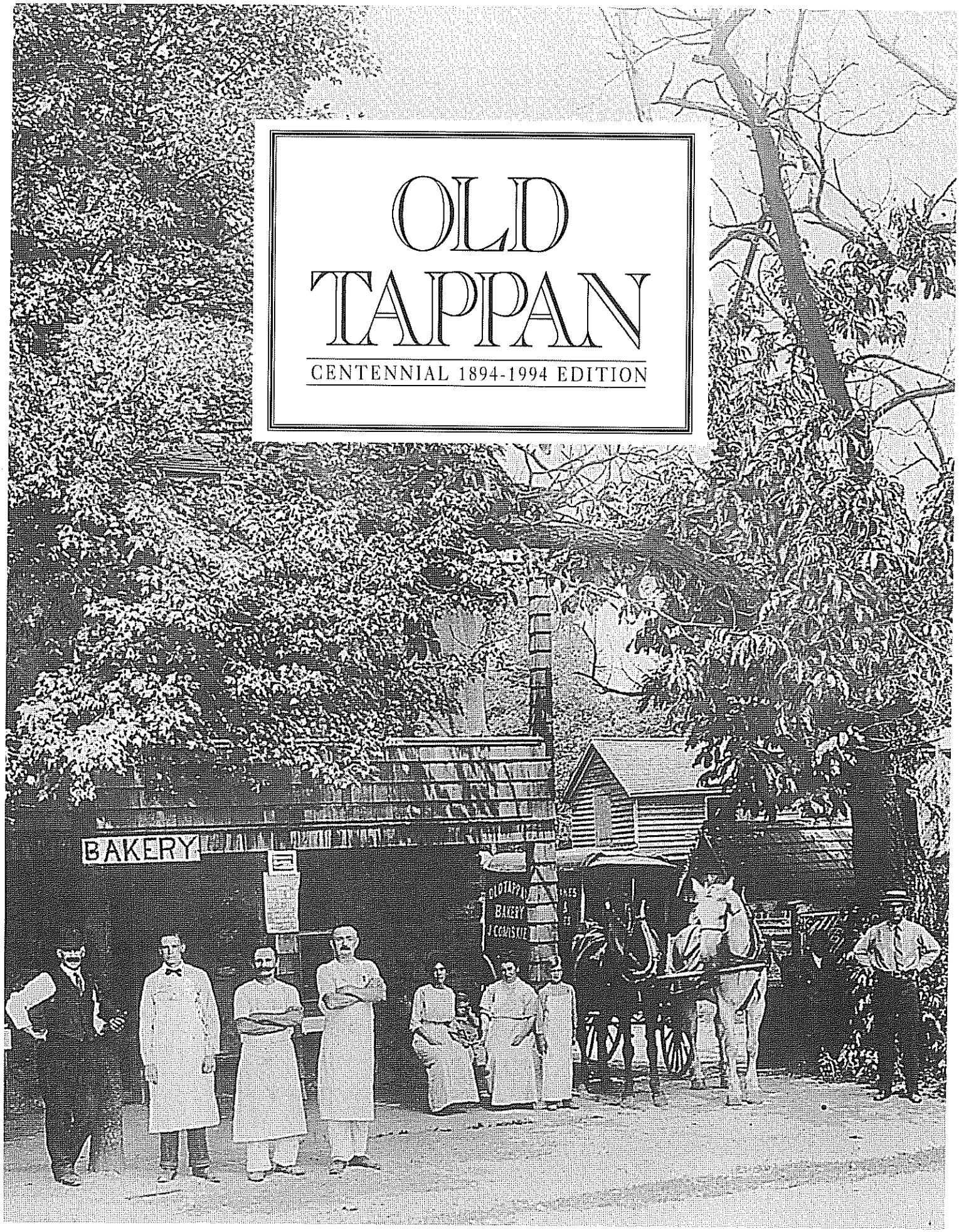
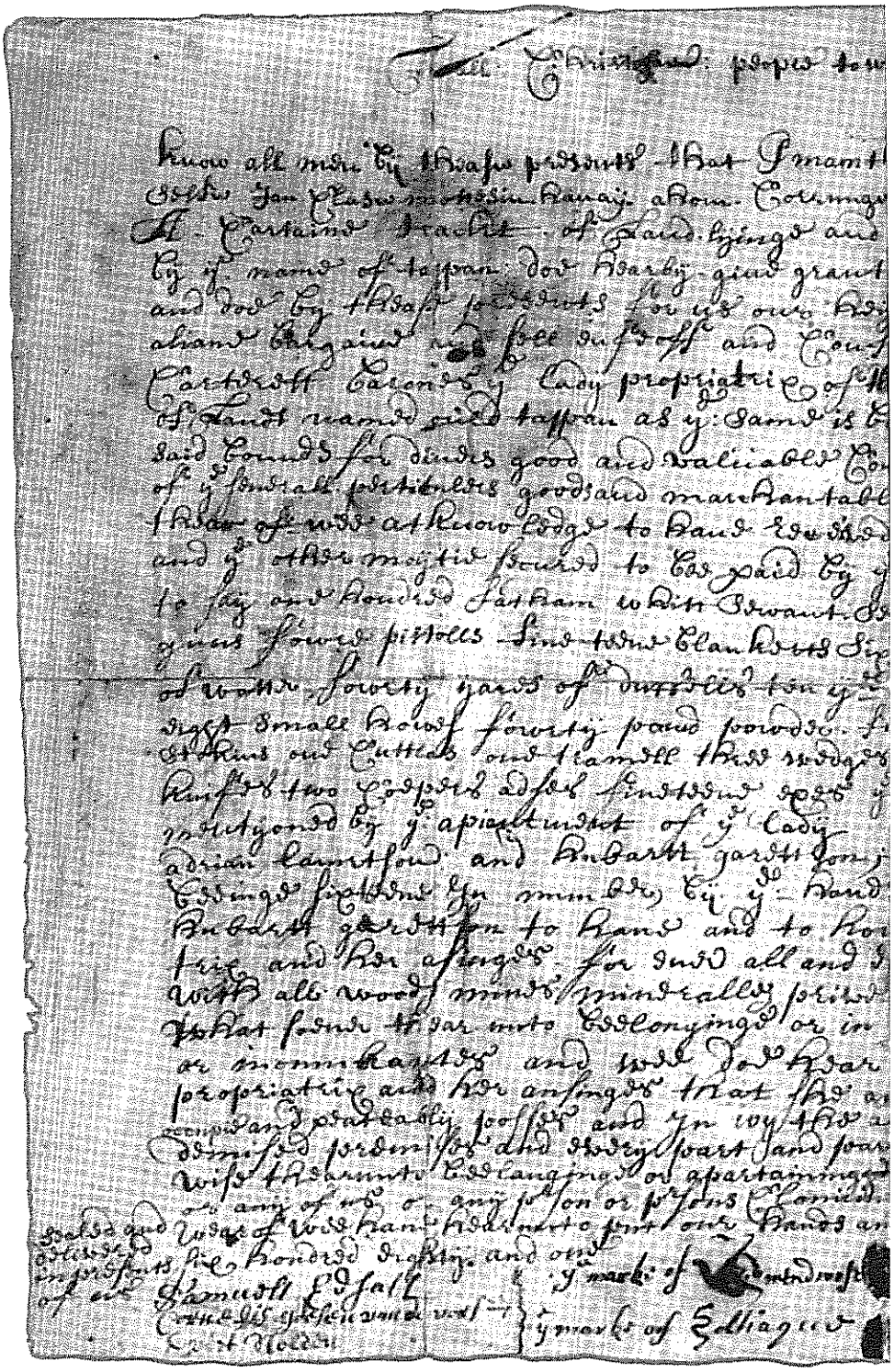
OLD TAPPAN

CENTENNIAL 1894-1994 EDITION





THE TAPPAN INDIAN DEED
MARCH 17, 1682

The first step in obtaining a patent, or land grant, was to purchase the Indian rights. On March 17, 1682 "A Cartaine trackt of Landt named ould tappan" was purchased from the Tappan Indians.

The Indian deed, however, was not legal title to the land. That came five years later, on March 24, 1687, when the Tappan patent was granted by Governor Thomas Dongan of New York.

Since the Indian deed was the basis for the Tappan patent, it is apparent that the entire area from present-day Harrington Park, NJ north to Blauvelt, NY was called "ould tappan" before white men lived there. Looking from the Hudson River westward, this "ould tappan" of 1682 was the outlying area of Tappan. As explained in this book, this may account for the origin of the name.

In England at that time, New Year's Day was celebrated on March 25th. This is why the Indian deed bears the date of the previous year – 1681. The date of the Indian purchase, by our modern calendar, was March 17, 1682.

The Tappan patent, granted by Governor Dongan five years later, appears on the back endpaper of this book.

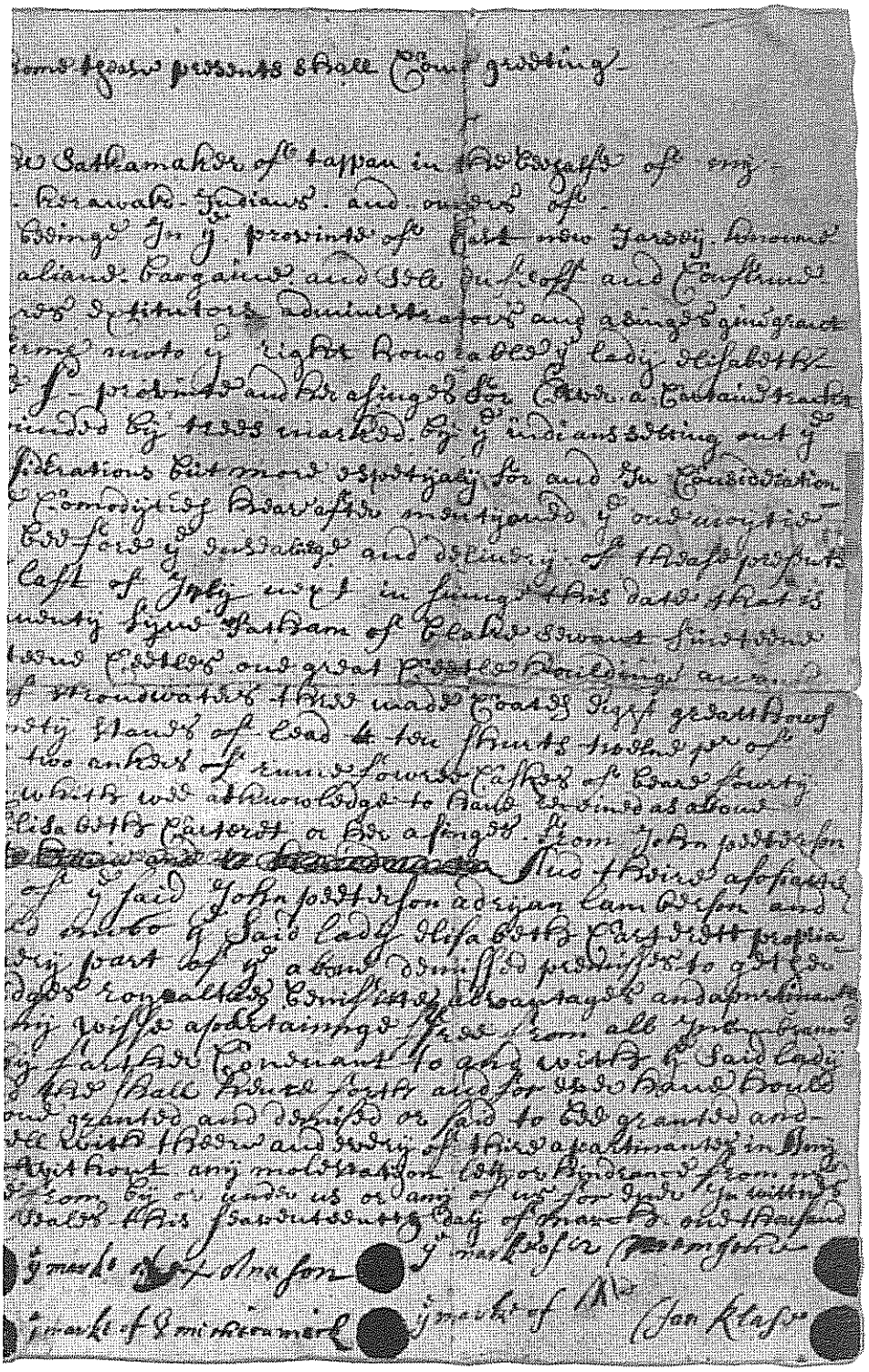
COVER PHOTO: *Comiskie's Bakery, 1908. Courtesy of Ed Vanderbeck (See page 37).*

Some these presents shall Come greeting

[illegible] Sathamaker of tappan in the behalfe of my
[illegible] Kerawak Indians and owners of
beeinge In ye provinte of East new Jersey knowne
aliane bargaine and sell enfeoff and Confirme
[illegible] extitutors administrators and asinges gine grant
[illegible] moto ye right honorable ye lady elisabeth
[illegible] provinte and her asinges for Ever a Certaine tracke
[illegible] by trees marked by ye indians setting out ye
[illegible] but more espetyaly for and In Consideration
[illegible] Comodyties hear after mentyoned ye one moytie
[illegible] before ye ensealinge and delivery of these presents
[illegible] last of July next in sunge this date that is
[illegible] Sytham of Blake sewant Sinteene
[illegible] Cettles one great Cettle houldinge an
[illegible] stroudwaters three made Coates eight greatthowe
[illegible] stanes of lead 4 ten shurts twelve pr of
[illegible] two ankers of rume fowree Caskes of beare fourty
[illegible] which wee acknowledge to have received as above
[illegible] Carteret or her asinges from John peeterson
[illegible] And theire asosiatte
[illegible] of ye said John peeterson adryan lamberson and
[illegible] ye said lady elisabeth Carterett propria
[illegible] part of ye above demissed premisses to get her
[illegible] royalties benifittes advantages and apertinantes
[illegible] wisse apertainnge free from all Incumbrance
[illegible] farther Conevant to and with ye said lady
[illegible] shall heure forth and for ever have hould
[illegible] granted and demised or said to bee granted and
[illegible] with theere and every of thire apertinantes in any
[illegible] without any molestation let or hindrance from me
[illegible] from by or under us or any of us for ever In wittnes
[illegible] this seaventeenth day of march one thousand

ye marke of [illegible] Anason ye marke of [illegible] Jan Klase

ye marke of [illegible] ye marke of [illegible] Jan Klase



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Some of the many wild flowers and plants found in the fields and meadows of Old Tappan, a living and familiar reminder of our past:

1. *Common Dayflower*
2. *Wire Grass, Slender Rush*
3. *Lady's Thumb*
4. *Tall Buttercup*
5. *Common St. John's-wort*
6. *Common Blue Violet*
7. *Wild Carrot, Queen Anne's Lace*
8. *Indian Tobacco*
9. *Yarrow, Milfoil*
10. *Mayweed*
11. *Pineapple Weed*
12. *Burdock*
13. *White Daisy*
14. *Chicory*
15. *Canada Thistle*
16. *White-Top*
17. *Bitterweed*
18. *Black-Eyed Susan*

OLD TAPPAN

CENTENNIAL 1894-1994 EDITION

"A people without history is like the wind on the buffalo grass."
SIOUX INDIAN SAYING

Editor-in-Chief **Jo Haight**
Assistant Editor **Sally Weller**
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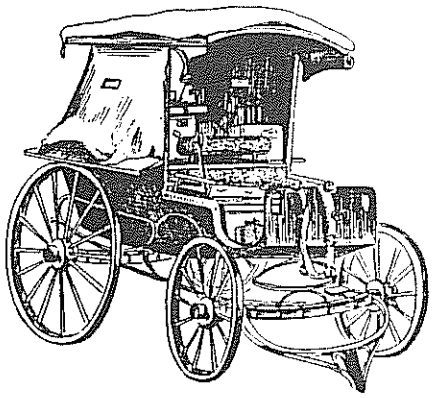
Tom Demarest



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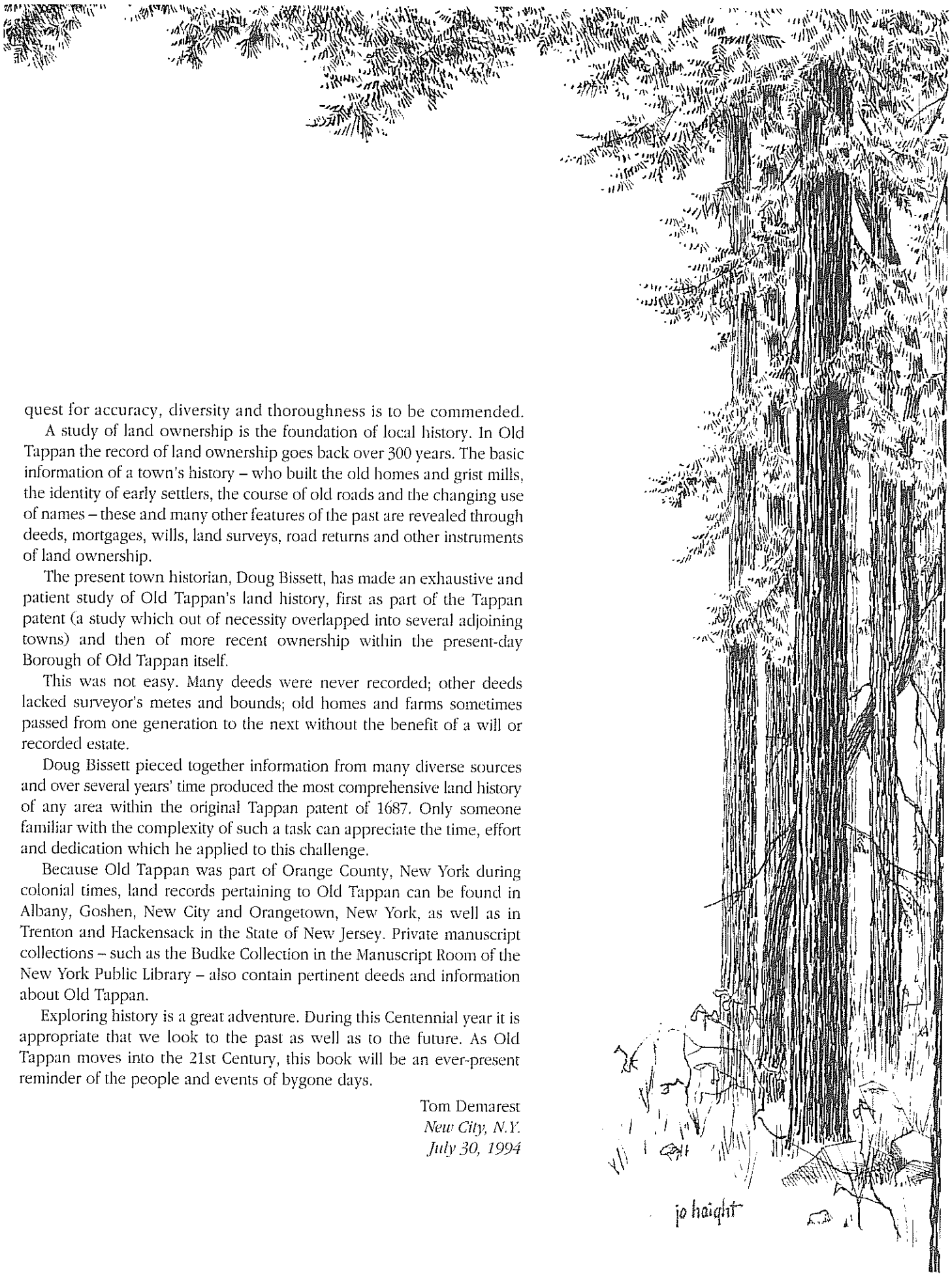
FOREWORD

This book is the result of a diligent effort on the part of the authors to present an accurate and thorough history of the Borough of Old Tappan. In achieving this, they have focused largely on the last 100 years – the century that Old Tappan has existed as an organized borough. They have not failed, however, to delve also into Old Tappan's existence as a locality during the centuries prior to 1894. Indeed, the name of Old Tappan can be traced back to March 17, 1682 when it was purchased from the Tappan Indians. It is evident from the Indian deed that the name was in common use for an indefinite period prior to 1682, and the authors have given us a plausible explanation as to how the name may have originated.

Jo Haight and Sally Weller have both lived in Old Tappan for about 40 years, and Claire Millard over 30 years. They have witnessed the profound change in Old Tappan from a rural, partly-agricultural town, with no town center, to the bustling, heavily-populated and well-organized borough which exists today.

This change was inevitable. It was also orderly. But it blotted out the mood and characteristics of the era which preceded it. The authors have rescued from oblivion and preserved for future generations not only the facts and figures of bygone days in Old Tappan, they have also provided us with explicit images of what the town used to be – photos, illustrations and maps which bring to life what facts and figures alone cannot.

The talents of Jo Haight as an artist, and of Sally Weller and Claire Millard as writers, are only too evident. What is not evident is the vast amount of time and effort which goes into locating the material for a book such as this. People who possess the memories, the diaries, the old photos and the historical lore that much of local history is based on, have often drifted far afield from the old home town, and tracking them down can be as challenging a task as compiling the history itself. In this respect the authors have been particularly successful. They have spared no pains to locate persons both locally and far afield and record their fleeting images of an era swiftly receding into the past. What they have recorded here will be the history of Old Tappan for the next 100 years, and their



quest for accuracy, diversity and thoroughness is to be commended.

A study of land ownership is the foundation of local history. In Old Tappan the record of land ownership goes back over 300 years. The basic information of a town's history – who built the old homes and grist mills, the identity of early settlers, the course of old roads and the changing use of names – these and many other features of the past are revealed through deeds, mortgages, wills, land surveys, road returns and other instruments of land ownership.

The present town historian, Doug Bissett, has made an exhaustive and patient study of Old Tappan's land history, first as part of the Tappan patent (a study which out of necessity overlapped into several adjoining towns) and then of more recent ownership within the present-day Borough of Old Tappan itself.

This was not easy. Many deeds were never recorded; other deeds lacked surveyor's metes and bounds; old homes and farms sometimes passed from one generation to the next without the benefit of a will or recorded estate.

Doug Bissett pieced together information from many diverse sources and over several years' time produced the most comprehensive land history of any area within the original Tappan patent of 1687. Only someone familiar with the complexity of such a task can appreciate the time, effort and dedication which he applied to this challenge.

Because Old Tappan was part of Orange County, New York during colonial times, land records pertaining to Old Tappan can be found in Albany, Goshen, New City and Orangetown, New York, as well as in Trenton and Hackensack in the State of New Jersey. Private manuscript collections – such as the Budke Collection in the Manuscript Room of the New York Public Library – also contain pertinent deeds and information about Old Tappan.

Exploring history is a great adventure. During this Centennial year it is appropriate that we look to the past as well as to the future. As Old Tappan moves into the 21st Century, this book will be an ever-present reminder of the people and events of bygone days.

Tom Demarest
New City, N.Y.
July 30, 1994

FROM THE Hudson River it was across the salt meadow and through the narrow valley of the Tappan Creek (present day Piermont, New York) that the first inland settlement to the west was made. Land was purchased from the Lenni Lenape Indians on March 17, 1682. Five years later, in 1687, legal title to the land, known as the Tappan patent, was granted by Governor Thomas Dongan of New York to thirteen Dutchmen and three free Negroes. The Tappan patent is believed to be the only land grant of its kind in the country to include both blacks and whites on an equal basis. They were all prosperous farmers from the settlement called *the Bouwerie* which grew up around Peter Stuyvesant's farm in what had been New Amsterdam. As their farms became crowded by the late 17th Century, they came together to purchase new unsettled lands in the wilderness.

The land they bought is described as "*...a Cartaine trackt of Landt named ould tappan as ye same is bounded by trees marked by ye indians.*" The ould tappan of 1682 was much larger than the Old Tappan we know today. Tappan, from the Lenni Lenape word *Tuphanne* (reputed to mean cold water) was the area around present day Piermont, and Nyack was then the north end of Tappan. The out-lying area to the west was ould tappan. One theory is that early Dutch mariners on the Hudson River called this out-lying wilderness *uyt-tappan*, meaning out tappan and corrupted it in their own language to oud tappan, thence in English ould or old tappan. The truth of this theory is debatable, but it is a fact that it was known as ould tappan since the first settlement after 1687.

The Tappan patent ran westward to the Hackensack River from West Nyack to Harrington Park and was settled and divided among the shareowners, three of whom were the negotiators for the land grant - Jan Pietersen Haring, Adriaen Lambertson Smidt and Huybert Gerritsen Blauvelt.

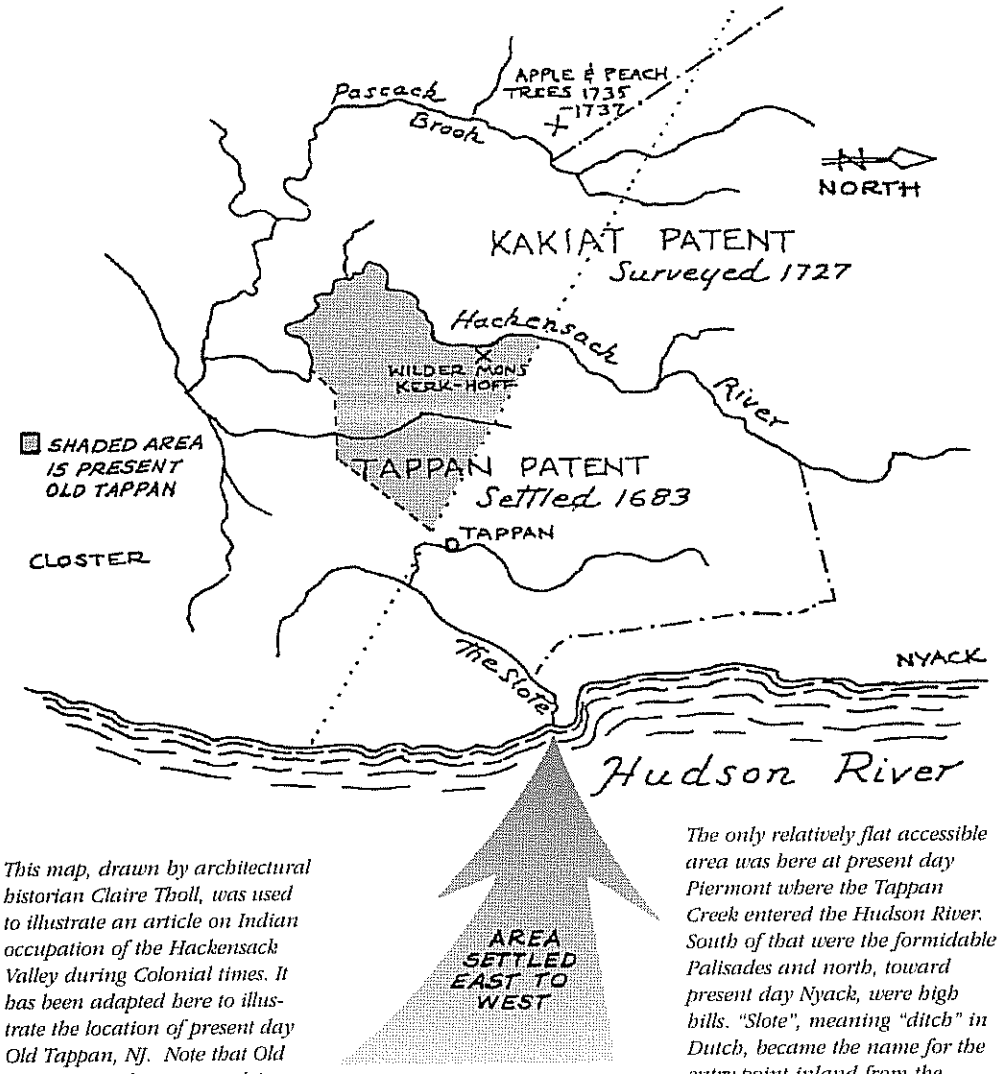
The land on the other side of the Hackensack River became part of a large land grant known as the Kakiat patent. It was not settled but was granted to only two men, Honan and Hawdon, individuals with political influence who were active in New York colonial affairs. These men had no intention of settling the land themselves, but held it for speculation. As late as 1727, 44 years after the first settlement at Tappan, the southern half of the Kakiat patent was still unsettled and unsurveyed.

After the Kakiat patent was surveyed, much of the settlement was done by landowners in the Tappan patent in order to provide lands for their many sons without dividing their Tappan holdings into lots too small for practical farming.

By 1683 some of the Tappan patentees had begun to settle on their lands while some sold their shares to other settlers. Boundary disputes between New York and New Jersey were becoming heated. Surveys were conducted and the boundary line was determined to lie much farther south than the state line we know today. This is why the Tappan settlers did not get a New Jersey land grant as anticipated when they bought the Indian rights, but instead were granted a patent by the Colony of New York.

For 86 years Old Tappan was part of Orangetown, Orange County (South of the Mountains), New York. Tappan was the county seat and the first public structures built there were a church, jail, inn and courthouse. Inhabitants of Old Tappan served in the Orange County militia, paid taxes to the Colony of New York, served as assessors, fence viewers and road masters of Orangetown. The people continued to speak the Dutch language and Dutch customs prevailed. A census of 1702 reveals there were 279 inhabitants in all of Orange County.

During this period, Indians continued to occupy the upper Hackensack Valley. It is said that the last remnants of the Tappan Indians sought for their homes a large area of swampy, untillable land known as the *greun bosch* - Greenbush (later called the Greenwoods). To the



This map, drawn by architectural historian Claire Tholl, was used to illustrate an article on Indian occupation of the Hackensack Valley during Colonial times. It has been adapted here to illustrate the location of present day Old Tappan, NJ. Note that Old Tappan was the most out-lying area of the Tappan Patent.

The only relatively flat accessible area was here at present day Piermont where the Tappan Creek entered the Hudson River. South of that were the formidable Palisades and north, toward present day Nyack, were high hills. "Slote", meaning "ditch" in Dutch, became the name for the entry point inland from the Hudson River.

south of this land was a chain of hills along what is now Old Tappan Road that were known as the Little Mountains. The highest of these, where Bi-State is now, was said to have been used by the Indians as a lookout point.

The Indians lived on this land in the manner to which they were accustomed, raising corn on patches of land called by the Dutch *Wilder mons maize lout*, situated on what later became the O'Connor farm. A sandy knoll on the shore of what was once an immense beaver pond or lake was the *Wilder mons kerk-hoff* - the wild man's burying place. The location was remote and useless for agriculture. It lay within the bounds of the Tappan patent but only a wooded swamp separated it from the Hackensack River and the long-vacant lands of the Kakiat patent.

A spring-fed stream ran alongside the knoll and entered the swamp. This area remained largely unchanged until recent years and was frequented by ducks, muskrats, raccoon and mink. Deer often crossed through the swamp. The area was quiet, wooded, remote and in places, treacherous underfoot.

Before the reservoir was put in, there were several excavations conducted at this Indian campsite. No burials were found there but artifacts found on the knoll were within or near a sixteen foot circle of very black earth about fifteen inches deep, in what was otherwise sandy soil. This deep black circle was undoubtedly the site of a small Indian house used during Colonial times. It was probably a migratory hunting camp, used sporadically in all seasons. It was also a significant approach point to the occupied lands of the Tappan patent– a logical site for conducting trade or being within easy range of it.

English trade pipes, stoneware fragments, knives, a coin dated 1737, arrowheads and other articles found in the area indicated that the Indians lived in the Greenwoods from about 1680 to 1740. They didn't just disappear from the land after 1740 but moved on into the Ramapo Mountains, intermingling with free Negro settlers and whites, becoming mountain people and peddling woven baskets, bowls, spoons and other utensils of wood well into the nineteenth century.

Another discovery, about a half mile southwest of this campsite, was made when a bulldozer exposed bits of flint and pieces of pottery indicating the presence of an Indian hearth. Emil Giotta from Harrington Park, a landscaper and member of the North Jersey Archaeological Society, had found an Indian hearth near there in 1962. Together with interested helpers, he returned to the site the following year. They carefully dug away the earth and uncovered a whole human skeleton. From the perfect condition and structure of the skull and the burial position of the skeleton, Mr. Giotta was able to identify it as that of a male Indian, six feet tall, 30 to 35 years of age. The particular designs on the pottery shards dated his burial at about 1500 AD. His was one of only a few such skeletons ever found in Bergen County. This Indian lived and worked at his hearth in the Greenwoods and his final resting place there had remained undisturbed for over 400 years.

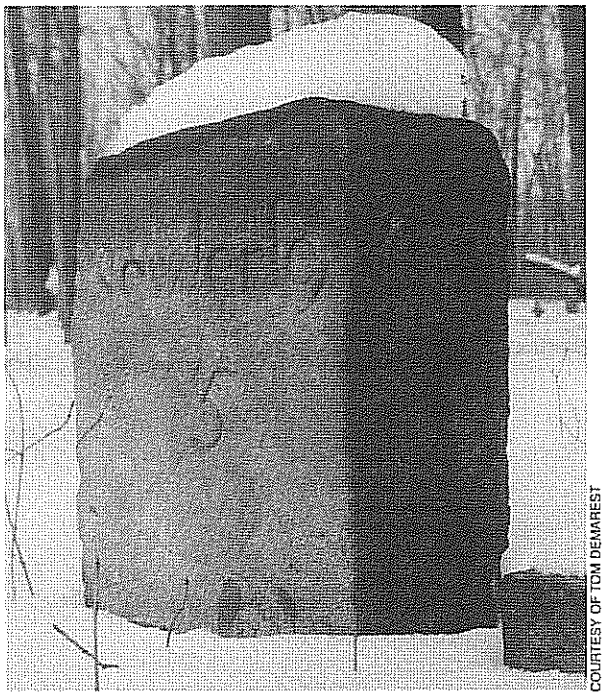
For nearly twenty years the lands of Tappan were held "in common"– that is, the whole tract was owned by the patentees as a group. They divided part of the land among themselves in 1704 and issued non-survey deeds which are almost impossible to locate today. The owner of each share received a deed in which the other patentees signed away their rights. In the ensuing years the remaining land was settled upon, exchanged and laid claim to by the various shareholders. The Second Division of the Tappan patent was formally agreed upon in 1721, dividing all the lands including those deeded in 1704, surveying and issuing surveyed deeds. Some of the deeds of the Second Division, however, were written several years after that date.

During the Colonial years New York and New Jersey disputed bitterly over their boundary which divided governments as well as land rights. Finally, in 1769, commissioners appointed by the King of England settled the discord by deciding on the present state line. Change in jurisdiction occurred in 1773 and the line was marked with milestones in 1774 at points indicating the distance from the Hudson River. Milestone Four was off Orangeburgh Road North. Milestone Five was in the Greenwoods.

The settlement of the New York - New Jersey boundary severed Old Tappan from its original connection with Orange County and the Colony of New York. It was now part of the Province of New Jersey.

Though title to their land was based on a New York land grant, provisions of the boundary settlement confirmed rights of ownership to Old Tappan landowners who found themselves on the New Jersey side of the line, as well as to those whose properties were now partly in both states. Soon after the settlement, the people of Old Tappan joined others in a petition for the formation of a new township which took in a large portion of northern Bergen County. It was known as Harington Township (spelling changed to Harrington in the latter part of the 19th century). Old Tappan was to be part of it for 119 years.

The Blauvelts, Harings, Flierbooms and Smidts were the leading families of the Tappan patent. The Harings were by far the most important family of what is today Old Tappan. Jan Pietersen Haring probably never settled on his lands (he

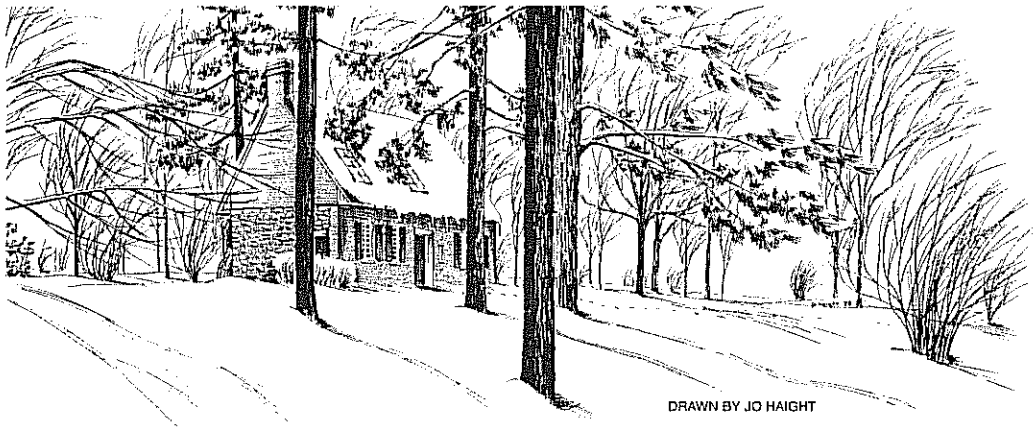


COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

This two-foot-high milestone was located in the Old Tappan Greenwoods, five miles from the Hudson River. Faintly visible on this side of the stone, which was photographed from the New Jersey side, was "New Jersey 5." On the reverse side "New York 5" was inscribed.

died in 1683) but most of his seven children did. Two sons, Peter Haring and Cosyn Haring, were patentees.

Jan Pieterson Haring's widow married Daniel DeClark (deKlerck) who emigrat-



The DeWint House, Tappan, NY

ed from Holland to New York about 1676 and later became a member of the Dutch settlement on lands within the Tappan patent. In 1700 DeClark built the DeWint House in Tappan, New York. Until the DeWints bought it in 1746, it was known as the DeClark House. This two-story house, with its steeply pitched roof, was built of local sandstone and brick from Holland, with seventy purple Dutch tiles about its mantelpiece. It was a monument of luxury compared with houses of a generation before.

Cosyn Haring acquired four tracts in the various divisions of the patent, totaling 732½ acres, 469½ of which were located in Old Tappan. Sometime between 1704 and 1721 either Cosyn or his son, Jan Cosyn, built the remarkable Dutch farmhouse on De Wolf Road. The house has remained in the original family ownership ever since, never having been deeded to anyone, and the sheepskin deed to Cosyn Haring's share in the first division of the patent in 1704 is still in the possession of the family.

Cosyn Haring was an important community member, an organizer of the Tappan Church, assessor, and a Captain in the Orange County Militia. He died in 1743, leaving the farm to his heirs.

Cosyn Haring's will, made in 1733, gives us in the following excerpts the first instance of how an original large land-holding was disbursed: *"I leave to my daughter Maritie, wife of Johanes Bogart, all that my land known by the name of Hemp meadow; also a lot of land lying at a place called the Greenbush (Blauvelt, NY) both lying in said Tappan. I leave to my daughter Grietie, wife of Jacobus Demarest, all the northeasterly half of my plantation where I dwell at present, adjoining to the land of Cornelius Smith; Also ½ of the land which belongs to said farm or plantation 'known by the name of the Little Mountains' which belongs to the old farm and ¼ of the meadow which lieth within the bounds and limits of the land of my son John Haering (Jan Cosyn Haring). I leave to my grand-children viz: Gerret Eckeson, Willempia Eckesson and Cornelius Eckerson[1], the children of my daughter Mariah, deceased, all the southwesterly half of my farm (clockwise to Cripplebush Road) or plantation where I do dwell at present, lying between the common road and the partition fence, the bounds of my daughter Grietie, except my house and barn, and one row or range of apple trees; Also ½ of the tract called the Little Mountains, which belongs to the old farm and ¼ of the meadow, which lieth within the bounds and limits of the lands of my son John Haering."* The will was witnessed by David Demarest and John and Jacob Flierboom. Gerret C. Eckerson's siblings signed over their shares in the property to him and he took over the house on the site of the present Ingleside Nursing Home.

Excerpts from some of the Eckerson family wills paint a picture (albeit a confusing one because of generational repetition of first names) of how lands were bequeathed, bought and divided:

The will of Cornelius Eckerson, whose home was probably on the site of the Herrick House on the west side of Washington Avenue, left to the heirs of his sons John and Garret deceased, among other bequests, *"that part of my farm called Stone Point"*.

Abraham Eckerson made a will in 1837 leaving to his grandson Abraham C. Eckerson (son of Cornelius, deceased), *"a lot of land commonly called the swamp...adjoining partly on the north by the land purchased of John Duryea and westerly by the Hackensack River.* (about 24 acres)

"Also half of salt meadow lot purchased of Harmon Tallman." (Many an Old Tappan farmer owned a small lot on the Tappan salt meadow, near present-day Piermont. The salt hay grown there was a valuable commodity in farming.)

To John A: *"lot in southerly end of farm commonly called the Sand Hill."* (next to Cripplebush)

To Gerret: *"that part of my real estate where I now dwell (site of* Ingleside*) ...beginning in the middle of the public road opposite the barn of my brother Cornelius Eckerson where the fence runs easterly..."*

Wills also show that fathers provided for their daughters. An unusual bequest, is found in the will of Cornelius Eckerson, dated 1841–*"to my daughter Margaret the kitchen on the south side of my dwelling house, the use of part of the cellar, the use of apples out of the orchard and part of the garden as long as she remains unmarried"*.

These samples show how lands were divided and identified, but the will of Cosyn Haring concludes by showing also that, no matter the divisions, the far-flung families were bound together as one: *"Further I will that all my children and grandchildren herein named shall jointly stand together to bear all cost and charges to defend their land which I have herein granted to them if it should so happen that any claim might come upon any part thereof by any person or persons whatsoever"*.

Frederick Haring, youngest son of Jan Cosyn Haring, built the house on De Wolf Road at Old Tappan Road about 1752 on land that was part of his grandfather Cosyn Haring's holdings. Frederick Haring had become a prominent man of the community during Colonial times and he served as First Lieutenant of Captain Eckor's Company of Foot in the Orange County Regiment of Militia. Two of his sons, John F. Haring and Garret F. Haring, served in the Revolutionary War as members of the Bergen County Militia.

On May 30, 1752 Frederick married

[1] *Spelling was whimsical in those days and names have been found spelled in several different ways. Note that the name Eckerson is spelled three different ways in the same sentence.*

COURTESY OF ELAINE HAMILTON

The house pictured here was built circa 1752 by Frederick Haring, youngest son of Jan Cosyn Haring. It remained in the Haring family's possession until 1928. Dormers were added and other modifications were made after this picture was taken.

his cousin Rachel Haring, daughter of Abraham Haring and Dirckje Tallman. The house passed to the youngest of their ten children, Abraham F. Haring, who died in 1858, leaving the house to his son Frederick A. Haring. He married Mary Ann Bogert of Closter and the youngest of their thirteen children was another Garret F. Haring, born in 1854. He was the last Haring owner and gradually sold most of his acreage.

John F. Haring, named above, was just 16 years old when he began serving in the Bergen County Militia in 1776. His commanding officer was Capt. Abraham T. Blauvelt who lived in the house at the junction of De Wolf and Orangeburgh Roads. This house was in the Blauvelt family's possession for over 100 years. In 1780 John F. Haring married Abraham Blauvelt's younger sister, Jacomynte, and their home was opposite what is now Bi-State Plaza. Their oldest son Frederick Haring (1782-1869) and his family lived out their lives in this house and were buried in the old burial vault on the part of their farm later known as Todd's Hill. John F. Haring died in 1836 and is buried in the cemetery of the Dutch Reformed Church in Tappan, New York.

Before the American Revolution the Jersey Dutch of the Hackensack Valley were split into two factions by a bitter dispute within their church. For many of them the war was not only a conflict between England and America but also an opportunity to express the conflicts between themselves. Neighbor often turned against neighbor.

During the war Bergen County and Orange County South of the Mountains formed a borderland between the American stronghold in the Hudson Highlands and Ramapos and the British forces stationed in New York City. Parties of Tories, British troops and even foraging Americans seriously depleted the farms of this area. To protect their valuables from marauders and raiders, the farmers often buried their personal property; in Nyack, a grandfather clock was buried in a grave during the war.

A legend of buried treasure around the Frederick Haring house probably originated in those times. When Garret Haring (known as Uncle Gare to his nieces and nephews and all their friends) sold some property near his house in 1925, it was agreed that any buried treasure found would belong to him. So far, none has been discovered. Another tale is of the British entering the Haring-De Wolf house, looting and smashing china and taking every horse they could find in the fields. A fanning mill (a machine for separating chaff from grain by air) was hidden in the Greenwoods and escaped their plunder.

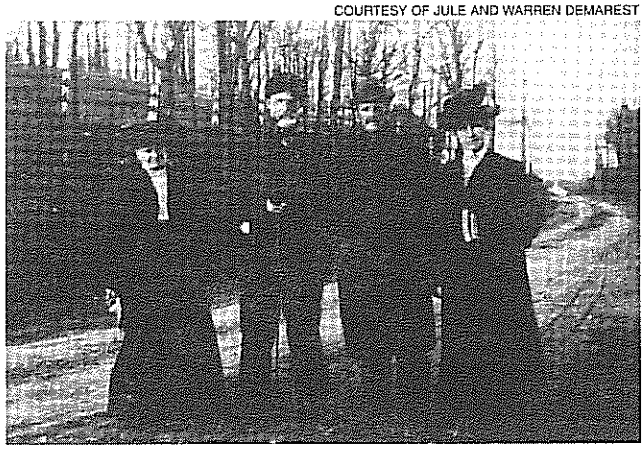
Except for a skirmish that was said to have taken place on the farm of John Hogencamp on Orangeburgh Road, when a raiding party of British soldiers tangled with members of the local militia, no major Revolutionary historic events occurred within the present boundaries of Old Tappan. Both the trial and execution of the British spy Major John André in Tappan, New York and the Baylor Massacre in River Vale, New Jersey happened within 200 yards of the Borough's borders.

In the Revolution the De Wint house in Tappan, New York served as

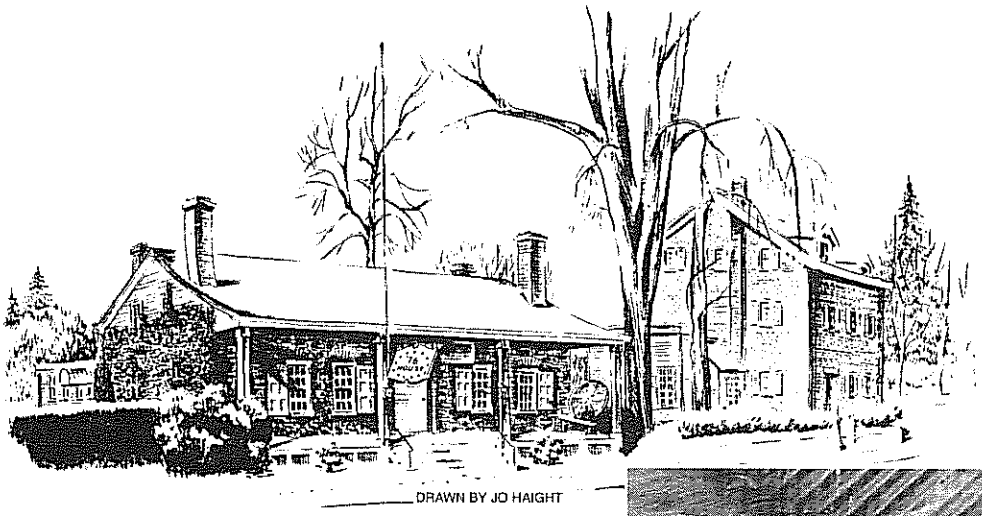
COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

Frederick Haring (1804-1883) seated with his dog outside the Frederick Haring House which he inherited in 1858 upon the death of his father.

