

North Castle History

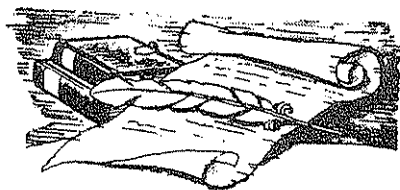


Wampus Brook, Armonk, N.Y., 1910

The North Castle Historical Society

Bedford Road, Armonk, New York 10504

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members and Friends,

This has been a great year for our Society. On March 30, 1977 we took title to historic Smith's Tavern, and since that date many wonderful things have happened at our new headquarters.

On June 18, 1977 the Tavern was officially dedicated with magnificent public ceremonies. Speakers for the day included Town Supervisor, Hon. John A. Lombardi; County Executive, Hon. Alfred DelBello; and Hon. James D. Hopkins, Associate Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York who gave the dedicatory address. William Durr, Vice Commander of North Castle American Legion Post 1097 presented a beautiful flag pole and flag for the Tavern grounds. The highlight of the ceremony came when a bronze plaque commemorating the gifts of the I.B.M. Corporation and the community was unveiled by Mrs. George W. Smith who lived in the Tavern 1908-1917 and Granger Tripp, great, great, great grandson of Captain John Smith. A champagne reception followed the dedication at which more than 200 guests were present.

Since that day the Tavern has hummed with activity. Painting, repairs, yard activity, the setting up of exhibits and library have been accomplished by a large group of dedicated volunteers.

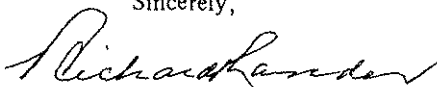
The annual meeting was held at the Tavern on April 6, 1977 at which a large overflow crowd attended. Since that date, the Trustees have held their meetings there and this fall our first real public exhibits were unveiled: the Thorne Collection of early tools and household utensils and an exhibit of 19th Century women's and children's clothing.

To date, members, friends, corporations, organizations, and foundations have given \$116,053.49 to acquire and preserve the Tavern: \$85,000 from I.B.M. and \$31,053.49 from our other friends. On October 8, 1977 the Society held its first house tour for the benefit of the Tavern. \$2,000 was raised from this event. The Chairman of this very successful tour was Jane Fehrs.

To name everybody who has helped in this year's endeavors would fill several pages, but I cannot close without a special word of appreciation to Doris Finch Watson and Ruth Frank, Co-Chairmen of the Smith's Tavern Fund Drive, who have given hundreds of hours towards this year's activities.

As I close my term as President, I wish to thank all of you who have contributed in any way to the success of the Society during the two years I have been privileged to serve. As someone remarked early last year, "No organization has come so far and done so much in so short a time as our historical society." Our collective efforts to preserve our local heritage have been truly blessed.

Sincerely,



Richard N. Lander



Smith's Tavern

A

LOOK

TO

THE

FUTURE

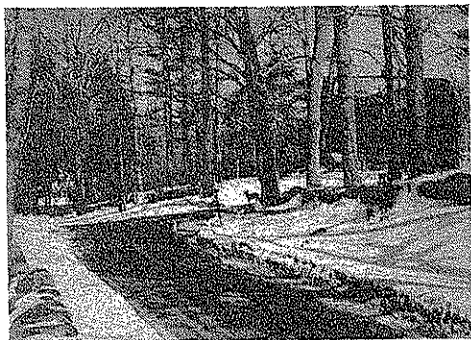


Over three hundred students and adults viewed our fall displays, and the Tavern will have hostesses ready for spring tours.

We will have to proceed slowly, but next year we hope to have funds to begin some of our major goals: renovation of the electrical and heating systems; restoration of the original kitchen to the 1790 period when Capt. John Smith was innkeeper; development of a parking area; improvement of our local historical research library; restoration of the original taproom; relocation of the old Brundage Blacksmith Shop, and finally restoration of period rooms in the Tavern.

These projects for the future are mammoth undertakings, but with your enthusiasm, effort, and support, Smith's Tavern will be an educational center in which we can take pride, knowing that future generations will have an opportunity to know life as it was lived in early North Castle.

Doris Finch Watson
1st Vice President



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Approximately 500 feet south-east of the site of Sands' Mills, on the original road that runs through the Leisure Estate and parallels Cox Avenue in Armonk, stands an ancient wooden structure that was for 74 years a meeting place for the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in North Castle. Above the door, plainly carved for all to see, is the date "Aug. 1776." However,

while researching for this article the author uncovered a conflict regarding that date and solved the mystery of the Friends Meeting House in North Castle.

The above 1978 picture of old Cox Ave. looking North, shows the Friends Meeting House on the right past driveway. The home (circa 1760's) of Mr. and Mrs. George S. Leisure is straight ahead on the road, to the left of the picture.

THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE AT NORTH CASTLE

by Richard N. Lander

In the mid-1600's the Quakers began to settle on Long Island, and from such places as Musketa Cove (Glen Cove), Oyster Bay, Locust Valley, and Flushing, came across the Sound to Westchester County. Meetings were established at the borough of West Chester (now Bronx County) in 1685/86, and Mamaroneck prior to 1704. The first move into present day Westchester County came in 1679 when John Harrison purchased the lands north of Rye to the Rye Ponds on the southern borders of the West Patent¹ of North Castle.² The new settlers who came to Harrison's Purchase were Quakers and their immigration began in the early 1720's. As a result of this settlement the Purchase Monthly Meeting was established on the 9th day of the 4th month 1725. The Purchase Meeting House was built in Rye Woods, a short distance south of the North Castle boundary near the Rye Ponds in 1727. This was to be the Meeting of the earliest Quaker settlers of North Castle.

As more and more Quaker settlers pushed into the area between the Hudson and New England they spilled over into the West Patent. The minutes of the Purchase Monthly Meeting for the 10th day of the 8th month 1745 reads as follows:

"Whereas several Friends who lived [in] a place called Shapiqua within the bound of North Castle have continued for some considerable time to meet together at the house of Abel Weeks³ and desire to have a meeting established amongst them the meeting therefore having considered thereof desires the approbation of the Quarterly Meeting for the same."

For some time the Meeting must have existed in homes, notably Abel Weeks's house, and as this small Meeting grew we find another entry in the

Purchase Quarterly Meeting minutes. On the 4th day of the 10th month 1752, the Meeting acknowledged *"that friends at Shapagua requested a meeting house. Benjamin Birdsell, Anthony Field, Henry Franklin, Moses Quinby and John Clapp were appointed to view land and other conveniences"* and direct *"to allow for a house 20x26 feet with 18 foot posts."* Richard Cornell, Abel Weeks and Moses Quinby were appointed *"to employ workmen and carpenters to complete the work."* This meeting house, the first in North Castle (now in New Castle), still stands on Quaker Road in Chappaqua and is still in use to this day by the Chappaqua Meeting of the Society of Friends.

The preceeding paragraphs are included here for the purposes of historical background as we shall now take up the subject of the meeting house at North Castle (Armonk), the origins of which are set forth here for the first time.

The North Castle (Armonk) Meeting House

There are a number of conflicting recitals in the Quaker records regarding the organization of the North Castle Preparative Meeting and the building of the meeting house.

The first date one finds is in this simple recital in the Purchase Monthly Meeting minutes: *"that the North Castle meeting was allowed, as a meeting for worship in the 11th month 1790."*

The Purchase Quarterly Meeting minutes recite on the 29th day of the 4th month 1796: *"Purchase monthly meeting informs that a number of their members at and near North Castle have requested to be joined to Shapagua Monthly Meeting."* This matter was referred to the two monthly Meetings and approved by them.

The next item of interest comes from the Purchase Monthly Meeting minutes which recites: *"Having first been allowed as a meeting for worship at the house of Isaac Cocks,⁴ North Castle Preparative Meeting was established by Purchase Monthly Meeting the 11th month 1796 by request of members."*

The 3rd, 5th month of 1797, Purchase Quarterly Meeting minutes continue the story: *"Shapagua Monthly Meeting proposed to the meeting the settlement of a Meeting for Worship on the fourth day and a Preparative Meeting at North Castle now held at Isaiah Quinby's.⁵ A committee was appointed to attend North Castle and report to the next Quarterly Meeting."*

2nd, the 8th month 1797: *"The committee reported that the meetings be established, both the meeting for worship and the preparative meeting. This was approved."*

- North Castle Friends Proceed to Build -

The Purchase Quarterly minutes now continue in a more exciting vein, 1st the 11th month 1797: *"Shapagua Monthly Meeting proposed building a meeting house at North Castle 30 by 40 feet with twenty foot posts — estimated cost £500 — deficient sum £236/12s. A committee of Jonathan Nickerson, John Griffen Jr., Joseph Quinby of Westchester, John Cornell, Thomas Vail and Isaac Haviland was appointed with power to*

allow the Friends of North Castle to proceed if the committee thought it right."

