

Route 9W bridge repairs complete in Sparkill



Staff photo — Al Witt

Refurbished Sparkill bridge has new railings and surfacing.

By WILLIAM DEMAREST

Staff Writer

A \$1.3 million project renovating the towering Sparkill Viaduct on Route 9W in Piermont was completed Thursday, allowing the 58-year-old bridge to open for two-way traffic after being reduced to just one lane more than a year ago.

Construction on bridge, which rises 80 feet above the Sparkill Creek and several small Piermont homes, forced the detour of southbound traffic on Route 9W since August 1983, according to Walter Greening, an engineer with the state Department of Transportation.

Traffic was rerouted down a steep hill to Route 340 and through local streets in Sparkill, where travelers could return to Route 9W on the southern tip of the steel and concrete bridge.

The state-funded project included a new road surface, guardrails, a sidewalk, as well as a 7-foot-high fence stretching

across the 1,400 foot structure on both sides.

The fence is considered one of the key improvements, according to Piermont Mayor William Goswick.

Before the project, owners of homes situated in the shadows of the span complained that vandals were tossing debris off the bridge that broke their windows and cluttered their backyards and swimming pools with junk.

Goswick said that in addition to being a deterrent to vandals, the fence probably would eliminate another serious problem: suicides.

The structure has been the scene of several suicide jumps in the past five years.

"Hopefully, by having the fence pitched toward the center of the bridge, that problem will have been eliminated," the mayor said.

Goswick said the DOT's original plans included

fencing just a few areas of the bridge. But after complaints from the village and lobbying efforts of state Sen. Linda Winikow, D-Spring Valley, the agency agreed to enclose the full length, he said.

During the last year, concrete barriers had divided the roadway, with cars traveling one side and workers on the other. The barriers were carted away Thursday morning and by 3 p.m. crews had painted a new double yellow line from one side to the other.

Greening said the viaduct opened unceremoniously for general traffic in both directions about 4 p.m. He also said that crews plan to complete minor work on the bridge and clean up within the next week.

The construction work was done by Structural Concrete Co. of Montgomery, N.Y., Greening said.

Something fishy in Sparkill Creek

Story and photos
by Arthur R. Aldrich

From its trickling source amidst the rock formations of Clausland Mountain it courses among the rocks and through the concrete channels in Tappan as it dives through the constrictions of the Valentine Avenue bridge before widening into a placid pond in Sparkill as it thunders over the dam in Piermont, picking up a final surge of energy before its confluence with the majestic Hudson, the Sparkill Creek is little more than a wavy line on topographic maps.

Over the years it has served as a source of pure water and fresh fish to Indians and settlers as a handy sewer for polluters

and finally, as a valuable resource to be reclaimed and restored.

"It is Orangetown's own stream - it originates here and ends here," explains Paul Melone of Tappan, one of a growing number of residents dedicated to its preservation and improvement.

Their task hasn't been easy. The stream was once so foul with industrial pollution that nothing would live in it. As polluters were identified and prosecuted marine life began to flow back. But chemical spills, such as acetone one year, and fuel oil inadvertently dumped from a school in Northvale, set back the clean-up process. But revolutionary artifacts have been retrieved from its streambed: each year

anglers cast with worms, lures and flies in hopes of hooking a trout.

Watching the stream has become a way of life for people like Barbara Porta of Tappan, who drafted the town's first wetlands legislation, and Emil DiFrancia of Piermont, who has been designated that village's official stream

watcher. Melone also watches the stream, which flows past his colonial home in Tappan.

What they're watching for is pollution from industries that might be tempted to

OT 4/3/85

discharge chemicals or wastes, and for silt from construction sites. "There is a lot of building going on," Melone says. "I've seen the dirt piled up at the county sewer plant construction site, right next to the Sparkill. One good rain and that dirt will wash right into the creek."

Dirt carried by runoff becomes silt that fills up the low spots in the stream bed, and chokes off the trout.

Fish Important

Fish are important not only to the anglers, but also to the Sparkill activists. Explains Barbara Porta: "If the stream supports aquatic life it earns a higher rating from the state. The higher the rating, the stricter the laws about what can be put into the stream." However, a Catch-22 complicates the problem.

If a stream is so polluted it does not support aquatic life, then

it cannot qualify for the higher rating that would protect it from pollution. Yet, says Mrs. Porta, the former Orangetown town board member who now heads the county's environmental management council, it is the polluted streams that most need protection from the state's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

The state's highest rating, AA, goes to streams that are used as public water supplies.

Lower ratings go to streams in which fish will propagate, and lower ratings still to those waterways that will sustain life, but in which fish will not propagate.

The Sparkill, in its short travel from mountain to river, is rated, in spots, B, C and D, that is, it will support some fish except in a few areas. Each year, the Brookside Fish and Game Protective Association, of Sparkill and Piermont stock the stream with

fingerling trout. Many survive and grow in the waters, but the fish do not propagate. Raising the stream's rating to a B-T (one in which trout will not only survive, but also reproduce) is a major goal of the conservation groups and activists involved with the Sparkill Creek. Melone and Mrs. Porta will soon begin to map the stream, in order to identify the sources of pollution that will prevent it from being rated at a higher classification.

Fishing's Good

While the stream's overall cleanliness is important to anglers like Donald Grippo and Ray Peretin, both of whom were out fishing for trout the day the season opened, April 1, the name of the game was to hook fish. Grippo had caught 64 trout last year, ranging in size from 12-18 inches. On Monday, he had only caught a few, but it didn't matter. "My boss knows not to expect me

he said.

According to Grippo and Peretin, conditions have been improving in the Sparkill for the 12 years they have been fishing. "It's much cleaner now than it had been," Peretin said. "There's still some pollution, but we don't know where it's coming from."

Porta, Melone and others however, want to know where the pollution originates. So does Donald Brenner, the town's executive director of public works. Even though the Sparkill is technically under the aegis of the county drainage agency, Brenner will follow up on reports of pollution.

Meanwhile, from the pond behind the Tappan Library, to the quiet, hidden pools just south of Oak Tree Road, to the wildlife refuge in Piermont and the tidal marshes just beyond, the Sparkill Creek remains one of the town's major water resources.

SPARKILL SCRAPBOOK

'Orphanage kid' blossomed into artist

by Arthur R. Aldrich

Dom Yazzo was a St. Agnes boy - one of the thousands of orphans cared for by the good sisters in Sparkill - raised, nurtured and educated before being turned out into the world at age 18, with nothing but his abilities and ambitions to sustain him. Today he's still living in Orangetown.

He entered the home in 1914 and emerged, at the height (or depth) of the Great Depression. "I did alot of things to stay alive," he says, looking back on the experience from the distance of nearly 60 years. "I'm not proud of some of them." Eventually he landed a job as a dishwasher in New York City at \$6 a week, and managed to stay alive.

While he was at St. Agnes he used to go with some of the other orphanage boys into the heart

of downtown Sparkill, which boasted a soda shop and a silent

film theater. "We watched the movies for nothing in the summer," he recalls. "There was no air conditioning so they had to keep the doors open. Then we'd stand outside and watch." There was no dialogue, but appropriate piano music was provided by a bevy of teenage music students, among them Mary Francisco. He married her in 1935 - the couple celebrated their golden anniversary this year.

"You know what we did for our wedding celebration? We went to the dog races in Orangeburg and won \$11. That was a fortune then. We went up to Gus' training camp for dinner and felt like big shots," Mary adds.

During the Depression Sparkill residents, the Yazzos among

them, patrolled the Erie tracks looking for coal that fell - or was thrown - from the steam locomotives. That coal was often a sole source of heat for many area homes, Yazzo says. But the Erie was stingy with its coal, even the discarded clinkers from engine fireboxes. Anyone the railroad police caught trespassing on the tracks was arrested and prosecuted.

Dom Yazzo kept up with his drawing despite the hard times. Just before he was scheduled to be shipped out as an army inductee, he sketched Sparkill as it looked in 1944 - a drab tank town, with lines of poverty still deeply etched. "It's funny - I put that sketch away and never looked at it again," Yazzo says. After he returned from military service he did artwork for the Journal-News, drawing a

regular cartoon commentary. Then he became a teacher of the handicapped, and worked for BOCES in industrial training. Yazzo also fired off a letter one day to Norman Baker, then editor of the newspaper, suggesting that great sports figures in Rockland be immortalized in a Hall of Fame. The idea began to grow, and although Yazzo was not asked to play a part in its development, the Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame became an institution.

Several weeks ago, *Our Town* ran a photo of downtown Sparkill, taken in the late 1930's. That prompted Yazzo to rummage around in his studio for the long-forgotten sketch. He found it, did an oil painting from it and also came up with some memorabilia of his days as an orphan at St. Agnes so many years ago.

Dom and Mary Yazzo (left) with his view of Tappan in the 1940's. Below, the St. Agnes football team he played on. Leonard Cooke was also a team member.



County's Thanksgiving presele - sell or be forced out

Story and photo
by Arthur R. Aldrich

Thanksgiving at the Vega family table is usually a festive event. Children and grandchildren have gathered for four years at the couple's home on Route 340 to enjoy the holiday, and to enjoy as well the fruits of their own labors.

