

NORTH CASTLE HISTORY



Welling Collection

REUBEN WRIGHT'S MILLS MONUMENT

Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

REUBEN WRIGHT'S MILLS MONUMENT

THE NORTH CASTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 42 -- 2015

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Smith's Tavern
Society Headquarters
Listed in The New York State
and National Register of Historic Places

The North Castle Historical Society

440 BEDFORD ROAD ARMONK, NEW YORK 10504

March 2016

Dear Friends,

Thank you! Your continuing support for The Society has been wonderful this year. Memberships are increasing. Donations of time, expertise, money and items for the collections are increasing. Your support is vital and helps ensure that The North Castle Historical Society will remain active and dynamic in our community.

The old newspapers preservation project with the North Castle Public Library continues. There were two Town wide historic sites bus tours (spring and fall) held with the Landmarks Preservation Committee and the Town of North Castle. We were able to host a remarkable wine tasting dinner, *An Evening of Camaraderie*, with the special support of Douglas Elliman Real Estate, Armonk Wines, Gavi Restaurant, Happiness Is Catering and Red Oak Transportation.

Converting our oral history tapes to newer technology format continues – with special appreciation to Eric Schultz. The Society remains supportive of efforts to preserve the Elijah Miller House/Washington's Headquarters.

Knowledgeable and friendly Docents welcome guests for guided tours on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons. Colonial Crafts Days remain highly successful and stimulating for area 4th grade students. These hands-on days present more than a dozen interpreters who educate and enthrall the children. Some of you have told us you remember when you came to Smith's Tavern for your Colonial Crafts Days.

The North Castle Historical Society is pleased to be serving as Co-Town Historian for the Town of North Castle. I am honored to serve as President along with Sharon Tomback, our Co-Town Historian, and all our capable Trustees who are always willing to help.

If you would like to volunteer, please do contact me.

Sincerely,

Anna Maria Marrone, President

REUBEN WRIGHT'S MILLS

by Sharon Tomback

According to original manuscripts of General George Washington edited by John C. Fitzpatrick¹, on July 20, 1778, General Washington wrote Major General Horatio Gates that he was headed to Reuben Wright's Mills (later called Kensico in the 1840s) and that he was then about six miles from where the courthouse used to be at White Plains². The courthouse was deliberately burned the night of November 5, 1776, along with White Plains village houses. As of Washington's July 20, 1778 visit, it had not been rebuilt.

Reuben Right's (sic) ... My Quarters for the Present

Sir: I have been favoured with your two Letters of today, (one inclosing a return) for which I thank you. I am now about Six miles from where the Court House at the plains was and shall set out immediately for Reuben Rights (sic), which will be my Quarters for the present.

General Washington arrived at Reuben Wright's Mills on July 20th for Mr. Wright gave him a bill for supplies furnished headed "July ye 20th, 1778, his Excellency family Expense" continuing through July 25.³ The list includes butter, chickens, tea, milk, bread, salt, vinegar, and sugar. Washington's bill for items supplied at the mills was paid on July 25th.

Reuben Wright was a Quaker miller⁴. By damming Bear Gutter Creek he created a mill pond and located his mills operations in an area opposite the

¹ The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799, Volume 12, June 1, 1778 – September 30, 1778, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, United States Government Printing Office, page 193.

² The site of the first courthouse in White Plains is known today as Armory Plaza, 35 South Broadway. It is on this site where the Declaration of Independence was first read in New York on July 11, 1776. Some historians report that at Washington's order on October 31, 1776, some buildings housing Continental stores were burned. The second burning on November 5, 1776, was against general orders and included the courthouse and village houses.

³ See copy of the bill herein.

⁴ Reuben Wright first married Sarah Smith, daughter of the Reverend Doctor John Smith. Sarah died September 1, 1768 and lies buried in the White Plains Presbyterian Church graveyard. He married Phebe Quinby 1769/1770.

monument now located on NYS Route 22. Records indicate that on July 21-25, 1778, a board meeting of general officers was held there.



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COPY OF THE BILL FROM REUBEN WRIGHT TO "HIS EXCELLENCY"

It has been reported that in 1780 the captured British spy, Major John Andre, was taken to Reuben Wright's mills before being taken farther north to Thomas Wright's (later called Sands) Mills.

The area of Reuben Wright's Mills was not generally called Kensico until the late 1840s when the first post office was established. Until that time the

area had been named after the successive mill owners, including Wright's Mills, Fisher's Mills and Robbins' Mills. In the 1880s the first Kensico Dam and lake were built. With the construction of the second Kensico Dam between 1908 and 1917, the old village of Kensico was demolished and the area inundated.



Pete Welling Collection, The North Castle Historical Society

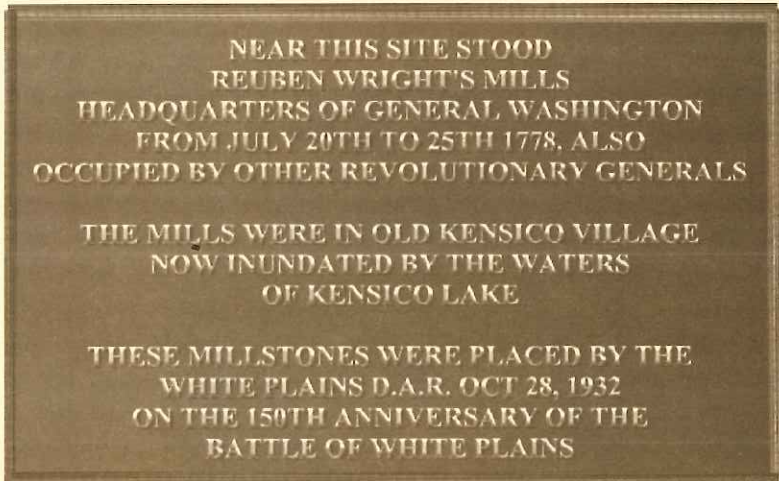
MONUMENT FOR REUBEN WRIGHT'S MILLS

New York State mortgage files indicate Reuben Wright's ownership of land on the Bronx River at least as early as 1763. He and his family moved from North Castle in 1784⁵.

