

# Waccabuc Country Club

## The Lake Waccabuc Inn, Waccabuc Hamlet



Photo courtesy of Maureen Koehl

Robert Hoe II, a Mead cousin, purchased Indian Spring Farm as a summer house from Martin Rockwell Mead in 1877. Robert and his wife, Thyrsa, combined two existing houses and added a third story to form their large Main House. They established a farm on over 450 acres and built an estate manager's house, a cattle barn, carriage house, smokehouse, stables and boathouse on the lake. Robert Hoe also built the Waccabuc post office in 1880 and a new schoolhouse in 1884 on land offered to the school district by Mr. Hoe.

After the death of Robert Hoe III in 1913, the descendants of George and Sarah Mead purchased the estate. Golf was becoming a popular sport and part of the land was leased to a new golf club and laid out as the first nine holes. A log cabin that had once been a playhouse for the Hoe children became the clubhouse. The Hoe mansion was converted to an inn by the Mead family for many friends of the local families.

In 1927, the inn and property were leased by the Waccabuc Country Club. The second nine holes had been built along with tennis courts. Membership in the club continued to increase and in 1960, Mead Property, Inc. sold the house and 200 acres of land, including the waterfront, golf course and many outbuildings to the members of the club. The boathouse for the country club was originally built for The Waccabuc House, a resort hotel owned by Martin Rockwell Mead, which burned down in 1896.

## Mead Memorial Chapel, Waccabuc Hamlet



Photo courtesy of Mead Memorial Chapel

The Mead Memorial Chapel was built by Sarah Frances Mead in memory of her husband, George Washington Mead, and all of the Meads before him. George was the third son of Alfred and Polly Mead, and the grandson of the first Meads to settle in the area. George was a graduate of Yale and Yale Law School. He and Sarah raised 12 children. They lived most of the year in Brooklyn Heights and “summered” at Waccabuc. By 1870, George had retired from law and operated a large dairy farm on 550 acres of land in Waccabuc. George W. Mead died in 1899.

In 1905 his widow hired architect Hobart Upjohn to design a memorial chapel in his honor for private family use. The Gothic Revival style Mead Memorial Chapel was built from area stone and timber on the site of a former Mead barn. The chapel was dedicated on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1907. In 1929, a library was added to store the Mead family papers. Until the 1960’s Sunday vesper services were held for all comers. From 1968 to 1978 St. Mary’s Parish in Katonah held a Sunday mass in the chapel. The chapel is maintained by the Mead family and occasionally welcomes guests for Christmas Eve services, special events and benefit concerts. The Mead Family Cemetery, on the lower half of Mead St., is maintained by the Chapel. The oldest Mead gravestone in the cemetery belongs to Sally Mead, who died in 1794 at the age of 14.

## Old Bedford Road, Goldens Bridge Hamlet



The Goldens Bridge Two-room Schoolhouse on Old Bedford Rd.

When the Croton River was dammed c. 1900 to make a reservoir for NYC drinking water, some families in Goldens Bridge lost their homes to the flooding. At least six houses were saved and moved by oxen and rails to Old Bedford Rd. The house in the photo above left was one of these homes. Built in 1828, it was moved to its present site on Old Bedford Rd. over a century ago.

At the end of Old Bedford Rd., sits the old Goldens Bridge Community House, once the Goldens Bridge schoolhouse. The first schoolhouse for the children of Goldens Bridge village was built behind this site in 1893. It was replaced by this two-room schoolhouse in 1912. The children attending this school were not part of the consolidation of Lewisboro's schoolhouses in 1939, because of the great distance to Lewisboro Elementary School. This school remained open until 1955. After that, children traveled to Katonah Elementary until Increase Miller Elementary School opened in 1963.

Since the school closed, the building has housed a community center, the Westchester Exceptional Children's School, the Northern Westchester Center for The Arts, the Parks and Recreation Department and an art school. The building was sold by the town and will be converted to a small apartment building.