And they had good reason to be thankful. Owners of a small business in the garment district, the Vega family moved to Orangetown 12 years ago and purchased a house. Six years ago they bought a 1928 Dutch colonial style residence abutting the Rockland County Sewer Treatment Plant. Before moving in they spent two years clearing nearly three and a half overgrown acres, and with their own hands turned a rundown wreck of a building into what Mrs. Vega calls "my dream house." Mrs. Vega is active in the parish of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Tappan, where she teaches confirmation class - in addition to attending classes at Rockland Community College and serving as mother to an extended family of married children.

But this Thanksgiving may be the last time the Vega family gathers in Sparkill. Earlier this year, the Rockland County Sewer District told Mr. and Mrs. Vega that their home and surrounding property was needed for "a recommended buffer zone" around the soon-to-be expanded sewage treatment plant. If they didn't sell out and leave, the district would be forced to condemn the property, the Vegas were told.

And on Monday, they were sent a letter giving them until November 30 to decide - if their decision was not to sell to the county, then condemnation proceedings would begin.

Sayre S. Burns, an employee of the Rockland County Office of Real Property and Tax Delinquency told the Vegas that they might be offered a life tenancy on their property, as an inducement to sell out to the sewer district before condemnation proceedings began. That was unacceptable. "We rebuilt this place with our own hands," Mrs. Vega said. "They're going to force us out, then let us live here as tenants? We don't know why they need our property - they say it's for a 'recommended buffer zone.' Who recommends it? If it's not a requirement, why do they need it?"

Mrs. Vegas says she has been unable to sleep ever since Ms. Burns' first visit on Good Friday. "I keep having this nightmare that people are trying to carry me out of my home. I wake up screaming in the middle of the night."

Meanwhile, the county ordered an appraisal on the Vega property, which straddles a residential and an LO (laboratory-office) zone. The appraiser came up with a figure of \$212,000, less \$6,000 for the cost of a subdivision, which Ms. Burns urged the Vegas to apply for. This is also puzzling. "Why do they want a subdivision if the property is only going to be used for a buffer?" Mr. Vega asks.

A few weeks ago, the sewer district mailed the Vegas a copy of the "life tenancy" policy approved by the sewer commissioners. It appeared at first glance to allow them to remain in their homes for the rest of their lives - until they read the entire document. Under its provisions, the Vegas must: pay all taxes on the property; carry and pay for a \$1 million liability policy; and maintain the property in a manner acceptable to the sewer district.

However, "life tenancy" could be as brief as 18 months, according to the agreement, if the county needs the property for the sewer district or any

other municipal use - in which case the Vegas would be forced to move out. Or, according to the policy, if the Vegas don't maintain the place according to the standards of the executive director of the sewer district, "who shall be the sole judge as to the neatness and orderliness of the premises," then eviction proceedings could be started.

"What the policy says, is that we can stay here for the rest of our lives - or until they want us out," Mrs. Vega says. "That's no life tenancy agreement."

Take the Money and Run?

The Vegas are torn between fear of the sewer district commencing condemnation and the temptation of taking the \$206,000 that has been offered. Some homeowners who have been approached by the county have taken the money gladly - especially those whose homes are in need of repair, as well as those who have been plagued by continuous sewer odor since the plant opened in 1969.

But the Vegas told *Our Town* they don't want the money - they want to remain in their home and enjoy what they worked to obtain. "We have deep roots here," Mrs. Vega explained. "I have two children at home, and children and grandchildren living across the street. My family is here, and my life is here. I'm very involved in Sacred Heart parish, and really don't want to move. The county's life tenancy is a joke."

If it is, the joke is a bitter one. "Mrs. Burns asked me to pick a tree, and they'd save it for me when they cut down all the others," she said, pointing to the wooded area that separates her land from the sewer plant. "I went back there and marked them all. Those are my trees, and I love them all."

For her Monday night RCC psychology class,

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Mrs. Vega was asked to draw a house and to put people in it. She nearly broke down. But she did write about her home.

"This is a beautiful house, built in 1928. This is my house. It was once full of happy faces, contented minds and loving hearts. Now the faces are sad. The contented minds are full of turmoil and pressure, wondering what the future holds for them. The loving hearts have become bitter, very bitter against politicians in Rockland who wish to take away the beauty of their home. Two years were spent fixing, repairing and rebuilding this house inside and out before it was to become home to us. Each wall and ceiling was planned and erected with care and love.

"When the house is destroyed, part of me will die with it. It was my dream, my forever house and home."

Remembering Rockland 'the way it was'

4/15/85

By NANCY CACIOPPO

Staff Writer

As a life-long resident of Sparkill, Betty Koester has a unique perspective on life in Rockland — the way it was. When the Piermont Reformed Church, where she has been a member for 70 years, decided to honor the 83-year-old Rocklander with a recent luncheon, it also seemed a good time to honor nostalgia.

Mrs. Koester (nee Elizabeth Boss) has spent the greater part of this century watching life evolve in and around the little Sparkill meat market that once stood at the corner of Main Street and Ferdon Avenue. It was a business her father acquired at the turn of the century, and one which stayed a family business for 69 years.

She has outlived her older sister, three younger brothers, and two husbands (she is now married to retired banker William Koester).

But she remembers when there were dirt roads and kerosene lamps, when local area children were transported to the Piermont School by horse and wagon, and when few continued their educations beyond the 8th grade.

Mrs. Koester's recollections, together with a history of the family business written by her late brother, John Boss, when he retired in 1968, provide some fascinating details of the family's history and their life in the area.

They recount how their father, Henry Boss, a German immigrant and butcher, his Pennsylvania-born wife, and one-year-old daughter, Margaret ("Marge"), came to Sparkill in 1899 "to take over a near defunct meat and ice business he had recently rented from a man named Zuber."

John recalled how their father "must have fared quite well in those days," because three years later in 1902, he bought the business. With it, he acquired the nearby ice house that occupied the site of an old grist mill owned by a man named Bogart, one of the original settlers of the area.

The family lived in rooms over the meat market, and Mrs. Koester was born there in 1901. John, who was born in 1903, was soon followed by the last two brothers, Bartly in 1906, and Carl in 1907.

John wrote, "My first recollection of the butcher business starts in 1909 when as a boy of six, after my father closed the shop for the day, we proceeded to the barn where my father would kill chickens, pigs, lambs, etc., which he had purchased the preceding Sunday as we rode through the countryside in our fringed-top surrey."

John related that the old ice house stood below the dam of the present Sparkill skating rink, and it was from there they harvested the ice. But in 1912, the family built a new and modern ice house on the site, which became "the largest building in town,"

John added.

"Twenty-five men would work to take the ice

from the ice pond and put it into the ice house, and my mother always fed them afterwards," Mrs. Koester recalled.

She also remembered that the area "wasn't very built up then, and had only a few houses, the Piermont Mill, our meat market and ice business, a grocery store, a coal yard, and several saloons which served the people catching the train for Jersey City."

"In 1912, my father bought his first automobile, a seven-passenger EMF, and shortly afterwards bought a new Studebaker for deliveries," John's history continues. "In 1913, my sister Marge, who was 15 years old, left school to drive it for us. Ice trucks soon followed. And the happy day arrived when there were no more horses to groom and feed, no more stables to clean before going to school. We were going places," John exclaimed.

Around 1915, John wrote, "Bob Maines of Tappan wired our house, and the wonderful nights of light began." The family also had one of the first telephones in the area, he added.

In the same year (1915) Mrs. Koester, then 14 years old, left school to go to work in the family business as a bookkeeper, fruit and vegetable buyer, and meat cutter. As children, she said, "we didn't have much play. We had to work all our lives."

John recalled how his brother Bartly, "from the time he was 14, worked with us as a mechanic and truck driver," while his brother Carl "was a man at 15, driving trucks and generally taking care of the ice business which had grown considerably," John wrote. "We had four trucks on the road those summers, selling about 20 to 30 tons of ice per day," he added.

The First World War came and went. "We lost a few customers, because my father came from Germany. It worried me some, but not my Dad — he was a proud man," recalled John.

During the Depression, the family sold pork chops at two pounds for 25 cents, "and few had the money to buy them," he added. Back in 1904, a sampling of the Boss Meat Market prices ranged from a 7-lb. rib roast for \$1.26, to a 2 3/4-lb. sirloin steak which went for 55 cents, to an 8-lb. roast beef which sold for \$1.44.

In the 1950s, Mrs. Koester recalled, the family's customers included the late actress Katharine Cornell and TV broadcaster Mike Wallace, both of whom lived in nearby Palisades.

But more recent reminiscences have a way of bringing you up to date. Mrs. Koester looked once again at another nostalgic photograph of the Henry Boss Meat Market and a sign on the corner that once pointed the way "To the Yonkers Ferry" (at Alpine, N.J.).

She agreed she'd seen some differences in the area over her lifetime. "But Sparkill doesn't really seem to change," she added.



Henry Boss, proprietor, and Cliff Davis in front of the Henry Boss Meat Market, Sparkill, circa 1904.



Betty Koester recently was honored by the Piermont Reformed Church.

