

# The Forest Hills Bulletin

Forest Hills, Long Island

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## History of Forest Hills from Days of the Indians

Names of Whitepot and Hopedale Discarded—Interesting Stories of Early Times, Progress Toward Larger Things and Recent Growth of Community

By LUCY ALLEN SMART

IF the name of Forest Hills had to be changed to Whitepot or Whiteput, which name would receive the higher number of votes among the present residents? An equally interesting and debatable question is whether the original name was Whitepot or Whiteput. There is a tradition that the place was called by the former name because the land had originally been purchased from the Indians for three white clay pots. There is another opinion that the real name was Whiteput (which was corrupted into Whitepot), the "put," a Dutch word, meaning "pit" or "hollow," for this section was at one time the bed of a large stream, dried up long ago. That Whitepot really means Whiteput is the conclusion of J. H. Innes in "Ancient Landmarks of Queens Borough," a publication of the City History Club of New York.

It is generally known that a section of Whitepot, with Union Turnpike and Queens Boulevard as a center, was for a number of years called Hopedale. In fact, it is only within the last year that a Hopedale Railway Station, located on the boulevard near the turnpike, was torn down. For many years there was a "small solitary house of unique architecture" called "Hopedale Hall," at the intersection of the turnpike and the boulevard. This was a popular place for dinner parties and dances of people from Brooklyn and New York.

The whole of Whitepot was in the jurisdiction of Newtown, of which I shall write later. How this section became Forest Hills is another story.

In Denton's "History of New York," published in 1670, we find this description of Long Island: "Long Island, the west end of which lies southward of New York, runs eastward about 100 miles, and is in some places eight, in some 12, in some 14 miles broad: It is inhabited from one end to the other. On the west end are four or five Dutch towns, the rest being all English to the number of 12 besides villages and farm houses."

This old historian was not so far removed from accuracy, for the Island varies in width from 15 to 23 miles and its length is 118 miles.

The Indian names of the Island are interesting. Benjamin F.

Thompson, in the first edition of his monumental "History of Long Island" (1839), gives these as Metoac, Mectowacks, Meitowax, Matanwake, and Seawanhacky, or "Island of Shells." The Dutch named Long Island, "Lange Eylandt," whence the name by which we know it. This wonderful island, with such variety and beauty of scenery, called today by some the "garden spot" and by others the "playground of the country," was the most thickly settled part of New York State down to the time of the American Revolution. It was the granary of New York City all through the Colonial period, just as it has been in later years the vegetable garden for the world's largest city. The

topography and the soils are due chiefly to glacial action; hence, with cultivation, the possible fertility of the land is traced to this geological fact. As we shall see later in this sketch, the land on which our village was built was owned, from the time it was bought from the Indians, by industrious and therefore prosperous truck farmers.

Let us recall the first white men who set foot upon Long Island, September 4, 1609, the renowned Hendrik Hudson and his adventurous crew of 18, who disembarked from the Crescent or Half Moon. On this shore, according to their record, "they found the soil of white sand, and a vast number of plum trees loaded with fruit, many of them covered with grape vines of different kinds. They saw also a great quantity of snipe and other birds." According to the words of Hudson's Journal, he sent men on shore in a boat and

these "caught ten great mullet, a foot and a half long, and a ray as great as four men could haul into the ship." (This is the first recorded fish story of Long Island). The ray, today, is understood to be a devil fish of the tropics.

Thompson in his history of Long Island quotes DeLaet, an earlier historian, as saying that the natives manifested all friendship when Hudson first landed among them. The latter says that "they were clothed in skins of elk, foxes and other animals. Their canoes were made out of the bodies of trees; their arms were bows and arrows, and the arrows had sharp points of stone fastened to them with hard pitch. They had no houses, but slept un-



Two boys playing marbles in front of Whitepot School.  
From an old cut of 1847.



Oldest house standing in Forest Hills.  
Built 200 years ago—On Yellowstone Avenue.



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FOREST HILLS, LONG ISLAND

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der the blue heavens. They had good tobacco, and copper tobacco pipes; also pots of earth to cook their meat in." From the best accounts obtainable the Indians who inhabited Long Island were, the Lenni Lennape (Delaware) division of the Algonquin Indians, and their early name was Matauwakes. They were enemies of the Mannhattans, and a better people. The 13 tribes on the island were listed by Thompson as: Canarsie, Rockaway, Merrick (Meroke), Massapequa, Matinecock, Nesaquake (Nis-saquoque), Seatacot (Setauket), Corchaug, Manhasset, Secatogue, Patchogue, Shinnecock and Montauk. "The Sachem of the Montauk tribe," says Thompson, "was of so much consequence as to have been acknowledged the Grand Sachem of Paumanake, as Long Island was sometimes called. Wyandanch was their Sachem in 1640," and therefore the chief of all Indians on the Island. His residence was at Montauk Point.

Denton describes the Indians as "no ways hurtful, but rather serviceable to the English." He tells of their nomadic life, their simple tent homes and very simple food. Their recreation was football and cards. "They are great lovers of strong drink," writes this historian, "yet do not care for drinking, unless they have enough to make themselves drunk; and if there be so many in their company that there is not sufficient to make them all drunk, they usually select so many out of their company, proportionable to the quantity of drink, and the rest must be spectators. And if any one chance to be drunk before he hath finished his portion (which is ordinarily a quart of brandy, rum or strong water) the rest of the people will pour the rest of his part down his throat."

"When an Indian dies amongst them, they bury him upright, sitting upon a seat, with his gun, money, and such goods as he hath with him, that he may be furnished in the other world, which they conceive is westward, where they shall have great store of game for hunting and live easy lives."

In the same quaint, whimsical way, Denton tells of burial customs, marriage customs, dances, clothing fashions, and closes with this description of make-up: "They grease their bodies and hair very often, and paint their faces with several colours, as black, white, red, yellow, blue, etc., which they take great pride in, everyone being painted in a several manner."

There were many white missionaries who tried to convert the Indians. One picturesque missionary was an Indian, Sampson Occum, who worked among his own people on Long Island, and who in 1766 and 1767, when in England and Scotland preaching, raised \$40,000 for the establishment of Indian schools here.

It was interesting to me to find that Tammany was not a Long Island or New York chief. He was a celebrated chief of the Lenni Lennape tribe and was living, after the arrival of Penn, on the spot where Germantown, a part of Philadelphia, now stands.

### THE DUTCH SETTLEMENT AND CONTROL

The Czar of all the Russias, in his palmiest days, had no more power than the West India Company of Holland, or its successor, the Dutch Governor, exercised over a large section of the eastern coast of America from 1621 to 1664. The first exchange of land from the Indians to the Dutch took place in 1623 in Manhattan and the settlement took the name of Nova Belgica, or New Belgium—later changed to New Amsterdam.

The entire territory, claimed by the Dutch, took the name of New Netherlands and this section (Forest Hills) was in that territory. The English claimed that Sebastian Cabot had discovered all of North America, but they were willing to confine most of their operations to New England, while the Dutch, through the West India Company, claimed New York, New Jersey, and the country up to the Connecticut River. The company was very powerful and conquered and ruled whole provinces at pleasure. This company failed in 1634, due to the extravagance of its agents. The Dutch Governor followed it in control.

The first Dutch settlement on Long Island was in 1632, in what is now Kings County, and later some settlements were made in Suffolk County. In the Dutch towns the land was usually purchased from the natives by the Governor and by him granted to individuals; but in the English towns, within Dutch territory, the land was procured by the settlers themselves. This was true of Newtown, of which Whitepot was a part. "The English who settled the towns of Gravesend, Newtown, Flushing, Jamaica and Hempstead," writes Thompson, "became from unavoidable necessity, though reluctantly, Dutch subjects; but were allowed to hold lands, enjoy liberty of conscience and employ their own ministers; although in their choice of magistrates it was required that the approbation of the Governor should be obtained, to authorize them to proceed in the discharge of the duties of their office."

### NEW NETHERLANDS BECOMES NEW YORK

According to Thompson, in 1640, when a few English emigrants from Lynn contracted with the agent of Lord Stirling for some land on Long Island (a section later known as Manhasset Neck), the Dutch Governor objected, arrested some of the men and trouble started. A group of men under Captain Underhill, of Long Island, issued a "remonstrance" on May 20, 1653. On December 11, 1653, delegates from Brooklyn, Flatbush, Gravesend, Newtown, Flushing and Hempstead, convened and adopted a strong "remonstrance," to the Director General and Council of New Netherlands, against Dutch rule. The Dutch Governor, Peter Stuyvesant, was much irritated and more friction ensued. He refused to confirm magistrates who had been nominated by Gravesend and serious differences between the Dutch Governor and English subjects followed.

In a few years, May 12, 1664, Connecticut claimed that she had control of the whole of Long Island. The English towns under Dutch rule (including Newtown), determined to withdraw from Dutch authority, and to put themselves under Connecticut rule. Oppression followed. It is a story of a disagreeable struggle, but finally on September 1, 1664, Peter Stuyvesant surrendered to the English and New Netherlands became New York.

### BEGINNINGS OF NEWTOWN

From 1664 until the date when the colonies gained freedom, through the War of the American Revolution, the English Government was in control of our Atlantic seaboard and of course Long Island was under the jurisdiction of the mother country. I shall go more fully later into this long period of English control, but just now let us consider the settlement and development of the village of Newtown called Middleburgh, of which Whitepot (Forest Hills), was a rural community.

Newtown was first settled in 1652 by a company of Englishmen from New England. The village was begun on what is now Queens Boulevard, just east of Broadway, where a group of cottages, fashioned after those of New England, of simple



construction and roofed with thatch, were built. The settlement was named Middleburgh after a place of some note in the Netherlands, the capitol of the Province of Zealand, and remembered with gratitude as a place of safety from religious persecution by many of the English Puritans.

When the people of Middleburgh could not get a patent from the Dutch Governor for their land, they bought it, in 1656, from the Indians at the large rate of a shilling an acre. It is stated by Riker in his "Annals of Newtown" (1852), that "no individual could find a residence among them except he were admitted by popular vote." So we have the precedent for the care with which we today admit our neighbors into our community fellowship.

In 1664 the name of Middleburgh was changed to Hastings, after a town in Sussex, England. Both the name of Middleburgh and that of Hastings applied not only to the village but to the entire township, which comprised the greater part of what is now known as the Second Ward, including Forest Hills.

In 1665 the town was enlarged by the addition of what is now the Bowery Bay section and Long Island City, a territory equal to about one-third of its previous area, and the township thus constituted was re-named the New Town, which was soon corrupted into Newtown. This new name was given to the village by a convention of delegates from 17 towns, held at Hempstead. The whole Province became Yorkshire, sub-divided into districts called Ridings, and this settlement (Whitepot), along with Newtown, was called West Riding.