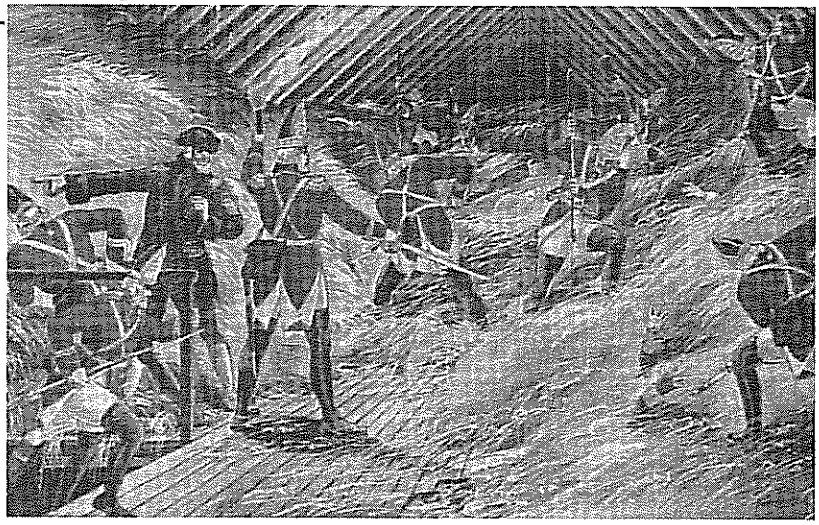
COURTESY OF JULE AND WARREN DEMAREST



Elizabeth and Garret Haring (left) and Fannie and Frederick Demarest (right) pictured on Old Tappan Road. The hill shown behind them was dug away and the ground leveled. Bi-State Plaza now occupies the site.



The '76 House, Tappan, NY



In this painting by Frank R. Paul, British General Charles Grey is seen commanding the attack force which surprised Colonel George Baylor's Dragoons as they slept in various barns just over Lachmund's Bridge in what is now River Vale. Although this painting exemplifies the barbarity of the incident, it is questionable that British troops actually entered the barns.

Washington's headquarters during the trial of Major André. British General Clinton had assigned André the task of arranging with General Benedict Arnold (then in command of West Point) for the surrender of the Hudson Valley to the British. They met at a landing just below Stony Point, New York, but the vessel on which André was to return was fired upon and slipped down the river, leaving him stranded in American territory. Disguised as a civilian, André tried to go across country but was captured at Tarrytown by three militiamen who discovered the incriminating papers hidden in his boots.[2] André was taken to Tappan, imprisoned in the '76 House and tried in the Dutch Reformed Church, the same church that served so many Old Tappan residents in the early days.

The Dutch Reformed Church, later known as the Tappan Reformed Church, Tappan, NY

The Baylor Massacre took place on the other side of Old Tappan where the Hackensack River forms the boundary with River Vale. In September of 1778 Colonel George Baylor, Commanding Officer of the Third Regiment of Continental Dragoons, decided to move his regiment from its station at Paramus (then a small hamlet on the Saddle River) to an area along the Hackensack River near Old Tappan. The purpose of this move was to monitor more closely the progress of British forces under Lord Cornwallis who had invaded the lower part of Bergen County and were then in the vicinity of Hackensack.

Colonel Baylor and his troopers arrived at their destination along what is now River Vale Road in River Vale on September 27, 1778. The force of twelve officers and 104 enlisted men was quartered in the houses and barns of several local farmers, one being Cornelius A. Haring and his son Ralph. Haring warned Colonel Baylor that he believed the British were lying at New Bridge (near Hackensack) and might at any time come upon them. Colonel Baylor was not alarmed but posted as guard a sergeant and twelve men at the bridge over the Hackensack River (Lachmund's Bridge) about half a mile south of Haring's house. Patrols were sent out on different roads leading to the bridge, one traveling on Old Tappan Road to present-day Washington Avenue in Old Tappan.

Lord Cornwallis, nine miles away, was notified by some Tories of the whereabouts and vulnerable positions of Baylor and his men. He formed a plan to surprise and capture the regiment during the night as well as to make a simultaneous attack upon a large group of American militia at or near the village of Tappan, New York, several miles to the east. Major General Sir Charles Grey, notorious as a marauder, was assigned the duty of attacking the sleeping Baylor and his dragoons. This he did with stealth and ferocity, commanding his troops to show no mercy to the defenseless American soldiers. The result of this slaughter was that out of the 116 men of the regiment, 11 were instantly bayoneted to death, 17 left behind covered with bayonet wounds and expected to die. Thirty-nine were taken prisoner, eight of whom were severely wounded, some dying later. The rest of the troopers escaped in the darkness.

John A. Haring of the Bergen County Militia was sent, along with others from Paramus, to bury the slain soldiers. Several were buried in tan vats no longer used on the Blauvelt farm, the only marker being a large grinding stone used to pulverize tan bark. This stone was removed in 1908 and set up on a low hill along River Vale Road about a half mile away. Although it was an ever-present reminder of the Baylor Massacre, knowledge of the burial site itself faded with the years.

In the summer of 1967, 189 years

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[2] Old Tappan resident Jay Gardner is a descendant of John Paulding, one of the militiamen. He remembers as a child being told the story by his paternal grandmother, Ella Blauvelt Gardner.

after the massacre, a search was begun along the banks of the Hackensack River for the neglected and forgotten graves. Work was started at the site by Tom Demarest and three college students. A clue to the actual whereabouts of the graves was given by Mr. George Fournier of Westwood whose father had owned the farm when the stone was taken out in 1908. George Fournier was just a boy at that time but he remembered his grandfather saying that the men were buried "around the stone". Digging was continued in the vicinity of an old, brush-filled hole where it was thought the stone had been and soon, some 20 feet from this hole and two and a half feet below the surface, the first grave was finally found; the soldier in this grave was designated Dragoon #1.

School groups, Scout troops and curious individuals flocked to the site daily and a special display was arranged for their viewing. The gravesite was made into a two acre county park, a lovely wayside retreat – a tribute to those who died nearby during the Revolutionary War.

After the Revolutionary War the populace of Old Tappan resumed its life as a rural community. Claims were submitted for compensation of damage and losses suffered at the hands of both sides during the conflict. The lands of residents who had been Loyalists were confiscated by the new government and sold. Peter T. Haring was a Loyalist who lost his lands this way. As eldest son, he had inherited from his father most of the lands north of Orangeburgh Road running into New York State. His brother, Johannes T. Haring, inherited the northernmost strip and he bought lands to the west. After Peter's lands were confiscated Johannes bought them back. He lived his life on the family farm, raising three sons there and when he died he was buried there. His and his wife's gravestones still stand in a horse corral beside Orangeburgh Road.

A picture that could be of Old Tappan is given in the following excerpt from the *Military Journal of the American Revolution* by a surgeon's mate, James Thacher. On his regiment's march in 1778 through Kakiat, Paramus and Acquackanonk he observed: *"These towns are inhabited chiefly by Dutch people; their dwelling houses are built mostly of rough stone, one story high. There is a peculiar neatness in the appearance of their dwellings, having an airy piazza supported by pillars in front, and their kitchens connected at the ends in the form of wings. The land is remarkably level and the soil fertile; and being generally advantageously cultivated, the people appear to enjoy ease and happy competency. The furniture in their houses is of the most ordinary kind, and such as might be supposed to accord with the fashion of the days of Queen Anne. They despise the superfluities of life, and are ambitious to appear always neat and cleanly, and never complain of an empty purse."*

James Thacher might have added that the Dutch language was still spoken in daily life among the descendants of the original Dutch settlers, particularly in the Tappan area where it was stated in 1776 that *"the Orangetown regiment is chiefly composed of such as know but little of the English language..."* In 1878, a full 100 years later or almost two centuries after the first settlement at Tappan, the Dutch language was still heard there, probably more there than anywhere else in this country.

An 1820 survey of Old Tappan Road showed no more than 11 houses between Lachmund's Bridge and the New York - New Jersey state line. One of these was the house Theunis Haring built around 1810 at 70 Old Tappan Road East. With its gambrel roof, curved overhanging eaves and locally quarried sandstone construction, it typified the Dutch style of architecture native to the New World.

The land on which the house was built was acquired in the 1721 division of the Tappan patent by Theunis Roelofsen Van Houton and stretched northeast of Orangeburgh Road and into what is now Rockland County. At that time there was no boundary line; the entire area was part of Orange County, New York. Upon Van Houton's death in 1737 the 190 acre main homestead was divided, going to sons, grandsons and sons-in-law. Through marriage, succession and acquisition over many years the property came into the possession of Theunis Haring, a direct descendant of Jan Pieterson Haring, one of the negotiators for the purchase of the lands in the Tappan patent. This Haring family was politically prominent in the 19th Century, Theunis and two of his sons all serving as Bergen County Freeholders. One son, Abram B. Haring, was Sheriff of Bergen County in 1856.

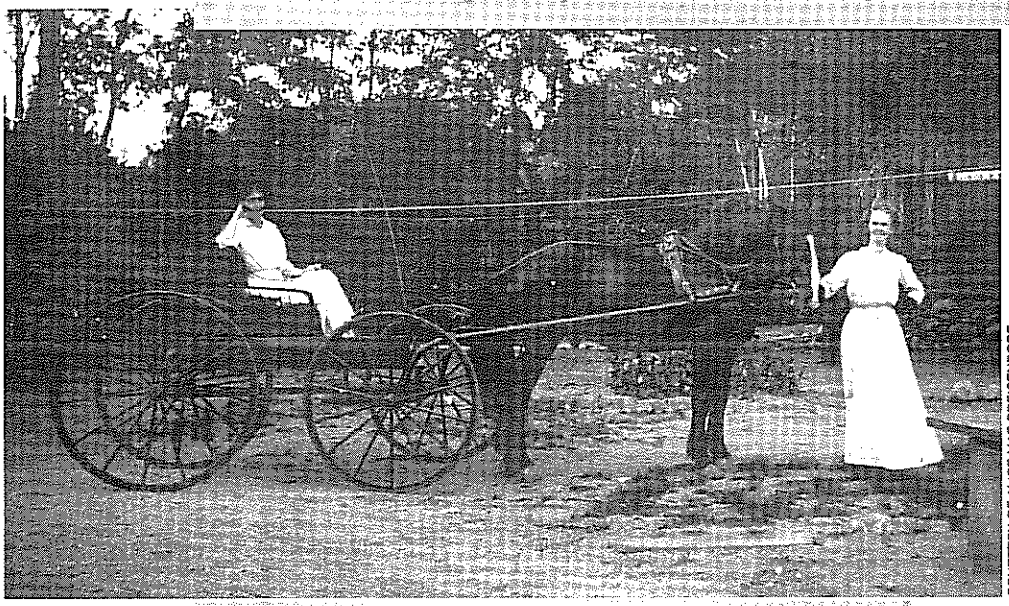
This picture of the Theunis Haring House was taken in 1875-76. Standing to the left with the oxen is Tomas Jefferson, a black farm hand who worked for John T. Haring (pictured center with his wife) and John's son, Richard B. Haring (in the sleigh with his wife). All three men's names are on the Poll List (page 22).

COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN LIBRARY

The Haring-De Wolf House pictured is the oldest house existing in Old Tappan and has remained in the same family possession since it was erected almost certainly circa 1720.

COURTESY OF ELAINE HAMILTON

Will and Anna Demarest were spending the day at De Wolf's farm when Anna had her picture taken seated in the wagon with Bertha De Wolf (young wife of Charles) holding their black horse. (Below)



COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

It took little for Bertha De Wolf (left) and her two friends to have a delightful picnic–just some food, a blanket and a fairly level place in a meadow.

In 1852 Catherine Haring, a lineal descendant of Cosyn and John C. Haring, married Martin De Wolf of Hackensack, a descendant of Huybreght DeWolfe, who had fled his homeland during the French Revolution. He was a portrait painter and a manufacturer of white lead (base for oil paints). These talents enabled him to earn a good living in Hackensack where there was a demand for such luxury items as family portraits.

Martin De Wolf (the 'e' now dropped from his name) was a scholar and a teacher in Old Tappan who taught from the classics and the nationally used McGuffey's Readers. For his great-granddaughter, Rachel Post Higdon, the discovery of these literary treasures years later opened up the world of books and inspired her love of reading.

With the marriage of Catherine Haring and Martin De Wolf, their home was now called the Haring–De Wolf House. Their son, John Haring De Wolf, was the first Mayor of the Borough of Old Tappan. The school, built in 1940, was named after his son, Charles De Wolf. His son, also Charles De Wolf, in 1967 sold fifty acres of his property to the Borough for the municipal golf course. The homestead itself remains in

the ownership of the same family chain to this day.

The greatest increase in building in Old Tappan took place prior to the Civil War between 1840, when there were about 26 structures, and 1861 when the number almost doubled.

In the 1800s roads were named by their destinations: Old Tappan Road was "the road to Tappantown" as Tappan was then known, and was occasionally referred to as "the road to Piermont;" by 1860 Central Avenue was "the road to Norwood" (Norwood Avenue); Chestnut Avenue was "the Wagon Road." De Wolf Road, before it took its name from the De Wolf family who lived there, was Orangeville Road, and was sometimes called "the road to Pearl River, New York." The area around present-day Rockland State Hospital was then known as the Schoyer Clove. The southern end of Orangeburgh Road in Old Tappan was "the Hochstadt", or "High Town Road." Blaisdell Road, extending into New York State from De Wolf Road, was also called "Hochstadt" which became corrupted in time to simply "Hog Road." The residents of the new homes built there in the sixties didn't like this name and had it changed to Blaisdell Road.

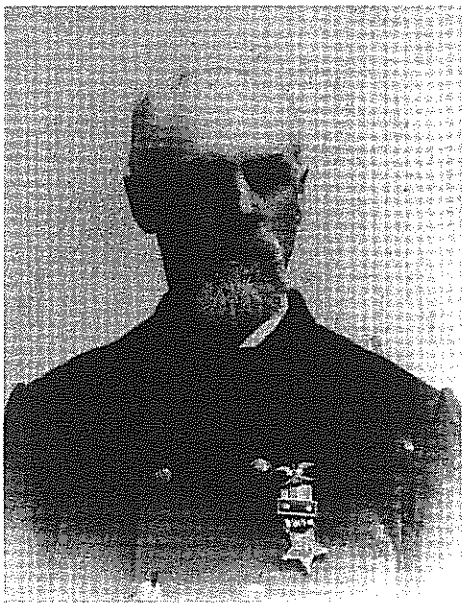
There were trails and rough roads through fields and woods whose names were known (if they were named at all) only by the local populace. One of these, mentioned in a conversation many years ago by Mayor John De Wolf to Pete Oakes, was the Oyster Shell Road. It was a short cut from the De Wolf home to Orangeburg, New York. An 1806 map shows the existence of a trail-like road just over the line in New York State leading in that direction. Tradition had it that such a short cut did exist there in the 1860s and '70s. In 1989 many oyster shells were found along Blaisdell Road when a new building was constructed there and the earth along the main road was disturbed. They were not the remnants of paving on the road itself but were located in what appeared to be a trash site.

Oysters were readily available in the Hudson River in the Piermont - Nyack area and were consumed locally. It is unlikely that any part of the Oyster Shell Road was in Old Tappan itself, but there are vestiges of its existence in Rockland County.

Old Tappan was little affected by the Civil War. The State of New Jersey, largely Democratic, was antagonistic toward Lincoln and had considerable feeling for the Southern cause; the southern tip of New Jersey extends below the latitude of the Mason-Dixon line.

Bergen County was still peopled mostly by individualistic Jersey Dutch farmers, many of whom were entirely opposed to the war, feeling that if the South wanted to secede let it do so. These people were called "*Copperheads.*" Although there were prominent citizens of the state who fought on the Confederate side, the state did not desert the Union and its young men went to war to preserve it.

Nicholas Collignon and Jacob Eckerson joined the 22nd Regiment of New Jersey Volunteers and came home safely, though Collignon suffered wounds which affected his health for the rest of his life. Until his death Jacob Eckerson was a faithful attendant at gatherings of veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), as the Union forces were known.



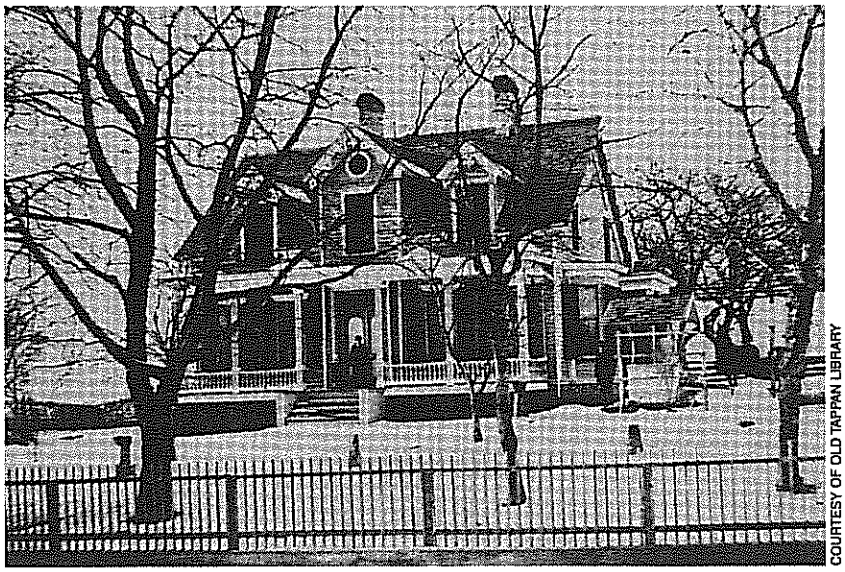
COURTESY OF KRISTI ECKERSON STRICKLAND

Jacob Blauvelt Eckerson shown in his GAR uniform.

COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

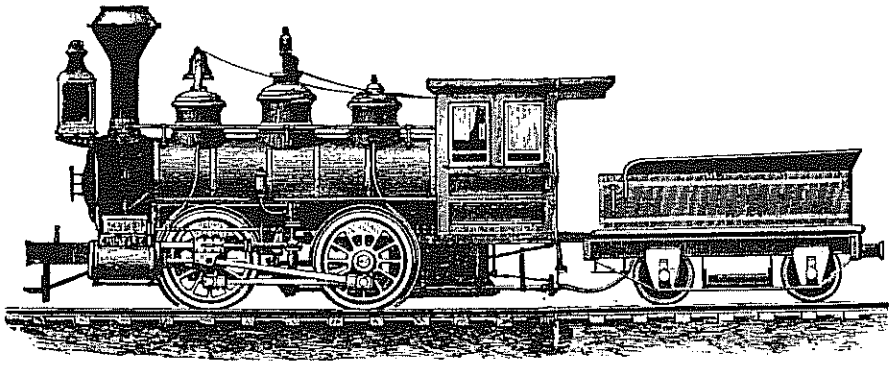
Jacob Blauvelt Eckerson in 1862 at the age of 23 pictured in his Civil War uniform.

In 1873 Jacob Eckerson was married and built the present house at 280 Old Tappan Road West upon the sandstone foundation of the first house built there by his grandfather, James A. Eckerson, in 1830. The romantic principles of picturesque architecture promoted by A. J. Downing at that time were incorporated in this home by the use of various roof shapes, accenting dormers, bay windows and by decorative trim such as vergeboards. Succeeding years brought alterations as tastes changed and the late 19th Century shutters, porch balustrades and vergeboard trim have long since been removed.



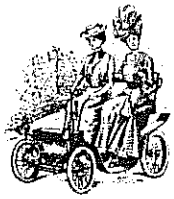
COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN LIBRARY

The picket fence is no longer there, but the Jacob Blauvelt Eckerson House pictured here in 1875 is easily recognizable today.



In 1859 the first of three railroads to serve northern Bergen County came to the region. It was the Northern Railroad of New Jersey and it linked Jersey City in the south to Piermont, NY in the north. The wood burning, steam driven locomotives pulled trains that stopped at stations along the way, serving commuters, the needs of residential neighborhoods and industrial development, all of which resulted from this railroad. Closter and Norwood were the nearest stations to Old Tappan. The line is now the Northern Branch of Erie Lackawanna.

In 1869 the New York to Hackensack line was extended to Westwood and Hillsdale, and by 1873 it ran through Park Ridge, Woodcliff Lake and on into New York State as far as Spring Valley. Homes and businesses naturally clustered along the rail lines. At one time a railroad spur was proposed which would have come to Old Tappan but it was not built and Old Tappan remained rural and virtually undeveloped farmland.



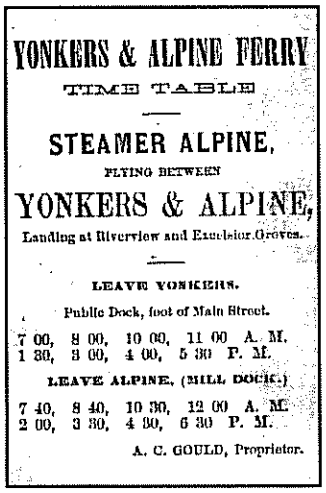
In 1883 the West Shore New York to Buffalo Railroad began operations, running trains from Weehawken to Buffalo, with stops in West Norwood, NJ, and Tappan, NY, the closest stations to Old Tappan. The passenger cars on the West Shore Line were splendidly fitted out with green upholstery and mahogany trim. The brakeman lighted gas lamps with a flame-tipped rod when the train entered tunnels. A 1925 record states that over 30 passenger trains passed on this route every day.

At Weehawken regular ferry service to 42nd Street in New York City completed the trip. The Northern Railroad connected with ferry service from Exchange Place in Jersey City to Cortland Street in New York City. These two ferry lines provided the greatest number of crossings, but a 1925 schedule lists others as well, with less frequent service: from Nyack to Tarrytown, from Alpine to Yonkers, from Englewood to Dyckman Street, New York City, from Fort Lee to 130th Street, New York City. A ferry ride provided an "excursion trip" across the scenic river and a welcome interval on the daily commute.

Trolleys crisscrossed lower Bergen County and beyond. They served both as links with the railroads and independently of them. The Hudson River Line, the last of the trolleys which had provided rapid and cheap transportation from 1896 to 1938, was abandoned and replaced, as other lines had been, by bus service.

Such excellent ferry and train service made travel to New York from Old Tappan pleasurable, despite the soot in summer from the engine's smokestack. Jumping up to shut windows was a frequent exercise. Transportation to the train station was by horse and carriage, joined early in the 20th century by "motor cars" and finally by cars only. Those living close enough to the station could walk.

Milling as an industry at Stony Point in Old Tappan began shortly before 1725 when a grist mill and dwelling were built at the "Steen Point" or Stone Point, on the north side of the Hackensack River. The site was very favorable for milling purposes; the river was deep, level and with a dam upstream, it furnished excellent water power. The mill and house were built on land owned by Johannes De Vries, eldest son of John De Vries, a freeman of part Negro blood and one of the original patentees in the Tappan patent.



YONKERS & ALPINE FERRY

TIME TABLE

STEAMER ALPINE,

FLYING BETWEEN

YONKERS & ALPINE,

Landing at Riverview and Excelsior Groves.

LEAVE YONKERS.

Public Dock, foot of Main Street.

7 00, 8 00, 10 00, 11 00 A. M.
1 30, 3 00, 4 00, 5 30 P. M.

LEAVE ALPINE, (MILL DOCK.)

7 40, 8 40, 10 30, 12 00 A. M.
2 00, 3 30, 4 30, 6 30 P. M.

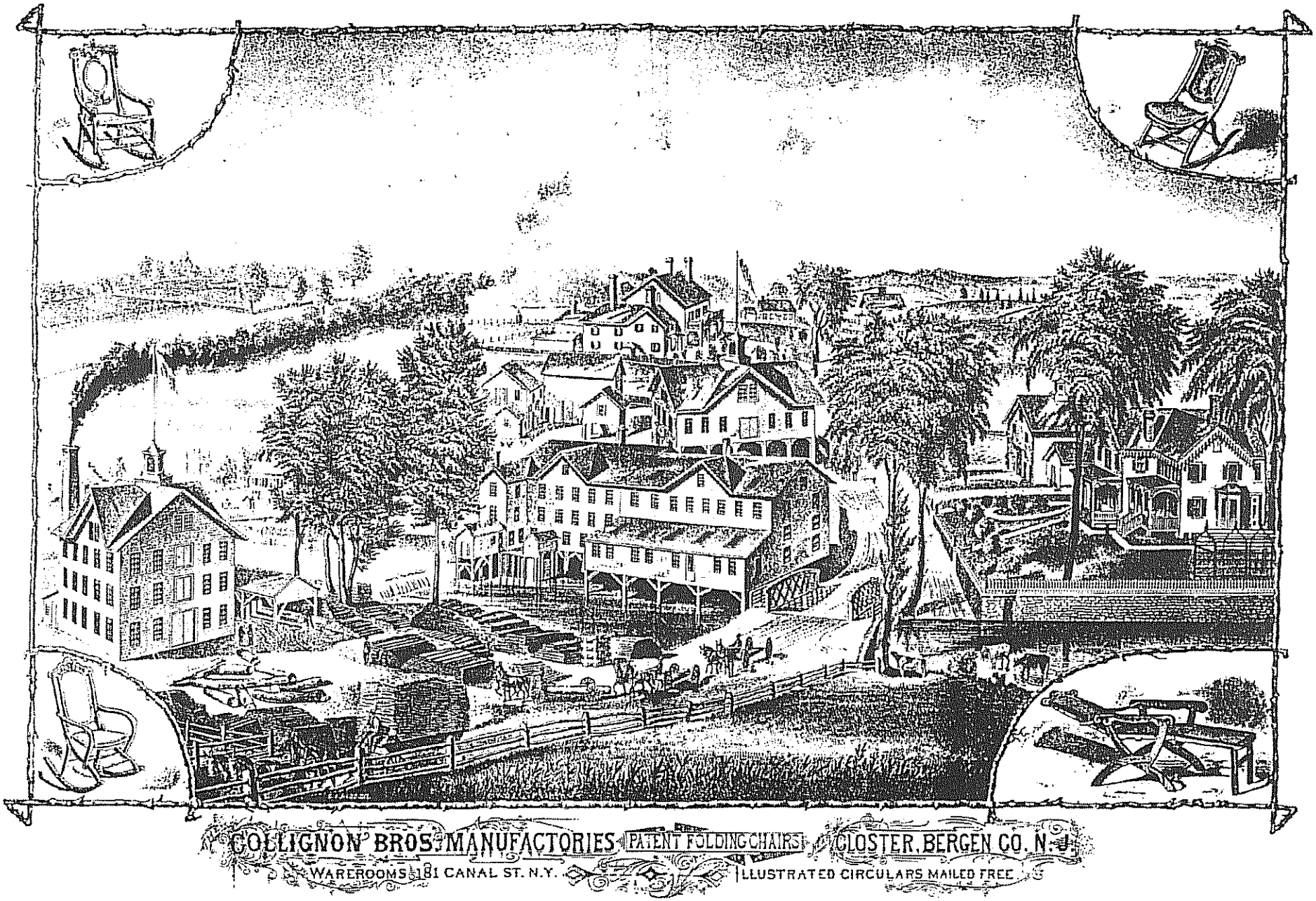
A. C. GOULD, Proprietor.

On April 16, 1725, by a Lease and Release recorded in Orange County, New York of which Old Tappan was then a part, De Vries sold a tract of 56 English acres "*and all that dwelling house and grist mill lately erected thereon*" to Heinrich Gessner, a millwright from Westchester County, for the sum of 160 pounds. Gessner operated the mill until his death in 1748, after which the property went through a series of ownerships. Around 1765 Samuel Durie acquired the property and turned it over to his brother John P. Durie who was a Loyalist in the Revolution. A judgment was entered against John in March, 1779 and his property was confiscated. As he and his wife were driven away, she uttered a curse on the land and grist mill that no one who occupied the buildings would ever be successful. This became legend in the neighborhood and was remembered when the buildings burned down in 1904.

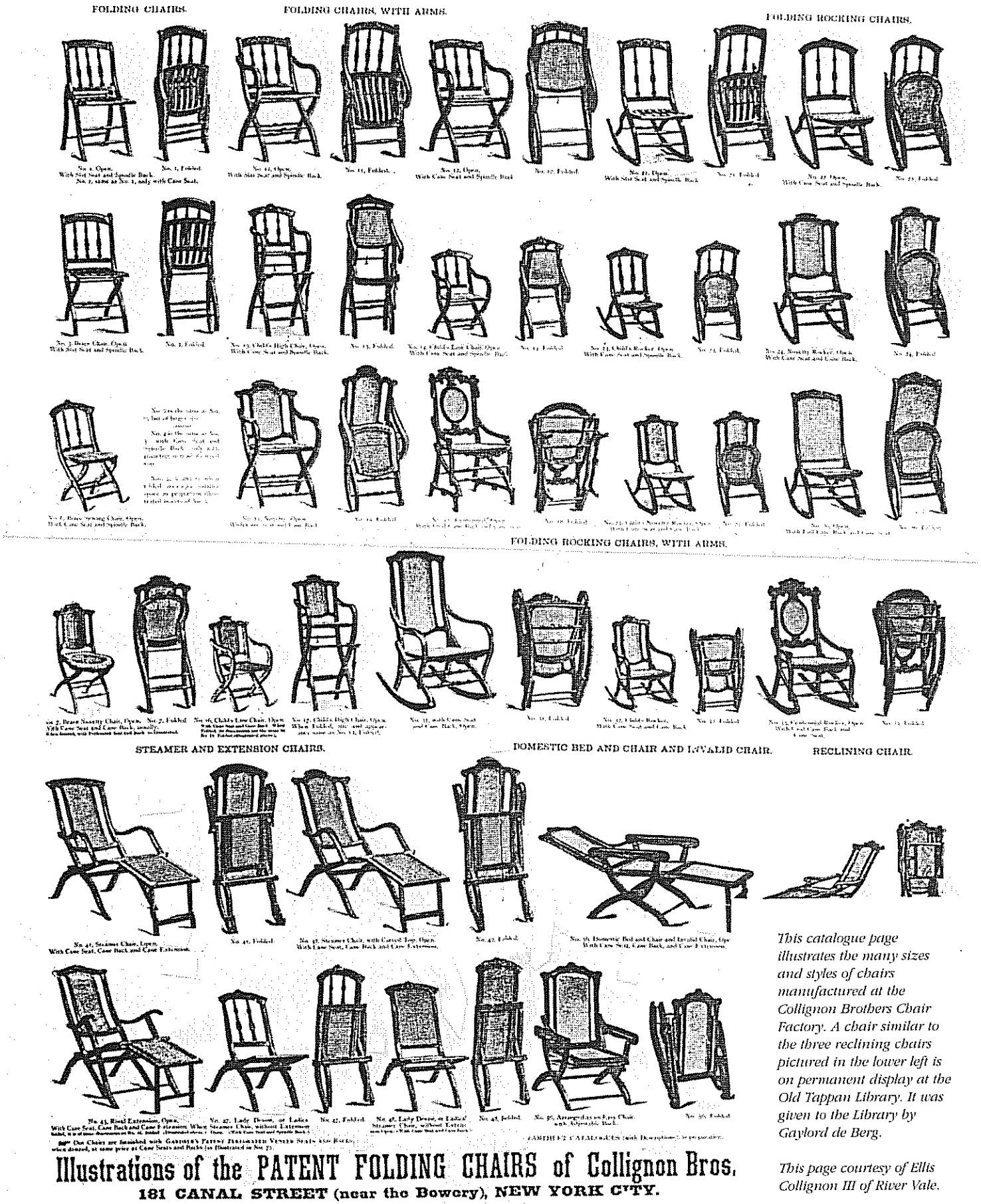
In 1818 when George Brinkerhoff became the owner, Mill Lane (as Westwood Avenue was known then), was a dead end road. In that same year it was extended over a new bridge across the Hackensack River and southerly through the land of Peter Merselis, whose brother Jacob had built a grist mill in 1800 further up the river near Old Tappan Road. Peter and Jacob Merselis were grandsons of John Flierboom, one of the early settlers of the Tappan patent.

There then followed a swap in 1827 between Brinkerhoff and Jacob Merselis, each buying the other's property for the same sum – $3,000. The Brinkerhoff mill passed through many hands as a grist mill, eventually ending as Hasbrouck's cider mill in the 1870s. Its foundation and dam are still visible at the Hackensack River downstream from Lachmund's Bridge.

Jacob Merselis sold his new mill and property to John Humphrey and his son, William, in 1839. The Humphreys started a chair factory as a sideline to



This picture was the centerfold advertisement in a catalogue issued circa 1880. It is an artist's rendering of the Collignon Brothers Chair Factory and dwellings situated on Westwood Avenue by the Hackensack River at Leslie's Bridge. The factory buildings were all destroyed by fire in 1904. The Nicholas Collignon House on the lower right of the picture burned down in 1943 when it was the home of the Leslie family. The Claudius Collignon House, top center of the picture, is the only remaining dwelling from the Collignon Manufactory.



This catalogue page illustrates the many sizes and styles of chairs manufactured at the Collignon Brothers Chair Factory. A chair similar to the three reclining chairs pictured in the lower left is on permanent display at the Old Tappan Library. It was given to the Library by Gaylord de Berg.

This page courtesy of Ellis Collignon III of River Vale.

COURTESY OF FRANZ AND ROBERT COLWELL

In 1931 renowned photographer Lewis Hine (1874-1940) took this picture of the Claudius Collignon House on one of his visits to the Fred McMurry family who owned the house at the time. Hine enjoyed playing tennis on the court in the backyard of the house.

the milling business and operated it until their deaths in 1849 and 1850. Their estate was settled and the properties sold to Isaac I. Cole in 1851 for $3,560.

On April 16, 1857 Cole sold the site to Nicholas Collignon, who, with his brother Claudius, established the largest chair manufacturing mill in the State of New Jersey. Nicholas married Catherine Demarest in 1855. His brother Claudius married Sarah Cleveland, niece of Isaac I. Cole.

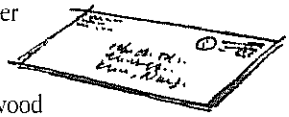
From the designs of Nicholas and another brother Adam (who later established his own chair factory in River Vale) this firm patented and made a specialty of folding wooden chairs, including the first folding rocking chair in the country, which was reported to "enjoy a great popularity." Part of their production was steamer chairs for use on ocean going vessels, especially those of the Cunard Steamship Line. This enabled the firm to expand its market abroad. Mill buildings were enlarged, supplementary steam power was installed and additional woodland properties were acquired from which the black walnut, maple and birch logs used in chair making were obtained. At one time as many as 100 men were employed in various departments of the business, besides the women and youths who wove the cane chair seats and backs at home. Chairs for children were made in a small-sized version.

In 1873 the firm established an office and principal shipping warehouse at 181 Canal Street in New York City. Prior to the coming of the railroad through the Pascack Valley, the chairs were taken by wagon to Closter for shipment by the Northern Railway to New York.

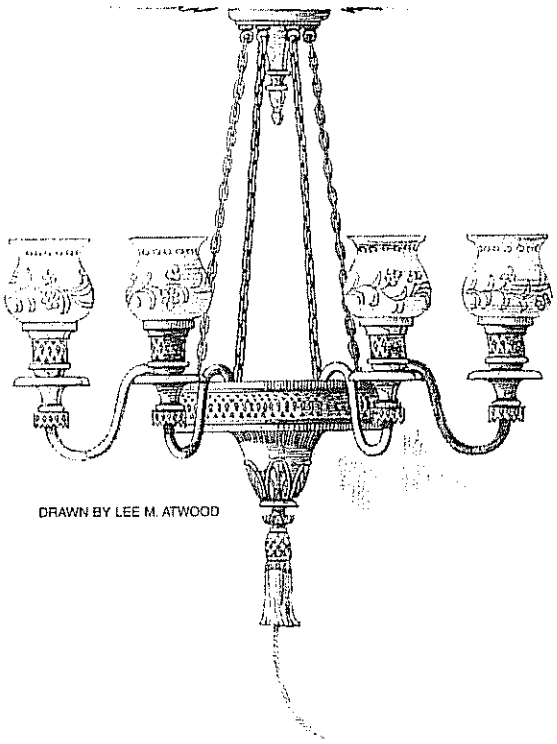
Nicholas Collignon died in 1879, his estate selling his half of the manufactory to his brother Claudius. Its market became curtailed, however, when a change in England's laws required that the furnishings used in English ships be manufactured in that country, resulting in the loss of business from a number of steamship lines. The competition from other furniture manufacturing firms, including that conducted by Adam Collignon at River Vale, and the expiration of their patents, also hurt this local industry.

Claudius Collignon died in 1891 and left his entire estate to his widow, Sarah Cleveland Collignon, who sold the business to their son, Peter C. Collignon. Peter continued with diminishing success, mainly due to large indebtedness. In 1895 he suffered foreclosure and the property was bought in a sheriff's sale by Hiram Bellis of Oradell, an agent of the Hackensack Water Company which was then acquiring considerable land along the river for watershed purposes. The buildings and machinery were leased by the Water Company to Thomas Jefferson Post, a former employee of the Collignon firm. He continued the manufacture of steamer chairs until January 1904 when fires destroyed the main buildings, materials and machinery.

Nicholas Collignon built his home on the east side of Westwood Avenue close to the river. It was a large, comfortable house with wide porches much enjoyed by the Leslie family who came into the ownership of this property around the turn of the century. In 1943 the house which had escaped destruction in 1904 was itself destroyed by fire. Attendance records of the Charles De Wolf School show that young Leon Leslie was excused from school on January fourth because his house had burned down. The stone gatehouse and the carriage house are still there today. From March 24, 1902 until June 30, 1903 Leon M. Leslie was Postmaster of the Leslie Post Office, operated out of the stone gatehouse on his property. A letter with a Leslie postmark on it is rare.



On the west side of Westwood Avenue, at 1019, is the Claudius Collignon house. Collignon built the central main part of the house, adding it (circa 1875) to his earlier two-story wing built circa 1860. This gave the house a most significant place in the manufacturing history of Old Tappan since it is the only example of a wealthy factory owner's home in the Borough. It is also unique as the only structure in Old



DRAWN BY LEE M. ATWOOD

John H. (Johnny) Lachmund posed for this picture in 1953. In addition to owning Lachmund's Hotel and grounds, he served a record 57 years as Borough Clerk of Old Tappan. John H. De Wolf, Old Tappan's first Mayor, appointed him in 1897. His last appointment was made in 1954, a month before his death, by Mayor William Davenport.

Tappan with Italianate style elements. The ornately carved raised scroll designs on the door and door surrounds are features of this style. More than likely these were executed by skilled woodcarvers and craftsmen employed by the Collignons in their factory.

Near the bridge on Westwood Avenue is a plaque erected through the sponsorship of the Old Tappan Tercentenary Committee in 1964. It marks the Stone Point mill site and mentions the Collignon Chair Factory which holds such an important place in the history of Old Tappan.

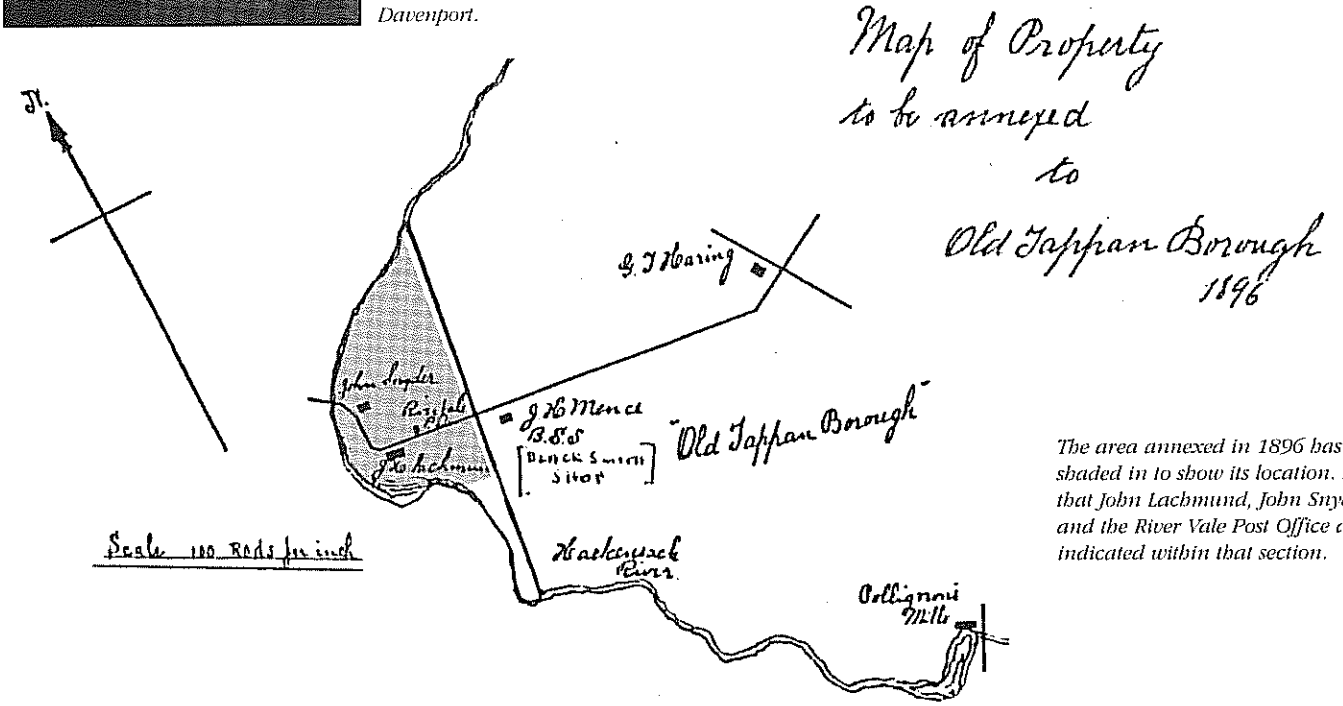
From the late 1870s when it was built and first known as Brookside Hall, the popular place to gather for entertainment and stopover was Lachmund's Hotel. It was a sprawling two-story structure on the bank of the Hackensack River where Old Tappan Road curves to cross the bridge and meet River Vale Road. The land on which Lachmund's was built was part of Old Tappan, but was incorporated into Eastwood (present River Vale) in 1894. It was rejoined to Old Tappan by special election in 1896. In the spring of 1894 the people of Overkill formed the Borough of Eastwood and included part of the River Vale section of present day Old Tappan

In 1896 Eastwood disincorporated (the only borough to do so) and John Lachmund and his now boroughless neighbors asked to be annexed to Old Tappan. At a special election on April 23, 1896 the town voted 22 to 1 to annex them, making this point of land part of Old Tappan with the Hackensack River the dividing line between the two boroughs.

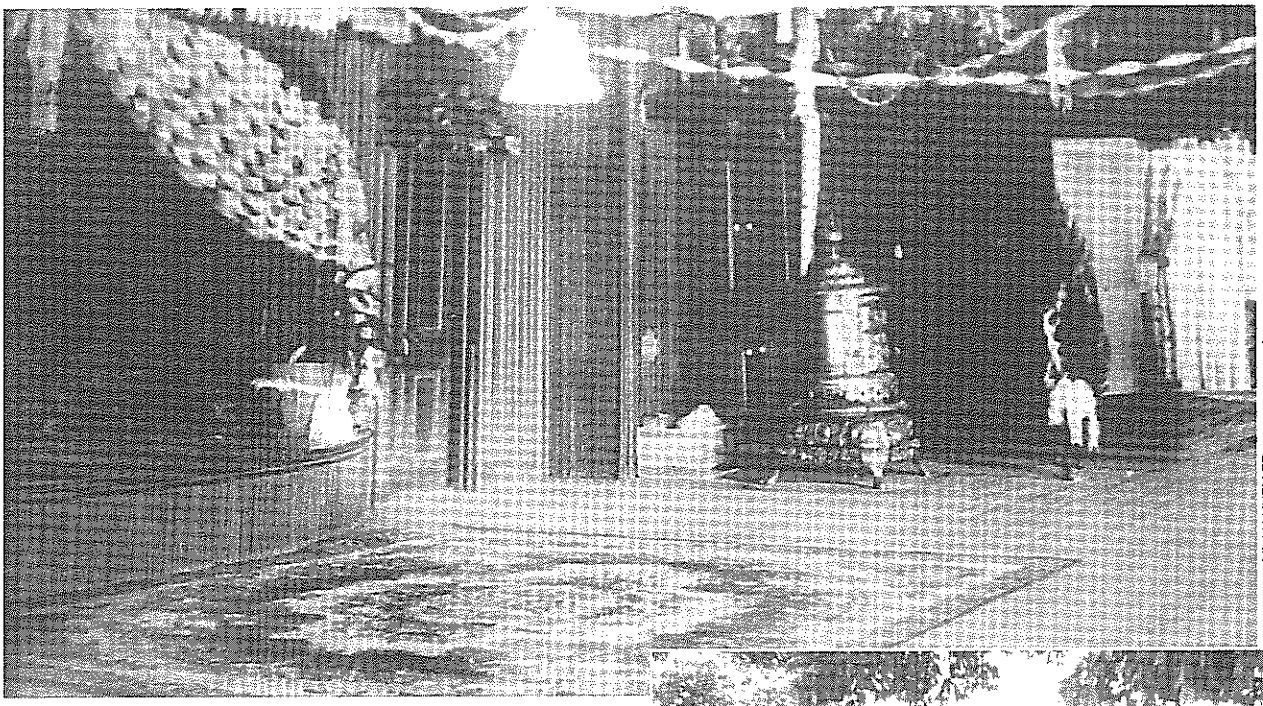
Lachmund's Hotel was built by John Lachmund, Sr. and housed the family's living quarters and a complement of dining rooms and bedrooms for summer vacationers. At one end was a general store for the year-round use of residents and travelers stopping by. On the second floor was a huge ballroom which easily accommodated wedding receptions, social club dinners, large card parties, vaudeville shows and early movies. There was also a tavern on the premises which undoubtedly added to the gaiety of Collignon's mill hands on a Saturday night. The Lachmund family staffed it all.

After 1896 Lachmund's was also the polling place where everyone voted (every man that is – the vote for women didn't come until 1920). John Lachmund, Jr. (or Johnny, as he was known) voted first because he lived there. Ballots were marked in pencil with an 'X', and tales are told of close votes where hot arguments took place and a crooked or misshapen 'X' was fiercely challenged. And there was one time when 100 registered voters were listed but 110 ballots were counted. Some jokester suggested that ten women had sneaked in!

After 1896, the Mayor and Council, with Johnny Lachmund as Borough



The area annexed in 1896 has been shaded in to show its location. Note that John Lachmund, John Snyder and the River Vale Post Office are indicated within that section.

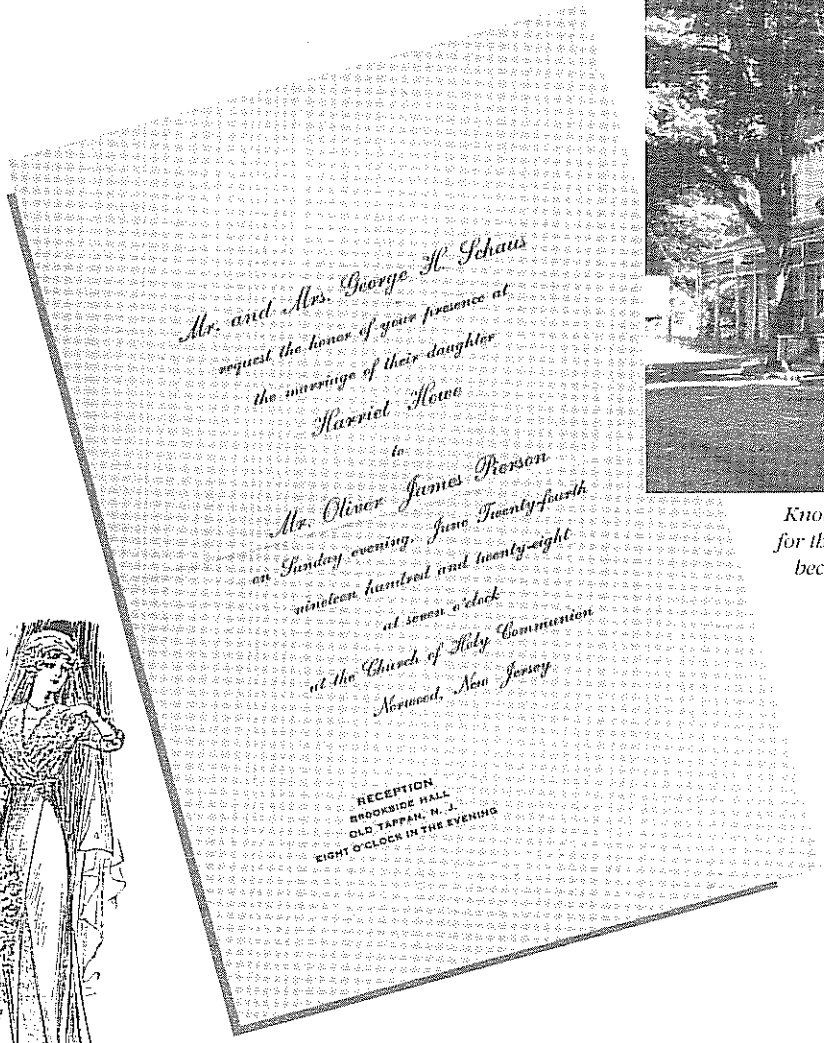


COURTESY OF JIM MUELLER

The interior dance hall ballroom of Lachmund's Hotel decorated for a wedding with crepe paper streamers and a white paper wedding bell. Ed Vanderbeck attended the Schaus-Pierson wedding as a very young boy and recalls that sawdust was put on the dance floor to make it easier to dance.

