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THE CLOVE AND ITS VALLEY

By DOROTHY SMITH

The Dutch called it "Het Kloven" — the cleft. A view of Staten Island from Brooklyn's Belt Parkway shows how aptly the Clove is named. Through that clove in the hills bordering the King's Highway, nearly three miles from the Watering Place, early settlers found a natural roadway to the north shore from scattered farms along the east and south shores. Long before the Clove Road was surveyed and recorded it was used as a public highway.

If tradition is to be believed, the first house in the Clove Valley was erected about 1690 by a member of the Corsen or Corson family. Possibly it was Capt. Cornelius Corsen who built the simple story and a half stone house on what was to become the east side of Clove Road for the captain had acquired considerable acreage in 1680 of the Dongan patent. In any event the house was occupied by the captain's descendants until 1832 when John King Vanderbilt, a New York City merchant, bought the farm which then numbered 80 acres. (The former site of the house is the center of Beverly Avenue as it meets Clove Road, opposite Clove Lakes Park.)

British maps made during the Revolution showed three unidentified houses on the Clove Road in this area. There was also a house on the Little Clove Road, an important connecting road that branched off the Clove Road about half a mile from the King's Highway and wound westward through the valley and up over the hill to farms farther inland. The house in the Little Clove, according to British maps, belonged to T. Seaman.

Family tradition has it that Daniel Corsen, grandson of Captain Cornelius,

Corsen-Vredenburg House, 1179 Clove Road. Built 1690; demolished 1930. *Photo, permission of Miss Dorothy Smith*

was living in the stone house in the Clove when the British landed on the Island. Apparently the sight of British patrols galloping past his house at all hours could not stifle his devotion to the American cause. Nor did a visit from the commanding general and his staff awe the sturdy yeoman although that first encounter with Sir William Howe must have been a trying one for the host who but a short time before had been declaiming at the Rose and Crown tavern that he'd rather have one commission signed by the American George than a dozen signed by the British George. Daniel Corsen had achieved considerable local fame for that sentiment and Sir William had been quick to recall the episode. As a bit of "punishment" for the rebel the general demanded that the Corsens name the child they were expecting "William Howe." So, unlike the other Corsens, who for generations had attended the Dutch Church, the new baby was taken to Richmondtown on Feb. 25, 1777 and christened an Episcopalian with the name of William Howe.

By 1804 Daniel's son Richard C. had taken title to the farm. When he died in 1823 he left to his beloved wife Margaret "my lower dwelling room and upper bedroom together with the use of my Garret, Entry, cellars and Kitchen and as much of the Household and Kitchen furniture as she sees proper to retain for her own private use. . . ." She also received "my riding chair, my best horse, two of my best Milche cows and keeping for the same . . . also one fourth part of the Poultry, and the privilege of getting as much firewood and fruit on that part of my Farm herein after devised to my son Cornelius, as she shall want for her own private use only; together with the use of one half of my Garden. . . . I do also give to my wife my colored woman, named Phillis." In addition Mrs. Corson received her husband's silver, all carefully listed, and interest on all his monies, bonds and notes. She continued to live in the old house and even after the farm was sold in 1832 remained in possession of the rooms willed to her by her husband. The negro woman Phillis and several others who had been slaves stayed on with the old lady and according to family legend "Aunt Peggy" used the lower dwelling room and the upper bedroom till her death in 1848.

Richard C. Corson's sister Ann married William Blake who, in 1802, took title to the stone house in the Little Clove known during the Revolution as Seaman's. Further research is necessary to ascertain whether this was "Brickfields", William Blake's father's property, or whether it was another Corson holding. In any event William and Ann Blake occupied the house and land, which extended both sides along the Little Clove, well into the 1840s. Later D. Porter Lord bought the property, "modernized" and enlarged the house, raised the roof and turned it into a mansard type. Subsequently Arthur Nellis lived there. The old house was demolished around 1930.

By the 1840s a number of elaborate houses set among beautiful shrubs and gardens had been erected in the Clove and nearly everyone in the valley and its surrounding hills was a Vanderbilt or a family connection.

High on the east hill forming the entrance to the Clove stood the Italian villa type house erected by Commodore Vanderbilt's nephew Charles M. Simonson. (This house still stands, considerably remodeled). About half a mile farther along that hilltop was the large house of Capt. Jacob Vanderbilt, the commodore's brother. At the left, just turning into the Little Clove was the square house of the Van Duzers. (The commodore's sister Elinor Jane was married to Daniel C. Van Duzer. About 400 feet farther, set up on a sloping terrace, was another Vanderbilt relative's house, the Haskells. This was another Italian villa type house. The stone wall marking the boundary remains along the present Ocean Terrace.

Overlooking the valley from the west was the La Bau mansion, the home of the commodore's daughter Alitia, who married L. B. La Bau. This house is now the Swedish Home. On the east slope stood the large house of the commodore's daughter Ethlinda, the wife of Daniel B. Allen. The Allens had bought eight acres from her father's cousin John King Vanderbilt, who lived in a more modest white frame house farther along the Clove Road, near the corner of Richmond Turnpike, now Victory Boulevard.

This latter house had been erected a year or two after John King Vanderbilt had bought the Corsen farm. He had remodeled the Corsen house somewhat by raising the roof on the main section, extending and facing the front first story with brick and placing a veranda across the main part of the house. By 1833 his stepdaughter, who had married Abraham Valentine Vredenburg of Yonkers, had moved in with her husband and children. What old Mrs. Corson did during the remodeling hasn't been recorded.

This house, later numbered 1179 Clove Road, was occupied by some member of the Vredenburg family until 1911, when Alfred Eigeldinger purchased it with two acres of land. About 1930 the house was razed when Beverly Avenue was cut through.