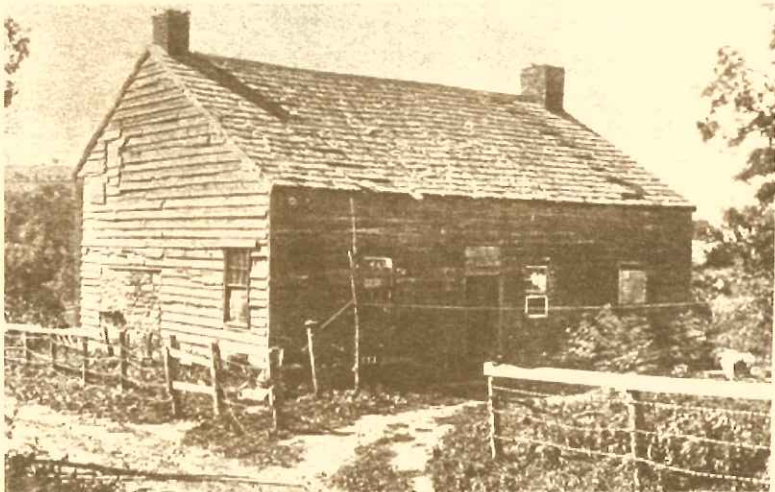
The White Plains Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, established the legitimacy of Wright's Mills as one of Washington's Revolutionary War headquarters. In 1932 the Chapter erected a monument which stands just south of the Rye Lake Bridge on NYS Route 22 near North White Plains. The millstones were taken from

⁵ Reuben Wright appears on the 1790 Federal Census for Township of Stephen, later renamed Somers, New York. Four white males over 16 years of age, 3 white males under 16 years of age, 6 females and one other free person were enumerated in the Census.

the Deutermann Mill known earlier as the Horton Grist Mill on present day Lake Street in White Plains where General George Washington stored his supplies during the Revolutionary War.⁶



PLAQUE ON MONUMENT FOR REUBEN WRIGHT'S MILLS



Collections of The North Castle Historical Society

ROBBINS-WRIGHT HOUSE

⁶ Historical Site Tour of North Castle, June 5, 1976; booklet by Richard N. Lander, Doris Finch Watson, Irene Sandford, Thomas R. Parker.

A MYSTERY MONUMENT CAMP WHITE PLAINS – JULY 21, 1778

The following information is excerpted from Historic White Plains by John Rosch¹. The source details are vague. Mr. Rosch wrote that he had been unable to trace the location of the monument and that its identity would probably remain forever unknown.

Another and Elegant Handwriting

On March 12, 1860 H. M. Taft of Lenox Massachusetts, wrote the editors of an unspecified history magazine relative to a ‘mystery monument’ of White Plains. He wrote that some years previous to 1860 he had the occasion in a professional capacity to examine an orderly-book “if that is the proper term of a non-commissioned officer of the Revolution. Upon one of its pages, in another and elegant handwriting, was the record I then transcribed and now inclose. Publish in your magazine if you think it deserves such a place.”²

A Great Stone of Curious Carvings

The transcription from the orderly book describes the dedication of a carved stone monument of mysterious origins.

Camp White Plains, July 21, 1778

This day was erected a fine monument of a great stone of curious carvings, by the field and other officers and gentlemen of the Regiment commanded by Colonel Wood³, after which, in the evening, these gentlemen were attended with a band of music and thirteen toasts⁴ were drunk in the following manner, and carried on in the greatest decency and good order.

¹ Historic White Plains by John Rosch, printed by Balletto-Sweetman, Inc. (White Plains, New York: 1939), pages 182-183.

² The information was published in The Historical Magazine and Notes and Queries concerning the Antiquities, History and Biography of America, (1860: New York, published by Charles B. Richardson & Co.), Vol. IV, page 150.

³ Colonel Ezra Wood commanded a Regiment of Massachusetts Militia.

⁴ In honor of the thirteen states.

Thirteen Toasts Were Drunk

1st. The Colonel – Hoping that we shall be made sensible that this is the year we shall gain a final victory over our enemies, and that independence shall be established upon good and lasting basis.

2nd. Lieut. Colonel – Success to the American Army – hoping that the present campaign may terminate the American warfare.

3rd. Major General Washington and all his brave officers and men – hoping that they will have the blessings of Heaven and the conquest of their enemies.

4th. Captain Noble – Success to General Gates and officers under his command – hoping they will prove themselves courageous and valiant.

5th. Captain Batchelo – Success to General Morris and his field officers and others under his command.

6th. Captain Carpenter – His Most Christian Majesty.

7th. Captain Green – Success to General Green and all his endeavors to stop British tyranny.

8th. Captain Stearns – The American Allies.

9th. Captain Drury – Everlasting union of the thirteen United States.

10th. The inroads of our inveterate enemies.

11th. Adjutant – Success to His Most Christian Majesty's fleet upon the water.

12th. Our Master. As the letters are engraved upon this stone, so let the letters of Liberty be engraved upon the hearts of all true Americans to all generations.

13th. Surgeon – May the engraving of this stone remain in view till all the enemies of America are buried in oblivion.

Monument Erected by Militia from Massachusetts

On July 22, orders were issued to brigade the troops. Woodford, Muhlenberg, Scott, Smallwood and the 2nd Maryland brigades were to compose the right wing of the first line. North Carolina, Nixon, Paterson,

Late Larned and Poor brigades were to compose the left wing of the same line. Wayne, 2nd Pennsylvania, Clinton, Parson and Huntington brigades were to form the second line.

The regiment of Massachusetts Militia commanded by Colonel Ezra Wood who reportedly erected the monument, played music and offered thirteen toasts as described above, was made part of the Nixon brigade along with the troops commanded by Col. John Greaton, Rufus Putnam, and Thomas Nixon.

Same Area – Different Names

It is interesting to note that documents written on the same day, July 21, 1778, are all headed “Head Quarters” but differ in designation of the location: one is headed Wright’s Mill and another is headed White Plains and another is headed Camp near White Plains.

