



The Roost

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IRVINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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IRVINGTON
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The "Richmond Hill" Clock

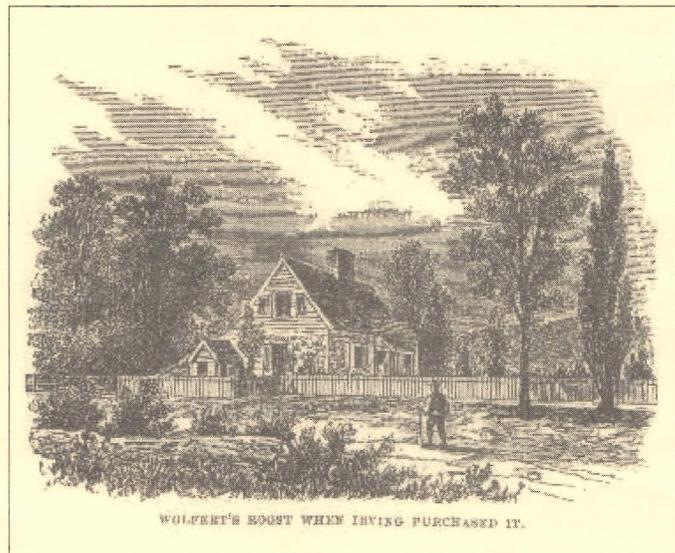
By Lewis B. Shradly

Only a handful of people remember now that Irvington once had two working clock towers. The Town Hall Worthington clock we are still very familiar with. But there was a second and older one on an estate at the southeast corner of Broadway and Harriman Road. The mansion was a large stone house (60 rooms) built in 1887 by Lucien Warner who donated most of the money for the Warner Library in Tarrytown. In 1895 he had installed on his estate a splendid tower clock. The works were weight-driven and a man came once a week to wind it and to perform any required maintenance. To my knowledge, this person also wound the Town Hall clock weekly before it was electrified.

The next owner was Daniel J. Reid, who made a fortune in the tin plating business. He deeded the estate to his wife who, in turn, sold it to William and Grace Mitchell in 1924. The clock was working all this time. In 1930 the Mitchells sold to George Washington Hill, president of American Tobacco Co. In 1938, American Tobacco's board forced Hill to step down. Soon after, he left the estate and put the property up for sale for \$25,000 (20 acres, the mansion, the clock and a caretaker's cottage).

The clock, however, continued to be serviced. One of the fondest memories of my early childhood was listening to its special five-minute chime routine

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WOLFEET'S ROOST WHEN IRVING PURCHASED IT.

The Roost at Sunnyside, Circa 1835

History Revealed!

By Peter Oley

The Irvington Presbyterian Church on North Broadway, designed by James Renwick, Jr., was built 130 years ago in 1869. In one of several renovations the church undertook since then, the Lewis Comfort Tiffany firm was contracted in 1913 to "redecorate" -- as the project was called in a contemporary newspaper.

Eighty-six years later, in the last year of the century, while removing a sheetrock wall in the small room between the sanctuary and the parlor, construction workers found not only old Tiffany windows long hidden, but an old church Bulletin dated Sunday, June 22, 1913 nailed to the frame of a door previously hidden.

The Bulletin reads like a time capsule from that earlier renovation, reminding current Presbyterian worshippers and village residents in general that some things in our local churches never change.

The Reverend Daniel Russel, D.D. was the pastor and his sermon of the day was "Studies in Acts XX. One Heart and One Soul." The organist was Mr. Robert M. Ferns and the soloist was Mr. Reginald Werrenrath. Mr. Albert Adwin Betteridge sang "Evening and Morning" by Spicker and "Zion is Captive" by Parker, with other musical offerings from Capocci, Lemaigre, and Mailly.

The "notes" section of the Bulletin tells of a very active church with a Thursday evening cooking class, a Monday meeting of the Campfire Girls, Children's Day exercises, and the annual congregational meeting followed by a "social" with music and refreshments on the church lawn.

The Ladies Missionary Society met on the porch of the manse and heard a reading by Dr. Russell. An announcement of special interest: "One week from this morning Mr. Booker T. Washington will speak and an offering will be made for his work."

In those more socially and economically stratified times, the church supported an "outreach" program at the Hope Chapel in Pennybridge, with the Rev. William Y. Duncan assisting, and at the Union Chapel in East Irvington (also known as "Dublin"). Miss Alma Dora Dodds, a missionary in China, was also supported by the church.

In 1913 there were four elders of the village Presbyterian church, three deacons, and nine trustees. On the front page of the old Bulletin was scribbled a penciled note referring to one of the trustees: "Will you pass a plate this morning if Mr. Mairs is not here!"

Know Your Street Names: Main Street Area

ASTOR: John Jacob Astor III, one of the richest men in America, lived at "Nuits" in what became known as Ardsley Park. He bought the house and 34 acres from Cyrus Field for \$125,000 on August 31, 1887.

BUCKHOUT: Captain John Buckhout, an early settler, lived to the age of 103 and left the prodigious number of 240 descendants when he died in 1785. His was one of the four original tenant farms that comprised when we know as Irvington today.