In the 1840s the Gothic type cottage became popular. Several were built in the valley, among them two Britton cottages. Abraham, Jr.'s was on the west side of the road; his brother Henry's was on the east. Both stand today and are numbered 956 and 1015 respectively. The latter is the home of the John Franzrebs. The steep-roofed house at 1336 Clove Road, corner of Schoharie Street, is also a pleasing example of the Gothic cottage but this may well be a much older house with a facade and roof line changed to meet a current fashion.

In the 1860s a retired sea captain named Allen lived in this house. Among other things in his garden he raised tobacco. This he cured — not too successfully — and smoked. So pungent was its aroma that an eight-year-old lad, who had watched the captain puffing a pipe of the local leaf, could remember those acrid whiffs more than eighty years later.

From all accounts life in the Clove was pleasant and leisurely. Everyone had good horses for riding and driving. There was much visiting. There were tea parties and evenings of whist or backgammon or music or charades. In winter children and their parents went skating on Britton's mill pond, tobogganned down the steep hills or climbed into farm sleds, cushioned with straw, drawn by plodding oxen. For those who liked faster transportation there was a cutter or a two-seated sleigh jingling with bells, drawn by a fast-trotting horse or team.

Lilacs and lilies-of-the-valley, roses and peonies, sweet smelling strawberry shrub, flags and pinks, wisteria and honeysuckle, rose of Sharon and sweet peas made the gardens fragrant at each season. In addition to gardens and green lawns nearly every house had a smooth croquet ground and later, when the game was introduced here, a lawn tennis court.

The orchards bore such apples as "Northern Spies", "Strawberry" and "russet." There were luscious freestone and cling peaches, red plums, ox heart, black Tartarian and white cherries, yellow quinces and numerous varieties of pears. Currants, gooseberries, grapes, raspberries and blackberries grew in abundance and of course each household was well supplied from its vegetable garden. In winter for the more opulent houses flowers were raised in a conservatory.

Particularly beautiful in the spring were the blossoms of the cherry trees bordering for a full quarter of a mile the property line of Abraham Britton on the west side of the Clove Road. Apparently the Brittons were especially fond of cherries for a number of the trees grew near their house and Mrs. Britton, determined not to share her cherries with flocks of hungry blackbirds, kept a shotgun handy on the veranda by her chair and fired whenever the marauders appeared.

Abraham Britton operated the mill at the head of the pond which had been formed by damming the Clove brook about 1825 and his son Henry had icehouses nearby where the ponds' harvest was stored. Henry Britton with his brother Abraham, Jr. headed the Island's ice industry for many years.

Ice harvesting may well be classed an old and important industry or business of the valley, along with iron mining in the Little Clove, which flourished in 1856. The Crystal Water Works, which came later, might also be called a valley "business."

The formation of the Richmond

County Hunt Club in 1888, with its club house in the Little Clove, midway between Clove Road and the present Ocean Terrace, brought to the valley diversion and excitement as pink-coated riders on galloping horses followed the baying hounds intent on running their quarry to earth. The fox den, a good distance from the old hunt stables, up on the left slope back of the present Sunnyside Hospital, is probably still there and a bit of poking in the underbrush would reveal its narrow opening because that area thus far is undeveloped.

When the club moved to Dongan Hills seven years later the property was included in the Deere estate, which also owned considerable acreage on the west side of Ocean Terrace. During World War I these fields, under the direction of Mr. Nellis who lived nearby, were turned into Victory Gardens of corn and potatoes.

At the entrance to the Clove the first Baptist Church on the Island was put up in 1809, a small building 20 by 30 feet. From it came all the other Island Baptist groups. Overgrown by brush and vine, a few of the gravestones of the early Baptists still remain.

Nearly across from the old Baptist meeting house St. Simon's-in-the-Clove grew from an Episcopal mission started from St. John's Church, Clifton, over 100 years ago.

In 1915 a small white chapel was put up on the south side of Victory Boulevard between Clove Road and the present Grand Avenue. Instituted by members of the Brighton Heights Reformed Church and directed by the New York Classis, a Sunday School and church services were conducted there for a number of years by students from the New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church, formed in the 1920s, is on Northern Boulevard and La Bau Avenue.

The Clovena Company started the first real estate development in the valley in the area bounded by Clove and Little Clove Roads and the present Victory Boulevard. A sale of building lots was held May 4, 1901, with Cornelius G. Kolff, auctioneer. Streets bearing such Indian names as Oswego, Seneca, Tioga, Oneida, Schoharie, Genesee and Niagara had been laid out and such inducements as cement sidewalks, macadam roads, city water, gas and electric lights were emphasized in the promotion material.

The second real estate venture called South New York, was that of Wood, Harmon and Company around 1906 in the tract bounded by the eastern side of Clove Road and the southern side of the turnpike. This area was laid out into avenues called Grand, Glenwood, Van Cortlandt and Alpine, with a fifth renamed Dudley in memory of Dudley Swartz, a young boy who died a few years after the section was opened.

The banal name Sunnyside first was heard in the early 1900s when trolley motormen, to advertise a boarding house on the northwest corner of Clove Road and the turnpike, loudly called "Sunnyside" each time they reached that corner. Unfortunately the name has stuck throughout the years. Its use is an annoyance to those who prefer the old name of the Clove, and its use as a post office designation a constant source of confusion with Sunnyside on Long Island.

The Clove had a brief flurry as a movie location when the "Right of Way," with William Faversham as the star, was filmed around the lakes in the summer of 1914. The area was selected, the movie people explained, because of its resemblance to the St. Lawrence River.

And what are the legends of the Clove? Probably the best known one is that of the Irish Cow Frog as told by David Carlin, a spry little Irishman, who loved children, animals and all growing things. David had been our family's gardener for many years. I have no first recollection of David. He was always there, with his marvelous stories which ranged from the pre-Christmas activities of Granny Goozenheimer, Santa Claus' grandmother and David's close friend, to the growth of fabulous vegetables, especially pumpkins and squash. But it was his story of the Irish Cow Frog that lived in Britton's mill pond that delighted us most. That story became so famous that a reporter from a New York paper tracked David down to get the facts at first hand and a version of the yarn appears in *The North Shore,* by William T. Davis.