At an Assembly held in New York, October 17, 1683, when Newtown was represented, a Charter of Liberties was adopted and at that time Ridings were abolished for Counties and this section became Queens County.

The name of Newtown was changed to Elmhurst about 20 years ago, so that the locality would not be confounded with that bordering on Newtown Creek some three or four miles away.

### FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

The people of Newtown rejoiced with others in this country at the abdication of James II and the succession to the throne of William and Mary. When the French were making inroads as far as Schenectady, the loyalty of the people of Newtown was aroused and a company of men was organized in Queens. There were 290 men from Queens engaged in the expedition to reduce Fort Ticonderoga; 300 from Queens were engaged in the struggle at Niagara and a number helped at Montreal. With the victory of the English, the people of this section rejoiced, but Riker, the historian, says that "The effects of the French War were in some respects, very deleterious upon the habits and the morals of this town. Wonder not, then, that horse racing—a thing hitherto unknown in this town—was introduced, nor that simple manners of the people should have been much per-

verted and corrupted." However, he does admit that a new classical school was soon established at Hallett's Cove—April 26, 1762.

### THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

During the entire War of the American Revolution, from the Battle of Long Island in 1776 until peace was declared in 1783, Newtown was in possession of the British. Directly after the Battle of Long Island, General Sir William Howe, Commander-in-chief of the King's forces, made his headquarters on Queens Boulevard in the Bretonniere house (not now standing), and the larger part of the British forces was encamped within the town limits. The range of hills now known as Nassau Heights, just south of the boulevard and directly in the rear of Howe's headquarters, was covered with tents, and vestiges of the encampment could be seen long after the war.

### THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND

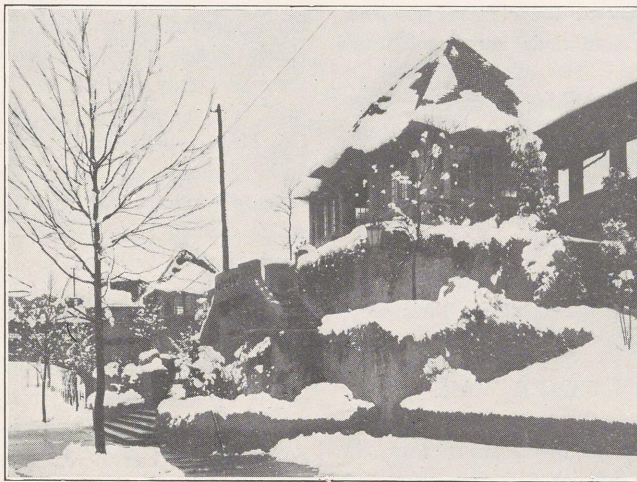
On the 24th of August, 1776, the whole militia of Queens County was called out to protect the stock and 300 head of cattle were taken to Jamaica and thence to Hempstead. This must have been a day of terror for the inhabitants of Whitepot. The American forces were driven within their lines at Brooklyn. The American Army was defeated and Washington took his forces to Manhattan during the night of August 29-30, 1776. Newtown and all of this section of Long Island were now in the hands of the enemy, the British Light Dragoons from Jamaica entering

the town early August 29. They overtook and captured Lieut. Jonathan Coe and Hezekiah Field of the Colonists' Troop, who the day before had returned from driving stock to Whitepot. Squads of soldiers visited every farmhouse in search of plunder.

Many Loyalists who remained in Newtown hoped that the county might be restored to royal favor. Nearly 1300 freeholders and inhabitants of the county signed a petition, hoping that "the county might be declared at the King's peace." These refugees took the King's side. Lieut. Colonel Sterling, in charge of troops in Newtown during the winter of 1779, was about to go on an expedition to Virginia, when he received an address from the people thanking him for the way he and his soldiers had conducted themselves during their stay in Newtown. This address was probably inspired by Tories.

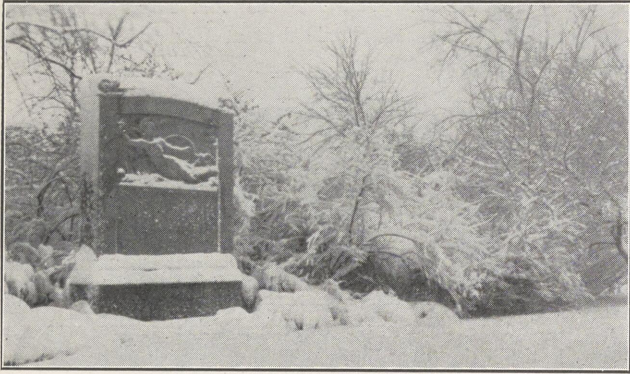
During the American Revolution, it was a common practice to bury money in order to save it; forgotten, it was found years after, on the premises by the people of Newtown.

The farmers, and this includes the people of Whitepot, were required to furnish provisions for the use of the British army. These provisions included hay, straw, rye, corn, oats, vegetables and fresh provisions. The farmers were required to furnish teams for the use of the army. The people of this section had to get permission from the army officials before they could go to New York or bring provisions home from there for their



*Forest Hills Station—Attractive in snow season.*





*Monument on Green in a heavy snowstorm.*

families. While their people at home suffered, there were many men from Newtown taking an honorable place in council, and on battlefield. It was a proud day at the close of the war, when these faithful ones returned to their homes and their families.

The historians of this period deplore the demoralizing effects of the war on this whole section. Morals had been lowered and religion forgotten. This was to be *the last war*, the people were led to believe, and so they took heart and repaired their houses fertilized their fields and looked forward to years and years of peace.

Whitepot was a settlement of farmers, happy to return to their industry, and they found a ready market for their crops in the great city, New York.

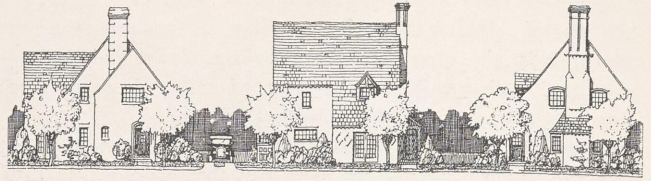
#### NEWTOWN'S PART IN OTHER WARS

While the people of this region were loyal to the country in the support of troops and supplies in the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the Great War, still, since at no time during these wars did this section become a part of the enemy territory, I shall pass over those eventful periods at this time in this meager way. Later in this historical sketch something of the record of Forest Hills in the Great War will be given.

#### SLAVERY ON THE ISLAND

This District of Newtown, including Whitepot, is not "Dixie Land" of course, and still there is an interesting story of the practice of slavery on Long Island. Thompson writes: "The practice of slavery was introduced in 1626 (on Long Island), if not sooner; and the Dutch carried on a considerable traffic in slaves between Africa and Virginia."

Riker says that slavery existed in Newtown and all of this section with the coming of the white population. It resulted from the high cost of white labor and was not considered the least bit wrong, for even the ministers had slaves in their families. Not only the negroes were bought and sold as chattels, but also free born Indians. The lives of the slaves were protected by law, and from what I can gather from the early records, the slaves were treated kindly. They were baptized as babies, and at a suitable age they were allowed to marry. They were well fed and always exempted from labor on Sundays and holidays. When a young son or daughter was married from a home, usually a slave went with the newly married couple and continued the devotion that had been given for many years. In the year 1775, Newtown contained 163 slaves above the age of 14 years—91 males and 72 females. We may be sure that some of these slaves were in



*Pilgrim Street Houses.*

the homes where Forst Hills now stands, in the village of Whitepot.

#### Freeing Slaves in Whitepot.

Slavery did not cease in the State of New York until July 4, 1827, though emancipation began soon after the Revolution. When, by the State Law, these colored people of this section became free, many of them rejoiced, but many preferred to stay with their masters. "I shall never forget," says Judge Furman, of Dry Harbor Road (grandfather of Mrs. Clarence P. Tompkins), according to Riker, "the quaint remark of two aged slaves, when my grandfather went to the kitchen and informed them that they were free. The old woman cried and the old man, Simon, said: 'Why Dinah, what are you crying about? Ole Massa won't turn us out of doors—will you, ole Massa?' 'Why Simon, you are now as free as I am, but if you both wish to continue with me, this shall be a home for you.' On which Simon, laughing and displaying his ivory, replied very significantly, 'Well, ole Massa, you have had de flour, I guess you must have de bran too.'"

#### POPULATION OF NEWTOWN

The population of Newtown, including the farmers of Whitepot, in 1673 was estimated at 99 male adults. There is no record of the women and children or Indians at that time. By 1790 the population had increased to 2,111; in 1830 there were 2,610 and in 1850 there were 7,207. These figures are given by the historian Riker.

#### THE WHITEPOT SCHOOL

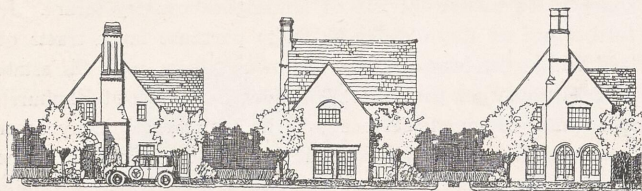
The first record of a school in this section is found in 1739, and this is the way Riker tells of it. "The residents south of Newtown Village took measures in 1739 to build a school house a little west of Whitepot on a plot of ground '20 feet square' given by Jacobus Springsteen (the ancestor of the Springsteen family now living on the boulevard), who on April 21 of the above year executed a deed for the same to his 'loving friends, Daniel Stevenson, Benjamin Coe, Gabriel Furman, Nowel Furman, David Springsteen, Ezekiel Furman, William VanDuy, Jeromus Remsen, Jacob Skillman, Rem Remsen, Abraham Morrell, Joseph Furman, Edward Titus, and Dow Suydam,' who were all farmers residing thereabouts. A stone school house was first erected, which afterwards gave way to a wooden one and then a third one, which burned down."

This school house was located on Yellowstone Avenue (Hollow Road) and Woodhaven Avenue (Trotting Course Lane).

#### SOME OLD WHITEPOT HOMESTEADS

A few of the houses of the early days, from 100 to 200 years ago, are still standing in this neighborhood. Many others have been torn down, making way for so-called "progress." What a deplorable thing it is that these have not all been saved, for their excellent construction, the quality of the materials, and beauty of architectural lines, are worthy of preservation. The writer is hoping that the very few of the old Whitepot homesteads that are still standing may be modernized as far as conveniences are concerned, re-decorated, re-painted in such a way





*Designed by Robert Tappan.*

as to lose none of the beauty of the olden days, and that then they may become the hospitable homes of people who care for charm of Colonial lines, and who have appreciation of historic values.

One of the most charming of the Whitepot homes is called by the old residents, the Whitson homestead (afterwards known as the home of the late John E. Backus). This house was built in about 1800 and it stands today near Backus Place on Queens Boulevard. It was originally the home of Abram Whitson (whose family had come from Holland in 1636), the great-uncle of Mrs. Frederick D. Backus, (Alice Jackson Backus).