31st of the 1st month 1798: *"Friends of North Castle are allowed to proceed in providing materials for a house and building a house." ... "It is desired that the Monthly Meeting will pay particular attention to the planning, seating etc. of the house. That it be convenient, and the Monthly Meetings are requested to open subscriptions and raise £263/12s the deficient sum."*

Mr. A. Day Bradley, an eminent Friend and expert on their history reveals when paying for a meeting house the custom of the Friends was for the local Meeting to raise what they could, and the balance was assessed to the constituent Monthly Meetings in the Quarterly Meeting. The assessment was based on the number of members in each Meeting and the ability to pay.

2nd, 5th month 1798: Purchase Monthly Meeting reports £94/17s/3d raised and paid for North Castle Meeting House.

1st, 8th month 1798: Shapaqua reports their share of the cost of North Castle Meeting House raised and paid. (Unfortunately the minutes do not give the amount.)

31st, 10th month 1798: Oblong Monthly Meeting has not quite completed raising money for North Castle.

30th, 1st month 1799: Amawalk Monthly Meeting had raised £31/11s and Oblong had completed their quota. (Minutes do not reveal Oblong's amount.)

Here we have a wonderful record of the Meeting and the meeting house set down first hand by the people on the scene. However, there is one disconcerting and discordant fact! Carved above the meeting house door is the date "**Aug. 1776.**"

Without the benefit of the above research we have always accepted the date on the meeting house as correct. And when beginning this work I wondered at the twenty-two year discrepancy between the date on the house and the date on the deed to the Trustees of the Meeting. This research indicates the deed was executed and delivered at the time the meeting house was completed in 1798.

Dr. Nicholas Cerullo, whose structural analysis of the building follows this historical report, says that the date was carved with great care a long time ago. He and I both wonder if years after the house was built, the Meeting desired to date its construction, and the wrong date was cut by pure error. Alas, we shall probably never know how the wrong date was inscribed.

The first land transaction we find reference to is an unrecorded deed recited in a later one.⁶ This unrecorded deed dated 28th of the 2nd month 1798, Thomas Sands and Rachel his wife and John Sands and Mary his wife conveyed to Isaiah Quinby, John Carpenter, Benjamin Lane of North Castle, and Samuel Sands of Bedford as Trustees of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting in consideration of twenty pounds the land upon which the meeting house presently stands. The land, two acres in area, was described as *"situated on the east side of the highway leading from the aforesaid John Sands to the*

Methodist Meeting House in the Town of North Castle."

In keeping with the customs of the Friends the premises was again transferred on the 10th of the 10th month 1830 by Samuel Sands, Benjamin Lane, and John Carpenter (surviving trustees), to Stephen Lane, Robert Cocks and Henry L. Haight as trustees of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting. This deed, also unrecorded, is recited in a later conveyance.⁷

- Conflicting Doctrines -

Whether any other significance is attached to this deed without extreme research into the Quaker records we cannot tell. It does come close after the great schism among the Friends which occurred in 1827. At that date the sect divided into two groups, the Orthodox and the Hicksites. This doctrinal difference literally tore apart the fabric of the Friends, and occasioned considerable bitterness in the various Meetings and even among the families in the Meetings. The Hicksites, led by a powerful Quaker preacher and leader, Elias Hicks, held to Unitarian beliefs while the Orthodox espoused Trinitarian doctrine and more evangelical participation.

These great divergence of opinions struck the North Castle Preparative Meeting with full force as the Orthodox marched out of the Meeting and continued their own Meeting under the trees in the meeting house yard. The larger group, the Hicksites, continued to carry on their Meeting inside the house. How long this sad state of affairs continued history does not record, but in nearby Purchase the split was so pronounced a second meeting house was built on the south side of the meeting house lot and both groups worshipped under different roofs but side by side.

It must be presumed that when cold weather set in the Orthodox members of North Castle met in the homes of their members.

- Chappaqua Meeting Determined North Castle's Destiny -

It must also be remembered that the North Castle Meeting was a Preparative Meeting always attached to or amenable to the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting. The Preparative Meeting met for worship, discussed matters of business which could be sent to the Monthly Meeting for their action and determination, and elected delegates to represent their point of view to the Monthly Meeting. The Monthly Meeting, which usually had two Preparative Meetings under its jurisdiction, had final determination over all business, membership matters, and marriages.

The title to the North Castle meeting house remained in the hands of the 1830 trustees for 39 years. When the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting realized all the trustees of the North Castle property were deceased but one, they voted that he convey the property to another set of trustees. Accordingly on the 4th of the 6th month 1869 in consideration of six cents Stephen G. Lane, the only surviving trustee conveyed 2 acres "*whereon stands the meeting house known as the Friends Meeting House at North Castle*" to Albert Tompkins, Town of Bedford, Charles Pierce, Town of Mt. Pleasant, Robert S. Haviland, Edward S. Quinby, Town of New Castle, trustees of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting.⁸ A clause in the deed "*subject to the*

direction of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting." indicates that perhaps the days of the meeting house were numbered.

- Membership Declines -

The decline in the membership of the Friends and the rather close proximity of the larger Meetings at Purchase and Chappaqua made the North Castle Preparative Meeting no longer necessary and the Meeting was laid down by resolution of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting on the 11th of the 7th month 1872.

The house became surplus property until the 11th day of the 1st month 1875 when the Chappaqua Meeting ordered the property sold. On the 11th day of the 2nd month 1875 the trustees Tompkins, Quinby, Haviland and Pierce conveyed the property for \$1,000 to William Cocks of Ossining, N.Y.⁹

William Cocks was a well known Friend and a produce dealer. He was the son of Robert Cocks formerly of North Castle later of Somers, a former trustee of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting. Whether he bought the building from sentiment or speculation we cannot tell; however he died November 27, 1879 owning the meeting house and the property. On March 24, 1881 his executors conveyed the premises to his widow Sarah Cocks. Mrs. Cocks continued to hold the premises until April 28, 1898 when she sold the same to Susan S. Purdy.

Susan S. Purdy and her husband, Judson W. Purdy, a prominent carpenter and builder, lived on the property until January 15, 1910 when they sold to Ida Mead. On June 6, 1911 Miss Mead sold the meeting house property to John Magee of Watkins, N.Y.

Mr. and Mrs. Magee had purchased the adjoining premises to the north and east consisting of 40 acres from Phyllis Davenport in March of 1910 and the later transaction was to square off the acreage and protect their country home. John Magee came to Armonk from the Watkins Glen area of New York, a millionaire due to the foresight of his grandfather who was early on the scene both in coal and railroading.¹⁰

On October 3, 1919 the Magees sold the property to Thomas Barnard and his sister Sarah Lyon. Mr. Barnard lived in Montana, but his sister Mrs. Lyon lived on the property until November 25, 1927 when she sold the premises to Mr. and Mrs. George S. Leisure who have made a country home there ever since.

- Alterations Over The Years -

Over the years the meeting house has been altered considerably, especially the first floor which has been rearranged to accommodate a carriage house and farming activities. A second floor was added for storage and loft purposes. The author is of the opinion that probably the Cocks's or more likely Judson Purdy first altered the building for farming purposes.

Through his fifty years of ownership Mr. Leisure has made rather extensive repairs, reroofing and refurbishing in order to keep the ancient building from deterioration. Our Society is greatly indebted and thankful

to Mr. Leisure for his interest and cooperation in granting the committee under Dr. Cerullo's direction permission to enter his premises and clamber over the entire meeting house to undertake this important study which follows in this issue. Our Society also wishes to thank Dr. Cerullo and his committee for their interest and great expenditure of time in bringing us this extensive study about one of the oldest structures standing in our community.