General Orders issued July 21, 22, 23, and 24, 1778 were all issued from “Head Quarters, Wright’s Mill” and General Orders for July 21 indicated it was a Tuesday. Washington’s letter to Governor George Clinton is headed “Head Quarters, White Plains, July 21, 1778.”

A July 21, 1778 letter to Colonel William Malcom from George Washington reads “Head Quarters near White Plains, July 21, 1778.” A July 22, 1778 letter from George Washington to Henry Laurens is headed “Camp near White plains July 22d 1778.”

A July 25, 1778 letter from George Washington to Lord Stirling is headed “Head Quarters, Wrights Mills, July 25, 1778.”

On July 27, 1778 George Washington wrote to the Marquis de Lafayette from “Head Quarters, White Plains.” Aide-de-Camp Alexander Hamilton headed this letter “Head Quarters” then “Valley” and crossed it out, next wrote “Wright’s Mill” and crossed that out, and finally, wrote “White Plains.”⁵

The location of the monument remains a mystery.

⁵ The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799, Volume 12, June 1, 1778 – September 30, 1778, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, United States Government Printing Office, Page 236.

OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK, NEW YORK

by Christine Eggleton



1851 Sidney and Neff map

1851 MAP SHOWING OLD ROAD TO MOUNT KISCO

The circled area is present day Old Mount Kisco Road. Perpendicular to it at the center of the circle is present day School Street. Joining it at the top of the circle from the left are Route 128, then High Street and then Cox Avenue joining School Street at the “M. M. House” (Methodist Meeting House). The top of the circle is the Mill location and the sharp turn in the road of NYS Route 128, the present day road to Mount Kisco.

One of the largest early settlements of North Castle grew around the Wampus River. This settlement was known as Mile Square and was at the cross roads of the Road to Mount Kisco (present day Route 128 and Old Mount Kisco Road) and Cox Avenue/High Street. The historic pre-Revolutionary War Mill first known as Hallocks Mill then Lattings Mill then Thomas Wright’s Mills¹, and then finally Sands Mills influenced the growth of the area. It was Wright’s Barn that held British spy Major John Andre overnight in 1780 during the Revolution. In it’s heyday

¹ Refer to North Castle History, Volume 32, 2005 for further information.

in the 1850s, the mill stood along with the surrounding “town” of stores, hotels, entertainment venues, commercial buildings and homes².

From the late 1890s through the late 1920s New York State and New York City began to focus a lot of attention on this area of town. During this time drinking water became a big concern for a growing New York City and cars were becoming mainstream. Some roads that were okay for horses and carriages were hazardous for the growing numbers of drivers. Ultimately New York City bought and condemned the properties surrounding Sands Mill that were polluting the Wampus River. At the same time NY State began standardizing State roads, ensuring they were of a standard width, were named using a standard nomenclature and were as safe as possible, eliminating as many curves as possible and increasing the distance between structures and traffic. In those efforts, most of the original structures along the Sands Mill section of the Wampus River were torn down and the Armonk-Mount Kisco State Road (State Route 128) was “straightened” as the old timers like to say. This left a curious little road known as Old Mount Kisco Road that continues to intrigue people as they pass through that road today. This article will begin to unravel the mysteries of Old Mount Kisco Road and though it is far from complete, research continues and a future article will bring more details together.

What was it about this area that drew North Castle’s earliest settlers? The Wampus River was ideal for a mill (there were quite a few mills in North Castle in the early days) and south of Sands Mills the Wampus river runs through a fairly flat valley area. This was very suitable for farming and there were many sources of water between the river and numerous springs. Early residents logically built into the steep hillside of this valley with most of the properties terraced from front to back or back to front, to be close to the source of business and away from the wet river area. Very old timers referred to this very steep hill along Old Mount Kisco Road as Chemung Mountain.

The following highlights the history we know at this time about the old structures along the Old Mount Kisco Road beginning at the fork in the road at Route 128.

² Refer to North Castle History, Volume 7, 1980 for further information.

We are fortunate to be able to walk through history down Old Mount Kisco Road and see so many buildings so close to their original setting. Please come by some time and see for yourself!



Google maps screen shot

THE FORK IN OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD TRAVELING NORTH

The left fork is the Old Mount Kisco Road (sometimes referred to as OMK Rd in this article) and to the right is the new Mount Kisco Road formally known as State Highway 128, which was created around 1920. Let's take the left fork and travel back in time and set the stage in your mind... We're going back to 1850... Imagine a time when people got around on horses, there was no electricity and homes were heated with fireplaces and wood stoves. The air always had an aroma of fireplaces and animals. The sounds were different too – imagine no airports or highways and the clip-clop of horses bringing people and goods from place to place. Imagine a lot fewer trees as many were cut down for fuel and to open farmland. Likely the homes on Old Mount Kisco dating to the 1850s were built using local timber cut at the saw mill up the road. The narrow road was unpaved until the 1920s. Just beyond the fork on the left is Eden Hunt Place, named for the house that once stood there.



Courtesy of Joyce Hergenhan, daughter of Goldie Wago and John Hergenhan

WAGO FARM STAND ON OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD AS IT APPEARED AROUND 1920³

The Eden Hunt house appears in the background on the right. Among local shoppers were the throngs of Sunday drivers taking out their new-fangled cars for a drive on the new Bronx River Parkway and up to North Castle to spend the day, shop at farms stands such as this one and picnic at the Armonk Airport, watching the airplanes take off and land.