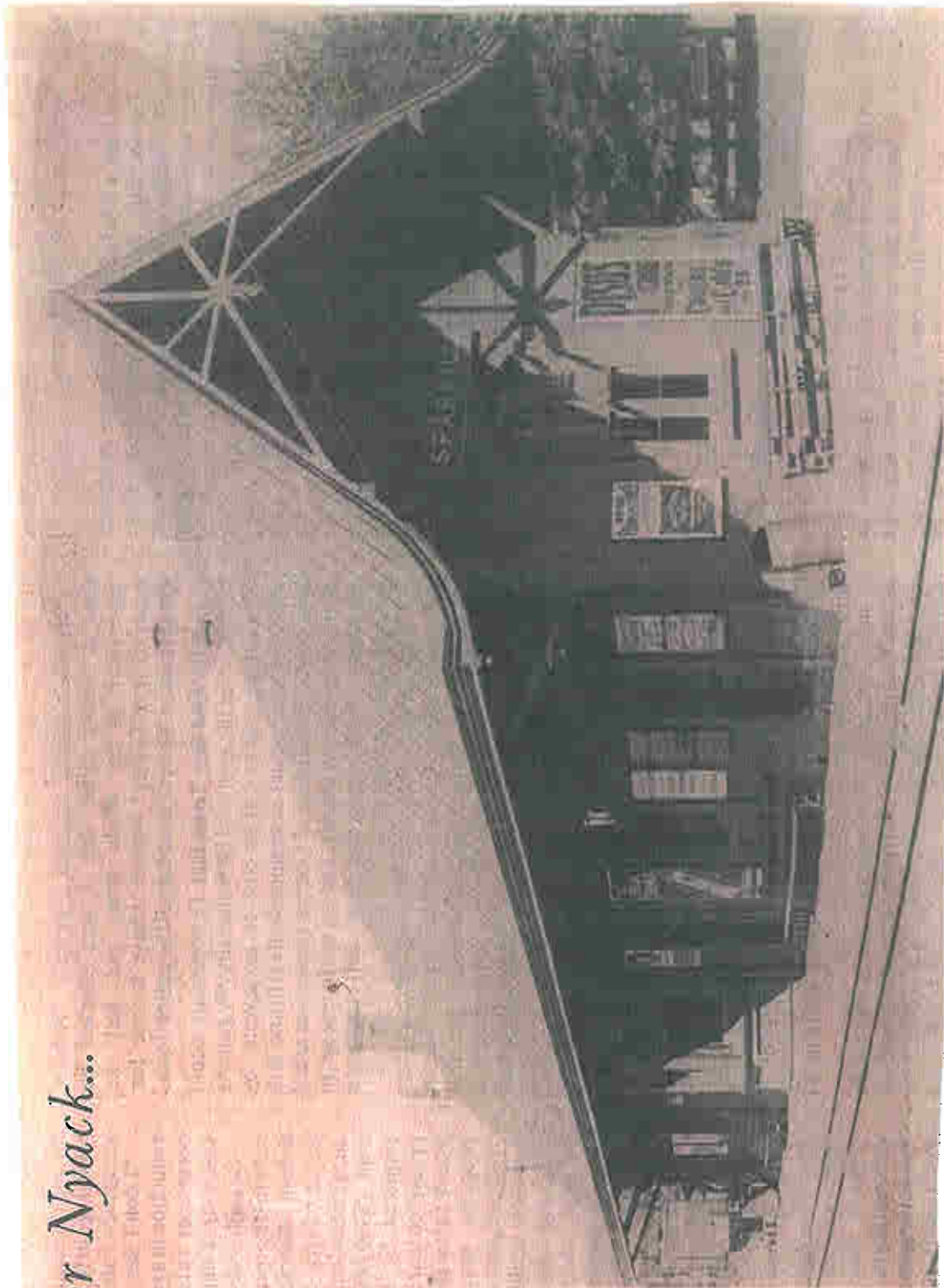


Elizabeth Boss as a first-time bride in 1925.

Special photo — Brian Yarbrough

All aboard for Nyack...

This was the Sparkill station on the Erie Nyack branch, sometime after the turn of the century. The station, which stood in the center of the hamlet, was demolished after passenger service to Nyack ceased in the 1960's. Only remaining railroad structure is the Piermont station, now privately owned and used as a residence. The hamlet of Sparkill was so named in 1870, after the creek which runs through the hamlet to its confluence with the Hudson River. Prior to that the hamlet had been called Upper Piermont, and, even earlier, Blanch's Crossing. The Erie tracks are used only for freight - junction with the Piermont Branch, which is now nearly abandoned, is north west of the station.



Down Memory Lane

There's nary a car to be seen in this bucolic view of Sparkill around the turn of the century. This view is looking north, over the Erie's Piermont Branch tracks. Road at left, known as the State Road, is now Route 304. What was to become Route 9-W is beyond the hill. Sparkill was an important switching center on the Erie, because the Piermont and Nyack branches intersected here. Both lines were busy with local traffic.



Margaret Kopf

Margaret "Mom" Kopf of Sparkill, the longtime owner of one of Rockland's oldest restaurants, the Mountain House Tavern, died Tuesday at the Elmwood Manor Nursing Home in Nanuet. She was 93.

Mrs. Kopf and her late husband, Henry, operated the family-style restaurant on Route 340 since 1929, when they purchased it at the height of the depression and prohibition.

Two of their sons, Edward, of Sparkill, and Otto, a Piermont resident, now manage the restaurant.

"Father ran the business end of it and mother ran the kitchen. In the early days it was known for its good sandwiches. Later on it became a real restaurant," said Edward. "It was never a fancy place, but it was always home."

Until about five years ago, Mrs. Kopf continued to run the restaurant with her two sons.

"She would have her hand in the cooking, dishwashing and setting tables," Edward said.

Her involvement with the restaurant later diminished, but Mrs. Kopf took part in the restaurant's business decisions until a year ago, Edward said.

While the restaurant had a varied menu, a popular favorite was its Sauerbraten with red cabbage and dumplings "that we marinate for at least four days," Mrs. Kopf told The Journal-News in 1976.

"Hard work and their love of people," according to Edward, kept the restaurant running for more than 50 years. "They would work 12 to 14 hours a day and then get up to greet the people in the morning," he said.

The restaurant's bar opened by 8 a.m., in time for the change of



Margaret 'Mom' Kopf

shifts at the old Piermont paper-mills, Edward recalled.

"There were not many restaurants around during prohibition and the depression. People didn't eat out as much then. And only a few are still run by the same family," Edward said.

Mrs. Kopf was born in Germany to Otto and Regina (Meyer) Lipinsky on Nov. 7, 1890. She came to this country in 1904, settling in New York City. She moved to Sparkill with her husband in 1929.

The Kopfs were married for 64 years. Mr. Kopf died in August 1976.

In addition to Edward and Otto, Mrs. Kopf is survived by a third son, Henry C. of Holiday, Fla.; a brother, Adolf Lipinsky, of Salisbury Mills, N.Y.; a sister, Guste Van Kampen, of Whiting, N.J.; 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

A funeral service is scheduled for 11 a.m. Friday at the Moritz Funeral Home, 290 Route 303, Tappan, with burial to follow in Rockland Cemetery.

Calling hours at the funeral home are scheduled for 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. today.

Mountain House remembered

by Erwin Single

News of the demise of the legendary "Mom" Kopf late in October spread rapidly throughout the Tappan-Spkill area.

If ever South Orangetown had an inn where the regulars were made to feel like part of the family it was the Kopf-owned Mountain House in the heart of Sparkill. Operated by Mom and Pop Kopf and succeeding generations, it dates back to the early days of Prohibition when the Kopfs first moved here after the unpopular Volstead Act padlocked saloons and dried up the flow of alcoholic beverages throughout America.

Besides raising a goodsize family, the Kopfs became celebrities in the area. Everytime mom was discharged from the hospital she would head straight for the Mountain House kitchen to resume her restaurant operation. In that kitchen she loved to make food that reflected her North German upbringing - both Mom and Pop Kopf came from an attractive village there.

Big Screen Attractions

When television became popular in the late 1940's and early 1950's innkeepers used the sporting broadcasts to increase their trade. Sons Otto and Eppy, the second generation Kopfs went a step further: instead of one TV set, they bought two, and placed one on each end of the bar. It proved an immediate hit. Where else could you watch a doubleheader - the Giants at the old Polo Grounds and the Dodgers at Ebbets Field, both at the same time!

Most enthusiastic of the fans were Mom and Pop Kopf themselves. Soon they had a favorite table reserved, which gave them a view of both sets at once. But they only allowed themselves the luxury of using it only after Mom Kopf had provided a flock of hot meals and sandwiches from the kitchen, and Pop Kopf had put in a full shift of serving clients from behind the bar.

Pop was denied the privilege of becoming a great-grandfather; he died before granddaughter Nancy (of the Eppy and Minno side of the family) produced a pair of twins. Mom was in her early 90's, and a nursing home resident, and would not have been able to prepare the traditional Thanksgiving family meal.

Then again, the holidays would have lacked the significance it would have had if Pop had been around to share them. He died while on his last visit to Germany, although his remains were brought back to Sparkill - his true home ever since he crossed the Atlantic to the New World so many years

11/28/84

Town will pay \$1.1 million for Sparkill sewer pump

by Robert Knight

Orangetown is so anxious to attract IBM to a site in Palisades that the Town Board has agreed to expand the Sparkill sewage pump station to accommodate the industrial giant at a cost of approximately \$1.1 million, according to Supervisor Joseph Colello.

