

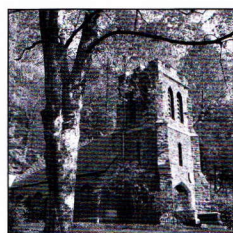
THE WESTCHESTER HISTORIAN



Stewards of the Land:
The Meads of Waccabuc

THE WESTCHESTER HISTORIAN

QUARTERLY OF THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Stewards of the Land: The Meads of Waccabuc

This special double issue of *The Historian* is completely devoted to one of Westchester's most important families. The first generation of Meads in Westchester settled in the area that became the hamlet of Waccabuc in the Town of Lewisboro in the last quarter of the 18th century.

Today, generations later, a few members of the Mead family still reside there. **Field Horne**, who has written many articles for *The Historian* and who spent the last several years organizing the Mead Family papers for WCHS, draws upon those papers to chronicle the Mead family story—their love for the land and their success in preserving much of it for future generations to enjoy. The hand-drawn map that is tipped into this issue was drawn for us by **Martha Costello** of Geigertown, Pennsylvania, an accomplished cartographer. **36**

Books and Things 94

Cover picture: Lake Waccabuc, by Gunther Hartwick, 1865. *Courtesy of Waccabuc Golf Club and Mead Memorial Chapel.*

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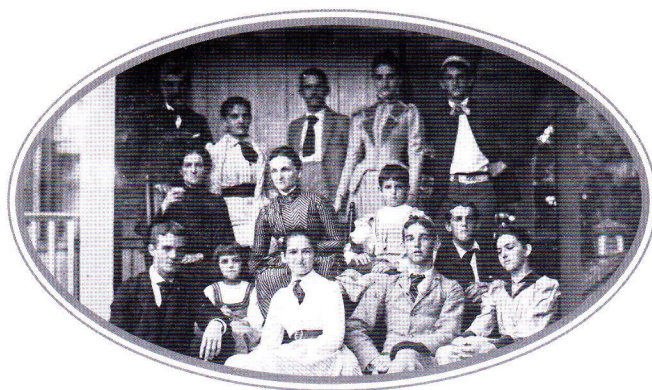
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A complete index to Volumes 1-65 is available for \$25.00 and to Volumes 66-83 for \$10.00. *The Historian* is also indexed in the Periodical Source Index (PERSI).

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Readers are invited to submit articles for possible publication. Manuscripts must deal with topics relevant to Westchester County history. Articles must be typed double-spaced with endnotes and/or sources noted. The editors reserve the right to make changes in articles accepted for publication and will consult the author should substantive questions arise.

STEWARDS OF THE LAND: The Meads of Waccabuc



by Field Horne

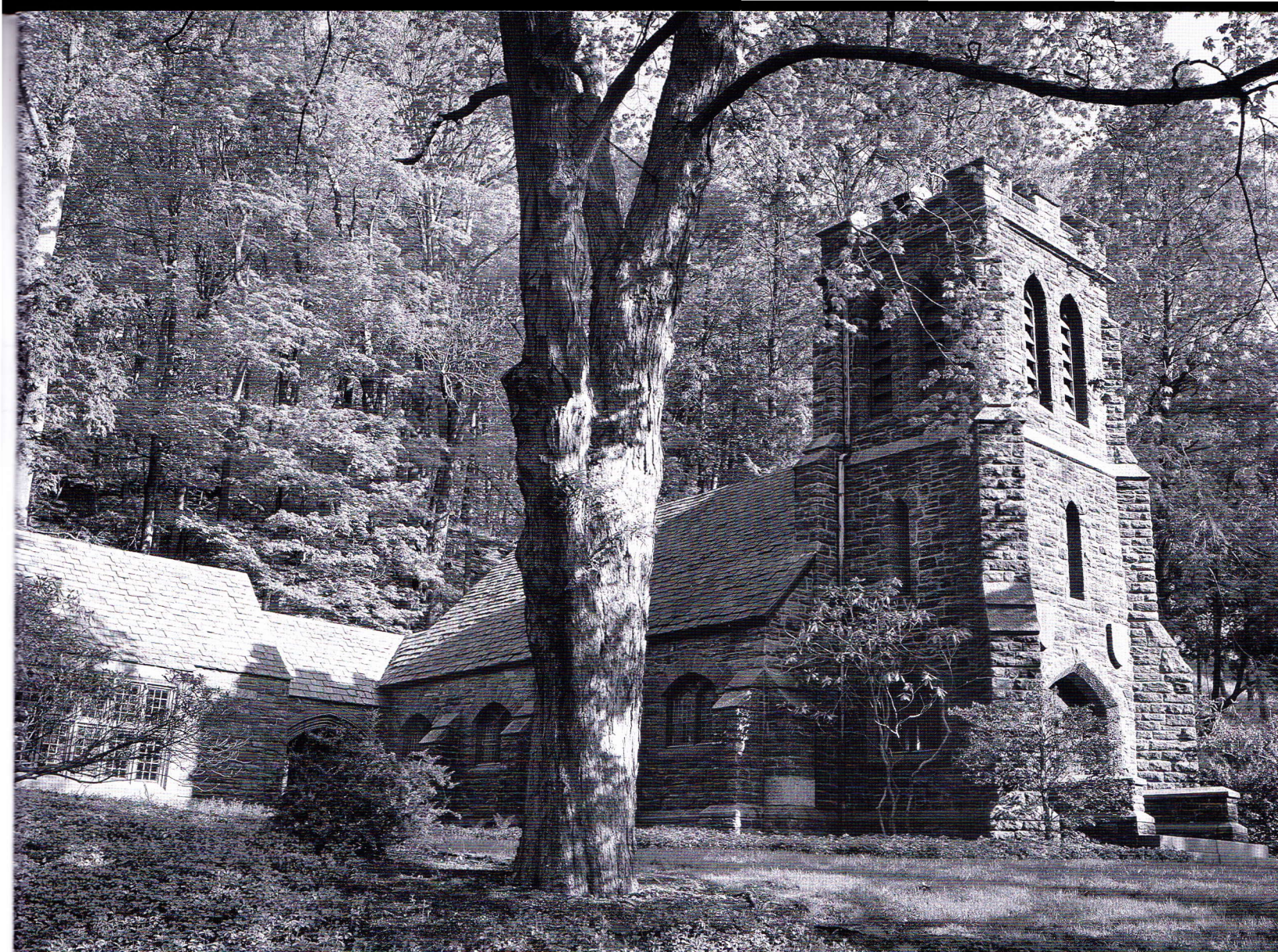
The Mead Family Papers owe their survival to the Mead Memorial Chapel given by Sarah Frances (Studwell) Mead in 1905 in remembrance of her husband, George Washington Mead. Located at Mead Street and Chapel Road in Waccabuc, Westchester County, New York, the impressive stone edifice, designed by Hobart Upjohn, was dedicated in 1907.

At that time 11 of the 12 children of Mrs. Mead were living. She died in 1919, and within a decade her children were themselves aging. For generations the Meads had been assiduous savers of documents, both business and personal, and they took deliberate steps to collect and preserve this

written legacy. A 1927 memorandum of O.F. Langmuir from the office of Hobart Upjohn discusses plans for a "Proposed Record Room" connected to the chapel.¹ It was completed in 1929, and a wealth of material was deposited there. Son David Irving Mead is credited as the driving force behind the preservation of the family's correspondence and business papers, and he was dili-

gent in seeking out related materials to add to the collection.

In 1951 son-in-law Charles F. Neergaard contacted R.W.G. Vail of the New-York Historical Society about placing the Mead Family Papers there. Vail's reply gave Neergaard encouragement, but apparently there was no further action.² D. Irving Mead had been president of the Westchester County



Mead Memorial Chapel, 2003. *Photograph by Gray Williams. All illustrations in this article, unless otherwise noted, are from the Mead Family Collection at WCHS.*

Historical Society, but there is no indication the family considered gifting the papers to WCHS which, at that time, was housed in a single room in the County Office Building. Although secure, the growing collection of Mead family papers was not managed in a way to encourage access, and the space was environmentally inadequate.

The next generation was aging when, in 1982, Elizabeth "Tid" Mead Murdock wrote her cousin, Sally Smith Marseilles, about the

problem. Some arrangement of the collection was undertaken by Mrs. Marseilles, Mrs. D. Irving Mead, Jr., and Susan Smith Henry. In the summer of 1988 consultant Diana Maull prepared an archival survey. A gift to the Westchester County Historical Society was first discussed in 1990. By 1992 descendant Susan von Salis, a professional archivist, had arranged a part of the collection by recipient as Series I and II, and these were given by the Trustees of the Mead Memorial Chapel to the

Westchester County Historical Society in July 1992 and July 1993. Von Salis completed series descriptions in July 1994 and these were added to the collection.³

Five additional boxes were transferred in May 1999. Most of the remainder was transferred late in 2003, and a few additional materials arrived the following year from Susan Henry and William Mead.

With financial support from the Mead Memorial Chapel, WCHS hired Field Horne to arrange the

entire collection, prepare a descriptive inventory, and write an essay based upon the contents. The three-year project began in February 2005 with the preparation of a panel exhibit for use at the June 2005 family reunion.

The series arranged by von Salis were in perfect order, but the rest of the collection was altogether random. A quick evaluation revealed that the unarranged contents overlapped with those that von Salis had processed. A new arrangement was

proposed, and was completed in 2006. When processed, this large acquisition filled 97 boxes with its private and business papers and photographs, and included 241 bound-volume manuscripts of business records and personal diaries.

A smaller but similarly significant collection is the Clara Mead Papers. There is considerable overlap with the Mead Family Papers, since Clara's great-great-grandfather, Solomon Mead, was brother to George Washington Mead's

father, Alfhred Mead. Papers of both branches are found in each collection.

Clara A. Mead of Dobbs Ferry died in 1991. Her executrix, the late Lucy Voulgaris, had spent a great deal of time with her, learning the family's background. She made a concentrated effort to preserve, arrange, identify, and transfer the documentary collection to the Westchester County Historical Society. While small parts of this collection were not arranged, she



Lake Waccabuc, ca. 1890, from the Waccabuc House. *Photograph by F.B. Studwell.*

had placed most of it in 10 acid-free boxes; unfortunately, she did not label the folders except with roman numerals, so her arrangement was, in effect, lost. The new arrangement of the Mead Family Papers offered a replicable model for arrangement of the Clara Mead Papers, so the latter collection was also rearranged and properly described and labeled in 20 boxes.

Thus two branches of one family, living adjacent to one another, each preserved a large portion of their correspondence, business records, and personal memoirs during the lifespan of at least four generations. While we might attribute this to a happy accident, it is clear from internal evidence that the Meads deliberately preserved their papers even before 1927. The wisdom and generosity of living representatives of the George W. Mead family of Waccabuc, and of Miss Clara Mead of Dobbs Ferry, have guaranteed that present and future historians will be able to study, in depth, the story of this remarkable family.

And what a story it is! Contained within the 117 boxes and 281 bound volumes are tales of agriculture's development and decline, men's roles and women's growing independence, suburbanization and environmentalism, politics and war. During the long task of cataloguing, in which every item was examined, it became evident that the Meads' love of the beautiful landscape that

is Waccabuc is the most thoroughly documented aspect of their history. The small hamlet of Waccabuc as we know it today is an example of the completion of the suburbanization process that began with the steamboat and the railroad in the early 19th century. In the pages that follow, the Meads themselves tell us how they created a home for themselves and for generations to come.

BEGINNINGS

By the end of the 18th century, Mead Street, Waccabuc's north-south artery, was designated as part of the Vermont Stage Road, which ran from New York City through White Plains and Bedford and onward through Danbury.⁴ Its course was, doubtless not coincidentally, just west of and parallel to the "Manor Line," the eastern boundary of Van Cortlandt Manor, established by its 1697 charter to run 20 miles from the Hudson. East of the line was the Oblong, a tract one and three-quarters mile wide ceded to New York by Connecticut in 1731. With so much unsettled Van Cortlandt Manor land nearer the Hudson, it was probably on the Oblong side that the first settlers of today's Lewisboro acquired their land, perhaps around 1728, coming mostly from the increasingly crowded Connecticut shore towns including Greenwich, Stamford and Norwalk.⁵

The first town meeting of

Salem, later divided into Lewisboro and North Salem, was held April 8, 1747,⁶ and the equally significant founding of the first church followed about five years later. The Rev. Solomon Mead (1825-1812), an "Independent" minister from Greenwich, had been preaching in Lower Salem for some time when, on December 23, 1751, the proprietors of the Oblong deeded two tracts of land for the support of the first Presbyterian or Independent minister to settle in town. On May 20, 1752, a church of 18 members was gathered, and Solomon Mead was ordained to the Gospel ministry, thereafter serving the congregation for 48 years.⁷ He was probably the first Mead in Lewisboro, and his presence drew other members of his extended family.

ENOCH COMES TO WACCABUC

By the time the Revolutionary War broke out, Salem was a settled place, though there was still a great deal of vacant land. The arrival of Solomon Mead's nephew, Enoch Mead (1756-1807), the founder of Mead Street, is dated by both community and family tradition⁸ to 1776. On February 1 of that year he married a distant cousin, Jemima Mead (1756-1837), and they set off from Greenwich for Massachusetts on "a journey of exploration," probably in search of a place to settle. On their return, the tale relates,

		\$	cents
<p>A true and perfect Inventory of All and Singular the Goods Chattels and Credits which were of Enoch Mead late of the Town of Salem in the County of Westchester Decd. taken by Solomon Mead and Abraham Mead Administrators of all and Singular the said Goods Chattels and Credits together with Clark Mead and Martin Mead who Appraised the same on the first Day of October in the year 1807</p>			
Two Stacks of Hay	15		
Two course Stacks of Hay Damaged	6	50	
One course Stack of Hay	6	50	
One course Do Damaged	3	75	
Hay in the drift Barn	35		
Hay in the South Barn	16		
	66	75	
Two Stacks of Hay	15		
Hay in the Little Stable	4		
Oats in the South Barn	6	75	
Potatoes and broom Corn in the Stone Garden	2		
Hay in the old Barn and Stack by the Barn	35		
Hay in the Stable and Stack by the Stable	10		
Flax in the Sheaf	7		
Three Acres of thin Buckwheat	5		
A patch of Buckwheat and turneps	2	50	
Two Stacks of Oats	25		
One Mow of Hay	60		
A Small Mow of wheat	2		
Four Acres of Light Corn on the Ground	12		
A field of Corn pumpkins potatoes and turneps	26		
	217	25	

Inventory of the estate of Enoch Mead, 1807.

their horse died near Long Pond [Lake Waccabuc], and there they stayed.

Since Pastor Solomon was Enoch's uncle,⁹ Enoch had a source of information about the availability of Van Cortlandt Manor land just west of the Salem church, so there may have been a more prosaic reason for their choice than a dead horse. Be that as it may, Enoch and Jemima are said to have built a simple house in 1776 by a good spring on the east side of Mead Street. Elmdon, the fine house they built in 1780, according to a stone in its

chimney, was just west of it, closer to the street. All this took place despite the upheaval of the war, in which Enoch served as an enlistee in the Fourth Regiment, Westchester County Militia, and as an adjutant in the Associated Exempts.¹⁰ Indeed, within three years of his settlement, Enoch paid £945 "York money" for 205 acres of land just east of the Manor line, the first of some 22 purchases.¹¹

While Enoch was, like most Westchester County residents, the proprietor of a farm, his bread-and-butter was doubtless the tavern he

kept at Elmdon. On April 3, 1786, he was granted an excise license "to Keep a Publick Inn or Tavern and to Sell by retail all Sorts of Strong and Spiritous Liquors to be Drank in the House wherein he now Dwells," and the tavern is identified as such on the 1797 town map.¹² His account book for 1794 to 1806 lists many sales of rum, grog, liquor, gin, brandy, cider and victuals, while the very small number of transactions of "yard goods" show that his business was that of tavernkeeper rather than storekeeper.¹³ His position in town was a prominent one: his townsmen

elected him Overseer of the Poor in 1784 and Commissioner of Highways in 1785, and he was called "Esq[ui]re Mead" on the 1797 map. He was also a captain and major in the militia.¹⁴

Profits from his business allowed him to continue the acquisition of land; by the time of his death he owned the home farm as well as two south of it, later known as Homestead Farm and the Lower Farm, as well as a five-acre tract on the north shore of Long Pond [Lake Waccabuc], several woodlots along Goldens Bridge Road [now Chapel Road], and "McCollum's Woods" on the present Route 121.¹⁵

Although Salem was not prime agricultural land, the first generations were able to make adequate livings from it even before grazing and dairying, both of which were better adapted to the soil, became dominant in the 19th century. Surveyor Benjamin Smith wrote a short description in 1797,

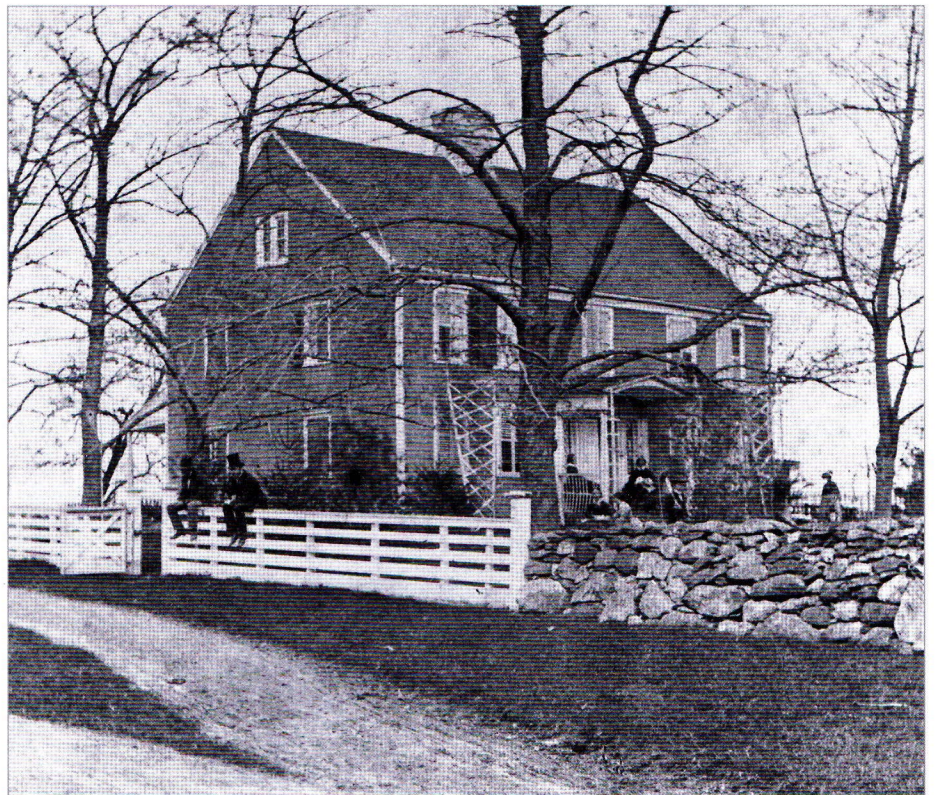
The face of the township is generally composed of ridges and valleys, except some mountainous lands in ye North, South and East lines, and is generally proper for plowing or mowing. The soil produces wheat, rye, Indian corn, buckwheat, oats, and flax; and various sorts of grass, as clover, spear grass, foxtail, red-top, blue grass, and in the wet and swampy grounds coarser kinds of grass, at about one ton per acre, at an average. The timber consists of black,

white and yellow oak, chestnut, white and black ash, maple, some beech and birch, walnut or hickory and white wood. It is well watered with springs, brooks and rivulets. It produces fruits, as apples, pears, peaches, plumbs, and vines thrive well. The fertile land is generally under improvement.¹⁶

Between his surviving account book and the meticulous inventory of Enoch's estate taken by his two sons on October 1, 1807, we can determine the nature of his farming activities. He grew grains (oats,

hogs, chickens and geese. A cider mill listed in the inventory indicates that there was an orchard and that Enoch fermented his own hard cider for sale in the tavern. Account-book entries include sales of butter and cheese, beef, pork and mutton, "Injan meal," and hides, and he generated additional income by pasturing and wintering stock for others, selling wood, and charging "house rent" and for the "use of my team."

The lengthy inventory, while not filled with luxury goods like that of a city merchant, includes much



Elmdon, ca. 1860.

buckwheat, rye, wheat, corn), root crops (onions, turnips, potatoes), fibers (broom corn, flax), pumpkins, and hay; and he kept cattle, sheep,

furniture (no fewer than eight beds), textiles and tableware, as well as a silver watch and a clock. There were three enslaved Blacks¹⁷ to work

alongside the family. There were a number of barns (west, south, old) and at least two stables (one was called "little"), along with the considerable landholdings, all of which bespeak a very prosperous man who had, by his death at 51, made fine provisions for the future prosperity of his family.

ALPHRED MEAD GOES INTO THE CATTLE BUSINESS

When Enoch died, his older son, Solomon, was already married, but his younger son, 26-year-old Alphred, was still single. Elmdon and the home farm were passed down to Solomon, while the place

later known as the Homestead Farm became Alphred's. At first, probably when he married in 1814, he built a small house south of Elmdon on the east side of the street. In 1819 he built The Homestead,¹⁸ and there he and his wife, Polly (Brundige)



Alphred and Polly Mead.