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 75 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK SITE OF THE FORMER FOUR PINES TEA HOUSE, aka COTTAGE

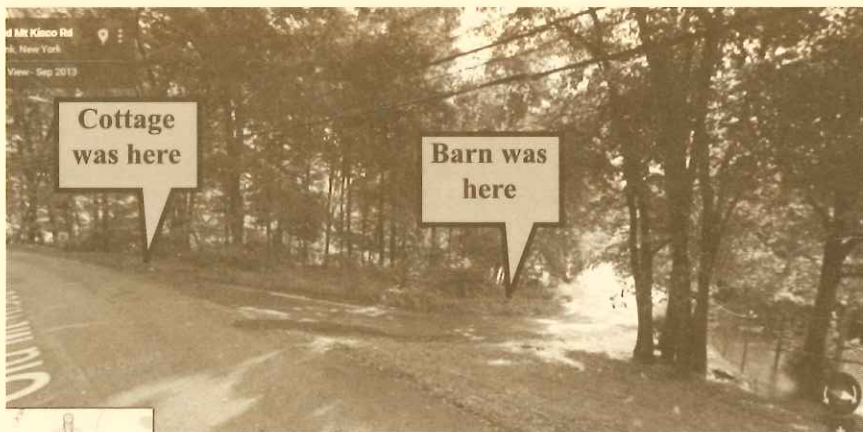
³ Screenshot taken from North Castle Councilman Barbara DiGiacinto campaign video.

Three of the original four pines remain on the front of the property. Tradition notes that a portion of this house was moved from Kensico Village before it was flooded for the Kensico Reservoir in 1917. Four Pines Tea House operated from 1914 to 1928 under Joseph Desmond.

It was bought by L. Forstner in 1928 who added a large parking lot across the street at 85 Old Mount Kisco Road (present day David Chen Restaurant). He operated a small farm and road side stand at the site and later added the Four Pines Cottage restaurant while the house at 75 Old Mount Kisco Road became a boarding house during the construction of an access shaft for the NYC aqueduct.

Bill and Opal Daffer owned and operated Four Pines Restaurant from 1938 until 1947. The North Castle Sun reported in its July 3, 1947, edition that the Four Pines installed a television set! At a later point the property at 85 Old Mount Kisco Road was Hilda's Restaurant, then the Flower Dragon and currently is David Chen Restaurant.

Hilda's reportedly had the nearest telephone for the new houses up on top of the hill of the Wago Farm subdivision during the 1940s until telephone lines were installed.



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD AND CROSS WAY

Imagine a very small cottage at the top of Cross Way and a barn at the bottom – where route 128 crosses. The little house belonged to Hannah

Knowlton. The Knowltons were farmers and millers with large land holdings in the area. The barn contained the horses and buggies for the stage coach company operated by the Johnson Family who lived at 128 Old Mount Kisco Road. As time went on and cars replaced horses, the barn housed the motor stage coaches.



Courtesy of Steve Hillebrand

HANNAH KNOWLTON'S CARRIAGE STONE

Marked "H.K." and "1880", Hannah's carriage stone sits in the woods near the intersection of Cross Way and Old Mount Kisco Road, Armonk.



Courtesy of Steve Hillebrand

SURVIVING HILLSIDE GATE POST WITH HINGES

A gate post, about 50 feet beyond the Cross Way intersection, on the property of 116 OMK Rd, almost blends with the trees. Three large, rusty hinges remain (top, middle, bottom near the ground). This gate blocked the view of a gas station and two bay garage built into the hill before the driveway was put in. Model T cars were serviced here during the 1920s. It is also believed this gate was used to block traffic coming down Old Mount Kisco Road after route 128 was finished. This little yellow house at #116 is reported to have been built around the time of the Revolutionary war.



Post Card Collection, The Historical Society

SLATER'S HOTEL AS IT APPEARED AROUND 1910
122 Old Mount Kisco Road, Armonk

Gus Slater's hotel and pool hall appears on the 1908 Belcher⁴ map but probably predates 1908. According to a former resident of Old Mount Kisco Road, this house was built before the Revolutionary War and was a tavern and farrier shop. This structure still looks similar today. North Castle had several hotels and resorts during the early 1900s.⁵



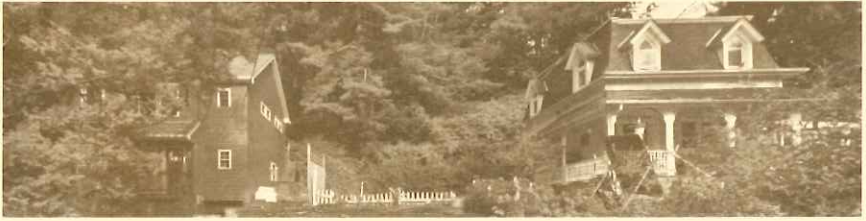
Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 124A OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

Built in the 1850s, this house is possibly the T.R. Smith Shoe Store on the 1867 map and the E. Ferris house shown on the 1900, 1908 and 1914 North Castle maps.

⁴ E. Belcher Hyde, 1908, Brooklyn, New York.

⁵ The Mile Square/Sands Mills area had another hotel near the mill pond – the Pigg Street Hotel. The North Castle Hotel was near the site of the Armonk Eagle at NYS Routes 128/22. Oysters were commonly served at hotels and restaurants – they were brought up from the Long Island Sound from Port Chester along NYS Route 120 (King Street).



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 126 and 128 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

126 Old Mount Kisco Road, on the left, was much smaller, and was attached or semi-attached to the Victorian, and was moved to its own lot and enlarged at some point, though they still share a garage. Current residents of #126 said they found a bayonet while digging round the house during renovations.

128 Old Mount Kisco Road, the Victorian on the right, was owned by Charles Johnson, operator of the Kensico & Armonk Stage Line on the 1908 and 1914 maps.⁶ It is possibly the J.B. Acker house on 1867 Beers map and then J.W. Acker house on the 1900 Hyde and Co. map and was possibly a shoe store. Until about 2005 there was a horse hitch across the street from the Victorian house.



Google maps screen shot

127 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

House numbers 119, 123, 125, 127 and 129 Old Mount Kisco Road were all one parcel, “the parcel”, until the 1970s when a previous owner, Albert Dod, subdivided the lots.

⁶ Refer to North Castle History, Volume 16, 1989, page 30 for a photograph.



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 129 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

Daniel Baker bought “the parcel” from Daniel G. Haviland in 1848. The building at present day #129, believed to have been constructed about 1839, was the school house for the Sands Mill area until the 1870s.