FOOTNOTES:

1. The West Patent of North Castle was granted by King William III through John Nanfan the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of New York to Robert Walters, and others on Feb. 14, 1701. This great tract consisted of all the land bounded "northerly by the manor of Cortlandt with Bedford line of three miles square with the White Fields and Byram River, southerly by the land of John Harrisson Rye line stretching to Byram River aforesaid and the white plaines and westerly by Broncks river and the manor of Phillipsburgh." The grantees in this deed, ten in number, were the original patentees of the western part of North Castle.
2. References to North Castle in this article prior to 1791 could indicate being located in the present Town of New Castle, as with the Chappaqua Meeting. The Town of New Castle was set off as a separate town from North Castle by Chapter 36 of the Laws of 1791, effective March 18, 1791.
3. Abel Weeks was evidently one of the earliest Friends in North Castle. He lived for a time near Hallock's (Sands') Mills as in the second town minutes of April 5, 1737 one finds "A vote. As consent for John Hallock to build a mill on Womposes brook near Abel Weeks." He removed to the Chappaqua area and settled on a farm of 90 acres which he purchased from Benjamin Smith, Caleb Fowler and Joseph Sutton. As his proportionate share of the money to purchase the rights of the patentees, undoubtedly this house was the site of the beginnings of the Quaker Meetings in North Castle (Chappaqua) which led to the gathering recognized by the Purchase Monthly Meeting in 1745. Mrs. Frances Cook Lee, the Historian of New Castle, has permitted the use of her notes for this article, which shows that Abel Weeks was born at Musketa Cove in 1715 and removed to North Castle circa 1720 with his father James Weeks. His father was a bricklayer and mason and the family settled near Wampus Pond where they farmed. His father conveyed 54 acres to Abel which accounts for the recital in the town minutes for 1737. He married the 23rd of the 12th month 1738 Mary Ireland and had several children. He removed to Chappaqua and acquired the farm above which Mrs. Lee reports today is at the junction of Wolf Hill and Roaring Brook Roads. Local historians believe the present house of Arthur Murtha sits on the foundation (circa 1730) of Abel Weeks' house. Abel was living in 1782 when he conveyed the premises to his son James Weeks. James's son Jesse finally sold the family farm to Lewis Hunt, who erected a larger house on the farm. Abel was not only a prominent Friend but held various town offices in North Castle.
4. Isaac Cock and the location of his house: The author has made a search for the location of Isaac Cock's house and can find no recorded deed or mortgage which gives a clue as to property in North Castle. The position of his name in the 1790 census could place the house near Mile Square (Armonk center) between the houses of Gilbert Thorn and Israel Townsend (between the present Willow Inn to the beginning of Old Mt. Kisco Rd.). The census also shows living adjacent to Isaac, his brother George. These brothers were the sons of Josiah Cock, born Piping Rock, L.I. 1709, died North Castle 1766. The excellent Cock Genealogy shows Isaac Cock was born at Buckram, L.I. 1741; died Mt. Pleasant, Westchester County 1827; married Charity Haight. He left 10 children (as the 1790 census shows). All of Isaac's children left North Castle for other homes in Westchester, western New York and Michigan etc.

Isaac's sister Elizabeth married Joshua Cock (1755-1828), who also lived nearby in North Castle. Their son Robert (1787-1866), a later trustee of the Meeting, married Phebe Carpenter and was the father of William Cock who purchased the meeting house in 1872. This Cock family has completely departed from our town. The present Cocks-Cox family descends from Josiah's second cousin Rees Cock who arrived in North Castle in 1784.

5. Isaiah Quinby (1749-1814) son of Moses and Jane (Pelham) Quinby (Moses was the first North Castle Town Clerk (1736-1742), lived on a land estate upwards of 300 acres around the shores of Wampus Pond. (The house stood approximately where the County Park parking lot is today.) This property descended to him from his grandfather Josiah Quinby, who purchased of the right of John Cholwell one of the original patentees of the West Patent. He was a third generation Quaker. Josiah before removing to North Castle was active in the West Chester and Mamaroneck Meetings. Note: His father Moses was on the committee to locate the Chappaqua meeting house. Isaiah was a prosperous farmer and raised large quantities of sheep. He married 1793 Mary Underhill. They had seven children. He died 1814 leaving young children which his widow brought up. She died in 1824. Their two sons Moses I. (1794-1843) and Isaiah (1795-1853) were both prominent Friends. Moses was a merchant in New York City and held public office in North Castle. Isaiah farmed the ancestral acres at Wampus. All mentioned in this footnote, except Josiah, are buried in the ancient Quinby cemetery on the south shore of Wampus Pond. (Mrs. Louise Zavras of Armonk is a direct descendant of the two Isaiah Quinbys.)
6. Liber 888 of Deeds page 425. Rec. 2-24-1875. Trustees of the Chappaqua Monthly Meeting to Cocks.
7. Liber 888 of Deeds page 425.
8. Liber 718 of Deeds page 4.
9. Liber 888 of Deeds page 425.
10. The author believes that John and Florence Magee lived in this house while they were building their magnificent estate "Wampus" on Wampus Mountain overlooking Wampus Pond. This house and outbuildings are no longer standing but were located on the property of the late Lawrence Labriola.
11. Other deeds recited herein can be found in Liber 996 page 69, Liber 1490 page 63, Liber 1900 page 131, Liber 1954 page 87, Liber 2319 page 217, Liber 2814 page 337.

REFERENCES:

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Quinby, Henry Cole AB.LLB Geneological History of the Quinby (Quimby) Family in England and America. The Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vt., 1915.

Religious Society of Friends - Purchase Quarterly Meeting, Purchase Monthly Meeting, Chappaqua Monthly Meeting - extracts from the minutes.

Westchester County Clerk, Div. of Land Records, deeds abstracted by the author.

Wood, L. Hollingsworth, The Old Quaker Meeting House at North Castle, Westchester County Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin, Vol. 18 No. 4, Oct. 1942, p. 64.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The author wishes to express his appreciation to the former Keeper of the Records of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of

Friends (and the subordinate Meetings related thereto); Miss Mary G. Cook and her sister Miss Katherine Cook, Haviland Record Room, 15th Street Meeting House, New York City; to Mr. A. Day Bradley of Hastings on the Hudson, a member of the Scarsdale Meeting of the Society of Friends and a member of the Records Committee of the New York Yearly Meeting for his interest and his assistance to the author with this article. Mr. Bradley researched and abstracted portions of the Purchase Quarterly Meeting minutes; to Mrs. Frances Cook Lee, Historian of the Town of New Castle for the use of valuable volumes; Mr. and Mrs. W. Howard Cox Jr., the Cox Geneology, and Mrs. Doris Finch Watson, the Quinby Geneology.

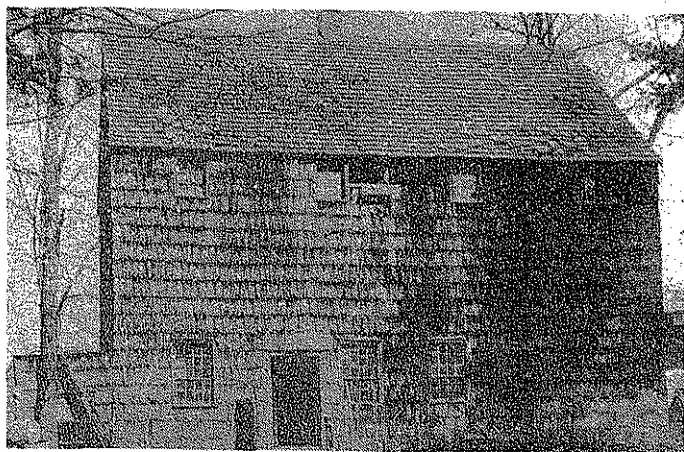
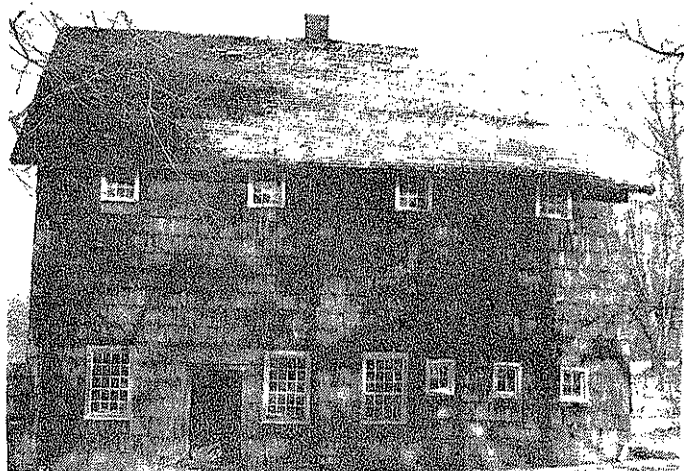


Photo No.1 - Friends Meeting House taken around 1910 by Sellick. Reproduced by L. Welling from a postcard in the possession of R. Lander.