## Lake Katonah Clubhouse, Goldens Bridge Hamlet



Photo Courtesy of The Lake Katonah Club

Driving along scenic Todd Rd, once surrounded by family farms and large cattle and dairy farms, it is hard to imagine what the area looked like 100 years ago. In 1926, a group of developers from White Plains bought 125 acres from the Edward Brady estate, including the lake. They dammed the lake, enlarging it to 26 acres, laid out roads, subdivided the lots and installed a water system. In 1927, they built the clubhouse and several model homes were built.

The idea was to build a summer vacation community with an easy commute to attract people from New York City. Similar lake communities were being built at Truesdale Lake, Lake Waccabuc, the Goldens Bridge Colony and Lake Kitchawan. In 1928, the community was incorporated as the Lake Katonah Club. There was great promotion of the Club through the New York Times and billboards all over New York City and by the mid-1930's there were 59 houses built. The Depression forced the club into trusteeship. In 1942, the club was able to buy back the clubhouse, water system and roads.

The clubhouse and lake have always served as the center of the community. There were many social events including swimming and canoe races, dinner dances and holiday parties. Children living in the community year-round attended school in Katonah. There are now 108 houses in the community, most of which are lived in year-round.

## Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Cross River Hamlet



Photo of Trailside Nature Museum and mason courtesy of Maureen Koehl

Ward Pound Ridge Reservation was created in 1925. While most of the 4315 acres are in Pound Ridge, the northeastern part of the reservation is in Cross River. Over 32 farms and a school in Cross River village were either bought or condemned by the county to form the park. It is the jewel in the Westchester County Park System.

In 1933, Camp Merkel, part of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's WPA (Works Progress Administration) New Deal projects, was located at the reservation. 200 young, unemployed men from New York State lived in barracks and worked on construction, reforestation and reclamation projects. The men were paid \$30 per week of which \$25 was sent home and \$5 was theirs to keep. They built the Trailside Museum, the WPA Gallery, many of the lean-tos and other masonry projects until 1940 when the camp was decommissioned.

The park has open space, woodlands and three small rivers, the Cross River, the Stone Hill River and the Waccabuc River. Several of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses still remain. The park headquarters is housed in one of these remaining homesteads. The Trailside Museum was one of the first nature centers in the country. William Wheeler was the first naturalist and remained for almost 30 years. The Ward Pound Ridge Reservation remains a biodiverse and protected landscape for all to cherish and learn about nature.

## Cross River Baptist Church, Cross River Hamlet



No. 12.—Baptist Church, Cross River, N. Y.

Postcard from 1907

F. W. GORHAM

The Cross River Baptist Church is the oldest public structure in Lewisboro. Built in 1791, the 36 x 30 foot meeting house was built overlooking the Cross River. In 1855, a steeple, bell tower and gallery were added to the church. Church suppers and Sunday school were held in the gallery.

The Reynolds' Family has lived in Cross River since before the Revolution. They were farmers and millers and their ancestors organized the Cross River Baptist Church in 1789. There were 37 original members. In the beginning, they met in members' homes and had visiting ministers or laymen conduct services. In July of 1791, the first services were held in the church.

When the Cross River was dammed in the early 1900's for the new reservoir, many homes were lost to the flooding or moved to new locations and the church lost some of its membership. High on the hill, the church was safe from flooding. In 1913, a resident pastor was finally obtained and regular services continued. A Christian Endeavor Society was formed in 1915 and gave the young people of the hamlet an outlet for serving others and socializing. The CCC Boys often attended the social events while enlisted at Camp Merkel.

