'm going to be buried in style,' he insists, 'and I don't want no ministers praying over me.' While this may seem sacrilegious, it's only talk. There isn't a village clergyman who does not recognize the old timer's good qualities.

Ferris' eating habits are also somewhat unorthodox. He drinks nothing but tea which he brews in a big restaurant kettle, one pound of tea to ten gallons of water. The mixture lasts for weeks. He does not eat meat because he has seen too many hunters kill wild game and fowl which once inhabited this section.

'There was a time in his youth when Lester Elwood Ferris was the fastest man in Westchester,' Police Chief John Hergenhan said.

(Society records relate that Mr. Ferris was a distance runner and that he would run to Yonkers and then enter a race there. Some records report that he died at the age of 84.)

Armonk's unofficial mayor, **Lester Elwood Ferris**, offers some philosophical advice to **David Parker**, 3. (The newspaper article with picture was donated to The North Castle Historical Society by Orrin Husted.)

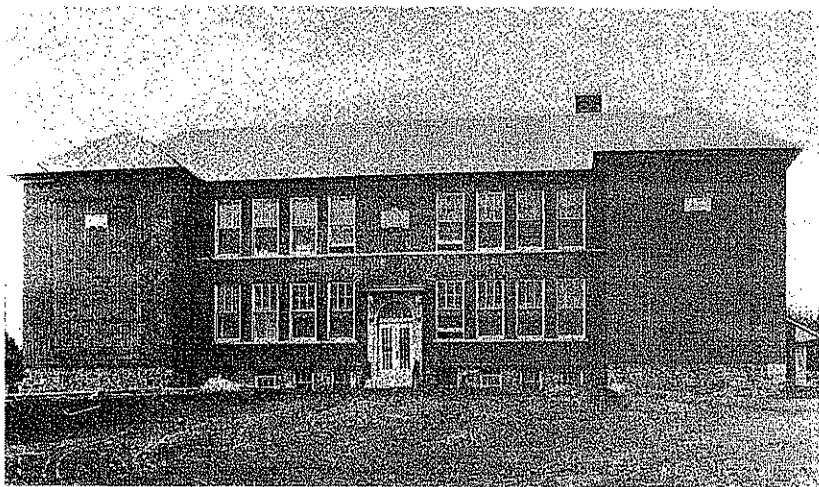


David is the son of Society members **Thomas R. and Josephine Parker**. **Jo** remembers that **David** was wearing his older brother's pants at the time, but does not remember the reason. **Mr. Ferris** lived behind the present drug store where the parking lot exists today. His shelter was an old, unheated barn without running water. He was known to sometimes spit toward the children.

WHIPPOORWILL SCHOOL

By Marie Conversano

When the new Whippoorwill School on Whippoorwill Road East opened for classes at Christmas time, in December, 1924, it consolidated three small Armonk schools: the old Whippoorwill School (a one-room building on Whippoorwill Road, District No. 6)¹, Cox Avenue (a one-room building on Cox Avenue also known as the Webster School, District No. 4)² and the Armonk School, a two-room building on School Street).³ The new Whippoorwill School was built at a cost of \$100,000.⁴



District No. 5, Consolidated School, 1925

(from the Collections of The North Castle Historical Society)