Photo No. 2 - South Face of meeting house. Photo by N. Cerullo, 1977.



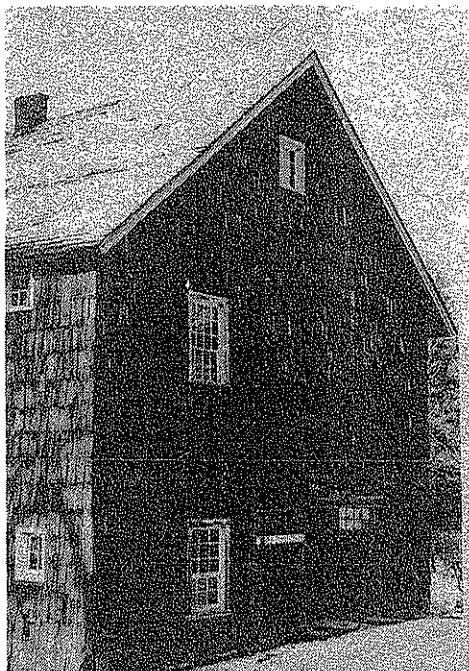


Photo No. 3 - East Face of meeting house. Photo by N. Cerullo, 1977.

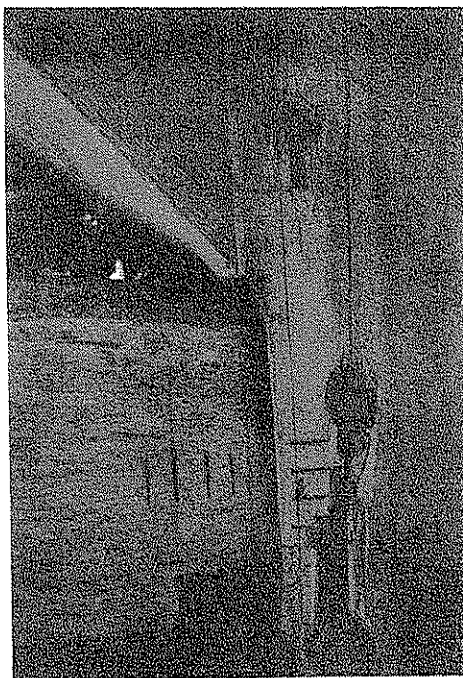


Photo No.4 - Construction marks on inside of meeting house. Photo by N.Cerullo.

STRUCTURE ANALYSIS OF THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

by Dr. Nicholas Cerullo

This report is intended to describe the structural components and interior layout of the Friends Meeting House located on the old Cox Avenue in Armonk. The structure was erected by men and women as a place where they might gather with their neighbors to pay tribute to their Supreme Being. The simplicity and symmetry of its design and its utilitarian construction may be due in part to the arduous conditions that prevailed after the colonist's fight for independence. Its design was, in effect, an extension of deep religious tenets and reflects the accepted construction practices of that day.

The author has attempted to reproduce the architectural facts about this building as faithfully as he observed and measured them. However, some assumptions, based upon the remaining structure, had to be made concerning the original design. These are noted in this report.

Constructed with its front entrances on the south wall, the 1798 meeting house is a two-story, wooden-framed building, measuring 40' wide by 30' high by 30' deep. It is symmetrical in its structural design with both halves of its four outer walls being mirror images. The symmetry of the internal supports design is maintained throughout with only a slight modification occurring in the structure's bracing elements. The building consists of four vertical sections. Each section measures 10 feet in length and is fitted with two end walls both possessing matching supports and bracing structures. It is upon these four sections that the internal features (ceilings and floors) are supported. This organization gives the original interior a two-level ceiling and possibly two floor levels. We must also reflect on the housewrights' skill as they planned and constructed the building. The tradesmen's individual construction marks on the support beams are all that now remain of their personal contributions to our community's heritage. (Photograph No. 4.)

Foundation

The loose stone foundation that is supporting the meeting house has a maximum height of 20 inches above ground line in the northwest corner. There is no evidence that there was ever any material used to bind these stones together or that a cellar ever existed. The stones, however, are flat on most surfaces and there are presently many locations where the weight of this wooden building continues to rest firmly upon them. (Photograph Nos. 1&2.) The thickness of the foundation is approximately 1 foot and the stones are similar to those found in the walls of the encircling fields. There is no evidence on the immediate ground surface to suggest another location for the building. Thus, except for the demolished shed at its southwest corner, the building presently appears to be its original size. There is additional evidence supporting the original size concept: the two walls (east and west) are identical in construction and the carpenter's construction markings

follow a similar system throughout. Furthermore, the fitting of the joints of the end walls are of a similar nature, thus implying a single construction theme and tradesman.

South Face (Front)

Since very early historical drawings of the building are lacking, the exact location of the original windows and doors may be established only by studying the consistency of the symmetrical construction of this structure. However, there is presently extensive plastering on all interior walls, over split wooden laths, that interferes with an accurate determination of these openings. The front entrances, of which only the western one remains, were located 10 feet from their respective ends of the building. (Photograph Nos. 1&2). The stepping stone for the present entrance is clearly visible but there is no evidence to indicate a stone existed for the now covered-over eastern front entrance.

If present, it can be assumed that the missing windows and door on this face would complete its symmetry of design. There are four small window openings, located at the roof line, that are fitted into the internal support frame. These openings provide to this author additional evidence concerning the building's original symmetry and 4-vertical section construction. A small brick chimney presently appears midway at the ridge line of the roof. A slight overhang to the roof's sides has been added, the support for these additions being clearly visible; they do not exist in the 1910 photograph. (Photograph No. 1.)

East Face

The east face openings probably were limited originally to four windows -- two of them, one above the other, on the southern portion of the wall. There is some evidence on the northern half of this face of a single window structure midway in height between the other two. A small window opening, just below the roof peak, presently exists and appears to be framed into the original support structure. (Photograph No.3.)

West Face

The window openings on the west complement those found on the east face. With two windows on the southern and one on the northern end and one just below the peak.

North Face

The north face presently has two window openings that are at the same height as the windows on the northern halves of the two east and west faces. Two additional windows, if present at the same height, would complete the symmetrical pattern of the western half of this rear face.

The present outer covering of all four faces is of cedar shakes (shingles) (31"to34"x6"to7½") nailed to 3"x1" horizontal boards, 11" apart, shows no evidence of any hand tool marks. There are seventeen courses of shingle on all four sides of this building.

The outer shakes have severely eroded and on some outer faces, are paper thin. There are several locations on the south face where the shakes

have been replaced. However, when examined, Photographs 1 & 2 strongly indicate that the shakes present today were also present in 1910. There is a remarkable similarity in the location of the nails holding the shingles in place. Also their width and juxtaposition to other structures, i.e. windows, add additional credibility to this assumption. The shakes appear weather-worn in the 1910 photograph and thus suggest their existence well before the photograph. A question that is raised regarding the original age of this outer wall covering is whether it eroded faster during this century or at the same rate throughout its existence? With this information a possible date for the outer covering could be estimated.

A printing manufacturer's label was found on the inner surface of one of the shakes (south wall) on the second floor. There appears to be only one layer of overlapping shingles (shakes).

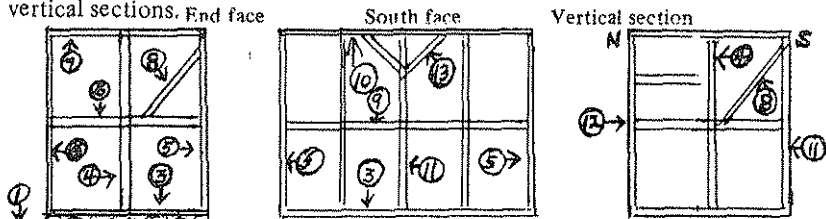
The roof portion of the building, 14' high from plate to ridge line, is symmetrical in slope and length. Originally the rafters were notched and ended at the wall plate on the south and north faces.

The roof is covered with shakes similar to those on the four outer faces, nailed on to purlin braces that extend the full length of the roof.