COURTESY OF SALLY WELLER

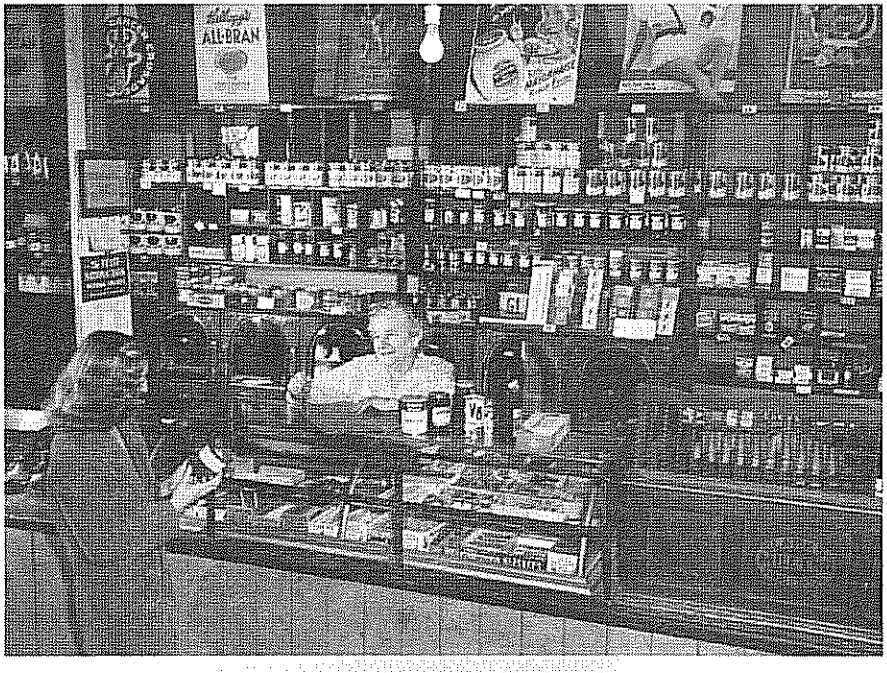
Known first as Brookside Hall, Lachmund's was the setting for this happy occasion in 1928 when Harriet Howe Schaus became the bride of Oliver James Pierson. Both lived long, productive lives on their farm on De Wolf Road.



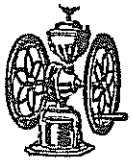
Mr. and Mrs. George H. Schaus
request the honor of your presence at
the marriage of their daughter
Harriet Howe
to
Mr. Oliver James Pierson
on Sunday evening, June Twenty-fourth
nineteen hundred and twenty-eight
at seven o'clock
at the Church of Holy Communion
Norwood, New Jersey

RECEPTION
BROOKSIDE HALL
OLD TAPPAN, N. J.
EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

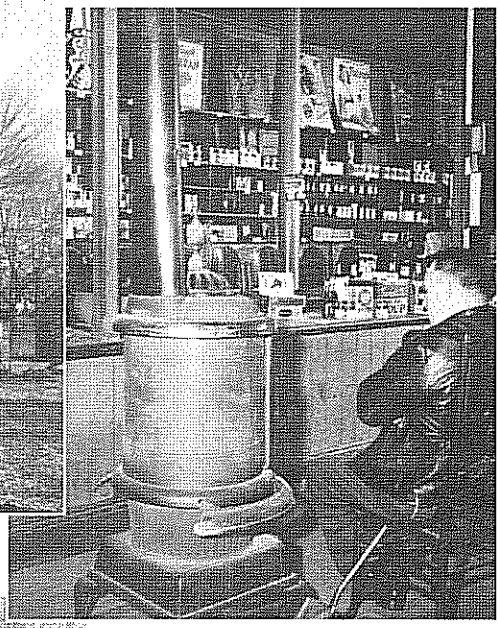
It is said that the best "help" is in the family, and here Helen Lachmund Blauvelt, sister of John Lachmund, is seen clerking in the country store.



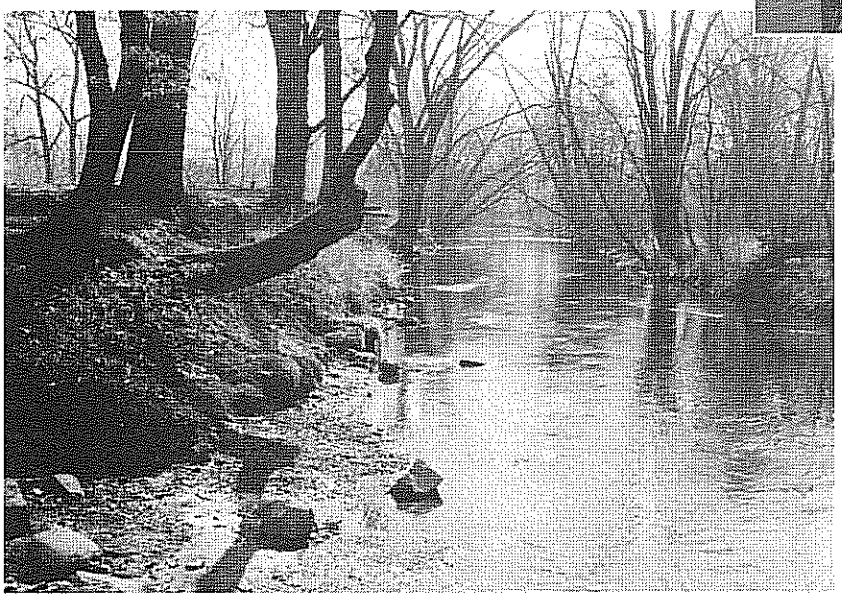
PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN LIBRARY

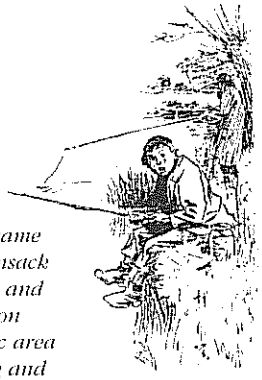


This rear view of Lachmund's shows the grape arbor from which the fragrance of ripening grapes emanated in late summer.



Wilbur Stokes, Old Tappan Tax Collector at the time this picture was taken, warming his feet by the stove in Lachmund's.





Boating parties came down the Hackensack River to the hotel and found this location behind the picnic area a favorite fishing and swimming spot.

Clerk, held their meetings in one of the smaller card rooms, after which they settled down to serious games of pinochle. Other organizations as varied as the Democratic Club and the Fish and Game Club held their meetings there also.

For a time postal service was available at Lachmund's. When it was discontinued on January 31, 1902 the large post office cabinet with its shelves and drawers and pigeon holes was given to the Pascack Historical Society which has it on permanent display at its headquarters in Park Ridge.

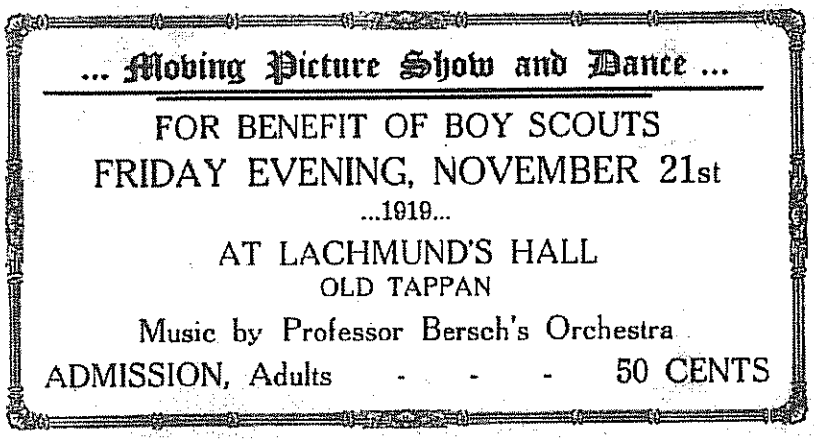
Sunday School picnics were held on the grounds, as were festivities of other organizations, and swimmers found it a favorite spot. Canoeists who took their canoes and went by train to West Nyack, New York then paddled down the Hackensack River, stopped over at Lachmund's Hotel before continuing south to Newark Bay. There were stalls at one end of the building for the horses and carriages which were a common sight. They brought summer visitors who stayed anywhere from one night to several weeks enjoying the spacious grounds (equipped around 1900 with a covered dance pavilion and two bowling alleys) as well as the pastoral pursuits of fishing and swimming.

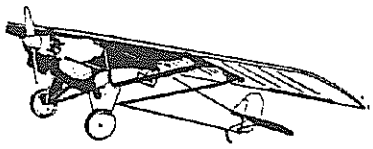
In 1904 the first telephone in Old Tappan was installed in Lachmund's grocery store. At first, and until they caught on, farmers who came to use this new, wonderful gadget were told that they would have to shout in order to be heard by the other party. What with the bellowing of the caller and the roars of laughter from the pranksters, the dishes were almost shaken from the shelves!

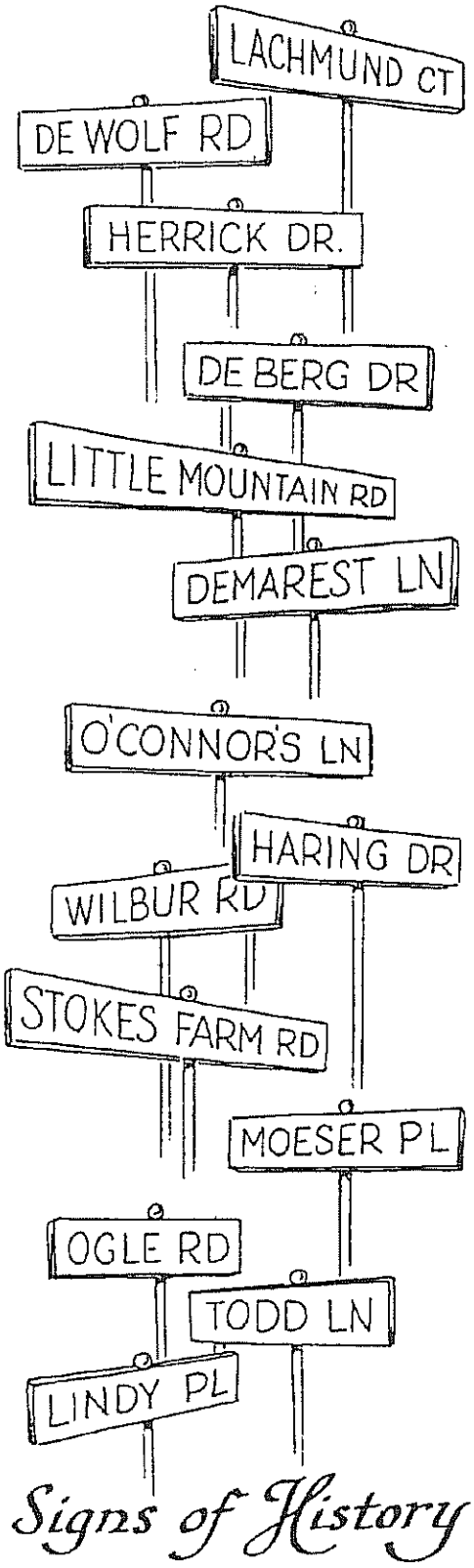
Prohibition ended the tavern business. The automobile enabled people to travel to more distant places. But people from nearby urbanized towns were happy to go out for a drive in the country and stop at Lachmund's for a soda and maybe a chat with loquacious Johnny Lachmund. His glass cases full of colorful mounted birds were displayed with pride to everyone including those who came to get their dog licenses and hunting and fishing licenses. He was meticulous in querying the applicants for hunting licenses: *"How many ducks did you get last year? How many rabbits? Squirrels? Wilson's snipe? Hungarian partridge? Pheasant?"*...the list went on and on.

The building of dams on the Hackensack River to form the reservoir system brought an end to the long canoe trips. Picnics were still held on the grounds, swimmers swam, anglers fished in the river and Johnny Lachmund still sold groceries and ice cream in his country store. Nearby residents went there for ice cream on summer evenings when he would let the children scrape the bottoms and sides of the nearly empty ice cream containers and he always gave them blue candies. In 1953 some of the first residents of Leoson Park were lucky enough to know Johnny Lachmund's kindnesses and the wonderful aroma of the ripening grapes wafting in through the back door. After his death in February, 1954 the old hotel was torn down.

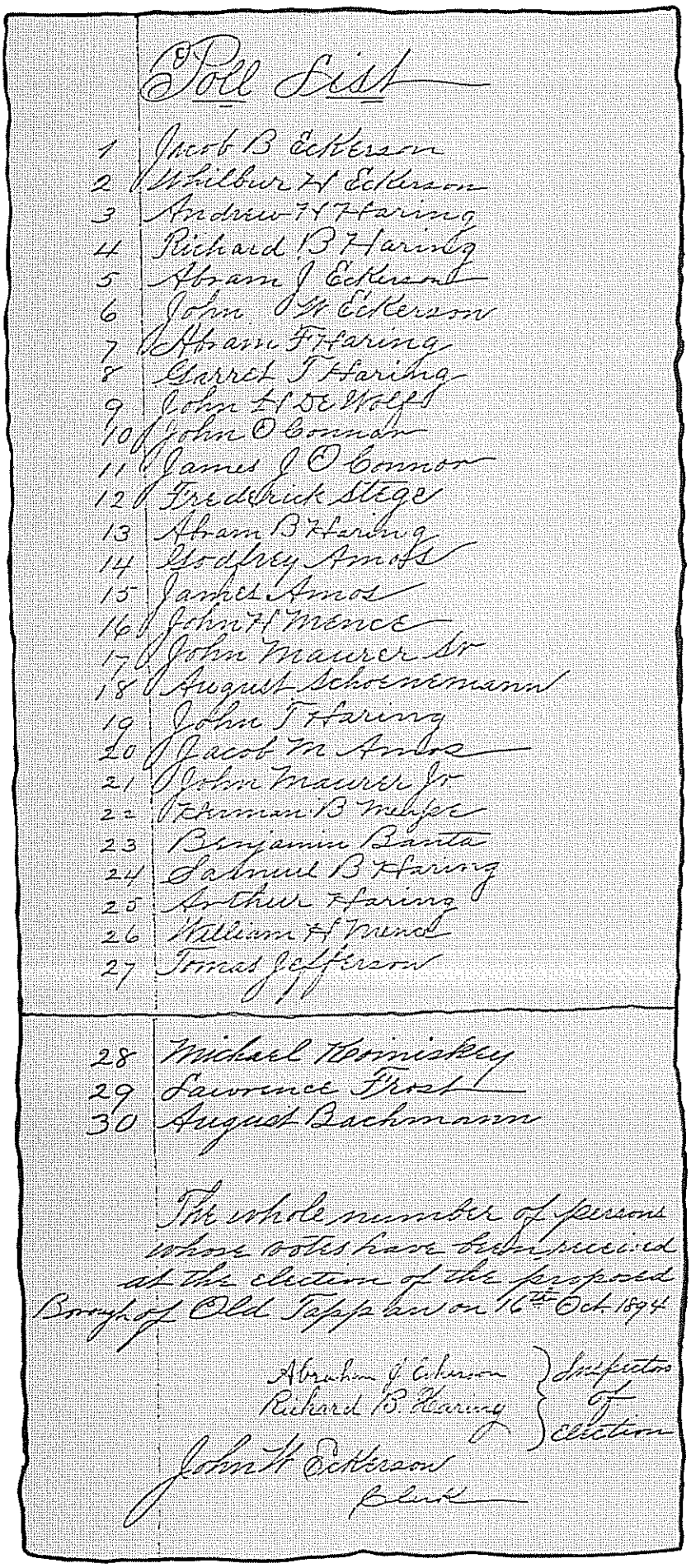
The Collignon Brothers Chair Factory, the location of railroads not far away and travelers stopping at Lachmund's Hotel undoubtedly stimulated some growth and building activity during the last half of the 19th Century. However, the majority of the residents were full time farmers and these events did not alter the basic agricultural character of Old Tappan before or after the turn of the 20th Century.







Signs of History



Poll List

1 Jacob B Eckerson
2 Wilbur H Eckerson
3 Andrew T Haring
4 Richard B Haring
5 Abram J Eckerson
6 John H Eckerson
7 Abram F Haring
8 Garret T Haring
9 John H DeWolf
10 John O'Connor
11 James J O'Connor
12 Fredrick Stege
13 Abram B Haring
14 Godfrey Amos
15 Jacob Amos
16 John H Mence
17 John Maurer Sr
18 August Schoenemann
19 John T Haring
20 Jacob M Ambs
21 John Maurer Jr
22 Herman B Mehse
23 Benjamin Banta
24 Samuel B Haring
25 Arthur Haring
26 William H Mence
27 Thomas Jefferson

28 Michael Woinicky
29 Lawrence Frost
30 August Bachmann

The whole number of persons whose votes have been received at the election of the proposed Borough of Old Tappan on 16th Oct. 1894

Abraham J Eckerson } Inspectors
Richard B. Haring } of election

John H Eckerson
Clerk

By the vote of twenty-eight to two on the night of October 16, 1894 the Borough of Old Tappan was born.

It was one of 28 boroughs to organize in Bergen County that year as a result of the State Legislature's passing the Borough Act to eliminate large township school districts and create separate boroughs. Each was to be responsible for financing and administering its own schools.

John H. De Wolf was elected Old Tappan's first Mayor and served in that position for 33 years. Meetings were held first in the school and by 1896 in Lachmund's Hotel, where they almost always ended in an all-night session of pinochle playing. Johnny Lachmund served as Borough Clerk for 57 years until his death in 1954.

Among the Council's first purchases were a dozen chairs for ten dollars and a half dozen tin spittoons at ten cents each. The Assessor and Collector each received an annual salary of $50, the Borough Clerk was paid $25, but the Marshall was not paid. Road equipment consisted of four picks, three mattocks, one ax, one road scraper and eight shovels. Pay for a ten-hour day of road work was: Superintendent of Roads $1.50, horse-cart and man $3.00, single man $1.50, team of horses and man $4.00, shoveling snow $1.20.

There were 22 registered voters in 1896; all voted at the spring election.

The end of the nineteenth century saw the beginning of the "horseless carriage." A few new owners of these creations bravely ventured to drive through Old Tappan where most of the roads were still dirt and wagons used to sink in mud a foot or more during a spring thaw. The Mayor and Council realized that the automobile was the coming means of transportation and turned its attention to road maintenance. The Borough was one of the first to "pave" roads. The paving, called macadam, consisted of a six inch layer of stones covered with three inches of dirt. By 1896 "improved" Borough roads measured six-and-a-half miles. An entry in Jacob Eckerson's diary of June 11, 1896 reads "*Worked on road at crushed stone. Finished ten car loads. 194 yards hauled for 10¢ per yard*".

Drivers of automobiles were required to "give an alarm when going down hills and around corners." They were

A Statement of the result of an Election held in the Old Tappan School house in the Township of Harrington in the County of Bergen on the sixteenth Day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninty four for incorporation of the proposed Borough of Old Tappan

"The whole number of votes on the Poll Book" Ninty

The whole number of votes received for Incorporation Twenty Eight

The whole number of votes received against Incorporation Two

We do certify that the foregoing is a true full and correct statement of the election above mentioned

Abraham J. Eckerson } Inspectors
Richard B. Haring } of Election

John H. Eckerson
Clerk

1894 1904

OLD TAPPAN

This is not an almanac of only momentous events but a listing of some occurrences, large and small, serious and lighthearted, that helps to put Old Tappan in perspective with the rest of the world over the last 100 years.

1894 The Borough of Old Tappan was born October 16.

John Haring De Wolf was elected the first mayor serving in that office for 33 years.

1895 Six-and-one-half miles of "*improved*" roads were completed in Old Tappan.

1896 The westernmost section of Old Tappan, which had been part of Eastwood (River Vale), was annexed to Old Tappan by special election.

Mrs. Annie Stokes paid $720 for 17 acres of land she purchased from Mrs. Rachel Ann Haring.

1897 Old Tappan students attended Hackensack High School.

1898 Jacob Eckerson purchased seeds and a plow which cost him $25.

1899 Wilbur H. Eckerson returned from service in the Spanish-American War.

1900 Population: 269

1901 Albert Todd enlarged and remodeled his residence which is now Ingleside Nursing Home.

1902 Adam Collignon's chair factory, located in River Vale about a mile from his brothers' factory, was destroyed by fire.

Local children received the newly-created *Animal Crackers* that were packaged in a box designed as a circus wagon.

1903 Margaret O'Connor Coffey's mother arrived in Old Tappan as a bride, emigrating from Ireland and passing through Ellis Island.

1904 The Collignon Brothers Chair Factory was destroyed by fire on January 9.

The first telephone arrived in Old Tappan and was installed in Lachmund's Hotel.

The Mayor and Council resolved: "*Base Ball playing be permitted within the Borough limits on Sundays, provided that games be played under proper management and no disorder or trouble result.*"

The coldest temperature on record for the State of New Jersey was recorded in River Vale and Old Tappan on January 4: minus 34°.

ELSEWHERE

1894 Grover Cleveland, who hailed from Caldwell, NJ, was the President of the United States.

Thomas Edison's kinescope was first shown.

The first Sears, Roebuck Mail Order Catalogue was issued.

Labor Day was first observed as a legal holiday.

1895 A year of inventions and discoveries: radio signals, the X ray, the diesel engine, the photoelectric cell and the safety razor.

A tornado funnel hit River Edge on July 13, destroying 60 dwellings and killing three people.

1896 Utah became the 45th State on January 4.

William Jennings Bryan was the first presidential candidate to campaign from an automobile, one of only ten cars in the United States at the time.

Chop Suey was first "*concocted*" in New York City.

1897 William McKinley was inaugurated as President.

The first Campbell soups were produced in Camden.

1898 The Spanish-American War waged from April to August.

Palisades Amusement Park opened.

The first steel ocean pier was built in Atlantic City.

1899 John P. Holland of Paterson built the prototype of the modern submarine.

The first motorist arrested for speeding in New York City was driving at a *breakneck* speed of 12 mph. The arresting officer gave chase on his bicycle.

1900 The United States adopted the gold standard.

1901 President McKinley was shot on September 4. He died ten days later, making Vice President Theodore Roosevelt, at the age of 42, the youngest President to take office.

1902 Thomas Nast, political cartoonist who created the Democratic *Donkey* and Republican *Elephant*, died.

The first Teddy Bear toys appeared, named after President *Teddy* Roosevelt.

1903 The first airplane flights by Wilbur and Orville Wright took place near Kitty Hawk, NC.

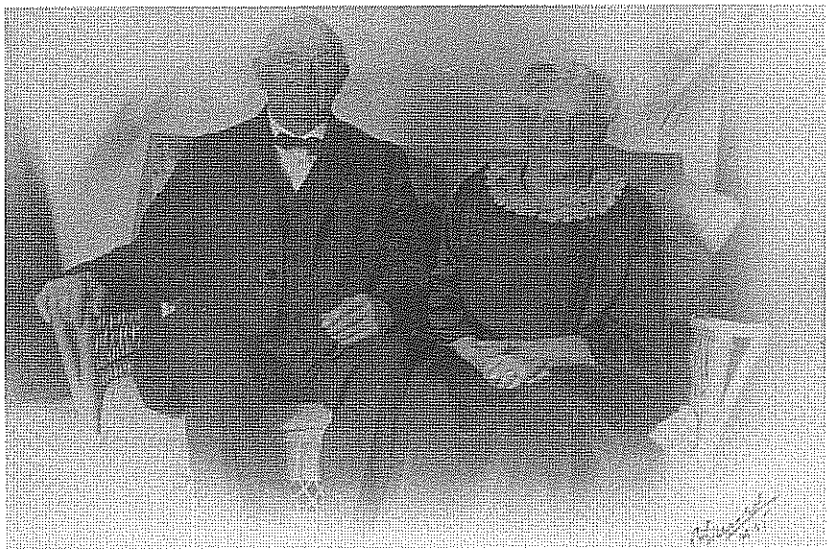
The Great Train Robbery, the first movie to have a plot and story, was produced and filmed in NJ.

1904 The New York City Subway was opened and retained its 5¢ fare for 44 years.

A woman was arrested for smoking on Fifth Avenue in New York City on September 27.

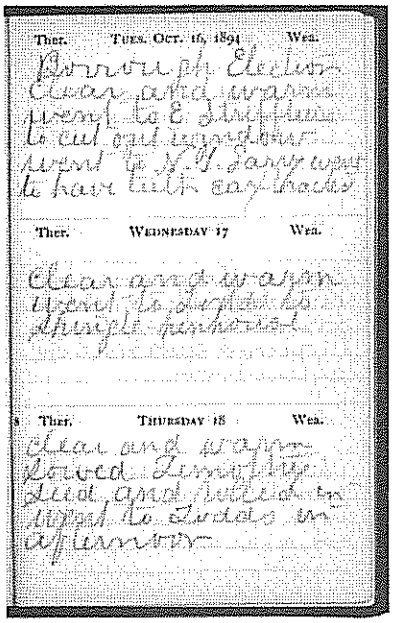
A comparison of the approximate expenses of the Borough for 1896, the State Tercentenary Year of 1964 and Old Tappan's Centennial Year of 1994:

	1896	1964	1994
County Tax	$995.80	$81,499.39	$1,614,691.72
Local school purposes	940.80	294,896.00	4,744,331.00
Regional High School	–	205,359.64	2,716,760.17
Veteran & Citizen Tax	–	18,880.90	–
Local Purposes	564.48	–	1,137,360.00
Roads	282.24	–	–
Total	**$2,783.32**	**$600,635.12**	**$10,213,142.89**



COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

John Haring De Wolf (1853 - 1927), the first Mayor of Old Tappan, is shown seated with his wife, Margaret Ann Cleveland De Wolf, in 1925. They were the parents of Charles De Wolf, Sr. and Annie De Wolf Post.



Ther. Tues. Oct. 16, 1894 Wea.

Borough Election
Clear and warm
went to E. Stiffleman
to cut out wingbone
went to H. Zarr went
to have tooth extracted

Ther. Wednesday 17 Wea.

Clear and warm
went to Englewood
Shingle funeral

Ther. Thursday 18 Wea.

Clear and warm
Raked Lawn
Lied and rested
went to Leads in
afternoon

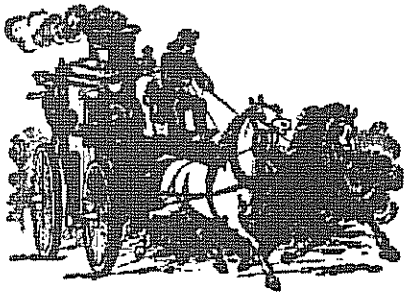
COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

Shown above is the October 16, 1894 page from Jacob Blauvelt Eckerson's diary mentioning the Borough Election.

fined five dollars if they failed to do so. Wilbur Stokes recalled later in his life that the first time he saw a car in Old Tappan was as he was leaving to deliver vegetables by horse and wagon to Nyack, New York. "*We passed about four or five on the way - the kind with steering arms - and I don't know how many horses ran away.*" Wilbur Eckerson, Sr. and Walter de Berg were among the first Old Tappan residents to own automobiles.

At a meeting of the Mayor and Council on June 24, 1904 approval was granted to the Northeastern Telephone and Telegraph Company to construct "a line of telephone and telegraph wires, including such poles, cross-arms, fixtures and appliances as may be necessary along the highways of the Borough; and that the poles be reasonable straight shaved wooden poles, set in the sidewalk immediately adjacent to the curb line, whenever curb lines are established".

The United States census of 1900 recorded only 269 people living in Old Tappan. Very few residential structures had been erected since 1876, but in 1911 an unusual house was built at 256

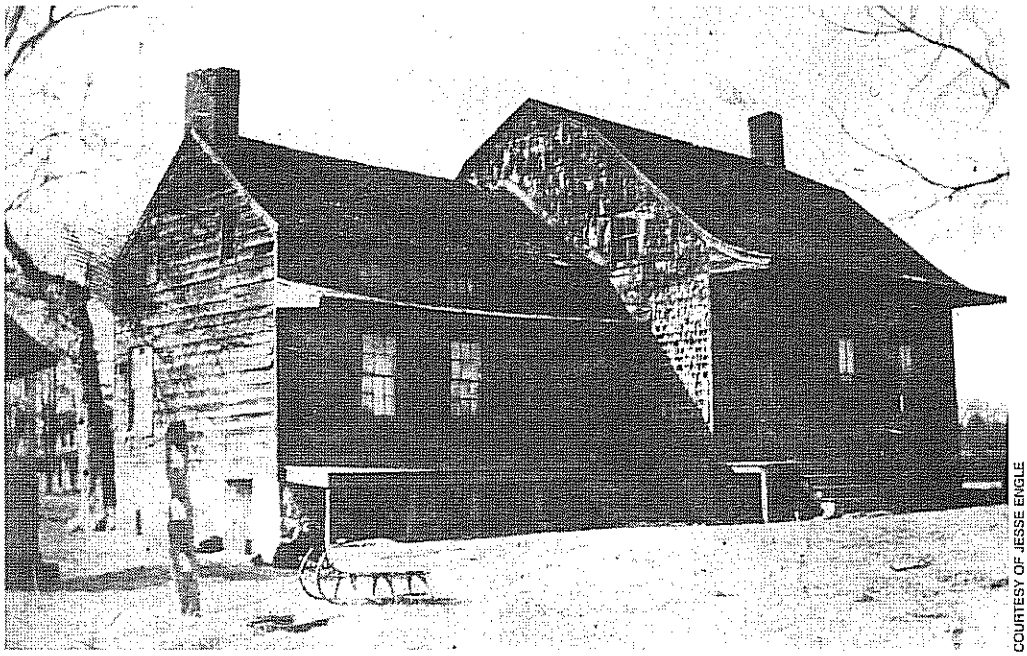


Old Tappan Road. George Schaus ordered a prefabricated house kit from the Sears, Roebuck mail order house catalogue. It included all material to construct the house and a detailed assembly booklet. He proceeded to put up his house on the substantial remaining walls of an earlier dwelling which had been destroyed by fire. At the time of that blaze, horse-drawn fire engines from Westwood were called upon to help save the house – the horses were frothing at the mouth upon arrival after pulling the engines at a fast pace all the way. The "Schaus House," as it came to be known, was actually constructed atop the remaining stone walls which is why it sits so high. It is a one-and-a-half story Colonial Revival structure with three central recessed dormers high above a full-length five-bay porch across the front of the house.

Between 1908 and 1937 over 100,000 Sears prefabricated houses of various designs were erected in the United States. Many of these pre-cut homes were manufactured in Port Newark, New Jersey and then shipped to various parts of the country. Some architectural historians say that most of these houses have escaped attention because they were so well built that they could not be distinguished whatsoever from any of their traditionally built neighboring homes.

In 1913 the Flierboom house situated on Old Tappan Road West (opposite present day Herbst Road) burned to the ground. It had been built by Jacob Flierboom (brother-in-law of Cosyn Haring) some time before the mid-18th Century on the 242 acres south of Old Tappan Road West he had acquired in 1721 in the final division of the Patent.

In 1965 the following description of the house was sent to Tom Demarest by his uncle, Jesse Engle, who lived in the Flierboom house around the turn of the century. The information was requested by the late Howard Durie, a genealogist and historian of Bergen County who



COURTESY OF JESSE ENGLE

The frame Flierboom house was situated on Old Tappan Road West. An old sled, fence post and well are visible on the left. Built before 1750, it burned to the ground in less than a half hour in 1913.

was researching the Flierboom family at the time. It is quoted in part here to give a first-hand description, not only of the house, but of the way of life sheltered therein.

"...No doubt the section at the left was added to the original at the right but even when we were kids the left side was ancient too. You note the exterior of the left side was made of clapboard, whereas the exterior of the original section was of long (2½" or more) hand made shingles. The space between the inside walls and the outside was filled with a combination of 'mud' and straw, which could crumble in your hand. The nails were all hand made. The beams were very large - I think about 10" by 12." They were exposed in the attic and we used to climb up about 6 or 8 feet and run on them playing tag. The attic (and first floor too) was floored with wide (about 12") boards but there were no rooms there. Those beams had about a dozen or more wooden pegs or dowells about 1½" in diameter with the heavy ends exposed about 4" or more, on which we hung the smoked hams and bacon slabs during the winter. Those beams were so hard that it was impossible to drive nails into them. Incidentally during the wintertime it was so cold in that attic that when mother wanted a couple of slices of ham, they had to be sawed, not cut, for they were frozen stiff.

"The cellar had a dirt floor, of course, and was very cool. Then father had two big square pits, dug to a depth of about 5 feet below the floor level, for the winter storage of potatoes. I think the two held about 100 barrels and were boarded up on the inside dirt walls but no board flooring.

"There were two fire places, one at the end of each section. There wasn't a closet in the house, but there were three or four antique closets which were very spacious, about 6' or 7' tall. I think I remember my Pop saying that someone said that the house was over 150 years old then, and that was about 1900 - 1905. The whole thing went up in flames in less than a half hour in 1913.

"Pop used to stack horse manure all around the outside of the old house to keep the cold weather out during the winter. He would mound it up against the stone foundation to a height of about two feet and extend the mound about two feet at the base. This was removed each springtime and a new lot put there early each winter. The fresher the horse manure the better, because Pop used to say there was more heat in it (ammonia I guess) if fresh."

Jesse Engle died at the age of 77, on April 17, 1970.

By the terms of Cosyn Haring's will, Gerret Eckerson inherited the site of the present Ingleside Nursing Home and its lands. Included in the inheritance was the house on that site in which Cosyn had been living at the time he made his will in 1743. In 1888 Albert U. Todd, a prosperous chemist with related interests in New York City, bought this land from his sister Emma Todd Herrick (wife of James Herrick) who had acquired it in 1867. By 1905 Todd had amassed holdings which added up to a substantial estate reaching as far as Cripplebush Road in Old Tappan (but extending further to Lafayette Road in Harrington Park) at one end and Old Tappan Road at the other, as well as another piece of property, "Todd's Hill", where Bi-State Plaza is now.

Albert Todd was a gentleman farmer who was also interested in architecture. He rebuilt the old Eckerson house into a shingle covered house with a Dutch gambrel roof. It is an historic remnant of the country estate period in Bergen County in the 19th and early 20th centuries when imposing houses on spacious landscaped grounds were built by urban emigrants who came to reside in the country.

Under Albert Todd's ownership this was a working farm. Hay was the principal crop but wheat, barley and oats were grown as well. Todd had his own granary, varieties of fruit trees, made cider from some of the apples, and raised poultry and livestock. He kept horses both for his carriages and to work on the farm. His two fine work horses, "Isabel" and "Ferdinand", knew their job so well that they hardly needed any instructions from their driver, but stopped and started and turned and waited quite on their own. A natural pond on the property was maintained as an ice pond to provide ice for the estate's use. Jacob Eckerson had several entries in his diaries mentioning working "*at A. Todd's on ice house.*"

Todd employed a cook-housekeeper and a butler to look after his household, and a foreman, Edgar Vanderbeck, to manage the farm with the help of five or six seasonally employed farm hands. Vanderbeck lived in the James A. Eckerson tenant house (with the red barn) at the bend in Cripplebush Road.

Michael O'Connell was the coachman on the Todd estate who lived in the red house now on the bend of de Berg Drive. He drove Mr. Todd to the West Norwood station for the train and ferry trip to his chemical business in New York City. One time the train started up before Mr. Todd got on and he fell, injuring himself, though not seriously. The train officials apologized profusely and expressed the hope that Mr. Todd would not sue. "*No,*" he responded

coldly, *"I will not sue. I will just never ride your railroad again."* He never did; he took the Erie Railroad instead, boarding it at the Norwood station a mile farther away near where the Norwood Post Office is now.

The coachman also took Mrs. Herrick out on her shopping rounds, to call on her friends and took her twin daughters, Esther and Ruth, to the train when they attended Dumont High School. These trips were made with horse and buggy. Most of the roads were unpaved circa 1917 and Cripplebush Road was no more than a dirt lane.

Albert Todd died on June 6, 1917 without ever having owned an automobile. He did not marry and he left his estate to his sister, Emma Todd Herrick. In 1926 Emma T. Herrick divided the estate among the children of her son, Albert T. Herrick, with Madeline de Berg receiving the Todd house and property. Her husband, Walter de Berg, became the third mayor of Old Tappan in 1935. Mr. de Berg enlarged the ice pond (no longer used for ice) and had a graceful gazebo built on its bank for Mrs. de Berg.

After Walter de Berg's death in 1947 this property, which was only a remnant of the original Todd estate, was sold to Daniel Ross in 1948. He later received permission from the town to establish Ingleside Nursing Home. Madeline de Berg sold the pond and adjacent lands to Audrey and James Kiernan in 1960. They maintained the pond for skating in the winter and as a preserve for birds and water fowl in the summer. It became known then and is still known as "Kiernan's Pond".

COURTESY OF ED VANDERBECK

The Herrick twins, Ruth and Esther, enjoy feeding the chickens on Todd's Farm in 1903. The farm hands' living quarters are seen behind the girls.

The earliest records of the Old Tappan Sunday School were lost in a house fire in December 1912. In 1940, from memory and with the help of his father Jacob Eckerson's papers, Wilbur H. Eckerson, Sr. recalled those first years.

Sarah De Baun Eckerson organized the Sunday School in 1874 aided by her father-in-law, Garret A. Eckerson, the first superintendent. Initially classes met upstairs in the school building. The Reverend Ernest G. Wesley, the school teacher from 1874 to 1880, occasionally preached at the services of this non-sectarian local mission.

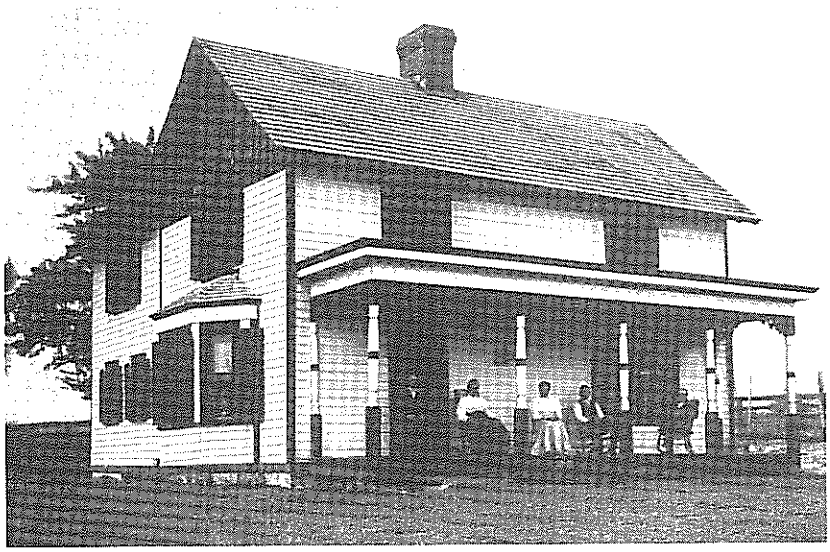
The first "scholars", as they were called, were from the Collignon, De Wolf, Eckerson, Haring, Herrick, Mence and Stokes families. The first teachers were Margretta De Wolf, Mrs. Abraham Eckerson, Garret F. Haring, John Maurer, Emma Saunders and Isaiah Stokes.

COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

Isaiah Stokes, who helped build the Old Tappan Sunday School and became one of its first teachers, is pictured in 1870 with his two sons, Joseph (left) and Henry (right). Isaiah, the great-grandfather of Ron Binaghi, Sr., died on December 2, 1883 one year after the Chapel was completed.

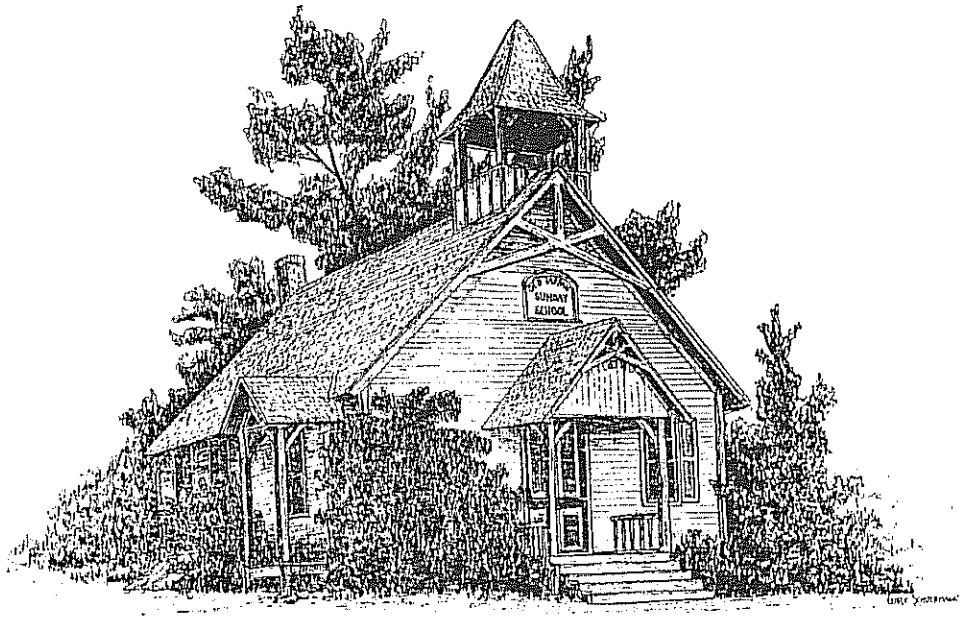
Old Tappan children and adults attended the Sunday School. Many townspeople also attended services in Tappan, NY at the Dutch Reformed Church which was established in 1694. As other churches were established in the surrounding area some townsfolk gravitated to different denominations. The Sunday School continued to be non-sectarian, so both adults and children participated in classes and activities in the white chapel as well as in their own churches.

In the early 1880s Sunday School leaders approached the community for assistance in building larger quarters. Enthusiastic support was forthcoming. Offers of cash, trees for lumber, labor, hauling and sawmill work were all donated. On August 12, 1882 incorporation papers were filed in Hackensack for the Old Tappan Sunday School



COURTESY OF ED VANDERBECK

Edgar Vanderbeck, foreman on Albert U. Todd's farm and estate, lived with his family in this house on Cripplebush Road in the early 1900s. Both the house and barn remain standing there today. The house has been renovated and modernized, but the red barn is just as it was.



DRAWN BY GARY SCHUERMANN

The "Chapel" on Old Tappan Road at Washington Avenue was built in 1882. It opened in 1883 as a Sunday School for the townspeople and served as a social center and a point of reference for all of Old Tappan.

Association. A plot of land, 75 feet on Old Tappan Road and 110 feet on Washington Avenue, was donated by Jacob and Margaret Eckerson on September 30, 1882.

Building started in October 1882 and the finished Chapel was dedicated on January 14, 1883 by the Reverend Ernest Wesley (the former school teacher) and the Reverend Van Buskirk of the Closter Reformed Church. The reading desk and pulpit chair were donated by the Collignons and made in their chair factory by their master woodworkers.

The Chapel itself is a charming one story rectangular structure with a belfry, built in the "Stick Style" which was a wooden variant of the Victorian Gothic Revival style of the 1870s and 1880s. The characteristic "stick work" is displayed in the gables and around the Chapel door.

Within ten years of inception the Sunday School, or "White Chapel" as it came to be called, was a significant center of religious and social activity in Old Tappan. The In As Much Branch of the Sunshine Society held many of its socials, entertainments and suppers in the new building. A good portion of the funds raised at these activities was donated for the improvement and maintenance of the Chapel, as well as for providing furniture.

A "pin system" for perfect attendance at classes was instituted by Elsie Kramer in 1916. That same year, Parker Leonard, first Sunday School Librarian, collected books from friends and neighbors to form a library for the Sunday School scholars. In later years Mr. Leonard was instrumental in the formation of a town library, with the help of a $50 contribution from the Sunday School.

Soon after World War II ended, the first housing developments appeared and the homes were eagerly snapped up by returning war veterans and their wives. Some of these young marrieds had been living in Shanks Village (formerly Camp Shanks) in Orangeburg, New York and were the first arrivals, anxious to remain in the area. The influx of newcomers caused the Sunday School Association to explore the possibility of forming a regular church.

In November 1952 a town survey was undertaken by the Association. The results indicated that large numbers of residents were Protestant and the greatest number of them preferred the Reformed Church. A Steering Committee composed of three members of the Sunday School Association (Margaret Davies, Parker Leonard and Harriet Pierson) together with three interested men from different parts of town (Walter Gunther, Raymond Hague and William Newton) was formed. The purpose of this committee was to expedite and plan the formation of a church to meet the needs of the community. In February 1954 a generous donation of the property adjacent to the Chapel on both Old Tappan Road and Washington Avenue was made by Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Davies for the erection of Trinity Reformed Church.

On August 1, 1954 the Sunday School Association passed three resolutions: to transfer all real estate to Trinity Reformed Church, to dissolve the corporation of the Old Tappan Sunday School Association, and to transfer all assets to Trinity Reformed Church. The final meeting on November 8, 1954 completed the dissolution of the Sunday School Association; all personnel, committees and activities were transferred to the Sunday School of Trinity Reformed Church of Old Tappan. The old reed organ was put up for sale and, after 80 years, the Old Tappan Sunday School Association had completed its service to the community.

This was a painful period for many long time residents of Old Tappan. The White Chapel in its role as a non-sectarian Sunday School had provided a spiritual and social focus for the children and adults of this vigorous farming community. Memories of childhood triumphs as scholars, rewards for perfect attendance, flirtations at box lunches and socials and teaching and participating in the planning of important town activities were all embodied in this little Sunday School. However, the building has continued to serve the citizens of Old Tappan as a part of Trinity Reformed Church and the Chapel stands proudly on "Chapel Corner" to remind us of a less crowded past.

COURTESY OF MARGARET ROMSBERG

A sightless child from the Blind Babies Hospital in Summit, NJ, typical of those helped by the In As Much Branch ladies.

A remarkable organization was begun in Old Tappan in March of 1908. "*At a small social gathering held at Cedar Rest (Mrs. Katherine Demarest's home) on March 12, 1908 Miss Elma Dodge proposed that steps be*

MEMORIES OF A CHRISTMAS LONG AGO

It was the day before Christmas, such a happy one. Santa Claus was coming that night.

"The snow had begun in the gloaming,
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white.

"Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm tree
Was ridged inch deep with pearl."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

It made a beautiful setting for Christmas holidays, while inside the women were bustling about, baking good things to eat for Christmas.

The little girl of the household was singing happily all day long. Wasn't Santa Claus coming that night? He always had, and she was sure he would come again. But first her daddy told her he would take her to see the Christmas tree at the Old Tappan Chapel. She wasn't sure what that meant, but knew it was something nice to anticipate.

At last the evening arrived and her mother bundled her up like an Eskimo, her father seated her on a hand sled his father had made him a generation before. Her father took the rope in his hands and off they went on a half mile walk to the Chapel. Such a beautiful white world it was, as they wended their way to the Chapel. The stars looked down; the winter wind swayed the branches of the old trees back and forth, making weird shadows on the snow.