Mead (1791-1878), raised their seven children.¹⁹ They sent their sons to the North Salem Academy: Alfred B., later a farmer and drover in North Salem; Martin Rockwell, a farmer and hotelkeeper at Waccabuc; George Washington, a Brooklyn lawyer and real-estate investor; Joseph, a Waccabuc farmer who died single at age 39; and Erastus F., a New York banker. Daughter Loretta remained at The Homestead and managed the home farm after Joseph's death, while daughter Mary married Gamaliel Charles Benedict and lived in North Salem.

Alphred received only a share of his father's extensive farmlands. His operation, like Enoch's, started out as a general farm. His account book for the years 1814 through 1846²⁰ shows that he was not in the tavern business, and that he grew more grain than Enoch had. His income, too, came from diverse sources: hay, grain (oats, buckwheat, corn, rye, wheat), root crops (potatoes, turnips), animal products (stock, butter, tallow), orchard products (vinegar), but also from house rent, salt, tobacco and codfish, the last three items suggesting he may have done a limited amount of retail trading. A later account book covering the years 1840 through 1852 shows that his butter production increased considerably later in his life.²¹ The earliest statistical description of his farm is found in a fragment of the



Loretta Mead, from a carte-de-visite.

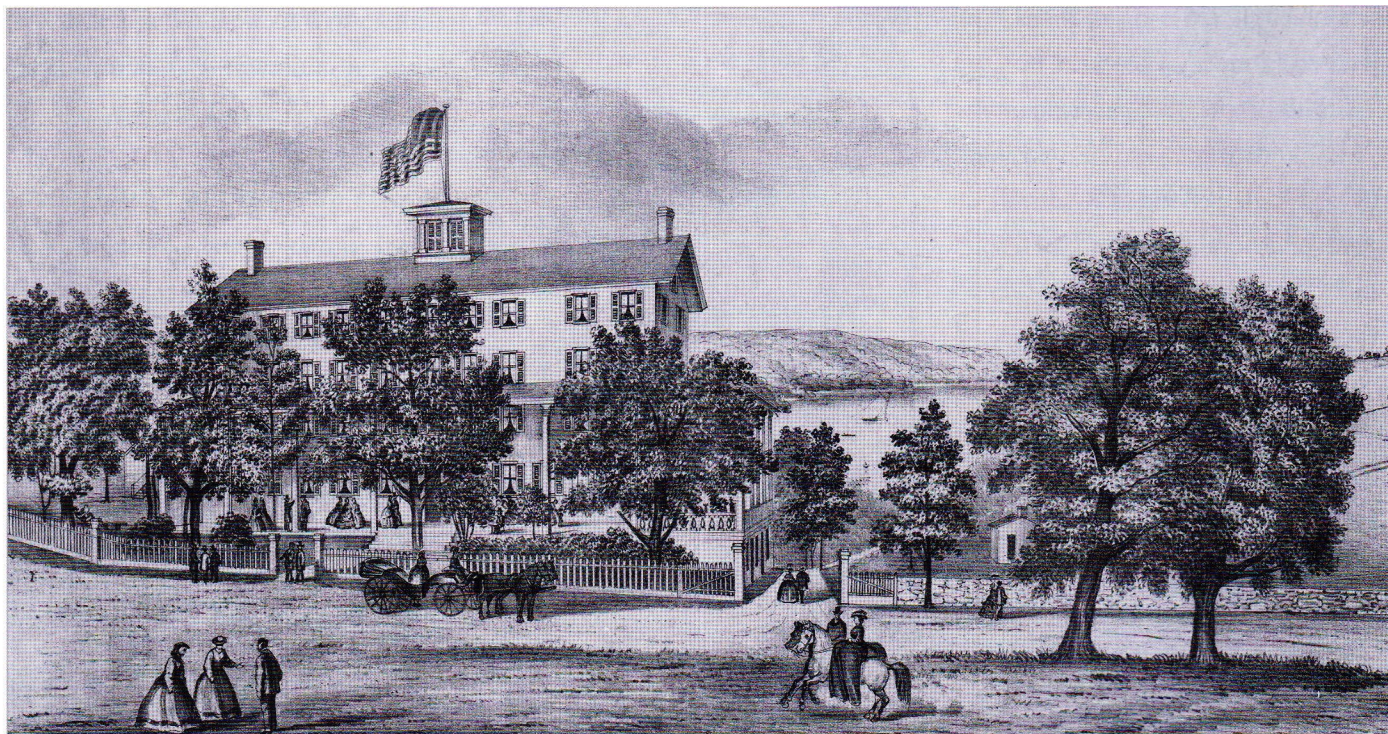
1845 state census agricultural schedule.²² At that time it consisted of 250 acres, of which nine were in corn, six and a half in oats, six and a half in rye, four in buckwheat, and one acre in potatoes. However, a

shift to livestock-based agriculture was well underway with 50 head of "neat cattle," only 12 of whom were milked, producing 1,200 pounds of butter and 400 pounds of cheese—and this *just before* the Harlem Railroad went into service and rendered market shipment to New York City far easier. The farm also had 18 hogs, 14 sheep and nine horses. Five years later 10 milkers produced the same 1,200 pounds of butter, but—however temporarily—Alphred was down to 12 "other cattle."²³

While cattle had been driven over the roads parallel to the Hudson and the Sound for generations, the growth of New York City in the 19th century created an increased demand for meat. In 1817 the first drove of Ohio cattle reached New York City. By the mid-



The Homestead, ca. 1900.



Waccabuc House, ca. 1865.

dle of the following decade Alfhred Mead, still a young man, ventured into the business. His grandson wrote that “Grandfather was a drover” and fattened the cattle in the pastures along Mead Street.²⁴ He sold pork to J. Peck and Son of Sawpitt [Port Chester] in 1821 and 1824, when one of the Pecks came to Waccabuc on a buying trip.²⁵ A series of letters from John Horton of Madrid, St. Lawrence County, dated between 1826 and 1828, solicited information from Alfhred about the prices current in the New York market for both fat and lean cattle, such as two-, three- and four-year-olds. Horton, who took his cattle to the “northern market” at Montreal when the price was better, called himself “an old friend and drover” in

one letter; perhaps he and Alfhred had traveled together.²⁶

The Susquehanna Turnpike through Chenango and Delaware counties was the main route east for cattle droves, and Alfhred sometimes received letters alerting him to the imminent arrival of droves in which he had an interest or for which he was offered first refusal. In the mid-1830s Lyman Bailly and Alfhred’s brother-in-law, Joseph Silkman, wrote him for this purpose from central New York.²⁷

In 1844 two of Alfhred’s sons went on a buying trip to Ohio. Alfhred, the eldest son, was 28, while George was 17, a student at North Salem Academy. Along with Joel Holcomb, they took the steamboat from Peekskill, presumably changing

to the railroad at Albany for Buffalo, then a steamboat to Ashtabula, Ohio, and a stage or a wagon to Warren, Ohio, to “look around for cattle.” George wrote that “there have been a great many buyers here,” but nonetheless the three young men acquired 187 head of cattle, mostly steers, and began driving them east by way of Meadville, Pa., Jamestown, Hornell, Ithaca, Oneonta and Stamford, N.Y., to Catskill, where they crossed the river (it is not known whether they consigned the cattle on boats bound for New York or ferried them across and drove them south) and continued homeward by way of the present Route 22.

By that time the railroads were poised to absorb cattle transport,

ending the droving business in the East. But the Meads continued to sell cattle on the hoof by consigning them to agents at the Goldens Bridge depot, where A.S. Mansir and George B. Stocum issued receipts to Joseph and Martin Mead for calves delivered in 1865 and 1867.²⁸ During the Civil War, provisions of the revenue act required Martin R. Mead to take a license as a cattle broker,²⁹ but by that time the business was incidental to his livelihood as a hotelkeeper. Apparently the eldest brother, Alfred, who settled in North Salem, was the only Mead who continued long in the cattle business.³⁰

MARTIN ROCKWELL MEAD BUILDS A RESORT

An essay by Erastus Mead written as a schoolboy, probably around 1848, opens with the sentence, "Among the many places of resort of the fashionable, is now numbered Long Pond."³¹ These "fashionables"



Octavia and Martin Mead.

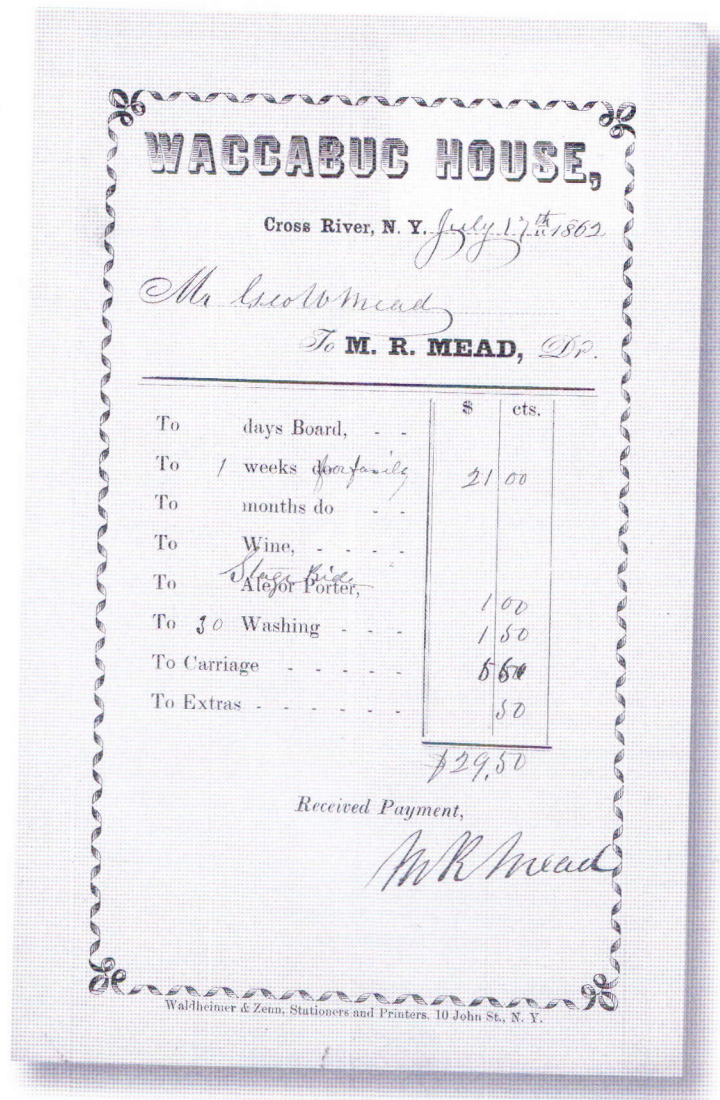
were doubtless brought to Waccabuc by the Harlem Railroad extension into northern Westchester County. Begun in 1832 at the very birth of the American railroad era, this earliest line northward from New York City had only reached the bridge to Westchester [now Bronx] County in 1840 and White Plains in 1844; it was extended from Mount Kisco to Croton Falls in 1847.³² Only then could Lewisboro's three connected lakes make claims as places of summer resort, competing with shore points on Long Island or on Westchester's Sound Shore, which had been accessible by steamboat for almost 40 years.

Nothing could have been more revolutionary for the residents of northern Westchester. A Katonah observer put down his memories 39 years later:

Away back in the dim vista of the past I recollect standing, one soft Spring morning, upon the crest of a grand bank where the hotel is, with scores of my neighbors, and watching and waiting for a certain portentous

Waccabuc House bill, 1862.

event. As we stood watching we heard the thundering and screaming of a locomotive rushing through the Dowburg cut, and before our eyes glided the first passenger train that ever traversed Westchester county since the world began. We congratulated each other, and expressed the hope that it was a sight we might behold if we chose each day, so long as we lived, and that like the rising of the sun it should be a matter of course for all future time.³³



Thanks to the railroad, residents were able to get to New York City without overland travel to South Norwalk, Peekskill or Sing Sing [now Ossining] steamboat landings, and tourists could as easily reach lakeside farmhouses and boarding houses. The railroad also made it easy for farmers to ship their milk to the city in cans, rather than processing it as butter or cheese. Contem-

porary comment indicates that the range for a “milkshed” was four to 10 miles, depending on topography and road conditions.³⁴

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Waccabuc House boathouse.

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Waccabuc’s nearest railroad depots were six miles distant at Whitlockville Station [now Katonah] and five miles distant at Goldens Bridge. Almost immediately, a branch line under separate ownership was proposed from Kensico Station [now Valhalla]

through Bedford, Cross River and North Salem to Danbury, but there is no evidence any construction was begun.³⁵ A direct effect of the Harlem Railroad was the construction of the Waccabuc House, a resort hotel close to the shore at the lake’s western end. Brothers Erastus and Martin seem to have built the hotel in time for the 1856 season, buying

listed in surviving advertisements are fishing, driving, boating, shooting, bowling (in the hotel’s detached bowling alley), bathing and rambling. What the hotel did *not* have was trumpeted by a flyer: “No Tramps! No Bar! No Malaria!”³⁸ No doubt Martin’s relatives benefited economically, as suggested by a much later brochure: “Table will be supplied with pure Milk, Cream, Choice Butter, Fresh Eggs and Vegetables from Waccabuc Farms.”³⁹ In 1860 it seems as though a farm was being operated by the two brothers to supply the hotel, but it is missing from the subsequent censuses.⁴⁰

Following the purchase of the Benedict farm, there was an attempt to create a small number of lots for sale. In 1863 the three brothers, Martin, Erastus and George, ordered that a road, now Tarry-A-Bit Drive, be surveyed from Mead Street eastward. They sold an eight-acre parcel to Leonard D. White, a New York broker, who planted spruce trees and built a “pretty gate” at the Mead Street entrance, but never built a house. In 1889 he offered to sell it back to the family, and it became the site of Tarry-A-Bit.⁴¹

Martin Rockwell Mead died in 1878 and thereafter his widow, Olivia, leased the hotel. On April 1, 1895, she sold it with “all the furnishings, fittings and utensils in Lake Waccabuc Hotel” to Thomas B. Ryder of Brooklyn. In 1896 it burned to the ground.⁴²

GEORGE WASHINGTON MEAD COMES OF AGE

In Martin Mead's post-Civil-War advertising flyer, buried in a reprinted story from the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, is a reference to his brother: "You wind through a wood, at the end of which Mr. George Mead, of Brooklyn, has his summer home." Not only was George Washington Mead one of the first summer residents of Lewisboro—if not the first—it was his wealth, his acquisitiveness and his vision that established Mead Street as a distinctive exurban locality after his death.

George Mead, whom we have already met in connection with his droving adventure in 1844, was born at The Homestead on February 12, 1827. He grew into a short and wiry young man with an abiding interest in natural history. From age 14 to 18 he studied at North Salem Academy

in the winter, working on his father's farm in summer; in 1849 he described himself during this period as "a hail [sic] hearty plough-boy toiling day after day . . . in the very fields where before had labored two successive generations of ancestors."⁴³ According to his autobiography,⁴⁴ he decided at age 18 to pursue a college education, and two days later he began to prepare for it. In the fall of 1847 he entered Yale College with the class of 1851.

He was still an undergraduate when he began buying and selling New Haven real estate; an address he prepared about this time begins with a statement, "There is, perhaps, no



George and Sarah Frances Mead, ca. 1858.

disposition so common to the human family as the strong and seemingly intuitive disposition to become the owners of land."⁴⁵ Few Westchesterites were as driven by the desire to acquire real estate as was George Mead. Even credit investigators remarked on it, calling him "an active, energetic, hard working man, shrewd & careful. . . He always had a fancy for R[eal] E[state] & his operations in this line have been quite extensive."⁴⁶

After "a brief tour of business and observation beyond the Mississippi," he entered Yale Law School in the fall of 1851, graduating two years later. With Enos Taft,



Lakeview Cottage.

his classmate in both the college and the law school, he was admitted to the bar in February 1854 and, as Mead and Taft, they opened a law office in New York City at 237 Broadway on the first of March.

On June 23, 1858, he married Sarah Frances Studwell, the only daughter of John J. Studwell (1813-1884) of Brooklyn, a native of Bedford who had gone to New York City as a young carpenter in 1831 or 1832, and had quickly amassed a fortune as a lumber merchant and later, as a banker, that only grew over the years.⁴⁷

This was a strategic match for Mead, though it was also a love match, and they seem to have lived happily for over 40 years until his death. Their first months together were passed on a Grand Tour of

Europe. Upon returning to the United States, they made their home in Brooklyn to be near her parents, but in the following year “they settled [for the summer] in a cottage which only contained two or three rooms which was formerly a milk house some where on the farm, and moved to the location on the Goldens Bridge Road [now Chapel Road] where with many additions it still stands.”⁴⁸ Known as Lakeview, it was used by George and Sarah and their 11 children for over 35 years.

George started making money in Brooklyn real estate; a record of his transactions in Kings County from 1856 to 1874 lists 119 parcels sold. He practiced law for a decade, retiring in 1864. Just at that moment, another railroad scheme was put forth, and it was to run through

Waccabuc. The New York, Housatonic and Northern Railroad was organized late in 1863, and was planned to start from the Harlem Railroad a little south of the White Plains depot, and run along the old stage route to Danbury, passing east of Rye Lake, through Bedford and Cross River, then up the valley of the present Route 121 until, at Salem Center, it was to follow the former post-route from Peekskill to Danbury and on to its terminus at Brookfield. All these points except the termini and Danbury were between four and six miles from the nearest railroad. George became president of the corporation. At this time the iron horse was regarded as a “sure thing,” for indeed the annual return on investment in the more successful railroads had been shown to be between 14 and 28 percent.⁴⁹ The milk business was described in its prospectus as “the very best paying, of any frieght [sic] transported by the railroads entering New York city,”⁵⁰ and it was hoped that the railroad would “convert the fine grazing district lying easterly from it, into a new milk-producing district.”⁵¹

GENTLEMEN FARMERS

George W. Mead was “retired” from law and, as a man of wealth and influence and a native of the rural district through which it was to pass, he was elected the railroad company’s president, with Daniel



Lake Waccabuc Post Office.

Hunt, Lewisboro town supervisor and a Mead Street resident, as its vice president.⁵² Perhaps it was George himself who was quoted anonymously in the prospectus:

In these retired villages, with their established schools, their churches, and their pure moral atmosphere, and among the thrift and sturdy intelligence of these suburban farmers, many a weary denizen to whom business for the sake of business had become distasteful, and many a household tired of the conventionalities of a constant city life, have already found not only *quiet* homes, but homes of rural beauty and elegant refinement. And yet, as was written by a gentleman intelligent on the subject, a few summers ago, who was even then impressed with the value and importance of this route for a railroad: "It can be safely presumed that thousands of the citizens of New York city have but a faint idea of the pleasant lakes, streams, and beautiful surrounding scenery, or the unrivalled sites for summer residences to be found along this route, not withstanding its nearness . . ." ⁵³

The railroad was never built; George resigned as president in 1871 or 1872.⁵⁴

The combination of gentlemen's country residences with dairy farming was a common practice in the late-19th century. George Mead plunged into it from his Brooklyn office, and by 1870 he controlled some 550 acres of Waccabuc land,



Coralie Mead teaching calisthenics.

500 of them "improved," with a cash value of \$25,000, which is \$400,000 in today's dollars, though the land has appreciated to a far greater degree than specie or prices.⁵⁵ There were 30 milch cows on the place, producing \$2,300 worth of milk for sale annually, more than half of the farm's \$4,000 income.⁵⁶ In 1879 eight milch cows were counted, producing 10,750 gallons for sale, and there were two hired men paid a total of \$600.⁵⁷

The milk was not shipped to the New York market, but instead went to the New York Condensed Milk Company plant at Purdys, driven there daily in a wagon.⁵⁸ The hired men were essential to the operation; a contract with James A. Conklin survives for April 1, 1882, through

April 1, 1883, setting forth his duties and responsibilities:

The said Conklin has engaged to serve as such farmer for the said term . . . The services to be rendered as to consist of the judicious care of the cows & the teams, careful making, cooling and shipping milk each day—the attending to the coming in of the cows—& keeping their times—and on the farm the painting of & putting up of fences, cutting of bushes, putting in bars & bar posts—cutting and harvesting the hay and grain and generally [sic] the work usually done by the wife of the said Concklin in said house . . . ⁵⁹

His compensation was \$30 per month, the use of a house and garden, firewood and a quart of milk daily.

By 1893 Mead Street had two

other gentlemen farmers. Robert Hoe III (1839-1909), George's cousin, owned a 445-acre farm on the present site of the Waccabuc Country Club and the East Ridge subdivision. Another cousin, Herbert Mead⁶⁰ (1845-1909), first owned what was later called the Croft Farm, and then inherited 140 acres south of Hoe. Both men had been raised by Robert Hoe II, and these two cousins seem to have benefited financially from the older man's partnership in the firm that had invented and marketed the rotary printing press. They were, like George Mead, local boys who made

or augmented fortunes in New York City.

