

Ridgefield Names Sherwood Places

by JACK SANDERS

MOUNT SHEPPISON

Mount Sheppison is mentioned in a single deed in 1746 and is shown on one map. Both its name origin and its exact location are unknown today.

The name appears on a very early map, copied in 1787 from a 1741 original by proprietors' clerk Benjamin Smith. The map, bound into the land records, shows the plan of the Fourth 20 Acre Division, northern Ridgebury territory that ran to New Fairfield, and which the proprietors got in compensation for the loss of land in the Oblong.

The map shows lot 26 as a 100-acre grant to Joseph Crampton and as being "Mount Sheppison," situated on the New York Colony line and not too far south of New Fairfield. This area, of course, now belongs to Danbury, which no longer uses the name.

SHERMAN COLONIAL

Sherman Colonial was a name used for a 1960's proposed subdivision that today is called Ridgebury Estates.

The name's use became commonplace in the mid-1960's because the Sherman Colonial Company got into a fight with Planning authorities over the siting of lots there and the Planning people went to court to fight for what they believed should be allowed at the subdivision.

However, they did not get permission from town officials, who would have to pay the lawyers' fees for defending the Planning and Zoning position. Although the planners won the case, it was some years before the Board of Finance finally agreed to pay the lawyers in the "Sherman Colonial case," a punishment of sorts for the planners because they had spent money without the financiers' permission.

Eventually, Jerry Tuccio bought and developed the land in line with Planning and Zoning standards.

SHERWOOD FARM

The Sherwood Farm was a successor to Knap's Farm, and was big enough, in its heyday to be a local place name, one that could have gone on to be a modern name such as Bennett's Farm.

Deeds in the mid-1800's mentioned "land at Sherwood Farm," referring to territory around the intersection of Ridgebury, Regan, and Old Stagecoach Roads—much of which is now the McKeons' Arigadean Farm.

Sherwood Farm was probably named for Nathan Sherwood who had bought part of Moses Knap's farm in 1747. Yet, the name was in use a century later.

There was another Sherwood Farm which, like Knap's Farm, was laid out by grant directly from the Connecticut colony before Ridgefield even existed. It was situated on the hillside which slopes to Mill Plain, territory that was once part of Ridgefield and now is part of Danbury.

SHERWOOD ROAD

Sherwood Road was probably named for descendants of Daniel Sherwood, the town's first miller (ca. 1717), whose mill was nearby at the old outlet of Lake Mamasasco (at the end of Pond Road).

Amos Sherwood owned 60 acres
(Continued on page 6)



Old Ridgefield

A rather comfortable and complete existence, it appears, could be had at this "compound." The house in the distance apparently belonged to the barns out back, complete with a greenhouse at the extreme right.

Does anyone recognize these buildings photographed some summer more than a half century ago by Joseph Hartmann? (#2791)

Twenty Five Years Ago in Ridgefield

The Court of Common Pleas ruled against an appeal of William Dworski, who maintained that the Zoning Board of Appeals was in error in denying him building permits to expand Camp Adventure on the north side of Great Pond, the Feb. 28, 1957 Press reported.

Miss Mary Clark, believed to have reached a greater age than any other Ridgefielder in this century, quietly marked her 104th birthday that day at Altncraig by cutting a birthday cake which she shared with other patients at the convalescent home. A native of Ireland, she came to the states in her teens—that would have been in the 1870's—and became a governess for several wealthy families, including the James Stokes family, who had a summer place on West Mountain (now the home of Actor Robert Vaughn and his family).

A front-page picture showed members of the Boys Club's model plane group, admiring a large model of a World War I British fighter plane built by Charles Underhill Sr. Among those pictured were Dr. Robert Mead, Harry Pierandri, Robert Santini, and Jesse Meeker.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bellagamba of North Salem Road celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary.

Dr. Walter T. Dolan was elected president of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, a new organization at St. Mary's parish. Other officers included Mrs. Joseph McGlynn, vice-president; Mrs. Vincent Caponera, fisher; Miss Ann Carboni, discussion club chairman.

In its first performance outside Norwalk, the Norwalk Youth Orchestra was scheduled to give a concert here Friday, March 1, at Veterans Park School. The orchestra included one Ridgefielder, Dawn Hauptmann, a violinist and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hauptmann.

Mr. and Mrs. John T. Venus of High Ridge announced the engagement of their daughter, Kathryn, to Paul J. Rosa Jr. of Darien. (In case that doesn't ring a bell, Kitty Rosa is now chairman of the Historic District Commission and Paul is now a selectman.)

A one-pound, two-ounce loaf of white bread was going for 16 cents at the First National.