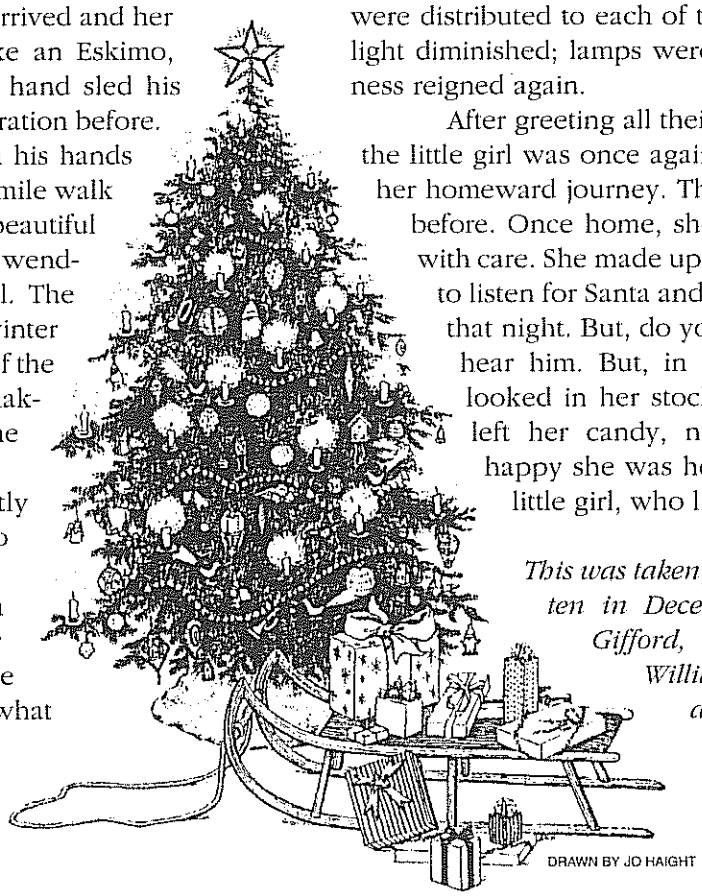
Soon the brightly lighted Chapel bloomed into view. The sled was parked. (It didn't take too much room.) The little girl and her father opened the door of the Chapel and stepped into what looked like a veritable fairyland. It was a bower of beauty. Every window was bedecked with a wreath of evergreens. Garlands of evergreens draped the walls. But the main object of beauty was the huge Christmas tree at the end of the aisle. It was bedecked with strings of popcorn and paper chains and cranberries and little paper dolls, which seemed to be dancing around the tree in glee.

The decorations were the small tapers, each one in its own holder fastened to the branches of the tree. Now that we had *looked* at all the beauty surrounding us it was time to *listen* to the Christmas story being read and the beautiful carols sung, giving us a better understanding of Christmas.

Then the oil lamps were turned down low. Two young men with lighted tapers on each end of the long poles they carried in their hands proceeded to light the candles on the beautiful Christmas tree. Soon it was a blaze of light pointing upward. Sometimes a branch caught fire. Another young man with a snuffer on the end of the pole he had in his hand would put it out. A box of candy and an orange were distributed to each of the children. The candle light diminished; lamps were turned up and brightness reigned again.

After greeting all their friends and neighbors, the little girl was once again seated on her sled for her homeward journey. The stars looked down as before. Once home, she hung up her stocking with care. She made up her mind she was going to listen for Santa and his reindeer on the roof that night. But, do you know? She never did hear him. But, in the morning when she looked in her stocking, she found he had left her candy, nuts and oranges. How happy she was he had found her, such a little girl, who lived way in the country.

This was taken from a recollection written in December, 1968 by May E. Gifford, daughter of blacksmith William Mence. Mrs. Gifford died in 1971 at age 89.



DRAWN BY JO HAIGHT

1905 1914

OLD TAPPAN

1905 In a bitter snow storm on January 26, Jacob Eckerson drove a team pulling a wooden sled to the West Norwood railroad station to meet his son. Only one train got through from New York City.

1906 Martin De Wolf, former schoolteacher in Old Tappan, died. He had married Catharine Haring in 1852 and added his name to their home on De Wolf Road (Haring-De Wolf House).

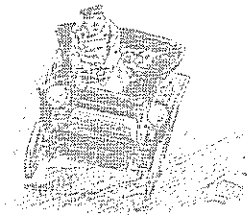
1907 Joseph Stokes paid $250 to J.H. Ackerman for a brown horse "*warranted true, kind and sound*".

1908 The In-As-Much Circle of the National Sunshine Society was formed on March 12.

1909 *Encyclopedia lots*, measuring 25' x 100', were offered as promotional prizes by an encyclopedia company. These lots were located off Central Avenue where the leaf dump is today and were called the *Warner Library lots.*

1910 Population: 305

The first cars to be owned by Old Tappan residents appeared on the roads.



1911 George Schaus built a *mail order house* at 256 Old Tappan Road, using a kit offered in the Sears, Roebuck Catalogue.

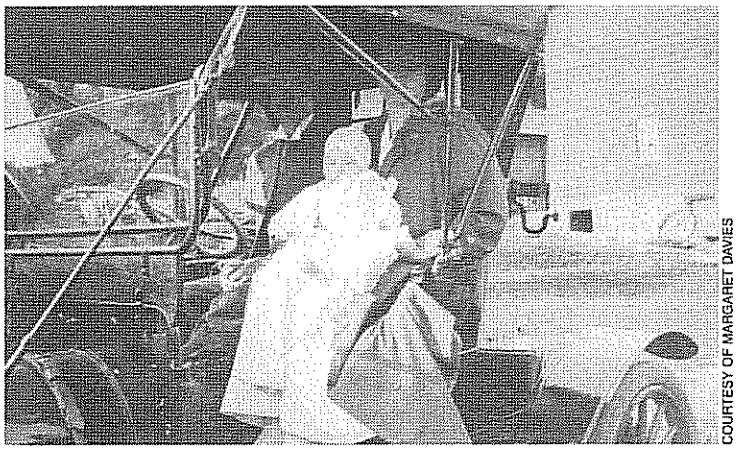
1912 Tax appeals were heard at the Closter Fire House in November.

Comiskie's Bakery (on Cripplebush Road) made deliveries by horse and sleigh when snows were deep.

1913 At the Sunday School meeting on January 1, Garret F. Haring was elected Superintendent.

On November 8 Jacob Eckerson put up wire and made a telephone connection to his house.

1914 Jacob Eckerson went to a Decoration Day flag-raising ceremony in Westwood.



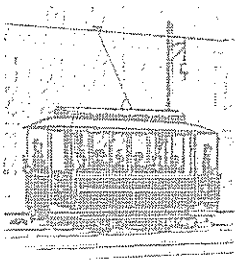
COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Eckerson with their infant son, John, in 1914 ready to take a spin in their new car.

ELSEWHERE

1905 Albert Einstein introduced his theory of relativity.

A ferry ride across the Hudson River and a trolley ride from the ferry to Fort Lee each cost 5¢.



1906 The San Francisco earthquake rocked the area, with a loss of over 500 lives.

The radio amplifier was invented by Lee De Forest.

1907 On November 16 Oklahoma joined the Union as the 46th State.

The beginning of plastics: Bakelite was invented.

The first electric washing machine was marketed.

1908 The first tunnel under the Hudson River, the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad System, opened.

1909 William Howard Taft was inaugurated as President.

Admiral Robert E. Peary reached the North Pole.

The first Lincoln penny was issued on August 2.

1910 Pennsylvania Railroad Station opened in New York City on November 27.

The Boy Scouts of America was incorporated in the United States on February 8.

1911 In New York City the infamous Triangle Shirt Factory fire caused 145 deaths, initiating fire safety reforms.

The automobile self-starter was invented by Kettering.

Air conditioning was developed by Willis Carrier for use beyond its early beginnings in cotton mills.

1912 New Mexico became the 47th State on January 6 and Arizona the 48th on February 14.

White Star ocean liner *Titanic* hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic on her maiden voyage and sank.

The Girl Guides, later renamed Girl Scouts, was founded on March 12 in Savannah, GA.

1913 Woodrow Wilson, former president of Princeton University and Governor of New Jersey, was inaugurated as President.

The Federal Reserve System was established.

The 16th Amendment giving Congress the power to collect taxes on incomes went into effect.

Prizes were first offered in boxes of *Cracker Jack.*

1914 World War I began on August 4.

In Westwood, I.J. Demarest opened a Chevrolet dealership which became the longest continuous Chevy dealership in the United States.

taken to form a circle for helping others and for mutual social intercourse." So read the minutes of the first meeting of the In As Much Circle (Old Tappan Branch) of the International Sunshine Society. Mrs. Samuel Reynolds was selected to write for information regarding the International Sunshine Society.

On Thursday, April 2, 1908 at a meeting in the home of Mrs. Garrett Haring, nine "ladies of the neighborhood" determined that they would form a branch of the Sunshine Society for the purpose of helping others in any way possible, according to their ability. They called their group the In As Much Circle, taking the name from Jesus' exhortation in the Gospel according to St. Matthew: "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me*". Mrs. Samuel Reynolds, wife of the town Poormaster, served as president from this first meeting until her death in 1913. There were nine charter members and the meetings were held at members' homes. Membership rose to as many as thirty-five members, plus five "associate" members in 1945.

Threaded through the years is a record of countless rompers, aprons, "gauze comfortables", jackets, dresses, nighties and other articles which were sewn at the meetings and sent to county hospitals, homes and various orphaned children, families and individuals in need. During that very first year the Circle claimed two orphaned girls who had been adopted by a member, Mrs. Durand. For many years the ladies made skirts, shirtwaists and nighties for these girls and sent them holiday boxes filled with other clothing, shoes and small cash gifts. These girls, Helen and Elma Morgan, became known as the "Sunshine Twins."

Early on the Neighborly Cheer Committee was formed, and untold amounts of jellies, crackers, oranges and fruit juices were delivered to ailing townsfolk. Consumptives (tuberculosis victims) received "four eggs, one quart of milk daily for two weeks and meat for soup." Christmas boxes, consisting of "such delicacies as each lady might choose from her store of preserves," were delivered to elderly or needy townsfolk. Special assistance was provided in the form of "hospital equipment," and frequent visits were made by the ladies of the Neighborly Cheer Committee who kept watch over the aged and infirm in town, transporting them to doctor or hospital where necessary. New babies were welcomed with visits and gifts.

COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

Four members of the In As Much Branch in 1957 displaying some of the medical equipment the organization lent to those in need. Left-to-right are Fannie De Wolf Demarest, Bertha De Wolf, Dorothy Collignon of River Vale (who was president at the time) and Cornelia Kramer.

COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

By 1929 the In As Much Branch of the Sunshine Society's membership had greatly increased. With no baby-sitter available for the five children shown, they joined the adults for the meeting and picture-taking.

In 1911 the Sewing Circle was organized and the Sewing School for Girls was formed which met in the school house on Fridays after school hours. These girls later became a sort of Junior Sunshine Society, making bean bags, aprons and other simple things for distribution by the Circle.

The ladies' efforts were financed by their own donations and numerous inventive fund raisers. In 1908 a Chowder Supper earned a $35 profit which provided an oil stove to heat the White Chapel for meetings.

In 1917 and 1918 candy and gifts were sent to "our boys engaged in the War." The Branch offered its services to the hospital at Camp Merritt in Cresskill, and made donations and collections for the Red Cross. At the November meeting in 1918 the ladies sang the hymn "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" to celebrate the Armistice, and voted their entire month's donations ($14.00) to the War Fund.

Apparently the members' enthusiasm in serving refreshments got out of hand because, at the meeting of January 14,

Pictured are John and Margaret De Wolf and some of their grandchildren in front of their home (the Haring-De Wolf House) on De Wolf Road at the spot where the historical marker stands today. Notice that the road was still a narrow dirt lane but telephone poles and lines had arrived.

COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

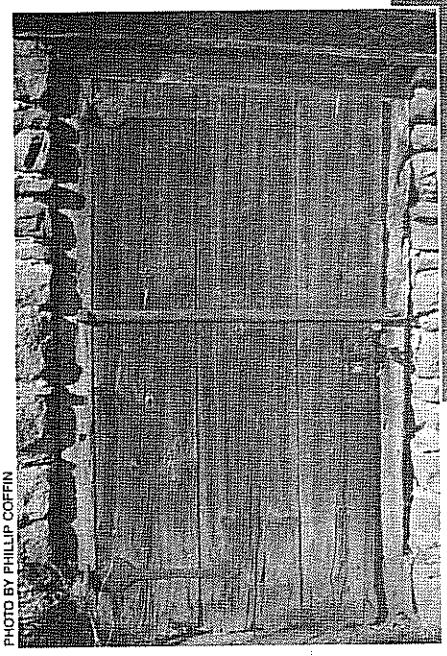


PHOTO BY PHILLIP COFFIN

A close-up of the door to De Wolf's smokehouse where hog meat was cured into hams and smoked pork.

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

The Haring-De Wolf Cemetery on De Wolf Road has been used since 1848 by the Harings, De Wolfs and Blauvelts.

COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

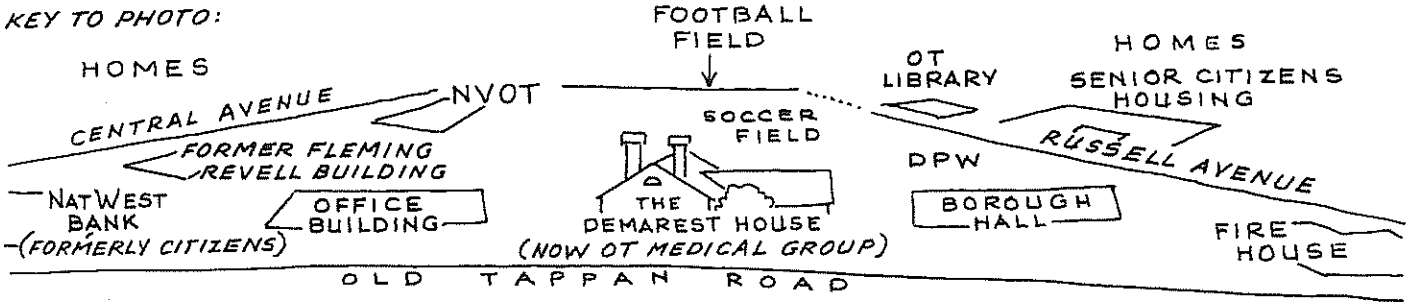
Charles and Bertha De Wolf are ready to take advantage of a beautiful 1919 afternoon in their new car.

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Wearing identical wedding gowns, two sisters married two brothers in a double ceremony in town in 1932. Shown are Paul Higdon and Ida Post (near right) and John Higdon and Rachel Post (right). All four lived together in Old Tappan until their deaths.

COURTESY OF LINCOLN DEMAREST



Nothing illustrates the change in Old Tappan during the past century as much as this photo taken on Todd's Hill in 1907. Automobiles and aircraft were in their infancy then and not part of the everyday scene. Only the sound of distant trains on the West Shore Railroad in West Norwood gave a hint of the suburban life which lay ahead. The boy in the photo is Luther Demarest (1900 - 1977) who later lived on Central Avenue. The young women are his sisters and cousins (left-to-right: Ruth, Marion, unknown, Pauline, Annie and Grace).

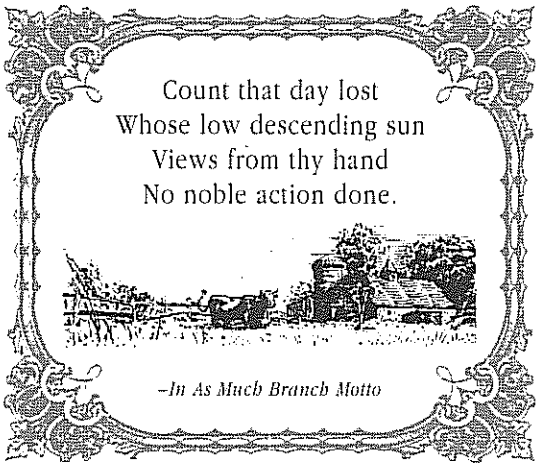
1932, it was determined that at all meetings except the Christmas Party, cake and coffee, *or* sandwiches and coffee, *or* salad and coffee could be served and "*that is all.*"

In February 1941 the Branch voted to have an electric meter installed in the home of elderly Sadie Bogert (the bill to be sent to the Branch), so that she might have electricity, and to send her $5 a month for necessities. Sadie had been crippled by polio when young.

The White Chapel, or Sunday School, was closely allied with the Branch for many years. Articles such as a lawn mower, twelve chairs and stepladder, as well as coal, oil and wood for fuel, were presented by the Branch in gratitude for the use of the building for its meetings and events. As the Branch grew in size and sophistication, it provided assistance in making major repairs to the building which helped to make the Chapel the center for so many of the town's activities.

In the sixties, seventies and eighties as the population of Old Tappan grew, the Branch found it increasingly difficult to keep up with "Neighborly Cheer" activities. Members moved away or were unable to attend activities due to age or infirmities. The life style of the community changed; ice cream socials, lawn card parties, quilting and amateur theatricals no longer held appeal in the TV age. The lending of hospital equipment, however, continued to flourish.

In August 1991 the In As Much Branch disbanded, giving all hospital equipment to the Old Tappan First Aid Corps, and the monies in their bank account to the "Overcomers"of Westwood. Thus ended 83 years of continuous service to the people of Old Tappan by a group of giving and caring ladies of this community.



1915 1924

OLD TAPPAN

1915 Two motion pictures were filmed at the Theunis Haring House: *Over the Hill to the Poorhouse* and *Ring Around Rosey.*

Mence's blacksmith shop charged $10 for a snow-plow it made to clear a path down the center of the road so the children could walk to school.

Dumont High School became a four-year high school and accepted students from Old Tappan.

1916 The County School Board granted diplomas to Old Tappan eighth graders.

1917 Twenty-four men from Old Tappan served in World War I and all returned safely.

Women on the home front knitted sweaters for the servicemen.

Albert Todd died on June 6.

1918 The In-As-Much Circle of the Sunshine Society sent a $5 donation to the Camp Merritt Hospital.

Soldiers from Camp Merritt in Cresskill acted as extras in the movie *Wanted for Murder* which was filmed at the De Wolf house.

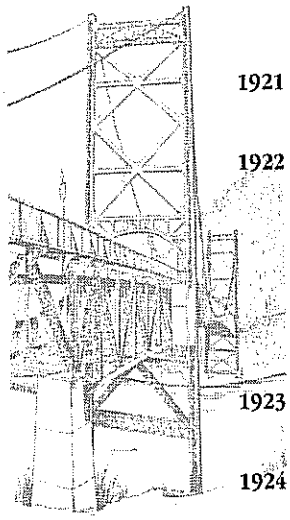
1919 Funds were raised by the In-As-Much Circle of the Sunshine Society to build a cellar and install a furnace in the Sunday School.

1920 Population: 404

The funeral of Abraham J. Eckerson took place at the Chapel on February 9. The roads were barely passable and three two-horse sleds were needed to transport the mourners who attended.

The Sunday School voted to apply its Christmas present money to the establishment of a circulating library — the very first library in Old Tappan.

The Leap Year Box Social planned for February 28 at Lachmund's was cancelled due to inclement weather and bad roads.



BEAR MOUNTAIN BRIDGE

1921 *The Town That Forgot God* was filmed at the Chapel picturing local children.

1922 30 acres of the pre-Revolutionary Blauvelt farm (later Pierson's) was sold by O. Dreisbach.

22 swampy acres (Idle Wild Swim Club's location) were sold for $500.

On July 26 an International Day lawn party was held at the home of Mrs. Walter B. Fred.

1923 Twin sisters Esther and Ruth Herrick graduated from William Smith College in Geneva, NY.

1924 A member of the In-As-Much Circle of the Sunshine Society was rebuked by the club president for calling the president's car a "*tin Lizzie*".

The entrance fee to Idle Wild Swim Club was 10¢.

ELSEWHERE

1915 The first transcontinental telephone demonstration (New York to San Francisco) took place.

Scenes for D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* were filmed in Harrington Park.

Frank Sinatra was born in Hoboken on December 12.

1916 Corning introduced its first Pyrex ovenware.

The original building of Bergen Pines Hospital was completed.

1917 President Wilson declared war on Germany April 6.

The 18th Amendment (Prohibition) was ratified.

The jazz music style was first released on a phonograph record on March 7.

1918 Armistice was declared on November 11, ending World War I.

A worldwide influenza epidemic killed 20,000,000 –548,000 in the United States.

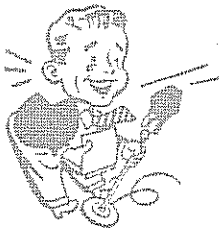
Teterboro Airport opened on October 14.

The first three-color traffic signals were installed in New York City, operated manually from a tower *crow's nest* in the middle of the street.

1919 The first air-conditioned department store was Abraham and Straus in Brooklyn.

1920 The 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, was ratified on August 26.

A Wall Street bomb explosion on September 16 killed 30 people, injured 100 and did $2 million damage.



1921 Warren Harding became President.

The first radio broadcast of a World Series baseball game was made from WJZ in Newark.

The first Band-Aids were produced by Johnson & Johnson, New Brunswick.

1922 Insulin was isolated by Doctors Banting and Best.

Radio Station WOR was born on February 22.

1923 President Harding died on August 2 and Vice President Calvin Coolidge became President.

Clarence Birdseye developed the process of quick freezing to preserve meat and vegetables.

1924 A law was approved by Congress making all American Indians citizens.

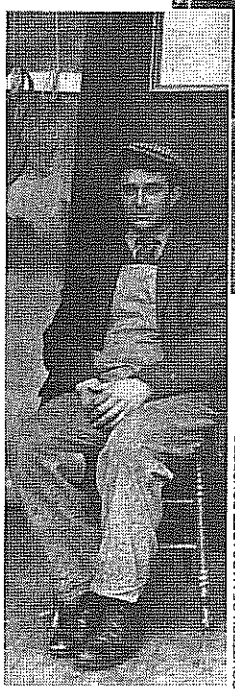
The Bear Mountain Bridge was completed.

The first Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade took place in New York City.

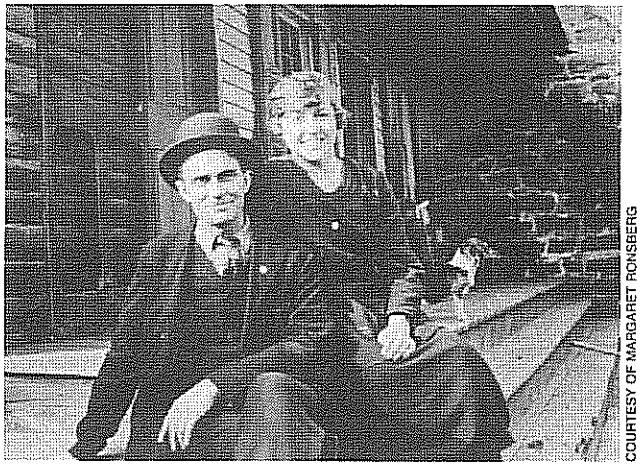
Fort Lee, New Jersey was the capital of the new movie-making industry from 1903 to 1917. Emmet Post of Old Tappan, husband of Annie De Wolf and son-in-law of Mayor John De Wolf, worked as a scene designer and painter of sets for the Fox Studios there. Often he spoke of the stars Mabel Normand, Nita Naldi and his favorite, Theda Bara, the famous vamp. Perhaps it was through Emmet Post that Old Tappan was chosen as the site for on-location filming of several motion pictures during the time of the first World War. One company rented the Theunis Haring house and barn to film two movies: *Ring Around Rosey* and *Over the Hill to the Poorhouse.* When the latter was shown at a movie house in Westwood it was seen by a large and enthusiastic local crowd.

COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

While the film company was using the Eckerson house during the filming of "The Town That Forgot God" in 1921, they took this picture of Jacob Blauvelt Eckerson with three of his grandchildren, John and Margaret on either side of him, and his daughter, Bertha Eckerson Platt with her daughter, Margaret. John and Margaret Eckerson's brother, Wilbur, was housebound at the time because he showed signs of scarlet fever.



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Emmet Post, painter and set designer for Fox studios (movie makers in Fort Lee, NJ), is pictured in the studio (far left). The photo (left) taken in 1920, shows Emmet Post with his daughter, Margaret, on the porch of the Haring-De Wolf house.

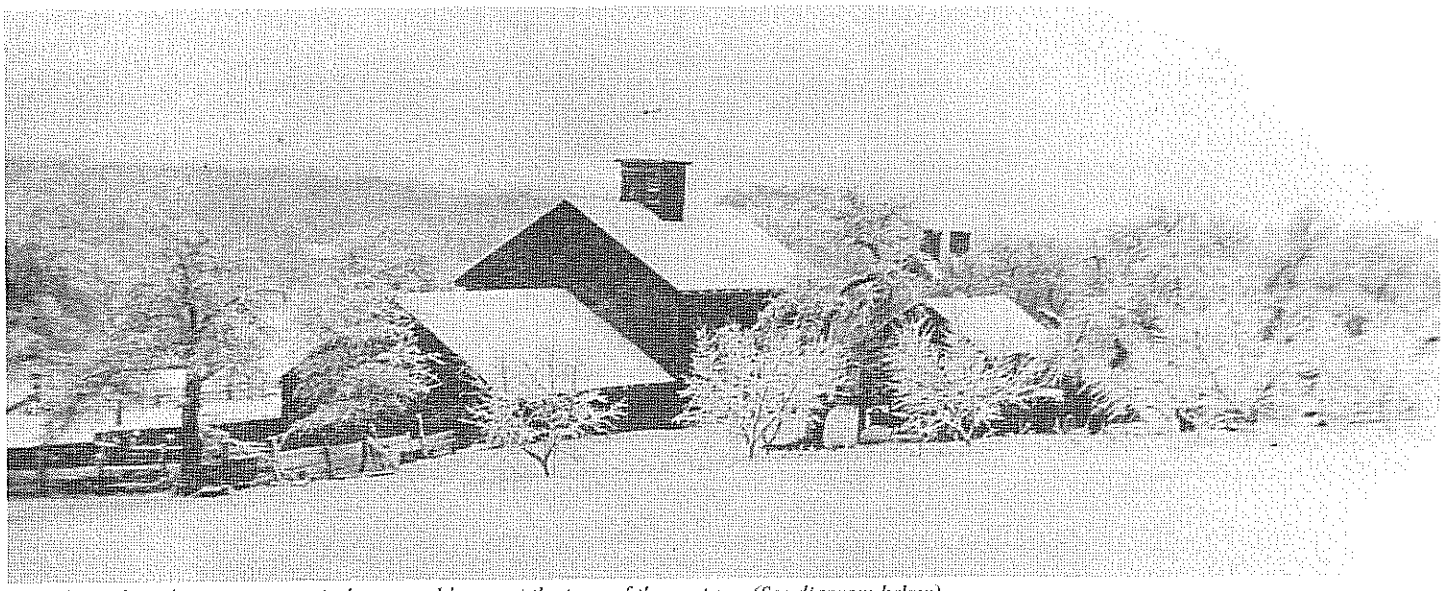
Next to Old Tappan in Harrington Park, where digging for the reservoir had begun, Civil War battle scenes for D.W. Griffith's epic, *Birth of a Nation,* were filmed in 1915, the excavations providing realistic trenches and redoubts. Actors used private homes for dressing rooms and some local residents worked as extras.

In 1918 the Haring-De Wolf house was used for the filming of a "Great War" picture called *Wanted for Murder.* Soldiers from Camp Merritt in Cresskill were employed as extras for the big battle scenes enacted on the meadows and fields around the house, with Mrs. De Wolf's homemade strawberry jam being used as the wounded soldiers' blood (even though the movie was in black and white). Between takes, the soldiers and actors relaxed on the meadows while the star, Elaine Hammerstein, sang to them "I'm Sorry Dear" and other popular songs of the day. Part of the picture called for the bombing of the house. For this, a model of the De Wolf house was constructed and blown up before the camera. So realistic was the scene, however, that Mayor John De Wolf later received irate letters from relatives and friends who had seen the movie, asking how *could* he have allowed the movie company to destroy his old homestead! He assured them that the film company had used a model to achieve one of movie making's early "special effects."

A part of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* starring Will Rogers was also filmed at the Haring-De Wolf house. The borough children were thrilled when famous cowboy Will entertained them with his rope tricks.

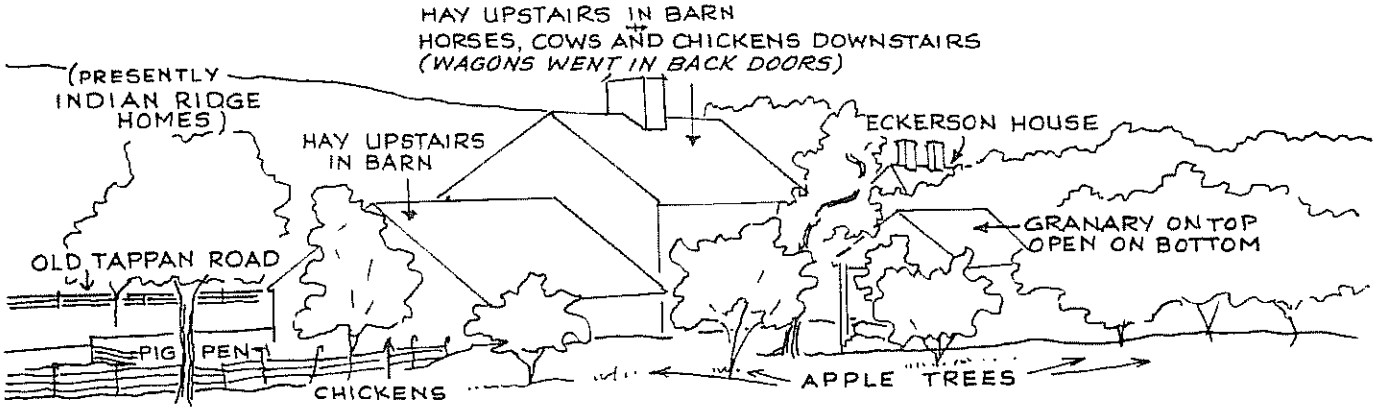
In the mid-twenties the children of Old Tappan had their chances to be in the movies. Rachel Higdon wrote, "*Our little nineteenth century chapel was used to represent a school house. The children of the elementary school - all of us - took part in one scene. Instructions were to run from the building in a group with happy 'school's out' faces. We each received fifty cents. We did not know until later that the title of the movie was,* The Town That Forgot God."

When Hollywood became the motion picture capital, an invitation was extended to Emmet Post to bring his talents to California. His daughter, Ida, who had always loved to sing and dance, was asked to come, too. But the West Coast was far away from home and hometown ties were strong. As for Grandmother De Wolf, the thought of her granddaughter becoming a movie actress was an abomination. It was all very well to have a motion picture filmed in one's backyard with all those fine young



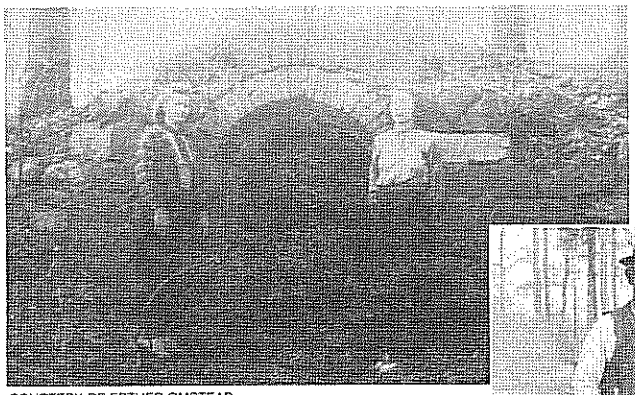
COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

This shows the Eckerson property, its house and barns at the turn of the century. (See diagram below)



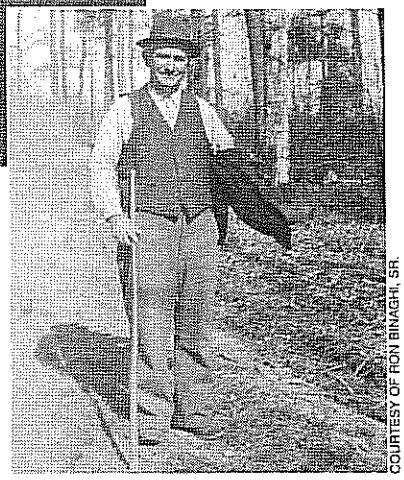
COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

The O'Connor oxen at just one of their tasks – pulling the Hanst car out of a deep snowdrift after it had become stuck trying to reach Old Tappan Road.



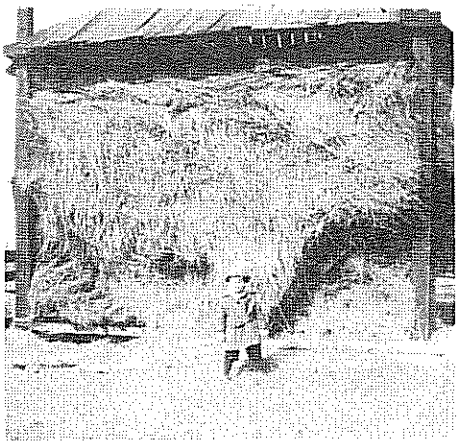
COURTESY OF ESTHER OMSTEAD

Esther Omstead (left) and her friend Anna Grief (right) in 1939 standing on either side of the old burial vault on Todd's Hill.



COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

Here is John O'Connor with walking stick, a smiling and proud landowner.

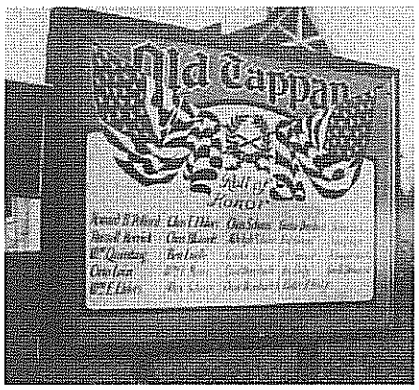


COURTESY OF ED VANDERBECK

Standing in front of a hay barrack in 1926 is Ed Vanderbeck, grandson of the foreman on Todd's Farm. A hay barrack is simply four posts with pegs and a roof which can be raised or lowered as the hay level demands. The pegs in the posts are visible.

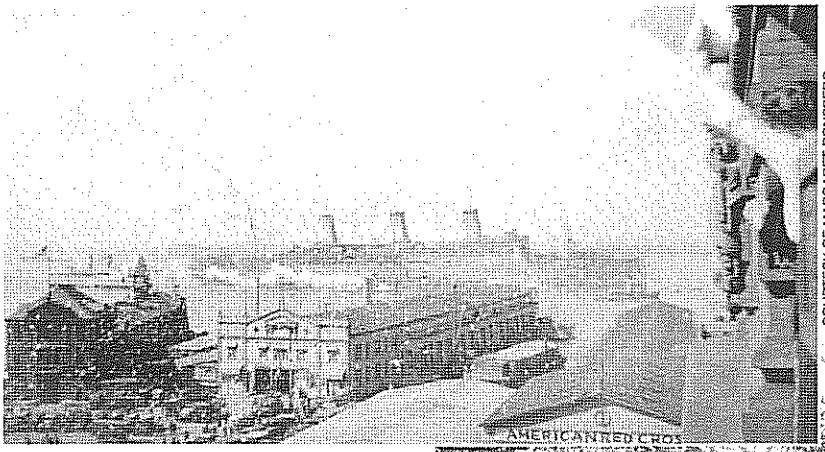
soldier boys, but it was out of the question for Ida to go to Hollywood and become a "loose woman"! They did not go.

During the thirties and forties Mrs. Ella Watson, a former Ziegfield Follies Girl and personal friend of famous movie star Claudette Colbert, lived at 97 Old Tappan Road. The neighbors would often see Miss Colbert strolling along the road while on one of her many visits to Mrs. Watson's home.



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

In 1917 this Roll of Honor was erected on Old Tappan Road on Chapel Corner. It lists the names of the twenty-four Old Tappan men who served their country in World War I.



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Taken at the Hoboken Pier in 1917, this photo shows a woman throwing confetti and waving as tugboats escort the troop ship out of the harbor. Barely visible on the front of one of the buildings are the words "American Red Cross."

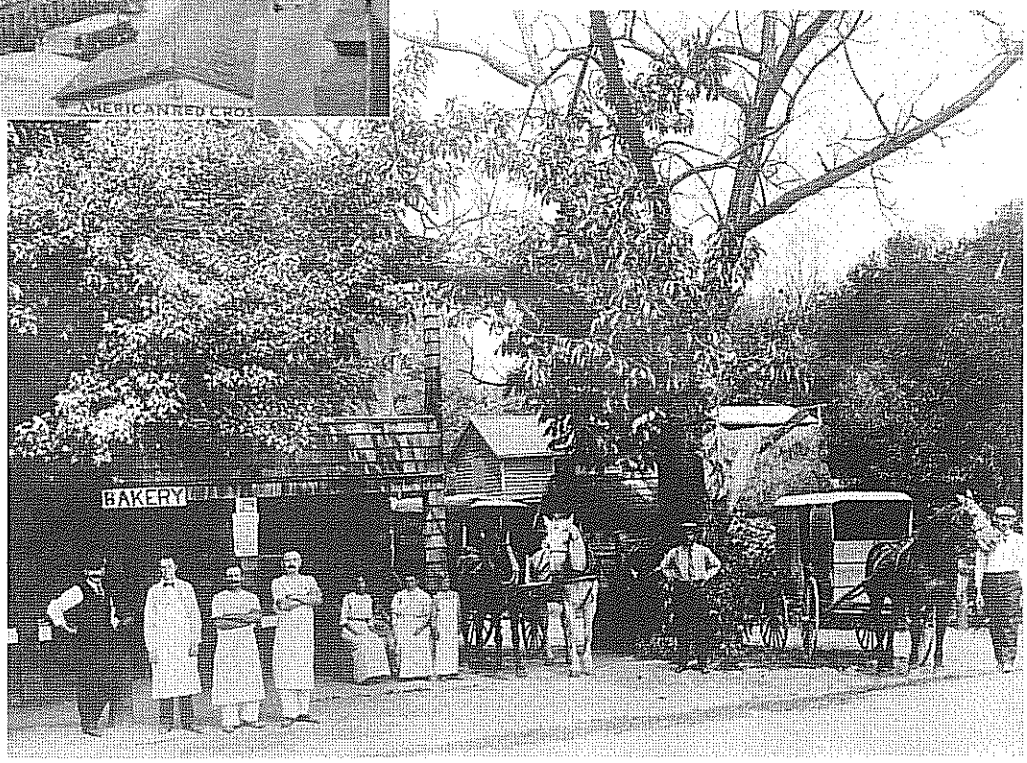
World War I had been raging in Europe for almost two years when President Wilson declared war on Germany in April 1917. The first contingents of American troops went "over there" in June 1917. Camp Merritt in Cresskill was the largest embarkation camp in the United States in World War I and 24 young men from Old Tappan went through it on their way overseas. All returned safely. Some local men were excused from service because they were needed on farms; others worked as carpenters at Camp Merritt, both essential to the war effort.

The teen years slid into the twenties and a dizzying prosperity swept the country. Farmers got reasonably good prices for their produce and could contemplate the purchase of new machinery to increase their productivity. Trucks replaced the horses and wagons that carried their produce to market.

Blacksmiths and wheelwrights turned their skills more towards welding, boiler works and auto mechanics. Old Tappan was gradually electrified during the twenties with electric lights replacing the oil lamps and candles. Piermont and Nyack were two markets where farmers took their produce. A number of farmers were dairymen as well and sold milk to their neighbors who furnished their own milk pails. Some residents kept cows for their own milk supply. Sheffield Farms was one of the early commercial enterprises operating a large milk distribution depot by the railroad in West Norwood. The milk train came through about three o'clock in the morning. The unloading and re-assigning of the milk for delivery to local homes provided good, steady jobs for residents, including those from Old Tappan such as Maurice Coffey.

The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the manufacture and use of alcoholic beverages (Prohibition) spawned the enterprise known as "moonshining." The secluded woods and fields of Old Tappan provided excellent sites for amateur distillers to engage in this illicit trade.

The Comiskie Bakery on Cripplebush Road near Blanch Avenue continued to deliver its baked goods door-to-door by horse and wagon. In the winter when the snow was deep a sleigh replaced the wagon. Big molasses cookies, freshly baked and delivered still warm from the oven, were the bakery's Sunday specialty. That oven made the bakery warm enough for the Comiskies to keep baby chicks, always an attraction for children.



COURTESY OF ED VANDERBECK

On Cripplebush Road property adjacent to the present St. Pius X Church the Comiskie family operated a successful bakery, delivering their products by horse and wagon, as depicted in this 1908 photograph. The remodeled house remains today in its original location. The young man in front of the tree on the right (between the wagons) is Charles Vanderbeck, son of the foreman of Todd's Farm.

1925 1934

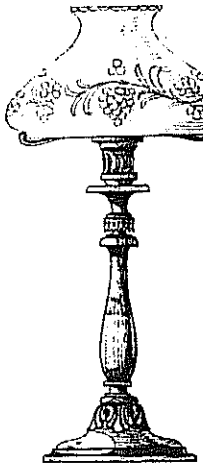
OLD TAPPAN

1925 The ladies of the Tappan Church gave a skit at the Chapel entitled *How the Ladies Earned Their Dollar.*

Electricity came to some parts of Old Tappan.

A one-room schoolhouse, presently the Police Station, was built to be used for upper grades.

1926 At Lein's a half-pint of Horton's, Reed's or Breyers ice cream cost 15¢.



DRAWN BY LEE M. ATWOOD

1927 Mrs. Barbara Moeser started a 4-H Club in Old Tappan.

These were prohibition years; it was not uncommon to detect the smell of moonshine on foggy nights in Old Tappan.

1928 Roads were tarred in Old Tappan.

1929 Wilbur H. Eckerson Sr. was elected the second Mayor of Old Tappan.

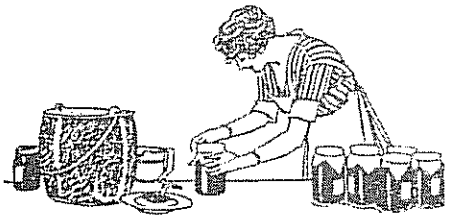
Rockland State Hospital was completed. Its construction gave employment to men from Old Tappan.

1930 Population: 600

The Old Tappan school staff consisted of teachers Genevieve Schutz (Loggie) and Margaret Scott (Harvie) and principal J. Donald Shock.

1931 Mrs. T. Baldwin Demarest, *herself,* sold 200 tickets to a benefit lawn and card party on September 7.

Ollie Pierson, newly married, worked at Ripple Creek Golf Course in Old Tappan at a salary of $15 for a six-day-week.



The Hopper family *put up* their annual 500 jars of food for the winter.

1932 The Old Tappan Volunteer Fire Company was organized.

The Hopper sisters started Girl Scouts in Old Tappan, but meetings were held in Westwood.

School was closed for four days in June because of scarlet fever.

1933 The Ladies Auxiliary of the Old Tappan Volunteer Fire Company was organized on August 16 at the home of Mrs. Ida Stokes with Mrs. Ethel Lake, Mrs. Eleanor Hayes and Mrs. Estelle Griffith present.

1934 The In-As-Much Branch of the Sunshine Society received an award for making 15 quilts in one year.

Wilbur H. Eckerson graduated from Dumont High School and was inducted into the Dumont Sports Hall of Fame.

ELSEWHERE

1925 John T. Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution, not divine creation, in a Dayton, TN high school.

1926 Dr. Robert H. Goddard successfully fired the first liquid fuel rocket on March 16.

All Hackensack High School students were required to sign a statement that they would not belong to any secret societies, prompted by *scandalous behavior within some fraternities and sororities.*

1927 Charles A. Lindbergh flew the first non-stop solo flight across the Atlantic.

The Holland Tunnel was completed.

Farnsworth demonstrated the first television system.

1928 The iron lung, which enabled polio victims to breathe, was invented by Philip Drinker.

The first Mickey Mouse cartoon film, *Steamboat Willie,* was shown in New York City.

1929 Herbert Hoover became President.

The Wall Street Stock Market crashed on October 29 with a $50 billion loss, precipitating the Great Depression.

Newark Airport opened.

1930 Nylon, the first truly synthetic textile fiber, was developed by DuPont chemists.

The first Toll House Cookies were baked at the Toll House Inn in Whitman, MA.

1931 Thomas A. Edison died October 18 in West Orange.

The 3,500-foot-long George Washington Bridge across the Hudson was completed on October 25.

The 102-story Empire State Building opened.

1932 Franklin Roosevelt was elected President.

The Lindbergh baby was kidnapped from his Hopewell, NJ home on March 1.

Sears, Roebuck & Company opened Bergen County's largest department store in Hackensack.

1933 The 21st Amendment which repealed Prohibition was ratified on December 5.

The first drive-in movie theater opened on June 6 in Camden, NJ.

President Roosevelt ordered all banks in the U.S. closed on March 6.

1934 The United States steamer *Morro Castle* burned off Asbury Park.

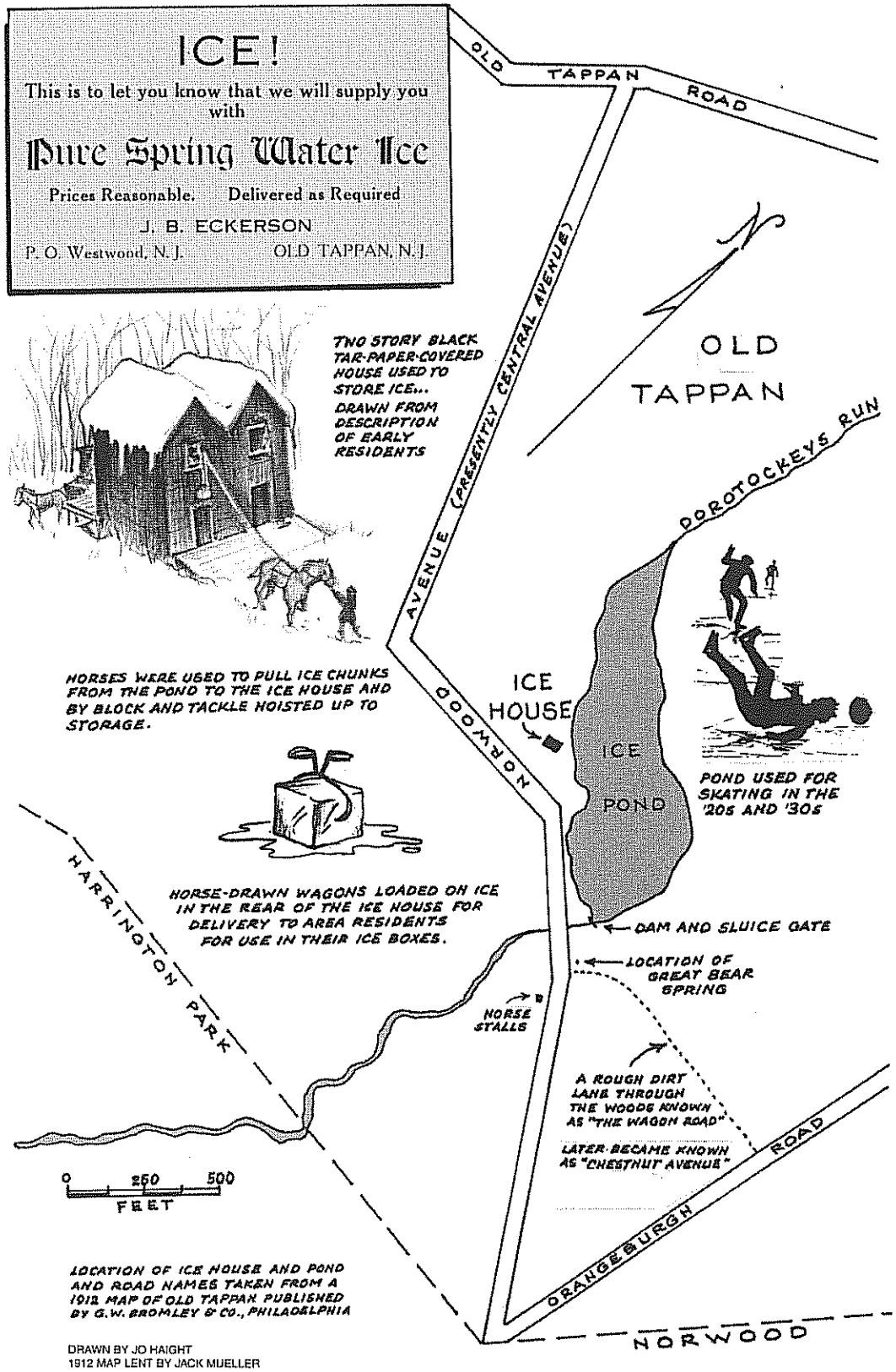
Trotting races were held in River Vale, where Holiday Farms townhouses now stand.