After the new school on School Street was built around 1870, Daniel Baker who was already occupying the house at 127 Old Mount Kisco Road expanded his grocery to 129 Old Mount Kisco Road.⁷

The house at #127 was reportedly used to store ice for the grocery store. Likely cut from the mill pond at Sands Mill, it may have been pulled down the street on an ice sled and stored in the cooler-like solid stone-walled section of the house. Ice was harvested from ponds in North Castle until the 1930s when modern refrigeration became mainstream.

George Johnson (the brother of Charles Johnson who operated the stage coach) bought the parcel in 1917 and continued the grocery business.

⁷ Son Mervin R. Baker, born in 1852, was a shoemaker and worked in the family grocery store, also called a general store. Mervin served as North Castle Town Clerk from 1881-1882 and then again 1884-1885.

The September 5, 1929 edition of the North Castle Sun reported “George Johnson, Armonk’s popular apple merchant, is a very busy man these days. George knows his apples”. There was an apple orchard along the back yard of this property and a cider mill on the present day property line between 127 and 129 Old Mount Kisco Road. The foundation ruins still can be seen.

Albert Dod purchased the parcel in 1944 and then subdivided the property in the 1970s. Each new lot has changed hands numerous times since then. These two properties (127 and 129) with structures appear on all the North Castle maps going back to 1851.



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 130 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

This house and many along Old Mount Kisco Road have steps leading to the front door from the street and do not have driveways. Built during the time of horses and buggies, parking was not required and steps from the street were the best way into the house.

Believed to be the old George Griffin farm house, this house dates to mid-1850s The Griffin farm appears on the old maps from 1851 until 1914.

The property behind the house was an apple orchard. The large farm encompassed this lot and 136 Old Mount Kisco Road, the property next door, along with quite a bit of the land up the hill behind.

George M. Sidenberg, a broker from New York City, bought this farm, along with the Acker farm on today's NYS Route 128 and Old Mount Kisco Road and most of the hilltop to create his Woodheath Farm estate. After Sidenberg died in 1942, the land was sold to Frederick Louis Ehrman who subdivided back to smaller parcels. Fortunately for history's sake, when Sidenberg assembled the lots, the houses were kept and used as rentals.



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 136 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

Probably part of the Griffin Farm originally, this house was much smaller and was originally located on the lower section of the property, in the flat area next to the large tree. It was relocated up the hill to its present location and extended during the 1960s. Many old houses started as cottages and were extended over time.



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 138 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

Believed to be property labelled “Mrs. Vandever”, then “JGeery”, then “HFrench”, then “HHouton”, and then “Mrs. Clark” on the old maps. Current occupants report they were told the house was once a butcher shop. They believe the house was built in 1847.



Google maps screen shot

PRESENT-DAY 148 OLD MOUNT KISCO ROAD, ARMONK

Likely from the late 1840s, this property is believed to be property labeled “Store”, then “JW Acker”, then “GW Acker”, then “Nehemiah Acker” and then “N Acker”. The Acker family had a large farm on this corner. This house was probably also a shoe shop at one point as the Acker Brothers were one of the primary shoe manufacturers in the Sands Mill area during 1880s.

SOME EARLY SETTLERS OF THE MIDDLE PATENT AREA

by Sharon Tomback

On February 17, 1701-1702¹ King William the Third granted “a certain tract of land in the county of Westchester”, which had been “purchased of the native proprietors” on the “5th day of July last past”.²

The tract was bounded southerly by the colony line of Connecticut, easterly by Mahanas³ river, northerly by Bedford line and marked trees to Mahanas river again, and southerly as the said river goes against the stream to ye head of the said river and so to the said colony line.”

The land “together with all and singular the woods, underwoods, trees, timber, feedings, pastures, meadows, marshes, swamps, ponds, pools, waters, water-courses, rivers, rivulets, runs, brooks, streams, fishing, fowling, hunting, hawking, &c., mines, minerals, &c., (silver and gold mines excepted) and all other profits, benefits, privileges, liberties, advantages, hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever to the aforesaid tract of land” was granted to Col. Caleb Heathcote, Joseph Theal, John Horton, Joseph Purdy, Robert Walters, Leigh Atwood, Matthew Clarkson, Lancaster Sims, Cornelius Depeyster, Richard Slater, John Chollwell, Robert Lurting, and Barne Cosens.

They were to pay the treasury of King William the Third one pound, seven shillings and six pence, current money of New York, “yearly and every year, on the first day of the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour.”⁴

Disagreement about Ownership

By August 20, 1733, there was disagreement about ownership of the land. James DeLancey, D. Clarkson, C. D’Peyster, P. Fauconnier, John Symes and Josiah Quimby, Proprietors, appointed Samuel Purdy, Esq., to lay out and divide the “Whitefeild” (sic)⁵. Mr. Purdy divided the “Whitefield Pattennt” into an east and a west Range, each containing thirteen “lotts”.

¹ Julian vs. Gregorian calendar

² Book of Patents, No. vii, 224, Secretary of State’s Office, Albany as presented by J. Thomas Scharf, History of Westchester County, New York (Philadelphia: 1886, L. E. Preston & Co.), Volume 1, Part 2, pages 885-886.

³ Named for Siwanoy sachem (chief) Myn Mayano. Over time there were various spellings. Today it is known as the Mianus River.

⁴ Scharf, Op. Cit.

⁵ Should appear as Whitefields – also known as Middle Patent.