As to lakefront property which, even then, would have been highly salable, the family appears to have been too protective of Lake Waccabuc to let go of it. Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., who had a fine house at Salem Center, two miles north of Waccabuc, wrote to George in 1892 about buying 10 acres on the lake, a former sheep pasture adjoining the Fuller place (that is, just north of the lake's west end) but nothing came of it.⁶¹

In 1884 George engaged Palliser, Palliser and Company, New York

architects, to design a new house, which he intended to erect on the hill northwest of the Waccabuc House. The firm sent him a "sketch plan" which has unfortunately not survived, and Ephraim Grummond was hired to build a massive wall of stone blocks at the front of the property. George was, however, unable to find a satisfactory source of water and gave up the idea.⁶² The family remained at Lakeview until 1895, when the 11 children "clubbed together" and built Tarry-A-Bit on land bought back from Leonard White.

George died unexpectedly at his



Tredinnock, 1926, the home of Frances Mead. One of many gracious houses built by family members at Waccabuc, it overlooks the lake at its northwest corner.

Coralie Mead, age 20, in her red Maxwell car, 1902.

Brooklyn home on February 13, 1899, the day after his 72nd birthday. George, Jr., was in Ceylon on an extended world tour, but started homeward as soon as the news reached him. The hard work had begun for the 11 Mead siblings.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Twelve children were born to George and Sarah Frances, 11 of whom lived to maturity. The first child, Alfred Jay Mead, born in late 1859, died at six months.

Four daughters followed in rapid succession, then five sons (two of them twins), with two daughters bringing up the rear. The girls were graduated from Brooklyn's Packer Collegiate Institute, except for Coralie, the youngest, who went to Rosemary Hall. The boys attended a variety of boarding schools, but only the youngest, David, followed their father to college and Yale. One of the twins, John, went into the real estate and insurance business in Bridgeport and died at 36, a suicide precipitated by a failing marriage. David lived in Brooklyn and later Scarsdale, but maintained a summer home called Meeko, the former John Newman Mead farmhouse on upper Mead Street. The other three sons were full-time residents of Waccabuc.



The daughters also made Mead Street their home to a greater or lesser extent. Loretta, the third daughter (but first of all the children to marry) took Herbert A. Smith as her husband, a man who had come from Yale to tutor her brothers. A distinguished forester and a close friend of Gifford Pinchot, he served in the U.S. Forest Service in Washington, and brought his knowledge and connections to the problem of managing the Mead woodlands. Their summer home was Hendy Hap, built in 1903-04.

Frances, the eldest daughter, never married, devoting herself to social work and to her extended family. She built Tredinnock in 1917. The second daughter, Elizabeth, called "Deb," fell in love at age 45 with Richards M.

Cahoone and married against her mother's wishes. After Sarah Frances' opposition waned, the couple bought a lot near Tredinnock and built a cottage there in 1919. The fourth daughter, Florence, married Horace I. Brightman, a New York attorney; they summered at Lakeview beginning in 1920. Alice, the 11th child, married her brother David's Yale roommate, Charles F. Neergaard, a hospital planner, and they summered at The Homestead and later across Mead Street at Gaard House, which they built in 1932. The youngest of all, Coralie, married Robert Brooke, proprietor of the Gramercy Bookshop in New York City; their summer home was Elmdon beginning in 1912. The sons-in-law, except perhaps

Scenes on the Croft Farm, ca. 1905-15: haying, rutabaga harvest.



Neergaard, did not farm; the exception is suggested by a 1924 price list of the Neergaard's Homestead Farm, offering Baldwin, Northern Spy and Winesap apples, and cider—this was during Prohibition, so it was not their great-grandfather's (hard) cider! Anticipating the direct marketing that is only now proving a factor in the survival of small farms, the flyer advertised "selected hand-

picked apples with the rich flavor and juiciness only found in New York State fruit," to be shipped "from Orchard to Consumer."⁶³

Two of the sons, lacking the academic or business acumen of their father and David, devoted themselves to farming. George, the eldest son, never married. In 1891, when he was 22 and his brother

John was 20, they set themselves up as poultry farmers on what they called Farview Farm in Danbury. George was about to turn 30 when his father died in 1899, and it was either George or Martin who took over their father's dairy operation. By that time they were sending their milk nightly by wagon to Goldens



Tarry-A-Bit soon after construction.

Bridge, to be picked up by the night milk train, rather than to the Purdys condensary. Several messages from the operator of the milk station at Goldens Bridge were sent that summer to "Mr. Mead" complaining that his milk wagon almost always arrived late.⁶⁴ In 1903 George acquired title to Herbert Mead's north farm from his mother, named it the Croft Farm, and specialized in white leghorn chickens. At the same time he entered politics, serving as town supervisor (1903-08)

and as a state assemblyman (1909).⁶⁵

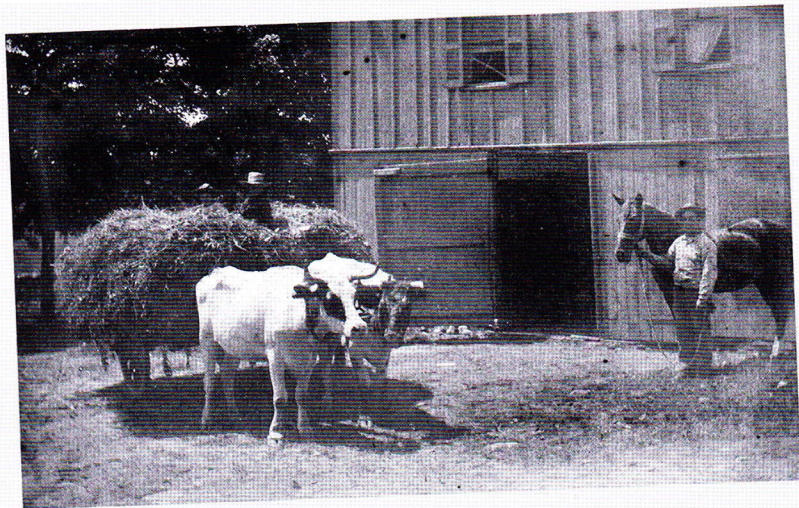
Any gentleman farmer, even those who worked on the land like George and Martin, depended heavily on hired help. In George's case we know a little about his farmer, George W. White, an African American who was working for Mead in 1905. Born in Virginia in June 1876, he was working as a laborer on the farm of Anna Ferris in Somers at the time of the 1900 census, but soon afterward he mar-

ried and started a large family. In 1905, while living at the Croft Farm, his family consisted of wife Rose and children Anna B., 3, George W., 2, Arthur, 1, and Lesley S., whose age was given as one quarter of a year. Photographs in the collection showing a nicely dressed family of seven children suggest that the Whites remained at least a decade, since the oldest boy appears to be a young teenager.⁶⁶

Joseph was 27 when his father died. He took a formal course in forestry and was interested in that



The Mead family, ca. 1887.



Clockwise from the left: Horses and oxen at the Waccabuc House barn, present site of the chapel; more scenes on the Croft Farm of George W. Mead, Jr., ca. 1905-15—George White with the Leghorn chickens, George White plowing, the White children.

aspect of the Waccabuc estate. In business (perhaps only briefly around 1907) as “Mead & Casilear, Brooklyn, real estate, loans & insurance,”⁶⁷ he became the owner of Tarry-A-Bit in 1920, while continuing to write insurance.

Martin was 26 when his father died, and he, like George, was farming in that year, when Samuel H. Lawrence wrote from Cross River that “your big oxen was up in my garden last night . . . they just about ruined my early sweet corn . . . it is a field where I raise everything for

market.”⁶⁸ He married the following summer, and in 1903 built his house, Fairacre, at the corner of Goldens Bridge Road [now Chapel Road] and Mead Street. There he raised his family while operating the Lower Farm, near the south end of Mead Street. He kept a dairy herd at

first, but later leased the farmland to Howland K. Adams while specializing in gladioluses.

The economics of the brothers' operations are hard to understand. What is clear is that, with some short-term exceptions, these gentlemen's farms and their expansive surroundings were always subsidized by the several income sources that supported the 11 siblings.

Sarah Frances' father, John J. Studwell, left nearly his entire \$1.2 million estate in trust⁶⁹ for his wife, his only daughter, and his grandchildren. This provision left Sarah Frances quite wealthy, and her children grew to maturity with the assumption of adequate means. Even after 1929, when the then \$2 million fund was converted to the Studwell Foundation, it subsidized the family's needs.

George Mead's legacy to his children was primarily in real estate. He went through bankruptcy in 1879; a common asset-protection strategy at the time was to convey property to one's wife, which George did with certain Waccabuc parcels in the 1880s.⁷⁰ After his death Sarah and the children continued to acquire contiguous properties along Mead Street. In this way the family added the Elmdon property, the land of Robert Hoe, Jared Mead, Elbert Mead, and northern Herbert Mead farms, as well as tracts of land north of the lake as far as the town line, and west of Mead Street along

Goldens Bridge Road [now Chapel Road] and the Town and Black House farms on Route 121. They also built a monument to George, the Mead Memorial Chapel, in 1905-07.⁷¹

To better manage all the real estate, both at Waccabuc and in Brooklyn, the family incorporated the Kings and Westchester Land Company on July 24, 1905, purchasing the Waccabuc landholdings from Sarah Frances in 1910 by paying her with stock at par.⁷²

The corporation's initial revenue-generating operations were in Brooklyn, where it authorized the construction of an apartment house in October 1905. Soon it discovered a style of building that suited the market; the minutes record, "The popularity of these duplex houses seems to justify us in building them as fast as we can."⁷³ The duplexes were initially rented. By 1911 Kings and Westchester's subsidiary, Kinko Builders, had a builders' department that acted as general contractors for others. This operation continued until Sarah Frances' death in 1919, after which the company sold most of its Brooklyn property, investing the proceeds in mortgages, some of which were held until 1969.⁷⁴



Kinko houses in Brooklyn.

The Waccabuc property was not so easily developed, nor was the family of one mind. But in the years following George's death a tract of land in New Haven, Connecticut, demanded their attention and promised profits similar to those realized in Brooklyn.

BEAVER HILLS

The story of the Beaver Hills development is peripheral to the development of Waccabuc, but it was an important family endeavor for 30 years, and the profits forestalled the need to generate income from the home properties.

In 1851, while George Mead was at Yale, he acquired New Haven real estate including the 53 acres that became Beaver Hills; he sold it to his wife's father, John J. Studwell, in 1874.⁷⁵ In 1907 the Mead family incorporated the Beaver Hills Company to meet a perceived demand for New Haven building



The sales office at Beaver Hills, New Haven, ca. 1908.

lots. By April 1908 they had resolved to build a model “bungalow,” grade streets, and print promotional booklets. Within two years, eight families were living in their new homes. The company soon built a clubhouse with tennis courts, but sales were slower than expected as a projected trolley line did not materialize.

In 1919 pent-up wartime demand helped sell 17 houses at a total of \$120,000. Starting in 1922 the company paid an on-site manager; he received \$80 a week (raised to \$100 in 1928) plus 30% of net profits. The net for 1930 was \$26,838, but the following year it plummeted to \$1.97. A year later, with the year’s loss at \$3,607, the Meads decided to liquidate the company as soon as possible. Losses mounted further, all vacant properties were sold, and there were plans in 1937 to sell foreclosed real estate and second mortgages. According to the

minutes, the company ceased operations in 1938.⁷⁶ But its value in supporting the 10 siblings and, especially, their Waccabuc “colony,” as they usually referred to Mead Street, was significant.

WACCABUC BEFORE DEVELOPMENT

With the passing of George W. Mead in 1899, the Waccabuc estate entered a new and creative era. The attention of the 10 participating children and their eight spouses was directed toward the creation of a sort of exurban paradise, where a few of them made their year-round homes and the rest maintained comfortable summer residences.

As the new century dawned, Mead Street doubtless looked much as it had for a century, but modern conveniences were soon to come. These the family adopted after due consideration. Running water was the most basic and had been avail-

able since the mid-19th century. It was supplied by pumping from the lake into a reservoir, from which gravity fed the family homes. A modern system was put in place in 1903; as late as 1929 it was limited to nine family houses, the country club, and the bungalow of Dr. Frederick Knowles, built in the previous year on land leased from the corporation.⁷⁷ In 1904, since the family was accustomed to gas and electricity at their Brooklyn homes but could not expect either at Waccabuc for the foreseeable future, they acquired an acetylene gas plant to generate electricity.⁷⁸ In 1908 the family, and perhaps one or two neighbors like the Hoe and Studwell estates, subscribed 10 shares to buy \$133 worth of equipment for the Waccabuc Fire Department.⁷⁹ The New York Telephone Company lines arrived in 1913.⁸⁰ Three years later, Alice Mead Neergaard noted “that electricity must come to Waccabuc, and soon, is a certainty, and there is every reason for having it.” The telephone poles were already present and only required crossbars, but Alice was concerned about their effect on the trees, pointing out that the street’s “quaint charm . . . has so long been considered one of Waccabuc’s greatest assets.”⁸¹ She suggested running power lines along the ridge to the east, or in underground cable, but conventional power lines arrived later that year.

The lake was the other focus of

attention. The family had gradually acquired nearly two-thirds of its shoreline, and on their holdings they avoided anything that might destroy its natural beauty. In 1895, while constructing Tarry-A-Bit, they also built a log cabin called the Bungalow Club for their own use. Since Sarah Frances was an advocate of total abstinence and all the children seem to have been drinkers, it provided them with a retreat where drinks could be served without offending their revered "little mother." There was a boathouse for family use on the south shore, later moved by Elizabeth "Deb" Cahoone to the north shore, near her residence. The family had a boat-rental business at the western end of the lake for many years, apparently begun by Joseph soon after the turn of the century. It was incorporated as the Lake Waccabuc Boat Corporation, and by 1924 it was managed by an employee, Alfred Conradi. Although the company was dissolved in 1929, Conradi carried on until 1934.⁸² It was likely a casualty of the Depression.

The Meads guarded the lake even more carefully than their



beloved Mead Street. A few leases for lakefront camps had been granted during George's lifetime, all to Katonah residents: F.B. Westcott, James A. Hoyt, and (for "two tents only"), Henry W. Kellogg. They were all informed in 1905 that they must remove their structures. As D. Irving Mead explained in a 1906 letter to Hoyt, "the only reason the lake is beautiful is because we have tried to be so careful. We want to enjoy the property, and to share it with the greatest number of friends, and even such an attractive camp as yours detracts from the beauties of

Canoeing on Lake Waccabuc.

nature."⁸³

Farther east the lake received rather intensive use. Starting around 1903 Mary F. Benedict, a widow who owned a 226-acre farm south of the lakes and east of the Mead property, began leasing land for small cottages on Lake Waccabuc's south shore. By 1930 about 20 cottages were present. This may also have been the location of Camp Harlem, run by the Harlem Branch of the

YMCA in 1905.⁸⁴

During this period the Mead family was essentially opposed to development, and Waccabuc's location so far from New York City rendered it easy to protect, aside from the ongoing risk of cheap lakefront cottages and camps to the east. As long as the nearest railroad was five to six miles distant and automobiles were rare, commuting was impractical. Several attempts were made during this period to introduce rapid transit to Waccabuc, however. In 1901 construction began on an electric railroad ("trolley") from Goldens Bridge to Danbury. A

power station was erected, most of the road-bed was graded and some of the rails were laid. In early 1904 there was a reorganization at which W.H.I. Howe of North Salem, husband of George Mead's niece Laura, was elected director, but it was never placed in service.⁸⁵

In 1911 the Westchester and Northern Railroad proposed an electric railroad beginning at the White Plains terminal of the New York, Westchester and Boston, to run through Bedford and Boutonville, where it was to divide, with one branch running through Ridgefield to Danbury.⁸⁶ The other branch was

planned to run between the lakes and through North Salem to Brewster. The family protested that a route through the Route 121 valley would be less destructive of the lakes and cheaper to build, while admitting a railroad "is of very great importance in the development of the section," particularly in making it economical to haul building materials to potential building sites. But the Meads wanted no railroad. Sarah "would do almost anything to save the lake . . . and she would not be disappointed if the road were never built."⁸⁷ It wasn't. Waccabuc remained rural and peaceful for a



The Bungalow Club.



Ice-boating on Lake Waccabuc.

generation.

In fact, the era of the electric railway was coming to a close. With the explosion in automobile ownership following World War I, trolleys' ridership decreased, and with the onset of the Depression most of them closed down. At the same time, though Mead Street was not hard-surfaced until as late as 1955, the present Route 121 from Bedford to Cross River was built in 1905 with a macadam surface, Route 121 from Cross River to North Salem was built in 1907, and Route 35 from Cross River to the Connecticut

line was built in 1912. By 1923 the entire route from Bedford to Ridgefield by way of Cross River was paved and considered a "through route." The present Route 35 from Katonah to Cross River remained gravel-surfaced until later.⁸⁸

FORESTRY

While two of the brothers were engaged in farming open lands in Waccabuc, the management of the adjacent woodlots demanded attention if they were going to generate income from otherwise vacant land. In the Bien atlas of 1891, most of Waccabuc is shown as open land,

but two large tracts were forested, the land north of the lake and west of the Manor Line and the land west of the Goldens Bridge Road [now Chapel Road]. A portion of this forested land was already owned by



Ice-cutting on Lake Waccabuc.

the Mead family, and ultimately all of it came into the ownership of the Kings and Westchester Land Company.⁸⁹ An initial step into woodland management was taken a few months before George W. Mead's death, when he contacted Gifford Pinchot of the Division of Forestry in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Pinchot was a friend and colleague of daughter Loretta's husband, Herbert A. Smith. In an official letter of December 5, 1898, Pinchot acknowledged Mead's application for "a woodlot working plan for 200 acres of forest land" at Waccabuc.⁹⁰ The plan is not further documented in the Mead

Family Papers, and very likely George W. Mead's unexpected death rendered it moot.

Joseph Mead had a particular interest in forestry; he took a silviculture course in 1901 and in 1902 and 1903 he purchased copies of *Scribner's Enlarged Lumber and Log Book*. From 1904 to 1910 he had charge of the Waccabuc "Forestry Department." He kept meticulous annual accountings of his operation, which was part of the family's general fund. In 1905, for example, he showed a very small profit, with nearly half of the production of "wood and lumber on hand" at year's end, including cordwood, chestnut

posts, stoneboat planks, white oak flooring, and "sawed wood." An outside forester was brought in a few years later, as the 1912 minutes state that "Fay's report on forestry" had been received; unfortunately the report has not been located.⁹¹ By this time the chestnut blight was in evidence, and efforts were made to take down and utilize the wood of the infected trees.

THE WACCABUC COUNTRY CLUB

As residents of Waccabuc, the family sought methods that would improve their property and generate income, yet preserve their privacy. They had observed the success of the Horse and Hound, a deliberately quaint inn in South Salem that opened in 1907. As one visitor described its setting, "the pervading quiet of a peaceful community, unelectrified by trolleys or railroads, left in the placid prosperity of fertile fields,"⁹² it was increasingly attractive for its very anti-modernism.

The Meads sought people like themselves who would use the property as they themselves used it. Somehow the idea of a country club came up. It may well have been an after-the-fact decision to utilize their latest land acquisition, the 445-acre estate of their cousin, Robert Hoe III, for which the Kings and Westchester Land Company paid \$135,000 in early 1912.⁹³ This large tract was central to Mead Street,



Hauling logs on the Tarry-A-Bit road.



The Lake Waccabuc Inn and Country Club, ca. 1915.

straddling it at its midpoint. Very soon after the purchase the company resolved to establish a country club. They also formed a subsidiary corporation, the Waccabuc Inn Company, to operate an inn at Indian Spring, the Hoe residence. Various houses on the tract were leased to the Waccabuc Inn Company and became the Meads' first rental properties, aside from a few old farmhouses rented to workers.⁹⁴ The

inn itself included 15 rooms and eight baths.⁹⁵

A nine-hole golf course was quickly built, along with two tennis courts and a putting green, and John S. "Jack" Gullen was engaged as the club professional, remaining until his death in 1952.⁹⁶ The cost to grade and seed the course, buy the maintenance equipment, and stock up on tee markers, score cards, golf balls and the like, was \$1,194.62.⁹⁷

A professional hotelman, E.H. Manning, was engaged to run the inn, which opened in August. In its first full year of operation, the inn and country club ran a deficit; in 1915 the deficit was \$307.

By 1916 the inn operation was already proving something of a disappointment, aside from the matter of the deficit. At the family conference in January, Florence Brightman gave her perspective:



The staff at the Lake Waccabuc Inn.

Why was it started?—To sell our property—to have more people around. It has sold no property. Has it brought the people we want? Do we want to hurry to sell our property? Northward the march of land owners takes its way from Mt. Kisco, Bedford, etc. Isn't it better to sit back, hold tight and wait for big prices instead of hunting for people to take our land at less price, or run-

ning the Inn at a loss to get people here who do not buy it.