As David told it the Irish Cow Frog was smuggled into this country by a man who worked in the old ice house at the pond. It was the only Irish Cow Frog in America and it was the biggest in the world. The man cared for it tenderly, taking it to the pond, keeping it in shallow water there, feeding it well and covering it up when the nights were cold.

But one day the frog got away and though the man tried many times to capture it the frog wouldn't come back to the ice house although apparently the creature hadn't gone far from the pond for every little while it spoke in a bellowing voice heard all the way to the Kills. Children who were very good often saw it for the frog was never afraid of boys and girls. Some small boys boasted they'd ridden on its back across the pond and back but they got whipped by their mothers for fibbing.

David said the frog weighed 150 pounds on the ice house scales but some fellows swore it weighed 274 pounds. David always scoffed at such exaggeration, saying who ever heard of a frog that heavy?

Just before World War I the frog seemed sick. Two warts on its back that used to be as big as water melons grew smaller and smaller and unless you stood within a quarter of a mile you couldn't hear its voice.

Finally a man from the same town in Ireland as the frog decided to help. He slipped a chain around the creature's back, a small boy patting its back so the frog wouldn't be frightened, and with the help of a derrick it was hoisted on a truck and taken to the docks where a ship bound for Ireland was loading. Later David had word that the frog had arrived safely and was living very happily in a pond near Tipperary.

These recollections and glimpses of the Clove and its valley for more than 200 years are random ones taken mainly from family papers and recollections and conversations with those who knew the area well. Very little is based on published sources.

Although my father John Frederick Smith was born in New York City in 1860 he spent such long periods of time at his Grandmother Vredenburg's that the Clove soon seemed home to him. In 1888 at the settlement of his grandmother's estate he bought about 15 acres of the old farm. This included John King Vanderbilt's white house. My father never lived in that house however. He sold it with two acres of land to his cousin Joseph Mortimer Vanderbilt.

In 1893 my father started building a house for himself south of the Vanderbilts on two acres bounded by the turnpike and Clove Road. This house was later numbered 1213 Clove Road. He lived there the rest of his life, taking his bride, Miss Abbie E. Crocheron, to the house near the turn of the century.

My father's mother was one of the youngest of the Vredenburg children. She was born in the old Corsen house in 1835. Her recollections of "Aunt Peggy" Corson and of Phillis, Alf, Ned, Dinah and the other former slaves were always first hand. My grandmother died in 1935, a short time before her 100th birthday. Her memory was always keen, although she much preferred to talk of the present and future than of the past.

By a coincidence my mother's mother was born in the valley, in the Little Clove at her Grandfather Blake's but she had no early recollections of the place because her parents returned to their own home in New York six weeks after her birth. However she knew the story, told and retold by her family, of Great-Grandfather Daniel Corsen and Gen. Howe just as the story was known to the later occupants of Daniel's house through his daughter-in-law "Aunt Peggy."

Among his voluminous file of business records that cover his nearly 75 years in real estate, insurance and banking on the Island and in New York my father had a file of papers relating to the Clove properties. These are intact. They are interesting now but they will be of much greater interest one day when cars speed along the Clove Lakes Thruway bringing tremendous changes to Het Kloven, even greater than those briefly mentioned in these pre-World War recollections.

OLD DAYS ON CLIFF STREET

By Captain John Hammel

When I was a boy, back in the seventies and eighties of the last century, I lived in a house on Cliff Street that is still standing today. In fact, Cliff Street itself has not changed a great deal. It still runs from Bay Street, or New York Avenue as we knew it, to the low cliff over the Narrows. The line of houses, in one of which we lived, that runs along the north side of the street, looks much the same as in my boyhood. But the surrounding areas of Rosebank, Fort Wadsworth and Arrochar have certainly changed.

Back in those days these areas were given over in large part to estates owned by well-to-do New Yorkers. These provided the native population with much of their employment as gardeners and handymen. There was no morning rush to the ferry or weary return in the afternoon for the Cliff Street dwellers. Those who were not employed on the neighboring estates were apt to be runners for ship's chandlers and sailors' boarding houses. Though these places were located on South Street in Manhattan, the runners had only to travel to the runners' dock at the foot of Cliff Street to be at work. On sight of a bark, a brigantine, or a ship beating its way in from the sea toward the Quarantine Station, the runners would take off from the dock. Their boats were about nineteen feet long, and two men handled each boat. Rowing as fast as they could they would race out to the incoming ship. While one man maneuvered the boat, the other would clamber up the rope ladder, search out the captain or mate, and seek to persuade him that the chandler or boarding house that the runner represented deserved the patronage of the ship's company. The runner whose boat outdistanced his rival's and whose line of talk was most impressive was the successful one. Probably the grandsons of such a one are now traveling salesmen and television announcers.