IBM intends to construct a multi-million training and conference center on the 102-acre site, between Routes 9W and 340, and between the Rockland Country Club and Oak Tree Road.

The land had been zoned for only laboratory and office use, but the Town Board has already unanimously voted to amend its ordinances to permit such conference centers in the previously restricted LO zones. IBM, which has an option to purchase the site which it has not yet exercised, has said it hopes to break ground for the new facility this summer, and occupy the completed center by 1986.

Among the technical requirements which IBM must still meet before it can build the facility, however, are site plan approval from Orangetown, and assurances that sewer service will be available.

The sewers had been a source of controversy, since company and town officials acknowledged early in the application process that the existing sewers serving the area were far from adequate, and could not possibly accomodate the huge conference center without a major expansion.

Although not legally responsible for what the town must provide, IBM agreed to contribute 10 percent of the cost of the expansion. At the time, it was estimated it would cost about \$850,000, and IBM therefore offered to donate \$85,000 to the town.

According to Donald Brenner, executive director of Orangetown's Department of Public Works, this estimate has now risen to \$1.1 million, however. IBM's contribution is expected to remain at the original amount.

Brenner says the Sparkill pumping station needed the improvements even without the arrival of IBM, which merely brought an already crucial situation to a crisis.

The station was built in 1963, and pumps millions of gallons of sewage daily from the communities of Piermont, Palisades, Sparkill and Tappan to the town's sewer treatment plant in Orangeburg.

According to Brenner, the station is far over its capacity already, resulting in occasional backups such as ones which occurred last year, lifting manhole covers in Piermont and causing raw sewage to flow along the streets there.

It would have been Orangetown's responsibility to rebuild the pump station even without IBM's additional discharge into the underdesigned system, Brenner says, adding that working with the company now provides the ideal incentive for the town to start work on the project.

At his urging, the Town Board voted unanimously last week at a workshop meeting to

proceed with the expansion at the \$1.1 million price tag.

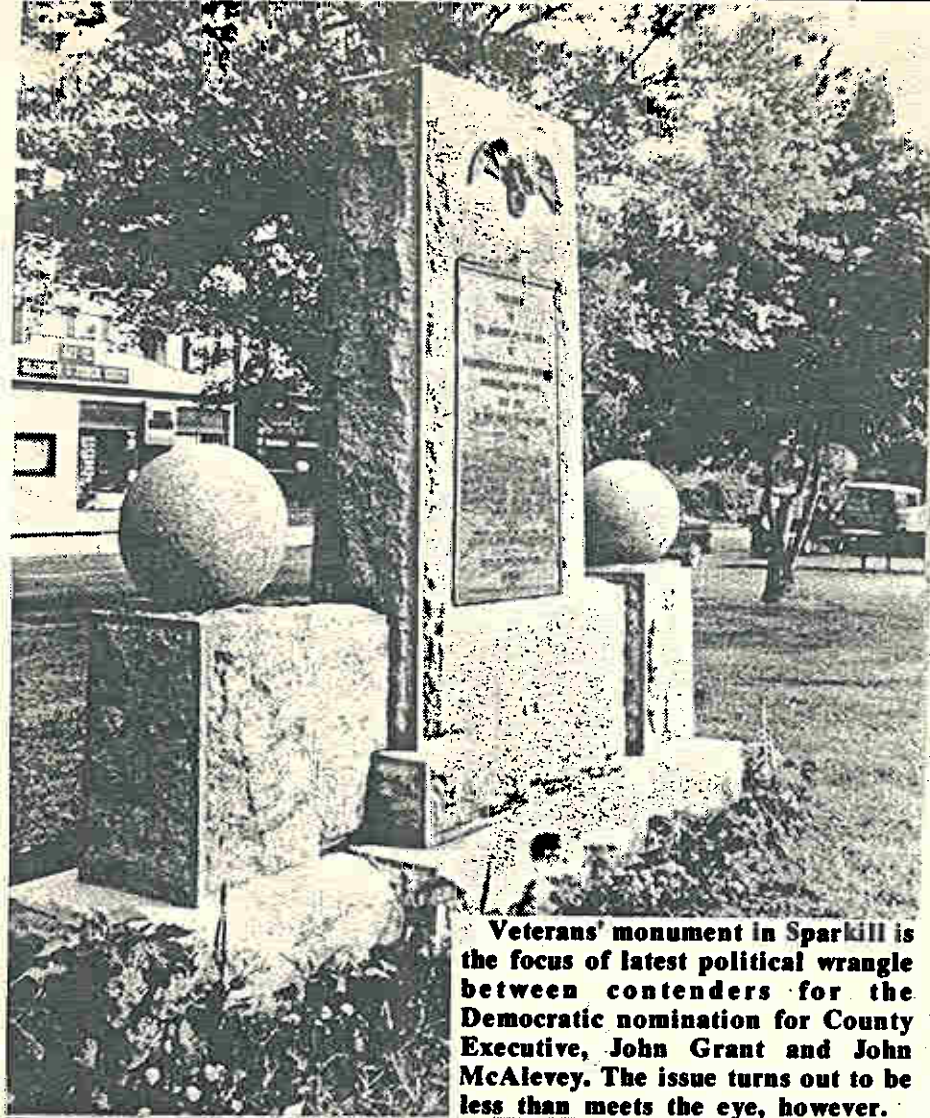
Most of the design work for the expansion will be done internally, within the town's Department of Public Works, and according to Brenner this will save the town at least \$75,000 which it would otherwise have had to spend to hire a professional outside planning and consulting firm.

Under the current plan, the town will only hire one additional engineer to work on the project, in addition to the two already on the DPW staff, including Brenner and town engineer Al Rossi.

Brenner estimates it will take between one year and 18 months to complete the expansion project on the pump station, which is located on New and William Streets in Sparkill. If that schedule is met, it will be finished in plenty of time for IBM to hook into it before their conference center is complete, Brenner says.

The IBM training and conference center will employ several hundred persons, many local residents, and will be used to train company officials in a resort-like setting, housing as many as 350 at a time. The center will not be open to the public, although its hotel, restaurant and meeting facilities will resemble a college campus, with acres of landscaped grounds which will include athletic facilities such as a swimming pool, tennis courts and similar amenities for the executives to use evenings and weekends during their training.

When completed, the IBM complex is expected to be third only to Lederle Laboratories and Blue Hill, both in Pearl River, as commercial tax ratables in Orangetown and Rockland County. According to IBM, the center will be one of two, the other being in California, for the worldwide training of its own officials, and customers in the use of its machines and equipment.



Veterans' monument in Sparkill is the focus of latest political wrangle between contenders for the Democratic nomination for County Executive, John Grant and John McAlevey. The issue turns out to be less than meets the eye, however.

Grant's charges leave McAlevey underwhelmed

Story and photos
by Arthur R. Aldrich

Orangetown has become a battleground for two Democratic county executive candidates. John Grant and John McAlevey, who are facing each other in their party's primary. But the issue they're fighting over leave many observers underwhelmed.

According to Grant, Metro North, which is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities rail operation, is trying to strongarm Orangetown into buying a one-third acre parcel of property which provides them access to a veterans memorial and a park. Coincidentally, McAlevey, is Rockland's member of the MTA. Grant blames McAlevey for the strong-arm tactics.

When reached by *Our Town* on Monday, Grant said he understood that the property in question was the park and war memorial across from the Pearl River station, but added quickly that he "would have to check and see where it was".

McAlevey didn't hedge. "The property that he (Grant) is referring to

is in Sparkill, and it belongs to Conrail. The MTA has nothing to do with it. Someone on his staff must have heard there was a problem, and tried to blame me for it."

The Conrail lot lies between the old Piermont Branch tracks of the Erie Railroad and the plaza where an ornate, cut-stone railroad station stood. Orangetown purchased two thirds of the acre parcel from a private owner last year in order to preserve the hamlet green and the veterans monuments where Memorial Day services are held each year. Recently, according to David Stuart, Orangetown's director of finance, Conrail sent a letter offering the remaining one third acre to the town, at \$24,000 adding that if the town didn't buy it, the railroad corporation would blockade the road running through the parcel, thus denying Orangetown access to the monuments and the park. The town paid reportedly \$15,000 for two third of the parcels.

But the Conrail threat is empty, Stuart told *Our Town*. "They couldn't blockade the park if they wanted to,"

and Conrail owe Orangetown on that parcel.

McAlevey told *Our Town* that Grant's allegations are baseless. "The only property the MTA owns in Rockland is the railroad right-of-way between Spring Valley and Suffern," he said. "Conrail owns all the rest, and we have nothing to do with Conrail". McAlevey also suggested that Grant and his staff "should read the stuff they're putting out to avoid looking ridiculous". And shortly after

he said. "There's access from the other said. And the town has plowed and maintained that road - it's become a public right away. If Conrail wanted to blockade it, they'd have to station 24-hour guards there - people would just tear down the barricades and use it anyway. And the town would take Conrail to court over something like that." But just in case, Stewart is checking into the total amount of back taxes that the bankrupt Erie Railroad

Our Town began questioning the story, Heather Duke, Grant's press contact person acknowledged that it contained serious factual errors.

McAlevey said he was happy to

share responsibility for MTA's accomplishments in Orangetown, which include rebuilding the Pearl River Station, and construction of high level platforms.