Why not concentrate upon the Gol[f] Club? Boom it. Get desirable members and is not this the psychological moment to call the Inn the Waccabuc Club Inn? Run it on A No.1 lines for the Club members and introduced guests but more like a private house⁹⁸

It was during the 1910s that many of the sisters established summer homes on Mead Street by pur-

chase of houses or building lots from the corporation. In this way Coralie acquired Elmdon in 1912, Frances acquired land for Tredinnock in 1914, Elizabeth bought land next to Frances in 1916, and Florence bought Lakeview in 1920. But efforts at attracting others were clearly not successful. In late 1913 the corporation voted to build a house across from Elmdon for lease to John R. MacNeille; this single attempt at "development" does not

appear to have been undertaken.⁹⁹ In 1923 Horace G. Reed, a partner at Sullivan and Cromwell, the white-shoe Wall Street law firm, expressed an interest in purchasing two lots totaling 10 acres near Perch Bay for a summer residence, but that, too, seems to have fallen through.¹⁰⁰ The only pre-Depression development seems to have been Oak Knoll, the bungalow of Dr. Frederick Knowles, for which the corporation issued a lease in 1928 (he surrendered the lease and sold his improvement back to the corporation in 1931) and a sale of land on the northwest corner of Mead Street and Schoolhouse Lane in 1929 to Bayard F. Pope, which was bought back by Charles Neergaard in 1935.¹⁰¹

The inn was operated until World War I made it impractical; it then remained closed for two years.¹⁰² In 1920 it reopened under the management of Alice Neergaard and her friend, Carina Eaglesfield, with Rose Swanson, Mrs. Neergaard's Orkney-born housekeeper, as cook. Despite everyone's skepticism, Alice produced a tidy profit of \$825. She noted an interesting clientele that summer, including Herbert Hoover, and remarked that "some patrons have formed the habit of motoring up from N.Y. and back the same day because they love the Inn so."¹⁰³ With various man-

agers working under Alice's oversight, the inn continued to make a profit in succeeding years until, in 1925,¹⁰⁴ it was leased to the

Waccabuc Country Club. A second nine holes was added east of Mead Street to strengthen the golf operation.



The inn dining room.



A bedroom at the inn.

COTTAGE RENTALS

Cottage rental was an ongoing source of income, although the net was reduced in many years by repairs necessary to maintain poorly constructed structures, some of which had originated as farm outbuildings.



Garden Cottage, one of the Mead rental properties.

A manager's salary and other overhead were charged to the cottage account by the company as well. Still, until the end of World War II, Waccabuc was a quiet summer resort, and the cottage rentals were a dependable source of income. The net loss on the Westchester property was shown on the company's books for 1914 as \$11,412,¹⁰⁵ so despite the Studwell Trust income, the revenue from New Haven and from Brooklyn, additional revenue to offset the loss was needed.

George, who had charge of the

club's development, was the first rental agent. The inn, the club and the cottage business were less than five years old when World War I intervened, and during the period the inn was closed, the cottages were neglected. It was not until the

spring of 1921, with Alice in charge, that they were fixed up. In that season four cottages were rented and brought in \$1,800. By judicious renovation of various structures, Alice increased the inventory to nine cottages in 1925, realizing \$4,175. One of these was the New Curiosity Shop, a chicken coop moved to the northeast corner of Mead Street and Post Office Road and made into a tiny shop building for two of the granddaughters, Emma Mead and Sarah Smith, who paid \$25 rent for the season. The five-year summary

showed a net profit to the company of \$4,123, after paying Alice a salary of \$1,000 per year (about \$11,000 in today's values). In the 1927-31 period there were seven properties rented.¹⁰⁶ In 1933 there were 11, although this number included some of the old farmhouses rented to workmen.¹⁰⁷

Joseph's daughter, Frances G. Mead, took over the cottage operation in 1931 and carried it on until the end of cottage life at Waccabuc shortly after 1950. In the late 1930s there were eight cottages rented, two of them to Mead grandchildren. Frances Mead noted that the 1930s were rocky. In 1932 rentals went begging, forcing prices downward in 1933, while 1938 saw landlords "thrown well back to their recent position of bowing and scraping." She reported that rentals around Bedford and Mount Kisco were roughly 20% higher than at Waccabuc, but in both 1937 and 1938 the cottage rental business showed a net profit, which was not bad for the Depression.¹⁰⁸

DREAMS OF A GARDEN SUBURB

Despite Florence Brightman's 1916 injunction to "boom" the country club, the family launched the next phase in the development of Waccabuc by retaining a landscape architect to plat a garden suburb. On July 24, 1917, Charles

Neergaard, acting as treasurer, wrote to Olmsted and Olmsted, Boston landscape architects, that "we are considering adding to our Colony by selling some parts of the property to friends of the family," and asked for an estimate of the charges for "laying out a plan for us." On September 1 Charles, David and George were constituted as a committee to select a landscape architect to recommend to the board.

Neergaard contacted Charles W. Leavitt of New York on September 7. Leavitt visited Waccabuc later that month, and John Olmsted visited in October. Herbert Smith thought Olmsted best "and did not approve of Mr. Leavitt," based in part on a confidential conversation with Frederick Law Olmsted, whom he knew. Later Smith changed his mind, thinking that Olmsted's proposal required immediate implemen-

tation to be effective. Ultimately Leavitt was their choice. The war intervened and Leavitt was not authorized to proceed until August 1919, at a price of \$4,500-\$6,000. His plat was completed by the end of the year, and with it came the recommendation that they hire a crew to cut trails along the lines of his proposed roads.¹⁰⁹

Subdivision plan for Waccabuc, prepared by Charles W. Leavitt, 1919.





The foot of Mead Street at NY Route 35, ca. 1940.

The plan was an ambitious one. It reserved 85 acres around the lake, but otherwise carved up the Mead holdings into lots of between six and 25 acres, mostly on new, curvilinear roads. There was provision for shops just north of the inn, a possible private school, a village green and a community house, and a number of “workmen’s cottages” on Route 121 and Todd Road on the western edge of the tract, along with small house lots in the East Ridge section.¹¹⁰

In the end, nothing was done. As Florence had pointed out, suburban conditions had reached Mount Kisco and Bedford, but the time was not right for Waccabuc to be developed into building lots. Commutation to lower Manhattan, where virtually all white-collar employment was then concentrated, required a drive of 10 to 12 minutes or more, a railroad trip of about 95 minutes,

and a subway ride of another 10 minutes or so, totaling (not including waits between the legs) roughly two hours.¹¹¹

Instead the family set their sights on a much smaller project, a cottage development for the meadow south of the inn, and paid \$75 for Leavitt to draw up the map.¹¹² This map has not been located, and no action seems to have been taken on this plan.

LOOKING AHEAD

In the midst of the expansive planning of a garden suburb, Sarah Frances Studwell Mead died, on June 16, 1919. She was 82. While it is clear from the timing of the initial approaches to landscape architects that she accepted the need to sell land, her death rendered it more imperative because of the division of the assets that had carried the

deficits for so many years. Yet the loss of her unifying force made the course far more difficult. United by their devotion to their “little mother,” the 10 surviving siblings had always surmounted any disagreements. Ted Smith, the oldest of 10 surviving grandchildren, was 19 the year his grandmother died; in the end there would be 14 grandchildren in five households. Aside from Alfred and John, the first death among the children followed six years after Sarah Frances, placing Loretta’s widower and grown children in the role of *per stirpes* shareholders. A complex operation was about to become far more complex.

Planning was limited during the decade following receipt of the Leavitt plan. The Meads continued to dream of the expansion of their “colony” as laid down on paper by Leavitt. Only the buyers were missing. Yet even theoretical buyers posed problems. A letter of Richards Cahoone to Herbert Smith early in 1921 expresses the concerns held by the family members: how could they add residents to a close-knit community without taking in people who might prove an annoyance? Cahoone wrote,

I am personally [*sic*] inclined to agree with you that it is well to be fairly liberal in the admission of new members to Waccabuc. But the personal element is tremendously important. I would not, speaking for myself, blackball anyone because of my per-

sonal dislike, but I don't blame anyone else for doing so. That is up to the individual, and the composite of the whole Mead tribe will be pretty safe.¹¹³

Writing four years later, Alice expressed support for the policy of "introducing more people into the community through the Inn, the Cottages and the Club." A memorandum prepared at the time indicated Horace G. Reed was contemplating buying a lot. While apparently never formalized or consummated, it gives a clear picture of the family's position. It required building plans to be submitted for approval, a first-refusal clause, a clause specifying reversion if a lot was not built upon within five years, and careful restrictions on lake access and power and telephone lines.¹¹⁴ Yet the cottage rental program was being expanded successfully, generating modest income and bringing congenial people to Waccabuc. So hope sprang eternal that an army of purchasers was still to come.

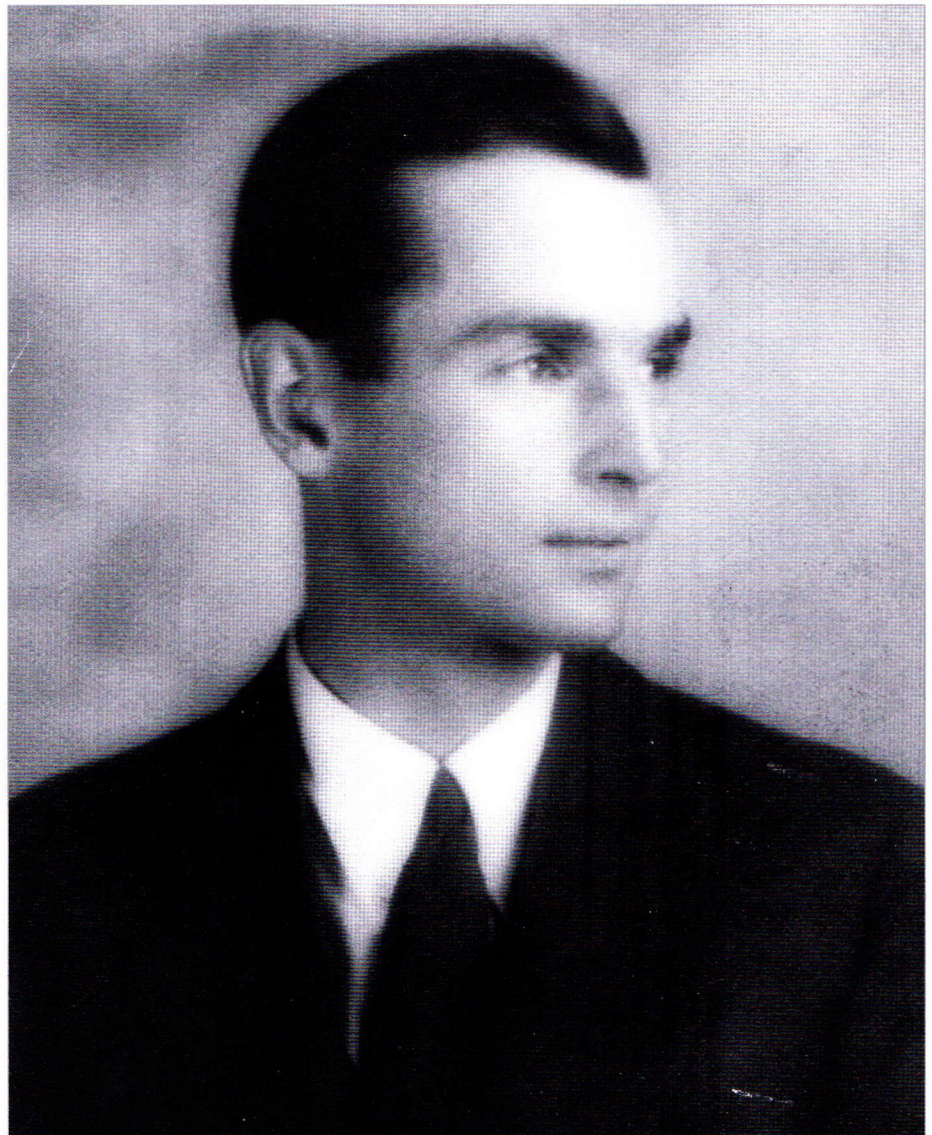
Each year the family looked with trepidation at the emerging deficit on Waccabuc operations, which came from ownership costs, improvements and maintenance. Taxes, interest on mortgages and, later, a property manager's salary were considered the cost of ownership; capital projects, which were elective, yet very important to the ongoing investment, were the cost

of improving the property. Income from Waccabuc, applied to these expenses, left a sum that, in the words of Assistant Treasurer Earl Smith, "ought to cover . . . the costs of operating the property"—the maintenance of buildings, roads and grounds. But it didn't. In 1929 the deficit after maintenance was \$2,700.¹¹⁵

Through the decade following Sarah Frances's death, management

continued as it had been. As Earl Smith recalled years later,

The country property was managed for many years by Messrs. George, Joseph and Martin Mead. The first and the last named were engaged in farming and used a considerable portion of the property at one time or another in their operations. . . . As time went on, when the need arose for some job to be done, either George or Martin Mead did it with



Earl Smith.

their own men and teams or they engaged men for the work, supervised them and let them go again when the job was finished. This was adequate to maintain the looks of the property and required no organized labor force and no Company equipment.¹¹⁶

At the start of 1929 the family took the major step of placing the property in the care of one of the grandsons. Earl Smith was 26 at the time, the son of Herbert and Loretta (Mead) Smith. He had grown up in Washington, D.C., where his father was with the Forest Service, and

summered at Henty Hap, their stone "cottage" north of the chapel. After graduating from the Thacher School in Ojai, California, he went to Yale, where he acquired professional credentials as a forester. His attachment to the land and his interests in forestry and agriculture led to a lifelong devotion to Waccabuc.

As an employee of the Kings and Westchester Land Company (after 1933, Mead Property, Inc.), his duties encompassed four areas of responsibility: improvements to the

property, maintenance of buildings and grounds, operation of revenue-generating business enterprises (ice, water, cordwood, contract labor), and management of the woodlands. He was not expected to do the work himself, but was authorized to employ labor. In 1929 there was a full-time employee, Jacob Schmid, and a day laborer.¹¹⁷ Although the company already owned a motor truck, Earl added a team of horses and a full-time teamster in 1932. The work force, of course, fluctuated with demand and financial con-



Aerial view of Waccabuc looking northeast, ca. 1940.

straints. Beginning in 1936 the golf course maintenance was returned to company hands as a revenue-producing contract, advantageous since "the rush seasons for the Company occur at different times than on the golf course and it has been possible to switch men and equipment back and forth."¹¹⁸

In his first year Earl developed a comprehensive plan for woodland management. There is little evidence of a coherent forestry program after Joseph relinquished it in 1910. Earl's meticulous proposal offered family members the opportunity to revive this operation. According to Earl, woodland management addressed two objectives: to improve the looks and value of the property by maintaining a fully stocked, healthy forest property, and to increase the revenue derived from the property by the sale of forest products.¹¹⁹ Earl categorized the company's 1,290 acres (several hundred acres having been sold to family members over the years were no longer company property): 267 acres were in agricultural use, including the golf course; 208 acres were in old fields, 70 acres of which were rented as pasture and 40 more could be; and 116 acres were in open swamp. That left 699 acres in forest of varying quality, the largest part of which being the best, mixed hardwoods, amounting to 35% of the total land area of the company holdings.

Earl estimated the woodlots contained 2,800 cords of wood,

54,000 railroad ties of various sizes, and 655,000 board feet of lumber. He also pointed out ancillary uses, some of which could generate revenue: shooting, trapping, picnicking, camping and horseback riding.

Meanwhile, the company's agricultural land was mostly leased to others. In 1933 leases totaled 191 acres to four farmers for land rent of \$1,196.50, while "Howland Adams is permitted to let his cattle in on 50 acres of pretty poor pasture." Both George and Martin operated farms on contiguous land that was not company-owned, although they were both nearing the end of their lives and their operations were winding down. The most important rental was the 70 acres of the golf course, at a per-acre rate over four times that of farmland. In addition, the company cut and sold hay from its 150 acres of hayfield.¹²⁰

In his 1934 report Earl noted that much of the hay ground produced poor quality grasses. "Good quality mixed hay and alfalfa can probably be marketed at a profit," he wrote. "The poorer quality hay, which will be produced on much of our land for many years, will probably be difficult to dispose of except in small amounts. Some form of stock on the property may become necessary."¹²¹

In 1939 Earl presented a somewhat revolutionary proposition to the company. With the objectives "to decrease expenses; to increase

income," he suggested assembling 150 acres of company land as a dairy farm, not to be operated by Mead Property, but to be leased. He pointed out a lease would produce more revenue than the company realized on operation of the same amount of land. On December 23, 1939, the company approved the sale of farm equipment and team to Earl, along with the lease of a farm of about 160 acres at a 1940 rental of \$1,000, with "a provision for the release of such parcels as might be needed for residential purposes."¹²² Earl operated this dairy farm and its milk route for over 20 years.

There is little evidence in the Mead Family Papers that the forestry program ever achieved the success Earl envisioned, and the ancillary uses were even less realized. Perhaps this was due to the increasing pressure to develop or sell that created differences of opinion among the family members. However, Earl knew what he was doing; in concluding his report he pointed out:

The ability to recognize and find more and more use of the land owned by the company will continually add to its value as a family estate and in like proportion postpone the time when it will be found more advantageous to dispose of at least some part of it.¹²³

Earl loved the Waccabuc countryside, but he understood the development pressure that was coming.

Outside forces were adding to the increasingly detached nature of the shareholders, as younger Meads sought their livelihoods away from Mead Street.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Changes in corporate structure took place before the next stage of planning. In 1929 the Studwell Foundation was incorporated, and its trustees held "a general discussion of the best method to provide for the investment of the funds now held by the Irving Trust Company as Trustee of the John J. Studwell Trusts," which totaled over two million dollars. These funds provided the family members with their income, and in effect permitted them to carry the Kings and Westchester holdings in Waccabuc at break-even or loss. Their performance was affected by the Depression, as a 5% return was reduced to 4% as of March 1, 1932, but the following two years showed a net gain in assets.¹²⁴

As David Mead put it, the Kings and Westchester Land Company name had always been a handicap, "too much like a land scheme rather than a family holding company," and the Brooklyn interests had been reduced to a defaulted mortgage, a single lot, and "a few doubtful assets," so it was decided to form a new corporation. Mead Property, Inc. was incorporated on December

24, 1932, and received 1,322 acres of land in 12 parcels from the Kings and Westchester on January 7, 1933.¹²⁵ Mead Property, Inc. became the new owner of the "country property," charged with attempting to make a profit on a combination of revenue-generating businesses and land sales. Kings and Westchester continued to hold Brooklyn assets and was to receive foreclosures of mortgages held by the Studwell Foundation.

The Mead Property holdings were in a section of the Town of Lewisboro, which had not, in the 1930s, seen any significant suburbanization. The hamlet of Goldens Bridge, on the western border, was a station on the Harlem Railroad and served commuters, but they were not many. The only development of building lots elsewhere in town had been lake communities which, thanks to their placement, their layout, the size of their lots and the original construction for seasonal residents, were essentially resorts, despite relative proximity to New York City. These were Lake Kitchawan (1925), Lake Katonah (1926), the Goldens Bridge Cooperative Colony (1927), and Truesdale Lake (1930s).¹²⁶

The State of New York granted authority to towns to create planning boards, and, in 1932 the Lewisboro Town Board did so. The new entity issued the first "Rules of Procedure" for the development of

property late that summer. Mead Property expressed itself in favor of zoning by a vote on May 26, 1934. Such landowners' opinions were taken into account, and, in 1936 a zoning ordinance and map were approved by the Town. Aside from the lake communities and hamlets, the rest of the town was designated "residential acreage zoning," with minimum lot sizes of 43,560 square feet. This map governed development until 1955, when, in response to the increase in suburban pressures following World War II, it was entirely revised.¹²⁷

During this period of Earl Smith's careful management, the family was not doing very much in the way of planning. The hope of land sales remained alive. In 1937 Mead Property paid \$30 for 700 road maps to Lake Waccabuc, which were to be sold at the New Curiosity Shop at a price of two for five cents—this can only have been a weak attempt at publicity.¹²⁸ In a circular letter of July 24, 1936, David Mead reminded the family that Sarah Frances "wished that each of us should have a home at Waccabuc," and said he was sure that the younger generation would "continue the underlying principals [sic] of corporate control of the family property."¹²⁹

But there was a problem with that vision. As the liquid assets had been buffeted by the financial crisis of the 1930s, and property values



John J.S. "Jack" Mead.

costly lifestyle. The family's consultant, Charles Dexter, observed this in 1940 when he wrote, "There is not only a probability that some of them will marry and move elsewhere (as have some of the grandchildren) but that they will many of them be financially unable to carry on with the taxes and upkeep that go with the homestead."¹³²

Loretta Mead Smith's children grew up in Washington, D.C., spending summers at Hendy Hap. Ted, Earl and Sally Smith (later Mrs. William Marseilles), the eldest group of grandchildren, all made their year-round homes on Mead Street. All three of Joseph's children lived most of their lives on Mead Street: Frances, who never married; Emmy Lou, who married late and had no children; and John J.S. "Jack" Mead, who was a lawyer in White Plains

and served as town supervisor from 1934 to 1944 and again from 1956 to 1960, and as state assemblyman from 1961 to 1965. Jack remained in Waccabuc until his death, though eventually Frances and Emmy Lou moved to Salem, Washington County. Of Martin's two surviving children, neither established a permanent home on Mead Street.

would soon begin an inexorable climb, the cost of subsidizing even a reduced tract was more than many family members could justify. Between 1929 and 1938, the company showed a modest operating profit only in 1930, and operating losses every other year, reaching a high of \$19,240 in 1937.¹³⁰ The average

annual loss was calculated in 1939 as \$12,000, or \$100 per month for each of the *per stirpes* shares¹³¹; this is equivalent to a subsidy of about \$17,400 per year (in present dollar values) *per stirpes*. Further, many of the younger generation followed professions that both drew them away from Waccabuc and paid salaries that could not support a

Caroline married the founder and headmaster of South Kent School, while Elizabeth, known as "Tid," married Bob Murdock, a New York realtor, and spent summers at Waccabuc, but lived in New York City until her death in 2006. David Irving Mead was a Brooklyn banker who lived in Scarsdale and spent summers at Meeko on upper Mead Street. One of his sons died in an aviation accident during World War II, but his other three children have followed lives and careers far from Mead Street, except that David, Jr., known as "Dimmy," lived at Tredinnock from 1949 to 1953 and at Meeko from 1969 to 1982, during the periods that professional opportunities required or permitted him to live at Waccabuc. Finally, Coralie had one daughter who lived in Scarsdale.¹³³

The ties to the land were weakened during this generation, and by the time the next generation grew to maturity, they were weak indeed, with only two Smith great-grandchildren making Waccabuc their primary residence. Earl's plan to lease a dairy farm was projected to reduce the annual loss by \$4,900, but it could not put Waccabuc on a paying basis for the increasingly dispersed heirs, some of whom, like Caroline Mead Bartlett, were rarely present, and for whom the unproductive asset was a disappointment.