Floor and Wall Plan

The basic first floor plan of the building reveals a construction that permitted its original users the maximum open area for Meetings with only three center posts obstructing the floor area. There is no evidence to support the early existence of the present second floor. To carry the weight of the wooden beams, "standard" construction patterns were employed in walls, floors, and ceilings. As indicated previously, the building is constructed of four vertical sections with two east and west end walls. An examination of one of these sections reveals that it consists of a rear, a front, and a center vertical post extending the height of the two floors.

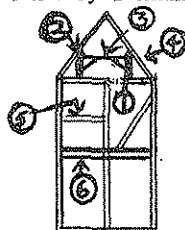
At the mid-height of the end wall there are horizontal girt beams (first end girts), fitted by mortise and tenon joints into the center, rear and front posts. These four vertical sections are notched at the base into the sill, at the first level into a summer beam, and at the top into the front and rear plates. For additional support the front south wall has a horizontal, front girt between each of the wall posts at the same height as the first end girts. A second series of girt beams (second-end girts) connect the tops of the vertical sections. End face



1. Ground level; 2. Stone foundation; 3. Sill; 4. Center post; 5. Corner post; 6. First end girt; 7. Second end girt; 8. Large diag. brace; 9. Front girt; 10. Plate front; 11. Front post; 12. Rear post; 13. Small brace.

Located atop the second end girt of each vertical section is the support framing for the roof's rafters. This framing consists of two vertical purlin posts upon which rest two horizontal purlin beams that extend the entire length of the building. It is upon these horizontal purlin beams that the individual rafters rest at about their midpoint. The two vertical purlin posts, near their upper ends, are connected to each other by a small horizontal girt.

1. Vertical purlin post
2. Horizontal purlin beams
3. Horizontal girt
4. Rafter
5. Rear ceiling brace
6. First end girt



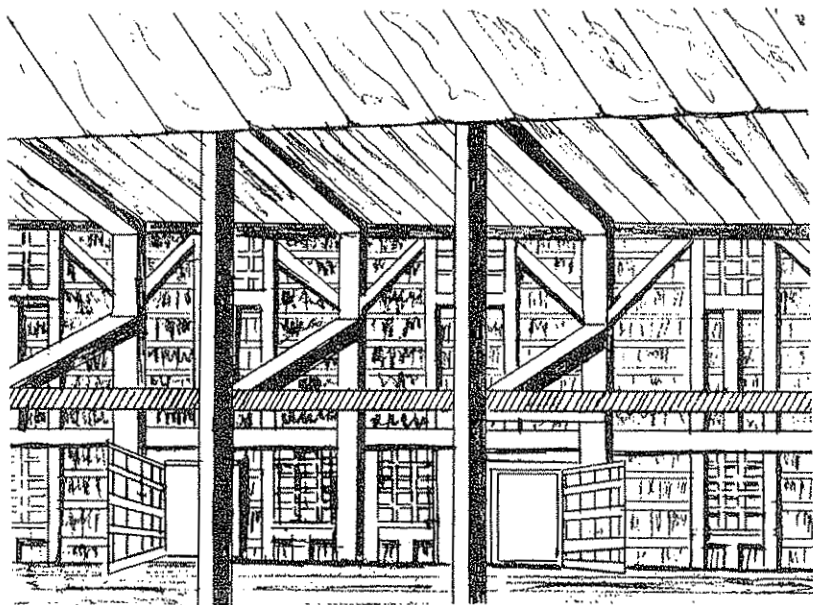
Support bracing is used throughout the building to provide additional strength to the horizontal and vertical framing. Diagonal braces exist at the intersection of most wooden beams. These braces are in a symmetrical pattern with only one exception. The exception to the symmetry occurs in the two (front and rear) halves of a vertical section. The front half has a large diagonal brace extending from a point on the first girt near the center post to the top of the front corner post. One brace for the rear half is located 1/3 down from the top of the center post and extends from there horizontally to the rear post.

The floor joist for the first floor extends from front to rear (north-south) of the building resting upon a summer beam. The ceiling joists, however, are at two different levels and extend from end girt to end girt (east-west). The two ceiling levels are, in the front (southern) half of the building, at the second floor height and for the northern half 1/3 below that in the front. All ceiling joists are set into blind mortise joints and those of the floor into open mortise joints. The rafters, without a common ridge pole, are notched at the bottom fitting into the front and rear plates and at the midway point into the purlin beam. At the peak they are connected with a mortise and tenon joint and secured with a wooden peg.

A weather worn chimney (not original) extends (about midway) through the roof from the first floor and is resting on a platform that is supported at the uppermost horizontal purlin frames support. The chimney appears in the 1910 photograph.

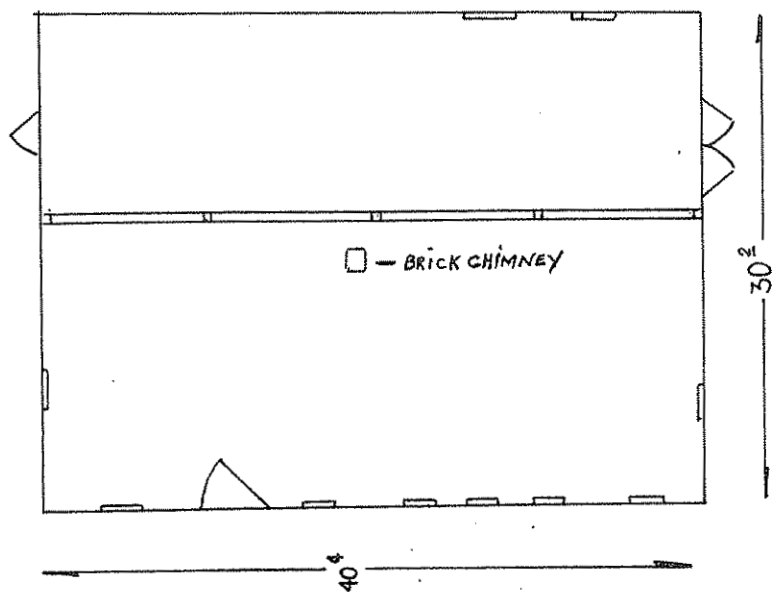
The girts, purlins, posts and braces are connected with well-fitted mortise and tenon joints, utilizing wooden pegs throughout. Most of the smaller diagonal braces utilize a single peg but the heavier vertical and horizontal beams utilize two pegs. Within the existing framework the number of unused mortise joints are few, an indication that the original framework had not been previously utilized in another building. Oak appears to be the predominant wood used in the original internal structure and flooring.

The sills and head frames of windows are secured with mortise and tenon joined into the vertical studs. The jamb forms the sides for each open-



Artist's concept of interior view of south face as it would have appeared at the time of original use. Drawn by Vincent Fiore.

Floor plan of meeting house today. Diagram by N. Cerullo.



ing and no wooden pegs are used in these joints; the vertical supports and diagonal braces hold them in position.

The plank flooring consists of 1½" thick planks (10"-13" wide) at the ground level and runs in an east-west direction. The under surfaces of the planks are flat and show no signs of wear; no subflooring is evident.

There is no evidence of an original inner wall covering or of the use of insulation between the walls.

All of the exposed wooden pegs located below the ceiling joists are neatly trimmed and flush with the surfaces of the posts and girts. However, those pegs above these two ceilings are untrimmed at both ends, extending several inches on each side of the beam.

The pegs are eight-sided and tapered to a blunt point at one end (11" long and 1" wide).

The exposed corners of the posts and girts are each chamfered, ending in a decorative, but subtle, curve. This chamfer does not appear on all of the framing members but where it does exist it is neat and smooth and reflects a considerable effort on the part of the housewright.

The finishing on most of the framing is smooth, in particular where exposed to view. There is little evidence of rough heavy tool marks left on the exposed surfaces, possibly due to the skill of the tradesmen. Those surfaces of the beams that are not exposed lack this finishing effort and show the marks of the felling and broad axes.

The metal hardware utilized appears to be of two varieties of nails and two varieties of strap hinges.