More Disagreement about Ownership

Disagreement about ownership continued. The Proprietors were not receiving the quitrents⁶. At a Town meeting on April 1, 1746, Jonathan Ogden and Benoni Platt were appointed as trustees for the Middle "Patent" for the coming year to clear up the quitrents. At a town meeting on April 4, 1749, enforcement was voted. Thomas Golden, Constable and Collector, "did sett up for the same in this town, to serve all Summonses and Supenies for any Freeholder or Inhabites, belonging to the West and Middle Patent of the said North Castle, for the sum of one shilling for each summons or Supenie, but for all warrents and Executions to take fees according to the ordinances, and is to gather the Quitrents of the above said two patents, for one shilling upon the Pound."⁷

Six years later in 1739 Benjamin Fox of King Street made a list of "the People Possessed on the Whitefeild (sic), or Middle Patent"⁸:

Thomas Hutchins	Jacob Finch	Benjamin Brush
Thomas Meritt	Samuel Banks	Samuel Peters
John Runells, Sr.	_?_ Owens	Ebius Brock
John Runells, Jr.	John Finch	Francis Purdy
Benjamin Platt	John Brush	John Purdy

Agreement about Ownership

The final settlement between the patentees and settlers was made in favor of the settlers in 1765. The following persons⁹ are listed as those in possession of the land:

Samuel Banks	Smith Sutherland	Nehemiah Brundige
John Banks	Charles Green	Abraham Knapp
Benony Platt	Charles Green, Jr.	Joshua Lounsbery
Jonathan Platt	David Brundige	Daniel Brown, Jr.
John Runnels	Walter Morris	Phinehas Knapp
Jonathan Owen(s)	Aaron Furman, Jr.	Jeremiah Numan

⁶ A land rent paid to the owner.

⁷ Refer to Historical Records North Castle/New Castle 1736-1791, published 1976 jointly by Town of North Castle/Town of New Castle, page B14.

⁸ Scharf, Op. Cit., page 886.

⁹ Scharf, Op. Cit., page 887.

John Rundle	Shubel Brush	Robert Murfee
John Armstrong	James Brundige	Jeremiah Green
Roger Sutherland	Stephen Edegett	

The arbitrators' award dated October 6, 1765, required that Anne DeLancey, John Bard, Pierre Depeyster, David Clarkson, Peter Remsen and John Ogelbie and all others who claimed the lands should deliver "in due form of law a release of all their rights and titles of, in, and to the lands specified in the said Letters Patent, to said Samuel Banks and the other persons above named who are now in possession of the said Lands." The settlers were to pay nine Shillings New York money¹⁰ for every acre not already purchased.

The 1763 list of North Castle Freeholders describes Samuel Banks, Benoni Plat (sic), John Bundle (John Rundle), John Armstrong, Josua Lounsbury (Joshua Lounsbury), David Brundige, Jeremiah Newman (John Numan), Aaron Forman Junr (Aaron Furman, Jr.) and John Banks as yeomen. Jonathan Owen(s) is listed as a carpenter. Phineas Knap (Phinehas Knapp) is described as a weaver.

Other Early Settlers

On April 3, 1739, Benoni Platt and Thomas Hutchins were made "fence viewers and prisers of damages for the Middle Patten" (sic). William Southerland was appointed highway master for the Middle Patten (sic) on April 7, 1741, and was succeeded by Peter Purdy on April 6, 1742.¹¹ Thomas Hopkins was appointed "sessor" for the east side of the branch of Byram River and the "Middle Patten" at the 1742 meeting.

Another early settler of Middle Patent was John Worden. He wrote his Will September 11, 1769, witnessed by Aaron Forman, Jr., Benjamin Hay and William Worden. The Will was Proved September 29, 1769. His

¹⁰ Ibid. Scharf wrote the value of nine schillings New York money was equivalent to one dollar and twelve cents in 1886. Although the shilling is not in use in Britain today, according to ask.com when it was in use, it was worth one-twentieth of a pound. Under the decimal system, that is equivalent to five pence. As of June 2014, five British pence was worth around 8.5 U.S. cents. Therefore, 9 schillings paid per acre in 1765 would equal less than \$1 an acre in 2015.

¹¹ Minutes of Town Meetings, Town of North Castle, New York.

Will not only gives the names of other early settlers, but also the general locations of their farms. "My will is that as much of my movable estate shall be sold, and all the land where my wheat grew this year, and the rest of my land that is adjoining to the same, it being at the north end of Albert Ogden's wheat stubble and joining to Jeremiah Green's land and to Jonathan Owen's land and joining the road that leads from the Middle Patent to my homestead, to pay all debts and charges." He named wife Mary, Stephen Voris and Joseph Golding as executors.¹²

"Many of the early families of Middle Patent, including the Banks, Hobby, Platt, Finch, Brush, Palmer and Smith families came to the area by way of Stanwich, Connecticut. Some belonged to the Stanwich Parish ... a parent community for the residents of Middle Patent."¹³

Many of these family names appear on 1779 a tax list for the "Destrict" (sic) of North Castle which shows the-then value of both the real estate and the personal estates of the owners. Samuel Banks¹⁴ widow Deborah is listed with personal property valued at 928 Pounds, but with no real property¹⁵. John Banks¹⁶ is listed with real estate valued at 1,220 Pounds and personal property valued at 650 Pounds.¹⁷

During the Revolutionary War years these families often were split in allegiance, fought each other and suffered hardships we cannot imagine.

¹² Collections of The New-York Historical Society for the year 1898, volume 31, page 134.

¹³ American Revolutionary History in North Castle, copyright, The North Castle Historical Society, 1976, page 71.

¹⁴ Son of Samuel who died in 1743; Samuel married Deborah June. He died in 1773. Their son James Banks married Ann Brush.

¹⁵ At this time real property disposition was generally the decision of the male. A married woman generally lost control of any property she brought to the marriage. Women could not make contracts, transfer or sell property. One notable exception was Ann Fisher Miller, the widow of Elijah Miller and owner of Miller House/Washington's Headquarters in North White Plains. New York passed a landmark married women's property rights law in 1848.

¹⁶ Son of Samuel who died in 1743; John married Deborah Newman. Their children married with the Reynolds, Sutherland, Ferris, Lyon, Murphy, Briggs, Miller and Owens families.

¹⁷ Op. Cit., Historical Records North Castle/New Castle 1736-1791, pages C1-C10.

SAMUEL BANKS OF THE MIDDLE PATENT OF NORTH CASTLE
by Sharon Tomback

On January 14, 1742 Samuel Banks of "Northcastle" wrote his Will. He died January 29, 1743.