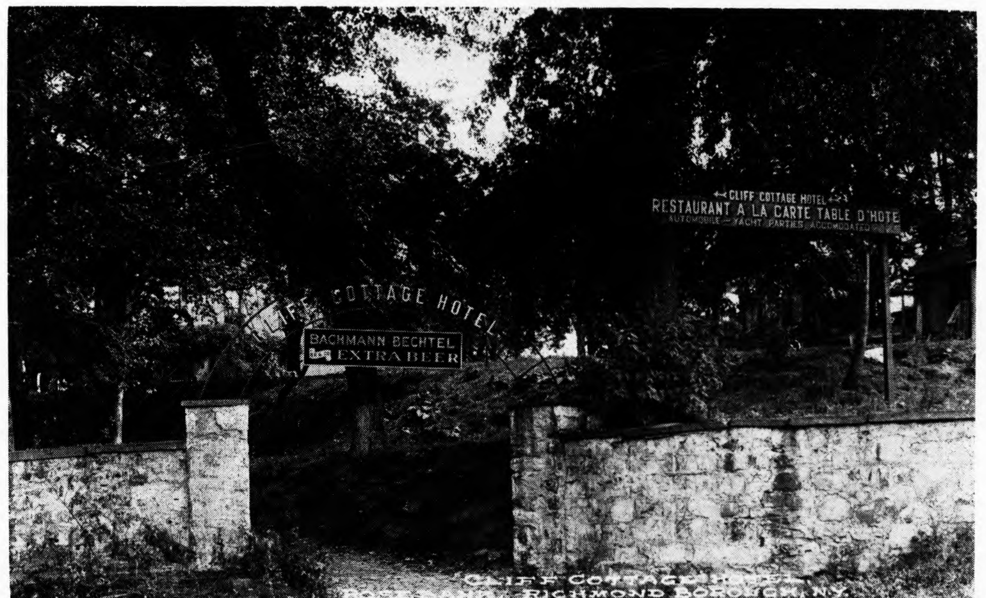
It was fun to grow up on Cliff Street, although a lot of work was mixed with the fun and our life might be considered primitive by the youngsters of today. There was swimming and fishing at the foot of the street, and in winter there were many ponds around for ice-skating. Of course the skating played second fiddle to ice-cropping. In a cold winter a pond might be cut twice or even three times to fill the icehouses. Electrical refrigeration has now banished the ice cutting crew, but it was quite a sight to see the crew of strong men and rugged horses cutting the big blocks and hauling them to shore.

Besides the swimming, fishing, and skating there were other amusements for growing boys.

On summer Sundays, for example, we enjoyed watching the horse cars on New York Avenue carrying hordes of weekend fishers to Fort Wadsworth. Most of these sportsmen for some reason were Germans who traveled down from Manhattan for a day's outing. They came in such numbers that, even though an extra horse was stationed at Cliff Street to help pull the cars up the hill to the fort, the cars would often fail to make the grade. Then it was fun to watch the fishermen scramble out of the car and, with sounds of mutual encouragement, help push the conveyance up the hill. When they arrived at the Fort, which enforced no security measures in those days, they covered the rocks on the shore by scores and indulged in some of the noisiest fishing on record.

Part of our fun was the proper observance of holidays. Those were the days when Hallowe'en and the Fourth of July were celebrated by boys in the old traditional manner. On Hallowe'en gates disappeared and outhouses moved. There were no safety regulations to interfere with patriotism and its expression in loud noises on the Fourth. But perhaps the most fun was to be had on Election Day. The Australian ballot had not yet been introduced. Each candidate had ballots prepared with his name on them. These were handed to the voter, who took the one he preferred and placed it in the ballot box in full sight of all the watchers. After the voting hours each candidate had one or two watchers to oversee the counting. This was when the fun began. Campaigns for town supervisor, town trustees and town judges (we were in the town of Middletown) were hotly contested. As the counting of ballots proceeded there was almost certainly a number of arguments. If the bystanders were lucky these might develop into pretty exciting fist fights. Along with the campaign parades and the victory bonfires these fisticuffs made Election Day a day to be remembered.

Apart from these amusements there was little entertainment in the sense that a modern youngster knows it. There were a few commercial amusements and no organized recreations. Family life in those days, however, was more complete than it usually is now, and there was not much time to sit around and wonder what to do next. As for exercise, you could not escape it. Chores around the house were expected. Walking was as natural as driving a car is today. Errands had to be run and bundles had to be brought from the stores. Milk was delivered to the home. Mr. Simonson, who had a farm at the corner of New York Avenue and Fingerboard Road, used to deliver milk on foot, carrying a five gallon can from which he scooped out the milk into the housewife's pail or jar. Of course, milk was not consumed in the quantities that we are used to now. A quart or two a day was sufficient for most households. Later on Mr. Simonson ran into competition from Pat Smith, who introduced a horse-drawn delivery service. For groceries and meat we went to the stores on New York Avenue. Ludlow's hay and feed depot also sold groceries. Hague's and M. J. Rothman dealt in both groceries and meat; the former was also a liquor package store. All of these had somewhat the air of a country general store. For clothes, however, we had to travel to Stapleton, where among other emporiums was situated the Tompkins Department Store. Occasionally, a trip was made to Washington Market in Manhattan to lay in a supply of meat at economy prices. Even though the fare on the horsecars was only five cents, for which one could travel all the way to Howland's Hook, most of my trips to Stapleton were by foot. We walked to St. Mary's Church on New York Avenue, where Father Lewis was pastor, for Sunday Mass, passing St. John's Episcopal Church, in those days under the pastorate of Dr. Eccleston. We walked, too, to Dr. Feeney's office, when medical attention was needed, and to his brother's shop by St. Mary's for drugs. A long walk was the



Cliff Cottage Hotel, Rosebank. c. 1902

one to a dental office in Stapleton, dreading the dentist's ministrations every foot of the way.

Since medical services were not always to be had readily, and at best meant a long walk to the doctor's office, a number of home remedies were used. Some of those I remember are the old spring tonic stand-by, sulphur and molasses, putting cobwebs on cuts, cutting the hair to restore strength, and tying a salt pork poultice to the neck for relief of a sore throat. But medical superstitions were not confined to laymen in those days. Even doctors approved of completely darkened rooms with shutters closed and shades drawn for measles patients, to whom hot drinks were given to bring the measles out.