The interior layout of the meeting house provides an unobstructed open area with a high ceiling, to a height of the front plate, and a lower one, by about 1/3, on the northern half. Some justification for this interior design exists, at least in the mind of the author, for the following reasons:

1. The four upper windows on the southern face are at the roof line; this exposure would allow light to enter throughout the year and thus require a higher ceiling.
2. Blind mortise joints for joist are present on the girts and are limited to those on the second floor ceiling girt and run parallel to the south face; the north joints exist only on the horizontal support. This arrangement is found throughout the four sections.
3. The chamfered corners exist only on the exposed side of the center posts and reflect two different heights.
4. The wooden pegs are not trimmed in the joints above these two ceiling heights. However, below these heights they are all trimmed.
5. The large diagonal brace exists only in the southern half permitting a higher ceiling in that section.
6. There exists in the lower portion of the posts of the north (rear) wall a large, crudely-cut square notch. Such notches exist in the posts and suggest a support for a low platform.
7. The location of the window openings on the sides and back would

suggest a lower ceiling in the back and a higher one in the front.

Dimensions and Materials Used (in inches)

(All beams are square - except when noted)

Sill, $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7" - Corner Post, 10 " x $7\frac{1}{2}$ " - Center Post, $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x $7\frac{1}{2}$ " - End girt -- first floor ceiling - Inner girt -- second floor ceiling, 10 " x 7" - Front girt, Rear girt, 10 " x 3" - Front plate, 8 " x 6" - Rear plate, 8 " x 6" - Joists, 7 " x 7 " (23 measured on edge) - Studs, 3 " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ " and 18 " on center - Summer beams, 8 " x 10 " - Purlins, 6 " x 5 " - Bracing, 9 x 7 (major diagonal), 5 x 4 (small), 9 x 6 (for northern half ceilings) Rafters, 6 x 5 and 39 " on centers - Floor boards, $1\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 to 13 - Horizontal purlin collar supports, 16 ' (6 x 5) - Doors, $41\frac{1}{2}$ " x $73\frac{1}{2}$."



REFERENCES:

Kelly, J. Frederick, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, Dover Publications, N.Y. 1924, p. 23; U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Important Trees of Eastern Forests, Western Publishing Company, Atlanta, Ga. 1973, p. 103.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The author wishes to thank Mr. Hubert C. Watson for his critical review of this article.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Dr. Nicholas Cerullo is a teacher of Chemistry and Ecology at Pelham Public Schools, Pelham, N.Y. His interest in historical architecture led to this study. Mr. Vincent Fiore and Mr. Seymour Gage are members of his Historical Sites and Landmarks Preservation Committee for The North Castle Historical Society, and assisted him in his investigation of the building. The historical report by Richard N. Lander has confirmed the original dimensions of the meeting house, 40 x 30 , found by this committee.



1813

1854

1915

1965

by Constance Quarrie

The progression of Coman Hill schools over a period of 150 years -- from one-room schoolhouses to an elementary complex consisting of eight regular classrooms, one portable multi-use room, a music room, an art room, a gym-cafeteria, and a learning center -- parallels the 19th and 20th Century growth of our town as well as our nation. Although the physical appearance, size, and location of the schools has changed, they all share the same historically significant name -- Coman Hill School.

It is believed that the name Coman is a derivative of the local Indian name, Cohamong, which means roughly, "the wide flat place where the water runs," or "the fishing place between the hills," or "the place where wampum is made."

In the early part of the 19th Century our local schoolhouses¹ were located within walking distance of the farms in the area. Simple in design and fundamental in education these one-room schoolhouses provided a basic education for youngsters grades one through eight, and upon graduation, education ended for many of these farm children.

- The First School -

As a result of my discussions with Mr. Richard N. Lander, our Town Historian, he recently discovered additional information about the early one-room Coman Hill School. (See Mr. Lander's Supplement to this article on page 26.) This school was built on a small plot of land donated or sold to the school district around 1813 by Capt. Gilbert Lyon. It was located on Bedford Road (Route 22) approximately 4¼ miles northeast of the present village of Armonk. Although there is no way of knowing what this school looked like we can safely assume that it was a very small wooden structure.

By 1854 the first Coman Hill School was replaced by a larger one-room schoolhouse built not far from the site of the first.

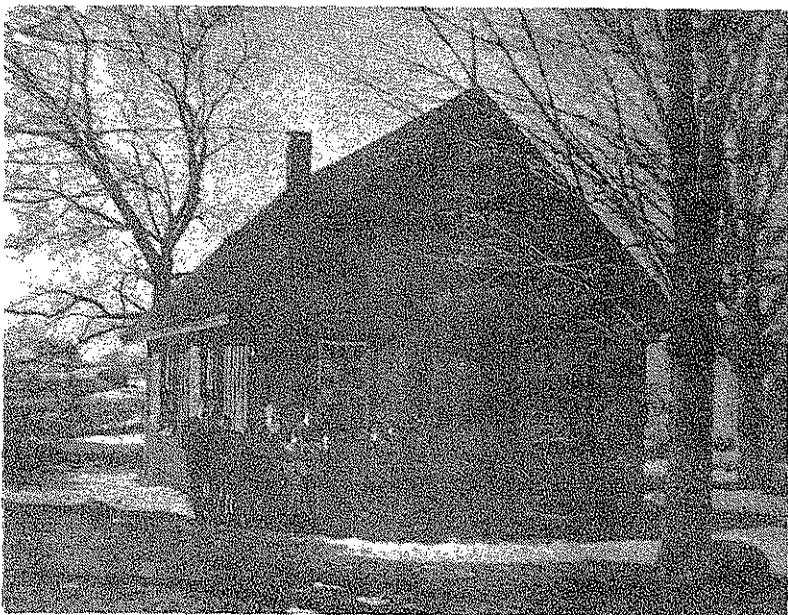
- The Second School -

The second Coman Hill School was built on land sold to the school district for \$50.00 by John and Phebe Bussing² and located a short distance below the first school.



This picture was taken in front of the second Coman Hill School (1854-1915) around 1900. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Herbert Worden, reproduced by L. Welling.

The second Coman Hill School (1854-1915) and students, taken in 1909. Photo courtesy of Clinton A. Ferris and reproduced by L. Welling.



The author was happy indeed to be able to interview Mrs. Herbert Worden (formerly Grace Woolsey) who supplied much interesting information about this school. (Although Mrs. Worden lived very close to the school, her parents wanted her to attend the one-room Middle Patent School because it had more students.)

The second school was a one-room wooden structure with a pot-bellied stove that was tended by the students. The school day was from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. with one hour for lunch. Lunches were usually brought from home. Water for drinking and cleaning was fetched by the children from a nearby house. On Fridays, school would be dismissed at 3:00 p.m.

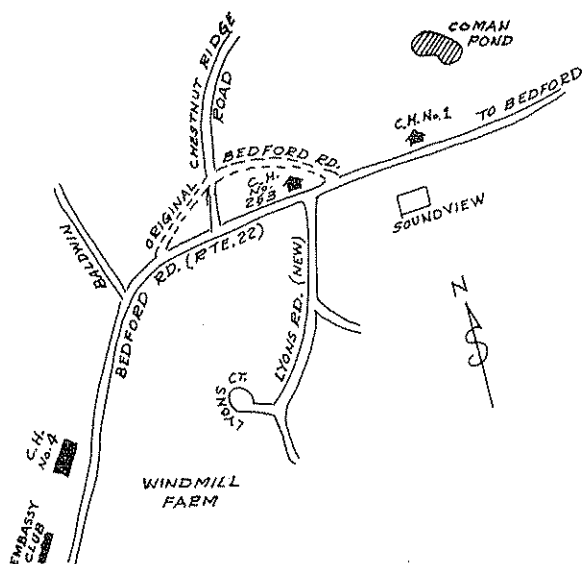
The children were required to furnish their own supplies. Small slates, instead of paper, were used for writing and mathematics. One teacher was responsible for all subjects, grades one through eight, including exercises and games. (Some of the games are still favorites: Tag, Hide-and-Seek, and Blind Man's Bluff.) Bible reading and a prayer were part of the daily routine.

Children were disciplined differently then. The teacher was permitted to hit the students, and often required them to write repetitively what they should or should not have done. They were also kept after school.

Girls wore dresses with high top shoes. In colder weather, the children wore buttoned knee-high leggings.

Christmas and the last day of the school year saw the children enjoying their largest parties. Mothers would come to school with homemade cakes and cookies and drinks such as lemonade and hot cocoa. There was always a tree and some gift exchanging at Christmas.

This second Coman Hill School served youngsters in the area for 61 years, and in 1915 the era of the second Coman Hill School came to a close.