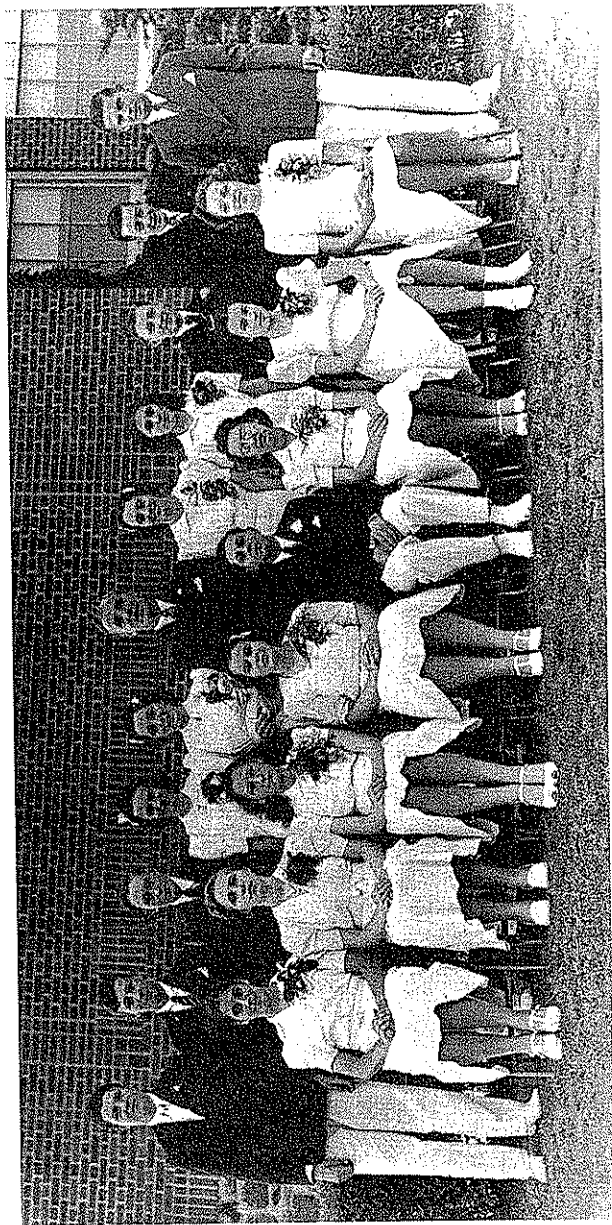
¹ The building became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Morton Engleman in the 1960s and later was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bethke.

² Miss Lillian Webster taught there for many years. The building thereafter was moved east about 300 feet and became the home of Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Duberman.

³ The building became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Merton Sinistore in the 1960s.

⁴ The building was dedicated May 15, 1925, with a formal program; the Junior Order of American Mechanics of White Plains presented a U.S. Flag and Bible.

8th Grade Graduating Class, 1940, Whippoorwill School



(L-R) Row 1: Nancy Gatto, Eileen Creed, Jane Crittenden, Mary Stow, Jimmy Hussar, Shirley Mahoney, Alice Garvin, Elsie Williams. (L-R) Row 2: Emil Eisermann, Reed Lindsey, unknown, Louise Strout, June French, Harry Finlay, Marie Lewis, Gladys Coupe, Billy Crittenden, Harry Williams, George Morogyk. (Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Kuhn)

The Board of Trustees consisted of Julius A. Raven, president; Edwin F. Acker, clerk; T. William Brundage, treasurer; and Mrs. Kathryn Hopkins (wife of Niles Hopkins) and William A. MacDonald. When the building was dedicated in May, 1925, faculty consisted of Harold C. Crittenden, principal, Lulu L. Aldous, Dorothy L. Pool (later Mrs. Herbert Jones), Dorothy Eastman and Margaret S. Wyckoff.⁵

The first eighth grade graduation from Whippoorwill was in 1925. During the spring of 1925 a student orchestra was begun, but the orchestra sometimes struggled to finish the programs started. (The orchestra and the graduation class consisted of five pupils!) At that time, if students wished to attend high school, they had to go to Pleasantville.

In the early years basketball baskets were installed in a classroom that doubled as a cafeteria and gym. A basketball team was established by the physical education teacher and the team competed with other schools in the area. The students also participated in spelling contests sponsored by the Interscholastic Activities Association. Between 1925 and 1932, students won first prize in the spelling contests four times!

By 1931 the building was so crowded that classes were being held in the auditorium and basement. Taxpayers voted to build an addition to the building at a cost of \$87,000, and by Christmas of 1932 students began using the new space. An attempt was made to buy property east of the school for playground space, but the taxpayers voted down the \$40,000 purchase price. A time capsule was put into the foundation of the new addition. Included in the small, sealed tin box were a copy of the proposal for the addition sent to the Town Board of North Castle by Harold C. Crittenden, a letter from Mr. Crittenden to the voters urging them to vote for the addition and newspaper articles describing the addition. The time capsule was discovered in 1995 when the building was being renovated to become condominiums.⁶

⁵ Dedication Program for the New Building in the Consolidated School District, District No. 5, Town of North Castle; May 15, 1925.