In the name of God Amen. January 15, 1742. I, Samuel Banks of North Castle in Westchester County, being very sick I leave to my wife Rebecca the same household goods that she brought with her. I leave to my son Samuel 10 shillings. I make Daniel Brundage¹ and Aaron Furman Sr. executors. I leave to my son John all my lands in the Middle Patent in North Castle and a pewter platter and he is to pay to my daughter Hannah Finch 20 shillings when she is of age and to Joanah Banks and Mary Anne Banks to each when of age. I leave to my daughters Rosanna, Susanah, Joanah, and Mary Anne Banks all the rest of my movables. Witnesses Benony Platt, Joseph Tooker, Jonathan Ogden. Proved March 31, 1743.²

The first recorded burial in our town was that of Samuel Banks who died January 29, 1743. He was buried on his farm and as other family members died, they too were buried near him. Over time the burial ground grew to include the graves of extended family members. The Middle Patent Rural Cemetery stands on land that was once the farm of Samuel Banks and is North Castle's oldest burial ground.

Samuel Banks' descendants are numerous. Banks family children married into the June, Newman and Finch families and their descendants married into the Briggs, Ferris, Hobby, Knapp, Lane, Lyon, Mead, Miller, Murphy, Owens, Palmer, Reynolds, Rundle, Smith, and Sutherland families of the Middle Patent area.

The hamlet of Banksville, named for the Banks family, sits on the state line between New York and Connecticut and for generations residents identified more closely with Connecticut. The Banksville post office was in Connecticut and mail service was through Greenwich until 1981 when the U.S. Postal Service changed to service from Bedford, New York.

¹ Note also reported as David Brundige.

² Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the year 1894, Abstracts of Wills on File in the Surrogate's Office, City of New York, Volume III, 1730-1744, (New York: 1894, printed for the Society), page 390, volume 27.



Courtesy of Charles Boetsch

**GRAVESTONE OF SAMUEL BANKS
THE MIDDLE PATENT RURAL CEMETERY**

There is a modern bronze plaque mounted above the original gravestone which has been encased with stone for protection. The plaque reads:

***THE GRAVE OF SAMUEL BANKS, ANCESTOR OF THE BANKS
FAMILY IN THIS AREA, BORN AT GREENWICH CIRCA 1677, DIED
AT MIDDLE PATENT JAN. 29, 1743 AND INTERRED IN THESE
GROUNDS WHICH FORMED PART OF HIS FARM.***

Richard N. Lander, who before his death served for many years as North Castle Town Historian, wrote that Samuel Banks, who died January 29, 1743, was a son of John Banks and his wife Abigail Lyon, that he was born at Byram in the Town of Greenwich, Connecticut, and that all his children

were by his first wife³. Mr. Lander reported that Samuel married second with Rebecca, the widow of Thomas Lyon and a daughter of Thomas Hobby and his wife, Rebecca.

Banks family researcher Charles Boetsch believes that Samuel Banks' first wife was Hannah Ogden⁴ and that she possibly lies buried beside Samuel in The Middle Patent Cemetery, Banksville (Bedford Post Office), New York.

Doris Finch Watson, who also served for many years as North Castle Town Historian before her death, wrote that Samuel Banks "... was one of the earliest settlers along the Mianus River. He came north about 1695 to settle and farm what would later become part of the Middle Patent, including the present Middle Patent Rural Cemetery. He was the grandson of John Banks, who arrived in America much earlier (1630) aboard the 'Mary and John'.⁵

Samuel Banks' Grandfather John Banks was an early settler in Windsor, Connecticut, and at his death in 1685 John Banks was one of the wealthiest landowners in Fairfield County, Connecticut.⁶

Samuel's parents, John Banks and Abigail Lyon, married in Stamford, Connecticut on April 3, 1672. John died July 14, 1699, but his estate was not distributed until May 4, 1703. Widow Abigail received her dowry and one-third of the personal estate. Their children were Joseph, Daniel, Samuel, a daughter⁷ who married Deliverance Brown, John and Mercy. Charles Boetsch reports that when Samuel Banks' father, John, died in 1699, guardianship records dated May 4, 1703, indicate that Samuel was still a minor meaning that he was born after May 4, 1682. Joseph was made guardian for his brothers Daniel and Samuel.⁸

³ According to Mr. Lander, the children were Samuel, Hannah, Jemima, Mary Anna, Rosanna, Susannah and John, but the wife's name was not reported.

⁴ a daughter of John Ogden and his wife, Susannah Dunscombe.

⁵ Sandford, Harry E. and Michael J. Kern, Editors, *American Revolutionary History in North Castle* (Armonk: The North Castle Bicentennial Committee, 1976), pages 64-72.

⁶ *Ibid*, page 71.

⁷ Some genealogists report that Deliverance Brown married Mercy Banks.

⁸ Miller, Robert B. & Albert Brown Lyons, Editors. *Lyon Memorial III: New York Families Descended from the Immigrant Thomas Lyon of Rye*, (Detroit: 1907, W. Graham Printing Co., publisher), pages 46-47.

Several family researchers have reported that Samuel was the father of five daughters: Rosanna, Susannah, Hannah, Joanna and Mary Anne and two sons: Samuel and John.