- The Third School -

The third Coman Hill School was built in 1915 close to the site of the second school. Additional land was sold to the school district for \$1.00 by Major General Samuel McRoberts. The building is a stone structure built with surplus materials from the general's mansion and farmbuildings (now known as Soundview), which still stand across from the old schoolhouse. (The materials were donated to the school district by General McRoberts.) The school closed in the 1940's³ and was sold on October 18, 1969 to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Adams who have made it their home ever since.

Marie Worden (daughter of Mrs. Herbert Worden) attended the third Coman Hill School through all eight grades. This school, too, had one teacher for all eight grades. Subjects included reading, arithmetic, penmanship, history, English, geography and music, with school textbooks. Every Friday afternoon the teacher would involve the children in many creative and interesting art projects. Although there was no principal, the superintendent of several small school districts in Westchester County did visit once a month. There was also a gym instructor who taught a variety of exercises twice



The third Coman Hill School (1915-1940's) and students, taken in 1921. L-R: Miss Cecelia McDonough, William Cregier, Tom Kirby, not known, Frank Horton, Fred Kirby, Clinton Ferris, Elliot Cregier, Edith Horton, Helen Ferris, Marie Worden, Elwin Horton, Marion McCabe, Marguerite Cregier, not known, Frances Myder, Harry Wilson, Nathan Ferris, Richard Schnoor, Alfred Sniffen. Identification by Clinton Ferris. Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Adams, from an original in the possession of Marie Worden.

weekly. Desks, which were not screwed to the floor, would be moved to one side for gym activities. These desks were equipped with a drawer and an inkwell. Scissors and rulers were commonly used school tools.

The school day opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a songfest which lasted for at least ten minutes. Classes were in session from 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon, then from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Lunch was from 12:00 to 1:00 o'clock, usually eaten out-of-doors when the weather was pleasant. During the lunch period, games such as Dodge Ball, Volley Ball, Baseball, Prisoner's Base, Anthony Over the Wall, and Fox in the Geese were favorites.

There was no sink in the classroom, therefore a pail and dipper were used for drinking water. A washbasin was also supplied for washing hands. Miss Worden remembers that a few children would cross the road to a neighbor's home to fetch the water for the day. An older boy took complete custodial charge of the school. His duties consisted of cleaning the school, caring for the furnace, and ringing the school bell at the designated times. He received a small fee for his services.

There were morning and afternoon recesses for all children. Miss Worden recalls that youngsters who so much as whispered during lessons had to stay in from recess and write what they did one hundred times. Sometimes they would have to stay after school for punishment. At other times a slap on the hand or sitting on the dunce stool would suffice.

Highlights of the school year included fall and spring nature walks which would last either half a day or a full day. On the full day nature walks a picnic lunch was the social climax.

The Christmas program, another highlight of the year, found the youngsters preparing short plays, reciting poetry, singing songs, reaching into a grab bag, and of course, enjoying the Christmas goodies.

Usually, the end of the school year found the teacher and children busily engaged in preparing a skit or play for the parents. This would be presented out-of-doors. Cookies and lemonade were brought in by mothers. These occasions were always happy ones as these events were the culmination of studies and a delightful anticipation of the beginning of another summer. The eighth graders usually celebrated their graduation with a trip to the Bronx Zoo.

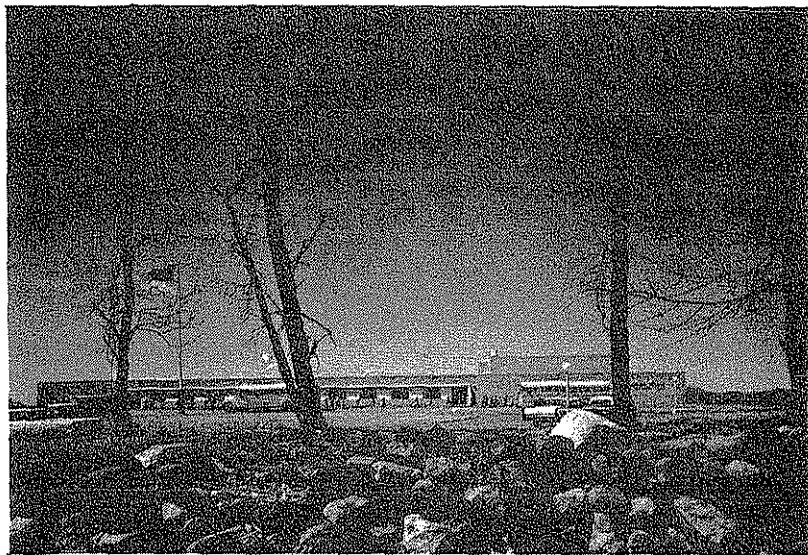
Miss Worden has fond memories of Coman Hill School. She likens her experience and learnings there as being part of one happy family. She was pleased to see the transformation from a charming one-room schoolhouse to a lovely home for Mr. and Mrs. Adams.

- The Fourth School -

As the town grew, so did the need for larger schools, and on June 17, 1963 the school district⁴ voted a bond referendum which included a new Coman Hill School. Contracts for the construction of this school were awarded on January 13, 1964. It is situated 1.1 miles south of the second and third schools.

The land on which the school was built has an interesting history. In 1898 this property was part of Norman W. Lander's 160 acre farm. The farm was sold to John H. Watkins who built the stone mansion which some years later became known as the Embassy Club.⁵ Part of the 160 acres was later sold to Dr. Charles V. Paterno.⁶ Dr. Paterno's son sold some of the acreage to Edward J. Tobin and Mac Welson who in turn sold a parcel to the school district for the site of the present Coman Hill School.

The fourth Coman Hill School opened its doors on January 4, 1965 to Kindergarten, first and second graders. Some children came from the old Middle Patent School; others came from temporary quarters in the North Castle American Legion Hall, and the remainder came from the Breezemont Day Camp. In the fall of 1965 third, fourth, and fifth grades were added bringing the enrollment to approximately 346 students. The principal was Mr. Thomas Herzog.



Picture of the fourth Coman Hill School taken in 1965 by Joseph W. Molitor, Photographer. The school grounds consist of 15.85 acres.

In 1967, Mrs. Clara Románo became principal of Coman Hill School. At present, the enrollment of students is 223, Kindergarten through Fourth grade. The staff includes eight classroom teachers and ten teachers for special services, a secretary and two custodians. Parent volunteers also help at the school. Subjects include social studies, language arts, math, science, music, art, health, and physical education. There is a special emphasis on interrelating these subject areas.

Today's youngsters have special teachers for art, music, and physical education. Also available are speech, reading, and learning disability special

teachers. The newest program added is for the gifted and talented children. Weekly library for books, movies, stories, museum exhibits, and parent volunteer seasonal exhibits, are other areas of special interest. The children also enjoy occasional trips to resources outside the school community. The reverse is also true since resource people are also brought into the school.

Although today's school does not require the students to fetch water, move desks for gym, or sit on a dunce stool, it is interesting to note how it reflects the educational needs of today's children just as the first, second, and third Coman Hill schools provided for the needs of yesterday's youngsters. It is truly gratifying that the name Coman Hill has been perpetuated through the years for it serves to remind us of the valuable role our early schoolhouses played in the development of education in our town.

FOOTNOTES:

1. In 1812 the New York State Legislature enacted a law establishing common (public) schools. The town proceeded to establish seven school districts and build seven schools.
2. Mr. and Mrs. Bussing are buried in a small cemetery not far from the second and third schools. They were the great-great grandparents of Marie Worden (Mrs. Worden's daughter).
3. The Coman Hill district merged with the Armonk district when the third school closed, and the youngsters from Coman Hill were sent to the large Whippoorwill School which was built in 1924. When that became crowded youngsters were put into temporary quarters.
4. The Byram Hills School District was created by vote of area residents on June 11, 1961 thus eliminating the need for a school district for each school in the area. It includes Armonk and Banksville-Middle Patent as well as the small section of Pleasantville known as Bear Ridge.
5. A fire destroyed the Embassy Club in 1952. The ruins are on school district property not far from the present Coman Hill School.
6. Windmill Farm was part of the Dr. Charles V. Paterno Estate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The author would like to thank Mrs. Herbert Worden, Marie Worden, and Richard N. Lander for their time and graciousness in supplying much of the information for this article.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Mrs. Quarrie and her husband, parents of three children in the Byram Hills School District, live in Armonk. Mrs. Quarrie is a second grade teacher in the Coman Hill School where she has taught for eight years.