One disease of those days has fortunately disappeared from our region. That was the dreaded malaria, for which quinine and rest were the only remedies, along with a close cropping of the hair during recuperation. Among other reasons, the milk and water supply may have been to blame for its prevalence. Each house had a cistern to catch rain water for general use. We obtained our drinking water from a community wooden pump at the corner of Cliff Street and New York Avenue. But, after all, we were still in the gaslight era, when a man with a short ladder appeared at dusk to light the street lamps on New York Avenue.

Of course school was an important part of growing up. School administration was much more casual than it is today, but a good deal of the schooling stuck with us. Luckily I was pretty close to the village school that stood on New York Avenue just at the end of our street. The same building later became the Southfield District School, and still later the school was moved to the P.S. 13 building. When I attended the principal was "Buck" Cleveland, who also taught the older pupils. There were both men and women teachers. There was no regular promotion system or graduation. A pupil passed on to the next room whenever he qualified for it, and left school when he or his parents felt that he had enough education. We sat on benches at double desks and studied from books supplied by the school. Very little homework was assigned. When a problem of discipline arose in a room the teacher would send for Mr. Cleveland, who made his appearance brandishing a three foot cane, long, narrow, tapering, and menacing. He administered punishment to the culprit in front of the class. The cane continued in motion until the miscreant acknowledged its power with a yell.

I must confess that I once felt the sting of Buck's cane. At eleven in the morning we had recess. Close to the school stood a place of temptation, Maria Tracey's Confectionery — ale and porter on tap — cigarettes 1¢ each. One morning Jim Mackin and I gave in to temptation and went to Miss Tracey's to buy a Sweet Caporal. As we returned, sharing the smoke, we must have been seen by the principal from his second floor window. To reach our room we had to pass through his. Jim made it safely, but I was detained and ushered to a bench under the principal's desk. His rattan cane, as always, was handy. After his class had assembled he stepped down from his platform, reached for my hand and came down on it with the cane. I knew he usually relented with the first yelp of pain, but I was young and stubborn. It must have been one of the longest lashings he ever dispensed. He gave no reasons then, or ever after, for the punishment. Incidentally, I still enjoy a smoke.

Even while we were still in school many of us became acquainted with the realities of working for a living. An up-and-coming boy was expected to pull his weight in meeting the family expenses. My first venture into the world of breadwinning was a newspaper route. Newspaper delivery in those days was by foot like most others. My job meant a walk to Clifton early in the morning to pick up the New York papers as they arrived on the ferry. Then I walked back to New York Avenue to distribute them among the homes in Rosebank and Fort Wadsworth. Most of the homes were well separated. I became acquainted with the names of the people who owned large estates in the neighborhood: people like the famous Mr. Mouquin of restaurant fame, and Mr. Appleton of the well-known publishing firm. All these papers had to be delivered early. If school was in session I had to be finished with my job in time to be at class. Those cold mornings with a bundle of Worlds, Heralds, Tribunes, and Times under my arm are still terribly vivid. Later on I obtained a job at Mr. Kost's Clifton House, one of the hotels along the shore above Fort Wadsworth. The Clifton House was a German Club, much given to good and substantial food. It had the advantage to me of being near Cliff Street. I worked as a handyman after school and during vacation. Next to the Clifton House was the Cliff House, right at the end of Cliff Street. This was an elite club operated by a Mrs. Walk. I remember it with fondness for one of its most prominent guests was Mr. Platt, the Commodore of the fabulous New York Yacht Club, who instituted a Fourth of July party for all the Cliff Street children. This became an annual affair with fireworks, soda and ice cream. It was a perfect place for fireworks displays with the waters of the bay stretching out below the cliff.

I really began to feel self-supporting when I obtained a job at the home of Mr. Endicott on what is now McClean Avenue. He was a famous lithographer and the president of Field and Stream Magazine. When I was twelve he hired me as a handyman at a salary of four dollars a month and board. For about two years I made the fires, cared for the grounds and looked after the chickens. At the end of that time I became assistant to my father, who was head gardener and superintendent of the estate of Mr. Emmonds, the president of the Staten Island Rapid Transit. This was a large and beautiful estate located between New York Avenue and the waterfront. It is now the Shore Acres residential development. Here at "Portledge", working with my father, I learned to know and love gardening, which has been my favorite hobby throughout my life.

All too soon it seemed, boyhood was slipping away. I was growing older and looking for new worlds. In 1890 South Beach opened and I joined the police force that was organized there. An eight hour shift and sixty dollars a month — and the excitement of a beach resort! But South Beach is another story. Soon afterwards I obtained a position on the old ferry to New York, operated at that time by the Rapid Transit Company. The boats were side-wheelers, and there were many winter mornings when we young deckhands had to chop ice from the paddles before the boat could continue its trip to New York. But that, too, is another story.

To most of the young blades of the time economic independence was not the only symbol of man's estate. There was another field in which recognition was important. Since our youngest days we had admired the gallant members of the local fire companies. This was the age of the volunteer firemen, and one of our dearest ambitions was to join their ranks. After all, policemen, even in those days, were professionals. But the firemen were dedicated amateurs and demigods. The Wadsworth Hose, Hook and Ladder Number Five, Engine Number Eight and the Grasmere Hose, away over near the Grasmere station. were as much on our lips as were the Civil War regiments on those of our elders. These companies covered the area from Vanderbilt Avenue to South Beach and New Dorp. At first all the machines were pulled by hand. Later on, horses were used, often hired from Ludlow's stable. There is probably no community position today to compare with that of the volunteer firemen. When I became a member of the newly organized Wadsworth Hose Company, I had achieved boyhood's dream and reached boyhood's end.

For most of my life I have lived within a short walk of Cliff Street. I have been able to see the changes that time has made. The old estates have largely disappeared. The old way of life has gone. I have favored every improvement that has come and that is to come. But those long ago days of growing up in old Staten Island are as alive to me as ever, and they hold a value in living that I could never regret.

HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION OF STATEN ISLAND PART II, 1800-1900 (Conclusion)

by LORING MCMILLEN

By 1857 the local papers carried the advertisements of Dr. A. G. S. Gale, druggist and dentist (also dealing in slacked lime), Charles H. White, Frederick Gaupp and William J. Watson. In 1859 and for many years thereafter, the papers carried the interesting notices of J. W. Bassett, Druggist at Tompkinsville. His first notice invited the residents to his "Drug Store at Tompkinsville where may at all times be found a full assortment of the finest quality of Drugs and medicines, together with such fancy goods and miscellaneous articles as are usually found in first class drug stores on Broadway (New York City)".

Mr. Bassett mentions in 1859 that he is a member of the Apothecaries' Co. and Pharmaceutical Society of New York and has been engaged in the business for the last thirty years. The druggist had come into his own and together with Mr. Bassett's assortment of "fancy goods" has been a necessary and established institution ever since.

Between 1832 and 1855 the Richmond County Medical Society was inactive and the medical history of this period must be gathered from other sources. The period was one of growth and development as business and professional men found the Island an attractive place for their homes. Among them was Dr. Samuel Mackenzie Elliott who arrived about 1830 and through his exceptional skill as an occulist and a pioneer in this field brought many famous people to the Island as his patients. He took an active part in his community and the section where he lived in New Brighton was for many years named Elliottville after him. His avocation was the building of attractive houses made from the grey trap rock quarried at Graniteville and during his life, which ended in 1875, he built and occupied successively more than 20. His son, Dr. S. R. Elliott, inherited his father's talents and also lived and died on Staten Island.

Dr. Samuel Akerly, born in 1786, was famous for his work as superintendent and physician of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum of New York City and for his contributions to scientific literature. He retired to a farm, the house of which is still standing at Eltingville, to devote himself to the scientific study of agriculture. He died in 1845 and while probably not a member of our medical profession he will be remembered for his contributions to our scientific and natural history.

Dr. John W. Draper, father of photography, was a resident here for a short time prior to 1847. He was one of the best known physicians, teachers and scientific writers of his time.

Many other physicians undoubtedly took up residence on Staten Island at this time, such as Dr. William G. Edie, who came as early as 1842 and who was later a member of the Medical Society, Dr .J. Tiebout, who lived on Richmond Road near Concord as early as 1828, Dr. Joseph Q. Warne about the same time, and possibly others, as well as those who were present at the reorganization of the Medical Society in 1855.

On January 17 of this year, a group of physicians met at the Tompkins Lyceum, Tompkinsville, "for the purpose of taking preliminary measures to reorganize the Richmond County Medical Society which was originally established in July 1806." The doctors present were John S. Westervelt, James Harcourt, Isaac Lea, John W. Sterling, William C. Anderson, James R. Boardman, F. Campbell Stewart, Joseph Feeny, E. W. Prendergast, F. Hertzka, C. G. Rotha, H. R. Baldwin, Thos. Walser, J. Cavelti and Edward C. Mundy. Dr. Westervelt, the only one of the original Society present, was elected chairman.

By recognizing that they were merely reorganizing the Society as established in 1806, the present group wisely guaranteed that they had not ceased to exist in 1832. At the present time this action establishes the Medical Society as the oldest of our time honored Island institutions.

Although the stated object of the Society was "the promotion of Medical Science and the friendly intercourse of its members" the actual purpose as stated in the act of 1804 was "to regulate the practice of Physic and Surgery". For this purpose three censors were still appointed to pass on applicants for membership. As formerly, rejection of an applicant did not carry any power to prevent him practicing his profession. However, throughout the minutes of the record book, kept from 1855 to 1902, there are many attempts to require non-member doctors to present their credentials in conformity to the original act and its amendments. In one instance it was proposed to present the names of the unapproved doctors to the District Attorney for action.

The minutes present a continuous history of the medical profession on Staten Island until the present time. They are outstanding for the dignity which was evident at all times, particularly during such trying events as the burning of the Quarantine Station at Tompkinsville in 1858. This station had been established in 1799 when the locality was nothing but farm land. However, by 1858 the thriving village of Tompkinsville had grown and surrounded the Quarantine. Several epidemics of yellow fever had been traced to the Quarantine and for many years the leading citizens of the Island had tried in vain to have the station removed to an isolated location. Finally on the nights of September 1 and 2, 1858, an "organized mob" destroyed the principal Quarantine buildings. While individual members of the Society, particularly the secretary, Dr. E. C. Mundy, Health Officer of Castleton, were involved, the Society before and after the destruction kept strictly to medical opinion as to the origin of the ,yellow fever epidemics and their contagious nature. In a notable address before the Society on August 1, 1858, Dr. Anderson, the president, brought out the difference of opinion at this time among the medical profession as to whether yellow fever was contagious and quoted in support of the "contagionists" a letter written by Dr. Richard Channing Moore, former member of the Society (1806-1808). This letter dated October 2, 1806, was published in the American Medical Register for July 1811 and was remarkable for its careful observation of the path of yellow fever. However, while the Medical Society was on the right track it wasn't until 1881 that the lowly mosquito was suspected as being the carrier of this dread disease.

The meeting of the Society on July 13, 1858 expressed a lighter side when, to quote Dr. Mundy, the secretary, "During recess the Society was invited by Dr. Anderson (President) to retire to the dining room where was prepared a sumptuous collation at which woodcock were dissected voraciously if not scientifically and viands discussed with marked ability. The stimulating properties of Champagne, Cincinati, and other sparkling wines were also tested and demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of each member of the Society after which the society reorganized."

At a meeting held January 8, 1861 it was resolved "That the room of the Society (corner of Bay and Union Streets, Stapleton) be opened every Saturday from 1 to 2 o'clock P. M. and that one or more members be requested to attend for the purpose of prescribing for the poor who will be furnished with medicine gratuitously". At the meeting on August 2, 1861, Dr. Anderson who appeared to be a leader in this movement, proposed that the "benefit of gratuitous medical attendance to the poor of Staten Island be extended to providing beds, etc."