John J.S. Mead put the problem succinctly:

Primarily our difficulties stem from the fact that the ratio of liquid to non-liquid assets of the corporation established in the early twenties has disappeared and we are left with insufficient cash to carry the property at Waccabuc in the manner we have followed in the past.¹³⁴

When the Brooklyn property was liquidated, those assets were used to create an investment fund "which was sufficiently large to pay the expenses of the maintenance of the Westchester property, and at the same time to pay dividends to the stockholders."¹³⁵ At the start of the 1930s the company held \$359,700 in securities and \$125,000 in mortgages, but at decade's end the values had dropped to \$21,700 and \$24,000 respectively, through a fall in stock values, the awarding of dividends (though this practice was ended in 1932), and deficit spending. By 1939 the principal, except for the real estate, was nearly exhausted, and no longer subsidized the deficit on the estate. It was at this time that the family began to seek advice from a professional. Jack Mead took the first step by discussing the problem informally with a White Plains mortgage broker.¹³⁶

A committee consisting of D. Irving Mead and John J.S. Mead prepared a lengthy report that analyzed the problem but made no effort to propose a specific solution. They did suggest adjusting the cottage rents and going ahead with a

dairy-farm lease, concluding, "We feel that it is very definitely necessary to . . . figure out some solution which will protect Waccabuc, keep it as we know it today and yet make it possible to carry on the Waccabuc property."¹³⁷ Even if unstated, the family was becoming aware that land sales must be consummated.

The next report was entitled "Memo on Sales of Property at Lake Waccabuc."¹³⁸ It identified a number of questions that had yet to be answered: what property to sell and how much, what size lots to sell, how to maintain restrictions, what improvements to make before sale, how to price the offerings and, finally, "how the sale of this property shall be handled and by whom."

The family's greatest concern was always how to restrict those who would be permitted to buy, and this continued to affect their ability to agree upon a course of action. At the August 1939 meeting Bob Murdock and Charlie Neergaard were appointed a subcommittee to investigate forms of deeds that were used to keep communities restricted. There were many aspects to this issue, including size of plot, use, design, color, grading, subdivision and easements. Their consultant expressed concern that "lawyers handling an estate would not hesitate to sell to a developer who might build houses in the form of Donald Duck or the then reigning fad of the nation."¹³⁹ But it's clear that

retaining a familiar cultural atmosphere was important, so "eligibility to purchase" always figured in the discussion. When the family drew up lists of those they were willing to approach as potential buyers, the names were those of present or past summer tenants, people already known to them and thus predetermined to be "safe." A 1940 list contains 11 names, all unmistakably Anglo-Saxon except William T. Kennedy.¹⁴⁰

It was finally agreed by unani-

mous vote to proceed with a plan to sell off sufficient property to alleviate the tax burden and create a fund to make up the annual loss. Advice was sought from an outside consultant, Charles E. Dexter, Jr., a New York City mortgage broker, who was retained by a vote on January 19, 1940, to prepare a "report with recommendations" for a consideration of \$500. The report was submitted on March 15, 1940, and provided a realtor's perspective on the problem the family was facing.

Dexter noted that the family felt strongly that they did not want to

develop the lake's immediate surroundings, but that in consequence, "with one or two exceptions," they had no property for sale that had even a view of the lake; thus they were forfeiting their most promising sales appeal. Ponds, however, could be built (for a price, of course), and this he felt would compensate in part. Dexter also recognized the uniqueness of Waccabuc: "you have a community quite unlike anything else I know of this near New York City."

In his minutely detailed report,

The Mead family, summer of 1935.



Dexter suggested retaining the lake frontage for five to 10 years, but initially selling a variety of properties, including the rental cottages, open land for large homesites, wooded land for large and small homesites, and homesites surrounding the second nine of the golf course.¹⁴¹

In July 1940 a "Committee on the Future of Waccabuc," consisting of David and Jack Mead and Bob Murdock, recommended offering outlying parcels for sale, reserving the lake frontage, and retaining Mead Street property between Elmdon and Meeko except for sale to family members. They suggested that Bob Murdock be appointed sales representative.¹⁴²

A sales campaign under Murdock's oversight was begun in the summer of 1940, focusing on 15 to 20 parcels to be sold, and proceeding slowly and conservatively on personal recommendations. It produced little in the way of results, aside from concluding a sale to the Misses Edith and Mabel Ashley, long-time summer cottagers.¹⁴³ Indeed, by late November of 1941, Bob Murdock felt that there was "considerable feeling of dissatisfaction with the seeming inactivity of the sales department," and recommended that it be given to someone who could make it a full-time endeavor.¹⁴⁴ And then, just 10 days later, Pearl Harbor was bombed and everything changed.

WARTIME

By the start of America's entry into World War II, Earl Smith's careful program of land management had improved the Mead Property holdings. His own dairy farm, on land leased from the corporation, was in good order. On the corporation's East Lots, Smith had planted potatoes, and seeded oats, corn and hay. By contrast, the neighboring Herbert Mead property "yields nothing [and] is an unsightly mess winter, spring and summer."

Smith knew he would have to carry on with shrinking resources due to war mobilization. The club made the decision to open in 1942 on a reduced scale, but Smith, who was responsible for the Mead Property contract to maintain the golf course, pointed out that "men and machines [were] mowing grass and trimming, raking and top-dressing and for what?—well, six days a week for rabbits and the seventh for golfers." This work had to continue, because the condition of the club grounds helped create the appeal to buyers the Meads needed, and restoration of a neglected golf course would cost thousands more than its ongoing maintenance.¹⁴⁵ Still, all other maintenance on the property was substantially reduced.¹⁴⁶

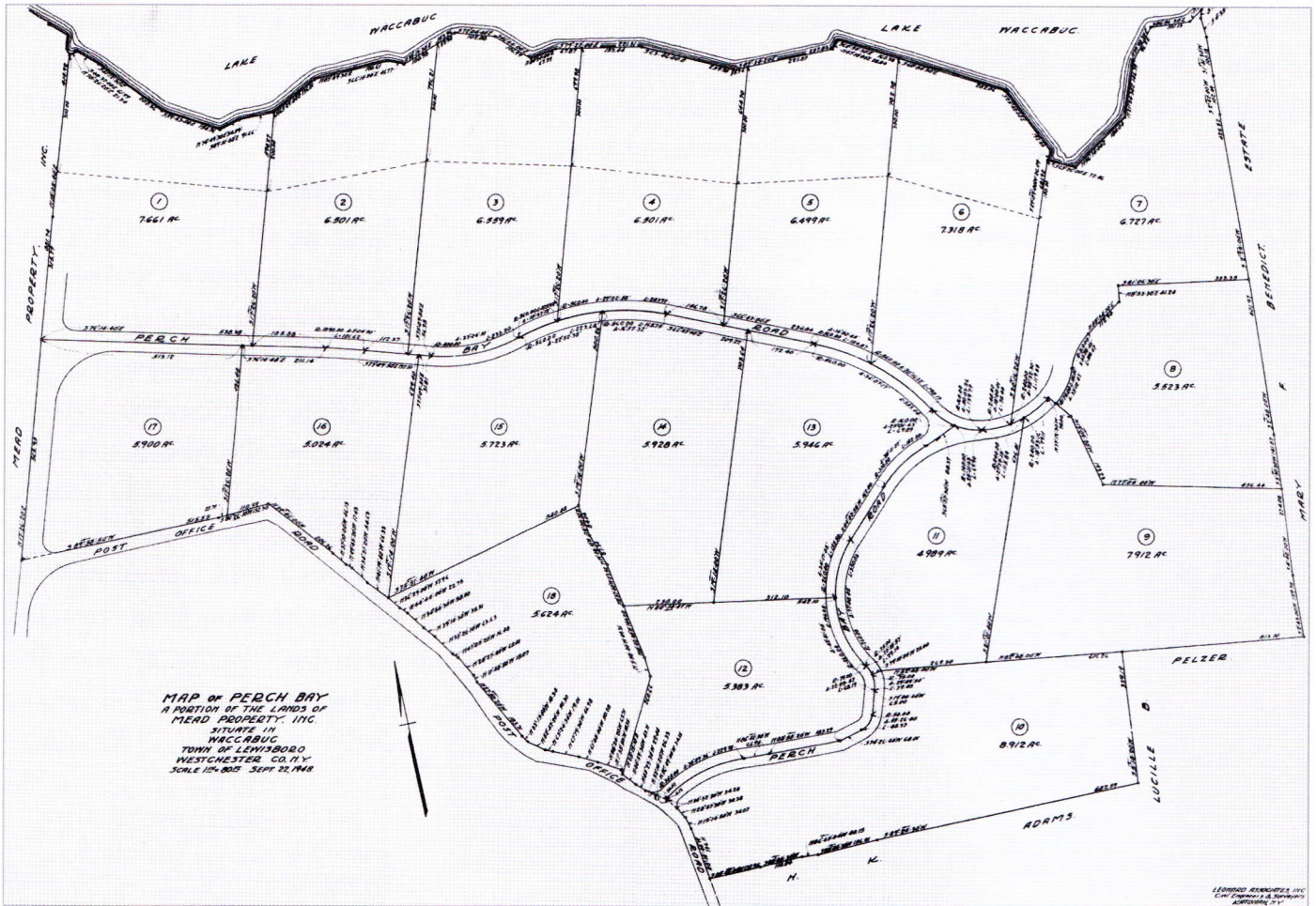
By April 1942 the family recognized that development opportunities had dried up due to the order of the federal government shutting

down construction. "Prospect for the sale of land appears to be gone," Earl wrote in July 1942. Yet the sale of existing properties continued; in October 1942 a sale of the Town Farm was negotiated, and in February 1943 the corporation offered for sale four of its rental properties: Lakeview, Hendy Hap, Cedarfield and Appledore.¹⁴⁷ The schoolhouse and 13 acres were sold in 1944, and 10 acres on the west side of Mead Street in 1945.¹⁴⁸

INTO THE SUBDIVISION BUSINESS

The war's end was a relief, as it promised an end to restrictions and materials shortages, but some expected a recession to follow. In consequence, a market for vacant land did not emerge immediately, as did the market for dwellings. The family remained of two minds about development, but necessity was driving them. Assessments had been kept down in Lewisboro, but "even at that level profitable agricultural operation has become almost impossible."¹⁴⁹ The taxes on Waccabuc were \$8,150 a year, driving an operating deficit in the \$10,000-\$20,000 range. This had been subsidized by the corporation's liquid assets, which were nearly gone, and by piecemeal sales of the improved properties.

In a 1946 circular letter Jack Mead pointed out the methods by which the family could keep Waccabuc as it was. An assessment



Perch Bay subdivision map, 1948.

on “the property owners and the members of the company” was one, but that was likely to be unpopular. Another was to subsidize the property through loans or other methods from the Studwell Foundation, which was still reasonably healthy and producing income of \$27,500 a year in 1945. Yet the individual shares of ownership in the two entities, while overlapping, were not equitable, and thus this plan, though offering a useful tax offset for the Studwell Foundation, would not be financially fair to some members of

the family. As a 1947 report noted, too, “income from this source is the main source of support for many of the family.”¹⁵⁰

Jack Mead recommended that the sale of land be undertaken when the market revived. At the meeting where his position was presented, Earl Smith, ever the steward of the land, presented a counter statement. In the summer of 1947, following a report by a committee which studied “the future of Waccabuc,” the board voted “that all possible steps be taken to liquidate a large proportion

of the real estate holdings of this corporation in such a way as to best protect the values and character of the community.”¹⁵¹ Earl Smith began road construction by late that autumn.¹⁵²

The initial plats were to be “Perch Bay,” south of the lake, and “East Ridge,” east of the golf course’s second nine. They comprised a total of 26 lots for sale, most of them in the four- to six-acre range.¹⁵³ Sales, mostly of cottages and random plots of land, had previously been handled by Alice Neergaard, but it was

understood that the new program required a dedicated sales agent. V.A. Bowman of Katonah was vetted and described as a “conservative and steady broker, more interested in long time programs than aggressive

house, for her lot, the first dwelling in the subdivisions.¹⁵⁶ In order to shift the revenue source to the sale of improvements and minimize the impact of the sale of raw land on assessments (thus increasing the

early in 1950 for “farm property at farm prices” was even more surprising. None of these proposals went forward.¹⁵⁸

It was an extremely difficult time for the family. In 1947 a committee on management and real estate sales policies noted,

We, of the Mead family, are inclined to feel that Waccabuc is one stable factor of this life, that the changing world has not much altered Waccabuc in the past, nor will it in the future. We all love Waccabuc and would prefer to see it continued as we have always known it. Overcoming the mental inertia caused by that feeling is the greatest single problem we have faced, or are facing. The fact is that the change has been taking place, and we have failed to change with it. That is why we are in the financial difficulty outlined in the first part of this report.¹⁵⁹



Carriage House Lane showing rental houses sold off between 1950 and 1952. Photograph by Joseph L. Cardillo.

salesmanship.”¹⁵⁴ He was entrusted with the task. A brochure of a rather amateurish quality was produced, apparently by Mead Property but carrying Bowman’s name as “owner’s representative” (and his telephone: Katonah 23). The Mead Memorial Chapel was the cover picture, while inside was a remarkable aerial photograph of snow-covered farm fields with Waccabuc Mountain in the distance.¹⁵⁵

Sales commenced, although slowly. Early in 1948 Katharine B. Barrett secured approval for “The Fleetwood,” a Johnson pre-cut

annual tax burden), the Meads decided to build a model house. Jack Mead and William A. Kelly, doing business as Salem Homes, started construction on Lot 12 of the East Ridge subdivision early in 1949.¹⁵⁷

There were some discussions about sales of large tracts. Bob Murdock brought a proposal by Archie Roosevelt for 500 acres to be used by the Gramercy Boys Club, and Charlie Neergaard suggested that some land go to the National Audubon Society. With farming fading rapidly in northern Westchester, an inquiry from Elwood Boynton

Furthermore, the report noted, “the old, close-knit family relationship is passing, and that passing will necessarily accelerate.” In fact, at a 1949 corporation meeting, the three surviving siblings (David, Alice and Coralie) were present with two spouses, but they were outnumbered by five of the next generation and two of their spouses. Many more cousins no longer had homes in or strong ties to Waccabuc, but were still shareholders of both Mead Property, Inc. and the Studwell Foundation.

This was at the root of a persistent conflict that made real estate

sales difficult. The desire to preserve the close-knit atmosphere of the 1880s and 1890s, when Sarah Frances Mead owned much of the land and her husband's first cousins much of the rest, drove a desire to place rigorous restrictions on property sales, restrictions that badly hampered marketing. Buyers were expected to submit a plot plan, plans and specifications for construction, and a color scheme. But before they could buy, "eligibility" had to be determined by the Committee on Restrictions, which took into consideration not only the opinions of "members of Waccabuc Community or surrounding country," but also schools and colleges attended, clubs and social organizations, business address and connections, and bank references.¹⁶⁰ The restrictions applied even to private sales of plots held individually by family members, and contracts bound buyers to apply them on resale, acknowledging that they were unenforceable in case of foreclosure sales.

As Jack Mead said, "In adopting [sales restrictions] we limited our market greatly in order to have a protection for ourselves and a potent sales argument with our market so limited."¹⁶¹ Working as they did against the sales program, the restrictions appear to have been a source of conflict. In late 1949 minutes noted that the constant attack on the function of the Restriction

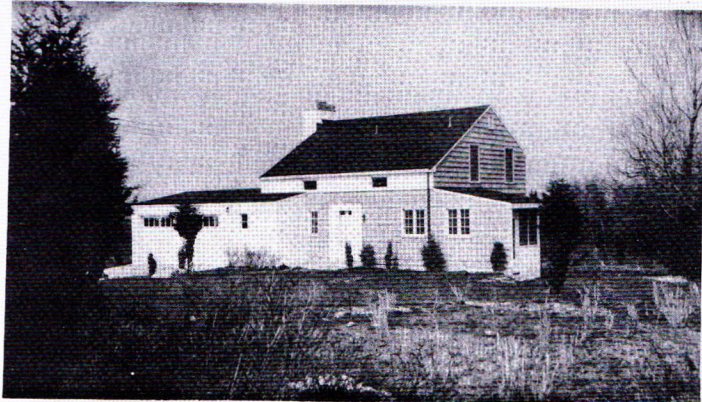
Committee and the recent limiting of its power indicates "there has been a serious split in the opinions of the various members on how to proceed." A few months later Bowman resigned as the corporation's sales agent.¹⁶²

THE 1950s

The family next approached Braislin, Porter and Wheelock, a

real estate and insurance firm with offices in White Plains, New York City and Brooklyn. It recommended marketing the property that might be sold without additional improvement or development schemes, including eight remaining cottages, the subdivided lots and some tracts with existing road frontage, and the country club (to its members). Citing "changing income tax condi-

MODERN COLONIAL HOME
East Ridge Road, Waccabuc, New York



Simple, rural community restricted to residential use, complete enjoyment of year round sports with access to Lake Waccabuc. Commutation to New York at Katonah, N. Y.

GROUNDS: Over 4 acres, commanding views. Frontage of 320 ft. and depth of 650 ft.

RESIDENCE: Entry hall, dropped living room with picture windows and fireplace, streamlined kitchen, breakfast nook, powder room, utility room and two car garage. Second floor has three bedrooms and bath.

Residence is completely insulated; air conditioned heat, fired by oil; aluminum screens, storm doors; hardwood floors.

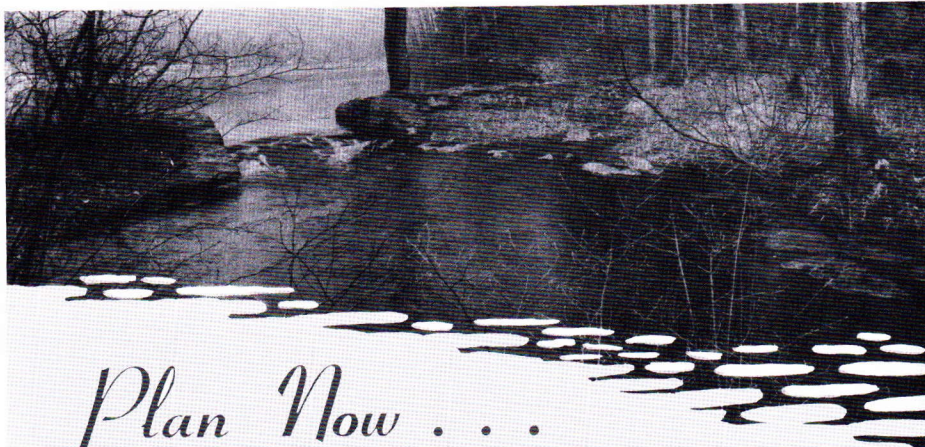
MORTGAGE: Original amount of \$15,000, dated January 1, 1950. Amortized 20 years. Interest 4½%.

PRICE: \$27,500

SALEM HOMES
Waccabuc, New York

For information or appointment call South Salem 3-3043 or White Plains 9-8040

Salem Homes prospectus, 1951.



Plan Now . . . to start Living!

People of our generation are learning the secrets of happiness—and enjoyment . . . and it is called "living".

The key to the secret of "living" is "to start living" . . . now . . . before you lose another day. That is why the most basic philosophy of this decade is contained in the phrase "it is later than you think".

So—come with us to this little colonial community with its historical background and its descendants of solid American stock.

Waccabuc is a closely-knit hamlet; restricted to preserve its atmosphere of dignity . . . acreage is sold in segments sufficiently large to insure country-life tone. It is immune to congestion and can never approach the appearance of "the development".

Year-round living is complete at Waccabuc.

It is within easy commuting distance of New York City—by auto and train.

There are adequate social facilities including a club house, the Waccabuc Country Club, bathing pavillion, and community center.

Here is a section which will cause the sportsman's blood to surge. There are riding trails weav-

ing through the picturesque hills and dales . . . terrific fishing holes and streams . . . the lake freezes solid in winter providing delightful skating . . . there are endless skiing slopes. Your strolls through the wooded areas will be punctuated by the graceful gliding of deer.