Tradition hands down many interesting stories of an old homestead which stood until ten years ago on the north side of the boulevard, west of the Police Booth. It was known for many years as the McCoun-Backus house, and was at least 160 years old. Ascan Backus, the father of Frederick D. Backus, bought it in about 1840 from Daniel McCoun, who in turn had bought it many years before from Abram Remsen. This house was built of pine with broad clapboards. The bricks in the chimney were hand made, of course, and at the time of the demolition, a few of the old bricks from the chimney were preserved. The floors were made of broad oak boards. There is a prevailing tradition, that in the early part of the American Revolution, General Washington stayed one day in this house.

The Jarvis Jackson homestead, built 100 years ago, is still standing in its lovely Colonial lines, just north of the present improved land of the Cord Meyer Development Company—the property of that company. Originally it was the home of the grandfather of Mrs. Frederick D. Backus, Jarvis Jackson, who for many years (1835-1857), was a State Assemblyman.

A lovely old Colonial house which stood, until one year ago, just west of the site of the McCoun-Backus house described above, was the home of Horatio N. Squire, who bought it from his father-in-law, Colonel Hunt. That house was at least 150 years old. The houses just described happen to have been built in the part of Whitepot which in these later years has developed into Forest Hills.

There are many interesting old homes in West Forest Hills—homes whose traditions and ownership are associated with the lives of residents of Forest Hills, who trace their lines back to the days of the old Whitepot. One of these is the home of Joseph J. Tompkins on Remsen Lane. Clarence P. Tompkins, the son of Joseph J. Tompkins, now living on Queens Boulevard, was born there. Originally the land had belonged to Edward Moore, the great-grandfather of Mrs. Clarence P. Tompkins (Ella Paynter Tompkins), being her mother's mother's father.

Another old home in West Forest Hills is that of Judge Jonathan T. Furman, the maternal grandfather of Mrs. Clarence P. Tompkins, on Dry Harbor Road. Although the house was built in 1750, it is still standing and is in good condition. The road was called Dry Harbor Road because it terminated in a cluster of farms. The house formerly faced a large pond, long since filled in, and which was surrounded by great black



*Deepdene Road—Looking down into Olivia Park.*

walnut trees, now mostly destroyed.

Another attractive house in West Forest Hills is the oldest one now standing in this vicinity—being at least 200 years old. It is known as “the house on the Abram Furman Estate” and is situated on the east side of Yellowstone Avenue. What a splendid thing it would be to move this, our oldest house, to Forest Hills or Forest Hills Gardens, put it in good condition and save it for future generations.

#### THE OLD WHITEPOT RACE TRACK

Willow Glen Farm (East Forest Hills), owned at one time by Timothy Jackson, was named for the beautiful weeping willow trees which adorned it, and was noted as a fashionable resort for lovers of fine horses. It was run by Timothy Jackson, a distant cousin of Mrs. Frederick D. Backus, as a stock farm for the raising of carriage and race horses. One of his patrons was Robert Bonner, late editor of the *New York Ledger* and owner of some of the fastest horses in the United States, among them being Maud S. and others having world records. Mr. Jackson owned the famous four-in-hand composed of four black stallions—superb stock—which he exhibited at all the County and State Fairs in New York State. All the notables at these exhibitions rode behind this four-in-hand, among them being, A. T. Stewart, who founded Garden City and also the drygoods firm of A. T. Stewart & Company (now Wanamaker's). Willow Glen Farm covered a rolling country and remains about the same. The famous old house, where the elite of the city met and ate the celebrated Jackson dinners, after seeing their pets worked out on the half-mile track, and a few of the old barns and stables are left. After Mr. Jackson's death and the old time lovers of horses had passed away, a son, Dr. O. C. Jackson, a veterinary, started the raising of Shetland ponies, which roamed over the hills and orchards.

A part of this farm, owned by Augustus Burtis, was sold to Edgar L. Wakeman, who discovered that the water on the property was so clear and good that he bottled and shipped it by horse truck in large quantities, to New York. Afterwards the land was sold to the Cord Meyer Development Company, and the water rights to the Citizens Water Supply Company of Newtown. In 1922 part of the Burtis farm was sold to the Queens Valley Golf Club, and the Wakeman house, which was used as a club house, was burned down a short time ago.

#### OLD DOCKS ON FLUSHING CREEK

At the north end of Forest Hills—the extreme boundary of the Cord Meyer Development Company is to be found Flushing Creek. On this creek, during the old days, were three docks, two owned by Ascan Backus and one by Henry Jackson and his



father, Jarvis Jackson. There is today a bill pending in Congress providing for the widening of the old creek, so that yachts could go through to Flushing Bay and the Sound.

### LIFE OF WHITEPOT PEOPLE DESCRIBED

Among the living members of the first families of Whitepot, the oldest is Frederick D. Backus, whose home is on Queens Boulevard—and with a whimsical smile and in a reminiscent mood, this is the way he told me the story of these early days:

"The neighbors were few when I was a boy and some that lived a mile away we called neighbors. The farmers raised hay, grain, and vegetables to supply the New York markets. The ladies would spend the afternoon visiting, and after their day's work the men would come to tea and spend the evening. Fruit and nuts were in abundance and every farmer would take his apples to a cider mill, which was located on the Hempstead Swamp Road (now Yellowstone Avenue). The cider mill has passed away, but the old house still stands. Cider, nuts, apples and doughnuts were a regular winter night's treat. It was very pleasant to sit beside the open fireplace, filled with huge hickory and pine logs, after a long ride in the winter snow.

"For lights we made what they called 'tallow dips.' A large iron kettle filled with tallow was hung in the open fireplace and a wick was placed on a thin stick and dipped into the hot tallow until it was the required thickness. Hundreds of dips were made this way, and after standing for a day or two, they were packed away for the winter. In later years we had candle molds, which simplified the work of candle making. Later came the glass lamp and an oil called camphine, which was considered very dangerous and could be handled only by the grown-ups. The roads of old Whitepot were very dark in the early years, but some years later they were lighted with naphtha lamps, which were considered wonderful.

"To keep things cool in the summer time, as only a few homes had ice houses, we had a way of placing butter, meat, or any food which had to be kept cool, in tin pails and hanging them in the well.

"The children attended the Whitepot school but we all had to go to Newtown to church.

"The long severe winters started early in November and lasted until the end of February. When the snow drifts were high and the roads were narrow, the older people had to stay home. The farmers had to dig themselves out of the drifts, and in some cases the oxen were driven ahead to break a way. But the young people loved the winter fun and would get up sleighing parties, with four horses attached to a large wooden sleigh, packed with boys and girls, and would drive as far as Jamaica and Hempstead."

### CORD MEYER DEVELOPS NEWTOWN

For many years the growth of Newtown Village was greatly retarded by the fact that much of the land was owned by a few individuals and they, as a whole, refused to sell or do very much for the general improvement of the place—their motto seeming to be, "What was good enough for their forefathers was good enough for them."

One of the principal, if not the largest landholder in the immediate vicinity of the village, was Samuel Lord, head of the drygoods firm of Lord & Taylor of New York. Mr. Lord was born in England and came to this country early in life. He settled in New York City, where he made a large fortune

and planned to live the life of an English country squire. In furtherance of this idea he began to purchase large tracts of land within the boundary of Newtown Village, until his estate covered the larger part of what is now the village of Elmhurst. He owned Clermont Terrace with its houses, and many other residences in the village. He built a handsome mansion in the midst of his manorial estate, which he intended to be a family homestead for himself and his children. However, after being a resident of the village for a long period, he lost his interest in the place and went back to England, never to return, except for brief visits. His entire Newtown estate he gave to the care of his son-in-law, Thomas Warren, and up to the time of his death always kept it intact, refusing to sell any part of it, and never attempting to develop the large tract of farm lands he owned north of and adjoining the village. Cord Meyer, who bought the Lord farm in Elmhurst, in 1893, later built a bank there, put gas, water and electricity into the village, and from the date of his improvements the new Elmhurst has grown.

### WHITEPOT FARMS, SITE OF FOREST HILLS

Forest Hills is built and developed from six farms.

The first we shall call the Ascan Backus farm, which includes land that came down from Jarvis Jackson, Abram Whitson, Daniel McCoun, and Peter Meserole. This land was bought from Frederick D. Backus, George Backus and J. E. Backus.

Second—The Casper Joost-Springsteen farm.

Third—The Horatio N. Squire farm.

Fourth—The Abram V. S. Lott farm.

Fifth—The Sarah V. Bolmer farm.

Sixth—The James Van Siclen farm.

The accompanying map shows how these old farms, handed down through the long history of the Whitepot days, have been changed into the winding and beautiful streets of Forest Hills and Forest Hills Gardens.

Large tracts of land owned by the Furman, Tompkins, and Springsteen families, have been developed into West Forest Hills.

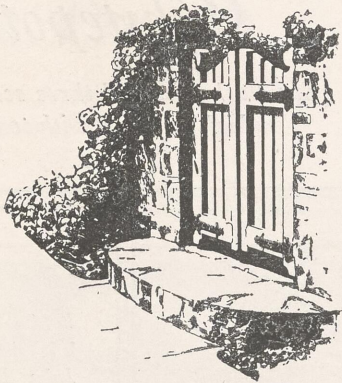
### CORD MEYER CO. BUYS 600 ACRES IN WHITEPOT

In 1906 the Cord Meyer Development Company, headed by Cord Meyer, purchased about 600 acres of land in what was then known as the Hopedale section of Whitepot, and commenced the development of a suburban community, not as is usually done by merely cutting through the streets and selling the lots, but by permanent improvements and the building of houses. The names Whitepot and Hopedale were discarded and Mr. Meyer chose the name Forest Hills for the new community, the reason for this choice being that the property was adjacent to Forest Park and is in one of the highest sections in this part of Long Island. He also named the streets north of the railroad. To him credit is due for bringing the various public utilities to this section.

The Cord Meyer Development Company has developed the land, improved the streets, and built 340 houses on the north side of the Boulevard. In the high western part of the property exceptionally lovely houses, some designed by Robert Tappan, and some by William Patterson, have recently been constructed. George C. Meyer, a son of the late Cord Meyer, is manager of the company and is a leader in the upbuilding of Forest Hills. To the people of Forest Hills, the company has donated the use of the Seminole Avenue Clubhouse, free of rent and until recently the company has paid the maintenance cost.



## RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION PURCHASES 160 ACRES



In 1910 and 1911 the holdings of the Cord Meyer Development Company, south of the railroad, consisting of about 160 acres, were purchased by the Russell Sage Foundation, and the development of that section was placed in the hands of the Sage Foundation Homes Company. With Grosvenor Atterbury and his associate, John Almy Tompkins, as supervising architects, with the

landscaping of the parkways, parks and Green under the supervision of Olmsted Brothers, and with clearly defined building restrictions, Forest Hills Gardens has developed into a unique community of such beauty and durability that it has attracted attention throughout the world. John M. Demarest, who from the beginning has been an important factor in the development of the village, is president of the company.

The Forest Hills Gardens Homes Company, organized by residents of Forest Hills in April, 1922, has developed a section of Whitson and Kessel Streets in the last two years, and houses of excellent construction have attracted substantial buyers. The company has 25 stockholders, who live in Forest Hills. S. W. Eckman, for many years a public spirited citizen of Forest Hills, is president.

Within the last year, D. E. McAvoy has rented or sold houses, which his company has recently constructed on Burns Street, to 106 families.

Frank Richards, of Brooklyn, has built a number of houses

on Beechknoll Road and is now constructing more on Burns Street, and on Borage Place.

William T. Anderson has built an apartment house, called Forest Arms, which gives homes to 35 families.

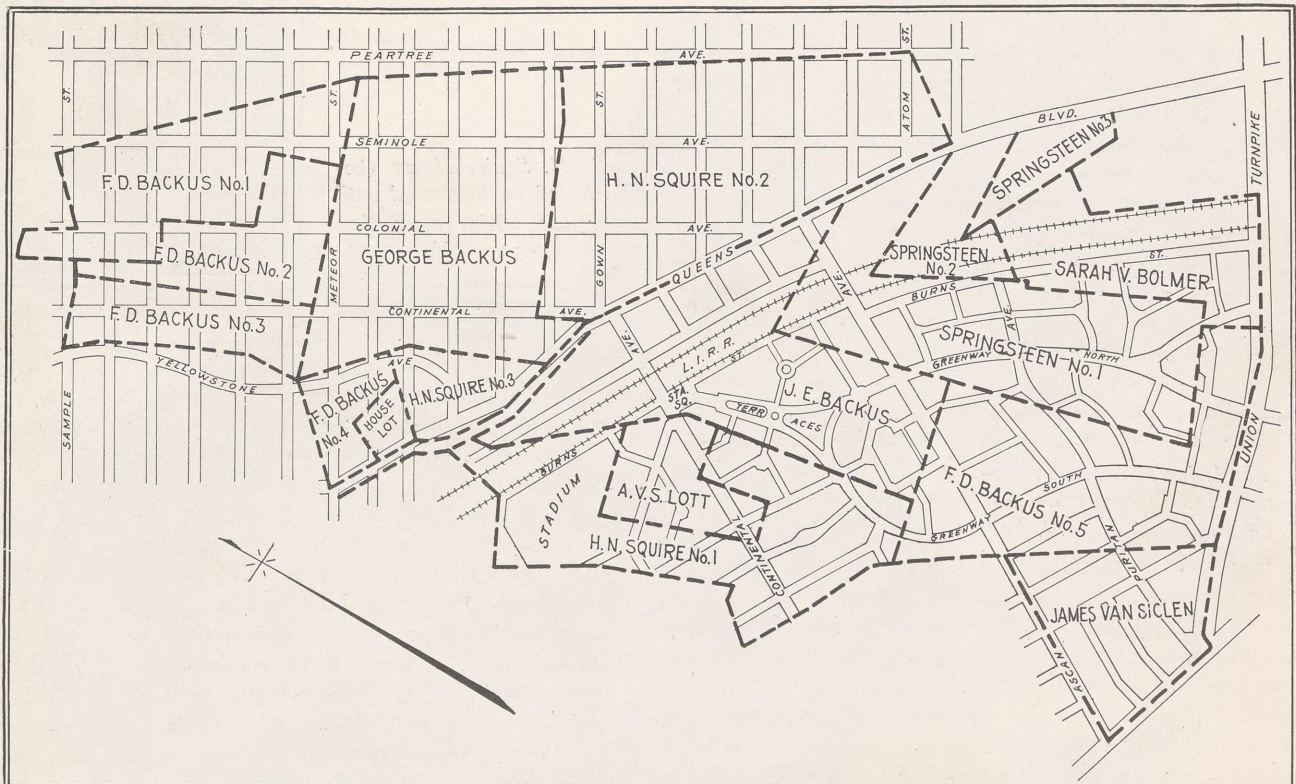
## EVOLUTION OF TRANSPORTATION

During the old Whitepot days the people drove their own horses, taking the children to school, themselves to church, and their provisions to the New York markets. A plank road from Newtown Village to Williamsburgh in 1851 greatly helped the connection with New York. In going from Whitepot to Williamsburgh, a driver would pass through two toll gates. A bus was operated from 1906 to 1912 by the Cord Meyer Development Company from Forest Hills to Elmhurst. Because of this meagre transportation, development of the property during this period was comparatively slow, and rapid growth did not begin until 1910, the time of the electrification of the Long Island Railroad and the placing of a station on the property. The opening of the street car line from 59th Street, New York, to Forest Hills, took place in 1913, and on January 31, 1914, the first street car was run to Jamaica, the line afterwards being extended to Jamaica South.

## QUEENS BOULEVARD BEING IMPROVED

Hoffman Boulevard was built, from Newtown to Jamaica, 50 years ago and was named for Governor Hoffman. The name was changed to Queens Boulevard when the bridge was built over Blackwells Island. Today, at a cost of \$7,000,000, the boulevard is being widened to 200 feet throughout its length, and when completed it will be one of the finest thoroughfares in the country, if not in the world. The residents of this section of Long Island are agitating the building of a subway

(Continued on page 10)



Map shows farms from which Forest Hills has developed since 1906.





## Glimpses of the Whitepot Days

Six old homes and three scenes of our hills  
which link past with today and as they appear

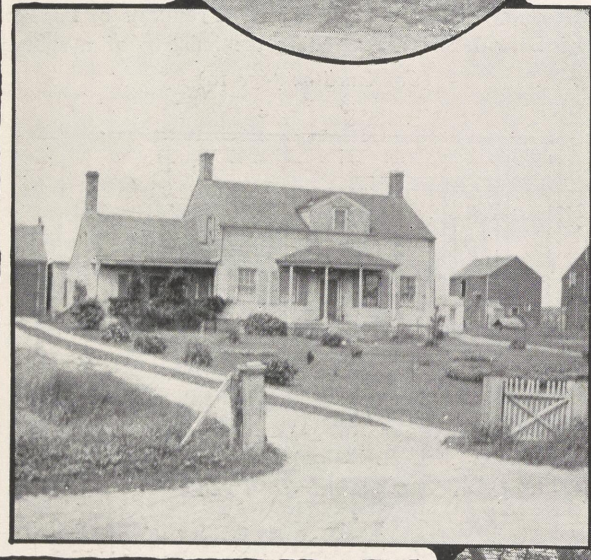
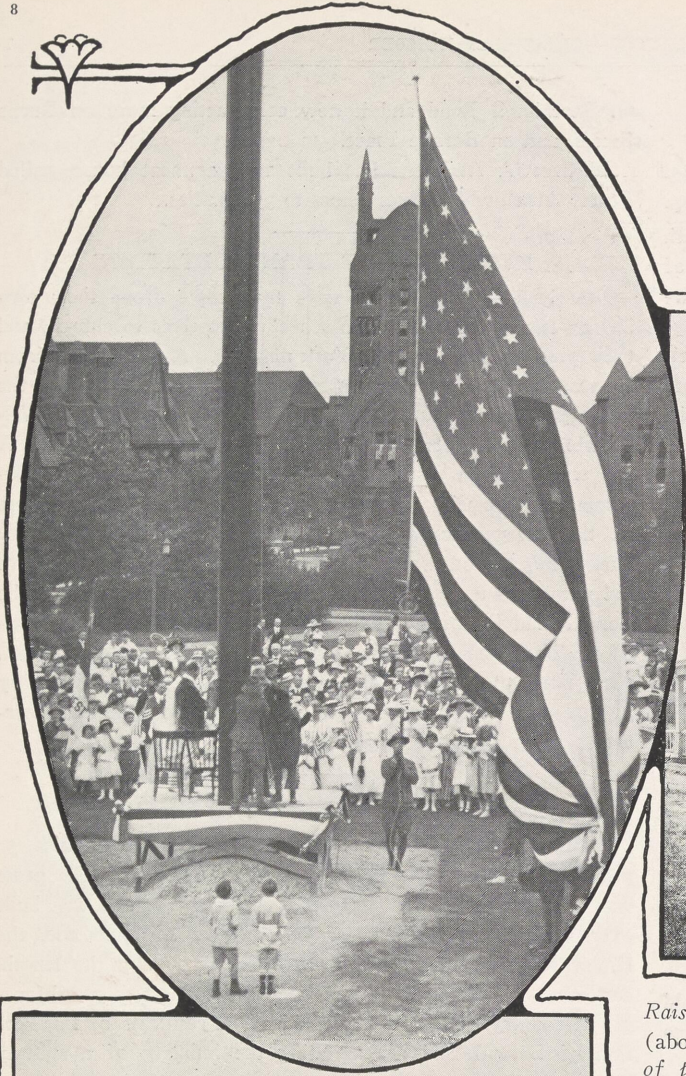
Whitson Homestead  
(left) later known as  
John E. Backus.  
1800. Stands on  
near Backus Hill

Raising Old Glory on the Green  
(above left). A regular feature  
of programs on Memorial and  
Independence Days in Forest  
Hills.

Horatio N. Squire House (be-  
low). Stood on Boulevard until  
a year ago. Was more than  
150 years old.

Jarvis Jackson Homestead  
(above). Built one hundred  
years ago, it is standing  
today, the property of  
the Cord Meyer  
Development  
Company.

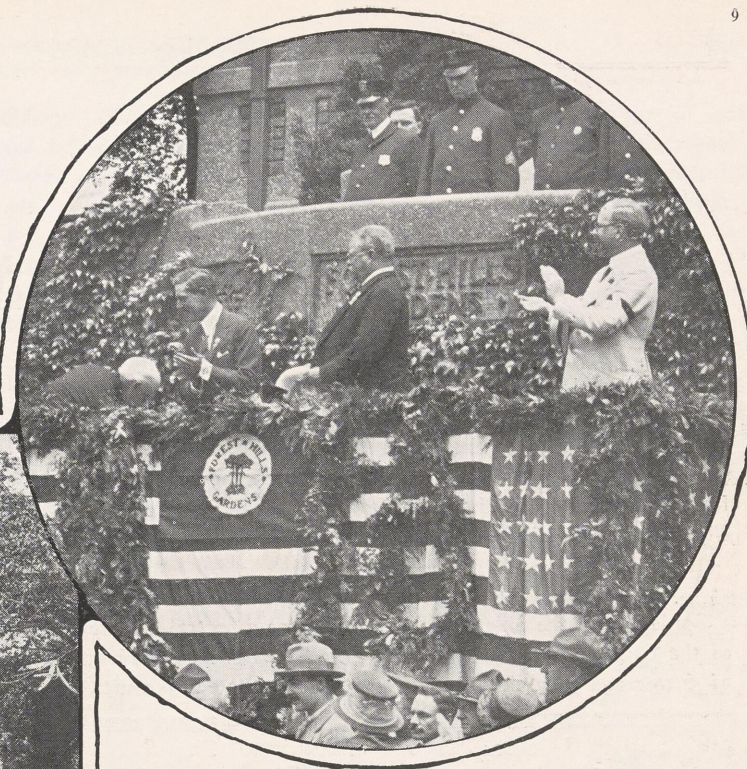
The Judge Jonathan T. Fur-  
man House (above), standing  
on Dry Harbor Road, built  
in 1750, and is in excellent  
condition.