The Society was quick to take action on Dr. Anderson's proposal, and on April 19, 1861 adopted the "Constitution of the Samuel R. Smith Infirmary, Instituted for the Reception of Indigent Sick, Staten Island, 1861". The first home of this, the first public hospital on Staten Island, was in one of the old repaired Quarantine Buildings. It is historically curious that on the same site the British during the Revolution erected probably

the first hospital on Staten Island for their sick and wounded, and here between 1799 and 1828 were erected several imposing hospital buildings for the Quarantine Station. Also here was established a Civil War Hospital in 1862 and the Medical Society further distinguished itself by offering its services which were accepted.

After occupying several other homes, the S. R. Smith Infirmary in 1889 finally opened the present hospital on Castleton Avenue. In 1917 the name was changed to the Staten Island Hospital. While hospitals were conducted in connection with the Quarantine, Sailor's Snug Harbor, 1832, Seaman's Retreat (Marine Hospital, now the U. S. Public Health Service Hospital) 1834, and other private institutions, the S. R. Smith Infirmary was the only hospital which served the public of Staten Island until 1903 when St. Vincent's was established.

Other notable events in the history of the Medical Society which firmly established it as an enlightened organization, were the recommendations in 1867 to the School Trustees that they require satisfactory evidence of vaccination of all children, the continued recommendations for local health laws and measures, and the frequent examination of reported health violations in the County Poor House and other institutions.

The list of members between 1855 and 1900 shows a total of 96. The membership in 1896 was 29. Adding possibly 11 nonmembers we find a total of 40 doctors serving a community of 65,000 people. In 1806 there were five doctors serving 5,000 people and in 1855 20 doctors for 20,000 people. The first women doctors admitted to the Society were Dr. Anna Lutkens of West New Brighton on December 6, 1879, Dr. Alice Avery on July 6, 1881, and Dr. May Rogers Owen on July 2, 1884. There were no others admitted before 1900.

It would be desirable if space would permit to give at least a brief biographical sketch of these 96 members as well as some others who served their community well in the period between 1855 and 1900. However, a few might well be mentioned.

Dr. William C. Anderson, president of the Society 1856-1862, was for more than 20 years its leading member. It was he who led the movement for the first hospital, and in 1859 published the paper called the "Sepoy" to defend the people of Staten Island against criticism and prosecution for the burning of the Quarantine. He left the Island because of ill health in 1880 and died in Washington, D. C. in 1882.

Dr. Alfred Ludlow Carroll, president of the Society 1880-1882, came to Staten Island in 1870 and died 1893. He was president of the National Science Association, editor of the "Medical Gazette", secretary of the State Board of Health, and translator and author of several scientific works.

Dr. James O'Dea, born September 6, 1837, in Toronto, Canada, came to Staten Island in 1871. He was author of many medical works including "Principals of Criminal Law as applied to Insanity."

Dr. Theodore Walser died April 23, 1902 at the age of 77, was health officer of Village of New Brighton, and together with his son, Dr. William C. Walser, was active in the Medical Society and a most beloved physician of the north shore of Staten Island.

Dr. R. Henry Golder, president of the Medical Society, 1884-1886, was born in 1820 in Philadelphia, received his M. D. in 1851 and moved to Rossville, Staten Island the same year. He was superintendent of common schools, commissioner of highways, associate judge, health officer of the Town of Westfield. He died in 1910. He bequeathed his buggy to Dr. Andrew Eagon who continued to drive it until as late as 1930. Dr. Golder had a son, Dr. Valentine Mott Golder, who died in 1879 and was also a member of the Society.

Dr. Eber Ward Hubbard, born October 8, 1797, settled in Tottenville in 1872, had a great interest in Staten Island natural history. His son, Dr. George C. Hubbard, was born June 8, 1831, graduated from New York Medical College in 1859 and served throughout the Civil War and was the leading physician of Westfield. He was physician at Mt. Loretta in 1883, active mason, police commissioner ,excise commissioner, and at the time of his death assistant sanitary superintendent of the borough.

Dr. Joseph Feeny was born in Ireland November 19, 1813 and graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1850. He taught school and opened a drug store in 1849 in Stapleton. His son, Dr. John L. Feeny was born at Stapleton May 29, 1845, graduated from the Medical Department of the University of the City of New York in 1866. Dr. John took an active part in civil affairs and was candidate for Borough President in 1898, losing to George Cromwell.

Among other members of the medical profession whose names will long be remembered are Alva D. Decer, Henry E. Earl, Robert M. Ames, Samuel Adams Robinson, Robert Rogerson, J. Walter Wood, Walker Washington, Charles Wilmot Townsend, Thomas J. Thompson, Isaac L. Millspaugh, David M. Coleman, Henry Van Hoevenberg, William Bryan, E. D. Wisely, J. J. Van Renselaer, E. D. Coonley, F. E. Martindale, Alvin Satterthwait, George P. Jessup, Andrew Eagon, Frank Anderson, E. J. Westfall, W. E. Bowne, Gottleib Stein, J. K. Ambrose, Hermann Beyer, Caleb Lyons, H. L. Goodwin, F. DeRevere, John L. Sprague, George Mord.

The end of the 19th century closed a chapter in the history of the Medical Society and the medical profession on Staten Island. The 19th century had been the days of the horse and buggy, the days of the country doctor who administered more by dignity and character than by medical science and the days of the general practitioner who prescribed for any ailment and had unbounded faith in the cure. The 20th century opened up a new era of scientific discovery and medical progress, in which the medical profession of Staten Island has participated. That, however, goes beyond the scope of this history.

