



GHI

*Reading Writing & Remembering
December Dusk. Volume I
26 December 2003*

The History of Greenwich

As taken from several Websites from the Town's own to Local Real Estate Firms:



In 1640 settlers from the New Haven Colony purchased land from the Siwanoy Indians in the area now known as Old Greenwich. Shortly thereafter the English joined the Dutch in a dispute with the Siwanoy which resulted in their massacre. After the disappearance of most of the Indians the industrious newcomers carved out larger and larger land holdings on which to raise potatoes, grain, and fruit. Settlements grew along the shore from Stamford on the east to the Byram River on the west and north to the border with New York State. By 1730 the 50 square miles

which comprise present day Greenwich were laid out. For its first 200 years the acquisition and cultivation of farmland was the major enterprise of residents, although grist mills signaled the beginnings of local industry and active shipping was conducted from the Mianus River. The relative calm of these years was broken by the Revolutionary War. Greenwich was a garrison town which experienced occupation by both British and American armies as well as raids from irregulars. The seven-year long war was fought on the roads and farms of Greenwich destroying homes, crops, and human lives.

The coming of the railroad in 1848 marked a significant improvement in transportation and brought increasing numbers of new residents to Greenwich. The Irish came to work on the railroad and settled close to Greenwich Avenue, the Town center. In an adjacent



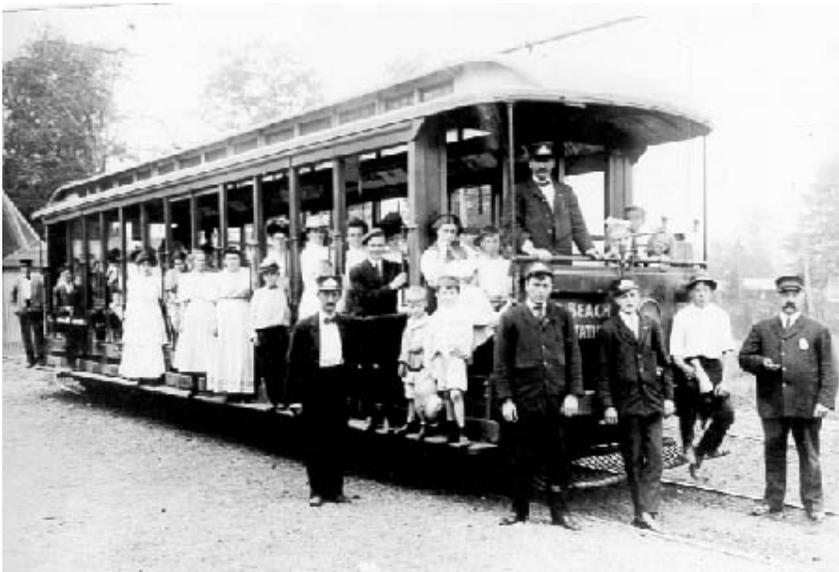


neighborhood called Chickahominy, Italian stonemasons congregated to be near the Byram quarries. Other Italians settled further east in North Mianus where they worked in the Mianus Woolen Mill. The Germans went to Byram, then known as East Port Chester, and found work in the Abendroth Foundry. Glenville, on the Byram River, attracted Poles who worked in the felt mill and Russell Burdsall & Ward, manufacturers of nuts and bolts. Each of these areas developed as distinct neighborhoods which have continued to be home to second and third generation descendants.

Greenwich also developed as a resort catering to New Yorkers wishing to escape the noxious city for the summer. Along the shore, hotels were erected to house, feed, and entertain these visitors. Many decided to build homes in Greenwich, creating such areas as Belle Haven, Field Point Park, Byram Shore and Rock Ridge. People with easily recognizable names - Benedict, Bruce, Converse, Gimble, Havemeyer, Mallory, Milbank, Rockefeller, and Teagle - amassed large land holdings upon which to build the estates for which Greenwich is famous. These families became great benefactors to the new community.



The 20th century burst upon Greenwich with yet another improvement in transportation. The trolley from Rye to Stamford connected Greenwich from west to east with a convenient, in-Town service. The automobile then took precedence after the First World War. In 1938 the Merritt Parkway cut through the northern section of Greenwich, followed in 1957 by I-95 on the south. Once again new arrivals swelled the population of Greenwich. This time the newcomers were the employees of corporations leaving New York City for suburban headquarters. While the beginning of the century saw the creation of great landed estates, the post World War II period witnessed their dissolution into smaller building lots which accommodated the new residents. Growth and development brought about the reorganization of Town government,