⁶ Developer Michael Fareri donated the time capsule to the Town of North Castle which then entrusted the contents to The Society.

In 1935 Mr. Crittenden began devoting himself to administration and supervision. With the help of the PTA, a kitchen was established next to the lunchroom and Miss Emily Stephens was hired to supervise the cafeteria and also to teach home economics to the upper grade girls. Joan Ogilvie Kenny, one of those girls who benefited, remembers the thrill of being able to work in the kitchen, wear a hair net and get a free lunch on the day it was her turn. This program continued until 1947 when Miss Stephens resigned. The first kindergarten was established in 1937.

During the World War II years the oil furnaces in the building were converted to burn soft coal.

In 1948 a part-time physical education teacher, Mr. Elwood Clark, was hired. He began a program of community recreation which used school facilities. Mr. Clark can be credited as an originator of recreation programs in North Castle.



(L-R) North Castle Recreation Superintendent Elwood Clark and three of his lieutenants, William E. Barrett, Jim O'Boyle and Joe Arnold, planning recreation programs, June 18, 1961. Patent Trader staff photo by Litchfield. (Courtesy of Elwood Clark)

Grade 4 Class, 1963-1964, Whippoorwill School



(L-R) Row 1: Susan Flory, Jane Weiser, Joy Bell, Cynthia Capriola, Beverly Voltz, Sherill Lawrence, Jessie Knapp, Vincent Marchica. Row 2: Teacher, Mrs. Katherine Trerotola, Ray Murphy, Robert Richardson, John Leinung, Robert Meyerhoff, Kim Nelson, William Buckle, John Maske, John Collins, Kim Witthoefft. Row 3: David Ammerman, Lu-Ann Kusserow, Janet Heyman, Susan MacLeish, Ellen O'Brien, Karen Porterfield, Elyse Frishman, Karin Nierenberg. Row 4: Jim Harmon, Dale Fisher, Cynthia Lowrey, Brenda Settgest, Anthony Longarzo, James Stigler. Absent, Hermine Siggia. (Courtesy of Vivian Trerotola Utke, whose mother taught at Whippoorwill School from 1957 until it closed.)

Enrollment in the Whippoorwill School continued to increase until the auditorium, library and basement were being used for classrooms. A new building to provide six classrooms and an all-purpose room was proposed to be constructed on a twenty-five acre tract of land on Wampus Avenue. In January, 1951 the primary classes were moved into the new Wampus School.

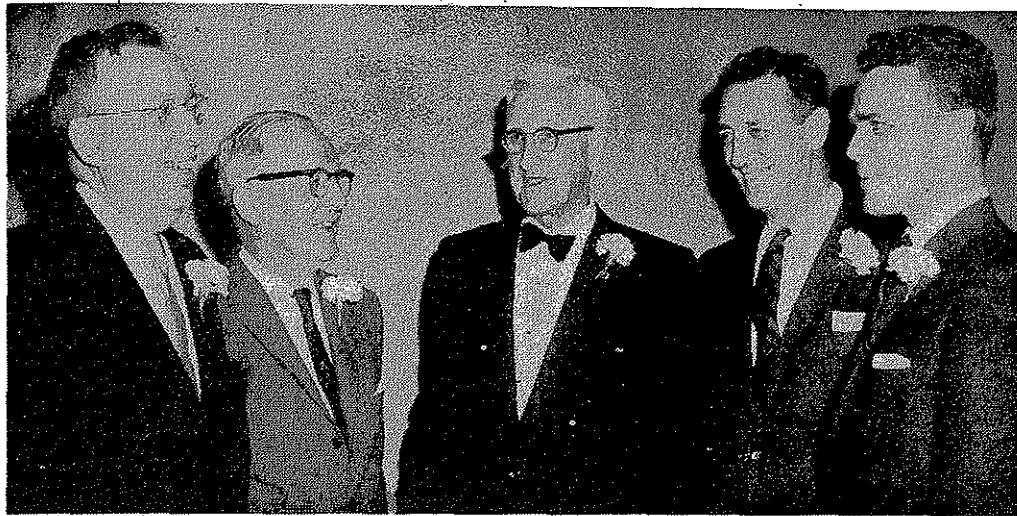
Pleasantville informed the district that in 1956 they would be unable to accept non-residents for grade nine.⁷ Again the voters agreed to build a secondary school on the property next to the Wampus Elementary School. The school was not completed until September of 1957, so again Whippoorwill School had the burden of a full house. In order to house the ninth grade students, the third grades were housed in the American Legion Hall and the fourth grades were housed in the Methodist Church. The new school had twelve classrooms and core facilities. It was called the North Castle School.⁸ Grades six through nine were housed there leaving grades three, four and five at Whippoorwill School.