Ice was a necessary commodity in the days before electricity brought refrigeration, and the Eckerson ice pond alongside Central Avenue was a main source. The pond was formed on the low-lying meadow coursed by Dorotockeys Run[3]. Every fall the sluice gate was dropped at the downstream end of the Run to dam the water and turn the meadow into a pond which froze in the winter into such thick ice that a horse could walk on it. The horse pulled a cultivator which marked off the ice into squares. These squares were cut through with a saw and the resulting two-by-two-foot blocks of ice were pulled out with tongs and hauled on a horse-drawn sled to the ice house. Sometimes the horse slipped and fell into the water where the ice had been cut away. Then "*it was the devil of a time to get the horse out,*" reminisces Pete Oakes, "*and we had to walk the horse back and forth to dry him and keep him warm.*"

The ice was hoisted by block and tackle into the two story ice house and packed in salt hay or sawdust to prevent the blocks from freezing together. The horses and wagons pulled up to the loading platform to take on the ice for delivery to the homes and inns in the area. The ice pond yielded as many as three crops of ice a winter and the ice had to be harvested as soon as it was ready so that the next crop could form. Young men, high school age and older, frequently helped in this hauling and packing of ice. They were not paid; they did the work simply because it *had* to be done.

Between harvests the pond provided excellent skating. On Sunday afternoons there were hockey games played at one end of the pond while general skating took place at the other end, and the skaters could glide into the woods where Dorotockeys Run froze as far as Haring Drive.

One New Year's Eve (no one seems to remember the year, but it was probably in the late twenties) the ice house exploded in a conflagration, the flames and smoke of which could be seen for miles around. Fire fighters with all available equipment of the time came from every neighboring town but were unable to quench the blaze. The ice house was gone. But actually the need for an ice pond had dwindled with the coming of refrigeration. Charles DeWolf, Sr., who for a time had owned and operated the business, even delivering the ice himself on many occasions, went back to full-time farming. The pond still froze over naturally for a few years but not at all to the same depth. Gradually the field grasses and thick bushes took over and the meadow became again a "durre takes".

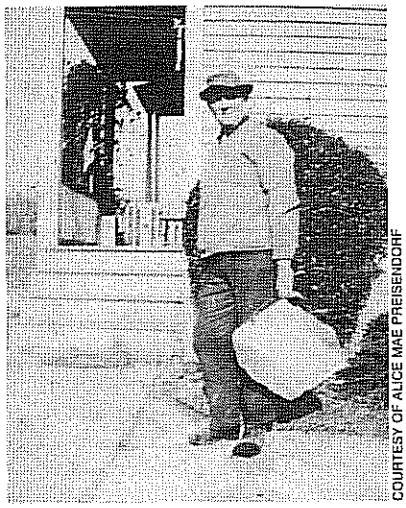


[3] *The name "Dorotockeys" evolved from the Dutch "Durre takes" which meant "through the brush", or in effect, "the place where we go through the brush."*

The same natural clear water springs that fed into Dorotockeys Run to form the ice pond provided such a plentiful volume of fresh water that a thriving bottling business grew. Spring water was taken by horse and wagon (later by truck) to the West Shore Railroad station in West Norwood for shipment to New York City for use in water coolers. The Great Bear Spring Water Company obtained much of its water from these springs well into the 1960s. Individuals from Old Tappan, the surrounding area and from as far away as Jersey City came to the springs on Central Avenue to draw water. All this came to an end in the seventies; housing development had increased and the springs were capped. There is still to be seen on the other side of Central Avenue, however, the concrete remains of a two-horse stall where the horses that pulled the spring water wagons were kept.

The great Depression of the thirties, while not felt so severely in Old Tappan as it was in urban centers, did affect the town and its residents. Jobs were hard to find, farm prices fell and there were some days when farmers were offered so little for their produce that they brought it back home again to feed the hogs or plow back into the fields. At least there was enough to eat on the farm and almost all rural families could have a vegetable patch and keep a few chickens. Neighbors helped one another through difficulties and the In As Much Branch was alert to provide necessities for anyone who was ill or in grievous need.

In 1931 before the Depression hit bottom, an enterprising and optimistic group formed the Ripple Creek Golf Course. From Hattie Schaus they bought 11.5 acres running on both sides of the present Charles Place; from John Handwerg both sides of the present Howard Drive running south to Cripplebush Road, as well as lands just south in Harrington Park - 42.5 acres in all; from Ruth Herrick True 11.13 acres running north from Cripplebush Road, including the lot on which St. Pius X Church now stands. They built a nine hole course complete with a clubhouse (now the St. Pius X Church) on Cripplebush Road at Blanch Avenue. Maintaining the course furnished employment for Old Tappaners. The course operated until 1944 when World War II took away the young men, and shortages of gasoline cut attendance from out-of-town players. The club declared bankruptcy and the lands reverted to the original owners.

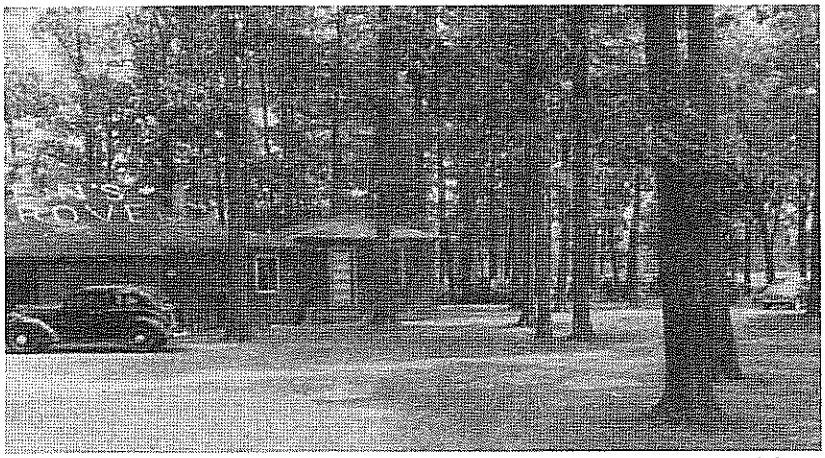


COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

Charles De Wolf is shown delivering a block of ice cut from the ice pond on Central Avenue.

COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN POLICE

Ed-Ella's on Orangeburgh Road, now Colonial Manor, as it appeared in the fifties.

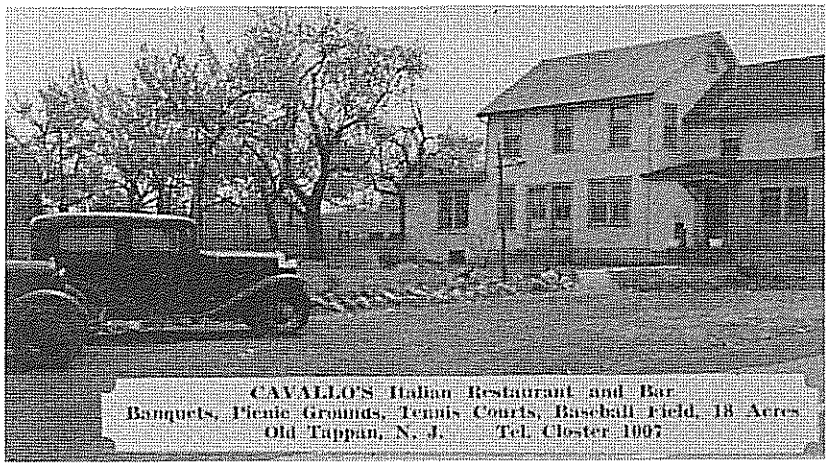


COURTESY OF ALBIE LEIN

Lein's Grove is portrayed in this old photo. Today Charlie Brown's restaurant and the United Jersey Bank (formerly Valley Savings Bank) occupy the site.

Parties, large and small, and entertainments put on by members of the In As Much Branch, the Sunday School teachers and trustees, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Fire Department and active youth groups kept up the spirits of the townspeople in those difficult financial times. Minstrel shows were a highly popular form of revue, and at one performance T. Baldwin Demarest brought down the house with his vigorous rendition of "Old Man River."

With the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, the tavern business came to life. It was observed that there were plenty of taverns in Old Tappan but no churches. There was Badini's (which became the Pine Grove Inn, Oriental Luau and three short-lived Asian restaurants), Castadella's, Frank's Place (renamed Ed 'n Ella's and now Colonial Manor), Cavallo's (later the Old Tappan Inn and now Confetti's Ristorante), Lein's Grove (later the Coach House and now Charlie Brown's) and the Old Red Barn. On Central Avenue Bernard Sniath operated a small saloon in what had been a Public Service bus. By 1938 Mr. Sniath's business was so good that he was able to



COURTESY OF JIM MUELLER

Cavallo's, which became for a time The Old Tappan Inn, is now Confetti's Ristorante.

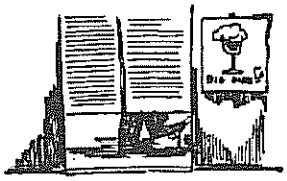
COURTESY OF JIM MUELLER

Shown here on another postcard is Sniath's 300 House Hofbrau.

buy the Theunis Haring House and transfer his liquor license to his new bar which he established in the cellar of the east wing. He named his tavern "Ye 300 House" wishing to imply that he was now located in a venerable 300-year-old home. This was his legacy because the house has been known by that name ever since.

For the Sniaths, however, their tenure of the new bar did not have smooth sailing. They had their license suspended for a week for an ABC violation and were cited for selling liquor after hours, though Mr. Sniath protested that he was only serving nightcaps to his staff. His propensity for misrepresentation led to complaints from customers that his beer on tap had more of the essence of tap water. His final transgression was his possession for sale of four bottles of bootleg liquor. His license was finally revoked on May 29, 1940.

The loss of their liquor license brought about the loss of business and finally the loss of the property by foreclosure. On June 15, 1940 a sheriff's sale resold the property to the Harings,



heirs of the original owners.

On November 22, 1943 the Harings resold the property to Edward Schmidlin. The bar was reopened by Frank W. Muth whose bar, "The Old Red Barn" on Old Tappan Road west of Washington Avenue, had burned down on November first. He transferred his liquor license, along with his handsome walnut bar, and prospered sufficiently to buy the house and grounds from Schmidlin in 1947.

Frank Muth owned the property and operated the restaurant and bar until his death in 1964. His wife, Anna, though a tavern keeper's wife, was said not to believe in drinking and she let the license lapse. She sold the house in February 1973. The new owners resurrected and reconditioned the old house and had it placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Before Old Tappan became a borough in 1894 it was part of Harrington Township and the keepers of the peace were residents of the Township who were appointed as constables on a yearly basis. Their duties were limited to minor infractions of the law; county and state police came in to handle anything of a serious nature. After 1894 a marshall was appointed by the Borough, and in 1904 the Mayor and Council voted unanimously "*to procure an officer's badge to be used by the Borough Marshall,*" and further "*that Marshall Mence be empowered and instructed to procure said badge.*" Marshall Mence did as he was bidden and had the badge made at his blacksmith shop.

In 1935 Joseph Mazzo was appointed as a marshall and in 1939 he was made Chief Marshall (at $1 a year), with two marshalls, Rodney Post and Conrad (*Cooney*) Lachmund to assist him. The marshalls used their own cars for police work and Chief Mazzo's home was his headquarters. He had a successful boiler manufacturing business in New York City so Lena Mazzo took messages for him and relayed his instructions.

COURTESY OF JOE TRACY

Chief Marshall Joseph Mazzo pictured in the early 1960s.

Traffic violations, squabbles (both domestic and between neighbors), petty thefts, drunkenness and rowdy behavior on Saturday nights made up the roster of crimes in Old Tappan in the thirties and forties. It always created great excitement when an inmate escaped from Rockland State Psychiatric Hospital, making his way across the sparsely settled countryside to Old Tappan. A siren was sounded from the hospital when a patient was found to be missing.

On one such occasion, however, the sequence of events changed. While getting ready for bed one night, Edna Alexander was startled to hear the sound of footsteps on the gravel outside her bedroom window. She turned off the light and pretended to get into bed but she quietly crawled to her sister and brother-in-law's bedroom (Margaret and Clayton "*Rons*" Ronsberg) to alert them. Throwing on some clothes, Rons ran outside to investigate while Margaret locked the door behind him, leaving Rons to fend for himself! She then phoned up the street to her uncle,

Marshall Rodney Post, who jumped into his car and encountered a man, with Rons pursuing him, at the 300 House corner. The two men bundled their unprotesting captive into the car. But what to do now; no signal had come from Rockland and, as the man either could not or would not explain himself, he had to be taken to the County Jail in Hackensack. With siren wailing the three raced the 12 miles to Hackensack. No sooner had they arrived when a call came through from Rockland that a patient had escaped and to be on the lookout for him. Back raced the three to Old Tappan. As they turned him over to the Rockland authorities, the bemused passenger thanked Post and Rons most kindly for the ride, saying that he had always wanted to go to Hackensack!

The marshall system served Old Tappan well, handling everything from a rash of chicken stealing during World War II when meat was scarce, to traffic jams on Sunday afternoons when attendance was high at Idlewild and Northern Valley swim clubs. By 1959 the number of marshalls had increased over the years, the town's population had more than doubled and the need for full-time policemen was obvious.

Old Tappan was the last town in Bergen County to give up the marshall system. Charles Schuh was hired as the first full-time policeman and later became the first Chief of Police. In 1960 he was joined by John Kramer who had grown up in Old Tappan. That same year the first police car was purchased.

Do you suppose John Kramer (shown here in 1951 with his young neighbor, Michael Jeffas) had any inkling that one day he would be the Chief of Police in Old Tappan? Or that Michael's brother, Tim, would be one of the town's police officers?

COURTESY OF JOHN KRAMER

Captain William Hoyle, now retired from the Police Department, recalled his first day on the job as a policeman in Old Tappan. At 2:18 PM on a Monday afternoon in July 1963 an alarm sounded in the River Vale Police Station signaling a holdup at the Valley Savings and Loan, then located in Bi-State Plaza. Hoyle and Lt. Schuh, who were in a police cruiser nearby, responded immediately. When they arrived no one was in the bank except Esther Herrick, the lone teller that day, and she was fuming! The story is now legend that after she had handed over the money demanded by two gunmen who threatened to shoot her if she screamed, she absolutely refused to go into the Men's Room as ordered. The men thereupon pushed her into the vault, locked the door, ripped out the phone and fled. The indignant Miss Herrick tripped the automatic alarm and the police appeared and rescued her. She was able to describe the gunmen well enough for composite pictures to be drawn and circulated throughout the area. The gunmen were caught in the Bronx, within the year, after having staged a series of holdups. Esther Herrick was a heroine, and Bill Hoyle wondered if police work in the small town of Old Tappan was always going to be as exciting as his first day.

The brick building, which had been built as a schoolhouse for the upper elementary school grades in 1925, became the Borough Hall in 1940. Police headquarters, which had been little more than a closet in the Borough Hall, was moved in 1960 to a portion of the downstairs which it shared with the Borough Clerk, the Tax Collector and Executive Council meetings. In 1986 the department took over the entire building when the Borough offices were moved to the Charles De Wolf School.

Acting Chief John Kramer was promoted to Chief of Police in 1972, the position he has held ever since. The Police Department today is a highly trained corps of 12 men: the chief, one captain, one lieutenant, two sergeants and seven patrolmen.

In 1932, at the instigation of the Mayor and Council, a group of men in Old Tappan called a meeting at Lachmund's Hotel to form the Old Tappan Volunteer Fire Company #1. Charles Lake, Sr. was elected as the first president and Fire Chief.

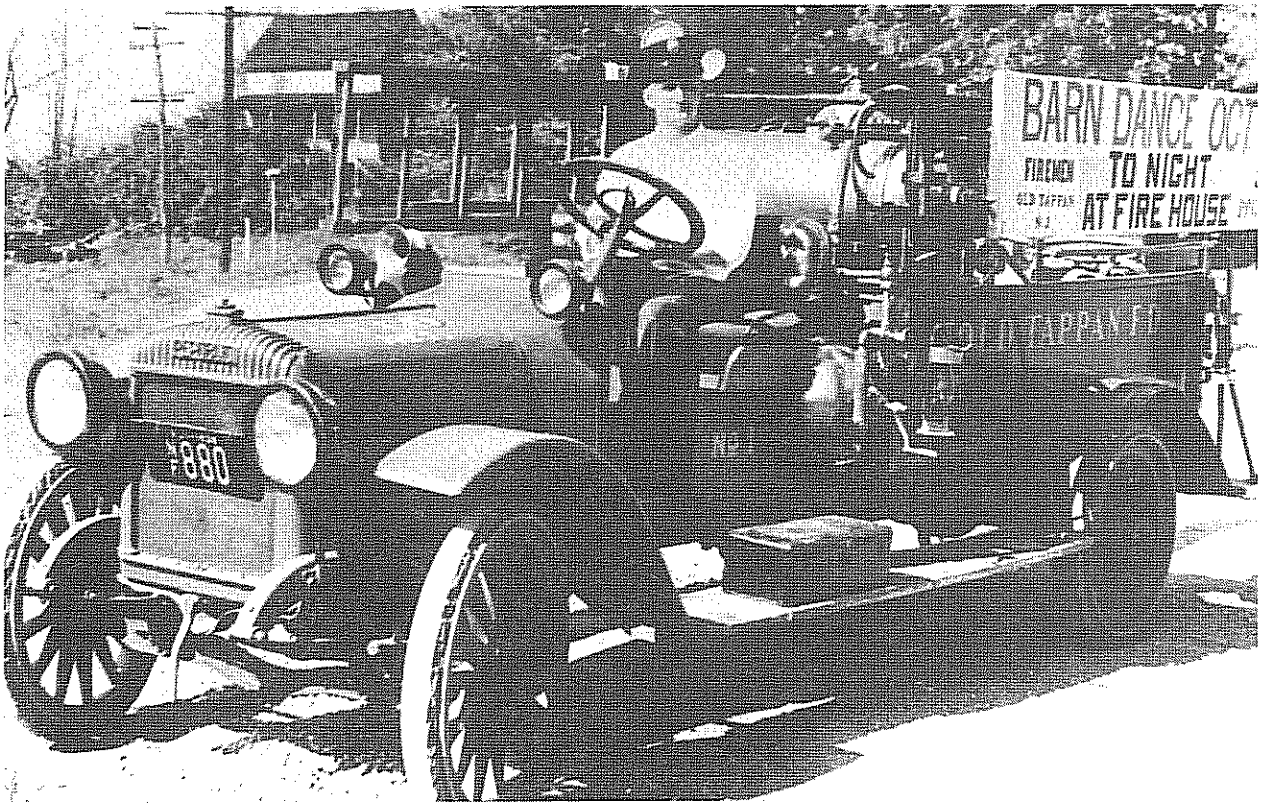
During all the years prior to this time Old Tappan had relied upon Norwood and River Vale for fire protection. Some large fires in town required additional help from Westwood, Northvale and Closter. Fires were common; the mostly wooden houses and barns burned quickly and completely, leaving only the stone foundations upon which to rebuild. There were no water mains, therefore no fire hydrants. Neighbors forming bucket brigades from the nearest ponds were able to give little help and even the plentiful water of the Hackensack River could not stop the blaze in 1904 that destroyed the Collignon Chair Factory on the river banks.

The equipment provided by the Mayor and Council to the new Fire Department cost $67 and was of the most rudimentary kind: one dozen brooms, two fire extinguishers, four water tanks and six Indian tanks. An Indian tank is a two-strap knapsack holding five gallons of water, equipped with a hose and a long pump-activated handle. It is capable of shooting water a distance of 20 feet. Though rarely used now, these tanks are handy for putting out small brush fires and the Fire Department still possesses a few.

Fire gongs and hammers were placed at various locations to sound the alarms (two such gongs can be seen displayed outside the Fire House today). Every able-bodied man in town was expected to drop whatever he was doing and respond to the call.

The first fire truck was fitted with soda and acid equipment and 150 feet of hose. It had solid rubber tires which, when it pounded along the hard roads to a fire, caused vibrations felt by the firemen and everyone living on either side of the road. Powell (*Albie*) Lein wrote in a letter, "*I can remember when I was a young boy running to the firehouse when the whistle blew and riding to fires with Mr. Cavallo who drove our first fire truck, an old Republic.*"

The Fire Department held its meetings in the old wooden schoolhouse (next to the present police station) until



Pictured here in 1938 is Maxwell Tonner, proudly seated in Old Tappan's first fire truck, a second-hand 1926 Republic.

COURTESY OF EVELYN HADE

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Virginia Dwyer (Jeffas) relaxing in one of the town's fire gongs in 1943. She is wearing typical attire of the time: a mouton lamb coat, saddle shoes and bobby socks.

the Old Tappan Fire House was built in 1936. No bank would lend money to build this fire house. Local citizens put up the money (Esther Herrick was a prime lender) and the suppliers of materials extended credit. The work was done by the members and eventually every borrowed penny was repaid.

On August 16, 1933 the Ladies Auxiliary of the Fire Department was proposed at the home of Ida Stokes with Ethel Lake, Eleanor Hayes and Estelle Griffith present. On August 23 the nominating committee submitted its slate of officers and Bertha De Wolf was elected as the first president. Charter membership was closed at the September meeting with 24 members and thus the Auxiliary was begun.

The Ladies Auxiliary fund raising efforts were the lifeblood of the Fire Department. The members held bake sales and card parties, made beautiful quilts which were raffled, helped sell tickets to the Annual Firemen's Ball and were famous for their delicious Manhattan clam chowder which they sold every Good Friday. They donated $1,969.20 towards the building of the fire house and bought a gas stove and all the kitchen equipment. Their fund raising continued - it did not stop with the completion of the fire house - and every year when the firemen march in the Memorial Day Parade some of the 35 Auxiliary Ladies proudly march right along with them.

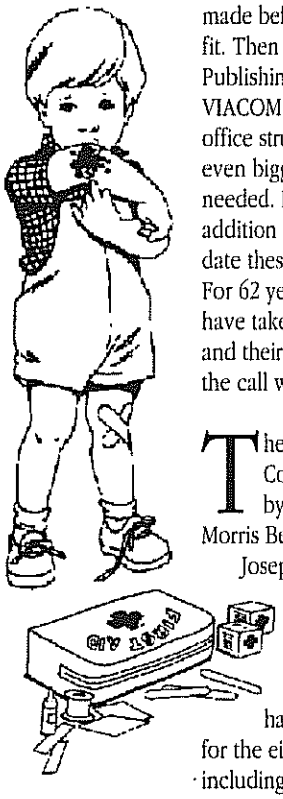
A Dodge fire truck and supplementary equipment was acquired at the outset of World War II and a Ford pumper from

COURTESY OF EVELYN AND HARRY LAKE

Ethel Lake (1899 - 1992), shown here sewing on a hexagon-design quilt in March 1948, worked with other auxiliary members on many quilts over the years which were raffled off to benefit the Fire Department.

Government surplus after the war. By 1958 the town's growth and consequent greater needs made it necessary to purchase new and larger equipment; a 750 GPM pumper equipped with a large hose bed and a 500 gallon booster tank was added to the department's fleet. As time went on the older trucks were replaced with new up-to-date fire engines.

In 1964 the Mayor and Council authorized the purchase of an aerial fire truck. An embarrassing situation resulted when this was delivered and found to be too high to back into the fire house. The top of the door frame had to be removed and interior modifications made before this new fire engine could fit. Then in 1978 when Prentice-Hall Publishing (now Simon & Schuster, a VIACOM Company) built its two-story office structure on Old Tappan Road, an even bigger aerial ladder truck was needed. It was necessary to build an addition to the fire house to accommodate these newer and larger engines. For 62 years, these dedicated volunteers have taken pride in keeping themselves and their equipment always ready for the call when it comes.



The First Aid and Ambulance Corps of Old Tappan was formed by three volunteer firemen, Morris Berman, Patrick Lanza and Joseph Mazzo. The corps received its State Charter in January 1938 and was incorporated on July 19, 1939. Prior to that time the Closter corps had handled emergency medical aid for the eight surrounding towns, including Old Tappan.

At the request of Fire Chief Rodney Post, the three founders (and later Wilbur Stokes and Earl Heyman) took a first aid course in Closter. At first, Mayor de Berg was not convinced of the importance of taking first aid courses, but after he witnessed the successful resuscitation of a drowning boy, he also enrolled for emergency training.

The original first aid kit was purchased by Berman and Lanza who shared the cost of $10.30. They hung the kit in Berman's Tri-Boro Grocery Store at Orangeburgh Road and Central Avenue. Word of its existence spread. Soon, whenever a child was hurt or someone needed medical assistance, they immediately went to the grocery store for first aid emergency treatment.

Next the firemen decided that the new corps needed an ambulance. A fund raising card party provided enough money ($25) to purchase a second-hand hearse. Rodney Post painted its funereal black exterior a fresh, light grey and Old Tappan's first ambulance was proudly driven in the 1940 Memorial Day Parade.

Patrick Lanza, now the only living member of the original trio, recalls that as he was marking the papers of his first all-woman first aid class, Bill Hayes rushed in to announce the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Mayor de Berg, upon hearing this news, immediately called a civil defense meeting. A network was set up mobilizing the town's energies and abilities under the combined direction of the First Aid Corps, the Fire Department and the Marshalls.

After World War II Old Tappan's population began to grow rapidly. The number of medical assistance requests increased and the corps was called upon to transport patients to Hackensack or Englewood Hospital. (Pascack Valley Hospital did not open until 1959.) To meet rising expenses and to purchase new equipment, the corps held dances, card parties and bake sales and ran an annual door-to-door contribution drive whose goal in 1949 was $700. Donations were made by individuals and groups in gratitude for the corps' emergency medical assistance, such as that given in the summer of 1944 to four women from Camp Woodland. This camp was maintained by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union to provide members with an opportunity for a summer vacation in the country and was located on Washington Avenue North (now under the waters of Lake Tappan).

The original "hearse" ambulance was replaced with a series of used ambulances obtained from other first aid squads. In late 1954 a brand new Cadillac ambulance was purchased and in the months of November and December of that year responded to 14 calls for assistance.

The Cold War of the fifties and the United States' engagement in the Korean Conflict gripped the country's imagination and there was heightened interest and activity in civil defense and disaster. "Safe" public places such as school and church basements were designated as shelters. School children were instructed in the proper response to air raid drills just as they had been in the 1940s. This civil defense activity, in which the First Aid Corps played such an important part, reached a high point during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and tapered off thereafter. The corps is still geared, however, to act effectively in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

In the late fifties the corps members recognized the need for a headquarters–a garage for the ambulance, which was accommodated in the fire house, and space for a small clinic. A plot of land on Russell Avenue and Old Tappan

COURTESY OF JOE TRACY

The new 1955 Cadillac ambulance is the pride of these four Corps members as they pose with it in the Memorial Day Parade: (left-to-right) Fred Jabour, William Weidmann, Henry Gundel and Walter Becker.

COURTESY OF PETE OAKES

Hunting was a way of life in the earlier days as this photo taken in 1936 shows. Pete Oakes, Wilbur Stokes, Rodney Post and Charlie Post (the two Posts are not related) pose with hunting dog, Sport, by the Weis house and garage on Central Avenue.

Road was acquired from the Borough for one dollar. A fund raising campaign, headed by Gaylord de Berg (son of the former mayor) was initiated. The Lions Club, always supportive of the corps, as many members were themselves corpsmen, made a large contribution in 1959. Construction started in 1960; the building was completed in 1961 and dedicated on May 30 of that year with an Open House held after the Memorial Day Parade. The building was rededicated on Memorial Day 1980 to the memory of Joseph Mazzo who had died in January 1978.

A modern ambulance, built to corps specifications, with the latest equipment and a removable modular body, was purchased in 1974. The Lions Club donated a two-way radio for use in the new vehicle. In 1982 a Ford wheeled coach was purchased and in 1990 a Ford Econoline wheeled coach.

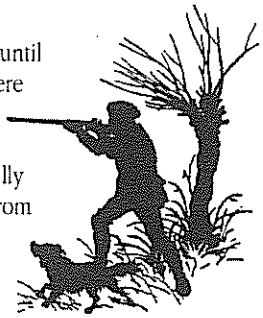
Corps members, themselves, take courses to keep up-to-date and, as of 1987, are required to take an Emergency Medical Technician training course. The corps now numbers 35 men and women (the first four women joined the corps in 1970) who meet monthly, have a monthly drill meeting and participate in drills with the Old Tappan Volunteer Fire Department. Theirs is a continuing service to the residents of Old Tappan.

The Rod and Gun Club was formed one day in the twenties as Rodney Post, his brother John, Wilbur Stokes and Pete Oakes were returning from a meeting of the River Vale Rod and Gun Club. Membership in this club was no longer satisfying, so they decided to establish their own club. There was immediate interest and support for the new group. The club sponsored local coon dog field trials, which were held almost every Sunday afternoon on O'Connor's meadows and into the Greenwoods.

The really big events, however, were those authorized by the Eastern States Field Trial Association. Coon dog field trials were held annually in their different member districts and Old Tappan was host to several of these trials during the thirties. Entrants and spectators attended from far and wide. Field trials were a one day event. Some participants from a distance arrived the night before, set up their tents and camped out. Others came early in the morning with everyone helping to set up tents for the committee and other necessary purposes, including the large "mess hall" where the women served lunch. Men, women and children (and the dogs, of course) took part in the trials. Whole families of spectators drove many miles in their Model A Fords to view the action.

First the raccoon man arrived with the animal in a carrying box. Sometimes he walked the raccoon on a lead about a mile and a half through fields, brush and bramble to put him high up in a tree – a very slow process. An alternate and less time-consuming method was for an assistant to lay the scent by dragging the raccoon's bedding along the ground while the raccoon was carried directly to the tree.

Each dog was assigned a number which was painted on its side. The trials were run in "heats" of four, six or eight dogs at a time, depending upon the number of entries. The dogs lined up with their owners. Charles De Wolf, Sr., who was a frequent starter, fired his pistol and off dashed the dogs. Off went the owners, too, in hot pursuit to prevent the dogs from fighting one another instead of concentrating on the chase. It usually took approximately seven minutes for the fastest dog to run the trail and find the raccoon up the tree. Timers clocked the dogs. Heat after heat, the dogs had their turns until all the dogs had run. The scores were recorded on the big board.

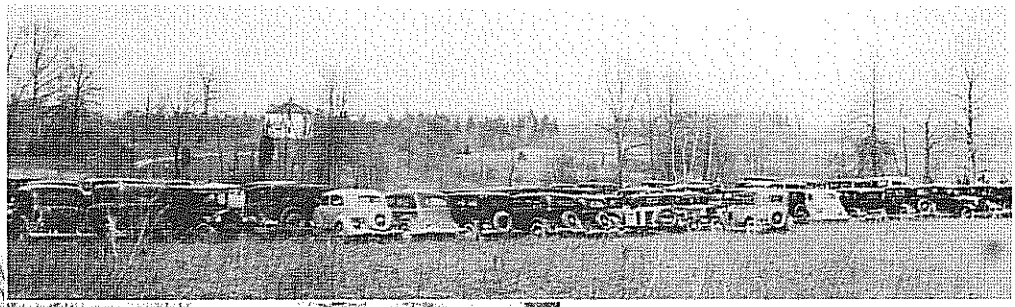


The raccoon was taken down from the tree and a fresh (and usually much longer) trail was laid, away from the original one. It was on this trail that the winners of each heat competed in a final run for the day's championship.

It was an exceptional dog that consistently "*barked a tree*" – one whose acute sense of smell and swift pace took it accurately to the treed raccoon – leaving the other dogs behind "*barking up the wrong tree*." Pete Oakes had just such a valuable dog and he was once offered an automobile in trade for it – he kept the dog!

Early in the 1940s, when World War II was raging and many of the men went off to war, the number of field trials fell off. Gasoline was rationed and new tires were unobtainable, but when tires held out and a little gasoline could be found, there were participants at the *big* field trials. After the war as houses were built on former farms and fields, the trials were no longer held and became a thing of the past.

COON DOG FIELD TRIALS



Spectators' cars parked along Old Tappan Road. Note house on hill where Bi-State is now.

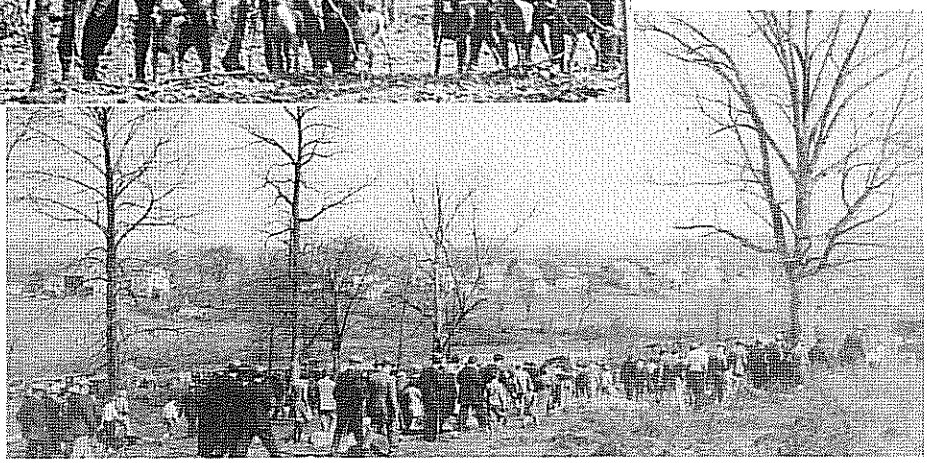
Setting up the tents and tables for the trials.

Stanley Murberg of Norwood arriving with the raccoon in its box.

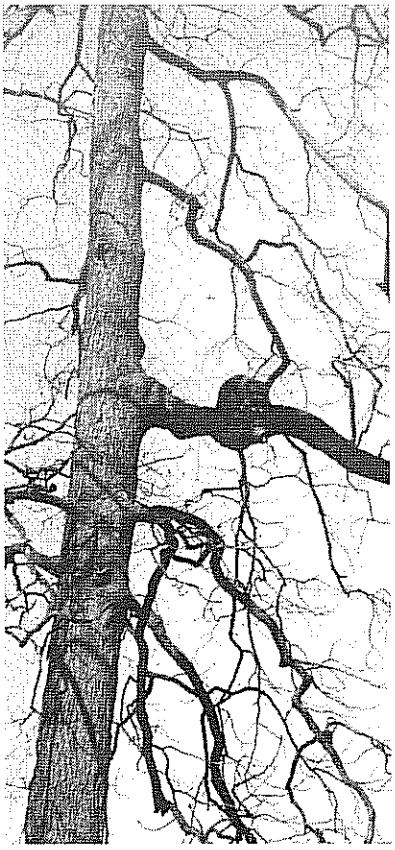
Pete Oakes painting a number on a dog. Each dog had its own number which was recorded on the scoreboard.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF PETE OAKES

Waiting for the starting shot. Charles De Wolf is on the left.



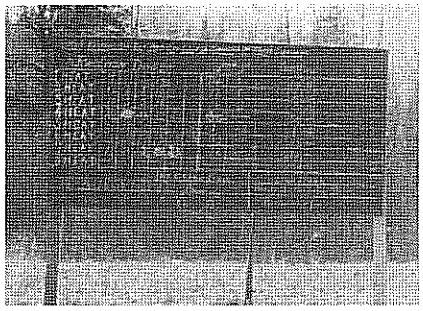
Crowds following the chase.



Raccoon high in the tree.

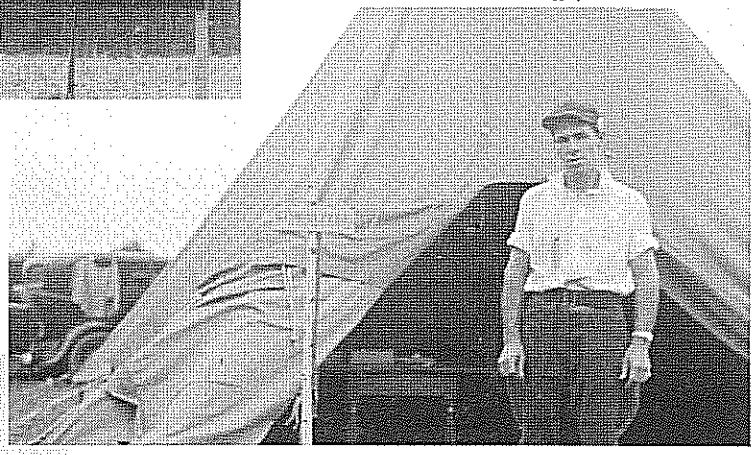
One man times the dog and the owner follows as fast as he can.

Crowds scanning the scoreboard.



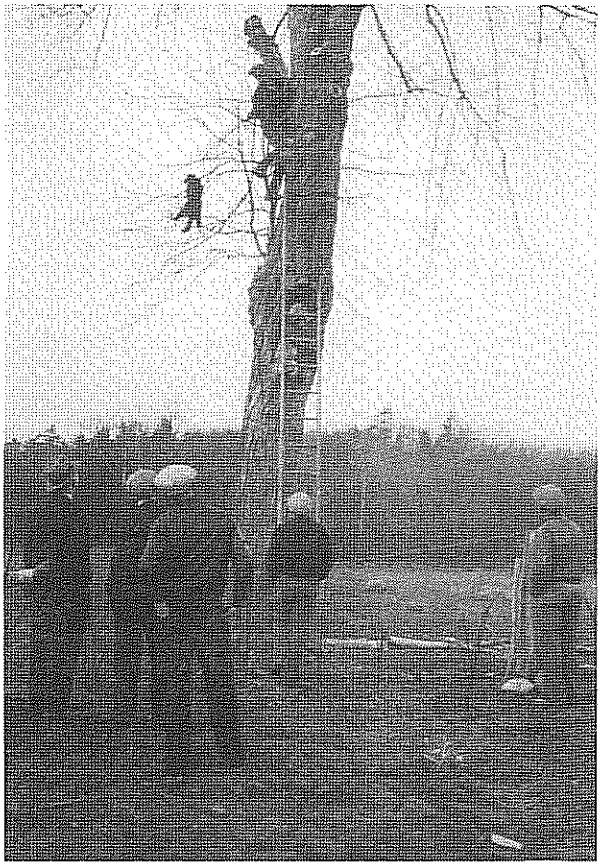
Eight heats listed on scoreboard. The results of each run are recorded on the scoreboard and viewed anxiously by the spectators who undoubtedly have made bets on the outcome.

Maurice Coffey, Committeeman.



"Come and get it!" – no one needs to be asked twice.

The Lunch Ladies are ready. They worked all morning in the De Wolf kitchen making clam chowder to serve to the hungry throngs.



Raccoon descending.

NEIGHBORHOOD RECOLLECTIONS

(1) CROSSING WIRES: THE HIGH TENSION LINES CROSSED THE HACKENSACK RIVER JUST BELOW THE NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY BOUNDARY. THERE WERE NON-ELECTRIC CROSSING WIRES OR CABLES AT GROUND LEVEL. A PERSON COULD CROSS BY PUTTING HIS FEET ON THE LOWER WIRE AND GRASPING THE OTHER ONE (ABOUT HEAD HIGH) WITH HIS HANDS. IN THIS WAY A PERSON CROSSED THE RIVER BY SLIDING SIDEWAYS.

(2) GREENWOODS: DENSE HEMLOCKS CREATED A NIGHT-TIME ATMOSPHERE DURING THE DAY WHERE ONE COULD (AND DID!) GET LOST EASILY IN THE GREENWOODS. BOTH LOCAL PEOPLE AND "BIG SHOTS" FROM HACKENSACK CAMPED HERE. DURING EARLIER TIMES THE GREENWOODS WERE CALLED THE "OLD TAPPAN GREENBUSH."

(3) PICKEREL POND: A TRADITIONAL NAME FOR THIS BEND AND SLOUGH ALONG THE HACKENSACK RIVER. DURING LATER TIMES, HOWEVER, THE BEST PICKEREL FISHING WAS FURTHER DOWNSTREAM AT A LARGE HOLE IN THE RIVER MARKED:

PICKEREL FISHING

(4) BEE TREE: ABOUT 1935 T. BALDWIN DEMAREST, JOHN O'CONNOR AND MR. HANST WENT TO CUT DOWN A BEE TREE SOMEONE HAD SPOTTED ALONG THE PATH BETWEEN THE WATERCRESS SPRING AND THE INDIAN BURIAL GROUND. TOM DEMAREST WENT ALONG. HIS DAD, WHO HAD 40-50 HIVES OF BEES, WENT ALONG TO GET THE BEES. THE OTHERS WANTED THE HONEY.

(5) WATERCRESS SPRING: SOURCE OF EXCELLENT WATER. EVERYONE DRANK FROM THE SPRING WITHOUT HESITATION. PEOPLE CUT WATERCRESS HERE. EVEN A BUTCHER CAME FROM WESTWOOD TO GET SOME.

(6) ICE FISHING FOR SUCKERS: IN THE WINTER WHEN THE RIVER WAS FROZEN OVER, A LONG, NARROW SLIT WAS CUT ACROSS THE ICE AND A NET DROPPED DOWN FROM THE TOP OF THE ICE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE STREAM. THE FISHERMEN (USUALLY WELL CLOTHED!) WOULD WALK A CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE DOWNSTREAM OR UPSTREAM AND WHILE RETURNING WOULD CONSTANTLY TAP THE ICE. SUCKERS AND OTHER FISH WOULD BE ALARMED BY THE TAPPING AND MOVE TOWARD THE NET. MANY WERE CAUGHT THIS WAY. SUCKERS ARE VERY GOOD EATING IN COLD WEATHER – FIRM AND TASTY, BUT EATING THEM IN WARMER WEATHER IS NOT DESIRABLE.

(7) SLUNTZ'S BRIDGE: SLUNTZ'S, SLUNKEY'S, SLANTZ'S – YOU NAME IT. IT WAS CALLED MANY WAYS. A POPULAR SWIMMING AND FISHING AREA.

(8) MAXIE'S JUNKYARD: AN AUTO JUNKYARD LOCATED ON THE O'CONNOR FARM DURING THE 1930S AND EARLY '40S. IT WAS OPERATED BY MAX GOLDFEIN. MANY A CLASSIC MET A FINAL AND IGNOMINIOUS END HERE!

(9) THE STILL FIELD: WHEN THE RESERVOIR WAS BEING EXCAVATED IN THE 1960S TOM DEMAREST FOUND THE COPPER STILL HERE, WHICH HE SOLD FOR SCRAP. IT WAS AN UNDERGROUND STILL. HAD BEEN RAIDED; AX MARKS WERE VISIBLE ON THE STILL. MAURICE COFFEY RELATED HOW THE MOONSHINERS HAD ELECTRIC WIRES OUT TO THE ROAD AND A SENTRY TO ALERT THEM WHEN A CAR ENTERED O'CONNOR'S LANE. T. BALDWIN DEMAREST SAID YOU COULD SMELL MOONSHINE ON FOGGY NIGHTS.

(10) THE OXEN LOT: THE BEST SOURCE OF ARROWHEADS IN OLD TAPPAN. SANDY GROUND. THE O'CONNORS FOUND LARGE NUMBERS WHEN IT WAS FIRST CLEARED. A LARGE, EXCEPTIONALLY BEAUTIFUL ARROWHEAD WAS FOUND BUT JOHN O'CONNOR, JR., ONLY A SMALL BOY, THREW IT INTO SOME BURNING BRUSH. IT WAS NEVER SEEN AGAIN. PERHAPS THE FIRE SHATTERED IT.

(11) GRANEY'S POND: A MAN NAMED GRANEY LIVED HERE. NO ELECTRICITY. ABOUT 1930 HE DUG A POND IN THE WOODS FOR HIS WIFE'S GOLDEN CARP. THE POND WAS SECLUDED. IT LAY AT THE BOTTOM OF A WOODED SLOPE AND AMONG THICK HEMLOCKS AND OTHER TREES. IT WAS PARTLY SURROUNDED BY AN OVERGROWN EMBANKMENT. IN THE AUTUMN OF 1953 MORE THAN 50 WOOD DUCKS WERE SEEN ON THIS LITTLE POND — HIGHLY UNUSUAL! THEY WERE MIGRATING AND GONE THE NEXT DAY. NOTHING LIKE IT WAS EVER SEEN THERE AGAIN.

(12) HANST HOUSE: DURING A DEEP SNOWSTORM O'CONNOR'S OXEN WERE CALLED ON TO PULL THE HANST AUTO OUT OF THE SNOW TO GET TO OLD TAPPAN ROAD.

(13) HARRIET'S POND: HARRIET AND OLLIE PIERSON LIVED IN THE GERRIT HARING HOUSE ON THE KNOLL ABOVE THE POND WHERE ICE SKATING OCCURRED IN THE WINTER. HARRIET HAD A LARGE SLED WHICH CHILDREN USED. HARRIET ALWAYS INVITED THE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE HOUSE TO WARM UP AND ENJOY SOME FOOD AND HOT DRINK.

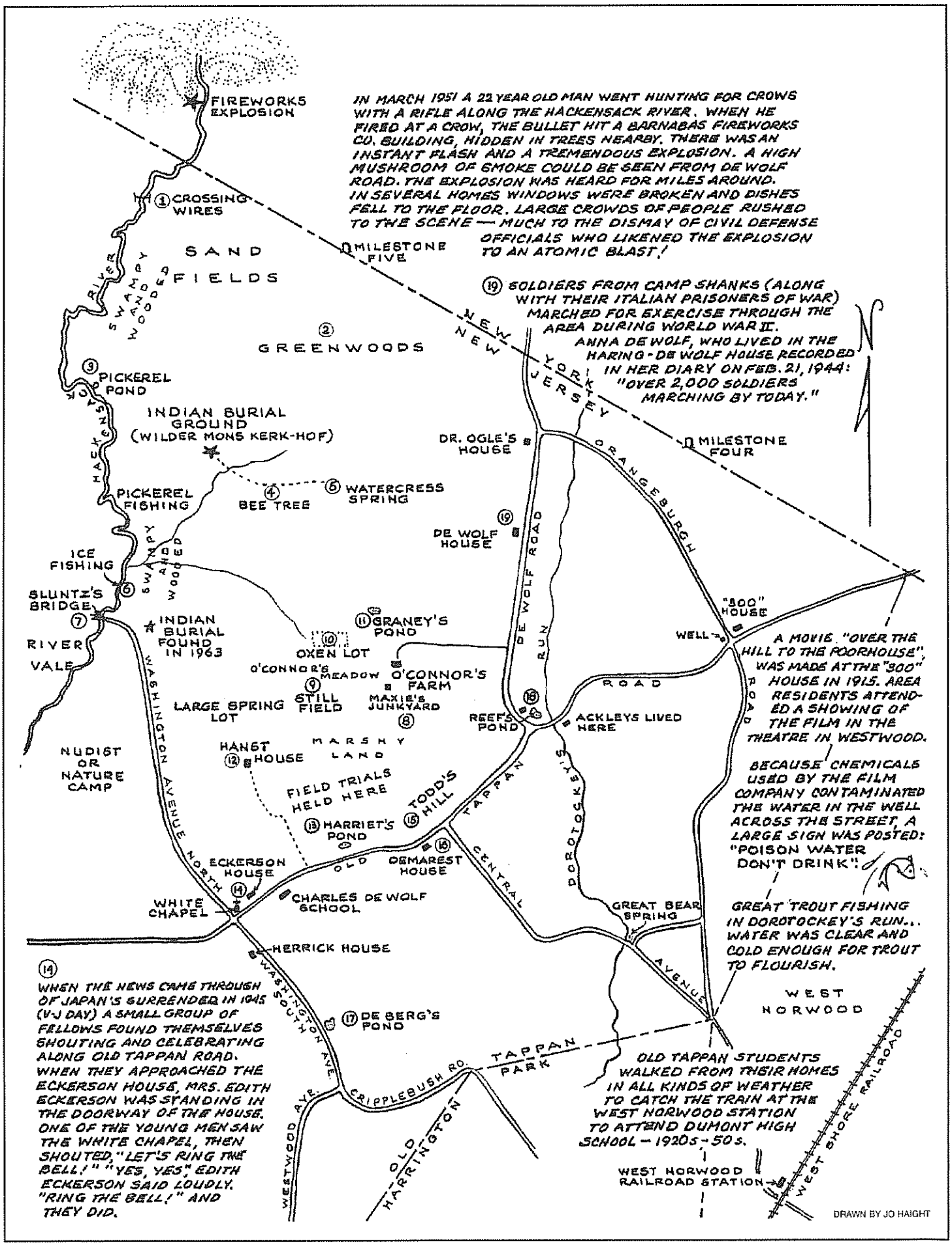
(15) TODD'S HILL: BLACKBERRY BUSHES, DOGWOODS, BIRCHES AND LARGE OAK TREES COVERED THE HILL. AN OLD HARING BURIAL VAULT WAS LOCATED ON THE FRONT OF THE HILL FACING OLD TAPPAN ROAD. ON A CLEAR DAY NEW YORK SKYLINE COULD BE SEEN FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL. YOUNG BOYS SPENT MANY HAPPY HOURS SWINGING ON THE BIRCH TREES THERE AND WERE DISAPPOINTED WHEN THEIR BEST SLEIGH-RIDING HILL WAS RUINED DURING WORLD WAR II. THE HILL WAS EXCAVATED FOR FILL DIRT WHEN CAMP SHANKS WAS BUILT IN ORANGEBURG.