WITH THIS RING —

Leah Crocheron lived with her parents in the stone and frame house belonging to the farmstead just south of and adjacent to Richmondtown, in an area that is at the present time occupied by the buildings and plots of a modern cemetery. Leah was born during the Civil War years, attended the district school that stood upon the Latourette hillside north of the village, and while in her early twenties married a native Staten Islander, William L. Flake.

The young couple began their life together in a Victorian house, a former parsonage that occupied the center of a gently sloping two-acre plot in the village, and close to the Reformed Dutch Church that had been built in 1808 to replace the earlier edifice: the one destroyed by the British garrison during the Revolution. The later church had been served by visiting ministers up to 1855, the year that the Richmondtown church acquired its own resident pastor, the Rev. T. R. G. Peck. It was for his use that the parsonage had been built. He eventually was called elsewhere and was succeeded in the local pastorate by several others, all of whom lived in the Manse until, the congregation dwindling, services in the church terminated. The old house of worship, sadly neglected, stood vacant for a long time, finally being moved to another part of the village to be used as a carriage factory. The Manse, subsequent to its occupancy as a parsonage, became the home of a physician, Dr. Mundy.

Its new owners, William and Leah Flake, who were married in 1881, spent much effort in the improvement of their house and grounds, making it one of the most attractive places on the Island. Leah was happy in her new life, and happy to be comfortably established in an environment that she loved and knew so well. It was a joy, too, to be able to walk through the old orchard that lay between her home and that of her parents, only a stone's throw distant. She was a contented young woman, proud of her new home, and proud of her good-looking young husband

and of the heavy wide ring upon her finger. She was always conscious of the lovely golden band, not only because of its symbolism, but, to tell the truth, because it was a trifle loose. It would have been a simple matter to remedy this, as her husband explained, but Leah could not bear the thought of the sharp teeth of a jeweller's saw biting into the soft yellow metal. No, she wanted it as it was, whole and complete, and she would be careful not to lose it. Sometimes she would run a thread beneath the ring and this, tied around her finger, seemed to make it secure enough.

One spring morning when the hazy sunlight was reflected in every drop of dew and the fruit trees were in full blossom, Leah Flake ran out of the house by way of the rear doorway and over the orchard path towards her former home to see her mother, a daily duty that she never missed performing. She felt well and full of happiness; at the moment everything seemed perfect: the day itself, the burgeoning apple trees all pink and white, the songs of oriole and catbird. Even the chipmunk who sat atop the low stone boundary line to stare at her as she paused to inhale the enveloping fragrance seemed gay and happy. Laughing aloud, she picked up a twig and tossed it towards the little beast, who in a flash disappeared into a cranny of the wall. She set off again, but soon stopped abruptly. Her heart almost ceased its beating, too, for her ring was no longer upon her finger.

Leah spent many hours during those early years of her wedded life searching the orchard for her wedding ring. No member of her family, no hired man who ever worked on the place, was ever allowed to forget that something precious had been lost one sunny spring morning in that orchard.

Fifty years passed. Leah Flake, now widowed, still lived in the trim white-painted house that looked out over the salt meadows towards the New Jersey hills. The Crocheron house had long since been demolished and the old farm was fast losing its identity under the grading operations of its new owners, the cemetery people. There were a few men at work clearing out the remaining stumps of the dead orchard trees. Again it was springtime, and Leah, walking in her own garden, noticed one of them shovelling earth and rubble into a wheelbarrow. The path which she had trod a thousand times in the past was no longer traceable, but she remembered the exact spot where she had paused that morning in the distant past to drink in the beauty of the young year. She remembered the fragrance of the blossoms and the hum of the bees, busy within them. She remembered the joyful songs of the birds and the misty splendor of the sun above the old courthouse. And the frisky, curious chipmunk; ah, she remembered him only too well, for it was on account of her childish desire to see him scamper off that she had lost her wedding ring, the circlet that was then so new and innocent of wear.

She walked across the grass towards where the man was levelling the earth, and he was glad for an excuse to leave off work for a moment and talk. Leah told him about the loss of her ring half a century before. She bade him look carefully at each shovelful. He grinned indulgently, promised to keenly use his eyesight and, when she had left, resumed his work.

Less than a half hour had elapsed when Georgia, the colored maid, called loudly that there was a man at the back door. Leah Flake hastened down from the floor above, her heart beating rapidly. She knew before she had reached the last step what the man's grimy hand contained and again she felt a resurgence of all the joy and all the happiness that had enveloped her on that morning long ago. Her prescience had not betrayed her; the laborer stood at the door, hand outstretched, and upon the calloused palm lay her ring, bright and shining as the day William her husband had placed it upon her finger.

The foregoing is true; the ring, worn for so short a period of time—for Leah Flake died but a few years following its recovery—is one of the Society's recent accessions, a gift of Mr. William L. Flake, Jr.

—H.G.S.

DOLLAR INDEX

We expect, by the time our readers receive this copy of *The Historian,* to be able to furnish copies of the index of the quarterly's first eight volumes. The work of compiling it—no easy task, by the way — was accomplished by our Volunteer Staff member, Miss Jane Depuy, and is uniform as to format with our regular issues of the magazine. We are supplying the index at cost, one dollar, either postpaid upon receipt of check, or at the museum. An index covering the contents of Vols. IX-XVI will be issued during 1957. We can assemble a limited number of the sets comprising the first eight volumes (numbers 1 to 32, the first issue in photostats). The price of this set, unbound, including index, is $16. postpaid.

POST CARDS: NEW SERIES

Six handsome cards in color, all with Richmondtown as the subject, have been added to our collection of sales items. We will mail twenty-four of these — four of each subject — for $1.10 postpaid. Purchased at the museum or at the Voorlezer's House, they are priced at five cents, or twenty-five cents for six. All are from new and hitherto unpublished negatives; all are exceptionally attractive.

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