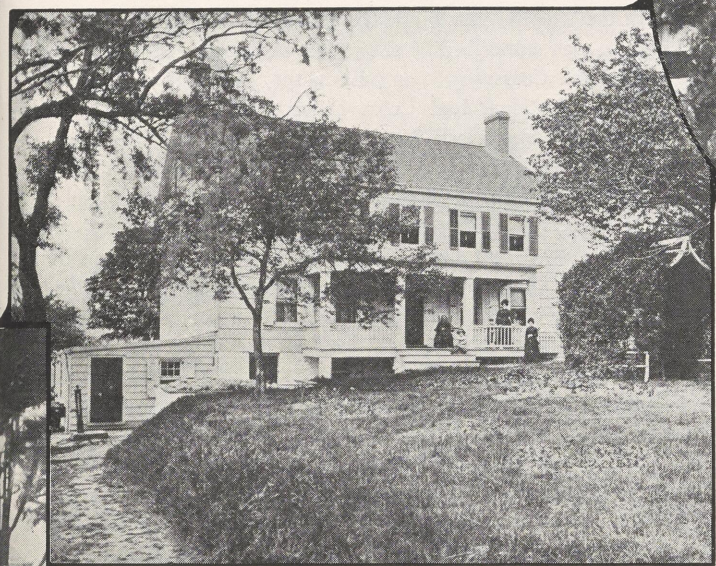


# Forest Hills from Past to the Present

Forest Hills in festive times. Pictures  
showing appreciation of historic values.

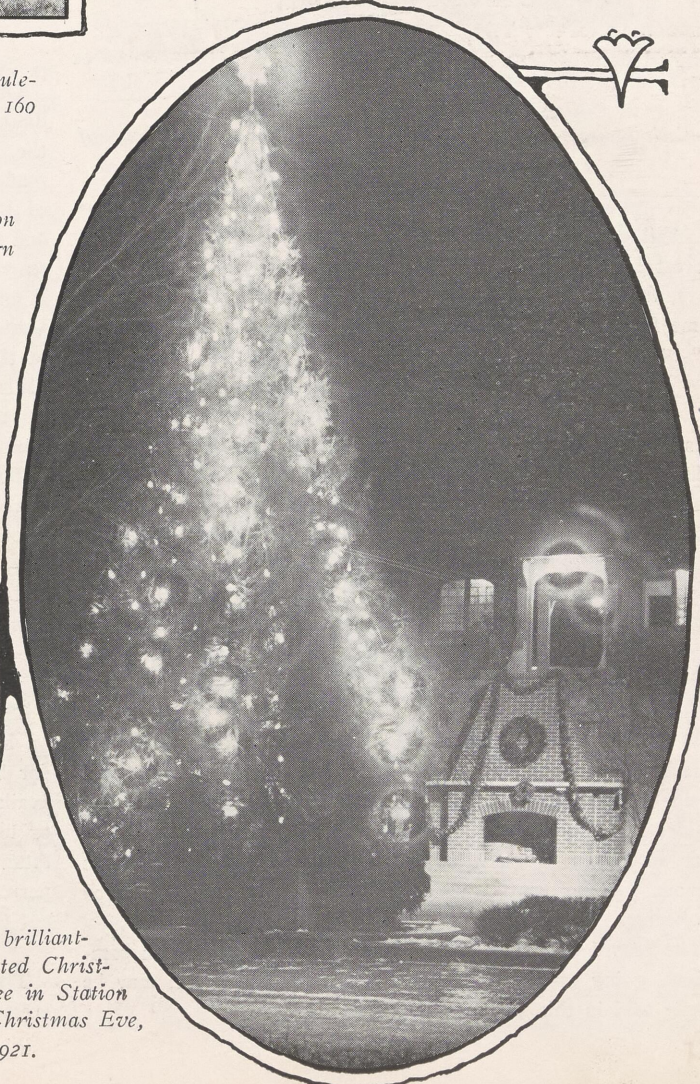


Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt (above) making his famous 100% American speech, in Forest Hills, July 4, 1917.



McCoun-Backus House (above). Stood on Queens Boulevard until ten years ago, when torn down. It was 160 years old, one of the best of Whitepot houses.

Joseph J. Tompkins House (below), standing on Remsen Lane. Clarence P. Tompkins was born here.



The brilliantly lighted Christmas Tree in Station Square—Christmas Eve, 1921.



(Continued from page 7)

under the boulevard, and in that way transportation for the fast increasing population of this entire section would be made much easier.

#### WEST SIDE TENNIS CLUB ESTABLISHED HERE

In 1914 the West Side Tennis Club, the foremost tennis organization in the country, moved from New York, established itself in Forest Hills, and dedicated a most attractive club house. On the grounds of the club are played the majority of the important tennis matches of the country and many of the International Davis Cup matches. A new stadium costing \$250,000 and seating 13,000 people was completed in 1923, and this comfortably accommodates the large crowds attending the matches. The membership of the West Side Tennis Club today is 910.

#### FOREST PARK A BIG ASSET

Bordering on the village of Forest Hills as a central feature of the Queens Park System, is Forest Park with its 536 acres of forest and glen, its 18-hole golf course, 18 tennis courts,



*Artistic houses on Pilgrim Street Circle—Two of the group of eight, designed by William Patterson.*

baseball grounds, and other attractions. Here the residents of Forest Hills today, as did the Whitepot people in the earlier days, find an opportunity to walk through the woods and become friends of the trees, the birds, the squirrels and rabbits.

#### FOREST HILLS' GREAT WAR RECORD

Previously in this sketch the part played by the residents of this section, in the early wars of the Nation, has been briefly told. Of the work of the residents in the Great War it is a pleasant task to review the outstanding features of the record, so absolutely loyal were these inhabitants, so thoroughly mobilized, that it is a story of which every one who has had any part in it may well be proud. From 1914 to 1916, before our Nation entered the war, war relief work was done by the women of the town, the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts. The men were organized in the Forest Hills Rifle Club and the Forest Hills Battery.

When war was declared against Germany, President Wilson sent 2,000,000 soldiers to aid the Allies, and 2,000,000 more were equipped, trained, and ready to go. Of this number 102 were residents of Forest Hills. On July 4, 1917, Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt, a guest of Forest Hills Gardens, made his famous 100 per cent American speech and thoroughly stirred his hearers.

The record of the village in the various Liberty Loan campaigns, going over the top several times in each case, may be briefly told in this way:

The First Liberty Loan was entirely subscribed by the banks.

In the Second Liberty Loan, the Fall of 1917, bonds to the value of \$453,450 were subscribed by residents of Forest Hills. Every one in town bought a bond.

In the Third Liberty Loan, the Spring of 1918, the sum of \$392,850 was subscribed.

In the Fourth Liberty Loan, the Fall of 1918, the sum of \$484,000 was subscribed.

In the Victory Loan, the Spring of 1919, the sum of \$293,950 was subscribed.

In the United War Work Campaign, of the Fall of 1918, \$21,400 was subscribed by the people of Forest Hills.

The Red Cross Booth on July 4, 1917 netted \$300.

In the National Red Cross Drive, 1918, the people of Forest Hills subscribed \$22,000.

At the Red Cross Fair conducted by the Red Cross Chapter of Forest Hills, held Sept. 12 to Sept. 14, 1918, the sum of \$11,042.71 was the net profit.

On Rainbow Night (so called), Sept. 29, 1917, 1,200 men of the Rainbow Division of the Army, stationed at Camp Mills, were selected by the Y. M. C. A. and transported to Forest Hills as our guests and entertained in our homes at dinner. After dinner, in Station Square, a most thrilling and inspiring patriotic program was given and one of the speakers was Helen Keller, of Forest Hills. Many of the boys who were entertained in Forest Hills homes on that night became the warm friends of their hosts and hostesses, and a record of the ensuing years shows enduring friendships, dating from that memorable night in September, 1917.

#### MONUMENT UNVEILED

On October 10, 1920, a beautiful monument honoring the soldiers and sailors of Forest Hills, was unveiled and dedicated on the Green. Major-General Charles P. Summerall, U. S. Army, made the principal address of the afternoon. The monument of bronze and granite symbolizes the call to service overseas and contains the names of 102 men. Those whose names are starred, having made the supreme sacrifice, are: Rice Bassett, Whitney Bowles, Clarence O. Collins, and Louis Serlen. The United States flag veiled the monument, so that the unveiling of the monument and the flag raising, conducted by the Forest Hills Post of the American Legion, were one and the same ceremony. A. A. Weinman, a resident of Forest Hills, was the sculptor of the monument. The monument was erected and dedicated under the auspices of the Community Council of Forest Hills, of which Thomas B. Paton was president. Lyman Beecher Stowe was chairman of a committee to welcome soldiers home and F. C. Thompson was treasurer. This committee had general supervision of the monument. Walter D. Teague was chairman of a sub-committee in charge of the erection of the monument.

#### FOREST HILLS INN

The Forest Hills Inn, situated on Station Square, was opened on May 1, 1912. In the beginning there were only 50 guests, for but a small part of the present commodious building was available for them. Today the number of people finding more or less permanent homes in the Inn is about 225. Grosvenor Atterbury was the architect of the building. The Inn is a permanent and transient residential, suburban hotel.

#### THE GARDENS APARTMENTS

The Gardens Apartments, situated on Dartmouth Street, were erected in 1917, and the Tennis Apartments, situated on Burns



Street and Tennis Place, were erected in 1920. These buildings give homes to 164 families. The buildings are controlled by the Gardens Apartments, Inc., of which Dr. S. Ellsworth Davenport, Jr., is president.

#### CORN EXCHANGE BANK

The Corn Exchange Bank established a Forest Hills branch on January 3, 1921, in a temporary home, in the building on the west side of Continental Avenue, opposite the new beautiful bank building which was opened on January 21, 1922. The depositors in the local bank today number 2,000.