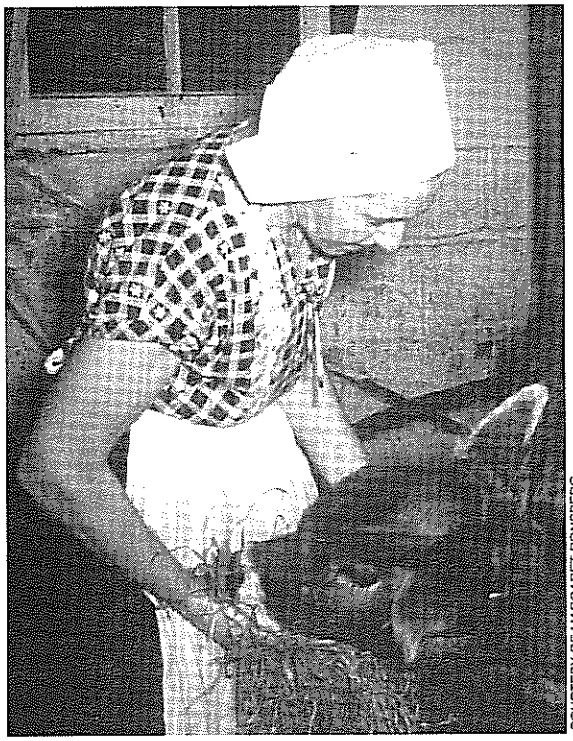
(16) DEMAREST HOUSE: WHERE OLD TAPPAN STUDENTS PICKED UP THEIR WEST SHORE RAILROAD COMMUTATION TICKETS TO USE ON TRAIN FROM WEST NORWOOD TO TAKE THEM TO DUMONT HIGH SCHOOL. HOUSE WAS TAKEN DOWN IN 1976-77.

(17) DE BERG'S POND: THIS WAS USED FOR ICE SKATING IN THE 30S, 40S AND 50S.

(18) REEF'S POND: ABOUT 1944 WALTER ACKLEY THOUGHT HE SAW A BABY IN THE POND. IT CREATED QUITE A STIR. THE ENTIRE POND WAS PUMPED OUT BY THE RIVER VALE FIRE DEPARTMENT. RESULT: A LOT OF MUD, FISH, JUNK AND A DOLL (WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN WHAT HE SAW). BOTH THIS INCIDENT AND THE FIREWORKS EXPLOSION WERE LATER USED AS "LEAD IN" REMARKS IN NATIONAL MAGAZINES. THE BUILDING WAS A SMALL STORE WHERE MR. AND MRS. REEF SOLD CANDY, SODA, ETC. PEOPLE CAME TO SWIM IN THE POND.

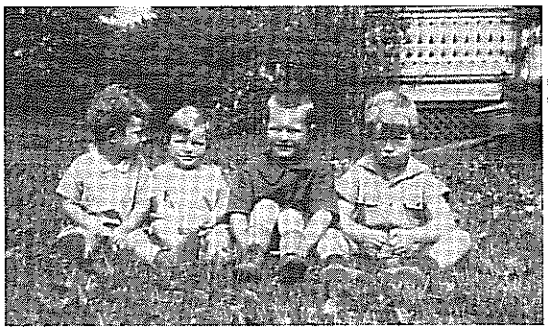
DRAWN BY JO HAIGHT


FIREWORKS EXPLOSION
IN MARCH 1951 A 22 YEAR OLD MAN WENT HUNTING FOR CROWS WITH A RIFLE ALONG THE HACKENSACK RIVER. WHEN HE FIRED AT A CROW, THE BULLET HIT A BARNABAS FIREWORKS CO. BUILDING, HIDDEN IN TREES NEARBY. THERE WAS AN INSTANT FLASH AND A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION. A HIGH MUSHROOM OF SMOKE COULD BE SEEN FROM DE WOLF ROAD. THE EXPLOSION WAS HEARD FOR MILES AROUND. IN SEVERAL HOMES WINDOWS WERE BROKEN AND DISHES FELL TO THE FLOOR. LARGE CROWDS OF PEOPLE RUSHED TO THE SCENE — MUCH TO THE DISMAY OF CIVIL DEFENSE OFFICIALS WHO LIKENED THE EXPLOSION TO AN ATOMIC BLAST!
1 CROSSING WIRES
SAND FIELDS
MILESTONE FIVE
19 SOLDIERS FROM CAMP SHANKS (ALONG WITH THEIR ITALIAN PRISONERS OF WAR) MARCHED FOR EXERCISE THROUGH THE AREA DURING WORLD WAR II.
ANNA DE WOLF, WHO LIVED IN THE HARING-DE WOLF HOUSE RECORDED IN HER DIARY ON FEB. 21, 1944: "OVER 2,000 SOLDIERS MARCHING BY TODAY."
2 GREENWOODS
NEW YORK
NEW JERSEY
3 PICKEREL POND
INDIAN BURIAL GROUND (WILDER MONS KERK-HOF)
DR. OGLE'S HOUSE
MILESTONE FOUR
ORANGEBURGH
PICKEREL FISHING
4 BEE TREE
5 WATERCRESS SPRING
19 DE WOLF HOUSE
DE WOLF ROAD
ICE FISHING
SLUNTZ'S BRIDGE
6
7
INDIAN BURIAL FOUND IN 1963
11 GRANEY'S POND
10 OXEN LOT
"800" HOUSE
WELL
RIVER VALE
O'CONNOR'S MEADOW
O'CONNOR'S FARM
9 STILL FIELD
MAXIE'S JUNKYARD
8
LARGE SPRING LOT
WASHINGTON AVENUE NORTH
ROAD
15
REEF'S POND
ACKLEYS LIVED HERE
NUDIST OR NATURE CAMP
HANST HOUSE
12
MARSHY LAND
FIELD TRIALS HELD HERE
TODD'S HILL
TAPPAN
DOROTOCKEY'S
13 HARRIET'S POND
16
OLD
DEMAREST HOUSE
CENTRAL
ECKERSON HOUSE
14
WHITE CHAPEL
CHARLES DE WOLF SCHOOL
GREAT BEAR SPRING
HERRICK HOUSE
WASHINGTON AVE. SOUTH
17 DE BERG'S POND
AVENUE
WEST NORWOOD
TAPPAN PARK
CRIPPLEBUSH RD.
WESTWOOD AVE.
OLD HARRINGTON
WEST SHORE RAILROAD
WEST NORWOOD RAILROAD STATION
A MOVIE, "OVER THE HILL TO THE POORHOUSE", WAS MADE AT THE "300" HOUSE IN 1915. AREA RESIDENTS ATTENDED A SHOWING OF THE FILM IN THE THEATRE IN WESTWOOD.
BECAUSE CHEMICALS USED BY THE FILM COMPANY CONTAMINATED THE WATER IN THE WELL ACROSS THE STREET, A LARGE SIGN WAS POSTED: "POISON WATER DON'T DRINK".
GREAT TROUT FISHING IN DOROTOCKEY'S RUN... WATER WAS CLEAR AND COLD ENOUGH FOR TROUT TO FLOURISH.
OLD TAPPAN STUDENTS WALKED FROM THEIR HOMES IN ALL KINDS OF WEATHER TO CATCH THE TRAIN AT THE WEST NORWOOD STATION TO ATTEND DUMONT HIGH SCHOOL – 1920s-50s.
14
WHEN THE NEWS CAME THROUGH OF JAPAN'S SURRENDER IN 1945 (V-J DAY) A SMALL GROUP OF FELLOWS FOUND THEMSELVES SHOUTING AND CELEBRATING ALONG OLD TAPPAN ROAD. WHEN THEY APPROACHED THE ECKERSON HOUSE, MRS. EDITH ECKERSON WAS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY OF THE HOUSE. ONE OF THE YOUNG MEN SAW THE WHITE CHAPEL, THEN SHOUTED, "LET'S RING THE BELL!" "YES, YES," EDITH ECKERSON SAID LOUDLY. "RING THE BELL!" AND THEY DID.
DRAWN BY JO HAIGHT



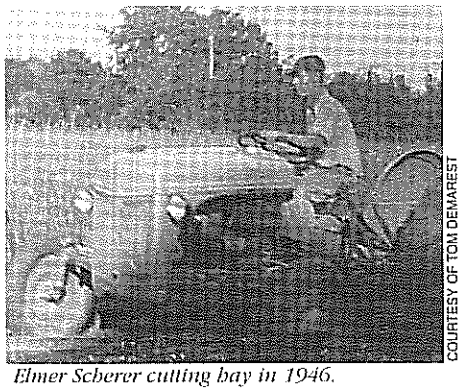
COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Harriet Pierson portraying an early Dutch farm woman in a Sunday School presentation in 1961.



COURTESY OF KATHLEEN DEMAREST

Four Demarest cousins in July 1927 outside the Demarest house on Old Tappan Road: (left-to-right) Warren, Jean, Donald and Luther.

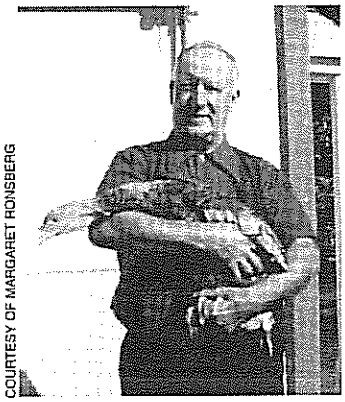


COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

Elmer Scherer cutting hay in 1946.

COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

Madeline Stokes Binaghi sleigh-riding with son, Ron, circa 1936. Old Tappan Road is in the background.



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Charles Dwyer holding a turkey outside his house on Orangeburgh Road in 1940.

John De Wolf, with milk pail in hand, pictured on his farm with granddaughter, Catherine.

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

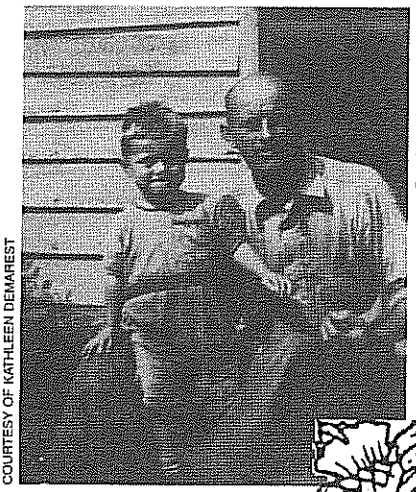
Two sisters of Joseph Stokes, both of whom lived in Old Tappan: Harriet pictured in 1878 (above), and Emma (right) whose portrait was taken in 1883.

EMMA AND HARRIET STOKES' PHOTOS COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

Twelve fifth-grade children taking a class trip to NYC in 1940. They are dressed in their "Sunday Best" – hats on the girls, and every style of pants on the boys!

OLD TAPPAN PEOPLE
...through the years



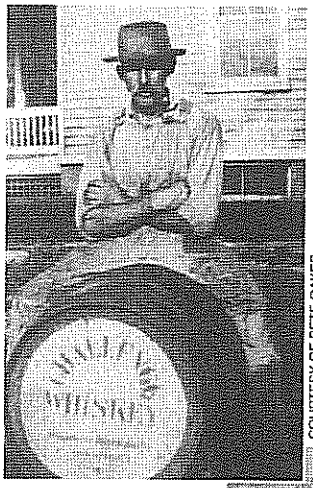
COURTESY OF KATHLEEN DEMAREST

T. Baldwin Demarest (after whom the school was named) with his son, Donald, in the early twenties.

This shows Edna Hutton as a college student in 1916 before she married T. Baldwin Demarest.

COURTESY OF KATHLEEN DEMAREST

Charles Weis (father of Freda) in 1936, astride a whiskey barrel.



COURTESY OF PETE OAKES

COURTESY OF PETE OAKES

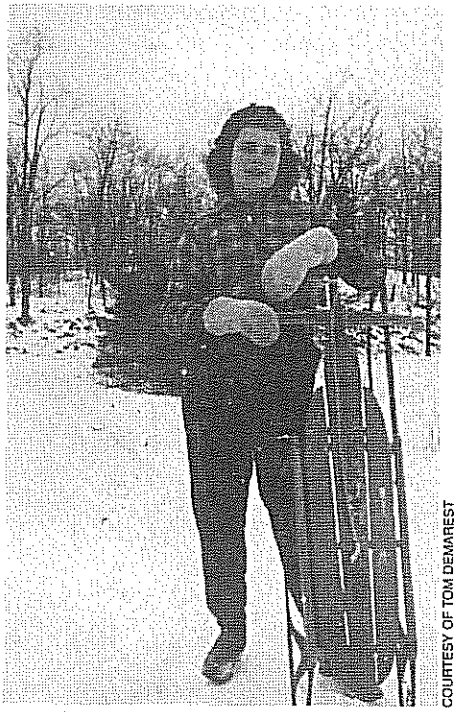
Freda Weis and Pete Oakes in 1922.

COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

Tom Demarest, Ed Rappold and Richie Brown at the New York World's Fair in 1940.

Pictured here in his World War I uniform in 1917 is Harry Isaac Lake, husband of Ethel and father of Harry, Bertha and Charles.

COURTESY OF HARRY AND EVELYN LAKE

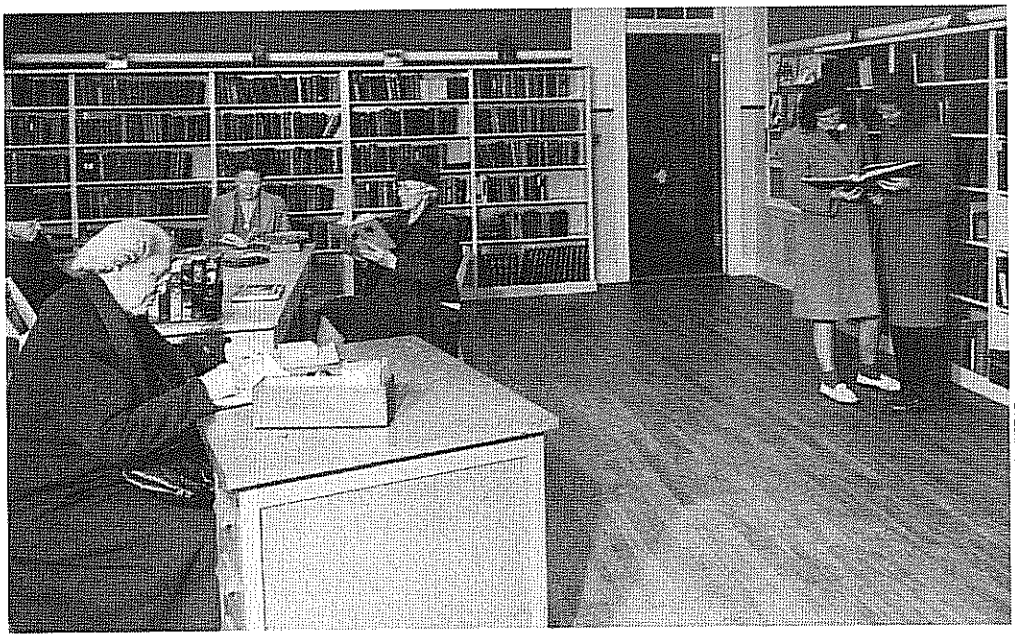


COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

In 1941 Jean Demarest posed for this picture in front of Todd's Hill where she had been sleigh-riding.

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Wearing a snood on her hair, Edna Alexander sits pensively by Reef's Pond in 1942. Note the outhouse and Binaghi's house in the distance.



COURTESY OF ESTHER OMSTEAD

Letha Smith (at far end of the table facing the camera) was Librarian of the Old Tappan Library when it was located in the basement of the Charles De Wolf School (shown here). On the right the Omstead sisters, Judy and Thelma, are scrutinizing a book.

COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN LIBRARY

Though membership in the Board of Trustees changed over the years, some stalwarts remained. Mrs. Barbara Moeser was notable, serving on the Board for 39 years. The month of April 1988 was dedicated by the library to the memory of Mrs. Moeser, in recognition not only of her association with the library, but also because of her long and active life in Old Tappan.

On June 19, 1941 the Certificate of Incorporation of the Old Tappan Free Public Library was signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of Borough Clerk John H. Lachmund, Jr. This established the library as an association "*not for pecuniary profit.*" Fred R. McMurry, one of a group of residents who had proposed a library as early as 1937, was the first president of the Board of Trustees. In addition to Mr. McMurry, the Board consisted of Mayor Walter de Berg, Clarence Gifford, William Hayes, Esther Herrick and Letha Smith.

Before this official library was formed there were small collections of books, new and used, donated by residents of the town and housed in the Chapel and the two-room schoolhouse built in 1890.

Letha Smith, wife of school principal Frank Smith, was the first librarian and served without pay. When it was created in 1941, the library occupied a room in the Charles De Wolf School, completed just the year before. It had 480 books, all donated by the townspeople. By 1944 the librarian's annual report listed 151 registered borrowers and a circulation of 3,127 books and magazines. Fifty-three adult and 72 juvenile books were purchased that year.

In 1951 a crisis arose when the room occupied by the library in the school was needed as a classroom and there were no other quarters in town available for the library. Old Tappan was in danger of losing its ten-year-old library. In Mrs. Smith's words:

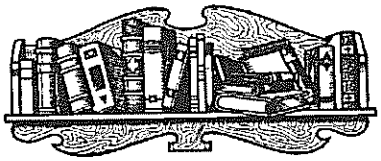
"*The outlook was dark until someone timidly suggested that an empty room in the school basement be used. Only its large size and high windows were favorable. Grey cement walls, appalling acoustics and a dangerous inside approach made the forbidding room seem hopeless.*

"*But the Library Board was a versatile group and numbered among its members an engineer and a designer. Plans were drawn up. Soon men and women, boys and girls, began to work in groups of five or six.*

"*Painters, electricians, a building contractor, engineers, carpenters, salesmen, teachers, truck drivers and office workers cheerfully donated time, labor and tools. Crews of youngsters, under the direction of the Librarian, moved the 4,000 volumes. Wives and mothers served gallons of coffee and soda pop and scores of doughnuts.*"

The dingy basement room was transformed into a bright, cheerful library with a good heating system, fluorescent lights and an acoustic ceiling. The Board of Education had an outside entrance built. The town appropriated money for bookshelves. All other expenses were paid for by the combined efforts of women's groups, the PTA and the local scout organizations who staged cake and plant sales, teas and luncheons. A bazaar held by the Girl and Boy Scout organizations raised the final funds needed to complete the project.

In the late fifties the library moved upstairs into one of the school rooms. By 1970 the school announced that it



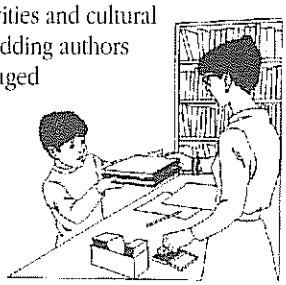
could no longer accommodate the library. It was mandatory for the library to build its own facility.

The governing body of Old Tappan recognized the need and offered (for $1 a year) the site on Russell Avenue and Irving Street. The Library Board of Trustees launched a vigorous town-wide fund raising campaign to build a new library. An intensive door-to-door campaign for funds began and members of the community involved in the campaign worked tirelessly to maintain the momentum and interest in the drive. The campaign was given a boost about a year and a half after its inception by the receipt of a State applied Federal grant of $33,000. This facilitated the completion of the fund drive and its objective was realized. The new library was built and was dedicated in 1975 and flourished in its new quarters.

The library entered the age of tech-

nology in 1988 with the acquisition of a LePac purchased with money bequeathed to the library by Esther Herrick. Since then three OPACs (Online Public Access Catalog) have been purchased by the library, two for staff and one for patron use. The library is now part of the Bergen County Cooperative Library Service (BCCLS) which gives Old Tappan readers access to the over four million books in its system.

In 1991 a dormant Friends of the Old Tappan Library group was reactivated. Since its new beginning, Friends has enhanced the library with purchases of books, furniture and equipment and has presented children's programs, family activities and cultural events. Budding authors are encouraged through its Creative Writing Awards to graduating students at both the high school and grade school.



The library today is fulfilling the vision of those who toiled to raise funds to build it: "*A diverse group of people joined together and created a new building for the Old Tappan Free Public Library. It is, and will remain, a monument to everyone in Old Tappan who wished it to exist and contributed in one way or another to achieve that goal.*"

The Charles De Wolf School, with several additions since 1940, is still extant today as the principal school building in Old Tappan. This was not always the case. In the early 1800s a schoolhouse stood on Old Tappan Road West near present Rickland Road. Little is known of it except that it was mentioned on two land deeds. One dated 1840 reads "near the schoolhouse," the other, dated 1851, reads "near where the schoolhouse formerly stood." A small building on the site of Bi-State Plaza at the head of Central Avenue is shown on a map of 1856 as "School House #6." That same year a two-story schoolhouse, 20 by 25 feet, was erected on Old Tappan Road near Russell Avenue. It is possible that more than one schoolhouse succeeded this up to the time the two-room schoolhouse was built in 1890. May Gifford, blacksmith William Mence's daughter, recalled her first day in this new school when she was only six years old:

"*I trudged off with a book bag containing a slate, rags and bottle of water to wash it, pencil box and First Reader. No paper. Parents bought the books and pads then. The mile walk seemed short to the new school. There were two large rooms, only one of which was furnished for the 60 pupils. The other room was empty for a table at one end of the room upon which we placed our lunch containers and a pail of water and dipper from which everyone drank. Germs? We weren't familiar with them.*"

There was only one teacher for the eight grades then. As in most one room schools the upper grade students were called upon to help in the teaching of the younger children, but even with these "teacher's aides" the task was a difficult one and the salary of $60 a month insufficient. The turnover was considerable. According to May Gifford the subjects taught besides the three R's were: history, geography, physiology, algebra, word analysis, grammar, business forms, drawing and even double entry bookkeeping and literature. "*The two latter subjects were dropped by the time I reached the eighth grade,*" she remembered.

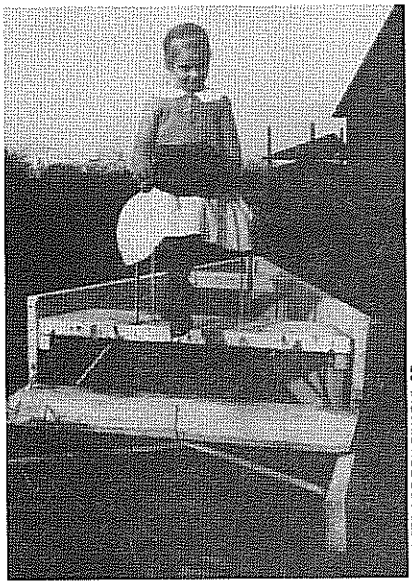
Both rooms of the schoolhouse were used as classrooms by 1900 and there were two teachers. The only heat for this school was provided by a coal-burning stove in each room. A protective bumper surrounded each stove to prevent anyone from getting burned. It also served as a drying rack for socks, leggings and leg wrappings made of newspapers and sacking. For some children the sacking served as both shoes and leggings. All of this gear got wet from the winter snows through which the children trudged. Sometimes the children's hands were so cold when they got to school that they had to warm them in a pan of water heated on the stove.

COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

School picture for the 1923-24 school year.

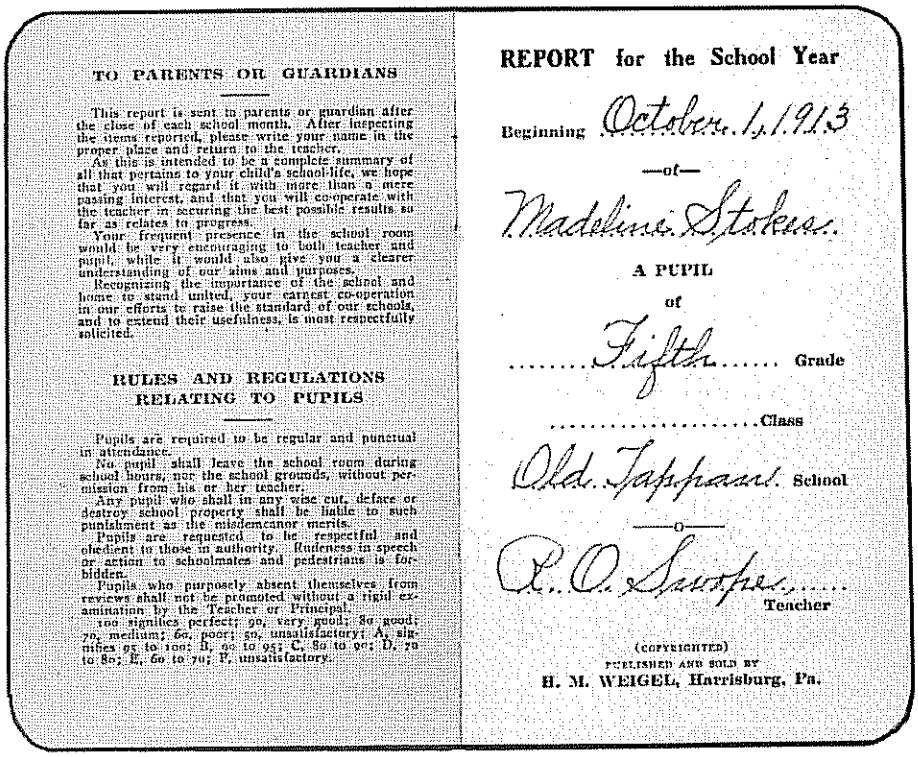
COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Frank Smith, principal of the school, preceding Margaret Harvie.



COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

Augusta Snyder sits atop the snowplow, made in Mence's blacksmith shop, used to clear a path so the children could walk to school.



TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

This report is sent to parents or guardian after the close of each school month. After inspecting the items reported, please write your name in the proper place and return to the teacher.

As this is intended to be a complete summary of all that pertains to your child's school-life, we hope that you will regard it with more than a mere passing interest, and that you will co-operate with the teacher in securing the best possible results so far as relates to progress.

Your frequent presence in the school room would be very encouraging to both teacher and pupil, while it would also give you a clearer understanding of our aims and purposes.

Recognizing the importance of the school and home to stand united, your earnest co-operation in our efforts to raise the standard of our schools, and to extend their usefulness, is most respectfully solicited.

RULES AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO PUPILS

Pupils are required to be regular and punctual in attendance.

No pupil shall leave the school room during school hours, nor the school grounds, without permission from his or her teacher.

Any pupil who shall in any wise cut, deface or destroy school property shall be liable to such punishment as the misdemeanor merits.

Pupils are requested to be respectful and obedient to those in authority. Rudeness in speech or action to schoolmates and pedestrians is forbidden.

Pupils who purposely absent themselves from reviews shall not be promoted without a rigid examination by the Teacher or Principal.

100 signifies perfect; 90, very good; 80 good; 70, medium; 60, poor; 50, unsatisfactory; A, signifies 95 to 100; B, 90 to 95; C, 80 to 90; D, 70 to 80; E, 60 to 70; F, unsatisfactory.

REPORT for the School Year

Beginning October 1, 1913

—of—

Madeline Stokes

A PUPIL

of

Fifth Grade

Class

Old Tappan School

—o—

R. O. Snoopes Teacher

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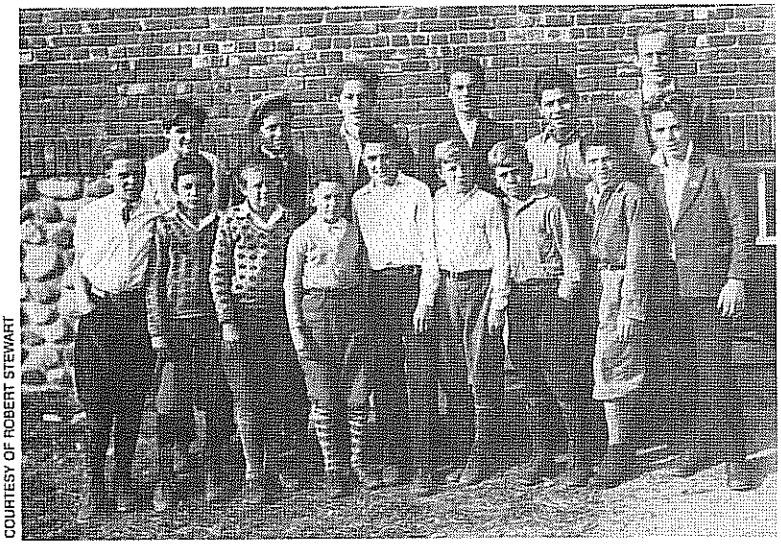
H. M. WEIGEL, Harrisburg, Pa.

COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

This shows the inside front cover and first page of Madeline Stokes' 1913 report card booklet which served for an entire school year. Numerical grades were given that year; soon after they changed to letter grades.

COURTESY OF CHARLES DE WOLF SCHOOL

Excitement surrounded Santa's visit each year in early December to the Charles DeWolf School. Santa (usually played by a prominent man of the community) listened to the wish lists of the children and gave each one a candy cane, as shown here on his visit in 1963. Helping distribute the canes is Martin Podmayer, right, Superintendent of Schools.



COURTESY OF ROBERT STEWART

Soccer is not a new sport to Old Tappan as this picture of the Old Tappan Soccer Team of 1930 shows. Front row from left are: William Brown, Joe Milan, Martin Vaughn, Elmer Blauvelt, Robert Stewart, Joseph Vaughn, Robert Brown, Mario Badini and George Coffin (killed in WWII). Back row from left are: Paul Hopper, Ralph Stanton, Wilbur Eckerson, Ira Humphrey, Frank Badini and principal/teacher, J.D. Shock, who was the team's coach.

COURTESY OF MALVINA PODMAYER

Margaret Harvie, principal, seated at her desk in the '50s with her staff. From left: Raymond Veltri, Marian Berger, Genevieve Jardine, Genevieve Loggie, Ruth Semendinger, Helen Parsons, Elsie Purcell, Evelyn Weldon, Margaret Branley, Margaret Heidenreich and Martin Podmayer.

The children walked to school in all weathers, some over hills and through orchards, but Esther Hopper Aanonsen remembers that in bad snowstorms her father took the children to school in his horse-drawn sleigh. In 1916 a snowplow, made in Mence's blacksmith shop, was bought for $10 to make a path down the center of Old Tappan Road to enable the children to walk to school. In later years when the occasional car managed to drive through town, children walked in the car tracks.

For the 1923-24 year there were 79 students and two teachers. The student enrollment increased to 90 the following year, but there were still just two teachers. In 1925 Genevieve Schutz (later Loggie) was hired at a salary of $1,200 a year as a primary teacher. J. Donald Schock was appointed as principal and as teacher of the upper grades in the newly built brick school (now the police headquarters). At a meeting of the Board of Education on September 1, 1925 the Clerk was authorized to procure a clock, a flag and a Bible for the new brick school and to have the piano in the old school repaired and tuned. At the same meeting Dr. Richardson of Closter was hired as school physician for $25 a year.

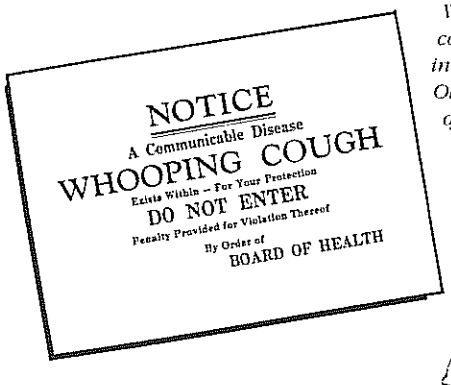
In 1926 Margaret Scott (later Harvie) was hired to teach the intermediate classes in one of the two rooms of the old school. In the twenties when she and Genevieve Schutz began teaching in Old Tappan, only unmarried or widowed women could be hired as teachers. No divorced woman could think of applying for a teaching position. Fortunately, these restrictions were abolished in later years and both Mrs. Loggie and Mrs. Harvie each taught in the Old Tappan school system for over 30 years (Mrs. Loggie for the longest tenure – 39 years) and taught two generations of Old Tappan children. Mrs. Harvie became the first woman principal in 1945, succeeding Frank Smith, who had followed J. Donald Schock as principal.

By 1938 the need for a new school was apparent; students had outgrown the two-room wooden schoolhouse with the bell tower that had been built in 1890 and the facilities of the brick school built in 1925 for the upper grades. A special vote was called on November 16, 1938 on the proposal to build a new school. The result was 130 in favor and 97 opposed. The total population of Old Tappan at that time was just over 600. The reason for the nay vote may have been the hard financial times. Citizens were afraid their taxes would greatly increase to pay for a new school. They need not have worried because the school was built as a WPA (Works Progress Administration) project. Completed in 1940, it was named after Charles De Wolf, Sr. who had been President of the Board of Education for 40 years. It had four classrooms, an office for the principal and teachers – and thankfully for all, it had indoor plumbing!

The school population figures fluctuated wildly in the period between the two world wars. Mrs. Loggie recalled that when she began teaching in Old Tappan "*100 children in the schools was considered a large enrollment.*" Just before World War II, when the low birth rate of the Depression began to make itself felt, there were as few as 11 youngsters in the entire school. This was quite a change from the 30 or 40 children of the combined classes.

The graduating class of 1930 numbered 10 and they all went on to Dumont High School. There were nine graduates in the class of 1936 and 13 in the class of 1947, by which time the faculty consisted of Margaret Scott, principal, and Genevieve Jardine and Genevieve Loggie as full-time teachers with Ethel Carrol and Yvonne Jané as helping teachers.

Outbreaks of scarlet fever caused the school to be closed for several days at a time. The family and the victim of the disease were quarantined. Measles, mumps, chicken pox and whooping cough were all subject to quarantine but not to the closure of the schools. However, just the threat of the dreaded infantile paralysis, as polio was known, was enough to shut down the schools immediately.[4] This happened many times, usually in September. The vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk in the early fifties was administered to all children through the fourth grade in the summer of 1955. This was the first step in con-



NOTICE
A Communicable Disease
WHOOPING COUGH
Exists Within – For Your Protection
DO NOT ENTER
Penalty Provided for Violation Thereof
By Order of
BOARD OF HEALTH

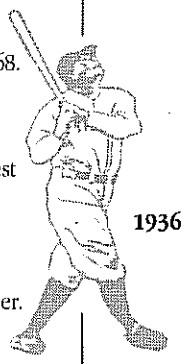
When there was a contagious disease in a household, the Old Tappan Board of Health issued a card such as this one, which was supposed to be prominently displayed.

[4] *Prior to the Salk vaccine, Margaret Alexander, Sadie Bogert and Anna DeWolf (all victims of polio) regularly donated blood at Bergen Pines Hospital where a cure for polio was being sought.*

1935 1944

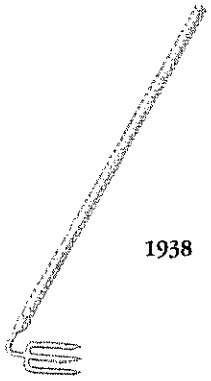
OLD TAPPAN

1935 A Christmas basket containing a chicken, potatoes, coffee, sugar, butter, oranges, canned peas and corn was given to a poor family by the In-As-Much Branch of the Sunshine Society, cost: $2.68.



1936 The Old Tappan Fire House was built.

1937 Mayor Walter de Berg advised residents to invest in land, but few had the money to invest.



Harry Lake worked at his uncle's Cedarwood Farm on Central Avenue to earn money for a bicycle. At 15¢ per hour, it took him all summer.

Ordinance #32 was passed by the Mayor and Council which officially named the 10 main streets in the Borough.

1938 Firemen were called out to help locate women lost in the woods March 13.

O'Connor's oxen won the Blue Ribbon at the Orangeburg County Fair.

1939 The Old Tappan First Aid Corps was incorporated.

The first meetings of Girl Scouts in Old Tappan were led by Margaret Eckerson; dues were 5¢.

1940 Population: 609

The Old Tappan First Aid Corps purchased its first ambulance–a second-hand hearse.

The Charles De Wolf School, built with WPA help, opened on September 8 and had indoor plumbing.

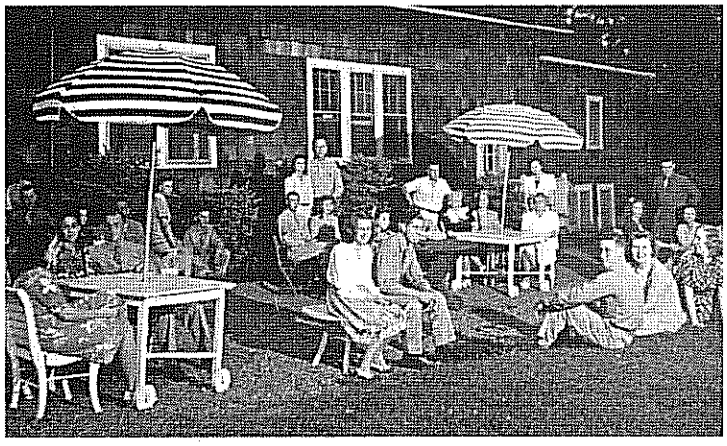
1941 The threat of infantile paralysis (polio) caused all grades of school to be closed for five different intervals during September and October.

1942 Richard Fuchs was the first person from Old Tappan to enter the service in World War II.

1943 The first water main was laid on Orangeburgh Rd.

Because of a wartime shortage of fuel oil, school was closed for four days in January.

1944 A rash of chicken stealing occurred, prompted by rationing and shortages of meat.



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Old Tappan young ladies acted as USO hostesses for servicemen from Camp Shanks at the Manse Barn in Tappan in 1944.

ELSEWHERE

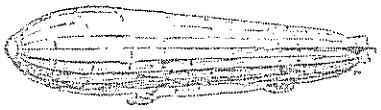
1935 Babe Ruth set a home run record with his 714th in Pittsburgh.

The Social Security Act was passed by Congress.

Parker Brothers applied for a copyright on *Monopoly*, a real estate game based on Atlantic City streets.

1936 Black track and field ace Jesse Owens was the first American athlete to win four Olympic Gold Medals, accomplishing this at the games in Germany.

Gone With the Wind by Margaret Mitchell was published.



1937 The German zeppelin, *Hindenberg*, exploded and crashed at Lakehurst, NJ on May 6.

Armstrong's experimental FM radio tower was started in Alpine.

Walt Disney's *Snow White*, the first Technicolor full-length animated cartoon, opened.

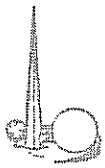
1938 Orson Welles' radio dramatization *War of the Worlds*, depicting aliens landing in fields near Princeton, caused a nationwide scare.

Boxer Joe Louis knocked out Germany's Max Schmeling at Yankee Stadium.

The last of the trolleys in New Jersey, the Hudson River Line, was taken out of service.

Xerography (dry photocopying) was invented.

1939 New York Yankee first baseman Lou Gehrig retired due to an incurable illness after having played a record 2,130 consecutive games.



The New York World's Fair opened in Flushing.

The first helicopter was invented by Sikorsky.

1940 The first sales of nylon stockings at stores throughout the country on May 15 caused near-riots.

McDonald hamburger stands began in a drive-in.

1941 President Roosevelt began an unprecedented third term.

Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7.

1942 Construction of Camp Shanks began in Orangeburg, NY in September.

World War II ration books were issued.

1943 The first payroll withholding tax started July 1.

1944 D-Day, June 6, launched the Allied invasion of Europe at Normandy on the coast of France.

The plane carrying band leader Glenn Miller of Tenafly was lost over the English Channel.

quering polio. The second was the Sabin oral vaccine which granted permanent immunity. In 1962 the Board of Health funded and mandated the administering of the Sabin vaccine through the school. In the auditorium of the Charles De Wolf School every man, woman and child was given a sugar lump saturated with the vaccine. Polio never again caused the fearful closing of the schools.[5]

For almost five years, 1963 to 1968, classes were held in the basement of the Charles De Wolf School (a usage no longer allowed by the State). Three classrooms were there at the height of crowded conditions just before the T. Baldwin Demarest School was completed. Some of the students resented being "put down in the cellar" but others rather liked their underground domain.

[5] *According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the number of cases of polio fell from 18,000 in 1954 to two in 1993.*

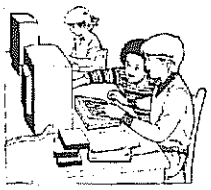
When space became available upstairs these rooms were turned over to the art and music departments and now are the lunch room (with two seatings) and the storage room.

Following Mrs. Harvie's retirement in 1957, Martin Podmayer, who had taught in the school since 1951, became principal. His untimely death in 1971 was felt with sadness and a real sense of loss by all who had known him.

A second school to accommodate the kindergarten through fifth grade was completed in 1965 and named after another long-time school trustee, T. Baldwin Demarest. This building also serves as the polling place for all elections.

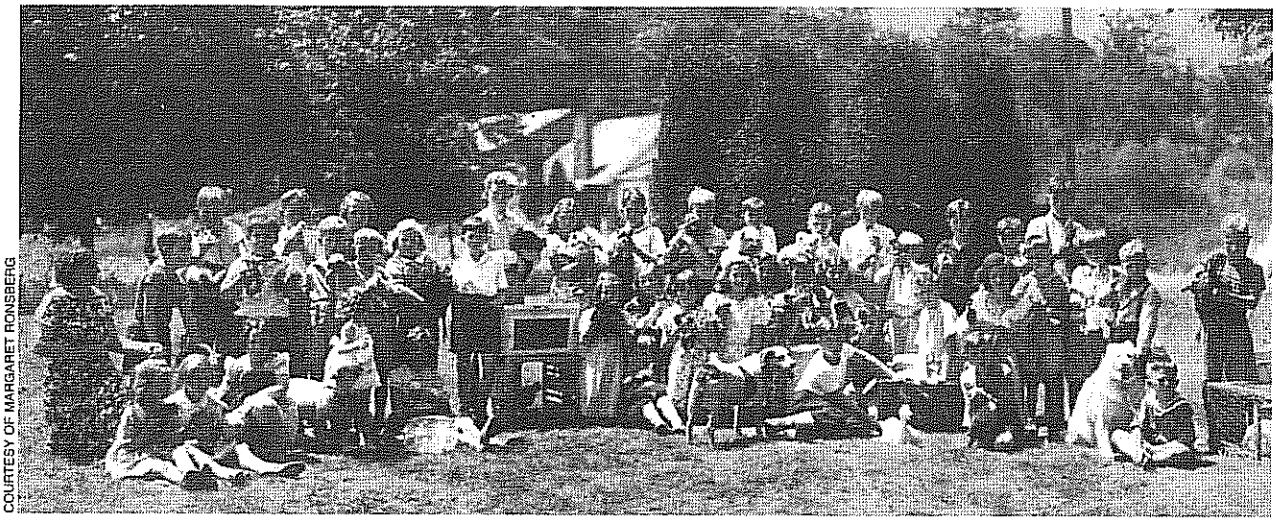
It was during the seventies that enrollment in Old Tappan's schools reached its peak with 992 students in 1971. It hit a low of 435 in 1987. The largest graduating class numbered 122 in the year 1977. The smallest graduating class in the last 30 years was 43 in 1989. Enrollment in the two schools for the 1993-94 year was 569, with 72 graduating from eighth grade.

Schooling in Old Tappan has come a long way from the early days to the present. Computers have replaced slates and pieces of chalk. The buildings have expanded far beyond one or two rooms with many grades together.



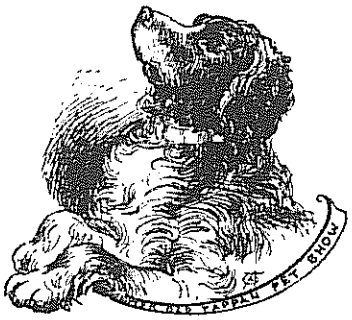
Currently there are 48 teachers, including subject and special education teachers, two principals and one superintendent. The school system employs a psychologist, a social worker and a business manager. There are also nurses and secretaries on the staffs of both schools.

Robert Lynch, principal, Donald Bulwicz and Richard Carew have each been in the school system for over 30 years. They have observed the children of students they taught when they first came to the Charles De Wolf School, and as Mr. Lynch reflects, "*The acorn doesn't fall very far from the oak.*"



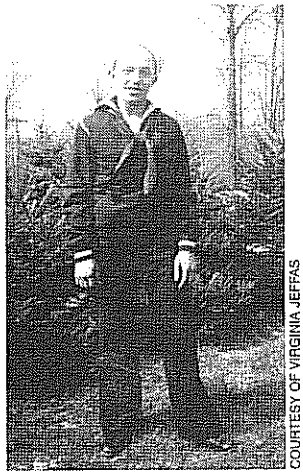
COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

This 1938 picture taken in front of the school (currently the Police Headquarters) shows children with pets they brought for the school Pet Show. Included were dogs, cats, rabbits, chickens, geese and roosters—even stuffed toy animals by those few who had no live pets.



COURTESY OF RODNEY POST, JR.

In 1936 "Hansel and Gretel" was performed in the old wooden schoolhouse by, left-to-right: Teddy Maker, Edna Alexander, Cecelia Davenport, Joan Hanst, Rodney Post, Jr. and Elmer Omstead.

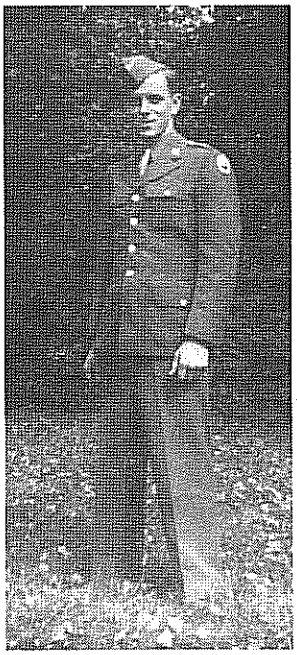


COURTESY OF VIRGINIA JEFFAS

Bernard Sniath

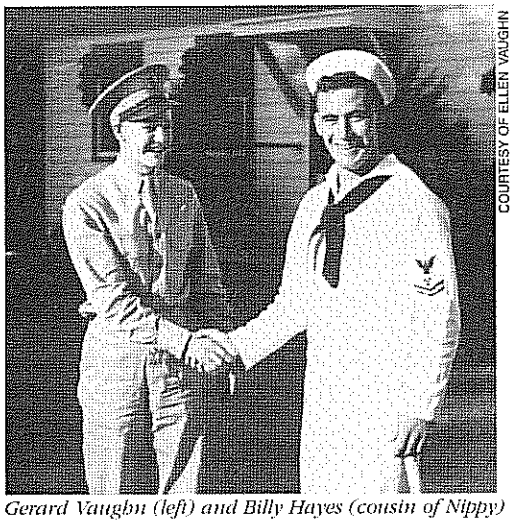
COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

USO can-can entertainers Margaret Alexander (standing left) and Bertha Lake (standing right).