Station plaza, memorial available—if the price is right

Orangetown may get to buy the former Erie-Lackawanna plaza in Sparkill, but for now, both the asking price and the owner of the parcel remain a mystery.

Although the supervisor was unwilling to discuss the questions raised at the workshop session, *Our Town* learned from other sources that the asking price of the property is \$16,000, and that it has been appraised at \$25,000. But development is unlikely since variances would be required.

The green rectangle used to serve as the gateway to the old Erie-Lackawanna station in Sparkill, at one time, a main junction where trains bound for Suffern, Nanuet, Nyack and Hoboken met. Passengers could either travel south to connecting ferries at Hoboken, west to Nanuet or Suffern, or north to Nyack. At Nanuet, passengers could transfer to trains for New City or Haverstraw. At Spring Valley, to trains for Pomona, and at Suffern, to the crack Erie "Road of Anthracite" mainline name trains.

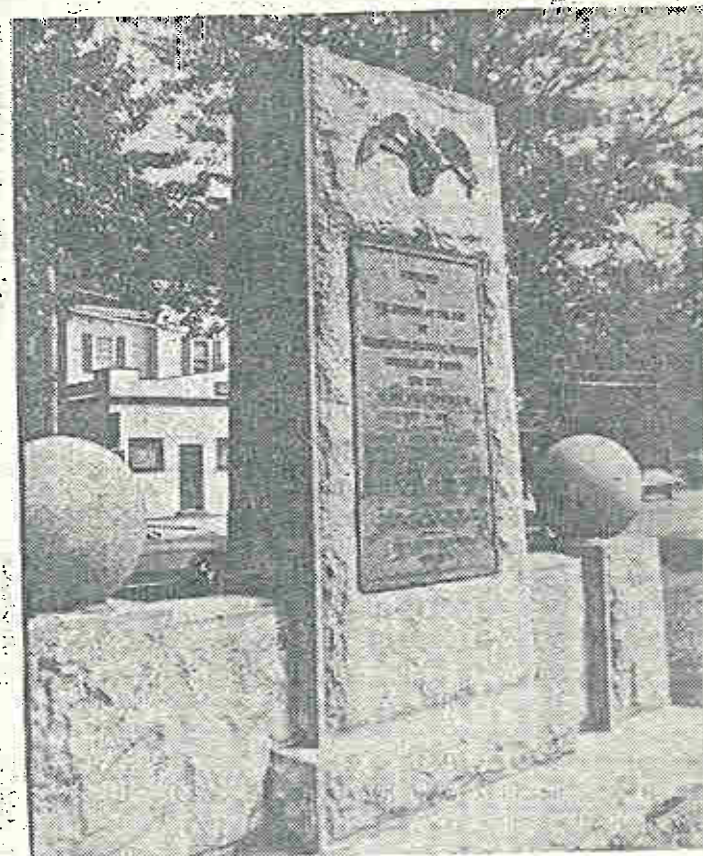
But the elegant, cut-stone station was torn down after the Erie Lackawanna Railway went bankrupt.

The Piermont branch, which it served, abandoned the passenger service during the Depression, severing the connection with Nanuet and Suffern. The Nyack spur was abandoned in the 1950's.

The plaza, used as a park and hamlet green by Sparkill residents, contains memorials to the Orangetown's World War I veterans. That stone memorial, flanked by two World War I vintage artillery pieces, is the destination of Sparkill American Legion Post's Memorial Day and Veteran's Day parades.

Possible purchase of the plaza was discussed by the Orangetown Town Board at a workshop session last week. The discussion will continue next week, according to town supervisor Joseph V. Colello. "One section of the property is occupied by monuments to Orangetown residents who served in the United States Armed services," Colello told *Our Town*. "And the square is the center of the community's activities. It is the place where friends and neighbors meet. Its loss to the community would be immeasurable and tragic."

Colello and the town board have authorized town attorney Morton Lieb to negotiate with the as yet unnamed owner of the square, and try to reach an as-yet-undetermined price.



War monuments occupy the center of the former Piermont station plaza.

Vegas safe at home despite county's threats

by Arthur R. Aldrich

There'll be no more construction workers or sewer district agents snooping around Ernest and Dolores Vega's home in Sparkill. And there'll be no eviction, seizure and condemnation of the property. The sewer district has been stopped in its efforts to force the Vega family out of its home on Route 340, to provide what the district called "a buffer zone" around the newly-expanded treatment plant.

The order stopping the county from summarily ousting the Vegas was signed May 1 by Supreme Court Justice Timothy J. Sullivan. It comes as a relief to Mrs. Vega, who told *Our*

Town that she and her family had been harrassed by the sewer district for months. "They were coming on our property and putting down stakes, spray painting lines, and getting ready to reroute the Sparkill Creek," she told *Our Town*. "We regarded it as a form of harrassment."

Acquisition agents from the county had offered the Vegas \$250,000 for the 1920's vintage colonial home and adjoining three-acre parcel - an offer which the family refused because, Mrs. Vega said, she had put down roots in Sparkill, was active in Our Lady of Sacred Heart, and valued those community roots more than money.

For the past two years, the sewer district has alternately cajoled,

threatened and harrassed the Vegas in an attempt to get them out. They also offered a "lifetime tenancy agreement" which, when analysed by the Vegas and their attorney, Peter W. Sluys, turned out to offer the family little except a cash payment and the right to be evicted without notice in the event the

sewer district decided it needed the property.

In January, the sewer district served condemnation notice on the Vegas, claiming it had the right to summarily evict them. However, judge Sullivan

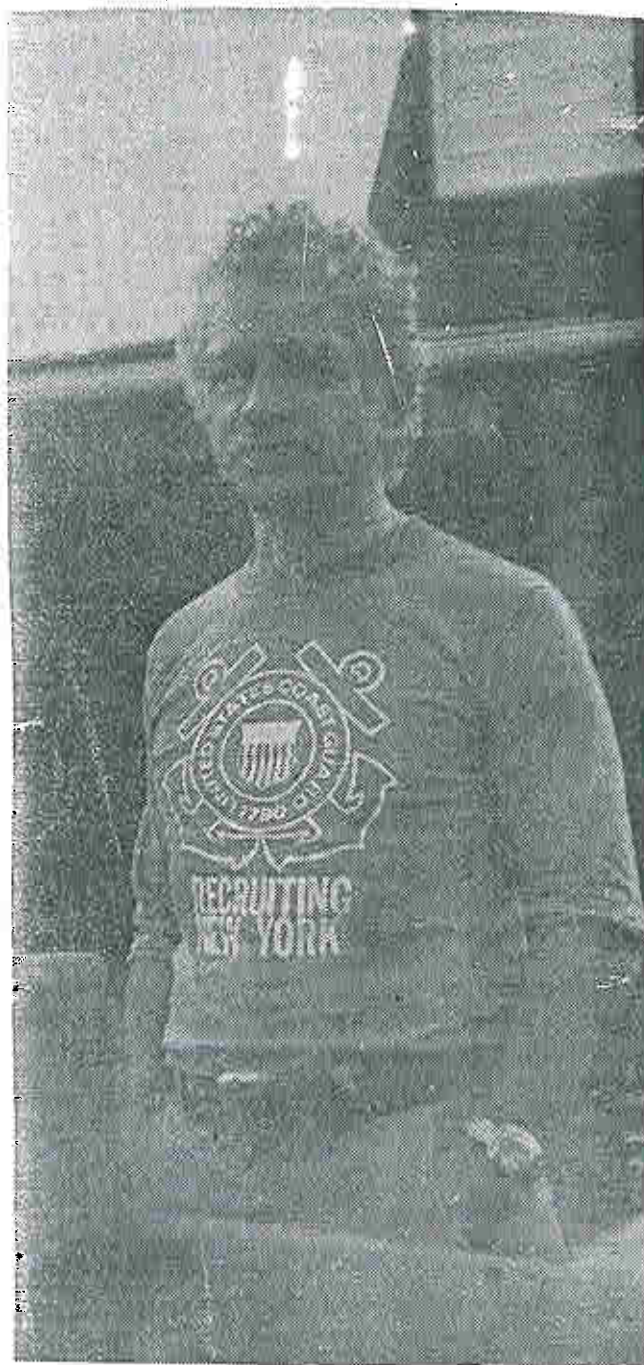
"We knew they weren't going about it the right way," Mrs. Vega told *Our Town*. "No matter what they say, they can't just come in here and act as though they already owned our property. This isn't Russia."

The Vegas, who had been fearful of being evicted from their home at the Christmas holiday, now will be able to stay while the issues are being decided in court. Meanwhile, behind them and around them, the new sewer plant is taking shape - a plant that will be visible year round, and one which could inundate them and their neighbors with sewer odor, if design or operational standards are not met.

Our Town, May 22, 1985.

Tappantown  Historical Society

Box 71, Tappan, New York, 10983



Ernest Vega contemplates the future outside his Sparkill home. County Sewer District threatens to condemn the Vega property for "recommended buffer." Despite the offer of \$206,000, neither Vega nor his wife Delores wish to pull up their roots and move.

3/6/85 Our Town



NOW AND THEN...

Station Square in Sparkill looks essentially the same today as it did 50 years ago, when the earlier photo, above, was taken. The building to the left was and is a private house, and the small store in the center still sells groceries a half-century later.