Children thrive in Waccabuc as evidenced by the rosy cheeks and glowing health in every group you meet. The rustic atmosphere seems designed perfectly for their needs.

Available for their educational requirements is a new grammar school nearby, in the town of South Salem. Their post grammar school education is serviced by the highly-rated Katonah High School, including adequate bus transportation.

Churches of all denominations are located nearby and the famed Mead Memorial Chapel is in Waccabuc.

So—here are the secrets of "living" . . . all contained within this snug little hamlet.

You hold the key: to start living . . . to start living before another day goes by.

Give your family the benefit of the wisdom of our generation.

"It is later than you think".

Sales prospectus, 1951.

tions and their resultant effects, and the difficulty in obtaining domestic employees," they reported "resistance is constantly becoming greater and greater to properties of the larger type, both as to size of house and area of land." Thus they did not recommend sales of large lots on Waccabuc Mountain, the rugged northern part of the Mead

landholdings.

Some practical suggestions were made: the creation of a "village green" near the clubhouse to which the post office could be moved, seeking a variance for some commercial uses around the green, and road signs of "more distinctive character" and "a very attractive and unusual sign of Colonial type design" for the Route 35 triangle.¹⁶³ It was also during their tenure that lots 5 and 6 in Perch Bay were resur-

veyed into five smaller lots of 1.6 to 3.7 acres called "The Hook," since the original, larger Perch Bay lots were not selling well.

They also produced a somewhat more professional, large-format brochure inviting potential buyers to "come with us to this little colonial community with its historical background and its descendants of solid American stock . . . restricted to preserve its atmosphere of dignity." And they established an on-site office, presumably staffed only at peak periods.¹⁶⁴

Unfortunately, the relationship between the real estate firm and the family corporation deteriorated rapidly. In October 1951 Stephen L. Porter of Braislin wrote to William Marseilles, president of Mead Property, pointing out that "marketing has been drastically affected under governmental restrictions and war influences," for the Korean War was then underway, but also that "friction exists within your corporation," doubtless the tension between those who wanted to balance the books and those who wanted Waccabuc to remain ever the same. Braislin had chartered a conservative policy, and was satisfying neither group.

Charlie Neergaard wrote that Braislin "dropped out after having sold all our income producing houses and none of our vacant lots." Indeed, a chart of sales shows that during the duration of the Braislin

contract from 1950 to 1952, Mead Property sold Meadow Lodge, a house on the Croft, the Playhouse, Appledore, and the Swallow, Orchard and Garden cottages, a 32-acre tract and a single East Ridge lot, the one on which Salem Homes was building. In October 1952 the corporation terminated the relationship with Braislin.¹⁶⁵

Meanwhile, two attempts to develop and build without outside participation were not going well. The 1951 sale of Lot 12 in East Ridge to Salem Homes (Jack Mead and William Kelly) for \$1,621 resulted in a loss of \$491 to the corporation. In early 1952 Earl Smith suggested the corporation itself build two "spec" houses on Route 121. Financing construction by notes against existing credit with County Trust, the corporation engaged Gosta Nyman of Yorktown to begin construction during the 1952 building season. Both on corner lots, the houses were of simple salt-box construction that might have been handsome if garages had not projected from part of their front facades. Priced at \$30,000, they hit the market in a period of poor sales, and were reduced to \$25,500 the following February. They finally sold in 1954 for \$25,000 each, a loss to the corporation of \$6,000.¹⁶⁶

Sales began to pick up in 1953. There were eight sales in Perch Bay, four in East Ridge, one in The

Hook, and six land sales elsewhere on the tract, in addition to the two spec houses. During three years of extraordinary activity, Mead Property realized \$141,297.¹⁶⁷

By mid-decade the family realized they did not have the expertise to manage a successful sales program. There was only one similar exurban development in the New York metropolitan area, Smoke Rise in New Jersey, so there was not a great deal of experience to draw upon. They did realize that, however much the family preferred them, larger lots were not easy to sell. On East Ridge the typical four-acre lots were selling, but the five-to-10 acre lots in Perch Bay had required resurveying into smaller lots like those in The Hook in order to sell them. Part of the problem was the perceived distance to New York City, where most upper-income wage earners then worked. David I. Mead, Jr. wrote in 1955, "For year round commuting Waccabuc is a little too far away from New York, as you and I know. But the trip is not at all bad in the summer."¹⁶⁸ The market was still largely limited to those seeking second homes, or the few willing to commute 10 to 20 minutes farther than most.

In 1954 the Town of Lewisboro took up the matter of amending its zoning ordinance, with the aim of upzoning to maintain the rural character of the town. Jack Mead examined the proposed changes in

draft and found that most of Mead Property's land would be zoned four acre. Based on their experience, the corporation requested that its large tracts be zoned two acre. In the ordinance as adopted, most of the family's land was zoned R-2, the residential two-acre district. The land south of Waccabuc Country Club on the west side of Mead Street and existing plots on the east side remained zoned R-1, the residential four-acre district.¹⁶⁹

Despite the improvement in sales, the financial situation grew worse, and by 1955 Jack Mead, Bill Marseilles and Bob Murdock recommended a reorganization of the corporate structure. Mead Property had generally depended upon Studwell Foundation to make up its deficits, but the very corporate structure of Studwell Foundation had created a problem in this regard. The 1929 crash wiped out Studwell's stock value, and its bonds dropped far below par. It became impossible to pay interest on the face value¹⁷⁰ without invading principal, so the bondholders agreed to take interest each year at a rate set by the directors, generally 2% of the face. Unpaid interest accrued until, in 1955, it amounted to well over half the value of the outstanding bonds.

Some years earlier the IRS had taken the position that the corporation was a sham, that the interest paid was actually not interest but dividends, and thus not deductible

in computing the corporate income tax. Mead Property countered this and won, but it was believed that another defense might not be so successful. As a personal holding company, profits realized but undistributed could be taxed at 75% of the first \$2,000 and 85% of the balance. A variety of solutions were examined, but none was acceptable, so the men proposed to remove Studwell Foundation from the classification of personal holding company. This action was also found to be filled with pitfalls.

In the end a merger of the two corporations was determined to be the best approach, having the advantage of carrying over the loss deductions of Mead Property that were extremely valuable for tax purposes. In June 1957 the directors of Studwell Foundation voted to purchase the assets and business of Mead Property. The transaction was effected on February 1, 1958, and Mead Property, Inc. was dissolved on May 2, 1960.¹⁷¹

Interestingly, at this point Charlie Neergaard suggested that a dividend in the form of real estate be offered to the 23 members of the younger generations, most of whom lived far from Mead Street. This land, on the Waccabuc Mountain Road, could be assigned in small lots under contract at assessed value, to be paid for when it was built upon, within a stated number of years. As

Neergaard put it, this would be “bringing the Meads back to Waccabuc.” Unfortunately, it seems not to have gone further than an idea.¹⁷²

When the Mead Property holdings were assumed by Studwell Foundation, they still amounted to 1,254 acres; most of the sales had been in small parcels. The 158-acre Waccabuc Country Club property was not likely to be sold except to the club membership; Pine Croft Farm, Earl Smith’s 101-acre dairy operation, was to be held for the time being. Some 162 acres around Lake Waccabuc were considered for dedication as a preserve. Aside from 56 acres of “waste,” some of which was wetland, there remained 776 acres for sale or development, assessed at \$157,107 but priced at \$1,411,500.¹⁷³

The marketing of the land remained a problem, for as Jack Mead put it in 1958, the family wanted to continue “sales of the fringe but by a new method rather than by retail sales which we had proved to ourselves we could not carry out.” Before Studwell Foundation could market this land—in fact, before Mead Property had passed out of existence—a group of investors sought them out for the northeastern 214-acre tract between Waccabuc Mountain Road and the North Salem line to add to a much bigger landholding in that town.

THE PORT OF MISSING MEN

To understand the vast scale and potential of a single undivided tract of land over the border in North Salem we must go back to 1900, when Henry B. Anderson, a young lawyer, had completed the construction of a new water system for Ridgefield, Connecticut. The laborers on the project were Italian immigrants who worked hard for low wages. Two years later Anderson also completed Ridgefield’s sewer system, and set out to acquire a vast tract of land mostly in the Town of North Salem and to develop it using those same Italian laborers. He acquired some 1,750 acres, which he imagined might become another Tuxedo Park. He built a house overlooking Waccabuc, Osaleta and Rippowam, and farther north on Hunt Lane, he built a tea house to be the center of his marketing effort. Its remoteness inspired its name, “The Port of Missing Men,” after a 1907 Civil War novel by Meredith Nicholson.

Food and service were superlative, and automobilists made the tea house a destination. In the first two years of operation more than 20,000 guests signed its register. The sales program, however, was never launched, and Anderson and his family returned to Long Island. In 1929 the tea house was still in operation but a bit shabby; three years later its manager died. At the end of

World War II Anderson's son ordered the demolition of the decaying structure. A decade later, in 1956, the land was sold to a developer, who marketed a few small tracts on the Connecticut side of the border. In late 1957 a group of New York City investors acquired it and engaged engineer, planner and

were strictly investors, and it was thought that Moore would be in charge of development and management, while Braislin, Porter and Wheelock might be the sales agent. Their project was to be a community developed as a whole, a "high grade development" of two-and-a-half- to five-acre lots. They request-

of Mead Property holdings to outside developers. The men advised Smith that if any land were sold to the developers, the Mead family should unload everything so as not to be affected by a depressing effect on adjacent land values and sales.¹⁷⁵

On January 7 Jack Mead and Lee Moore discussed Moore's "reference to the possibility of buying all of the property." He had found the investors were "willing to go in on a larger scale," enabling Mr. Moore to plan a "full community" rather than just a "large development." In that case it would be necessary to have a "main focal point" other than the lakes. Moore inquired about purchasing the Waccabuc Country Club, but, since that was out of the question, he indicated that the investors could build another golf course on the Black House Farm, on the east side of Route 121.

Jack Mead apparently went to the heart of the Waccabuc Council's concerns. "During the progress of the discussion, we both became rather frank as to the character of the development and the people to be brought in." Moore responded that the investors would want to build homes for themselves, but otherwise "he anticipated more trouble with them than he had with us on the quality of the other buyers."¹⁷⁶

At this moment a Denis Murray, who had been in contact with Earl



The Port of Missing Men. *The WCHS Picture Collection.*

architect W. Lee Moore to work with them.¹⁷⁴ On December 10, 1957, Moore met with Jack Mead to explore the possibility of purchasing the 214-acre tract north of the lake and east of Waccabuc Mountain Road.

This seems to have been the first substantive inquiry about any of the three "outlying" parcels, all of which were over 200 acres and were physically separate from the family homes on Mead Street. The syndicate Moore represented was led by two related businessmen, Abraham Kaufman and Marvin Levy. They

ed an option for one year.

The stockholders of Mead Property received the news at a special meeting on December 14. But the family had been moving toward including other Waccabuc residents in decision-making, recognizing the stake that their buyers had in the maintenance of the community's character. Earl Smith met with four of these buyers, calling themselves the "Waccabuc Council," on December 22 to discuss the offer. The council's reaction was unfavorable. "All foresaw scare selling" as a reaction to the sale of a large block

Smith, emerged as the head of a second group already interested in the property. Jack Mead's memo on their conversation reveals further that the corporation's emphasis on "eligibility" was softening with the gradual acceptance of demographic change, but it remained concerned that urban problems could invade Waccabuc.¹⁷⁷ Although minutes show that Murray's associates made a proposal for the property on February 9, 1958, negotiations continued only with Mr. Moore's group.¹⁷⁸

A different perspective on the Moore syndicate was offered by Waccabuc resident Henry Stockbridge in a February letter to Bob Murdock. "For several reasons we believe this offer should be accepted," he wrote, beginning with the increase in Waccabuc land values that would result from long-term development on the mountain. He noted the willingness of the syndicate to accept Mead Property restrictions, which would assure "acceptable buyers," and that the proceeds of the sale "would allow Mead Properties to develop the balance of its holdings in a manner in keeping with the high standards already established." An infusion of cash would allow the Meads to return to full maintenance of the properties, and prevent possible future sale "under stress" of the remaining land.¹⁷⁹

Jack Mead had at least two fur-

ther meetings with the Moore syndicate, in March and in July. At the latter meeting the syndicate indicated they were less interested in the 214 acres on the mountain as in the "whole matter," and that they were willing to work jointly with the Mead family and with the Lawrence real estate firm (never explicitly identified, but apparently the Bronxville developers) in a three-way arrangement.¹⁸⁰ Studwell Foundation agreed on July 16 to hold the present contract form open for approval by the syndicate until August 1.

On July 21, however, Moore and Jack Mead met with "the County's Top Brass" at the Port of Missing Men site, and they learned that the county was strongly interested in the North Salem tract as a site for its recreational camp, which was then operating in outmoded quarters on Croton Point. Moore requested an extension of the contract deadline to September 8.¹⁸¹ In the end, the county acquired the syndicate's North Salem land, and the Mead property remained on the market.

In early 1959, 2,200 copies of a rather dull brochure were printed by the Realty Merchandising Service, offering the 660 acres in the three large "fringe" tracts. Twelve hundred of the brochures were mailed to selected brokers; 20 replies had been received by manager Earl Smith by late March.¹⁸²

THE 1960s

The decade of the sixties opened with a major success in the family's program of divestment. On March 16, 1960, Studwell Foundation sold the golf course, clubhouse and other improvements to the Waccabuc Country Club, a New York membership corporation.¹⁸³ This had been one of the objectives of the sales plan since 1947. In 1952 Mead Property had resolved to sell it for \$250,000, and negotiations had continued since then, with the price and the schedule of payments the subjects of long and difficult negotiation. Now it was done, and the result gave assurance of future stability at the heart of Waccabuc.¹⁸⁴

The change that Earl Smith had fought against for decades, however, was coming. In the summer of 1962 he sold his retail milk business and his milk truck, and he had decided to sell his Guernsey herd and substitute beef cattle. For years he had operated with the provision that, if pastures or meadows were required for sale, he would have to give them up, but he had maintained farm fields that enhanced the attractiveness of Waccabuc for all. He pointed out that he had taken over the operation of lands that had cost the company \$800 to \$1,000 a year to manage, lands that had been "mined of their fertility," and he had restored them to both productivity and beauty. One thing had not

From Meads Please send to Jim

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1964.

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APPEARL CRAFTS MERGE PENSIONS

Dubinsky and Industry Join in Pact Aiding 400,000

By DAMON STETSON

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union and leaders of the women's apparel industry established yesterday a national retirement fund covering about 400,000 workers.

David Dubinsky, the energetic, 72-year-old president of the union, lighted a cigar and beamed proudly as he discussed details of the new fund at a luncheon at the Hotel Astor.

"I consider this a historic day and in the life of the industry," he said.

The \$217,000,000 fund results in the merger of 41 separate pension plans. Dubinsky explained the greater financial stability and improved efficiency of the plan. In addition, he said, the national fund will help administrative difficulties when workers move from one ladies' garment trade to another, or from city to city.

Smaller Funds Merged

Dubinsky, in addressing company officials at the luncheon, related how the retirement fund in the industry was set up in 1946 in coat and suit trade. Later, he said, many separate funds were established, but problems of reciprocity and transfers were.

The merger of the separate funds into one huge national fund was mandated by the union's conventions in accordance with sound insurance practice. The merger, however, was delayed pending an advance termination of the tax status of employer contributions. The revenue service ruled last summer that the tax-exempt status of employer contributions to separate funds would be continued for a merged national fund. The union then initiated moves by the boards of trustees of the separate retirement funds to approve the merger.

A new board of trustees for the 41 merging funds approved the establishment of the national retirement fund yesterday.

\$50 Monthly Pension

The monies going into the separate funds and into the national fund as of Jan. 1, 1965, come from employer contributions as a percentage of the payroll. These percentages range from 2 to 6 per cent at present.

Most workers covered by the fund will be able to retire on a monthly benefit of \$50. New York cloakmakers, who pioneered in developing a retire-

Auto Racer, Broke at 30, Tells Of Making a Million in 2 Years

Land Speculator Developing Hilly 842-Acre Tract for Homes in Westchester

By MERRILL FOLSOM

Special to The New York Times

WACCABUC, N. Y., Dec. 17—A 32-year-old former sports car racer drove a Land Rover up rocky hillsides and across fallen trees on his real estate holdings today and told how he had become a millionaire in two years.

The driver, Boris Said Jr., asserted that he had been "dead broke" in 1962.

"Were we ever?" exclaimed his wife, Valerie, a former sports car racer herself. "We got married on \$51."

Mr. Said is now the largest speculative real estate operator in Westchester County. He increased his holdings today in Cresskill, Bedford and Pound Ridge to 842 acres, larger than the village of Bronxville.

To celebrate, he took 125 guests by Land Rover and helicopter over the hilly terrain and six lakes and showed where he was laying out "an enlargement of Colonial Waccabuc, not a real estate development."

No 'Happiness Acres'

"I hate nothing more than developments called Happiness Acres, with streets named after the children and the mother-in-law," he said. "Here the home builders can set whatever boundary lines they want to include favorite trees, laurel clumps and brooks."

When "dead broke" in 1962, Mr. Said heard of 40 acres in Pound Ridge that he could buy for \$2,600 down. He scraped together \$231, borrowed the rest and made the deal. In six months, he said, he turned a \$110,000 profit on 36 acres and had his own new home on the other four acres.

He has continued parlaying this good fortune, and not the least of his feats has been his by-passing of labor unions by do-it-yourself skills. He operated his own chain saws and bulldozers and did his own



Boris Said Jr. on his new land in Waccabuc yesterday.

blasting of rock for highways. "American Cyanamid in New York told me how to do the blastings, but their local agents wouldn't sell me the dynamite because I was not a union member," Mr. Said recalled. "So I got the dynamite from du Pont agents in Connecticut, and the Cyanamid engineers came up to show me how to touch it off."

Mr. Said was born in New York of Syrian-Russian parents. He went to Europe with a troupe of Briggs Cunningham racing drivers in 1952 and began racing on his own the next year. He saw Valerie Witalis in an M.G. in 1960 and married her, and they have two children, Lisa and Boris.

Later he lost an inheritance from his mother of more than \$100,000 when he tried real estate speculation in San Pedro, Calif.

WALDEMAR FUND CLEARED BY JURY

But Nassau Prosecutor Says New Laws Are Needed

By ROY R. SILVER

Special to The New York Times

MINEOLA, L. I., Dec. 17—A Nassau County grand jury cleared the Waldemar Medical Research Foundation today of any criminal wrongdoing in connection with alleged financial irregularities.

District Attorney William Cahn said the jury had refused to return a true bill on the basis of the evidence from a four-month inquiry.

The foundation is engaged in cancer research and detection and is largely supported by public funds and governmental grants.

The investigation by the District Attorney started after present and past members of the fund-raising councils in Nassau and Suffolk Counties provided Mr. Cahn with information on the receipt and disbursement of funds.

4 Directors Resigned

During the investigation by Mr. Cahn's office, and the presentation of evidence to the jury, William S. Hults, chairman of the board of the foundation, and three other directors resigned.

Mr. Hults is also State Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. Six members of the Waldemar staff, including Dr. Norman Molomut of Flushing, were refused to sign waivers of immunity in the grand jury investigation.

"We refuse to help hunt witches," Dr. Molomut said at the time in a joint statement with members of his staff, which he said had given "every assistance and all possible information" on the foundation's fund-raising.

Mr. Cahn, after his announcement yesterday, issued a 21-page report criticizing Waldemar's operations.

He said copies of the report would be sent to Federal and state officials to correct "abuses".

Mr. Cahn said that his investigation had shown that the responsibility for the operation of Waldemar had been delegated by the board to Dr. Molomut and to Mrs. Florence Leszere, a member of the staff.

'Carte Blanche Authority'

"They were given and they took carte blanche authority and as a result there was no system of checks and balance," Mr. Cahn said.

He said that alleged abuses resulting from this system "vividly demonstrate that the laws regulating charities need review and strengthening." He will ask appropriate committees of the State Legislature, he said, to recommend amendments.

Lindsay Asks Delay On Pan Am Heliport At Board's Hearing

By RICHARD WITKIN

Representative John V. Lindsay urged the Board of Estimate yesterday to reject for now the plan to open a commercial heliport atop the 39-story Pan Am Building.

The building, just north of Grand Central Terminal, is in

N.L.R.B.'S ATTORNEYS SIGN OWN CONTRACT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 (AP)—The National Labor Relations Board officially became an employer, under principles of Federal labor law, in signing a collective-bargaining contract with its own attorneys today.

Under the board's contract with the N.L.R.B. Professional Association, the lawyers will not have the right to strike.

Nor will they be able to bargain for wages, which are set by Congress.