## E.L. Fancher Shoe Company, Vista Hamlet



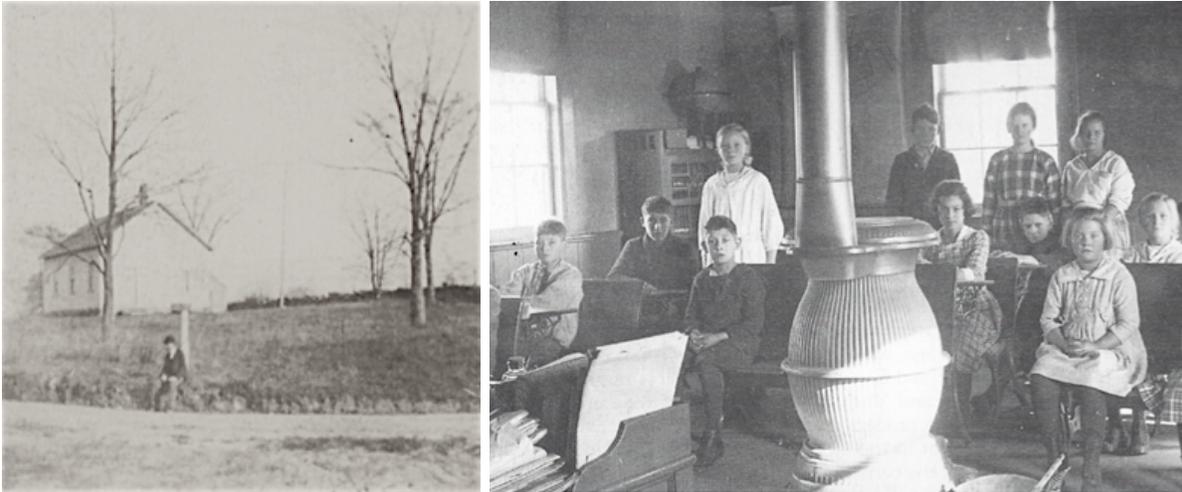
Photo courtesy of Maureen Koehl

Vista and the surrounding areas were farming communities in the 1800's. During the winter, there was less work on the farm and money was scarce, so many farmers would work in their homes on leather pieces for shoes and boots. They would then deliver these pieces to a shoemaker who would put them together. Every hamlet had its shoemaker. Farmers would receive cash for their work.

In the mid to late 1800's, Eleazer L. Fancher opened a shoe-making shop on the second floor of what is now Vista Market. There was a store and post office on the first floor and two rooms upstairs for the E.L. Fancher Shoe Factory. The factory made shoes for ladies only. In the back room, the women sewed the upper pieces of the shoes together and in the front room, the men put on the soles and heels.

The finished shoes would be taken by wagon to New Canaan or Norwalk and went by boat to New York City. Eleazer originally made shoes by "the old hand process." While in Vista, he then started using sewing machines to manufacture the shoes and trained his sons to make shoes at this time. His sons attended the Vista Schoolhouse prior to joining their father. The factory closed in 1884 when the family moved to Norwalk CT.

## Vista One-Room Schoolhouse, Vista Hamlet



Photos Courtesy of Maureen Koehl

The original one-room schoolhouse in Vista was located across the street from the market. In 1869-70, a new schoolhouse for the children of Vista was built in a meadow on the corner of East St. and the New Canaan Rd. (now called Smith Ridge Rd.). The schoolhouse has two doors, one for the girls and the other for the boys. There were two outhouses behind the school.

There was a wood-fired stove in the middle of the classroom which provided the only heat. Sometimes in winter the children had to wear their coats and hats all day to keep warm. Students in grades one through eight were taught in the same classroom with the older children often helping the younger children. Students were responsible for their own slates, paper and pencils. Very few children went beyond eighth grade at the time because they were needed on the farm or started learning a trade like shoemaking or blacksmithing. Children walked or rode their horse to school, no matter the weather.

In 1939, the smaller one and two-room schoolhouses in Lewisboro were consolidated to form the Lewisboro Elementary School. School buses were introduced and children were separated into classrooms by grade, one through eight. Grades one and two were combined and there was no kindergarten until 1945. When Lewisboro Elementary School opened in December 1940, there were 140 students, five teachers and a principal.

## St. Paul's Chapel and Rectory, Vista Hamlet



1899 Photo courtesy of St. Paul's Chapel Facebook Page



Photo courtesy of The Patent Trader 2-6-1958

There have been Episcopalian services in Lewisboro since 1750, when missionaries would conduct services in the homes of residents. In 1771, the first parish church was erected at the intersection of Routes 35 and 123, but was closed in 1776 because of its allegiance to England and for a short time it served as a military hospital. After the war it became a tavern known as "Church Tavern." In 1853, Stephan Hoyt willed the congregation land on Spring Street; the members quarried nearby stone and St. John's Church was built at its present site.