In the original picture, it housed the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, more familiarly called A and P, which graced the downtown of virtually every village and hamlet in Rockland before the advent of modern supermarkets. While the A and P is long gone from Sparkill, the same goods are handled today by its replacement, Gallucci's. The "Soda" sign hanging out front was transferred from the larger building on the right in the earlier photo, and indicates that the store dispenses Dolly Madison Ice Cream.

The two-story stucco building also housed the Town of Orangetown's Police Department and town justice court, as evidenced by the black police car parked out front, and the sign in the window. Both remained

at this location until the new Town Hall was opened in Orangeburg in 1962.

The corner store then, as now, houses the Sparkill Post Office. The 1930's vintage photo is from the collection of

Robert Knight, while the current view is from the collection of the Orangetown Bicentennial Committee, which is recording the town as it appeared during the bicentennial era.





Sister Ursula Joyce at her desk. She is the executive director of the community and the driving force in establishing Thorpe Village.



Sister Mary Kiernan, program director of senior citizen's activities, gives a lesson on folk dancing to residents of Thorpe Village in the Convent's Nutrition Center.

ROLE CHANGES IN CENTURY...

Dominicans quietly mark 100th anniversary

by JoAnn Di Gennaro

They began their work in 1876 with caring for orphans in a building on Manhattan's east side. Since then, the members of the Dominican Community have moved to Sparkill and expanded their services to include such things as senior citizen housing, St. Thomas Aquinas College, and an art gallery. They celebrate their 100th year anniversary in Rockland County on June 19 and look toward the future in accomplishing additional community services.

Their first convent was set up on E. 63rd Street in Manhattan by Madeline Thorpe in 1876. The Holy Rosary

Convent, as it was called, was one building that was set up to provide shelter for homeless women and their children at a time when the church was the only institution to handle such social services. The Convent made its move to Rockland County and expanded its facilities by purchasing the Johnson Estate in Sparkill to help accommodate the growing number of orphans that had come under their care.

As times changed, the Sisters found there was a great need for other social services such as education and housing, and a lesser need for large childcare institutions since children were being placed in foster or group

homes. As a result, the Sisters concentrated their attention on newer projects, such as developing St. Thomas Aquinas College in 1952 and establishing Thorpe Village, a senior citizen housing community in 1974.

The orphan agency finally closed in 1978 and according to Sister Ursula Joyce, "The different programs continued simultaneously until there was no need for an orphan agency anymore."

St. Thomas Aquinas College was originally designed as a three-year college for teaching sisters, but was soon expanded in the 1960's to a four-year independent, private college that

is open to both men and women students. It has grown from 200 students in 1952 to over 3,000 students today.

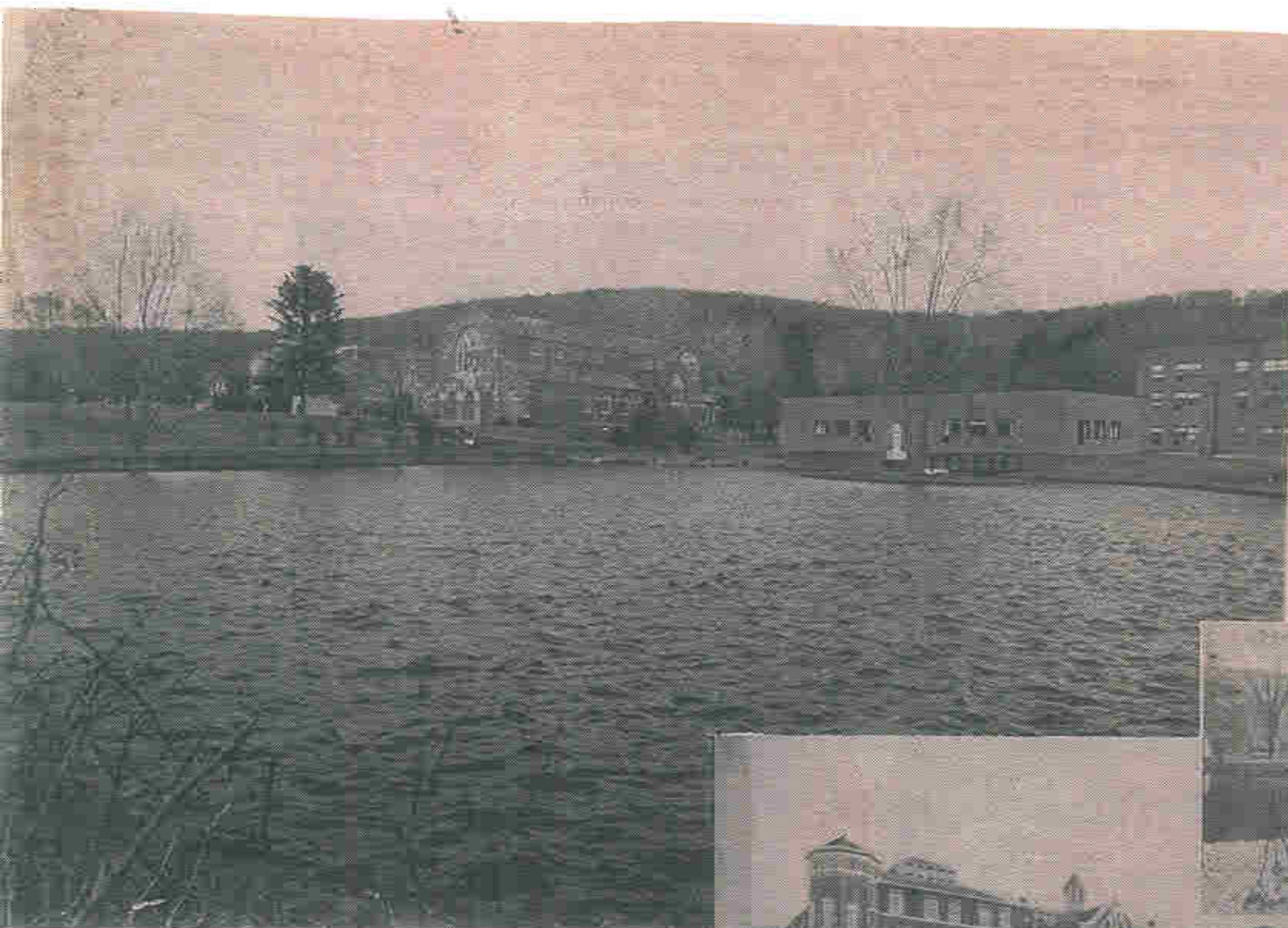
"We're hoping to give the sense that we're open to meeting the needs of people," says Sister Joyce in response to the reasons for the expansion of their community services. "There is more emphasis now on service. The way we'll feel closer to God is in our service to other people."

The Sisters' community service has gone beyond childcare and education and had branched out to such things as housing, nursing, and drug programs.

Please turn to Page 15

The lake and the land of the Dominican community today. St. Agnes Chapel stands in the center and sections of Thorpe Village can be seen on the right.

St. Agnes Convent as it stood in 1905. This building was used as an orphanage until 1978 when the agency closed. It was later destroyed to make room for Thorpe Village. The picture on the upper right hand corner shows the lake and land that were located near the St. Agnes Convent.



Dominicans

Continued from Page 2

One project, Thorpe Village, was first considered in 1970 when the Dominican Community assessed its large amount of property and the possible uses for it. The Sisters found that one of the greatest needs in Rockland was for senior citizen housing, and in 1976 began a four-year struggle to obtain town approvals and funding to start the construction of 200 units of independent housing for senior citizens.

Thorpe Village was completed in August of 1981 and is open to any person who is 62 years of age or older. According to Sister Susan Dunn, the housing is totally independent. Rent is based on a percentage of income and each resident manages for himself, although the sisters do take part in setting up recreational programs such as parties and dances. There is a long waiting list for Thorpe apartments.

In contrast to the housing and educational services of the Dominican Sisters is the art gallery that they established in 1976, which can be found in the basement of the Dominican Convent House. The convent, which is called the Mother House by the sisters, is a large

building that contains rooms and an infirmary for retired sisters, a chapel, and large dining and meeting rooms that are open to public use. Such services as "Meals on Wheels" and the "Thorpe Senior Center," which provides programs and meals for all senior citizens can also be found in the Mother House.

According to Sister Ursula, the Gallery was started with the idea that the arts are important in developing the human spirit. The Gallery, which contains the largest exhibit space in the county, features works from professional artists, as well as book exhibits and musical and dance performances. Shows for the gallery vary and usually last from one to two months. Currently being presented is a show entitled "Spannings" which depicts the beginning, middle, and latest works of twelve Rockland County artists.

With an eye to the future and the next 100 years, the Sisters are hoping to continue and expand on their services to the community. They are now breaking ground on their land for the John A. Murphy Group Home which will be sponsored by Camp Venture and house 12 to 14 retarded adults.

Sister Joyce described the philosophy of the members of the Dominican Community in their 100 years of service. "In religion today, there is more stress on people being happy in this world. We're concerned with making the world a better place to live in."