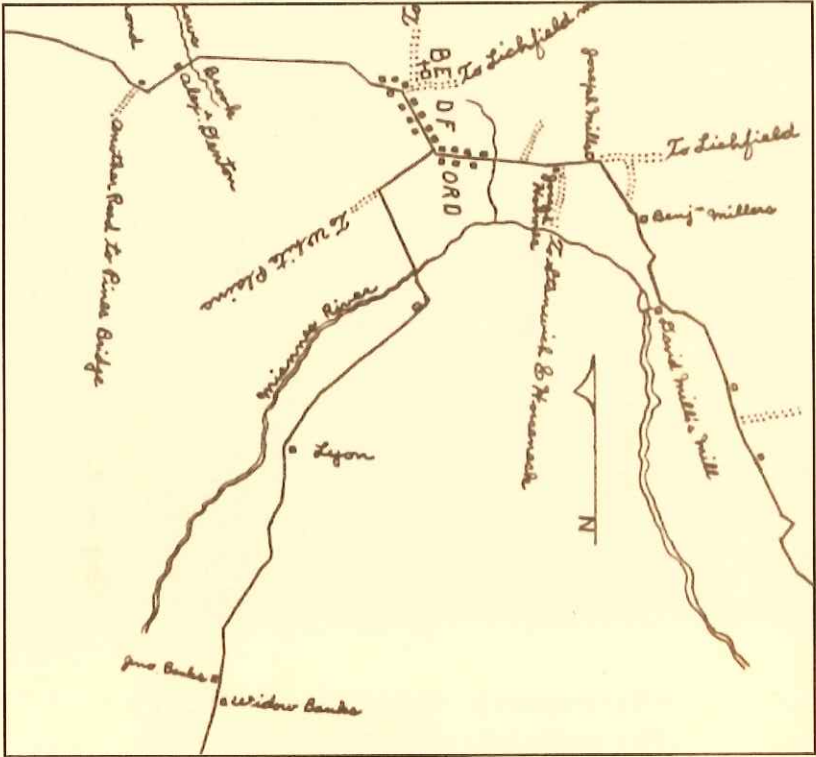


Courtesy of Charles Boetsch

GRAVESTONES – SAMUEL BANKS FAMILY THE MIDDLE PATENT RURAL CEMETERY

1. John Banks, born 1720 – This is a modern gravestone. The original footstone for John is marked “J B”. (Son of Samuel)
2. Unknown burial at this site marked by a fieldstone without legible markings.
3. Samuel Banks whose gravestone indicates that he died January 29, 1743.
4. Unknown burial in this gravesite marked by a cedar tree; possibly Hannah Ogden, the first wife of Samuel Banks who died January 29, 1743.
5. Rebecca Hobby, widow of Thomas Lyon and the second wife of Samuel Banks who died January 29, 1743.
6. Deborah June, wife of Samuel Banks who died September 10, 1773.
7. Samuel Banks, who died September 10, 1773. (Son of Samuel)

Samuel Banks' house stood across from today's Middle Patent Rural Cemetery.⁹ His two sons, John and Samuel, lived north of their father's house, near each other on the road leading to Bedford (today's Bedford-Banksville Road).



Courtesy of The New York Historical Society

FROM ROBERT ERSKINE MAP NO. 24

Robert Erskine was a geographer and surveyor general for the American army. He worked between 1777 and 1780. Note the Widow Banks and Jno. (John) Banks houses are indicated on the lower left of the map. Bedford village is indicated in the center top.

During 2015 The North Castle Historical Society was extremely pleased to receive the donation of a framed oil painting by Mary Estelle Hobby Haines from a sketch which she drew from memory of the John Banks

⁹ The Daniel Gray Fishing Club occupies the site today.

homestead. She was a great, great granddaughter of John Banks. We are indebted to her grandson, Chris Haines, for making the donation.¹⁰



Donation from Chris Haines to The North Castle Historical Society, 2015

SON JOHN BANKS' HOUSE

John Banks lived on the west side of the road leading to Bedford. John's house stood until about 1880 according to the artist's note on the back of the painting.

John Banks and Deborah Newman (Numan) married in 1749. They had a large family of six boys (John, Samuel, Joseph, Jonathan, Alanson and Benjamin) and six girls (Deborah, Hannah, Sarah, Diadama, Martha and Rachel). Their children married into the Sutherland, Ferris, Lyon, Miller, Hobby, Briggs, Avery, Ferris and Reynolds families.

¹⁰ Chris Haines donated a second oil painting by Mary Estelle Hobby Haines of the Hobby home in the Middle Patent.



Google maps screen shot

SON SAMUEL BANKS' HOUSE ALSO KNOWN AS THE WIDOW BANKS HOUSE

Samuel Banks, son of Samuel who died 1743, lived on the east side of the road across from his brother John. His house survives today and stands at the corner of Banks Farm Road and Bedford-Banksville Road. Samuel died in 1773 at age fifty-six and his widow, Deborah June, lived in the house during the Revolutionary War. The early house began as a "half house." The north half was built first. It was built with low ceilings downstairs. Later the other half was added, but with higher ceilings. The upstairs ceilings have adjusted heights on the two different sides in order to make the roof line come out even. The two very early fireplaces were removed in the 1930's by the-then owner, Mrs. Irma Schuster, when she and the late Mr. Schuster installed new heating. Samuel's house remained in the Banks family during the Revolution and passed on to Ezra F. Banks, who died in 1880. A beautiful old stone wall, built with the help of oxen, stands along today's Bedford-Banksville Road. The very large stones were placed near the bottom of the wall.¹¹

Samuel's tombstone epitaph bears the warning *Remember Man as You Pafs by, As You are now, so once was I; As I am now so must You be. Prepare for Death and follow me.*

¹¹ Richard N. Lander, Doris Finch Watson, Irene Sandford, Thomas R. Parker, Historical Site Tour (1976: Armonk, The North Castle Historical Society).

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REUBEN WRIGHT'S MILLS MONUMENT

New York State mortgage files indicate that Reuben Wright owned land on the Bronx River at least as early as 1763. He and his family moved from North Castle in 1784.

The White Plains Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, erected a monument in 1932 commemorating Wright's Mills as one of Washington's Revolutionary War headquarters. The monument stands just south of the Rye Lake Bridge on NYS Route 22 near North White Plains.

The Dedication Plaque reads: Near this site stood Reuben Wright's Mills, Headquarters of General Washington from July 20th to 25th 1778, also occupied by other Revolutionary Generals. The Mills were in Old Kensico Village now inundated by the waters of Kensico Lake. These millstones were placed by the White Plains D.A.R. Oct. 28, 1932, on the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of White Plains.

The millstones were taken from the Deutermann Mill, earlier known as the Horton Grist Mill (site was on Lake Street, White Plains) where General George Washington stored his supplies during the Revolution War.

Please forward any corrections or additions to the information presented herein and/or your constructive suggestions for improving this publication to the editorial board at The North Castle Historical Society, Historic Smith's Tavern, 440 Bedford Road, Armonk, New York 10504. If you would be willing to research and/or author an article, please let us know. Different writers and diverse perspectives are vital. We would appreciate hearing from you.

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