In 1870, John Lewis, for whom the town is named, donated his grandfather's farm in Vista to St. John's Church. The farmhouse was to be the rectory and a new "chapel of ease" was to be built to serve the parishioners living in the Vista and Lewisboro hamlets. Unfortunately, the church wasn't completely finished or consecrated until 1900, almost 30 years after his death. John Lewis is buried in Beck's Hill Cemetery, across the street from the chapel.

The old rectory sits just north of the church where Rt. 123 and Elmwood Rd meet. In 1870, St. Paul's School for boys was established in a back wing of the house. Students studied Latin, Greek, French and Music and were told to bring "slippers, one fork, three linen napkins and a blanket." The school closed in 1885. The former rectory is now a non-profit group home.

## Sylvanus Ferris House, Lewisboro Hamlet



Photo courtesy of the Patent Trader 11-23-1963

Sylvanus Ferris moved to a farmhouse on this site in 1782. He was a farmer and ran a small dry-goods store and post office across the street. His home served as an inn until 1815. Sylvanus was the great-grandfather of George Washington Gale Ferris, the inventor of the Ferris Wheel, first displayed at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

In 1901, the homestead was purchased by James Bradley, who helped to build the first NYC subway. It was still a working farm in the 1920's with many cows and fields of corn and potatoes. Over the years the simple farmhouse was grown to what you see today.

In 1941, the house was sold to the Jerome Newman family. The stone wall in front still holds Mr. Newman's initials, "J.A.N." The Newman family spent 23 summers at their home and named it *Meadowpond* for the small pond across the street. When the Newmans donated their 15-room home and 3.3 acres of land to the school district in 1963, the district promised to name the new elementary school next door "Meadow Pond". The school was completed in December, 1967.

The large farmhouse served as the KLSO district office from the early 1960's until 2012 when these offices were moved to IMES, then back to *Meadowpond* after the closure of Lewisboro Elementary School. The district office was moved to the JJHS campus in Cross River in 2015.

## Onatru Farm Park, Lewisboro Hamlet



Photo courtesy of Maureen Koehl

Edward B. Z. Lane bought this property in 1904 as a weekend and summer home for his family and named it Onatru Farm (On a true farm). At first a gentleman's farm, it was always a working farm with horses, cows, sheep, chickens and pigs as well as a buttery and creamery. Alice Lane Poor inherited Onatru Farm in 1924. The farm supplied all of the dairy and food for the family, and even some dairy products for Ridgefield restaurants.

The Poores lived in Manhattan and stayed at the farm weekends and holidays with their two children, Grace and Walter, until 1940 when they moved to the farm full-time. Walter died in 1945, but Alice continued her active involvement on town committees as well as her philanthropy, especially to Lewisboro service organizations.

In 1962, Mrs. Poor donated 27 acres on the west side of Elmwood Rd. to the town of Lewisboro. This area is known as Onatru Reservation and is specifically restricted to scouting activities. In 1973, Mrs. Poor donated 40 more acres from the eastern portion of the farm to the town and this section is known as the Alice Lane Poor Wildlife Preserve.

In 1978, Mrs. Poor donated the remainder of the farm including the main house, barn and outbuildings to the town. Alice Lane Poor's love of the "rural spirit" of Lewisboro, which led to her generous gift of 147 acres to our town, will be enjoyed by the families of Lewisboro for many years to come.

## Leon Levy Preserve, Lewisboro Hamlet



Photos courtesy of ScenesFromTheTrail.com

The Black Mansion sits in ruins atop a hill in the Leon Levy Preserve, one of the highest points in Lewisboro. The mansion was built c. 1901 as a summer home by Dr. James Mason Crafts. Dr. Crafts was a respected chemist and served as the President of M.I.T. for several years. In addition to the main house, he built a laboratory, an ice house, a coach house and a garage. Dr. Crafts called the mansion home until his death in 1917.

In 1923, the mansion was sold to the Abram Kaplan family. Mrs. Kaplan found the mansion too cold and drafty, so the family moved to another house on the property, leaving the mansion fully furnished and unused. It was probably during this time that it earned the nickname the Black Mansion. The Kaplan family was in the sugar and lumber business. In 1950, the property was purchased from the Kaplans as an investment by the Bell/Lyden partnership. Eventually, the neglected mansion was vandalized and became a hangout and party destination. On the night of January 28, 1979, the mansion caught fire. All the local fire departments fought the blaze. Only the stone foundation structures remain.