Our Town, June 6, 1984, Page 15



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

LINDA WINIKOW
38TH DISTRICT

SECRETARY, DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE
CHAIRPERSON, MINORITY TASK FORCE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON CRITICAL TRANSPORTATION CHOICES
TRANSPORTATION (RANKING MINORITY MEMBER)
BANKS
ETHICS
FINANCE
HIGHER EDUCATION
ENERGY

PLEASE REPLY TO
STATE SENATE
706 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
BUILDING
ALBANY, N.Y. 12247
(518) 455-2181
COMMUNITY OFFICE
ONE BLUE HILL PLAZA
PEARL RIVER, N. Y. 10965
(914) 735-7230

April 13, 1984

Leonard L. Wikstrom, Chairman
Rockland County Drainage Agency
23 New Hempstead Road
New City, NY 10956

Dear Mr. Wikstrom:

I am in receipt of a copy of a petition that was originally sent to you. It is from a group of concerned citizens who live in the area of the recently deregulated Freshwater Wetland that is the proposed site of the Sparkill Glen.

Their complaint is that the Public Hearing scheduled for May 1, 1984, is to be held at 2:00 P.M. These people would like to attend this hearing, and express their concerns. However, most of them work, and are unable to attend during the day. They would prefer that this hearing be held in the evening, any evening, after 7:30 P.M.

I am in agreement with these residents, and urge you to reconsider the time for the scheduled hearing. The purpose of a public hearing is so that all citizens be given the opportunity to be heard. This is a right that must be protected in a democratic society. If the hearing is held at a time when no one can attend, then their rights are being violated. I realize that notice of this hearing has already been publicized. If, for any legal reasons, you must abide by the publicized time, then you should hold another hearing at the time requested by the public. There are a large number of people who feel they are being treated unfairly.

I would appreciate a prompt response to my appeal on behalf of my constituents.

Yours truly,

LINDA WINIKOW
State Senator

CC: Herb Reisman
Ed Clark

PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 1, 1984, at 2 p.m., in the Conference Room of the Legislative Chambers at 11 New Hempstead Road, New City, New York, on the permit application number 84-1, by Sparkill Glen to excavate a portion of the floodplain and provide compensating storage in the floodplain of the Sparkill Creek.

Said hearing is being held pursuant to the Rockland County Stream Control Act, as enacted by Chapter 840 of the Laws of 1975 of the State of New York.

Any person wishing to speak, will be allowed to do so at said hearing.

Dated: April 9, 1984
New City, NY

Leonard L. Wikstrom
LEONARD L. WIKSTROM

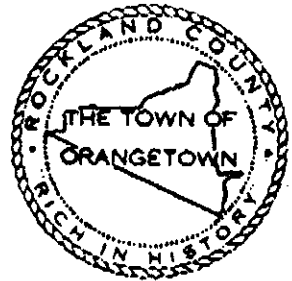
Chairman of the Rockland
County Drainage Agency
23 New Hempstead Road
New City, NY 10956

*"P.S. your neighbors have requested
a change of time!!"*

Town of Orangetown

Town Hall • Orangeburg, NY 10962

Telephone: (914) 359-5100



Roger Pellegrini
Supervisor

November 30, 1993

Historic Area Board of Review Members:

W. Beaty, II
K. Chipman
D. Toan
W. Walther
T. Schoppel
Dr. Tapley
R. Williams, Jr.
E. Larkin, Liaison

Please find enclosed, a request from the Committee for Historic Preservation (J. Chopliniski, C. Mouquin, and N. Paronetto, M.D.), which the Supervisor's office received on November 22, 1993.

This request is being forwarded to your Board for review and comment as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

12-01-1993 01:02PM FROM

TO

3598526 P.02

(JNB)

RTBM 11/22/92

November 22, 1993

TO: Roger Pellegrini
Supervisor, Town of Orangetown

RE: Historic Designation for Rockland Road, Sparkill, New York

FROM: Committee for Historic Designation

Joseph S. Choplinski - Liaison

Charles Mouquin

Nijole Paronetto, M.D.

Rockland Road is a winding country lane, heavily wooded, with large trees throughout the area that have been maintained in their natural state.

Prior to 1929, a segment of 9W was Rockland Road.

Presently, Rockland Road extends from 9W on the south, to Ferdon Avenue on the northern end. Rockland Road encompasses eighteen (18) home sites, several in excess of ten acres ranging downward to the minimum of one acre. It is also the entrance to Tallman State Park and borders a good deal of acreage of the park.

Tallman Mountain Park occupies 704 acres of prime real estate overlooking the Hudson River. It encompasses vast areas of wetlands that are the spawning grounds for many species of fish. One third of the park area is salt marsh.

The Palisades Interstate Parkway Commission was specifically created to prevent the destruction of the palisades. On October 11, 1928, Tallman Mountain, consisting of 164 acres, was appropriated by the state of New York. The park became very popular and in 1942 three Commissioners provided private funds to acquire the additional 540 acres.

The Doctor Hopson House is located in the woodlands of Tallman Mountain. It is a picturesque, gracious, French, Italian victorian mansion with a gazebo and carriage house. Doctor Hopson occupied this home site from 1850 - 1874. He was a member of the Rockland Medical Society and served on the first Board of the village of Piermont.

This house was the home of Marion Swan from 1920 - 1947, when it was sold to the Palisades Park System to be used as a residence for park personnel.

It is a contributing feature of the Palisades Interstate Park National Historic Landmark.

In 1865, a residence titled Stonehurst, was constructed for the Dederer Family. It is in the gothic style having twelve rooms with thick walls of rough basalt.

Mr. Dederer served Orangetown Government as a Town Clerk, Postmaster and Supervisor of Orangetown.

A small gatehouse is still utilized as a residence. The current occupants of the main house are Doctor Nijole Paronetto and Doctor Fiorenzo Paronetto.

John W. Ferdon, Sr. built a large home on Rockland Road in 1830. It is now occupied by Mark Umbach.

In 1848, John W. Ferdon, Jr., son of J.W. Ferdon, constructed a home on the road near by. He was a prominent attorney and served in State Government from 1878 - 1881. The house remained in the family until 1902 when it was purchased by Henry Mouquin. Four generations of the Mouquin Family have occupied the premises. P.J. and Charles Mouquin and family are presently in residence.

Currently, Jennifer and Michael Shapiro are owners of a home built in 1790, on a large tract of land, by a Mr. Kent. It has undergone several expansions with the original hand hewn beams and three foot thick brick foundations maintained.

In 1849, Mr. Kent's grandson built a large barn to the rear of this large tract and in 1859, he constructed a large victorian house behind the barn.

When a stock market crash reduced his financial status the main house was converted into a hotel as a summer destination for the wealthy New Yorkers, named TreeTops, and served food grown on the property.

An executive of Cunard Ship Lines purchased the property in 1904. He restored the main house to an individual family home.

The homestead and barn are currently owned by Arlene and Mark Rosen.

In discussion with John Scott, Senior Historian of the Historical Society of Rockland County; Nash Castro, former Executive Director of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission; Bernard Albin, Chairman of the Orengetown Architectural Board, the consensus was that Rockland Road is "Rich in History" and meets the criteria for Historic Landmark status.

All of the resident owners of Rockland Road are in agreement and request this designation.

Attached is a list of the residents of Rockland Road with their signatures.

NORMAN SHAFER
Rockland Road
Sparkill, New York

Norman Shafer

MAUREEN & ROGER PELLEGRINI
Rockland Road #99
Sparkill, New York

Maureen Pellegrini

FRANCES PELLEGRINI & ANN GRAY
Rockland Road
Sparkill, New York

Ann Gray
Frances Pellegrini

ARLENE & MARK ROSEN
Rockland Road
Sparkill, New York

Mark Rosen
Arleen Rosen

RUTH & JOSEPH CHOPLINSKI
Rockland Road #93
Sparkill, New York

Ruth Choplinski
Joseph Choplinski

SUSAN & CHRISTOPHER LUKAS
Rockland Road #85
Sparkill, New York

Susan Lukas
Christopher Lukas

JENNIFER & MICHAEL SHAPIRO
Rockland Road #87
Sparkill, New York

Jennifer M. Shapiro
Michael Shapiro

MICHELLE & LESLIE GINSBURG
Rockland Road #51
Sparkill, New York

Michelle Ginsburg
Leslie Ginsburg

NUALA & ROBERT PELLETIER
Rockland Road #90
Sparkill, New York

Nuala Pelletier
Robert E. Pelletier

KATHERINE & HENRY MINNEROP
Rockland Road #80
Sparkill, New York

Henry F. Minnerop
Katherine Minnerop

VIRGINIA & ROBERT BARRETT
Rockland Road #70
Sparkill, New York

Robert Barrett
Virginia Barrett

LUCIA & SALVATORE CARUANA
Rockland Road #65
Sparkill, New York

Salvatore Caruana
Lucia Caruana

NIJOLE & FIORENZO PARONETTO
Rockland Road #63
Sparkill, New York

Fiorenzo Paronetto
Nijole Paronetto

PJ & CHARLES MOUQUIN
Rockland Road #23
Sparkill, New York

Charles Mouquin
PJ Mouquin

LUCY & DAVID MORTENSEN
Rockland Road #21
Sparkill, New York

David Mortensen
Lucy Mortensen

JIM RICEAU
Rockland Road #1
Piermont, New York

DECEASED

MARILYN & ROBERT HEITMAN
Rockland Road #20
Piermont, New York

Robert Heitman
Marilyn Heitman

MARK UMBACH
Rockland Road #1
Piermont, New York

Mark Umbach

October or November 1965 - copy given to Paul DiHorvics for
Piermont Hist. Society by request

Commander O'Rourke, Dr. Munson, Legionares and friends.