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

William (Nippy) Hayes



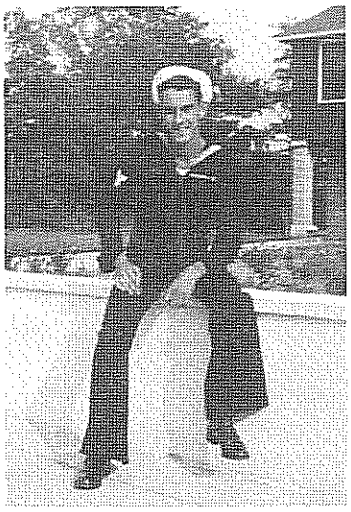
COURTESY OF ELLEN VAUGHN

Gerard Vaughn (left) and Billy Hayes (cousin of Nippy)

WORLD WAR II

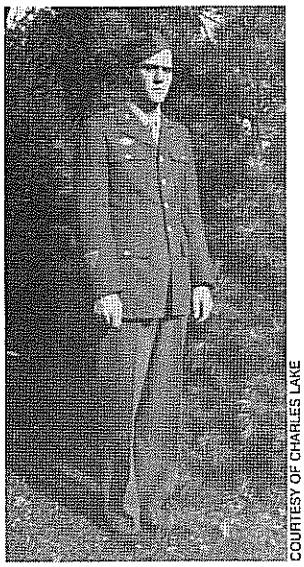
COURTESY OF GLORIA CAVALLI CERBASI

LeRoy Brizzolara (known locally as Roy Cavalli), one of the four servicemen from Old Tappan killed in action during World War II. His plane was downed by enemy fire over Ludwigshafen, Germany in 1944.



COURTESY OF EVELYN & HARRY LAKE

Harry Lake



COURTESY OF CHARLES LAKE

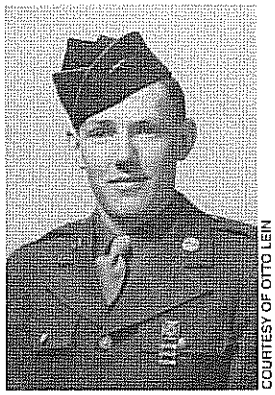
Charles Lake

COURTESY OF TOM SPILLANE

Thomas Spillane

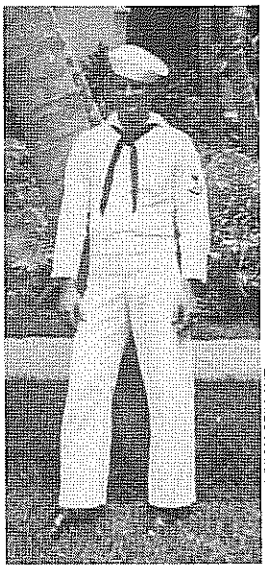
COURTESY OF ELLEN VAUGHN

Joseph, father & Martin Vaughn



COURTESY OF OTTO LEIN

Otto Lein



COURTESY OF TOM SPILLANE

Ralph Omstead

The war that broke out in Europe in September of 1939 was followed with anxious interest in the United States as one after another country fell to the Nazi "blitzkrieg" and Britain was left standing alone. Journalist Ernie Pyle's vivid dispatches were read avidly. Radio, which had become commonplace by then, was tuned to receive the news broadcasts from overseas. Edward R. Murrow's deep voice pronouncing "*This is London*" was unforgettable.

Production of war materials sparked recovery from the Depression, but it was the entry into World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor that threw such industrialization into high gear.

The call to arms was answered immediately in towns all across America. Richard Fuchs was the first man from Old Tappan to enter the service. He was followed quickly by 56 other men plus four women. Every branch of the service boasted residents from Old Tappan.

The energies of the people at home were mobilized in a pyramid of command (with Mayor de Berg at the top as Defense Director) which functioned throughout the war. An outgrowth of this was the Defense and Disaster Control Committee which was maintained as an entity well into the sixties. Air raid wardens were appointed to see that blackout regulations were followed, as well as to watch for any suspicious activity in the night sky. A ration board was set up and ration stamp books and tokens were issued to every family, indicating the amounts of sugar, coffee, butter, cheese and meat allotted to each person. For special occasions, allotments were pooled to provide enough sugar and butter to bake a big cake, and those who did not drink coffee gave their shares to others. Shoes were rationed also, allowing only two pairs per person per year.

Gasoline was rationed to owners of cars based on the type of usage: the family car with an 'A' stamp was allotted three gallons of gasoline a week – the least amount – cars used in commuting to work got a few gallons more (a 'B' stamp), with commercial vehicles receiving the most gas (a 'C' stamp). Signs were prominently displayed asking, "Is this trip necessary?" as constant reminders to conserve fuel.

Everyone participated in some way in the war effort – buying and selling war bonds, sending packages of special treats, writing letters to the servicemen overseas. Women knitted sweaters, hats, gloves and scarves for the men. Money was raised for the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, churches and other organizations that helped both military personnel and their families when hardships struck.

Camp Shanks, the largest military installation in the United States, was built in Orangeburg, New York just a few miles from Old Tappan. Seventeen thousand men, many from Old Tappan, worked around the clock to complete the camp in four-and-a-half months. It was an embarkation camp for over a million men who passed through on their way to Europe. Almost every night long troop trains rumbled their way from the camp to Hoboken where the men boarded ships bound for Europe. Some contingents of soldiers marched to Piermont, New York to ship out. Shanks was also a receiving and dispatching center for incoming Italian and German prisoners of war. The German P.O.W.s were sent on to other camps but the Italian P.O.W.s were kept at Camp Shanks.

Soldiers from the camp frequently marched the Italian prisoners on the local roads of Old Tappan. Young boys riding on bicycles pedaled alongside bantering with the soldiers who would call to the boys, "*Hey, do you have a sister at home?*" Many of the young boys did, and these sisters and their friends acted as hostesses for the USO dances and entertainments held at the Manse Barn in Tappan.

Old Tappan made its own unique contribution to the war effort. With the fear of enemy invasion, Mayor de Berg felt that all women should be able to shoot a gun; consequently, classes in gun handling were started for the women of the town. Also, First Aid classes were taught by members of the Ambulance Corps. Everyone was assigned "safe stations" at which to gather in the event of an air raid.

Because Old Tappan was close to both New York City and Camp Shanks, if either the city or Shanks were hit in an air raid, it would be necessary to evacuate people to safer areas. Consequently, the town was canvassed for sleeping and eating accommodations for these evacuees.

A benefit to Old Tappan occasioned by the proximity of Camp Shanks was the installation in 1943 of the first water main in town laid on Orangeburgh Road. Its primary purpose was to supply water to Camp Shanks, but connections were made to fire hydrants placed along the road. (A second main was put in on Old Tappan Road, but it was not until 1953 that additional mains were laid on Washington Avenue South and Central Avenue. These mains were installed chiefly to provide fire fighting water.)

Almost everyone had "Victory Gardens." It was felt that it was patriotic to grow as much of your own food as possible so that farmers would be able to devote more of their output to the war effort. Everyone collected tin foil to be turned in for reuse. All residents contributed with a genuinely patriotic spirit to win the war.

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

During the holiday season in December 1944 at the Manse Barn in Tappan, girls from Old Tappan and surrounding towns volunteered at the USO Canteen.

COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN POLICE

Coppola's Farm and barn in the late '50s as seen from across Old Tappan Road looking toward the corner of Rickland Road.

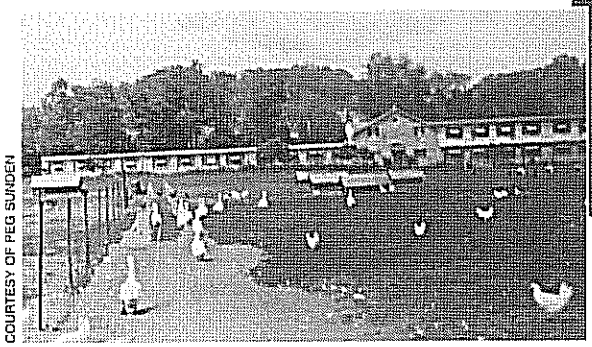
COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

Looking toward O'Connor's, far back from DeWolf Road.

COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN POLICE

The Youngman's barn and produce-packing crates. Their house is out of range to the right on Old Tappan Road.

Sunden's chicken coops in the late '50s, top, and their farm stand, bottom, which was located on the corner of Old Tappan Road and Washington Avenue South.

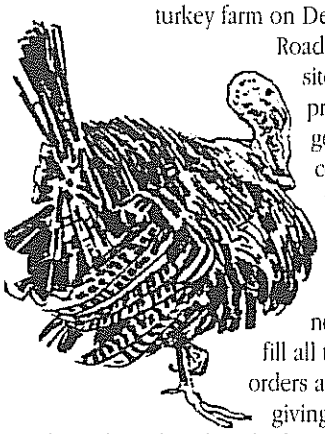


COURTESY OF PEG SUNDEN

COURTESY OF PEG SUNDEN

Side by side with all this new activity were the farms, still a major part of Old Tappan in the 1960s. On the south side of Old Tappan Road West the Coppola and Klein families operated large "truck" farms, raising vegetables and trucking them to market. The Coppolas had bought their farm from Charles Weis who cultivated fields of corn and grains. He was the last farmer in the area to thresh his grains with a flail. Next to the Coppolas was the small Youngman farm whose whole field was covered with pumpkins in the fall. The Hoverman family cultivated a tree nursery on the opposite side of the road, up the hill towards the reservoir (Herbst and Hoverman Roads today).

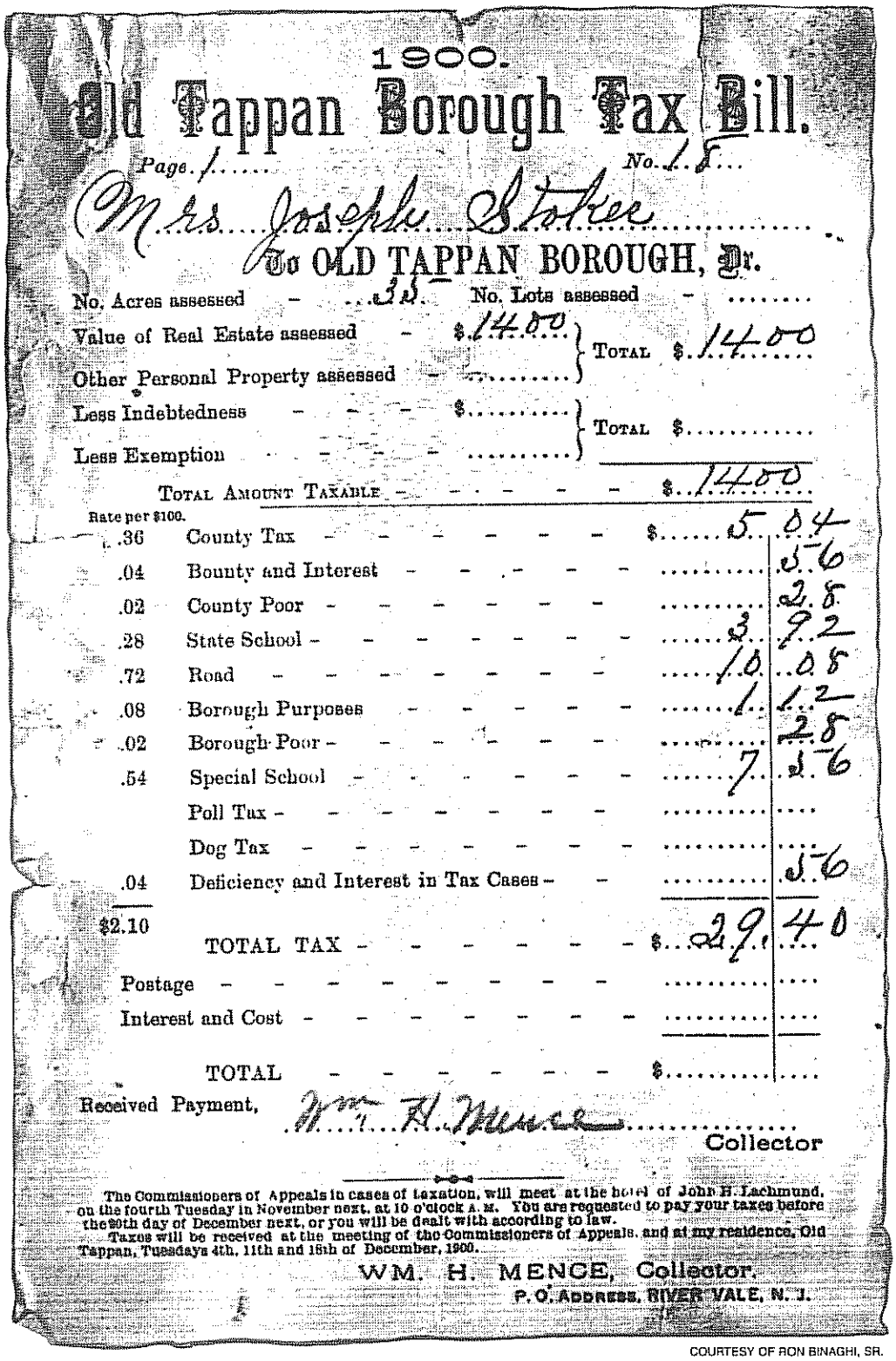
There was also the Del Vecchio's turkey farm on De Wolf Road (opposite the present golf course) where extra hands were needed to fill all the orders at Thanksgiving time.



The Del Vecchios bought their property in 1950 and soon turned it into a turkey farm which thrived in the sixties.

The Sundens had their farm at Old Tappan Road and Washington Avenue. They came to Old Tappan in the mid-thirties and at one time had 10,000 chickens, plus sheep, horses, cows, pigs, rabbits, ponies and even a llama. The two-month-old llama drank twenty quarts of milk a day and spat at anyone rash enough to come close. After the Sundens gave up the animals and poultry, they maintained a thriving business in the building which had once been their chicken coop, selling plants, fruits, vegetables and preserves. In 1987 the Sundens gave up their farm and sold the land for development.

The first and oldest farm in Old Tappan was, of course, the Haring-De Wolf's on De Wolf Road. Later, in 1873 Isaiah Stokes came from England with his family to settle on the gently rolling hills and meadows above De Wolf Road. He established not only a farm but a prominent place in the community for himself and his descendants. His



1900.

Old Tappan Borough Tax Bill.

Page 1 No. 18

Mrs. Joseph Stokes

To OLD TAPPAN BOROUGH, Dr.

No. Acres assessed - 35 No. Lots assessed -

Value of Real Estate assessed - $1400 } Total $1400

Other Personal Property assessed -

Less Indebtedness - - - $ } Total $

Less Exemption - - - -

Total Amount Taxable - - - - - - $1400

Rate per $100.			
.36	County Tax	$5	04
.04	Bounty and Interest		56
.02	County Poor		28
.28	State School	3	92
.72	Road	10	08
.08	Borough Purposes	1	12
.02	Borough Poor		28
.54	Special School	7	56
	Poll Tax		
	Dog Tax		
.04	Deficiency and Interest in Tax Cases		56
$2.10	TOTAL TAX	$29	40
	Postage		
	Interest and Cost		
	TOTAL	$	

Received Payment, Wm. H. Mence Collector

The Commissioners of Appeals in cases of taxation, will meet at the hotel of John H. Lachmund, on the fourth Tuesday in November next, at 10 o'clock A. M. You are requested to pay your taxes before the 20th day of December next, or you will be dealt with according to law.

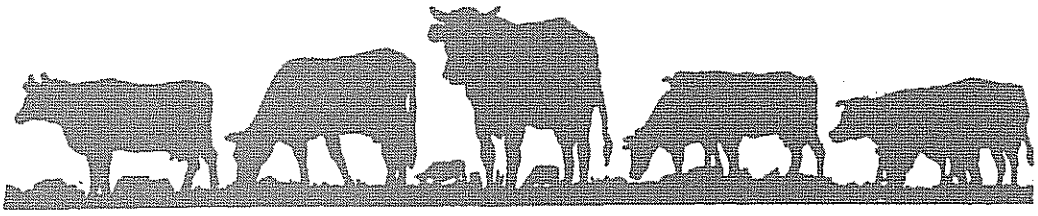
Taxes will be received at the meeting of the Commissioners of Appeals, and at my residence, Old Tappan, Tuesdays 4th, 11th and 18th of December, 1900.

WM. H. MENCE, Collector.

P. O. ADDRESS, RIVER VALE, N. J.

COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

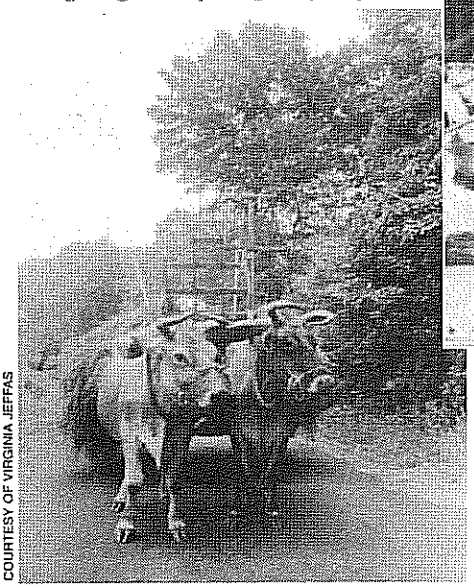
Anna Stokes' 1900 Old Tappan tax bill. Note that the tax collector was William Mence, the town blacksmith.



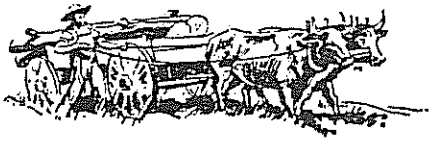
Charles DeWolf, Sr. (after whom the school was named) is seen on the left of the horses with young Rachel Post beside him. His son, Charles DeWolf, Jr. is between the horses. The other two men are farm hands.

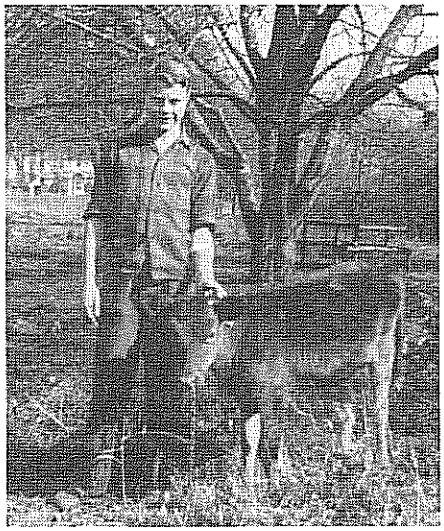
COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

O'Connor's oxen as they traveled down Orangeburgh Road pulling a hay wagon.



COURTESY OF VIRGINIA JEFFAS



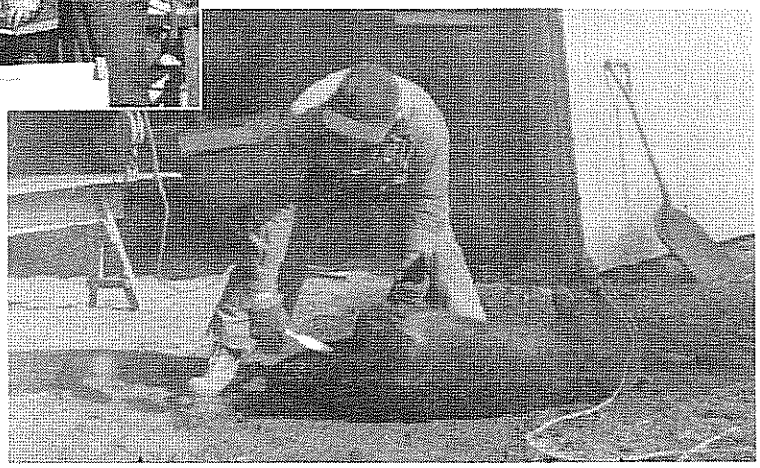


COURTESY OF TOM DEMAREST

Tom Demarest in November 1945.

COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

Packing tomatoes for market at DeWolf's Farm in 1939 are two of John DeWolf's granddaughters: Rachel Post, wearing the kerchief, center, and her sister, Ida, in front of Rachel.

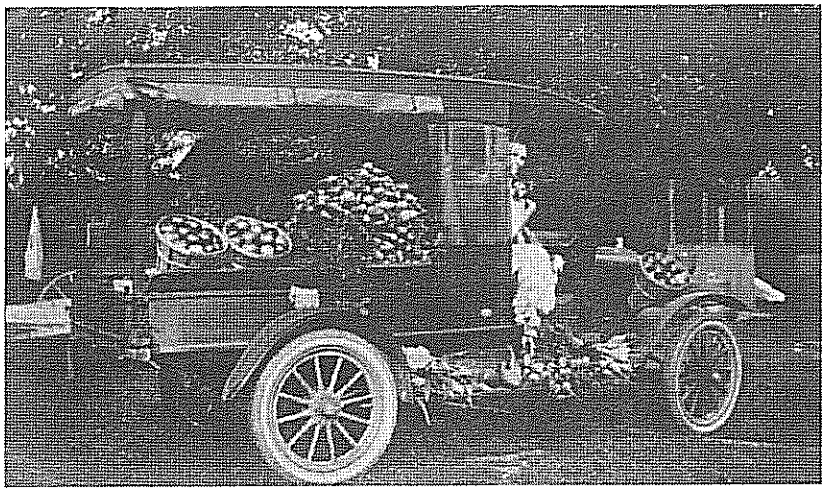


COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

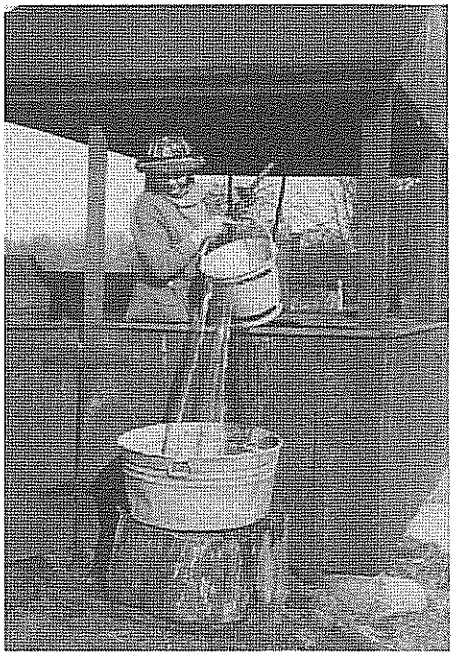
Ron Binaghi, Sr. is shown butchering a hog in 1958. This was part of the seasonal activities of farm life.

COURTESY OF ALICE MAE PREISENDORF

John DeWolf, Jr. and his wife, Jennie, with their young daughter, Elaine, on their farm in 1931.



Packed full of fresh tomatoes, corn and other vegetables from their farm, Anna Stokes is ready to drive their '23 Ford truck to market.



Madeline Stokes pouring a bucket of well water into a large tin tub for later use.

LIFE ON THE FARMS

A classic picture of farm people pausing for a moment from their work early in the century. From the left: Kate Kuhn, Joseph Stokes, Anna Stokes, with their daughter, Madeline.

ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY OF RON BINAGHI, SR.

A tender moment between mother and daughter, Madeline and Anna Stokes.

Pictured atop the hay wagon are Joseph Stokes, owner of the farm, with his granddaughter, Florence Stokes. On the ground wielding pitchforks and rakes are, from left: Kate Kuhn, Anna Stokes, granddaughter Anna Stokes and her mother, Ida Stokes.

1945 1954

OLD TAPPAN

1945 May 8–school was closed for V-E Day.

1946 The Old Tappan Youth Fellowship variety show featured Ron Binaghi and Audrey De Wolf.

The Rustic Cabin on Route 9W in Englewood Cliffs and Frank Daley's *Meadowbrook* in Cedar Grove were popular night spots enjoyed by Old Tappan residents.

1947 John Lachmund was honored at a dinner at Pine Grove Inn on April 12 for having served 50 years as Borough Clerk.

Twenty-three inches of snow fell on December 26.

1948 On January 30 Marshall Conrad "*Cooney*" Lachmund was commended for aiding Lindy Place residents who suffered unusual hardships during the power outage caused by the December, 1947 storm.

Rain, humidity and worms rotted the summer's sweet corn crops; farmers plowed under as many as three plantings.

1949 Girl Scouts sold cookies door-to-door at 35¢ per box.

1950 Population: 828

Seven Northern Valley towns voted for the formation of a regional high school.

1951 On April 25 Tom Demarest and Leon Leslie traveled together by bus to Fort Dix, where they reported for duty in the Korean conflict.

The first section of the Leoson Park housing development was completed.

1952 Mrs. Barbara Moeser was elected the first Old Tappan Councilwoman.

On Christmas Day the Old Tappan First Aid Corps delivered its first baby.

1953 A variety show about the history of Old Tappan was presented at the Charles De Wolf School on November 13.

1954 John Lachmund, Borough Clerk for 56 years, died on February 5. His landmark hotel was demolished in August.

Charles De Wolf, Sr. died on August 22, having served on the Board of Education for 44 years.

The Old Tappan First Aid Corps put its first *new* ambulance into use.

ELSEWHERE

1945 President Roosevelt died on April 12. Vice President Harry Truman became President.

V-E Day (Victory in Europe) took place on May 8.

On July 28 a B-25 bomber accidentally crashed into the side of the Empire State Building.

The first atomic bombs were dropped. The war in the Pacific officially ended September 2.

1946 The first electronic computer was designed and built at the University of Pennsylvania.

1947 The Marshall Plan was proposed June 5 by Secretary of State George C. Marshall.

Jackie Robinson took his position at first base for the Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, breaking the color barrier in organized baseball.

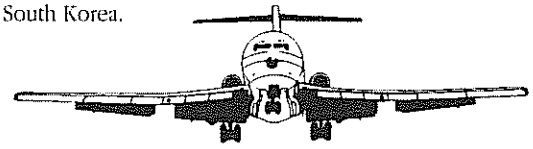
1948 President Truman was elected, against all odds favoring NY Governor Thomas E. Dewey.

The transistor was invented at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in Murray Hill, NJ.

1949 NATO (North American Treaty Organization) began.

The Berlin Blockade ended September 30 after American and British planes had airlifted almost 2.5 million tons of food and coal into the city.

1950 President Truman ordered the Air Force and Navy to Korea on June 27 after North Korea invaded South Korea.



The United States sent 35 military advisors to Vietnam.

1951 DNA, the molecule that carries genetic information in all living systems, was discovered.

The first coast-to-coast direct dial telephone service was initiated in Englewood.

The first modern computer was unveiled.

The first mile of the Palisades Interstate Parkway, from the George Washington Bridge north, was completed.

1952 Construction began on the Tappan Zee Bridge.

The first microwave ovens, produced by the Tappan Company, could be purchased for $1,295.

1953 Dwight Eisenhower was inaugurated President.

The first polio vaccine, the Salk vaccine, was developed.

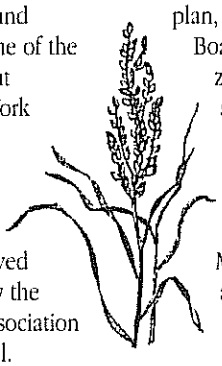
1954 Racial segregation in public schools was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Ellis Island closed.

granddaughter, Madeline Stokes, married Ernest Binaghi in November 1927 and today the Binaghi Farm run by their son and grandson, Ronald Binaghi, Sr. and Jr., is the only one left in Old Tappan. Continuing in the family farming tradition, Ron Binaghi, Jr.'s division of the business is known as Stokes Farm.

Coming from Ireland, the O'Connor family arrived in Old Tappan in the 1890s, joining the De Wolfs and the Stokes on De Wolf Road. As did the others, the O'Connors raised rye, wheat and buckwheat which they took to Bogert's Mill in Harrington Park for milling into flour for their personal use. They also grew corn for meal for the cattle, chickens and pigs, and supplied a livery stable in Englewood with hay. But the O'Connors became famous over the years for a succession of oxen pairs, each pair known as "Dark" and "Dawn." These strong, patient beasts served the O'Connors well and were even loaned out to other farmers for plowing and hauling loads too heavy for horses. Occasionally they pulled out cars mired in mud or stuck deep in snow. The O'Connors kept the oxen until 1944 when they gave their last pair to the Piersons who carried on the tradition. Harriet and Ollie Pierson were frequently seen driving their oxen along De Wolf Road.

Farming occupied the whole family. Haying and harvesting time called forth everyone to help. When strawberries ripened in June, tomatoes in July and apples in the fall, the picking and packing went on for days. Some of the produce was taken to market at Piermont, Paterson and New York City, and some was sold at the family farm stands. For years the Binaghis supplied the strawberries for the delicious strawberry shortcake served at the Cafeteria Suppers run by the Old Tappan Sunday School Association every June in the White Chapel.



The highlight of the farm year was the Orangeburg County Fair. The fair took place on the far side of what is now Route 303 and was an event at least as far back as 1904 when Jacob Eckerson noted in his diary for September 6th of that year, "*Went to Closter in the morning. Got horses shod and wagon fixed. Went to Orangeburg Fair in afternoon.*" He went to the fair again the next day. Animals – pigs, sheep, horses, cows and goats, as well as poultry – were brought to the fair to compete for prizes. The O'Connor's oxen won the blue ribbon every year! The farm wives, who had been canning fruits and vegetables to provide for their winter food supply, took their best products, along with their tasty pies, breads and cakes, to be judged. Many women of the town were accomplished needle-workers, winning prizes for their excellent embroidery and other types of handiwork.

Itinerant farm hands provided extra help at particularly busy times in the farm year. One of these, William McAneny, widely known as "Irish Bill", went from farm to farm in Old Tappan to work. He died in September of 1930 at the age of 58 and is buried in the Brand family plot in the Old Tappan Cemetery. For large scale help migrant farm hands were employed, some from Puerto Rico and some Jamaicans who migrated from Florida in the summer. One man from Puerto Rico worked on the Binaghi Farm for 19 seasons. By the seventies the need for migrant workers was over in Old Tappan. The Coppola and Klein farms had been sold and Binaghi had cut back on wholesaling produce and concentrated more on bedding plants and the roadside market business.

Today the Old Tappan Golf Course spreads its greens and fairways over fifty acres of the Haring-DeWolf property and there are houses where the other farms once were. A foresighted master plan, drawn up by the Planning Board and approved in 1955, zoned the town into building lot sizes large enough to achieve the attractive neighborhoods that resulted. That master plan did not become effective without a fight – literally! When the Mayor and Council voted approval of the master plan at their regular meeting in September 1955, several owners of large land holdings rose up in anger. They were afraid that they would not be able to sell their properties with these increased plot size requirements. In a flare-up of fists and temper one councilman was socked in the jaw and another was chased around the table. The whole chamber was in an uproar. But order prevailed, the vote held and the property owners subsequently sold their lands and prospered. So did Old Tappan.

Anna DeWolf with a list of what she "put up" in one season as taken from her 1942 diary.

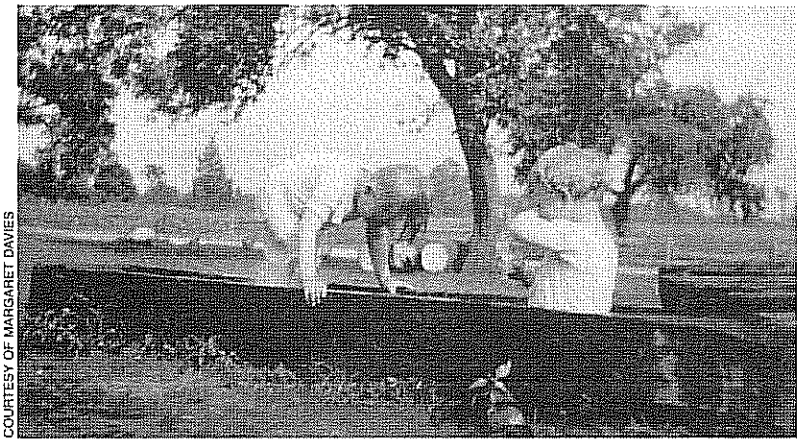
JULY 8	10 PINTS RASPBERRIES
JULY 13	8 QUARTS STRING BEANS
JULY 16	6 QUARTS STRING BEANS
JULY 21.	8½ QUARTS STRING BEANS
JULY 22	5 PINTS STRING BEANS
JULY 27	7 QUARTS PEACHES
JULY 29	7 QUARTS CORN
JULY 30	7 QUARTS CORN
AUG. 3	6 QUARTS SOUR BEETS
AUG. 4	MADE CORN RELISH
AUG. 5	8 QUARTS TOMATOES
AUG. 6	11 PINTS CHILI SAUCE
AUG. 12	11 QUARTS PEACHES
AUG. 14	7 QUARTS SWEET BEETS & 5 QUARTS APPLE SAUCE
AUG. 24	12 QUARTS TOMATOES & 7 QUARTS CORN
AUG. 25	10 QUARTS TOMATOES
AUG. 26	22½ QUARTS TOMATOES
AUG. 27	6 QUARTS LIMA BEANS
SEPT. 1	6 QUARTS PEACHES
SEPT. 2	MADE TOMATO JUICE & GRAPE JELLY
SEPT. 3	6 QUARTS PEARS
SEPT. 4	5½ QUARTS PEARS
SEPT. 5	11½ QUARTS PLUMS & 3 QUARTS SWEET POTATOES & 2½ PINTS LIMA BEANS & 2 PINTS SPAGHETTI SAUCE
SEPT. 7	19 QUARTS PEARS
SEPT. 8	MADE PEAR PRESERVES
SEPT. 21	4 PINTS LIMA BEANS
SEPT. 24	4 QUARTS GREEN TOMATO PICKLES
SEPT. 25	4 QUARTS GREEN TOMATOES AND ONIONS
OCT. 5	7 QUARTS APPLE SAUCE
OCT. 7	4 PINTS EGGPLANT
OCT. 16	4 QUARTS PEARS
OCT. 19	4½ QUARTS PEARS
OCT. 20	MADE BEET RELISH
OCT. 21	7 QUARTS APPLESAUCE
OCT. 22	2½ QUARTS SOUR BEETS
OCT. 26	7 QUARTS APPLE SAUCE
NOV. 9	6 QUARTS APPLE SAUCE
NOV. 11	7 QUARTS PUMPKIN
NOV. 23	3 QUARTS MINCE MEAT

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

"Come on in– the water's fine!" says Margaret Alexander with a broad grin. She's seen left center.

COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

Ready for a picnic and some swimming in the Hackensack River in the early '20s are, from left: Mrs. Mall, Mrs. Burnett, Peggy Platt, Wilbur Eckerson (half hidden), John Eckerson, Margaret Eckerson and Edith Eckerson, mother of the three Eckerson children.



COURTESY OF MARGARET DAVIES

On a hot summer day, John and Wilbur Eckerson take advantage of the watering trough by the side of their house to cool off.

COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

Margaret Alexander and Ida Stokes (center, left and right) enjoying an afternoon at the popular Hackensack River swimming area by Sluntz's Bridge.

Swimming in the Hackensack River was a favorite summer pastime over the years and the "river of many bends," as the Indians called it, furnished good swimming holes at those bends. One was at a small bridge, Sluntz's Bridge on Washington Avenue North, now long covered by the reservoir. It was a real "ol' swimmin' hole." There was scarcely any traffic on the road, and with woods on both sides of the river it was secluded. Further down the river the grounds of Lachmund's Hotel were in almost constant use by groups who picnicked and swam there. The Leslie home on Westwood Avenue by the bridge (named after them) was host to many swimming parties.

In the twenties two man-made swimming pools were built on Orangeburgh Road, both fed by abundant natural springs, both starting out on a small scale. What became Idle Wild Swim Club was started by Ray Rappold as a pool for his children. Otto Supply began his pool much the same way and in 1953 sold it to the Otto Limmer family who have operated it as Northern Valley Swim Club ever since.

Both pools prospered. There were traffic jams on Orangeburgh Road on Sunday afternoons when people drove from all around to enjoy swimming in the refreshing waters and sunbathing on the sand. Colorful umbrellas dotted the beaches; chairs and picnic tables were placed in shady groves. Lockers, bath houses and refreshment pavilions were added, along with playgrounds and game courts. High school boys and also a few girls got summer jobs as lifeguards and as "helping teachers" in the swimming classes held for young children.

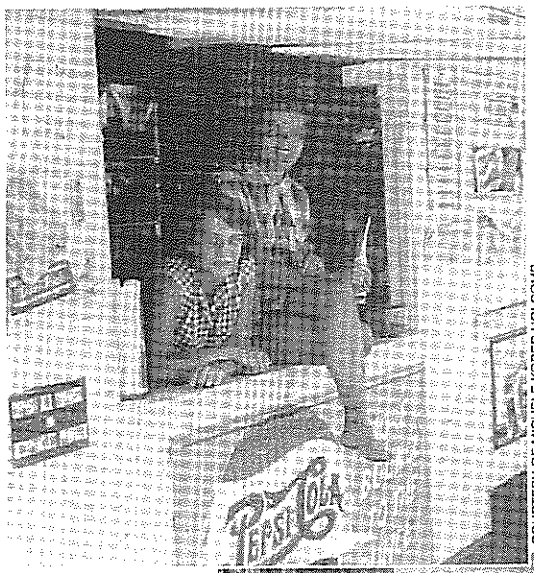
By the late sixties home swimming pools appeared in more and more backyards, replacing the lawn sprinklers that had showered gleefully shrieking children on hot summer days. Though the home pools were competition, both swim clubs retained a good attendance. The Rappold family ran Idle Wild from the mid-thirties to the late seventies when it was sold to Bill Bresler, who ran the swim club for a few years. Otto Limmer died in 1959 but the swim club and the Longwood Racquet Club (built on the property in 1973) are managed today by his widow, Marie Limmer, and their daughter, Marie T. Kober.

Both Ray Rappold and Otto Limmer

were public spirited citizens of Old Tappan, taking part in community activities and making the resources of their clubs readily available to the various organizations and groups in Old Tappan. Top eighth grade students were given summer passes to Idle Wild by Mr. Rappold and an eighth grade graduation math award is given every year by the Lions Club in Mr. Limmer's name.

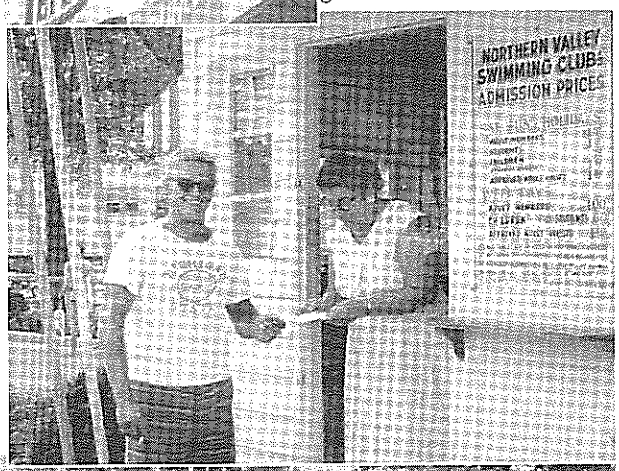
COURTESY OF MICHELE KOBER HOLCOMB

Otto Limmer in 1958, owner of Northern Valley Swim Club.



COURTESY OF MICHELE KOBER HOLCOMB

Betty Nogie (left) and Marie Limmer (Kober) in 1953 at the refreshment stand at Northern Valley Swim Club.



COURTESY OF MICHELE KOBER HOLCOMB

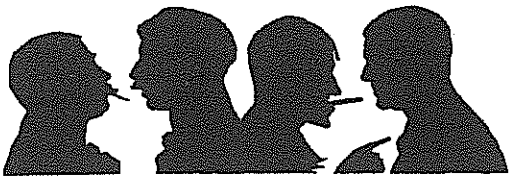
Roger Hering, one of the lifeguards, checking in with Marie Limmer in 1959. Adult admission on weekdays was only $1, on weekends, $1.50 for a whole day of fun.

(Below) A postcard showing an early view of Idle Wild Swim Club.

COURTESY OF JIM MUELLER

MAYORS OF OLD TAPPAN

John De Wolf	*1894 - 1927*
Wilbur H. Eckerson	*1928 - 1934*
Walter de Berg	*1935 - 1946*
David Stewart	*1947 - 1951*
John Geare	*1952*
William Davenport	*1952 - 1955*
F. Clark Smith	*1956 - 1959*
John Corrigon	*1960 - 1967*
Malcolm Davies	*1968 - 1971*
Walter Frueh	*1972 - 1979*
Edward J. Gallagher	*1980 -*



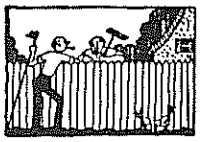
Old Tappan was predominantly a Democratic town from its beginning. John O'Connor was a robust and active Democrat who is reputed to have growled on his death bed, "*I don't care who you vote for as long as he's a Democrat.*" His son carried on the tradition, becoming president of the Democratic Club, presiding over many picnics and corn-and-pig-roasts and clam bakes at his farm homestead on O'Connor's Lane. He was well liked and his unbroken voting record was acknowledged at a large testimonial dinner in October 1954.

Republicans were entering the political scene in Old Tappan during the "roaring twenties." Walter de Berg was one of whom residents remarked, "*He's a Republican, but he's very nice.*" On November 3, 1937 Anna De Wolf noted in her diary: "*Election Day. Papa* (Charles De Wolf) *got 125 and de Berg 187. The whole ticket went Republican in town.*" In spite of the loss, candidates and campaigners went to a party at Cavallo's after the election. On the 18th of December that year there was a large turnout at the Democratic Christmas party at Lachmund's. Ten years later Anna De Wolf noted that there was a large turnout at a Republican dinner at the Pine Grove Inn.

By the mid-fifties Republicans had taken over the town and, with the exception of a few Democrats who won council seats from time to time, the governing body of Old Tappan has been Republican ever since.

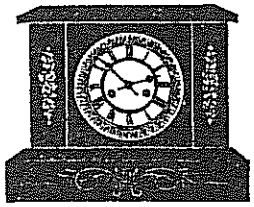
COURTESY OF SALLY WELLER

In 1953 parents and children are shown on Amelia Drive, the first of many developments in Old Tappan. At this time, mailboxes were placed in front of the residences, rather than clustered on the main roads.



COURTESY OF LEANORE SANSONE

A 1954 view of the Charles Place development, taken from what was to become the Little League field, looking toward Old Tappan Road.



In 1957 Lee C. Atwood purchased the Eckerson house on Old Tappan Road to serve as both his home and his place of business, calling himself "The Clockman of Old Tappan." As one entered the shop, which occupied the entire right side of the first floor, the various sounds of all the timepieces conjured up thoughts of times past. It was stocked with every variety: cuckoo, mantel, banjo, regulator and old Victorian clocks. Atwood was highly skilled in the craft of clock restoration and repair and had won wide recognition. Atwood is shown here with actress Imogene Coca, who played the owner of an old clock factory in the Bergen Mall Playhouse production of "A Rainy Day in Newark," in September 1964. The play featured a variety of clocks from Atwood's shop.

COURTESY OF JEFFREY HAIGHT

Probably no home scene was as changed for returning war veterans as Old Tappan after the Korean War. The first housing development had scarcely begun in 1951 when many of Old Tappan's young men and women were called to serve in that far-off conflict. The town was full of farms and woods and fields when they left. They returned two years later to find a bustling community of new streets with new houses and new people in those houses, and the need for an addition to the school already under consideration. The population jumped from 828 in 1950 to 2,330 in 1960. The newcomers and the old-timers all settled in together taking active parts in community affairs.

The mailing address for Old Tappan was still RFD 1, Westwood. The local telephone exchanges were NOrth 4, CLoster 5 and POplar 8. The telephone had neither rotary dial nor touch buttons – it was operator serviced – a voice asking "*Number please*" when the receiver was lifted. Many of the phones were on party lines so the inevitable eavesdropping occurred. A warning was posted in the Lions Club Telephone Directory of 1965 to users of party lines stating that they must release the line for any emergency call or be fined.

Milk was delivered in returnable glass bottles by several dairies. The Dugan's Bakery delivered bread and baked goods to any household that displayed a big "D" card in the window. Sunden's Farm delivered eggs. Dry cleaning and laundry were picked up and delivered; men's shirts were done for 25¢ each, handkerchiefs 5¢ each.

There were no big supermarkets. The A&P had a store in Westwood where Rafters is now. A smaller one, without a meat department, but with "The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company" logo overhead was in Hillsdale. Closter had a small A&P where the medical group is now, and the Market in Tappan delivered. There was a family owned general grocery store in an old house at the Four Corners in River Vale which stayed open until early evening. (Five o'clock was closing time for all other stores.) When a Honeydew supermarket opened in River Vale near the Four Corners it became the closest supermarket for Old Tappaners and did a thriving business until it was destroyed by fire on New Year's Eve 1966.

Todd's Hill had been reduced by a

series of excavations to a large gravel pit where turkey shoots were held in the fall. The ground was finally leveled and in September 1956 a row of small stores opened which struggled to stay in business until a FINAST supermarket was erected there in 1958, attracting customers. The small building which now houses McDonald's was built for the Valley Savings Bank, the Old Tappan Medical Group and a dentist's office. Thus was Bi-State Plaza launched.

COURTESY OF LEANORE SANSONE

William Heckel and his widowed sister Helen Watson lived in a tiny house, almost hidden by an enormous pyrocanthus bush on the corner of Old Tappan Road and Washington Avenue North. On the other side of Old Tappan Road they kept a small store and sold fruits and vegetables from an outside stand. This shows customer Gertrude Sorensen (right) with Helen Watson at the stand in the '50s.

Prior to the turn of the century two-year high schools, normal schools (for teacher training) and trade schools satisfied most graduates from elementary school. In 1897 Hackensack became the only four-year high school in Bergen County and accepted students from other towns, including Old Tappan. They traveled by train on the line which went through Westwood.

In 1915 Dumont High School became a four-year high school and students from the Northern Valley could take the West Shore Railroad from West Norwood to Dumont, which was a shorter trip to more of a "neighborhood" high school. The Old Tappan Board of Education paid for the round trip commutation. Any students who caught the train in Tappan, NY (because the walk was shorter) had to pay the difference. Frequently, obliging conductors would neglect to collect the extra nickel.

Maurice Coffey walked from his home on O'Connor Lane, over the hills where Bi-State Plaza now is, down Central Avenue with its orchards, farms and few homes, to West Norwood. A shortcut down Knickerbocker Lane, across a log over Dorotockeys Run to First Street in Norwood and up to Orangeburgh Road (now known as Broadway) was often taken by those who didn't mind going through fields and woods and getting across the brook.

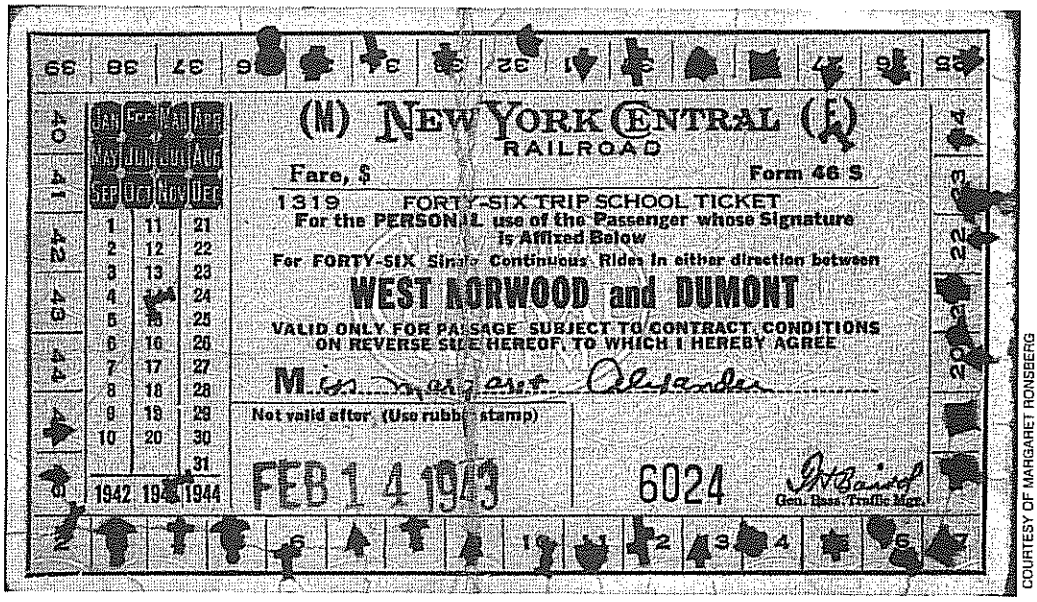
The Old Tappan Board of Education did not allow snow days and there were cold winter days after a deep snow had fallen when Old Tappan students slogged their way to the train and arrived at the high school only to find it closed because *Dumont had declared a snow day*!

At least, when all those walking students got to the station they could warm up around its pot-bellied stove, along with commuters to New York City and any local residents who dropped in for companionship and gossip. The students had a good time on the short train ride to Dumont, but some business men were annoyed when they missed their 7:30 express train and had to take the 7:40 local with "all those noisy high school kids" – all eight to ten of them!