In 2005, the town purchased the property thanks to a \$5 million dollar gift from the Jerome Levy Foundation among other donations. The Lewisboro and Westchester Land Trusts helped to negotiate the purchase. Now known as the Leon Levy Preserve, this preserve will protect the 383 acres of forest and wetlands keeping it accessible to all.

## Tator's Garage, South Salem Hamlet



Photo courtesy of South Salem Fire Department

Tator's Garage has been operating in Lewisboro since 1908, when George T. Tator moved from his livery station in Ridgefield and rented a barn in Waccabuc from the Mead family as his first automobile garage. In 1913, he bought a bigger barn and property from the Lawrence family on Spring St. for \$600 and a horse. In 1914, the Dodge Brothers started building cars and Tator's Garage was chosen as the third Dodge dealer in America out of over 1000 applicants. Until 2009, they were the oldest family-owned dealership in America.

In 1925, George T. Tator and his mechanic of 64 years, Leo Gustafson, built and operated the first firetruck in town. The fire department was headquartered at Tator's Garage until the new firehouse was completed on Rt. 35 in 1951. George also purchased the first 5 Dodge school buses in 1939. Children had previously walked or ridden their horses to the smaller one-room schoolhouses. The mechanics at Tator's served as the bus drivers.

The square building that fronts on Spring St. was a Mobil gas Station for over 50 years. Chuck Tator is the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of the family to run the garage and is known nationally as the "Dodge Viper wizard." The Tator Family has been serving the town of Lewisboro for over 100 years.

## South Salem Presbyterian Church, South Salem Hamlet



Postcard from 1906 with the Meeting House (later the library) still on the church property.

The South Salem Presbyterian Church was founded in 1752. Solomon Mead served as the founding pastor until 1800. In 1872, the entire church was remodeled at a cost of \$8000. The church continued to serve as a social and religious center for the entire area.

On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1973, just after the nursery school dismissed, the church caught fire and burned to the ground in two hours. The 1898 church bell, a bible, some offering plates and a couple of flags were the only things to survive the fire. The whole town worked to raise money for a new church and the current church was dedicated on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1975. Over the years, Catholics, Protestants and a Jewish Congregation have shared this building.

The church graveyard is the oldest of Lewisboro's 20 cemeteries. The site had been used as a burial ground since 1710, before the church was even built. There are 26 Revolutionary veterans buried here, two of whom served in the French and Indian War; three veterans served in the War of 1812. Many of the families important to the development of South Salem are buried here: Benedict, Bouton, Keeler and Gilbert among others. The graveyard was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.

## Historic South Salem, South Salem Hamlet



Postcard of Main Street South Salem in 1910 The Horse and Hound Inn is on the right

Rev. Theodore Van Norden, a Presbyterian minister, landowner, farmer and entrepreneur in the early 1900's described South Salem this way: "That, indeed, is the charm of it, for there is excitement a-plenty in the modern world, and it is good to find a peaceful corner." His observations still hold true over a century later.

Old South Salem had a beautiful white church on hill and a downtown consisting of a schoolhouse, a library, a harness shop, a general store and post office and a blacksmith shop. South Salem School #3 was built in 1870. It is now a private home located behind the market which was built in the 1930's. John Russell's Antiques, originally the SSPC Meeting House, built in 1840, served as the first library building. In 1909 the building was moved across the street. The two-story white house next to the Horse and Hound was one-half of the original Presbyterian parsonage. It was moved to this location in 1888, the site of the first South Salem post office and general store owned and operated by Gould Hawley. Appointed the first postmaster of South Salem in 1813, he served for 50 years.

The Horse and Hound Inn was built c. 1799 as a private residence. Owner Henry Dauchy Keeler built the adjoining blacksmith shop in the 1840's. The Rev. Van Norden purchased the property in 1907 and opened the Horse and Hound Inn. On and off a private residence, it has remained a restaurant for most of the past century.