Thank you for the invitation to participate in your program. My research afforded me an opportunity to delve into the history of our beautiful Rockland Cemetary and I enjoyed that.

Dr. Eleazar Lord, author, educator, first President of the Erie and builder of the "castle" over the hill here, donated 200 acres in 1847 for a cemetary which he hoped and expected would become New York City's principal burying place as soon as the Erie began bringing ^{it's passengers} from the West and ^{them} transferring to the city via fast steamers from the pier again just over the hill. The Cemetary was officially opened with ~~the~~ pomp and circumstance and 1,500 visitors. as described in this clipping from the New York Tribune of May 31st 1847.

"On Monday morning at an early hour a numerous assemblage departed from our wharves in the steamers S^t. Nicholas and James Madison for Piermont on the occasion of the opening and the dedication of the new and very beautiful Cemetary of Rockland County, The Company comprized several destinguished guests and other gentlemen, ladies and children in great force and as bright and cheerful as ever" As an asside, it does The John Perry Post honor to see so many destinguished guests and gentlemen here today and certainly the ladies are as bright and cheerful now as the were ^{then} almost 120 years ago.

To continue with the Tribunes story " The passage up was somewhat marred by the damp drizzling atmosphere, but when the Palisades were reached, the clouds cleared away and in the pure free air, dark blue titn and cheerful sunlight of the "upper deep" the guests lost all fretfulness and persuaded themselves into a quiet and happy humcr. When however about half the distance was accomplished, the company caused a very foolish fright- all crowding to one side to ~~see~~ observe a line of barges, necessarily careening the boat just sufficiently to do no damage, frighten the ladies and children and dampen the ardor of a few in the immediate vicinity of the lower cabin windows!"

From another newspaper account of that same excursion the boat almost did tip over and it would seem the cemetery almost did a land office business for new grave sites before it was dedicated. The account after many flowery speeches on the beauty of the scene and a "soft sell" for grave lots concluded with and again I Quote" The concluding prayer was then offered and the visitors were conducted through the grounds to the spacious boarding house of Mrs. Lyons where an elegant collation was provided, and though on strictly temperance principles, we have rarely seen a company enjoy themselves better or do greater justice to the numerous good things set before them." For several years Piermont and the cemetery boomed. Then the Erie received a belated charter from New Jersey and ran directly from Suffern to Jersey City and both the town and the cemetery were left in the backwater of progress. In 1880 William Whiton, son in law of Eleazor Lord, ⁸ John Ferdon among others, revived and rebuilt the cemetery. This activity gained ¹ increased recognition ~~for the cemetery~~ and it was promoted as the site for The National Cemetery. Both Fremont and Geringe were buried here about this time. However the Federal Government had confiscated Robert E. Lee's home ' Arlington during the Civil War and it had been used for burial of war dead since 1864. Its close proximity to Washington and this past history influenced Congress to name that site as the National Cemetery in 1889. ^{So much for past History} ~~However~~ We are here today to write current history. The gift of this flagpole by the John Perry Post has dual significance; the intrinsic value of the pole itself and even more important, the symbolization it represents. So let this flagpole serve as our everyday reminder of those Honored principles of the American Legion we all would do well, to live with and respect. The Legions purposes as described in the Encyclopedia Americana are: 1) To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. 2) To maintain law and order 3) to foster and perpetuate a 100% Americanism 4) To preserve the memories and incidents of associations in the great wars. 5) To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State and Nation 6) To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses 7) To make right the master of might 8) To promote Peace and Good will on earth 9) To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principals of justice, freedom and democracy and ~~peace~~ 10) To consecrate and sanctify comradeship by devotion to mutual helpfulness. As a representative of the Sons of the American Revolution whose goals and aims are dedicated to similar patriotic and non partisan principals I congratulate you on your choice of a flagpole as a gift to the cemetery. We thank you gratefully for this gift for it is the best possible symbol for all these important honored and cherished goals.

GETS COMMISSION AS 'NO RISK'



CLEARED OF BEING a possible security risk, Ensign Norman Gaston (right) receives his commission in the Coast Guard Reserve from Capt. Raymond C. Hohenstein, chaplain, at ceremonies in New London, Conn. In center is Comdr. Lynn Parker. Gaston's commission had been held up since last April because his mother was accused of having been pro-Communist. (International Soundphoto)

You're Telling Me

Though it was one of the hottest summers on record, those Brooklyn Dodgers for most of the season had that National League pennant in the deep freeze.

Soon comes the autumnal hunting season. To be followed, as always, by the Christmas hunting season.

Junior executives, we read, now favor the "fastidiously casual" haircut. What do they mean — carelessly careless?

In the Middle Ages, according to Factographs, most people drank beer for breakfast. Guess that's how pretzels came to be invented — as a substitute for buttered toast.

A British court refused a 17-year-old girl permission to wed because she couldn't cook. The judge must have remembered his own bride's first biscuits.

A British firm is offering pink and green shoes for men. Personally, our dogs wouldn't be found asleep in 'em.

In Regina, Canada, an eight-year-old girl won a completely furnished home in a contest staged by a service club. This is without doubt the largest doll house on record.

Air Force Tells Off Its Generals

WASHINGTON (JNS) — The Air Force, disturbed by recent heart attacks among its generals, has instructed them to take at least one afternoon a week off to play golf or get some equivalent exercise.

The order was given verbally. Gen. Thomas D. White, deputy chief of staff, who explained that there have been too many deaths from heart attacks brought on by overwork among Air Force officers.

Maj. Gen. Dan C. Ogle, air group general, is preparing a letter that will put the instruction in writing for all commands. The Air Force said the letter will stress that it is part of an officer's duty to keep himself physically fit.

Spokesmen said that the order applies to all officers, but it is primarily designed for those over 40 years of age.

The sun is the chief cause of rain. Its heat causes evaporation of water which remains suspended in the air until its contact with cooler currents of air causes it to condense into clouds and fall to earth as rain.

Random Notes On Rockland County

By Saxby Voulter Penfold
Rockland County Historian

Today, Saturday, September 17 is "Citizenship Day," and those residents of Rockland County who received their citizenship the easy way — thanks to their parents — may be glad to know how the Constitution of the United States was brought about. It was produced by a few great minds assembled in a brief convention. William Ewart Gladstone, the great British statesman, termed it "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

Less than a hundred working days measured the "given time." The framers had had no means of previous personal communication by telegraph and almost none by mail; there were no stenographers or typewriters; there was, indeed, no clerical assistance; for the proceedings of the convention were secret and the clerical work was done by great men.

As the time was brief (only 85 days), so were the framers few. The convention was composed of 55 men; the constitution was agreed by 39, including Washington, who took part in a debate in a brief but immortal speech which Professor Fiske said "ought to be blazoned in letters of gold and posted on the wall of every American assembly that shall meet to nominate a candidate or declare a policy or pass a law."

Blazing from his President's chair, Washington exclaimed: "It

Detail reported and furnished every member with a printed copy of the proposed Constitution. Again the work of consideration began, and went on as before, section by section, line by line. Vexed questions were referred to special committees — composed of one member from each state — amendments were offered, changes were made, the Committee on Detail incorporated additional matter in their draft until, on Sept. 8, the work of construction stopped. But not even then did the labors of the convention cease. On that day a committee was appointed, "by ballot, to revise the style of and arrange the articles which had been agreed to." This committee was afterward known as the Committee of Style. It reported on Sept. 12, and the work of revision again went on until the 15th. On Monday, the 17th, the end was reached, and the members of the convention signed the Constitution. Well did Franklin exclaim in his farewell words to the Convention: "It astonishes me, sir, to find the system approaching so near to perfection as it does!"

A strong tendency to turn back to the community as the heart of our social life is evidenced in all parts of our country, showing that the problems of coming events will be solved in the individual communities in which we live. Among the problems arising in attempting to develop desirable human qualities in the individual are those which come up in developing good

where luxuries were non-existent and a new dress or suit of clothes was something to be dreamed of and rarely attained, but where, nevertheless, natural cheerfulness, and a warm family affection gave zest and gaiety to a workaday world.

Mr. Van Weelden's little book is full of bits of philosophy. He says: "To those who are compelled to leave school at an early age I recommend a thorough reading of Shakespeare and the Proverbs. In those books one may acquire a rich vocabulary."

Many people have written in to inquire the meaning of the name Sparkill. It means Spruce Creek and the stream was thus denominated because of the evergreens growing on its banks.

SETTLE IN FLORIDA

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Woodgood have settled in Danis, Fla., and are building a duplex house at SE Second Avenue and Third Place in Danis, which is near Hollywood. The Woodgoods are former Nyackers and Mr. Woodgood had a long career in the Nyack post-office. Upon his doctor's advice, he retired from the postoffice on March 1. Friends may reach the Woodgoods by writing to P. O. Box 2011, Danis, Fla.

Orange sticks used by women to manicure their nails were called that because they were made from orange wood, or of a citrus wood from a tree of the orange family.

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