COTTENET: Francis Cottenet, a prosperous textile importer, moved from New York City to Irvington in 1853. He took up residence in "Nuits," built for him by the architect Detlef Lienau. The large stone house was named after Cottenet's birthplace, Nuits-St. George, a small town on the Cote-d'Or in France.

Letter From The President

Dear Members:

It is a great pleasure to introduce this premier issue of your Historical Society's Newsletter. We have named it *The Roost* as that was the name of the Society's publication many years ago.

Our thanks go to Kate Buford, Paula Yardley Griffin, and the publishing committee. They put in many hours of volunteer time to create this issue.

We look forward to continuing the tradition of sharing with you the rich history of our Village. Thank you for supporting our endeavors.

Betsy Wilson, President

To Be Continued

The picture on the front cover is from: *The Hudson*, by Benson Lossing, published in 1866.

Cedar Ridge: The Early Years

By Joan Morgenstern Lobdell

Cedar Ridge was named for the numerous cedar trees that covered the ridge of land on the north side of Harriman Road between the Whitehouse estate (now Cedar Hill Apartments), Rutter's woods (now Field-point), and the Lewis property below the Irvington reservoir, on Harriman Road.

Maurice Rice & Sons were the developers of the residential subdivision. Harvey Beaudreault was the builder and The Homeland Company was both the agent and planner. The first homes were built in 1927 and, by 1929, eighteen of them were occupied. Though some were owner-built, the majority were put up by the developers.

The style of the first homes was stucco English Tudor and split-level and they sold for \$13,000 to \$15,000 on lots measuring fifty by one-hundred feet. The original plans called for 150 lots. The Morgenstern house was held for a down payment of only five dollars. With the coming of the Depression, building was halted and some residents lost their homes.

Except for those on a few flat lots, most of the Cedar Ridge houses were built on sloping ground with the result that many early driveways were washed out during heavy rains.

The steep hillsides afforded great winter sledding and creative summer play. There was a small play-

ground for children inside the main entrance, flowing brooks for gathering watercress, and an abundance of wildflowers. Hickory trees yielded bushels of nuts; elderberries and crabapples made delicious jelly.

From Riverview Terrace, the Hudson River could be viewed all the way to the George Washington bridge. Deer, raccoons, rabbits, and groundhogs -- the bane of today's gardeners -- were content to stay in Rutter's woods. The only wildlife problem was snakes. Since "the Ridge" is largely rock, the reptiles had been disturbed by the construction blasting and turned up later in kitchen drains or climbing the basement stairs.

Being a small community, Cedar Ridge soon became a close-knit neighborhood. Holidays were celebrated together. There were teas, dinners, and picnics to welcome newcomers.

Everyone helped everyone. Digging a car out of mud or snow, making meals for those who were ill, car-pooling to the train station and to the schools (there were no buses then) were all common projects.

As the Depression waned in the late 1930s, there was a renewal of building in the subdivision which continued after World War II. Today there are 73 homes and although there are only two of the original residents still living in Cedar Ridge, it remains a friendly and caring section of Irvington. ❧

Richmond Clock, continued

Continued from page 1

at 6 p.m. each day. The sound coming across the then open fields was like a scene from a Thomas Hardy novel!

The estate was now owned by David Schulte who sold it in 1943 to the brothers, Bertram and Gustave Trent, who leased the front 13 acres with the mansion to Philips Laboratories. In mid-August, 1944, the clock malfunctioned. It struck continuously for two hours, then stopped—never to work properly again. In 1952, Philips Labs, now in Briarcliff, bought the 13-acre parcel.

One day, when I was home from college in 1958, I was stunned to see the clock gone and the four sides of the tower stuccoed over. An engineer at Philips told me that several of his colleagues, while attempting to restore the clock, discovered that its supporting timber

was so riddled with termites that it was about to collapse. I never found out what happened to the clock.

In 1985, the mansion and clock tower, both in some disrepair, were demolished to make way for the Richmond Hill townhouses now occupying the site.

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Exhibit Your Collection

If you collect interesting historical items, please call and tell us. Would you be willing to exhibit your collection at one of our meetings?

The Roost

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Wish List

Considering donating an item? Even if you think an item is unimportant, it might fill a hole in the Society's collection. Please feel free to call and ask.

School class photos prior to 1960: Pennybridge, East Irvington, Main Street, Hudson River Country Day School, athletic team photos

Old local maps, Deeds, Old Phone Books

Local advertising items, merchant receipts, signs

Volunteer activities: photos, brochures, newsletters from Fire and Rescue Squad departments, Police, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts

Holidays: Fourth of July, Memorial Day (parade), Christmas, Sunday School picnics

Newspapers/Magazines: Irvington Gazette, magazine issues with history-making headlines, school newspapers, news articles on former Irvington residents

World War I and II memorabilia

Stories/Articles: articles about Irvington school teachers, doctors, shopkeepers

Old postcards: Irvington and surrounding areas

Spring Programs

Additional information and notice of each event will be mailed out to members.

March 12: Members-only lecture, reception, and private tour at Sunnyside.

April 7: Irvington High School's "Who's Who" in Irvington.

May 21: Former fighter pilot Bill Lyons tells of his 64 long-range missions as escort of U.S. bombers on raids over Germany during World War II.

June 4: Odell Tavern Tour.