Bob Said in the New York Times, 1964.

changed since "the rate of sale had been slow": the deficit on operations remained high. Maintenance of the Waccabuc property of the Studwell Foundation created a net deficit of \$30,000 in 1961.¹⁸⁵

Smith's plan to shift to beef cattle aroused controversy. His brother Ted wrote a querulous letter, and Sam Bartlett, whose wife was one of Martin's daughters, responded rather angrily. "Thirty thousand dollars a year," he wrote, "is being milked out of Studwell in a desperate effort to hang onto a past that is gone forever." The Bartletts, and other non-res-

ident heirs, wanted a division of the assets, an eventuality that all knew was coming. They felt that delay was potentially worsening the situation. "Eventually someone is going to get hurt and the longer time [is] spent in waiting to face the evil day the worse it is going to be."¹⁸⁶

But the situation was complicated by tax law. It was simply not possible to divide the assets, particularly the non-liquid real estate holdings, without creating questions of equitability, and any dissolution and distribution plan would trigger tax liabilities for the dissolving corporation and for some or all of the distributees. Jack Mead, labelled by Bartlett as one of the "parasites enjoying something they could not, or would not afford, were it not for the soft-hearted family," politely but firmly replied that he and Bill Marseilles had repeatedly tried but failed to explain these problems. The corporation approved Earl Smith's change; Earl began an Aberdeen Angus feeder operation in cooperation with Carlo Paterno of North Salem.¹⁸⁷

At the same meeting that Earl made the latter announcement, a potential offer was received for the 676 acres in the three large "fringe" tracts. Boris "Bob" Said, Jr. (1932-2002) was a larger-than-life character. The son of a Syrian father and a Russian mother, he grew up in Greenwich and was educated at Deerfield and Princeton. While at

university he discovered auto racing and dropped out of school, winning a sports car race at Rouen in 1953. After nearly a decade of racing, Said was “dead broke” in 1962 when he heard of 40 acres in Pound Ridge that he could buy for \$2,600 down. He scraped together \$251, borrowed the rest, and six months later turned a \$110,000 profit.¹⁸⁸

On May 18, 1963, Studwell Foundation received Said’s offer for a six-to-eight month option on 676 acres. He requested the time in order to carry out engineering studies and to approach the local authorities about rezoning issues. Said’s plan was based upon five divisions of the property. He proposed to develop the northern and northeastern portion (Waccabuc Mountain) under existing two-acre zoning with houses in the \$30,000-\$45,000 range. A buffer zone of 75 acres along the north shore of the lake and west of the chapel was to be sold in large parcels for “finer private homes.” Said hoped for rezoning to one-acre use for a 215-acre parcel, apparently the northwestern tract off Chapel Road. Along Route 121 he allocated 45 acres for future rezoning for neighborhood retail facilities, and another 35 acres south of it was to be reserved for future dedication to the town. His \$102,800 offer was not conditional on rezoning. On October 18, 1963, the stockholders of Studwell Foundation approved Said’s agree-

ment to exercise an option. The option was called in March, and in May the land was sold by Studwell to Said, the largest sale of Mead land to take place, at the price of \$150 an acre.¹⁸⁹ Working with Houlihan Real Estate, Said developed some lots and roads on the Waccabuc Mountain tract, notably Rampart Pass, Flintlock Lane and Makepeace Hill. Characteristic of

which had been a great help, had been exhausted. The shareholders of Studwell Foundation decided to proceed with liquidation.

At this point, Jim Henry, husband of Earl Smith’s daughter Susan, proposed formation of a syndicate to take over the real estate. This, he said, would allow the dissolution of the Studwell Foundation with the attendant distribution of assets,



The Old Field Preserve, part of Martin R. Mead II’s Lower Farm.

Photograph by J Henry Fair © 2008.

his life from beginning to end, he lost interest quickly and sold the remaining undeveloped land to Bessemer Securities just two years later.¹⁹⁰

With that behind them, the executive committee continued to assess the situation. At the 1965 annual meeting, they noted that they still had 348 acres (115 farmed, 72 protecting the lake’s west end, and 161 saleable), and that the tax advantage of the 1958 merger,

since distribution was impossible without the sale of the remaining non-liquid real estate. Henry offered to purchase 315 acres at about \$600 an acre for a total of \$189,000; he planned to sell off the fringe properties, hold the lakefront for at least 10 years and the farmland for at least 15 years, while the farm operation continued. Since there was still a substantial (and increasing) operating loss and some family members were demanding

immediate distribution, there were advantages to Henry's proposal, but his offer was at 40% of the appraised value, and ultimately the family rejected it.¹⁹¹ About this time, with the end of landholding anticipated, Earl Smith gave up his cattle operation.¹⁹²

At the July 26, 1968, annual meeting the stockholders declared their intent to dissolve. In order to postpone the realization of capital gains, the corporation's accountant and tax counsel advised a distribution of assets to the shareholders in the form of cash, stocks, bonds and land. Once initiated, it had to be completed in one month.¹⁹³

The sticking point was the so-called Pond Meadow and other land surrounding Lake Waccabuc. Elizabeth Mead, widow of D. Irving Mead, had proposed reserving 40 acres on the north shore from the sale to Boris Said as a memorial to her husband, but Said had refused to exclude that prime land from his purchase. Now, in June 1969, substantive discussions were held with the Nature Conservancy. A small group of family members led by Sally Marseilles, along with seven other residents, clubbed together to purchase 35 acres at the lake's west end, donating it to the Nature Conservancy. The sale was approved in October, and 38 acres were designated the Long Pond Preserve under perpetual covenants. A non-contiguous acre surrounding Castle

Rock on the lake's north shore was included, but in 1985 was sold back to David I. Mead, Jr. due to trespassing.¹⁹⁴

On April 14, 1970, the chapel lot was conveyed to Mead Memorial Chapel, a pre-existing religious corporation.¹⁹⁵ A July 1971 meeting noted that all remaining interests, such as mortgages held, were to be turned over to the Studwell Trust, created on July 27, 1970, which would have no non-liquid real estate holdings and no management responsibilities. The corporation was dissolved on July 15, 1971; the trust continued through 1974.¹⁹⁶

Another problem was that of the shared services and community assets. Snow plowing, water supply, and general maintenance were still handled by the corporation in the late 1960s. Also, the tiny post office on Post Office Road was owned by the Studwell Foundation and leased to the federal authorities. In the end Waccabuc Community Services was formed in 1973 to purchase, enlarge and maintain the post office building.¹⁹⁷

The family was no sooner free of their burden than the Boris Said sale looked like it would destroy all they had tried to preserve. Said had unloaded his vacant land to Bessemer Securities, which in turn sold to Victor Weingarten of Mount Kisco late in 1968. In November 1972 Weingarten's Suburban Action Institute (SAI), described as "a non-

profit organization that seeks to open suburban housing to minorities and low-income groups," announced it had acquired options on the land and planned to build a 4,600-unit "new community" there. The anticipated population of 13,800 would have nearly tripled Lewisboro's population. Its development was to be limited to families with incomes of under \$20,000 a year (about \$96,000 in present dollars).

The proposal came hot on the heels of demands for affordable housing in Westchester County's affluent northern towns. In the previous summer Lewisboro residents had campaigned for local acceptance of the Urban Development Corporation's "Fair Share" plan to build 100 units of housing in Lewisboro and in five other towns. One of the developers, Paul Davidoff, said that the new community would be racially mixed, but that no quota had been set. "We are not social engineers," he said. "We're building an open community." The housing was to be built by the institute's development affiliate, Garden Cities Development Corporation, "as a joint venture with private investors."¹⁹⁸ The SAI principals were clearly real estate speculators.

The firestorm of opposition was immediate. The proposal came during the end of a period, beginning in 1969, when a Master Plan for the town was in preparation. The town board withstood the Suburban

Action Institute's challenge without having to go to court, but they recognized the principle, and in the Master Plan approved in June 1973, the town identified four hamlets in which dense development was desirable.¹⁹⁹ By June 1975 the Waccabuc Mountain development proposal had been inactive for so long that the Town Committee Against the Suburban Action Proposal, headed by David I. Mead, Jr., returned funds that had been contributed in 1972 for a legal defense.²⁰⁰

LOOKING BACKWARD

The last decades of the 20th century were a period of unprecedented growth for Lewisboro. Interstate 684 was completed to Katonah and Goldens Bridge in 1970, rendering the town far more accessible by automobile. Perhaps more significantly, commuting destinations changed dramatically. Stamford, which was quite close by back roads, became a suburban office center, as did White Plains and other cities in the New York periphery. Rising prices, particularly after 1990, made much of lower Westchester County outside its old cities unaffordable for large numbers of workers.

At the time of the Suburban Action Institute proposal, 30% of the development's potential residents were projected to commute to New York City, 25% to the White Plains area, 15% to Danbury and 10% to

other places in Fairfield County.²⁰¹ Thirty-five years later the New York City commuters would certainly be fewer and the Fairfield County commuters would be more numerous.

Also, Lewisboro's population had nearly doubled. Between 1960 and 2000 its population increased from 6,610 to 12,324, a larger absolute growth and a larger percentage increase than either of its rural neighbors, Pound Ridge and North Salem.

Along Mead Street, however, there has been no loss of beauty. All its historic houses still stand, beautifully restored by their current owners. Beyond the Pond Meadow, Lake Waccabuc is as beautiful as ever, and its shoreline largely unspoiled, thanks to setback rules established by the Meads. To the north, Waccabuc Mountain is sprinkled with suburban houses, but with its rugged topography and heavy forest cover, it remains a dramatic background for Waccabuc; it was developed with two-acre lots on a small number of public roads and many long strip driveways leading to six- to 20-acre lots. Earl Smith's cows and the farm fields are gone, but the Pond Meadow is owned by the Nature Conservancy, the golf links are maintained by the Waccabuc Country Club, and most of Martin Mead's Lower Farm is now the Old Field Preserve, established in 2003 and held by the Westchester Land Trust. Waccabuc is "built out," with little vacant land for additional houses, yet

its character remains distinctly rural.

Still, compare Waccabuc with Mohegan Lake, another Northern Westchester community that had a similar history as a Victorian lake resort surrounded by the estates of urban residents and long-tenured local families. There, in the northwest corner of Yorktown, the lake first drew a hotel and summer boarders in the same 1850s decade, followed closely by substantial "summer cottages" of wealthy New Yorkers. But fashion passed by Mohegan Lake and a working-class audience followed, with increasingly dense development. No single family controlled more than 50 or 60 acres, and land was subdivided into lots as small as 25 by 100 feet. After World War II, when population pressure increased, high-density patterns established early in the century resulted in a dense build-out, while two- and four-acre zoning preserved Waccabuc's rural atmosphere.

The Meads were ultimately successful in creating a quiet and beautiful 21st-century community. They were "land-poor," yet they chose to forego development schemes that might have produced large returns. Their great love for the countryside and their judicious, if halting, decisions in the face of great pressure left their mark on Waccabuc, a landscape that is a living memorial to a single family. ■

ENDNOTES

¹ Memorandum, O.F. Langmuir, February 14, 1927, MFP 59.17.

² Letter, R.W.G. Vail to Charles F. Neergaard, September 27, 1951, MFP 10.21.

³ Susan von Salis, Finding Aid, MFP 10.21.

⁴ Identified as "Post Road," it is shown on the map of December 16, 1797, by Benjamin Smith, submitted to the state government and now in the New York State Archives; an engraved version is found in J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Westchester County* (Philadelphia: L.E. Preston, 1886), II:537. In a deed of March 21, 1798, it is called the "New York and Vermont Stage Road" (MFP 66.4).

⁵ An argument about the identity of the town's first settlers is found in Theodore L. Van Norden, "South Salem History and Traditions," ms., 1927, 13, Lewisboro Town Clerk's Office, and *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, Second Edition (South Salem: Library Association, 1994), 28.

⁶ Scharf II:541. A photocopy of the first minute book is in the WCHS collection; there is a typescript at the Lewisboro Town Clerk's Office.

⁷ Scharf II:555-556.

⁸ The story is recounted in Theodore Van Norden, *South Salem Soldiers and Sailors* (South Salem: Horse and Hound, 1927), 23, and in an untitled manuscript in the hand of D. Irving Mead, MFP 10.24.

⁹ Spencer P. Mead, *History and Genealogy of the Mead Family* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1901), 250 [hereafter, *Mead Family*].

¹⁰ James A. Roberts, *New York in the Revolution as a Colony and State*, Second Edition (Albany: Brandow Printing

Company, 1898), 215, 217. A photocopy of his commission in the Exempts is in MFP 1:29.

¹¹ Only one deed was recorded in the County Clerk's Office by Enoch during his lifetime, but MFP 65.6 contains the 22 original deeds referred to here.

¹² Excise license, MFP 1.29; map, Scharf II:537.

¹³ Enoch Mead, Account Book, 1794-1806, MFP bv 62.

¹⁴ Van Norden, 23-24; the commissions are in MFP 1:29.

¹⁵ D. Irving Mead, "A Bird's-Eye View of Waccabuc Titles," MFP 11.23.

¹⁶ Scharf II:557.

¹⁷ One may have been Toby, purchased from Amos Mead on March 17, 1786; the bill of sale was formerly in the Clara Mead Papers but was apparently not received in the gift to WCHS; see list in CMP 110.5. In both 1790 and 1800 censuses, Enoch's household included two slaves. Enoch's estate inventory describes "One Black Girle, \$80," presumably a younger "Black Boy, \$50," and "One Black Boy, time from four years old to twenty Eight, \$20," who must have been the youngest, probably eight years old at the time, given the gradual abolition scheduled by New York State Law to be complete in 1827.

¹⁸ D. Irving Mead dated it "1820," as it was said Martin Rockwell Mead I was the first child born there, but inasmuch as he was born January 28, 1820, it must have been built during the preceding building season.

¹⁹ The basic source for genealogy of this family is *Mead Family*, 227-231. There are persistent references written by her own grandchildren to Polly Mead having been a Quaker. It is also so stated in Ruth Lawrence, ed., *Brundige-*

Banks-Reynolds and Allied Family Histories (New York: National Americana Publications, Inc., 1950).

Not only was the Mead family Presbyterian, meaning that by her marriage she would almost certainly have forfeited her Quaker membership, but there is no reference to Polly or to her parents in the records of New York Yearly Meeting, now on-line (www.swarthmore.edu/x6673.xml).

I judge this to be "fakelore" originating with a grandchild remarking that she was "dressed like a Quaker" in one of the surviving daguerrotypes.

²⁰ Alphred Mead, Account Book, 1814-46, MFP bv 45.

²¹ Alphred Mead, Account Book, 1840-52, MFP bv 46.

²² Not found in the State Archives, this fragment is in MFP 66.2.

²³ Federal Census, 1850, Lewisboro, agricultural schedule.

²⁴ Letter, D. Irving Mead to Alice Mead Neergaard, February 12, 1927, MFP 10.24.

²⁵ Letter, James H. Peck, Sawpitt, to Alphred Mead, January 12, 1821, letter, J. Peck & Son, Sawpitt, to Alphred Mead, December 23, 1824, MFP 4.17.

²⁶ Letters, John Horton, Madrid, N.Y., to Alphred Mead, June 30, August 15, August 26, October 17, November 3, 1825, July 14, August 21, October 17, 1826, August 27, 1828, MFP 1.14.

²⁷ Letter, Lyman Bailey, Preston, N.Y., to Alphred Mead, December 29, 1834, MFP 1:151; letter, Joseph Silkman, Davenport, N.Y., to Alphred Mead, August 6, 1836, MFP 3.27; letter, Joseph Silkman, Pharsalia, N.Y., to Alphred Mead, August 16, 1837, MFP 3.27.

²⁸ MFP 2.21, 3.12. At this time Joseph Mead, at least, was not raising or

marketing beef. His income tax form for the year 1864 shows he had only three "horned cattle" and six calves. The household numbered three (mother Polly, sister Loretta, and himself) with one hired laborer. But perhaps Joseph lacked the temperament for cattle trading; his obituary describes him as "peculiarly reticent and retiring." Joseph Mead, Supplementary Income Blank for Farmers, 1864, MFP 2.22; undated clipping mounted on (loose) scrapbook page 189, MFP 11.10.

²⁹ U.S. Internal Revenue, license, Martin R. Mead, May 2, 1864, MFP 3.12.

³⁰ He is described as a farmer and cattle dealer in Sarah F. Marseilles, "Waccabuc: The Settlement of Mead Street," *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, 263. See also letter, A.B. Mead, Cleveland, O., to George W. Mead, March 11, 1852, MFP 1.9.

³¹ Erastus F. Mead, "Long Pond," MFP 2.5. The essay ends with the statement, "This pond was named by the Indians Lake Wakeback." By the middle of the following decade the Indian name was in common use under its present spelling.

³² Louis V. Grogan, *The Coming of the New York and Harlem Railroad* (Pawling: The Author, 1989), 14-15.

³³ Peter Parley, Jr. [Rev. Richard Wheatley], "Katonah In Days Gone By," *Feast of Lanterns*, August 26, 1879, quoted in Frances R. Duncombe, *Katonah: The History of a New York Village and Its People* (Katonah: K.V.I.S., 1961), 117-118.

³⁴ *Prospectus of the New York, Housatonic, & Northern Railroad Company* (New York: Wm. C. Bryant & Co., 1864), 8.

³⁵ Samuel Nott, *Report of Surveys for*

a Railroad from Danbury, Conn., to Kensico Station, on the New York and Harlem Railroad (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1854). A copy is in MFP 11.11.

³⁶ Various dates are cited in published accounts, including 1858 and 1860, but an account of M.R. and E.F. Mead, "bought of L.O. Wilson," dated May 21, 1856, includes such large quantities of bedding and other housewares that it cannot be for any purpose beside furnishing a hotel (MFP 3.12). The Benedict deed is further corroboration of the 1856 beginning (Westchester County Deeds 480:224), yet the surviving ledger begins June 19, 1858 (MFP bv 32).

³⁷ The dimensions are provided in an undated letter of Martin R. Mead to George W. Mead, 1870s, MFP 3.11. The inventory at time of sale in 1895 lists eight tables and 50 chairs in the dining room; there were 36 bedrooms.

³⁸ Advertising flyer, n.d. [1866?], MFP 57.1.

³⁹ Hotel Waccabuc Souvenir, n.d. [1891], MFP 57.1.

⁴⁰ Federal Census, 1860, Lewisboro, agricultural schedule.

⁴¹ D. Irving Mead, "A Bird's-Eye View of Waccabuc Titles," MFP 11.23; letter, G.S. Avery, surveyor, Croton Falls, to Martin R. Mead, May 11, 1863, and letter, Leonard D. White, New York, to George W. Mead, March 4, 1889, MFP 13.1; for White, see *Trow's New York City Directory for 1864-65* (New York: Trow, 1864), 939. White's purchases in 1861 and 1863 are in Deeds 870:118,122, and his sale in 1889 is in Deeds 1166:431.

⁴² MFP 12.6. A schedule of the contents is attached; it shows that the 36 bedrooms typically contained a bed-

stead, wardrobe, bureau, washstand and chair.

⁴³ George W. Mead, April 14, 1849, quoted on "Prosperous Farmers" exhibit panel, *The Meads of Mead Street: An American Family* (2005), MFP 64.13..

⁴⁴ *Men of Mark* (New York: New York and Hartford Publishing Company, 1871), 179-185.

⁴⁵ George W. Mead, untitled lecture headed "Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Club," undated, MFP 7.8. Mead's handwriting changed over the years, and this appears to be in the hand he used in his twenties.

⁴⁶ Report of January 23, 1874. New York, Vol. 378, p. 41, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.

⁴⁷ John J. Studwell, autobiography, quoted by D. Irving Mead, "Studwell Family," MFP 51.18.

⁴⁸ D. Irving Mead, untitled manuscript, 1927, MFP 10.24.

⁴⁹ *Prospectus of the New York, Housatonic, & Northern Railroad Company* (New York: Wm. C. Bryant & Co., 1864), 8.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵² He lived in the next house south of The Homestead, and served from 1841 to 1874 (*A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, 71).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 11. Punctuation has been slightly altered for clarity.

⁵⁴ Report of January 23, 1874. New York, Vol. 378, p. 41, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.

⁵⁵ Conversions in this study were performed using www.measuringworth.com.

⁵⁶ Federal Census, 1870, Lewisboro, agricultural schedule.

⁵⁷ Federal Census, 1880, Lewisboro, agricultural schedule.

⁵⁸ Fred C. Warner, "Industry Thrived in Early North Salem," *Reporter Dispatch*, December 13, 1959. A number of letters and accounts regarding George's transactions with the company in 1892-97 are in MFP bv 88. In September 1897 he shipped 20,675 gallons to the Purdys factory.

⁵⁹ Contract, James A. Concklin, MFP 6.28.

⁶⁰ Grandfather of Clara A. Mead.

⁶¹ Letter, U.S. Grant, Jr., Salem Center, to George W. Mead, December 17, 1892, MFP 21.5.

⁶² Letter, Palliser, Palliser & Co. to George W. Mead, August 23, 1884, MFP 6.19; D. Irving Mead, "A Bird's-Eye View of Waccabuc Titles," MFP 11.23; Sarah F. Marseilles, "The Settlement of Mead Street," *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, at 264.

⁶³ Advertising flyer, MFP 60.11.

⁶⁴ Memoranda, John Hanley, Goldens Bridge, June 27, 1899 and July 4, 1899, MFP 46.2.

⁶⁵ MFP 42.13; *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, 275.

⁶⁶ Federal Census, 1900, Somers, family 142; State Census, 1905, Lewisboro, First E.D., p. 2; photograph, MFP 71.181.

⁶⁷ Business card, John S. Mead and John W. Casilear, n.d., MFP 44.1.

⁶⁸ Letter, Samuel H. Lawrence, Cross River, to Martin Mead, July 29, 1899, MFP 46.6. ⁶⁹ This is equivalent to about \$25 million today, while its \$2 million value in 1929 represented a slight decrease in absolute terms.