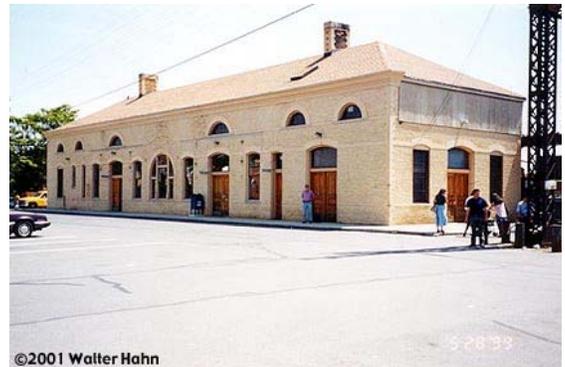
the reorganization of Town government,

the consolidation of the school system, and the establishment of a network of independent, non-profit organizations which supply the Town with its social services and cultural institutions. The second half of the century saw a growing concern in Greenwich for protecting its heritage, resulting in the creation of two local historic districts, twenty-three buildings and areas listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the acquisition of undeveloped land as park and conservation areas. Greenwich is a special place to its residents who work hard as volunteers in its behalf.

Road Trip

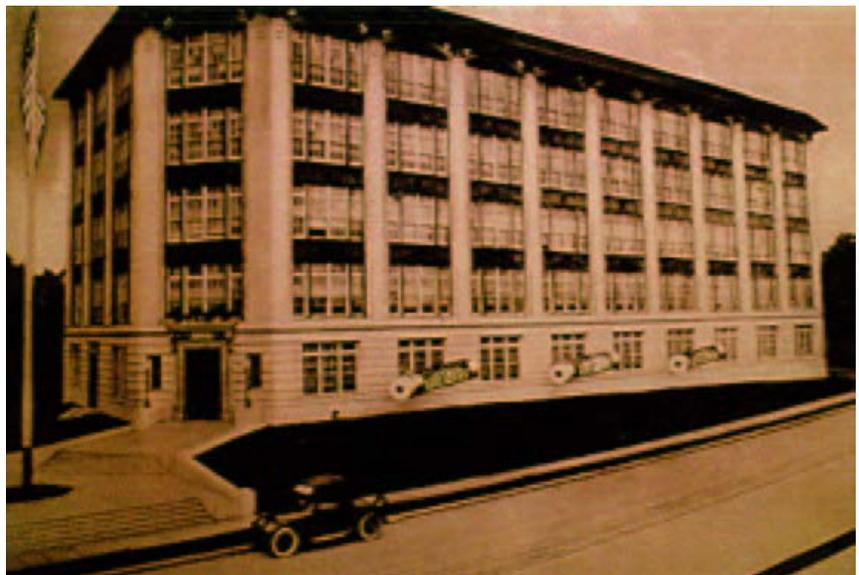


Starting in Byram at the Byram River Bridge, this view was seen by very few of you, during daylight hours. Typically, when you crossed this bridge, you were on your way to Port Chester and Vahsen's.



Where, as a rule, you would park at the Port Chester Railroad station lot, behind the big hedge near the street opposite Vahsen's itself. The thought was that the cops in Port Chester were so dumb that they didn't realize that all these Greenwich kids with Connecticut plates were legally drinking in New York. The legal age was changed from 18 to 21 around the time that many of us left Greenwich.

Of course, while we are in Port Chester, there is a slight side tour to see the Life Savers Building. I can remember when they were making the spearmint the whole town smelled. And how about those huge rolls of Life Savers. Pop Art before it's time. Claes Oldenburg is way off schedule.





Heading up into Greenwich, next to the Havemeyer Building, when the soccer team wasn't practicing you could spend some time just off Greenwich Avenue in Havemeyer Park.



There have been many changes to "The" Avenue as it is now called. Most obvious is the introduction of the "Higher Price Spread" of Luxury Boutiques and of course, like every town in America. It has its "Olde Time Piece" provided by the Local Jeweler. I would image that each of us have our version of this kind of commercial "History" on their local street scene. I wonder where the original "Is"?





Of course down on the waterfront we have the Indian Harbor Yacht Club, this photo was taken from a pier that was always the greatest fishing spot for Snappers. Steamboat Road ended at the beginning of this pier. This was about as close to the Yacht Club, that I ever got.

Let's head further North, up through Cos Cob and over the Mianus River Bridge to the Cow's Barn at Tod's Point and keep moving along the coast.



That's the town of Stamford ahead on the Turnpike and the theater of choice "The Palace". It is still in operation. I think the last seat in the balcony still has some of the popcorn that fell out of my container, lodged in its sticky soda-splashed floor.

There were several other theaters in Stamford. The Plaza and the Stamford Movie Theaters have both been torn down, but the Avon, the Majestic, The Ridgeway and the State are still around. The Palace is currently being renovated.



Of course, many of you can only remember the Drive-In at Shippan Point. How many guys made the trip into this place in the trunk of your older brother's car?