When Byram Hills High School opened all fifth and sixth grades moved to Crittenden School. After that, Whippoorwill School became a third and fourth grade school with Clara Romano serving as master teacher and also teacher of fourth grade. The building served in that capacity until it closed in 1971.

The Whippoorwill School building was sold to Tobias Bisharat in 1981 for commercial use. It was resold six months later to Whippoorwill Corporate Center Associates. It remained in their hands until August 4, 1988, when it was sold to 20 Whippoorwill Road Corporation. It was renovated and rebuilt into condominiums which opened in 1995.

⁷ Until this time any Whippoorwill School student wishing to go on to high school went to Pleasantville.

⁸ In 1961 Mr. Crittenden retired and the School Board voted to name the new school Harold C. Crittenden. In honor of his retirement, a testimonial dinner was held at Rye Casino, and Mr. Crittenden was given a travel certificate worth \$1,200 for a trip to Hawaii.



(L-R) Judge James D. Hopkins, Judge Julius Raven, Harold C. Crittenden, Town Supervisor James R. Caruso and Charles Pound, president of the school board, recalling the day in 1924 when Judge Raven hired Mr. Crittenden as Armonk school principal. Judge Hopkins told the story that "A young man walked up to Judge Julius Raven, who was then head of the school board, and said, 'I want to be your new principal.' Judge Raven looked up from a bottle of cider and said, 'How much do you want?' '\$1,800' said the young man. 'Care for a sip?' said the judge. The young man replied, 'I will if it's sweet. I never touch anything hard.' To which the judge responded, 'Fine. In that case we'll give you \$2,000.'" (as reported by Tom E. Pray in The Reporter Dispatch, May 15, 1961. Staff photo by Warren Inglese.)

JUDGE JULIUS RAVEN

by Edith Hahn

[The following article appeared in two parts in the North Castle News, October 13 and November 3, 1976.]

Former Justice of the Peace, Julius A. Raven, died on Thursday, October 7, at his home, 15 Annadale Street, Armonk. He was 88 years old and served as Justice of the Peace for 46 years.

Born in Kensico, New York, he was a lifelong resident of this area. He was a retired builder.

Mr. Raven was a member of the Armonk Methodist Church, a 50-year member of Pleasantville Lodge F.&A.M., an exempt member of the Armonk Independent Fire Company, a member of the Westchester County Magistrates Association, and an honorary member of the North Castle Policemen's Benevolent Association.

His wife, Marie, died in 1959.¹ He is survived by his brother, William E. of Valhalla; and a sister, Mrs. Dorothy Draper of Valhalla.

History of Judge Raven

Judge Raven was born October 15, 1887, in the village of Kensico², which is now under Kensico Reservoir. He was one of 11 children, 9 of whom were boys. His father was a farmer. The family first owned a farm where the Jennie Clarkson Home is now located. Later, his father retired to a smaller farm on Old Post Road. Judge Raven first served in public office as Assessor in 1918 and 1919, which was then an elective office.

From 1924 to 1931 he was Chairman of the School Board for the Armonk School District which had just centralized and Whippoorwill

¹ He was married in 1910 to the former Marie L. Petit of New York City. They had no children.

² Refer to *North Castle History*, Vol. 2, 1975, and Vol. 10, 1983, for further information.

School was built during his tenure. He hired Harold Crittenden as principal of the district.

Justice of the Peace

In 1931, at the urging of the Brundages, the Hunters and the Hergenahans, he ran for and was elected Justice of the Peace. He started to serve in January 1932. At that time, North Castle had 4 Justices of the Peace: Arthur Pietschker, Edward Kanze, George Mead and Julius Raven. The Justices of the Peace constituted the Town Board and served with a Supervisor and Town Clerk. The Kirkland Act changed this by making all Westchester Towns First Class Towns and in 1934 the Town Board became a separate body.