#### NEW FIRE STATION

The Forest Hills Fire Station, which cost \$78,000, houses Engine Company No. 305 and Hook and Ladder Company No. 151. It is located at 11092 Queens Boulevard. The new station was opened on November 15, 1924, with ceremonies attended by Fire Commissioner Thos. J. Drennan, Deputy Commissioner William Thompson, and Deputy Chief John O'Hara, who is in charge of Brooklyn and Queens. Commissioner Drennan thanked the volunteer firemen for their work in the past, and addressing the newly-installed firemen, asked them to remember the rules of the department and to live up to them in every detail. Lieutenants Leonard, Healy and Powell are now in charge. The Forest Hills Station is fully equipped with up to date apparatus and is said to be one of the finest in the city.

The Forest Hills Fire Company, Inc.,—a volunteer fire company—is therefore disbanded and the little fire engine house on Austin Street will probably be torn down.

#### THE STORY OF THE BULLETIN

The first issue of the FOREST HILLS GARDENS BULLETIN appeared on September 25, 1915, and the publisher was the Sage Foundation Homes Company. In May, 1922, the financial responsibility was assumed for the summer by the Sage Foundation Homes Company, the Cord Meyer Development Company, the Forest Hills Gardens Homes Company, the Forest Hills Inn, and the Gardens Apartments, Inc. In September, 1922, the last named company withdrew and the other four companies have conducted the BULLETIN to date. The name of the paper was changed in October, 1922, to the FOREST HILLS BULLETIN, and since that date the news has covered every geographical part of the village. To these companies the readers of the paper are indebted, for the little publication has printed the news, held up community ideals, and brought together the various interests of the village. Seventeen hundred copies have been printed fortnightly. The *Jackson Heights News*, the *Country Club District Bulletin* of Kansas City, and three or four other similar papers have been started, following the example of the BULLETIN, a pioneer of its kind, and for a number of years they have served their communities in the same way.

In June, 1919, the writer became the editor of the paper, and has always aimed to keep it at the highest standard as a community newspaper and historically accurate as a town record. On the editorial page of the *New York World* appears this motto—"There is a mental exercise and a lot of satisfaction in trying to say much in a few words." This might have been regularly printed at the head of the BULLETIN columns, for the editor has always been compelled to say much in a few words.

Many residents, of newspaper and magazine experience, from time to time, have contributed articles, which have been greatly appreciated by all the readers.

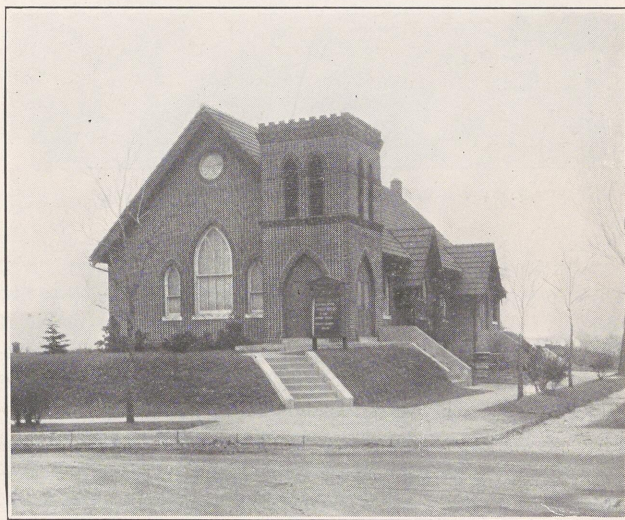
Five sets of the BULLETIN were indexed and bound, covering the years from 1915 to 1920. One of these was for the New

York Public Library, and one for the local library, so that they will always be available to the public as a town record, after the fashion of the New England town records. Several sets of the volumes from 1920 to date will also be indexed and bound in three-fourths morocco, and one will be placed in the New York Public Library, and one in the local library, to be of service to the greatest number of people, interested in the history of Forest Hills.

This illustrated supplement, the final number of the BULLETIN, is mailed to the residents of Forest Hills as a Christmas gift from the Cord Meyer Development Company. Since the BULLETIN, in the first numbers issued, usually gives early historical sketches of various churches and organizations, and because all later numbers have continued a record of the activities of the village, I state in this sketch only outstanding facts of these last nine years.

#### THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FOREST HILLS

The First Presbyterian Church had its origin in a small Sunday School, organized in 1908. For a short time the people met in the various homes, holding prayer meetings under the direction of Dr. Charles K. Clearwater, the minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Elmhurst. It was soon decided to hold a Sunday School for the religious training of the children, and the first meetings were held in the fire engine house on Austin Street. At the conclusion of the Sunday School, Dr. Clearwater held preaching services. In 1912 the corner stone of the present building on the corner of Seminole Avenue and Gown Street was laid, where the Community Church of Forest Hills was started—the first real Community Church organized in the United States. Improvements at various times have been made to the building, and four additional lots for future expansion were acquired last year by the Ladies' Auxiliary. The present value of the building and property owned by the



First Presbyterian Church—Formerly the Community Church of Forest Hills.

church is approximately \$75,000. The generosity of the Misses Miller, of Kelvin Street, made it possible to install a pipe organ at a cost of \$5,200. This gift necessitated additions to the church building, which have provided very much needed room. The charter members of the church were about 50 and the present membership is 125.

The Community Church of Forest Hills became affiliated with the Presbyterian denomination in 1922, was incorporated



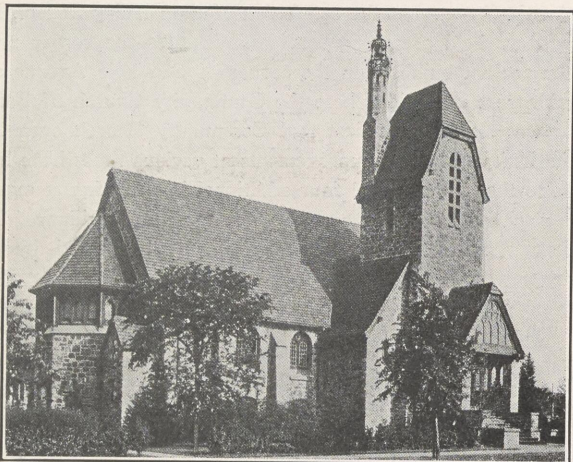
and the name changed to the First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills. The resources of this church are not confined to Forest Hills, but are utilized for national and foreign charities and philanthropic activities.

The ministers have been Rev. J. C. Hollyman, Rev. Dr. W. P. Swartz, Rev. Charles D. Swartz, Rev. Philip A. Swartz, Rev. E. L. Hunt and the Rev. Albert Sheppard, who came to the church January, 1920.

#### CHURCH-IN-THE-GARDENS

The first service of the Church-in-the-Gardens was held on October 13, 1912, in a store loaned by the Sage Foundation Homes Company, at the corner of Dartmouth Street and Continental Avenue, with 40 present. The church was organized on March 19, 1913, with 38 charter members. It was incorporated as The-Church-in-the-Gardens on June 5, 1913, and moved from the store into a portable chapel, located on Ascan Avenue near site of present building, on November 9, 1913. On December 12, 1913, the Ecclesiastical Council extended to the church the fellowship of the Congregational Churches.

The very beautiful building now occupied by the church was designed by Grosvenor Atterbury and John Almy Tompkins, and was dedicated and presented to The-Church-in-the-Gardens on October 10, 1915. Mrs. Russell Sage,



*Church-in-the-Gardens, gift of Mrs. Russell Sage to the Community.*

the generous giver of the building, wrote: "I hope its doors will always be open to every one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and wishes to do His will." Mrs. Sage's request has been carried out in letter and in spirit, for the present membership of 297 represents nine denominations. The Women's Guild, organized in 1914, has 144 members, representing many denominations. While the building was a gift from Mrs. Sage, the members of the church purchased the land. The value of the church building on Ascan Avenue and Greenway North, is \$125,000.

In 1920 Mrs. Susie D. Smith, the mother of the late Rowland H. Smith, gave to The-Church-in-the-Gardens the lots adjoining the church on Greenway North and Borage Place, on which could be built a Community House of The-Church-in-the-Gardens. Plans have been drawn and it is expected to build a Community House which will serve all of the people of the village, at a cost of \$150,000. Mrs. Smith also donated land on Ascan Avenue on which to build a parsonage.

The first pastor of the church was Dr. Robert J. Kent. He

was followed by Dr. David Latshaw, who served in 1920-1921. The present minister is Rev. C. E. Silcox, who has been in charge since March 1, 1923.

This church has exemplified the duty and privilege of benevolent and missionary giving to the less fortunate in this and other countries.

#### CHURCH OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF MARTYRS

The Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs held first services in an unoccupied house on Fife Street, through the courtesy of the Cord Meyer Development Company, in November, 1912, with an attendance of 100. The present membership is about 1,500. In December, 1915, the church moved from Fife Street to the present chapel on Ascan Avenue. The Rev. Thomas A. Nummey was pastor of the church from 1912 to 1917 when the Rev. Joseph R. McLaughlin was placed in charge.

The present edifice is entirely inadequate for the congregation and the erection of a complete parish plant is contemplated for the near future. Plans are being prepared by McGuinness & Walsh, celebrated Boston architects, and will include, the church with a seating capacity of 1,000, a school which will accommodate 1,500 pupils, with an auditorium which will seat 1,000, a rectory and convent. The style of architecture will be Tudor-Gothic and the construction will be of stone. It is planned to start the first unit of the auditorium as soon as possible, to take care of the large congregation. The total estimated value of the completed church property will be \$1,000,000.

#### ST. LUKE'S

A little group of Episcopalians first met in a store at Station Square, corner of Dartmouth Street and Continental Avenue, and later in unoccupied houses, through the courtesy of the Sage Foundation Homes Company. They afterwards met in the homes of the members, and then in a small building which they erected on their land on Greenway South and Cranford Street. The services were conducted in the early years under the supervision of Canon Roy Farrell Duffield, of the Cathedral at Garden City. In 1914, 1915 and 1916, Rev. W. P. S. Lander was in charge. Later the Ven. Archdeacon Nichols came to take charge on May 1, 1916. The Reverend Mr. Lander has been rector since 1921.

The church was organized on October 18, 1913, and the first services were held in the new building on December 25, 1923. The value of this building is \$70,000 and the architect is Robert Tappan. There are plans for future building of aisles, parish-house, tower, and rectory. Today there are 292 communicants. The women of the church are organized in a Women's Guild and an Altar Guild.

A parish day school, consisting of kindergarten and first primary grade, is conducted in the Guild Hall, under the general supervision of the rector.

#### FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

The first two services of the Christian Science believers were held in the home of Mrs. Anna C. Boyd. For almost a year before organizing, the services were conducted in a store on Continental Avenue. The Christian Science Society of Forest Hills, Long Island, was organized on November 1, 1917. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Forest Hills, Long Island, was incorporated under the religious corporations law of the State of New York on April 1, 1921. Since January 1, 1921, the church has held services regularly in the Masonic Temple on Queens Boulevard. The organization owns five lots on



Dartmouth Street and expects later to build a church. As it is not customary for the Christian Science churches to make public the number of their membership, these facts cannot be published.

All of these five churches conduct schools for the religious education of the boys and girls enrolled in them.

### THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF FOREST HILLS

A portable building, known as Public School No. 3, was opened on December 19, 1910, on Seminole Avenue between DeKoven and Euclid Streets. This little building contained two classes with about 75 pupils. The present permanent building with 14 rooms was opened on February 1, 1921, and the present enrollment is 496.

Public School No. 101 was opened in a portable building on Russell Place, on May 20, 1914, with two classes of about 75 pupils. A large and commodious building is on the 1924 Budget of the City of New York, through the efforts of a committee, of which Mrs. H. P. Daniels is chairman, and it is hoped that construction of this new school will begin soon. The present enrollment is 217, divided into six classes. The crowded condition in both schools necessitates classes on part time, and in the permanent building No. 3 classes are held in the auditorium and on the stage. Miss Mabel Sondheim is principal of Public Schools No. 3 and 101.

### THE KEW-FOREST SCHOOL

The Kew-Forest School, a private day-school, situated on Union Turnpike south of Queens Boulevard, was opened on September 23, 1918, with an enrollment of 55. The present enrollment is 200. Classes are conducted from the kindergarten through the high school. The value of the present building and site is \$200,000. There is a plan to erect another wing to the building and a gymnasium within the next four years, at a cost of \$300,000. Louis D. Marriott and Guy H. Catlin are the principals of the school.

### FOREST HILLS LIBRARY

The Forest Hills branch of the Queensboro Library was started in the Inn on April 16, 1912, with a circulation the first year of 3,704. For a number of years the branch has been located in the old Sales Office at the head of the Green, through the courtesy of the Sage Foundation Homes Company. The circulation in 1923 was 10,325.

The Library Committee has worked strenuously for three years, with the co-operation of the Queensboro Public Library Board, to encourage the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to purchase a permanent library site in Forest Hills. Six times has the committee appealed to the Board of Estimate and Apportionment in the City Hall, and has failed to secure a site, solely because there has been a lack of unanimity in the opinion of the residents of Forest Hills as to the proper location of the site. For more than three years, Mrs. George Smart has been chairman of the Library Committees of various organizations, and has acted as a liaison officer between the Queensboro Library Board and the residents of Forest Hills.

### FOREST HILLS TAXPAYERS

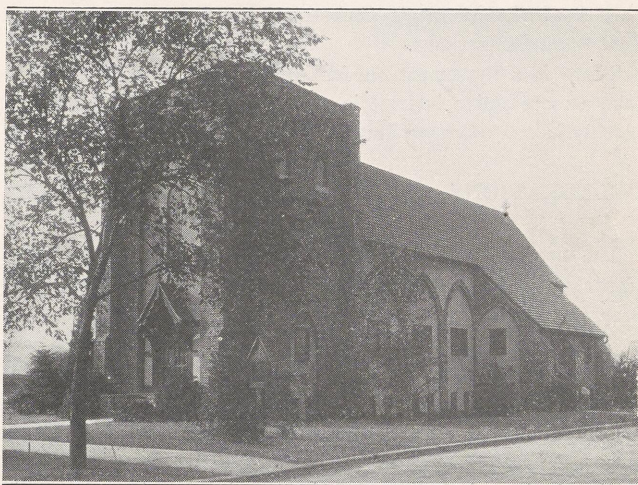
The Forest Hills Taxpayers was organized in 1909 among the residents of the Cord Meyer Development. This was the first of the secular organizations and it was primarily interested in the public school situation. When the Sage Foundation Homes Company began developing the property south of the

railroad, new people moved into this section and they were invited to join the Forest Hills Taxpayers. They readily assented. The railroad, post-office, and public schools, also many other civic matters of common interest became the very serious concern of this live organization.

In December, 1919, this organization became the Community Council of Forest Hills, and was alert in trying to help in all civic matters. Candidates for public offices spoke at the meetings held each Fall just before election day, and thus gave the people an opportunity to see those men for whom they were asked to vote. Since the Gardens Corporation and the Forest Hills Association have taken over many of the duties of the Community Council, this latter organization is still kept alive and can be called into ready service at any time, but it is not active.

### THE WOMEN'S CLUB A VITAL FORCE

The Women's Club of Forest Hills, whose object it is to "form a center for social and mental culture, to encourage all movements for the betterment of society, and to promote generous public spirit in the community"—was organized in 1913 with a membership of 31. In 1912 a school committee of the Forest Hills Taxpayers developed into a Mothers' Club, from which the Women's Club evolved. The Women's Club joined the



*St. Luke's Church—Dedicated one year ago.*

State Federation and City Federation in 1915. With two chapters, one interested in philanthropy, and one in current readings, and with eleven committees serving in the various interests of the club, this large organization of 360 members today is a vital force in community life. A long list of capable women have held offices in the club from the beginning.

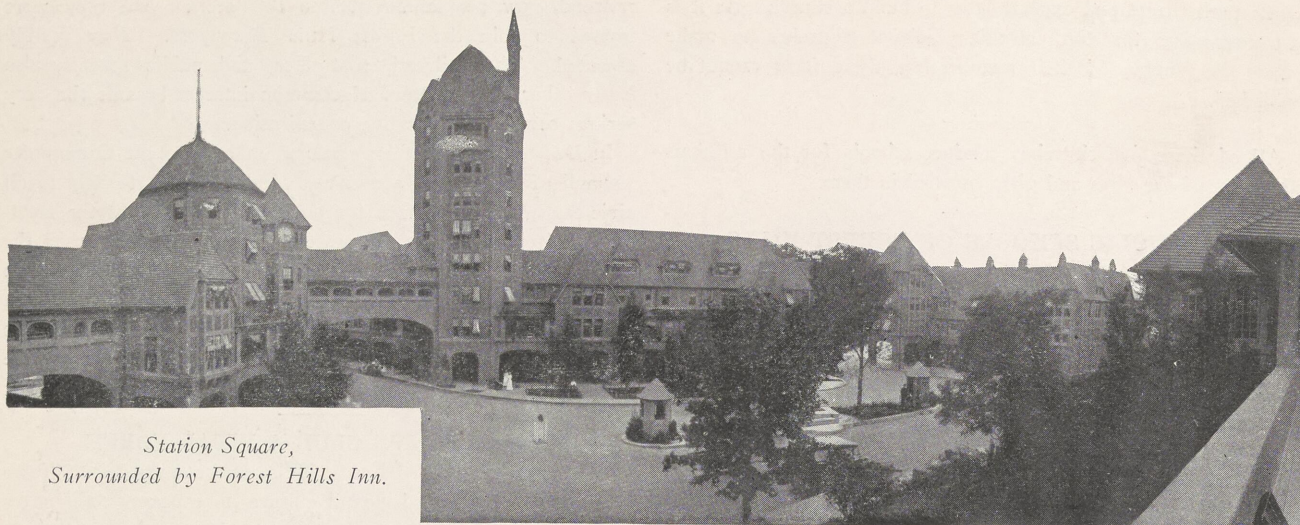
Since organization, the meetings of the Women's Club have been held at various times in the homes of the members, in the portable chapel of The-Church-in-the-Gardens, in the Social Room of The-Church-in-the-Gardens, and the ball-room of the Inn, where the meetings are now held. Mrs. Robert C. Adams is the president of the club.

### THE MEN'S CLUB

The Men's Club of Forest Hills held its first meeting in The-Church-in-the-Gardens on December 21, 1913, with 11 members. For a time the organization was a part of The-Church-in-the-Gardens, but later was separated from it and the meetings have been held ever since in the homes of the members or, on some occasions, at the Forest Hills Inn.

The Men's Club is organized in the interest of the welfare





*Station Square,  
Surrounded by Forest Hills Inn.*

of the community and to welcome newcomers.

The Fourth of July Celebration in Forest Hills Gardens was started and fathered by the Men's Club, and the caroling on Christmas Eve has been sponsored by it, with the help of the chorus of the Women's Club—now the Forest Hills Choral Club—and Santa Claus.

There is a movement on foot today for the Men's Club to take a more active interest in civic affairs. The present membership is 160. George Smart is president.

#### CELEBRATIONS ASSOCIATION OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS

The first celebration of Independence Day in Forest Hills Gardens, sponsored by the Men's Club, was held in 1914, and ever since that year, Fourth of July has been duly celebrated in Forest Hills Gardens. The Fourth of July Committee was in charge until September 13, 1920, when the Celebrations Association of Forest Hills Gardens was organized. The date of incorporation was March 31, 1924, and the present membership is 325.

The singing of carols on Christmas Eve was inaugurated in 1914 and has been carried on ever since, and a colorful pageant—Santa Claus mounted, a Christmas tree, torch bearers, and carol singers—has passed up and down the winding streets every year since 1914, in unforgettable charm and beauty. The Christmas Carols committee was organized in 1916 and in 1920 the celebration on Christmas Eve was taken over by the Celebrations Association of Forest Hills Gardens.

Gifts of toys, books, clothing and money are donated by the people of Forest Hills on Christmas Eve, for "the children of disadvantage" (as Dr. John H. Jowett called the poor), of Queens.

G. W. Cunningham is president of the Celebrations Association.

#### FOREST HILLS CHORAL CLUB

The Forest Hills Choral Club, an evolution from the Women's Club chorus and the Christmas Eve carol singers, was organized on September 22, 1921, with a membership of 25 choral and 30 associate members. Today there are 60 choral members and 75 associate members.

This organization appears in a public concert of high grade music and excellent performance, twice a year. The members assist in the singing in the various churches, and in the exercises

on July 4th and Christmas Eve. The organizer and president is Mrs. Charles H. Scammell.

#### THE GARDENS CORPORATION

Until the Spring of 1922, the Sage Foundation Homes Company (backed by the Russell Sage Foundation), administered the property and the provisions and restrictions of Forest Hills Gardens, in a spirit of kindly paternalism. When most of the land was sold, the Foundation in 1922 sold its stock in the Homes Company to Mr. Demarest and his associates and retired at that time from the backing of the development. This was a surprise to the property owners. After months of preliminary work and negotiation with the Homes Company and the Foundation for the best possible terms, the organization committee presented a plan for the organization of the Gardens Corporation as a membership corporation and the taking over by it of the community property and rights from the Homes Company.

On January 1, 1923, following several preliminary meetings, the Gardens Corporation, Inc., took over the maintenance of the community property and rights of Forest Hills Gardens from the Sage Foundation Homes Company. The work of the Gardens Corporation falls into three general classes:

- 1st—Supervising of architecture.
- 2nd—Physical upkeep and maintenance of the community property.
- 3rd—Office administration.