In September of 1955 Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest was ready for the students from the seven Northern Valley towns, and the train trips to Dumont ended. (Four years later the West Shore Railroad stopped carrying passengers altogether, and today only long freight trains rumble and rattle and whistle their way over the single line of tracks that are left.)

For one and a half years (during the years 1960-62) Demarest High School was on split sessions because of the heavy enrollment of students, brought about as more and more families settled in the Northern Valley. In the winter, students waited for the school bus by the light of the setting moon, and those in the second session came out of school long after the sun was down.

On March 19, 1962 the Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan (NVOT) opened its doors to students from Old Tappan, Harrington Park, Northvale and Norwood, affording Old Tappan students a high school in their own town.



COURTESY OF MARGARET RONSBERG

A 1943 New York Central Railroad commutation ticket between West Norwood and Dumont used by students attending Dumont High School.

1955 1964

OLD TAPPAN

1955 Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest opened in September.

The Master Plan for Old Tappan was approved by the Mayor and Council in a stormy meeting.

St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church was blessed and dedicated on November 6.

1956 Thieves robbed Lein's Grove of more than $500.

The first Annual Children's Fishing Contest, sponsored by the Rod and Gun Club, was held at the pond off Blanch Avenue.

1957 Trinity Reformed Church was dedicated on June 30.

School Principal Margaret Scott Harvie retired after 31 years of service to the students of Old Tappan.

1958 The first supermarket, FINAST, opened at Bi-State Plaza attended by entertainment personalities Arthur Godfrey (who flew in by helicopter) and Mitch Miller.

Two stolen cars used in a gangland murder were found in Old Tappan woods.

1959 The Old Tappan telephone directory was published by the Chamber of Commerce and later became a project of the Lions Club.

1960 Population: 2,330

The Mayor and Council approved purchase of the Leslie property for use as Stone Point Park.

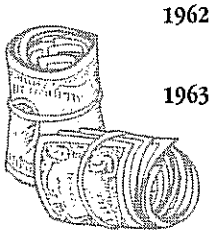
The first Borough-owned police car was put into use.

1961 Charles Schuh became the first full-time patrolman on the Old Tappan Police Force.

Welding business owner O.J. (*Ollie*) Pierson advertised that "*We Weld Everything but Broken Hearts.*"

Bob Lewis, co-pilot of the plane (*Enola Gay*) that dropped the first atomic bomb, lived in Old Tappan with his family.

1962 Northern Valley Regional High School in Old Tappan opened on March 19.



1963 Two masked gunmen robbed the Bi-State Plaza branch of Valley Savings Bank of $4,000, threatening the lone teller, Miss Esther Herrick.

The Woman's Club of Old Tappan was formed.

1964 Mrs. Genevieve Loggie retired after 39 years of teaching in the Old Tappan schools, the longest tenure of any teacher in Old Tappan.

On June 14 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church held its first service and dedication ceremony in its new Church-in-the-Round.

Lein's Grove was destroyed by fire on July 8.

ELSEWHERE

1955 The Brooklyn Dodgers won the World Series against the New York Yankees.

The Ford Motor Company opened the largest assembly plant in the world in Mahwah.

1956 The Tappan Zee Bridge was opened to traffic.

1957 *Sputnik I*, the first man-made satellite, was launched by the Soviets.

The Palisades Interstate Parkway was completed all the way to Bear Mountain.

Bergen Mall and Garden State Plaza shopping centers were opened.

1958 The European Economic Community (Common Market) became effective January 1.

Elvis Presley was drafted into the Army.

1959 Alaska was admitted as the 49th State on January 3, Hawaii as the 50th State on August 21.

Pascack Valley Hospital opened on Old Hook Road in Westwood on June 1.

Ferry service across the Hudson River from Weehawken to 42nd Street ceased operation, bringing about the end of passenger service on the West Shore Railroad.

1960 An American U-2 reconnaissance plane was shot down inside the Soviet Union on May 1.

The first 200 non-stick frying pans at Macy's, Herald Square sold out despite 9° and 17" of snow on December 15.

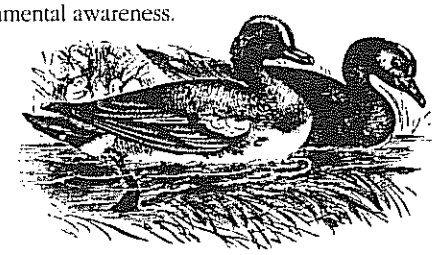
1961 John Kennedy was inaugurated as President.

Commander Alan Shepard, Jr. became the first American in space on May 5.

Construction of the Berlin Wall began on August 13.

1962 President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* launched environmental awareness.



1963 President John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas on November 22. Vice President Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as President.

1964 A major American commitment in Vietnam was made after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution August 7.

The Beatles made their first appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9.

The original volume of the PTA minutes as recorded by Nettie L. McMurry on October 17, 1922 reads: "*A meeting was held in the Old Tappan Chapel for the purpose of organizing a Parent Teacher Association. Twenty-five persons had gathered pursuant to an announcement that had appeared in the Westwood Chronicle. Mrs. Hartring, the visiting teacher, arranged the meeting. The guest speakers were Mr. Daines, New Jersey County Chairman of the PTA, and Mrs. Magel, president of the PTA of Demarest.*

"Mr. Daines, acting as chairman, effected an organization. Mrs. Frederick (Fanny De Wolf) Demarest was elected president. Mr. Phillpot, vice president, Mrs. Nettie McMurry, secretary, and Mr. David Stewart, treasurer. Dues of 25¢ per member were agreed upon. The third Friday of every month was agreed upon as meeting night."

At a public meeting of the Board of Education on October 31, 1922 the Old Tappan PTA was officially recognized. The most important order of business for the newly formed PTA was to support the need for additional school facilities. Their efforts succeeded and, when the new brick building on Old Tappan Road at present day Leonard Drive was dedicated on September 3, 1925, the PTA was there to take part in the inspection and dedication ceremony.

Babysitters were not used in the early years; mothers brought their children with them to meetings. A pot of soup or hot cocoa was always warming while the mothers were in discussion and the children were playing or reading.

During the Depression the school building became more crowded and economic times more difficult. By 1936 PTA membership had dropped and active members were few and disheartened. Leslie Gifford, president from 1927 to 1929, read into the minutes of May 15, 1936 "*the PTA is disbanded.*" It was not until 1947 that the PTA was reorganized with many of its original members. Gaye Desrats was president of this new beginning.

The housing development of the early fifties brought new families to Old Tappan, and with them the need for more schoolrooms. Pauline Julich, who had attended classes as a child in the old wooden schoolhouse and remembered what inadequate conditions were like, was president from 1952 to 1954 and led the PTA in another campaign for additional facilities. The first addition to the Charles De Wolf School was completed in time for the 1954-55 school year.

The PTA has been a strong and effective organization in both the school and community. Since the mid-eighties it has offered enrichment programs at Saturday morning workshops. For at least the last six years the Old Tappan PTA has won the State Superintendents' Award for its 100% teacher membership. Its sale of delicious home-baked treats on Election Day each November has become famous.

Averaging 35 members, The Woman's Club of Old Tappan, was organized and federated in 1963. Alice Gaffney, a popular mathematics teacher at the Charles De Wolf School, was its first president.

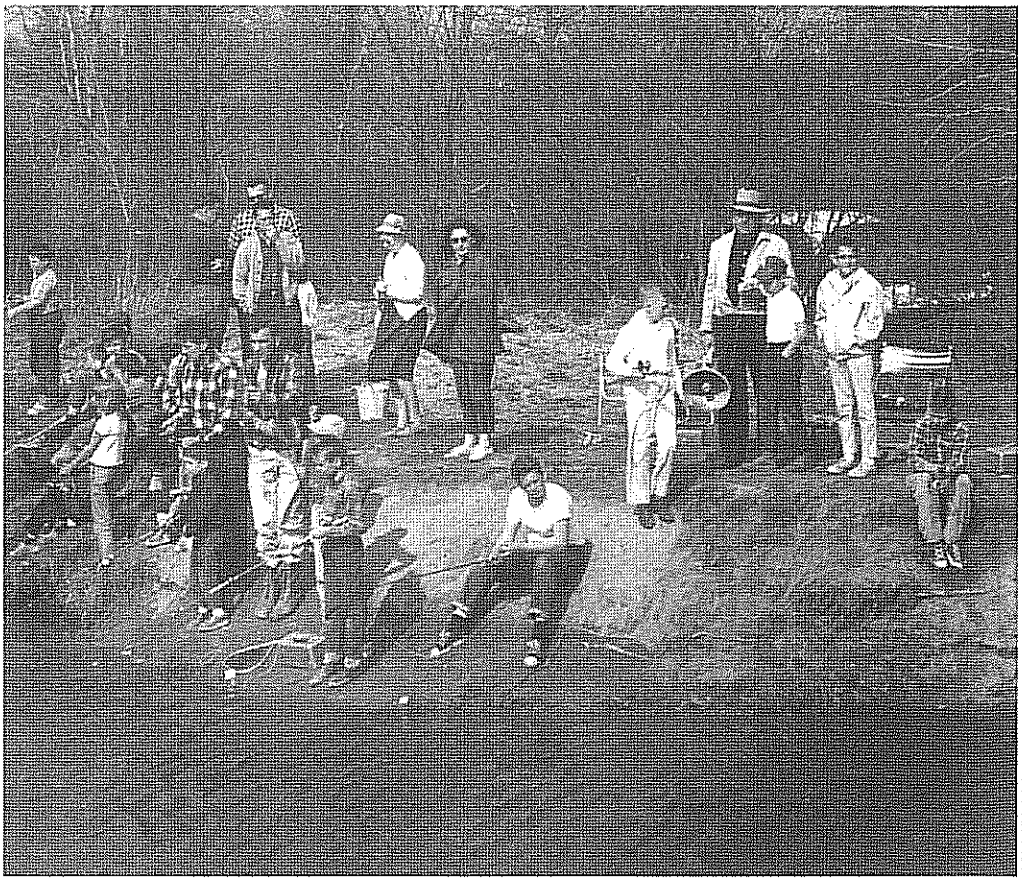
Among the local projects of this service-oriented group are the awarding of scholarships to eighth graders and high school graduates, donations to the First Aid Corps and the Library, sponsorship of baby-sitting clinics and the annual Halloween Ragamuffin Parade and support of Ingleside Nursing Home. Each year the Woman's Club makes it possible for a delegate from NVOT to attend the Girls Career Institute at Douglas College, New Brunswick.

County and State projects include support of the Mental Health Center in Dumont, the Rape Crisis Center in Hackensack, pediatric Aids care at a hospital in Newark and also to a special emergency facility for children.

The Club's 30th Anniversary in June, 1993 took on special significance when the members evoked feelings of nostalgia by dressing in the styles of the sixties, complete with lovely hats and flowing dresses. The Woman's Club of Old Tappan effectively combines sociability and service to make New Jersey a better place to live.

The Old Tappan Branch of the Women's Auxiliary of the Pascack Valley Hospital Association was formed in the late fifties. It joined with other area branches to provide financial support and volunteers for the new hospital. Two early, successful annual fund raising events were the Auxiliary-wide Street Fair every June and Old Tappan's own Outdoor Antiques Show each October. The Old Tappan Branch became part of the Northern Valley Branch of the Auxiliary in the eighties and our Borough women continue to serve the hospital.

The Annual Fishing Contest, sponsored by the Rod and Gun Club of Old Tappan was held on Blanch Avenue in Harrington Park each May up until 1978 and provided a day of competition for the Borough's young anglers. Many prizes were awarded enabling numerous youngsters to go home with new fishing equipment besides any trout they had caught during the contest. Emil Dreisbach, president of the club, is shown officiating with the bullhorn.



COURTESY OF OLD TAPPAN POLICE

1965 1974

BAYLOR DRAGOON

OLD TAPPAN

1965 David Siegel was recognized as the first Eagle Scout from Old Tappan Troop 132.

The T. Baldwin Demarest School opened in September.

Half of Old Tappan was blacked out on the night of November 9 when a massive power failure affected most of the northeastern United States and parts of two Canadian provinces.

1966 Lake Tappan reservoir was completed.

1967 The site of the Baylor Massacre, near Lachmund's Bridge, was discovered by Tom Demarest and others.

Title to 50 acres of De Wolf land was transferred to the Borough of Old Tappan for a municipal golf course.

The first Old Tappan Ragamuffin Parade was held.

1968 The Old Tappan Chapter of the Women's Auxiliary of the Pascack Valley Hospital sponsored its eighth Annual Outdoor Antiques Show on October 21.

1969 The Old Tappan Golf Course officially opened July 1.

1970 Population: 3,917

Police Department functions were temporarily taken over by the County, as a matter of procedure, while investigation was made into alleged acceptance of a gift by an officer from a resident.

The Golden Age Club of Old Tappan was founded.

1971 The Old Tappan First Aid Corps boasted four women members.

After review by the Mayor and Council, the Police Chief was dismissed from the force for inappropriate conduct.

A five-member Board of Commissioners was appointed by Mayor Davies to manage the Municipal Golf Course.

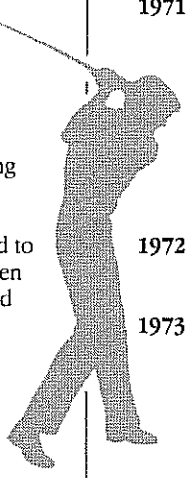
1972 The Lions Club sponsored free glaucoma testing in its Eyemobile.

Acting Police Chief John Kramer was promoted to Chief of Police, effective September 1. Patrolmen William Hoyle and Charles Lake were advanced to Lieutenant and Sergeant, respectively.

1973 The Boy Scouts constructed a bridge across Dorotockeys Run to Stanaland Park.

1974 Old Tappan teacher Thomas Phelan filmed a documentary movie on the American Revolution, featuring 110 fifth-grade students from the Charles De Wolf School.

Harry Lake was presented with the Citizen of the Year Award by the Lions Club on March 6.



ELSEWHERE

1965 Five days of rioting occurred in August in the Watts area of Los Angeles.

1966 Medicare began on July 1.

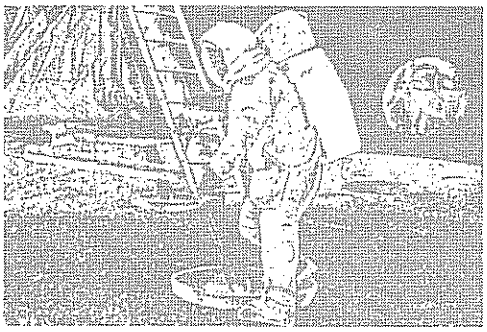
1967 President Johnson and Soviet Premier Kosygin met at Glassboro State College on June 23 and 25.

Thurgood Marshall, the first black to be appointed to the Supreme Court, was sworn in on October 2.

In the first Super Bowl game, the Green Bay Packers beat the Kansas City Chiefs 35 - 10.

1968 Richard Nixon was elected as President.

Both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy were assassinated.



1969 *That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind:* First lunar landing on July 20 by U.S. Astronaut Neil Armstrong and Col. Edwin (*Buzz*) Aldrin, Jr.

350,000 young people attended the Woodstock (NY) rock festival.

1970 Four students were killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University in Ohio during a Vietnam War protest.

April 22 marked the first Earth Day.

1971 The 26th Amendment to the Constitution lowered the voting age to 18.

On June 13 The New York Times began to publish classified Pentagon Papers about involvement of the United States in Vietnam.

Palisades Amusement Park closed on September 12.

1972 The Watergate scandal began by the break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters.

1973 The Supreme Court's *Roe vs. Wade* decision declared that a state may not prevent a woman from having an abortion during the first six months of pregnancy.

Gerald Ford became the first appointed Vice President when Spiro Agnew resigned.

The World Trade Twin Towers were built.

1974 President Nixon resigned on August 9. Vice President Gerald Ford took over the Presidency.

Girl Scouting for Old Tappan began in 1932 when Dorothy, Esther and Myrtle Hopper and Barbara and Eve Ellis were invested as members of a troop which met weekly in Westwood. These girls walked to the meetings at the Berkeley School in Westwood. In 1939 Myrtle Hopper (Snow) and Margaret Eckerson (Davies) organized the first Girl Scout Troop in Old Tappan. This troop of fifth-through-eighth graders met in the old wooden schoolhouse.

At their first outdoor camping experience at Lachmund's Grove, the girls learned the art of cooking over a campfire and Scoutmaster Leonard Swope set up a large army tent for them. One anecdote which survived through the years tells of a can of spaghetti which exploded while heating over the fire – its contents dangling from the branches of nearby trees! (The "cook" had forgotten to vent the can by puncturing its lid.) In addition to its camping adventures, the troop took trips to local places of interest and traveled by train and ferry to visit the Statue of Liberty.

In the late forties through several bake, craft and white elephant sales and by putting on a variety show, the girls earned sufficient money to purchase their own camping tents and equipment and no longer needed to borrow from the Boy Scouts. During the week following the close of school in June, the girls camped on the grounds of Idle Wild Swim Club, where they earned their swimming badges under the direction of its owner, Ray Rappold.

In March 1951 Muriel Lanza, Kitty Kingsley and Jennie Koch organized Old Tappan's first Brownie troop, which had 11 members, aged seven to nine. In the fall of 1953 Old Tappan became part of the newly formed Pascack Valley Girl Scout Council. and also in the fifties the girls competed in the Pascack Valley Softball League and were frequent champions. The Girl Scout Council of Bergen County was established in 1959, expanding camping facilities for Old Tappan scouts to sites at Glen Spey and Stokes State Forest.

The Old Tappan Chapter of the Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1938. Frank Lowe, former Eagle Scout and a Scoutmaster in Park Ridge, was persuaded by Bob Hayes, a resident of Old Tappan, to head up a troop in town. By 1940, having gained the sponsorship of the Mayor and Council, Troop 132 received its charter from the Bergen County Council. In 1956 the Lions Club of Old Tappan took over the sponsorship which continues to the present.

In the beginning the scouts met in the old wooden schoolhouse and Charlie Lake remembers going there in the late afternoon to stoke the fire in the iron stove so the room would be warm enough for the evening meeting.

One of the largest public service undertakings of the Boy Scouts in Old Tappan was the bimonthly collection of newspapers for recycling. The scouts received no remuneration for this until 1950 when the revenue from this activity made it possible for the troop to buy tents and equipment. It also financed hundreds of camping experiences for the scouts. The paper drives, which began sometime in the forties, ended in 1989 when the mandatory recycling program began under Borough auspices.

In 1965 the troop had its first Eagle Scout; other Eagle Scouts followed in almost every successive year for a total of 37 to date. Hundreds of boys have gone through the ranks with enrollment peaking during the sixties and seventies when approximately 60 boys were registered each year.

In 1956 the Lions Club, the largest service organization in the world whose primary purpose is to aid the blind and prevent blindness, founded a chapter in Old Tappan. Thirty charter members elected Richard Siccardi as their first president.

Old Tappan's Lions are known for charitable deeds which they fund by an annual raffle, White Cane work and from the sale of advertising space in their town telephone directory. The Lions have distributed this book free to each household in the Borough, for the past thirty years.

Most of the funds they raise are returned to Old Tappan, with only a small portion to state funding for the blind. Through scholarships to both grade and high school graduates and assistance to the Library, the Old Tappan Baseball Association and Men's Softball League, the Lions demonstrate their generosity to our community. The Lions Club sponsors the Cub Scouts and Boy Scout Troop 132. Contributions are sent to D.A.R.E. and Safe Rides. Equipment is given to the schools, Fire Department and First Aid Corps. In 1961 the Lions donated a gurney to the Ambulance Corps; in 1993 they donated a more up-to-date model which cost $2,000. The Club also supports the Blood Bank. And their warm-hearted giving extends to the children of Old Tappan who have the Lions Club to thank for providing the amusement rides at Town Day each year.

For the past 38 years, the Lions Club has been a most active and concerned organization, devoting many hours to the benefit of our town.

The Old Tappan Little League was founded in 1954 with the support of Councilwoman Barbara Moeser. Local businesses and organizations sponsored the baseball teams and supplementary funds were raised by the boys themselves. In 1956 the playing field on Irving Street and Charles Place was completed. It included a refreshment stand which is staffed by volunteers, providing additional monetary support for the League. Stone Point Park and the Chestnut Avenue site with its fieldhouse built in 1991 increased the number of playing fields. Although Little League began with boys' baseball, it has expanded to involve the sports of football, soccer and basketball, and presently offers girls the opportunity to play various team sports.

On April 16, 1970 a group of residents met at Trinity Reformed Church to form a senior citizens' club which would provide social opportunity and planned activities for Borough inhabitants aged fifty-five and older. The Golden Age Club of Old Tappan, as it was named, elected Joseph Presta as its first president. It was an immediate success and membership increased from the original 40 persons at the initial gathering to 120 the following year.

Members spent their time listening to guest speakers, playing cards and bingo and enjoying the camaraderie of their peers. One-day visits to such places as Lancaster, PA and Smithville, NJ progressed to more ambitious two and three-day excursions. Currently, a five-day trip is scheduled each year.

1975 1984

OLD TAPPAN

1975 The Old Tappan Library's new building on Russell Avenue was dedicated.

Foodtown supermarket opened at Bi-State Plaza on July 22.

An ordinance was adopted on construction and enclosure of private swimming pools.

1976 Mrs. Ethel Lake sewed a Bicentennial quilt which hangs in the Borough Hall.

Old Tappan celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States with a parade to Stone Point Park where a picnic, band concert and square dancing commemorated the occasion.

1977 The Old Tappan First Aid Corps worked more than 1,900 hours and drove over 4,000 miles.

Tom Demarest completed the dismantling of his home, the T. Baldwin Demarest house on Old Tappan Road, where the Medical Center now stands.

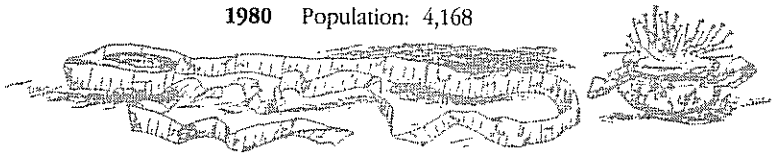
1978 The town honored Mrs. Barbara Moeser on April 9 with the first Old Tappan Hall of Fame Award.

Prentice Hall, later to become Simon & Schuster, a VIACOM Company, opened as Old Tappan's largest commercial enterprise.

1979 On May 20 Frank B. Recktenwald was honored for twenty-five years' service as Borough Clerk.

The NVOT marching band performed in Giants Stadium at half-time for the Giants vs Rams football game.

1980 Population: 4,168



A group of townswomen, under the direction of Wilda LaGrossa, started working on the historic quilt that now hangs in the Old Tappan Library.

1981 Friends of the Old Tappan Library was started with thirty charter members.

The Board of Health conducted a seminar on the proper care and maintenance of septic systems.

1982 The Woman's Club of Old Tappan conducted a weekly story hour for children at the Library.

A Borough ordinance was passed regulating home alarm devices.

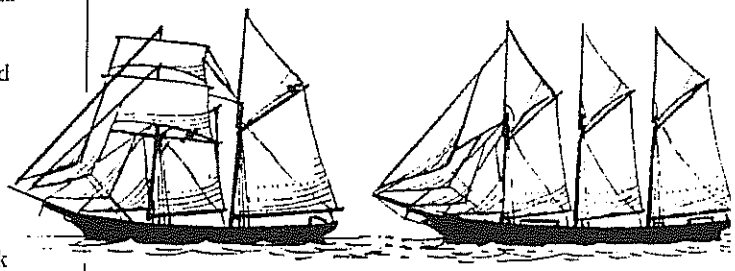
1983 The musical *Damn Yankees* was the All-School Production by NVOT students, May 5 - 7.

The television show M*A*S*H was viewed by 50,000 households, including those in Old Tappan.

1984 Torrential rains in April caused the worst flood of the Hackensack River in seven years.

ELSEWHERE

1975 On July 15 the U.S. and the USSR carried out the first international manned spaceflight when an *Apollo* and a *Soyuz* spacecraft docked in earth orbit.



1976 Operation Sail, a gathering of tall ships from around the world, navigated up the Hudson River on July 4 in celebration of the U.S. Bicentennial.

New Jersey levied its first state income tax.

The spacecraft *Viking I* landed on Mars on July 20.

1977 James (*Jimmy*) Carter was inaugurated as President.

President Carter pardoned some 10,000 Vietnam War draft dodgers.

1978 On May 28 first-class postage was raised to 15¢.

The first six women were accepted into the NASA Space Program on January 16.

1979 A nuclear accident occurred at Three-Mile Island near Harrisburg, PA on March 28.

Ninety people, 63 of whom were Americans, were taken hostage at the American Embassy in Iran on November 3.

1980 Dormant for 123 years, volcanic Mount St. Helens in Washington erupted in May, blowing 1,300 feet off the top of the mountain.

The United States Olympic hockey team won the Gold Medal in an upset victory over the team from the USSR, at Lake Placid, NY.

Former Beatle John Lennon was shot and killed by a deranged fan in New York City on December 8.

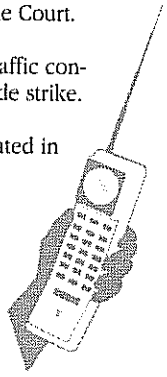
1981 Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President.

Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court.

President Reagan fired all federal air traffic controllers who participated in a nationwide strike.

1982 The Vietnam War Memorial was dedicated in Washington, DC on November 13.

The first permanent artificial heart was implanted in Dr. Barney Clark.



1983 The first cellular phone appeared.

1984 Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman vice presidential candidate, ran with Walter Mondale on the Democratic ticket.

COURTESY OF THE RECORD / PHOTO BY ED HILL

This aerial view clearly shows the Old Tappan Golf Course in 1969, shortly after it opened. The Haring-DeWolf House can be seen on the small piece of property still retained by the DeWolf Family along DeWolf Road. Much of the surrounding area has been developed.

In 1961 the Recreation Commission was established to investigate and develop athletic and recreational facilities for children and adults in Old Tappan. They quickly realized that a golf course would benefit the town and were encouraged by the Mayor and Council to embark on a feasibility study. In October 1966 their findings were presented at a public hearing and a referendum to finance this project was placed on the November ballot. The voters approved a $600,000 bond issue to construct a municipal golf course and clubhouse on 50 acres of farmland owned by Charles De Wolf. In September 1967 title to the De Wolf land was transferred to the town for $375,000. Soon after, construction of a nine-hole golf course was begun. The course was opened and dedicated on July 4, 1969, making Old Tappan the only municipality in New Jersey with its own golf course. The 30' by 50' clubhouse, finished and furnished by volunteer labor and donations from organizations and individuals, opened in March 1971. It has since been enlarged and improved and golf carts have been a welcome addition. A voluntary, five-member Golf Course Commission was established in 1971, which oversees and manages all aspects of the course.

The Golf Course has been enjoyed by members who live in Old Tappan (whose residence entitles them to a reduced fee schedule) and by non-residents (at a higher fee). The $600,000 bond issue was paid off November 1, 1988. In October 1990 the first Annual Mayor's Golf Tournament was held at the Old Tappan Golf Course, sponsored by the Committee for a Drug Free Old Tappan.

Since 1900 the Hackensack Water Company had been acquiring land along the Hackensack River in Old Tappan and southern Rockland County for watershed purposes. In the late fifties when it became necessary to put another reservoir into the system, the low-lying swamp and forested area, the Greenwoods, was chosen. Lands were appropriated, including the lower reaches of the farms on De Wolf Road and the end of Washington Avenue North.

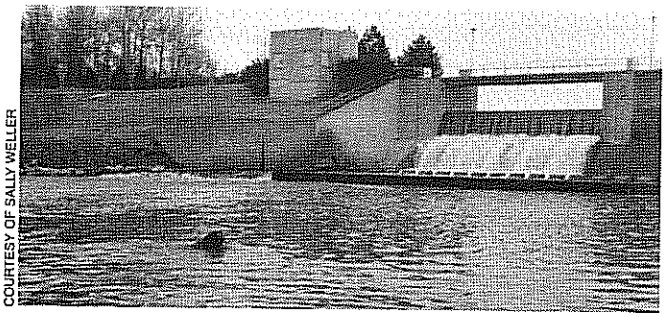
Excavation for the reservoir was accomplished during a period of severe drought which extended over New York and New Jersey for six years. Thousands of cubic yards of earth were dug up and carried away, truckload by truckload, rumbling over the local roads day after day, rattling dishes in cupboards and spewing dirt and dust in their wake.

A fifty-five foot high dam was built across the Hackensack River. Washington Avenue was rerouted to follow the south shore of the reservoir and cross over to Poplar Road in River Vale on a bridge built just above the dam. The engineers projected that with favorable weather the dam would begin holding back the water by the summer of 1967. However, the drought continued and by the spring of 1967 the plain of the reservoir had turned into a meadow of wild flowers and grasses through which the Hackensack River meandered, itself shrunken by the drought. It was not until the fall of 1967 that the drought ended and Reservoir #3 filled with water and became Lake Tappan, the largest reservoir in the Hackensack Water Company system and the last that can be built for it.

In 1975 another drought struck and the water in the reservoir drained away. The floor of the reservoir turned into a cracked hard pan. Governor Byrne landed in a helicopter to inspect it, and a newspaper as far away as Lincoln, Nebraska pictured on its front page the parched surface of a reservoir in Old Tappan, New Jersey!

That drought, too, ended and Lake Tappan filled again. Since then, though its level has fluctuated with different weather patterns, it has provided not only necessary drinking water for the area but a view of sparkling water in the sunshine, white caps in the wind and seagulls in the sky.

The dam built across the Hackensack River which holds the water in Lake Tappan.



COURTESY OF SALLY WELLER

Founded in Tappan, NY in 1694, the Dutch Reformed Church served the Protestant Dutch worshippers from Old Tappan from the time it was part of Orange County. With the arrival of many new families in Old Tappan in the early 1950s, the need was felt for a church in town to accommodate both newcomers and those residents who had been attending the Tappan church.

The Reverend Roscoe Mott Giles, pastor of the Tappan church, endorsed the desire for the formation of an Old Tappan church and worked to form the new congregation. Forty-two members transferred from the Tappan Reformed Church to become charter members of the Trinity Reformed Church.

Construction began in 1955. The last shovelful of gravel to be taken out of Todd's Hill was used in the construction of the church. The building was completed in 1957 with the first service held in April on Palm Sunday. The church was dedicated on June 30, 1957.

The Reverend Walter Felgner was the first minister, who served three years, followed by the Reverend Louis O. Springsteen, who remained as pastor for 33 years and became a well-known figure in town as he took his daily brisk walk along the reservoir road. The Reverend David Cooper assumed the ministry of the congregation in 1993.

Today there are 160 families registered as members of the church. In 1966 "Tuesday School" for all pre-school children was started to ease crowded conditions on Sunday mornings and still continues. Adult and junior choirs and a skillful bell choir flourish. Trinity maintains an active Sunday School, a Vacation Bible School for children and conducts dual services on Sundays.

The parish of St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church was founded in 1952 through the efforts of layman Peter W. Wise. He recognized the need for a local church for the Catholic community in Old Tappan who had been going to Norwood and as far away as Piermont, NY to attend services. Mr. Wise petitioned the Most Reverend James L. McNulty, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Newark, to address this need. The Reverend Thomas Curry was appointed administrator and offered the first mass ever celebrated in Old Tappan on September 21, 1952 at the firehouse. The church was originally named Mission of Our Lady of Refuge. Two years later when the Reverend Michael W. Dancak was its first pastor, the church was renamed the St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church.

On July 5, 1955 the present brick building on Cripplebush Road was purchased. A dedicated volunteer group from the 40 families that then made up the parish worked for four months to repair, refinish and renovate both the exterior and interior of the building.

The church has had four pastors of whom Father Lynch, who died in August of 1993 at age 83, was pastor for the longest time – 20 years. Over 700 families now worship at St. Pius. The church has a well attended religious education program for the children, an active youth group, a fine choir and a hardworking group of church women, The Rosary and Altar Society.

The church celebrated its 40th anniversary throughout 1994 with religious observances and social events.

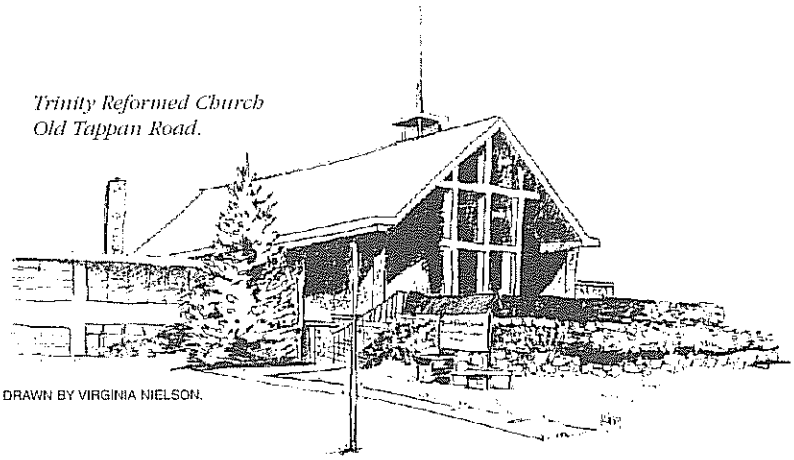
In 1960 a lovely wooded site of more than four acres off Orangeburgh Road was selected for the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. The church began as a congregation in 1958, meeting in various homes including the parsonage where the first service was held. By Easter of 1959 its charter members numbered 92. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new church took place on May 19, 1963 and on June 14, 1964 the dedication of the area's first "church-in-the-round" was held.

The Reverend Otto Jacobsen was the first pastor serving until 1968, followed by four pastors, the last of whom is the present Reverend Bruce Bassett. His arrival coincided with the construction of a new 1,250 square foot, two-story addition to meet the growing and changing needs of the parish.

This Lutheran church has been active with other area churches in various ecumenical activities, of which the Hostels for the Homeless Program is a large and compassionate undertaking. Every Sunday one can hear the glorious voices of the choir and fine organ music resounding from the church.

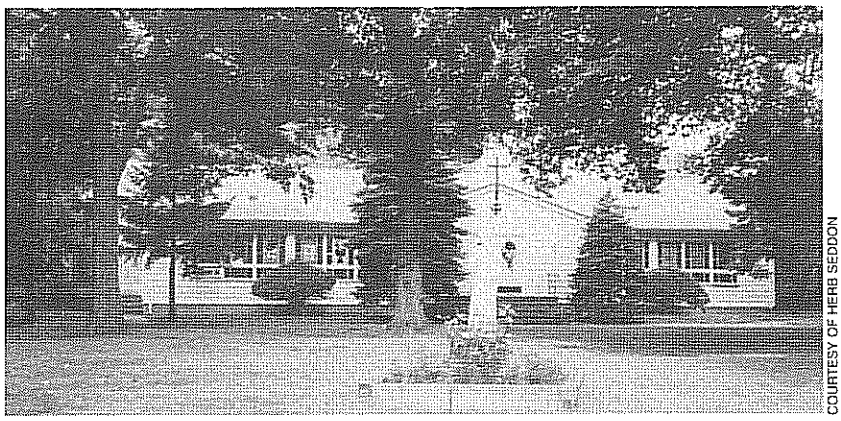
The Samil Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (separate from the new Korean Presbyterian Church of the Palisades) meets in the Prince of Peace building. This was the first Korean congregation to hold its services in Old Tappan.

The latest church to be erected in Old Tappan is the Korean Presbyterian Church of the Palisades on Old Tappan Road. This handsome edifice was built and dedicated for services in 1993. Every Sunday the pastor, Reverend In Young Chung, and his associates conduct three services, one in English and two in Korean, as well as a Sunday School in both Korean and English.



Trinity Reformed Church Old Tappan Road.

DRAWN BY VIRGINIA NIELSON.



COURTESY OF HERB SEDDON

St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church, Cripplebush Road.

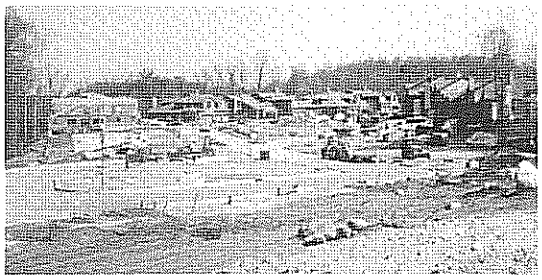
COURTESY OF REV. BRUCE BASSETT

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Orangeburgh Road.

COURTESY OF JO HAIGHT

Korean Presbyterian Church of the Palisades, Old Tappan Road.

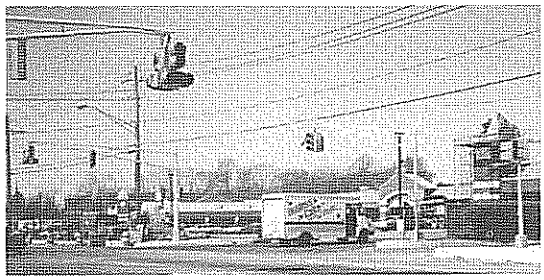
A view of Lakeview Estates during early construction in June 1993, as seen from the back of Bi-State Plaza.



During the seventies and eighties Old Tappan acquired a "midtown" – banks, professional buildings, office buildings, publishing houses, restaurants and increasing shops and services at Bi-State Plaza. This was crowned by the completion of the beautifully designed Borough Hall in 1989.

Home building continued and in 1993 the first townhouse development in Old Tappan, Lakeview Estates, was built off Old Tappan Road by the reservoir. At the other end of Lake Tappan another complex of luxury homes, Water's Edge, was begun. A housing project for Senior Citizens was erected on Russell Avenue next to the Library.

While Bi-State Plaza underwent a massive redesign, emerging as a coordinated whole with a greatly enlarged supermarket surrounded by a good variety of smaller enterprises, residents of Old Tappan saw the red and green of the first traffic light installed at Central Avenue and Old Tappan Road on June 3, 1993. A second light, at Washington Avenue and Old Tappan Road, followed soon after.



June 1, 1993, two days before the first traffic light in Old Tappan went into service. Construction was still ongoing at Bi-State-Plaza as evidenced by the scaffolding surrounding one of the clock towers

1985 1994

OLD TAPPAN

1985 John McKittrick, who had served as Borough Tax Collector/Treasurer for fourteen years, retired.

Re-evaluation of all properties in Old Tappan was conducted.

1986 Miss Esther Herrick, well-known lifelong resident of Old Tappan, died at age 84 on March 9.

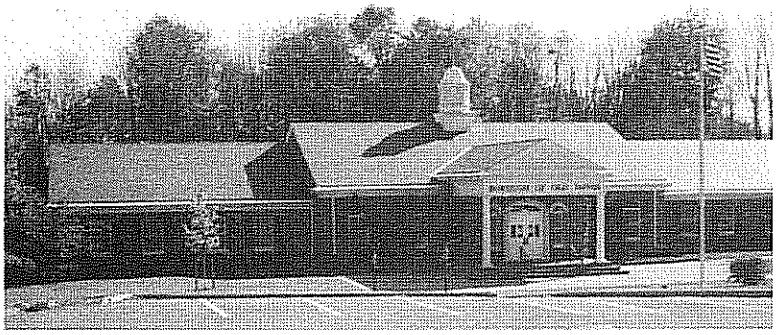
The Old Tappan Board of Health provided free flu shots for Senior Citizens.

1987 Sunden's farm stand was closed and its nursery stock, plant, vegetable and Christmas tree business ceased.

Frank Recktenwald retired as Borough Clerk after 34 years.

1988 The PTA-sponsored *Teen Center* opened October 14.

The town Newsletter was dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Barbara Moeser, a "*public servant who devoted most of her life to the betterment of Old Tappan.*"



COURTESY OF ED GALLAGHER

1989 The new Borough Hall was dedicated on May 29.

1990 Population: 4,354

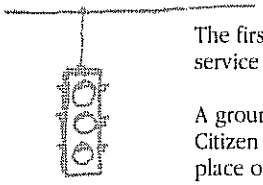
Mayor Gallagher was elected President of the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

1991 Volunteers constructed a field house at the Chestnut Avenue ball field during April and May.

The In-As-Much Branch of the Sunshine Society finally and officially disbanded in August.

1992 A wild Nor'easter hit the New York–New Jersey area on December 11 and brought down trees and power lines in Old Tappan, disrupting electrical power for as much as 23 hours.

1993 The Korean Presbyterian Church of the Palisades opened for Sunday services.

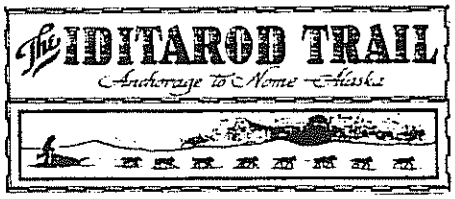


The first traffic light in Old Tappan went into service on June 3.

A ground breaking ceremony for the Senior Citizen housing complex on Russell Avenue took place on September 22.

ELSEWHERE

1985 The United States space shuttle *Discovery* was launched on January 24.



Libby Riddles became the first woman to win the Iditarod dog sled race in Alaska.

1986 The *Challenger* spacecraft exploded seconds after blastoff, killing all seven aboard.

The Statue of Liberty celebrated its 100th birthday.

1987 October 19 was Black Monday at the New York Stock Exchange when the Dow Jones plummeted 508 points, the largest decline since 1914.

1988 George Bush was elected President.

A terrorist bomb caused the explosion and crash of *Flight 103* over Lockerbie, Scotland on December 21, with a loss of 270 lives.

A Cornell graduate student, trying to test the security of computer systems, caused a massive computer virus throughout the United States.

Smoking was banned on domestic airplane flights.

1989 The Berlin Wall came down on November 9.

The tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground in Prince William Sound, AK on March 24, spilling nearly 11 million gallons of oil and devastating area wildlife.

An earthquake in the Oakland-San Francisco area cancelled the third game of the World Series.

Barrier tolls on the Garden State Parkway were raised from 25¢ to 35¢.

1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2.

1991 United States-led Coalition Forces launched Operation Desert Storm against Iraq on January 17; Iraqi forces were defeated on February 28.

1992 William (*Bill*) Clinton was elected President.

The Soviet Union ceased to exist as 15 new nations were formed, including Russia.

A Chorus Line gave its record 6,137th performance.

1993 The World Trade Center Twin Towers in Manhattan were damaged and six people killed in a terrorist bombing on February 26.

Christine Todd Whitman, the first woman Governor of the State of New Jersey, was elected.

PHOTO BY ED MARR

The serene beauty of Kiernan's Pond as it was in February, 1994.

1894 to 1994 The whole world has changed in the last 100 years and Old Tappan is probably typical of many small towns across the nation. But Old Tappan has its own character, its own uniqueness. One hundred years ago it was a small, mostly farming community protected from the inroads of commerce and industry by the absence of any rail or even trolley lines coming through. The population could travel anywhere in the outside world on any of the three railroads nearby and the farmers and their families could find almost everything to satisfy their needs in the surrounding towns.

Old Tappaners were independent and resourceful, self-sufficient and neighborly. Accounts of their daily lives are filled with visiting back and forth to talk, to help out and to play spontaneous games of cards.

It was not until after World War II that real change occurred. Old Tappan bustled with activity as houses were built for the young families hungry for homes of their own in the country. With careful planning the town grew in an orderly fashion and became a flourishing suburb. Though much of its land has been built upon, there are still woods and open spaces and its populace has become conscious of the need to preserve these precious pieces.

For every person living in Old Tappan in 1900 we now have eighteen persons. Yes, our town has changed over the last 100 years. But our new motto states what has not changed:

"OLD TAPPAN: A TRADITION OF SPIRIT AND FRIENDSHIP."

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Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

ABOUT THIS BOOK

In March 1993, as a Centennial project, Jo Haight suggested updating a history of Old Tappan. She enlisted the talents of Sally Weller and together they established the tone and format of this book. They were soon joined by Claire Millard who helped in digesting the volumes of historical material and assembling them into readable copy. Facts were cross-checked with Borough Historian Doug Bissett and Tom Demarest. Tom, who is a former Old Tappan Historian now living in New City, NY, agreed at the outset to advise and also contribute many of his recollections of growing up in Old Tappan. Without their meticulous attention to detail, expert assistance and constant support, this book would never have been the very readable and accurate history that it is. Karolyn Sklar's copy editing and computer typesetting and Edie Ley's copy editing and proofreading skills were invaluable to the completion of the book.

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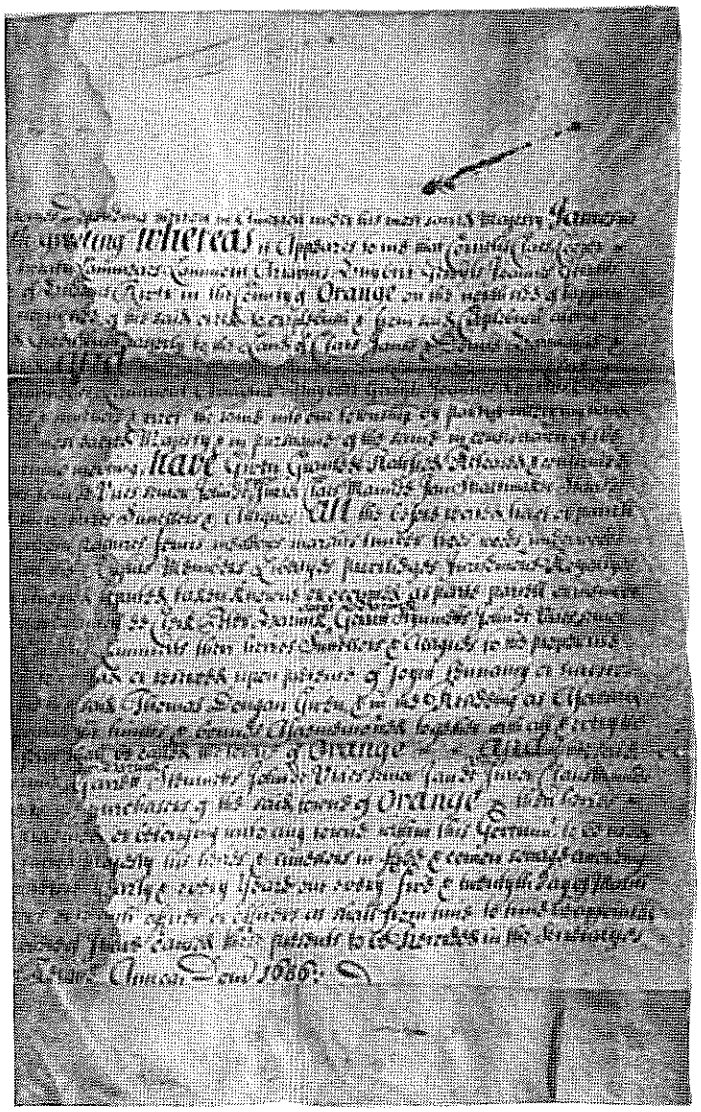

THE TAPPAN PATENT
MARCH 24, 1687

The Tappan patent was granted by Governor Thomas Dongan of New York on March 24, 1687. The name "Tappan patent" refers to both the document shown here and the tract of land itself.

In granting the Tappan patent, Governor Dongan also created the "towne of Orange." Old Tappan was part of Orangetown for 86 years (1687 - 1773). Concurrently, Old Tappan was also part of Orange County, NY. The present New York-New Jersey boundary did not exist during those years.

In England at that time, New Year's Day was celebrated on March 25th. This is why the Tappan patent bears the date of the previous year - 1686. The date of the Tappan patent and the creation of Orangetown, by our modern calendar, was March 24, 1687. The 300th Anniversary of Orangetown, therefore, was March 24, 1987.

Those who settled on the Tappan patent, which included Old Tappan, were simply Dutch farmers. Their goal was to continue the Dutch way of life, in religion, customs and language. This they managed to do for generations. They were pastoral people who preferred a sequestered way of life and had no plans or desire to engage in commercial activities other than marketing farm produce and running an occasional grist mill.

All property titles in present-day Old Tappan, Tappan, Blauvelt, Orangeburg and West Norwood, and most of Harrington Park, Norwood, Northvale and Sparkill, go back to this one document. It is the ultimate title search. The original document shown here, and the original Indian deed reproduced on the front endpaper of this book, are in the New York Public Library.