Judge Raven was re-elected ten times for a total of 40 years. Twice he ran unopposed and he was particularly proud that every one of his opponents became even better friends after elections.

Education and Early Life

Judge Raven attended a one room school in Kensico. It held 30 students and went through from what was then called "First Reader" to "Eighth Reader". He left home at the age of 16 and worked as office boy in the Westchester Lighting Co., where he made \$5 a week.

However, his board cost him \$6 a week so he took on a hat check room on Tuesday and Friday nights in White Plains. He received \$2 for his Tuesday night work and tips for Friday night. He didn't like office work and decided to study carpentry. He also attended a general contractor's course at night.

Although he roomed in White Plains, he always maintained his home address in North Castle. Shortly after his marriage he moved to Armonk and renovated and lived in what is now known as the Flower Dragon.³

³ Currently David Chen Chinese Restaurant, opposite where School Street intersects with Route 128 (Armonk-Mt. Kisco Road).

Raven's Corner

In 1917 he bought the corner on which Greensleeves Restaurant now stands for \$5,000.⁴ He moved the structure back from the curb some 43 feet, and started a cider mill and fruit and vegetable stand. He bought apples off the trees and employed a dozen men to pick them. It soon became known as Raven's Corner.

During the winter months he continued his carpentry work and from April through June, his wife took over the stand. Judge Raven joined her in July and continued on to Thanksgiving.

The "marrying judge"

Judge Raven married 6,223 couples and never knowingly married anyone under the influence of liquor, but turned many away. Judge Raven explained popularity as a "marrying judge" by the fact that he had married movie celebrities, among them Jane Todd and Jack Warner. He was acquainted with Jack Kriendler and Charles Burns who owned the old Embassy Club and later the "21" Club in New York. They, and Billingsley of the Stork Club, would suggest Judge Raven in Armonk as "a nice place to get married".

During World War II, he married all those in uniform "on the house" until he discovered that the word was out that here was a sucker. Soon they wouldn't even say thank you, so he stopped the free service. He married the same man to the same woman twice; he married two brothers to two local sisters at the same time and the son of one of the couples came back to him for his wedding. He married twin sisters to twin brothers and a Mt. Kisco woman three times, the second and third time to the same man. Descriptions of marriages in Armonk from gas station to Judge were exaggerated newspaper accounts.

⁴ The corner opposite the Armonk Methodist Church building. Currently other businesses are located on the property. Refer to North Castle History, Vol. 1, 1974, Vol. 19, 1992, and Vol. 23, 1996, for further information.

There were about 12 murders during his tenure. All cases had indictments and conviction, although his court did not handle the cases themselves.

“See Here Mr. Mookridge”

Judge Raven's most famous case, because it turned out to be a constitutional test case, came in 1939 when Chief Hergenhan made an arrest because a man had “mutilated” a license plate by putting a piece of tape over the legend noting the 1939 World's Fair. The man objected to giving the State free advertising. The case was tried in the old Town Hall which is now the room in which Mr. John Stromak holds his auctions.⁵ The prosecutor for the State was Albert “Rip” Gallagher, who later became State Supreme Court Justice. Judge Raven decided in favor of the State and levied a \$5 fine. The incident had been written up in a book called *See Here Mr. Mookridge*.

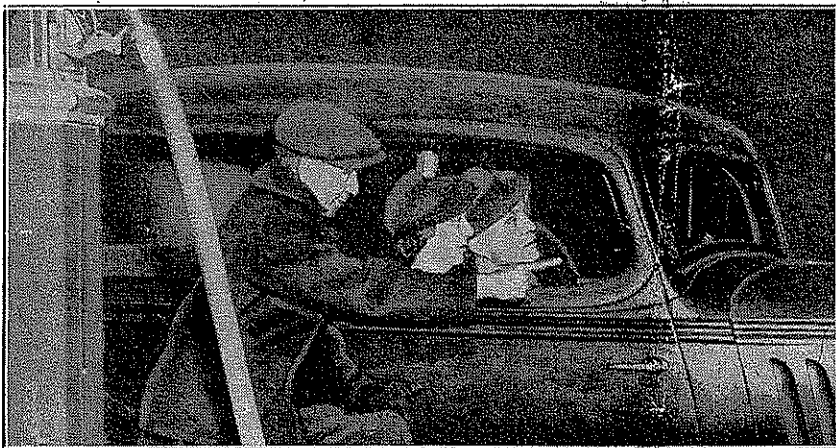
Until 1949, arraignments were conducted in Judge Raven's home. He was known for his 24-hour availability. In 38 years he was never late for any court session nor did he ever miss a scheduled session. He believed he was the oldest living judge both in age and in years of service in the State. He also believed that Justice of the Peace Court was the most important court in the State.