The number of 412 resident and 78 non-resident property owners have joined and paid the maintenance fees and dues. The present total membership is 494. The general meetings are held in The Church-in-the-Gardens. Lawrence F. Abbott is president.

#### THE GARDENS PLAYERS

The Gardens Players were organized in April, 1916, and gave their first performance on June 9, 1916. The membership on that date was 36, and the membership to day, 116.

The Players have given performances in the Kew Gardens Country Club, in The Church-in-the-Gardens, in Olivia Park, in Tea Garden of the Inn, and on Burns Street, where "Pomander Walk" pleased large audiences.

The Players have twice succeeded in winning second prize in the New York City Little Theatre Tournament. During the past two years the great difficulty in finding a place in which to play has meant that very few performances could be given in



Forest Hills; so this organization has contented itself with competing in the Little Theatre Tournaments. It is the plan this year to read plays in the homes of members. Clarence A. Perry is president.

### FOREST HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY



The Forest Hills Gardens Audubon Society was organized April 9, 1914 with 24 members, and for many years was active in the conservation of bird life, and in arousing the interest, not only of the adults of the community, but of the children in the schools, in our feathered friends. In the year 1922-1923, in the days of its greatest activity, there were 339 members. For many years Miss Mary E. Knevels was secretary and the guiding spirit of the Audubon Society. During the years 1921 to 1923, the society co-operated with the Long Island Bird Club in the work of bird conservation. At present it is deplorable to announce that this organization is in a Rip Van Winkle state.

### FOREST HILLS LODGE F. & A. MASONS

Forest Hills Lodge No. 946 of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York, was granted a dispensation December 18, 1916, by Most Worshipful Grand Master Penny to John Miller, Master; Robert Whyte, Senior Warden; Adam Treu, Junior Warden, and 15 brothers of different Lodges. The first meeting was held in Arcanum Hall, Elmhurst, when the dispensation was delivered. The charter was received May 13, 1917. The Lodge was constituted by Most Worshipful Townsend Scudder on June 4, 1917, assisted by a large number of Grand Lodge officers.

As soon as the Lodge was constituted, the members set out to secure for themselves a home in Forest Hills. They bought land on Queens Boulevard and started the erection of a temple, with the understanding that they would first build the foundation and meet there until they had means to go further. They moved into their new quarters November 16, 1920. Their membership today is 187. The Master of the Lodge is Charles A. Richards.

### FOREST HILLS POST NO. 630, AMERICAN LEGION

Forest Hills Post No. 630, American Legion, was organized in 1919 with 30 members. There are 57 members today. The excellent preamble to the constitution is quoted here:

"For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster

and perpetuate a one hundred per cent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our association in the Great War; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

The present commander is H. D. Canaday.

### MOTHERS' CLUB—PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 3

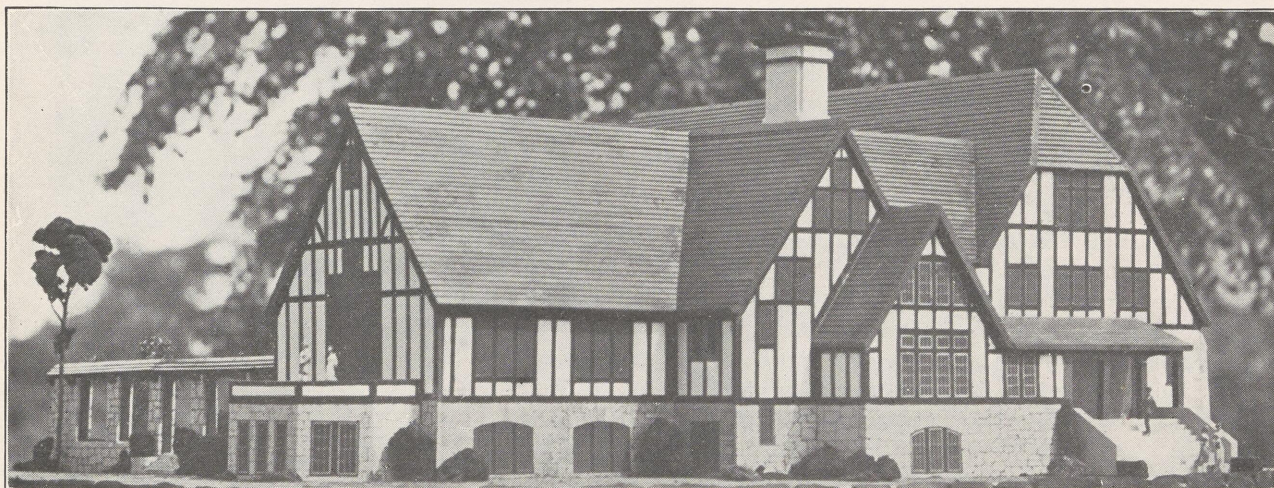
The Mothers' Club of Public School No. 3 was organized shortly before January, 1918. The membership on that date was 29 and the membership today is 100. This organization meets in the auditorium of the new Public School No. 3 building. Mrs. Frank A. Hanna is president.

### MOTHERS' CLUB OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS

The Mothers' Club of Forest Hills Gardens was organized April 10, 1921, with an approximate membership of 20. The present membership is 160. The meetings are held in Public School No. 101, and in the homes of the members. Mrs. Donald G. Clark is president.

### SCOUT TROOPS

For a number of years there was a troop of Boy Scouts conducted under the auspices of The-Church-in-the-Gardens, with W. P. McCulloch and others as Scoutmasters. The troop was disbanded for a time, but the work has been started again



MODEL OF COMMUNITY HOUSE

Project of the Church-in-the-Gardens, planned to serve the whole community. Will be built on land given by Mrs. Susie D. Smith.



this Fall with Lyndon Burton, one of the members of the troop in the early days, as the Scoutmaster.

There is a very successfully conducted troop today in the



*Home of Dr. and Mrs. Philip G. Cole, Markwood Road,  
Sending forth cheer on a Winter night.*

First Presbyterian Church, with George Springsteen, descended from the old Whitepot family, as Scoutmaster.

There is a troop of Girl Scouts today in the First Presbyterian Church, under the leadership of Miss C. B. Ford.

#### FOREST HILLS ASSOCIATION

The Forest Hills Association was organized by the residents in the Cord Meyer Development section, in the Fall of 1920. The association has taken most active interest in civic betterment of the community. It also concerns itself with the celebration of July Fourth and Christmas Eve. Certain social entertainments are given for members and their families, which are held at the Clubhouse on Seminole Avenue, which was built in 1912 by the Cord Meyer Development Company and turned over to the residents, in response to the desire for a place to meet and indulge in tennis and outdoor sports. The present membership is 135 and the president is Herbert Chase.

#### AUXILIARY OF JAMAICA HOSPITAL

The Forest Hills Auxiliary of Jamaica Hospital was organized in November, 1922, with Mrs. Niels F. Holch, president. Under her administration, \$12,000 has been raised locally for the institution. It is the plan to raise \$4,000 more, to complete the equipment of the maternity ward. Mrs. F. M. Waterbury was elected president this fall.

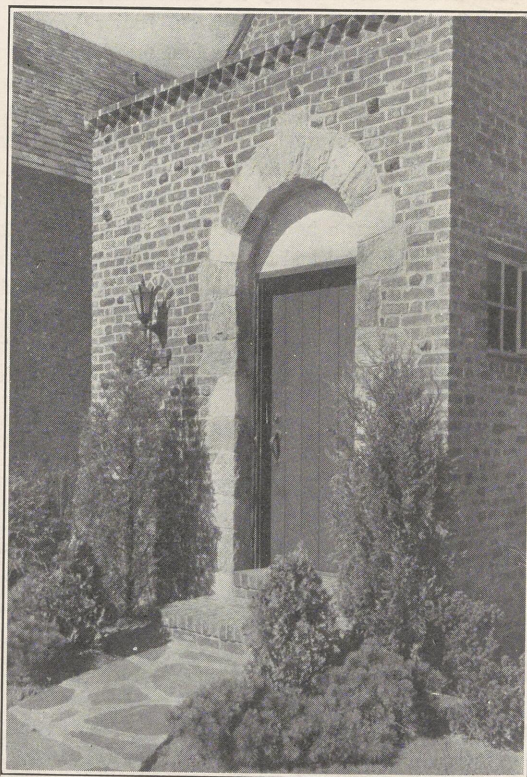
#### FOREST HILLS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

The population today of the sections which have been developed by the Cord Meyer Development Company, the Sage Foundation Homes Company, and the Forest Hills Gardens Homes Company, is approximately 5,000. The growth of this settlement, and in fact of all the adjoining sections, has been rapid and steady. It is conservatively estimated that in the next five years the Forest Hills Library, which is expected to serve all residents between Richmond Hill, Jamaica and Elmhurst, will have to meet the needs of 30,000 people. While this growth has been almost miraculous in the last 18 years since Cord Meyer bought the Whitepot farms, still it is not surprising when one considers that we are removed from Manhattan by only 15

minutes on electrified train, and that here we may live with gardens about our homes, with trees and birds and flowers for our friends, as though we were removed by many, many miles from the world's greatest metropolis. From our homes we can reach the many opportunities which New York City offers, by motoring on Queens Boulevard over the Queensboro Bridge in one-half hour to the heart of the City.

In the early days of Forest Hills, the community was essentially a friendly place in which to live. In spite of the growth and the many unforeseen changes in a material way because of the increased population, it is the hope that those who come may continue to find here a hospitable welcome. Surely any newcomer can find his congenial church home and place of spiritual uplift, and in some of the many secular organizations he can find his place to assist in maintaining the ideals of the past and to help in bringing greater civic improvements. This section is a glorified Whitepot in every material way. May the material Forest Hills continue in the high standards which were set in 1906 and 1911, but may its real value be found in the character of the men and women, boys and girls, who call this village home.

The old settlers of Whitepot were industrious farmers and good citizens, who cared for the enduring things of the spirit; may we who inhabit this town today follow their example in placing real values—not real estate values, important as the latter are—first!



*Charming door of a Pilgrim Street house. Typical of all doors of Forest Hills, opening in to hospitality and out to service.*

(This history of Whitepot and Forest Hills has been prepared from authoritative sources. The early history is founded upon early historical documents. Stories of local interest have been told the writer by members of Whitepot families still living in Forest Hills and these have been confirmed by historical record in some cases and in others by the members of other Whitepot families. Files of the BULLETIN have been used to furnish the facts of the development of Forest Hills. Figures of present day membership in churches and other organizations have been secured from the ministers of the churches and the officers of the organizations. Altogether it becomes the first recorded history of this section from the days of the Indians up to the present. Some time this may be elaborated upon and a more complete history written by the author. L. A. S.)