⁷⁰ A few bankruptcy related papers are found in MFP 6.25.

⁷¹ The chapel's construction is documented in MFP Box 59.

⁷² Deed, Sarah F. Mead to Kings and Westchester Land Company, December 26, 1910, MFP 12.2, recorded in Westchester County Deeds, 1937:349.

⁷³ Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1905-15, p. 69, MFP bv 2.

⁷⁴ Letter, D. Irving Mead to "my Brothers and Sisters," December 31, 1921, MFP 21.4; mortgages, MFP 29.15-21.

⁷⁵ Letter, D. Irving Mead to Alice Mead Neergaard, February 12, 1927, MFP 10.24; see also MFP 9.17, and William Mead, ed., *The Meads of Mead Street: Family Histories* (n.p., 2004), 16.

⁷⁶ Beaver Hills Company, Minutes, 1907-38, *passim.*, MFP bv 1.

⁷⁷ MFP 11.27; "Receipts of Bills Sent Out From Water Service 1928," MFP 17.12.

⁷⁸ MFP 17.1. A replacement was purchased in 1914.

⁷⁹ Receipt of Herbert A. Smith, Washington, D.C., February 27, 1908, signed by Charles F. Neergaard, MFP 63.11.

⁸⁰ Bill of sale, Martin R. Mead to New York Telephone Company, 1913, MFP 11.25, by which Martin sold the family's private telephone line, built in 1902, that connected Tarry-A-Bit, Lakeview, and Hendy Hap with the company's line at Goldens Bridge. See also MFP 17.5.

⁸¹ Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1916-20, pp. 5,20,30, MFP bv 3.

⁸² MFP 15.8, 17.6, 21.3, 38.5. See financial report of 1915 in MFP 15.8.

⁸³ Letter, D. Irving Mead to James Hoyt, February 7, 1906, MFP 21.3.

⁸⁴ *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, 292; "Summer Camping with the Y.M.C.A. Boys," *The Evening Mail*

Illustrated Saturday Magazine, August 5, 1905, 7, MFP 21.3. The former Benedict cottages remain rentals in 2008.

⁸⁵ "Goldens Bridge Trolley Begun," undated clipping, MFP bv 51, p. 48; transcript of item from *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, March 26, 1904, 78:1222, in MFP 11.6. Letter, Charles W. Leavitt to Kings and Westchester Land Company, December 31, 1919, MFP 23.15.

⁸⁶ "Westchester and Northern Railroad Asks Permit," clipping, March 10, 1911, MFP 11.12.

⁸⁷ Letter, D. Irving Mead to Henry B. Anderson, April 12, 1910, MFP 31.9. See also other correspondence in the same file,

⁸⁸ *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, 128; New York State, Department of Transportation, State Highway History Manuals, Westchester County; Rand McNally Official 1923 Auto Trails Map and 1930 Socony Road Map of New York, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections. Unfortunately the DOT manuals, which are the most accurate source, are lacking schedules for most of the state highways in Lewisboro.

⁸⁹ J. R. Bien and C.C. Vermuele, *Atlas of the Metropolitan District* (New York: Julius Bien, 1891), plate XIII. Other documentation of the extent of forest cover can be found on USGS Carmel Quadrangle, 1894, reprinted 1911, hand colored, New York State Library; "A Cover Type Map of the Country Property of Mead Property, Inc.," prepared by Earl Smith, March 1939, MFP 23.16; and USGS Peach Lake Quadrangle, 1941, reprinted 1958.

⁹⁰ Letter, Gifford Pinchot to George W. Mead, December 5, 1898, MFP 7.1.

⁹¹ Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1905-15, p. 216, MFP bv 2, entry for September 21, 1912. Joseph's class notes on silviculture are found in MFP bv 178. His Scribner estimating books are in MFP object box 97. Joseph's annual accountings are in MFP 10.31.

⁹² J.S. Barton Key, quoted in "The Horse and Hound," *Ridgefield Press*, January 20, 1910, 1.

⁹³ The family's offer was tendered early in 1911. Letter, D. Irving Mead to Joseph H. Adams, January 31, 1911, MFP 58.5.

⁹⁴ Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1905-15, pp. 194, 195, 197, MFP bv 2. For an example of a farm rental, the Town Farm on the southeast corner of Route 121 and Chapel Road was rented to J.J. Palmer for five years on February 28, 1914, *Ibid.*, 261. A detailed description of the creation of the cottages is found in *The Revived Ground Pine Gazette*, August 23, 1930, I:7, MFP 44.6.

⁹⁵ Floor plan, The Lake Waccabuc Inn, MFP 58.1.

⁹⁶ Charles T. Helmes and Kenneth W. Price, *Waccabuc Country Club: Seventy Years of History* (Waccabuc, 1982), unpag. See "New Lake Waccabuc Inn," *Ridgefield Press*, 25 August 1912, MFP 58.4.

⁹⁷ Account, The Country Club, to Kings and Westchester Land Company, 25 October 1912, MFP 58.11.

⁹⁸ Minutes of a family conference, January 15, 1916, MFP 21.5.

⁹⁹ Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1905-15, p. 246, entry for October 25, 1913, MFP bv 2.

¹⁰⁰ Letter, Horace G. Reed to Joseph Mead, November 23, 1923, MFP 15.19.

¹⁰¹ Agreement, Kings and

Westchester Land Company to Frederick and Sophie W. Knowles, April 28, 1931, MFP 25.1; purchase agreement, Benjamin F. Pope to Kings and Westchester Land Company, July 10, 1929, and deed, Benjamin F. Pope to Charles F. Neergaard, December 27, 1935, MFP 24.15.

¹⁰² J. Allen Rogers of New York City proposed to lease it in 1919, but apparently did not do so. Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1916-20, p. 88, MFP bv 3, entry for March 15, 1919.

¹⁰³ Alice Neergaard, untitled report, MFP 58.10.

¹⁰⁴ The club's history says "in 1927, the Lake Waccabuc Inn facilities and approximately 200 acres of land, including the boathouse and surrounding property, were leased from the Kings and Westchester Land Company to be operated solely for members of Waccabuc Country Club," but writing only a few years later a family member said, "In the spring of 1925 the Inn disappeared, the house being taken over by the Club." ("Do You Know?" *Revived Ground Pine Gazette*, I:7 [August 23, 1930], MFP 44.6).

¹⁰⁵ Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1905-15, p. 282, MFP bv 2.

¹⁰⁶ See various documents in MFP 21.4, 24.1, 58.9, 58.10.

¹⁰⁷ Mead Property, Inc., Report of the Manager, 1934, in back of MFP bv 20.

¹⁰⁸ Mead Property, Inc. reports of 1937 and 1938, MFP 18.1.

¹⁰⁹ Letter, Kings and Westchester Land Company to Olmsted & Olmsted, Boston, Mass., July 24, 1917; letter, Kings and Westchester Land Company to Charles W. Leavitt, September 7,

1917, MFP 23.15; Kings and Westchester Land Company Minutes, 1916-20, pp. 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 96, MFP bv 3; letter, Charles W. Leavitt to Kings and Westchester Land Company, December 31, 1919; letter, Herbert A. Smith to D. Irving Mead, November 20, 1917. All materials except minutes are in MFP 23.15.

¹¹⁰ Kings and Westchester Land Company, Subdivision Plan, C.W. Leavitt, December 5, 1919, revised January 3, 1920, negative photostat, MFP 23.15.

¹¹¹ Letter, Herbert Mead, Jr. to Herbert Mead, Sr., February 11, 1909, CMP 107.11. He refers to a train leaving Grand Central Terminal at 2:09 PM, arriving Katonah at 3:44 PM. See also New York Central and Hudson River Rail Road, Harlem Division, timetable, June 29, 1891, on which a train departed Goldens Bridge at 6:54 AM and arrived at Grand Central Terminal at 8:20 AM (MFP 11.16).

¹¹² Alice Mead Neergaard, report on cottage rentals, 1925, p. 3, MFP 58.9.

¹¹³ Letter, Richards M. Cahoon to Herbert A. Smith, January 13, 1921, copy, MFP 39.12.

¹¹⁴ Memorandum, November 28, 1923, MFP 15.19.

¹¹⁵ "Report of Assistant Treasurer," December 31, 1929, MFP 23.16.

¹¹⁶ Earl Smith, "A Study of the Company Property," May 1, 1939, MFP 23.16.

¹¹⁷ "Report of Manager of Westchester Properties," June 30, 1929, MFP 23.16.

¹¹⁸ Mead Property, Report of Manager, 1937.

¹¹⁹ Earl Smith, "A Plan of Woodland Management for the Kings and Westchester Land Co." 1930, MFP

23.16. For location of land uses at a slightly later period, see "A Cover Type Map of the Country Property of Mead Property, Inc.," prepared by Earl Smith, March 1939, MFP 23.16.

¹²⁰ Mead Property, Report of the Manager, 1933, found loose in MFP bv 20. In 1939, 270 acres were leased, generating \$566, approximately the same acreage as was managed in 1933 to return \$1,574.

¹²¹ Mead Property, Report of the Manager, 1934.

¹²² Mead Property Minutes, 1933-41, entry for December 23, 1939, MFP bv 20.

¹²³ Earl Smith, "A Plan of Woodland Management."

¹²⁴ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1929-42, MFP bv 27, entry for March 1, 1932.

¹²⁵ Mead Property Minutes, 1941-46, entry for December 30, 1932, MFP bv 21. See also MFP 12.2, and Westchester County Deeds 3302:435. The final dissolution followed the sale of remaining assets of Kings and Westchester Land Company in 1937 for \$25,925.

¹²⁶ See *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, 130-131, 203-209, 211-214, 433-436.

¹²⁷ Esther Lewis, "Planning and Zoning History," *A History of the Town of Lewisboro*, 503-504; Mead Property Minutes, 1933-41, MFP bv 20; *Building Zone Ordinance of the Town of Lewisboro* (1936), 8.

¹²⁸ Mead Property Minutes, 1933-41, MFP bv 20, entry for July 23, 1937.

¹²⁹ David I. Mead, untitled circular letter, July 24, 1936, MFP 21.4.

¹³⁰ "Memorandum in Regard to Mead Property, Inc. Lake Waccabuc Property," MFP 24.2.

¹³¹ Earl Smith, "A Study of the

Country Property," MFP 23.16.

¹³² Charles E. Dexter, Jr., "Organizing for Action," in "Report With Recommendations," March 15, 1940, p. 1, MFP 20.1.

¹³³ The basic source for the 20th-century genealogy is William Mead, ed., *The Meads of Mead Street* (n.p., 2004), 183-195.

¹³⁴ John J.S. Mead, untitled report, 1939, MFP 24.1.

¹³⁵ "Memorandum in Regard to Mead Property Inc. Lake Waccabuc Property," p. 5, MFP 24.2.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹³⁸ "Memo on Sales of Property at Lake Waccabuc," MFP 24.1.

¹³⁹ Charles E. Dexter, Jr., "Report with Recommendations, March 15, 1940," p. 49, MFP 20.1.

¹⁴⁰ Mead Property Minutes, 1933-41, entry for September 14, 1940, MFP bv 20.

¹⁴¹ Dexter, "Report," *passim*.

¹⁴² "Recommendations of the Committee on the Future of Waccabuc," July 26, 1940, MFP 32.3.

¹⁴³ Report of the Sales Manager, June 26, 1941, MFP 32.3.

¹⁴⁴ Letter, Robert D. Murdock to Directors of Mead Property, November 28, 1941, MFP 32.3.

¹⁴⁵ "Report of the Manager," July 24, 1942, MFP 32.3.

¹⁴⁶ Mead Property Minutes, 1941-46, entry for July 28, 1944, MFP bv 21.

¹⁴⁷ Mead Property Minutes, 1941-46, entries for October 11, 1942 and February 14, 1943, MFP bv 21.

¹⁴⁸ Mead Property Minutes, 1941-46, entries for March 24, 1945 and September 21, 1945, MFP bv 21.

¹⁴⁹ John J.S. Mead, circular letter, [July 19, 1946], p. 3, MFP 24.2.

¹⁵⁰ "Report on Management and Real Estate Sales Policies," [1947], p. 2, MFP 24.2.

¹⁵¹ Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entries for July 26, 1946, April 20, 1947, June 20, 1947, July 24, 1947, MFP bv 22.

¹⁵² Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entry for December 6, 1947, MFP bv 22.

¹⁵³ "Map of East Ridge," May 22, 1948; "Map of Perch Bay," September 22, 1948.

¹⁵⁴ "Report on Management and Real Estate Sales Policies"; "Memo Re Mead Property," October 22, 1947, MFP 19.1.

¹⁵⁵ "Mead Property / Studwell Foundation, Inc. / Waccabuc, N.Y." (brochure), MFP 20.6.

¹⁵⁶ Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entry for January 11, 1948, MFP bv 22.

¹⁵⁷ Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entries for January 30, 1949 and April 30, 1949, MFP bv 22. The contract is in MFP 25.18.

¹⁵⁸ Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entries for June 10, 1949, July 28, 1949, February 18, 1950 and March 12, 1950, MFP bv 22.

¹⁵⁹ "Report on Management and Real Estate Sales Policies," pp. 24-25.

¹⁶⁰ "Rules of Committee on Restrictions," [1947], MFP 19.1.

¹⁶¹ Letter, John J.S. Mead to Alice Mead Neergaard, September 25, 1947, MFP 24.4.

¹⁶² Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entries for September 21, 1949 and November 5, 1949, MFP bv 22.

¹⁶³ "Report on Real Estate Holdings of Mead Property, Inc.," May 1, 1950, MFP 19.1.

¹⁶⁴ "Plan Now . . . to Start Living," [1950], MFP 32.3. This brochure, at a cost not to exceed \$750, was authorized

at a meeting on June 22, 1950 (MFP 26.10).

¹⁶⁵ [Charles F. Neergaard], "General Management," MFP 32.3; Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entry for October 24, 1952, MFP bv 22.

¹⁶⁶ "Mead Property, Inc., Sales of Real Estate, January 1, 1950 to November 30, 1955," MFP bv 23 (loose within); Mead Property Minutes, 1946-52, entry for April 5, 1952, MFP bv 22; Mead Property Minutes, 1952-58, entry for February 27, 1953, MFP bv 23; "Report on Financing to Date on Construction of Two Houses on Route 121, Sept. 24, 1952," MFP bv 23 (loose within); sales flyers, MFP 20.6.

¹⁶⁷ "Mead Property, Inc., Sales of Real Estate."

¹⁶⁸ Letter, David I. Mead, Jr. to Robert Murdock, in Mead Property Minutes, 1952-58, entry for October 11, 1955, MFP bv 23.

¹⁶⁹ Mead Property Minutes, 1952-58, entry for January 22, 1955, MFP bv 23; letter, John J.S. Mead to Morgan Parker, chairman, Planning Board, Town of Lewisboro, April 23, 1955, MFP 26.11; *The Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Lewisboro* (1955).

¹⁷⁰ Its debenture bonds, issued in 1929, provided for interest payments of 6% per annum on their face value, with any profits above that figure paid as dividends.

¹⁷¹ "Memo Re Form of Incorporation, Studwell Foundation, Inc." [June 1, 1955], MFP 24.2; letter, Charles F. Neergaard to Moss Pangburn, August 19, 1957, MFP 32.3; Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1942-64, entry for June 21, 1957, MFP bv 28; Deeds 5780:1.

¹⁷² [Charles F. Neergaard], "Proposed Merger, Mead Property and Studwell Foundation," [August 15, 1957], MFP

22.7.

¹⁷³ "Mead Property, Inc., Real Estate, August 1, 1957," MFP 22.7.

¹⁷⁴ Russell K. Jones, "The Port of Missing Men," *15 Year Commemorative* (North Salem: North Salem Historical Society, 1984), 81-83; "Port of Missing Men: From a Civil War Book," undated clipping from the *Reporter Dispatch*, WCHS vertical file.

¹⁷⁵ "Notes on Meeting of 'Waccabuc Council,'" MFP 22.6.

¹⁷⁶ "Memo Re Mead Property: Talk of John J.S. Mead with W. Lee Moore on January 7th, 1958," MFP 22.6.

¹⁷⁷ "Conference with Denis Murray 1/20/58," MFP 22.6. A bill was introduced in the state assembly on January 20, 1958 "to amend the executive law in relation to the elimination or prevention of practices of discrimination because of race, creed, color or national origin, in housing accommodation." (MFP 22.6)

¹⁷⁸ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1942-64, entry for February 9, 1958, MFP bv 28.

¹⁷⁹ Letter, Henry Stockbridge to Robert Murdock, February 4, 1958, MFP 22.6.

¹⁸⁰ "Re Meeting with Moore & Kaufman 7/9/58," MFP 22.6.

¹⁸¹ Letter, W. Lee Moore to John J.S. Mead, July 24, 1958, MFP 22.6.

¹⁸² Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1942-64, entry for March 28, 1959, MFP bv 28; "Mead Property," brochure.

¹⁸³ Deeds 5997:194, 252.

¹⁸⁴ Mead Property Minutes, 1952-58, entries for November 28, 1952 and July 28, 1955, MFP bv 23; deed, MFP 28.1.

¹⁸⁵ John J.S. Mead, "To the Stockholders of Studwell Foundation," November 12, 1962, MFP 22.2; Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1942-64,

entry for February 16, 1963, MFP bv 28.

¹⁸⁶ Letter, Theodore Smith to John J.S. Mead, November 20, 1962, MFP 29.12; letter, Samuel S. Bartlett to John J.S. Mead, November 16, 1962, MFP 29.12; letter, Samuel S. Bartlett to John J.S. Mead, undated [1963], MFP 32.1.

¹⁸⁷ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1942-64, entries for February 16, 1963 and 18 May 1963, MFP bv 28; Timothy Smith, Waccabuc, oral communication, January 8, 2008.

¹⁸⁸ Merrill Folsom, "Auto Racer, Broke at 30, Tells of Making a Million in 2 Years," *New York Times*, December 18, 1964, 45; www.grandprix.com/gpe/drv-saibob.html. At the end of his life, Said was in film production, notably *Mystery of the Sphinx*.

¹⁸⁹ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1942-64, entries for May 18, 1963, August 2, 1963, August 6, 1963, October 18, 1963, April 4, 1964 and May 16, 1964, MFP bv 28; letter, Boris Said, Jr. to John J.S. Mead, July 29, 1963, MFP 32.1; "Memo to Studwell Foundation Executive Committee," undated [1963], MFP 19.3; minutes of a meeting of the executive committee, April 4, 1964, MFP 22.1; letter, Boris Said, Jr. to Studwell Foundation, March 9, 1964, MFP 22.1; Deeds 6403:490.

¹⁹⁰ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1964-70, entry for October 7, 1966, MFP bv 29; Timothy Smith, Waccabuc, oral communication, January 8, 2008.

¹⁹¹ Letter, James F. Henry to Robert D. Murdock, December 20, 1966, and attached untitled memo, MFP 31.11.

¹⁹² Susan S. Henry, oral communication, January 3, 2008.

¹⁹³ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1964-70, entry for July 28, 1968, MFP bv 29; "To the Stock and Bond Holders of Studwell Foundation, Inc.," November 11, 1968; "Transition Period

& S.F. Liquidation," December 25, 1968; "Set Up Into Which to Liquidate," postmarked February 3, 1969, all three memoranda in MFP 22.1.

¹⁹⁴ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1964-70, entries for June 8, 1969, July 7, 1969 and October 31, 1969, MFP bv 29; minutes, Lower Hudson Chapter, Nature Conservancy, October 30, 1990, MFP 20.4; *Guide to the Natural Areas of the Lower Hudson Chapter of the Nature Conservancy*, Second Edition (1981), 40-41; mimeographed memo, The Long Pond Committee, July 29, 1971, MFP 20.3-4. The deed to the Conservancy is dated December 8, 1971 (Deeds 7031:788).

¹⁹⁵ Deeds, 6919:375.

¹⁹⁶ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1964-70, certificate of dissolution, July 21, 1971, MFP bv 29. See also MFP 22.1-2. The Studwell Trust is documented in MFP 19.10.

¹⁹⁷ Studwell Foundation Minutes, 1964-70, entry for April 5, 1970, MFP bv 29. See also MFP 31.10. The Waccabuc Field Association had been organized in 1960 to protect the legal rights, privacy, and safety of Waccabuc residents, with particular reference to an influx of outside deer hunters. The post office was sold to Waccabuc Community Services on January 29, 1974 (Deeds 7179:623). The roles of both organizations were taken over by the Waccabuc Landowners Association in 1980.

¹⁹⁸ Linda Greenhouse, "Action

Group Seeks to Build a Project in Westchester," *New York Times*, November 15, 1972, 51.

¹⁹⁹ Jim Heller and Elizabeth Baecher, "Lewisboro Residents, Officials Attack Housing Development," clipping dated November 15, 1972; Elizabeth Baecher, "Waccabuc Plan Faces a Fight," clipping dated November 30, 1972, both in WCHS vertical file; Elizabeth Simonoff, "Opposition Rising to Giant Project," *Patent Trader*, November 18, 1972, 1.

²⁰⁰ Letter, Town Committee Against the Suburban Action Proposal to "Dear Contributor," June 1975, MFP 31.7.

²⁰¹ Linda Greenhouse, "Action Group. . . ."

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