His starting salary as Justice of the Peace was \$1,500 and during the depression it was cut to \$1,000. Forty years later he made \$4,000. He remembered that Judge Pietschker got \$300 more because court was held in his house. He remembered that until 1915 criminals didn't have a chance because with the constable system, the constable got \$2.50 for each arrest regardless of the outcome and the judge was also paid \$2.50.

Judge Raven said that more cooperation was needed by the District Attorney's office with the lower courts. He also felt defendants should be provided with legal service but that the policemen must do their own prosecution against skilled lawyers.

⁵ The building, on Maple Avenue, presently houses another business. See *North Castle History*, Vol. 1, 1974, for further information.

“Candid camera acts as wedding witness in Armonk, N.Y., where life is just one continuous marry-go-round. Below, Walter Lindenau and Winifred Gentzel, a couple of license-hunters, get their bearings from R. L. Lawrence, garage worker.” (Courtesy Daily News, December 10, 1936. Photograph by C. Hoff.)



**Judge Julius A. Raven
(1887-1976)**

(Photograph from Collections of The Society)



THE TEAPOT AND THE CABBAGE

A North Castle Tale

(from the New York "Mail and Express", January 13, 1900, as related to the reporter by I. Howard Kinch, the first Commissioner of Jurors of Westchester County)

"Up in one of Westchester's picturesque valleys is an old-fashioned gambrel-roofed farmhouse that stood just where it now stands when the states were only colonies. This was the home of Gilbert and Charity Thorn. With this house and with a certain ancestral teapot belonging to the Ferris family - neighbors who lived about two miles away - is associated one of the interesting tradition's of the county.

One night in 1778, when the region was infested with marauding "cowboys" and "skinnners", a band of these freebooters came to the house and demanded food and drink. The farmer's wife that night happened to be alone. She obeyed their wishes. The guerrillas rushed in, flung a bag of booty in the corner and began a wild carousal. In the midst of their revelry, one of them remembered the plunder, dragged the bag to the table and brandished the teapot in the air.

The good wife knew it at once, for plate was not so common in those days and the fame of that particular piece had gone over all the countryside. Plying the marauders with drink, she went quickly to the garden and cut a head of cabbage. Then, when the revelers were not looking, she deftly extracted the precious teapot and put the cabbage in its place. Shortly, the band left with their bag of plunder.

The good dame carried the teapot back to its rightful owners, with whom it has always remained and by whom it has been handed down from mother to daughter-in-law to this day."

[Gilbert Thorne was North Castle Town Clerk 1770-1778. He was also a Town Constable, Tax Collector and Sessor, and in 1771 he received a license as an Inn Keeper. See *North Castle History*, Volume 5, 1978, page 9.]

SEAL, TOWN OF NORTH CASTLE, NEW YORK

The Town Seal is composed of three parts: our national emblem, a shield divided into four sections and a banner beneath the shield.

Perched atop the shield is our national emblem, the American Eagle, with his wings spread and his eyes watchful.

The shield beneath is divided by a blue cross into four sections, each representing an important period in our historic past.

The Revolutionary War, our struggle for independence, is depicted in the upper left portion. Reflected in the upper right section is the role of the early settlers, whose crops of corn, wheat and potatoes helped to sustain life. Shoemaking, an important local industry for over half a century, is portrayed in the lower left section of the shield. The lower right section of the shield reflects the year of the first Town Meeting, 1736, which is imprinted across a representation of the present boundaries of the Town.

The banner beneath the shield bears the year of the Town's incorporation, 1788.

The large, full-color Town Seal hangs proudly in the North Castle Town Hall.

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