SUPPLEMENT

In 1812 the State Legislature passed the legislation which provided for the creation of common (public) school districts throughout the state. On April 22, 1813 the electors of the Town of North Castle held a special town meeting to comply with provisions of the law, "*to elect Commissioners of Common Schools and Inspectors of Common Schools and to raise taxes for*

support of schools."

It must be presumed that the first commissioners, James Guion, Gilbert Purdy and James Hopkins laid out and created the first school districts and negotiated in the several neighborhoods for schoolhouse sites. Only one of these original deeds is in existence: Redbrook School, 2 miles below Coman Hill. (*"John Tripp to James Hopkins, Samuel S. Sands and Guy B. Hobby, commissioners of schools for the time being of the Town of North Castle, County of Westchester and State of New York,"* dated October 30, 1816 and unrecorded.) All of these schoolhouse lots were miniscule in size, large enough only for the house itself. Redbrook for instance, was only 14'x22' and the deed specifically recites, *"for the purpose of sitting a school house for the use of common schools in said district and when needed no longer for the use of a school house by said district then the above granted and described premises to return to the party of the first part or his heirs or assigns."* It was in the 1830 to 1860 era that the original schools disappeared and newer buildings on larger lots took their places.

Until Mrs. Quarrie started her article it was believed that there was only one 19th Century Coman Hill School. Subsequent research has uncovered the fact that there were actually **two** early schools.

The first school (1813) in Coman Hill must have been located several hundred feet easterly from the site of where the second and third schools would be built. The proof of its existence can be found only in the following deed which happens to mention it: Capt. Gilbert Lyon and Mary Lyon his wife of North Castle to Benoni Platt of North Castle, dated April 1, 1815 and recorded much later on September 6, 1867 in Liber 650 of Deeds on page 297 ...*"thence with the fence by the road the several courses to the school house thence North and West and South by the sills of the school house to the fence..."* (Underscoring mine.) Like Redbrook this lot was only large enough for the schoolhouse, as borne out by the wording of the deed. The deed goes on to describe a small farm of 34 acres stretching to Coman Pond. This is all we know of the first school. The writer of this Supplement believes this small schoolhouse lot was given to the commissioners of schools by Capt. Lyon only two or three years previous to the conveyance to Benoni Platt. Proof that Gilbert Lyon is undoubtedly the first school district benefactor may be found in the will of his father Captain Roger Lyon the only "lord" of all that area of North Castle, in whose will admitted to probate on June 6, 1797 (West. Co. Surrogate Liber B page 237) is the following devise, *"I give to my son Gilbert Lyon over and above what I have already given him all that land lying and joining Comung [Coman] Pond which land is now occupied and possessed by my son Gilbert."*

- The Second School -

On January 9, 1854 the trustees of School District No. 4 and 15 of the towns of North Castle and Bedford purchased a lot *"whereon it is intended to build a [school] house"* containing 36 rods for the sum of \$50.00 from John Bussing and Phebe his wife. This deed recorded March 20, 1854 in Liber 264 of Deeds on page 298. This was the second (1854-1915) school.

In reading this article the reader must remember that this schoolhouse and lot were on the south side of the Bedford-White Plains road (Route 22), and only after relocation of the highway about 1910-12 when the road was completely relocated and rebuilt at that point did the schoolhouse and lot stand on the present north side of the road. A field trip to the area will show the old road behind the stone school on the north side of the schoolhouse property.

- The Third School -

About the same time as the building of the third (stone) school, the lot was enlarged to accommodate the larger school: Deed dated November 25, 1914 and recorded December 26, 1914 in Liber 2071 of Deeds, page 419, Samuel McRoberts and Harriet his wife to School District No. 3 of the towns of North Castle and Bedford. This deed conveyed the balance of old John Bussing's farm now on the north side of relocated Route 22 — adjoining the 1854 lot to the school district.

(Note the numbers of the North Castle districts changed through the years, and after were combined with other numbered districts in the adjoining towns. District No. 15 of Bedford was in the Chestnut Ridge area, north of the town line.

R.N.L.



— OUR THANKS —

to:

Past President Lindsay "Pete" Welling, who has devoted countless hours taking, reproducing, and developing pictures for our Society. An airline pilot by profession, Pete has become quite an expert in photography. His endeavors have produced an extraordinary collection which he shares with the Society.

This publication's Editorial Board is particularly grateful to Pete for his assistance in supplying pictures needed for various articles, and reproducing, to the best degree possible, old, scratched, and faded photographs. We appreciate it!

to:

Sadie Marie Mains, the Society's Mailing Chairman, who has done a fantastic job with the organization and distribution of our mailings. Yearly townwide membership mailings and followups, member meeting notices, invitations, announcements, our publication, etc. are all coordinated and mailed by Sadie Marie. Her job is one of the most important functions of our Society and her efforts are most gratefully acknowledged here.

THE TRAVELING MOTTO PAINTER

During the late 1800's North Castle was visited by George Meyers, the man who painted on rocks. Not much is known about Mr. Meyers except that he was evidently a self-styled evangelist who spread the word of God by painting quotations from the Bible on prominent rocks throughout the area. Verification of at least one of his visits here can be found in the Theodore Brundage diary of 1886: "*Sunday December 19. Clear. All of us went to church at night, the man that paints on rocks was there.*"

Although most of the evidence of his passing this way has been worn away by time, it is possible that if you looked carefully in the likely areas of where he would have painted you could still find remnants of his labors.

B. Massi

The following article was taken from the Mt. Kisco Weekly, Feb. 1888:

"The Man Who Paints on Rocks"

"George Meyers, the devoted German who has adorned so many rocks along the roads in this section of the country with scriptural injunctions, promises, etc., visited Port Chester recently, and the journal of that place published last week an interesting article regarding him and his work of which we make an extract.

Meyers had just made a trip to the west and to the north which occupied about a year. He went as far west as Chicago going and returning in about seven months and painting the startling passages every day, yet in all that time he slept in a bed but twice. Though giving his entire life to his Master certainly doing no harm and doing much good he could find only two families who cared enough for the precepts they profess to follow to give him shelter though sometimes the storms were so harsh and the weather so cold that men would take special care to see that their beasts were comfortably housed.

Mr. Meyers cannot be called a tramp, though he tramps much further every day than any of the fraternity. He does not beg. He always pays for what he receives or at least offers payment though sometimes his money dwindles to 5¢. During the time he has been engaged in this work down to the beginning of the present year he had painted 25,075 passages of Scripture in places where he hoped they would be seen by the thoughtless or careless ones, and that they would thereby be led to prepare for the life to come.

In 1887 he painted 11,225 passages, traveled 4,000 miles and used more than 100 lbs. of paint. It seems strange that so few Christian families open their homes to him. His exhibition of faith would often be of great help to them, and his uncomplaining life a lesson from which much could be learned. He believes that the reward of his labors is to be a great benefaction that will result in the salvation of many thousand souls."



WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AT THE BATTLE OF WHITE PLAINS, a 32 page booklet by Thomas R. Parker, published by the North Castle Bicentennial Committee, is now available, at no cost, to members of The North Castle Historical Society and donors to North Castle's Bicentennial Committee. This publication was a project of the Bicentennial Committee, R. Eugene Curry and Charlotte Devers, Co-Chairmen. Mr. Parker was Chairman of the Historical Landmarks subcommittee which was responsible for attaining inclusion of the Miller House, in North White Plains, in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

In order to fulfill the requirements of the application, Mr. Parker's main task was to search out and interpret all the facts regarding the circumstances of why the Miller House was significant to American History. Commissioner Joseph Caverly and Deputy Commissioner Paul Lohner of the Westchester County Parks Dept., and historians of the White Plains Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, led by Mrs. Denslow Dade, Regent, who had accumulated scores of documents, memorabilia, and other artifacts, made major contributions towards the development of Mr. Parker's successful application.

Copies are available at Smith's Tavern. Spring visiting hours to be announced.

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FRONT COVER PICTURE

This postcard photo, taken by Sellick about 1910 from Bedford Road, looks north along Wampus Brook into what is today Wampus Brook Park. Maple Avenue is to the far left of the photo, outside the fence. The eye can follow it as it turns toward Main Street where the firehouse is today. Note the bogs where the pond is today. To the right is an old orchard about where the gazebo is presently. Note also the total absence of the pine grove planted by New York City when they acquired the property a short time after this photo was taken. Photo reproduced by L. Welling, from a postcard in the possession of R. Lander.