"I love birthdays, and shall enjoy them until they transpire elsewhere," said Miss Geraldine Farrar of New Street, former Metropolitan Opera star, marking her 75th.

Her reaction to "rock and roll?" "Ugh!" she exclaimed. "Disgusting acrobatics that belong on the sports field." Her dad, incidentally, was a star baseball player in the 1880's.

"Coach Mel Makowicki's tabulations show that the sharp-eyed Ridgefield junior scored a total of 490 points during the past campaign. This gave him an average of 24.5 points for 20 games and sets a new school record..."

"Mazzi, in three years of high school competition, has scored the outstanding total of 1,235 points—another school record."

Where, incidentally, is Fred today? The Ridgefield Townies turn in a mild upset by scraping out a 61-59 victory over the Barry Clothes quintet

of Bridgeport. Al Janesky was the leading scorer for Ridgefield, with 17.

Mrs. August Tiburzi was named chairman of the American Cancer Society's Ridgefield campaign.

Births that week included a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Piet Juch of Lewis Drive; and a son, Paul, to Mr. and Mrs. James Principi of Island Hill Avenue.

Harry D. Hull, a painting contractor for many years, and father of first Selectman Harry E. Hull, marked his 90th birthday. He had been a Ridgefielder for more than 60 years.

Two heads of lettuce could be gotten for 29 cents at Gristedes, where a six-ounce jar of instant coffee was going for \$1.29.

"Fines have become an important source of revenue at the Ridgefield Library, according to a report from the librarian, Miss Phyllis Paccadolmi, who told the committee last week that late returners had paid \$112 during January. No fine is larger than the original cost of the book."

Thank goodness!

Rodier Spreads the Alexander Gospel

by LINETTE BURTON

Oh, my aching back! How many people do you know who have uttered that cry of distress as a sharp stab of pain strikes like lightning or a dull ache makes life a heavy burden?

William B. Rodier of Ivy Hill Road was one of the thousands of people with a bad back until he learned of a technique called the Alexander Method which has turned his life around and made him spread the Alexander gospel.

F. Matthias Alexander died in 1955, but his method of dealing with the human body to put it to optimum use lives on. His technique was extolled by

George Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley, John Dewey and a host of lesser known people and, of course, by Bill Rodier.

Practical Technique

Basically Alexander "developed a practical technique for restoring the body in its widest range of possibility (not excluding the mind) as a means toward better health, greater awareness and freedom from habit," according to a note in the dust jacket of a book about the Alexander technique.

Mr. Rodier, who calls himself a retired gardener, was getting along just fine until in 1938 he lifted a hemlock all by himself because there was no one around at the moment to help him. OUCH. Right then began a

back problem that was to stay with him in varying degrees until he latched onto the Alexander method. But there were many years of bad pain between the hemlock and Alexander.

"I went to Penn State for two years studying landscape architecture and for two years to the Texas Christian University School of Music," Bill Rodier said. "Then I came back to Washington D.C., which was my home, and later went to New York and got a job washing dishes at Rikers, where I became night manager. I had a violin and a girl friend who went to Columbia and I met Hugh Findley, head of the school of landscape architecture at Columbia. He suggested that I go to Columbia and get a degree in landscape architecture and said that if I worked for a nursery I could probably get a scholarship."

Outpost Nurseries

So Bill wrote letters to three nurseries, one of which was Outpost Nurseries which had an office at 101 Park Avenue. He found himself on Park Avenue and there, by golly, was 101. So, with his Outpost letter in hand, he rode the elevator to the 21st floor and there was Richard E. Conley who said there was a job available at Outpost's sales garden in Ridgefield on Route 7.

"It was July 1935," Mr. Rodier remembered, "and the next weekend I went to Ridgefield by train. Joseph Servadio, who worked for Outpost, met me in Branchville and when he drove me to Ridgefield, up and down Main Street and on High Ridge, it was a transcendental experience."

"I'm going to live here, Bill decided, and he did. He married Marywade Moses of Washington. They lived at first on the second floor of a house across from Yellow Shutters Antiques on Route 7, within walking distance of Mr. Rodier's Outpost job. Outpost, Mr. Rodier had learned, was the largest

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THWAACK goes the log-splitter as Bill Rodier deftly divides a log with a mighty blow, a feat impossible for him before he turned to the Alexander technique to solve his back problems.—Photo by Linette Burton.

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his dad had given him land earlier or that he was living on the land his father had given him.

Rodier Spreads

(Continued from page one)

retail nursery in the United States.

Later, after the Rodiers' two daughters, Gail and Christine, were born, Mr. Rodier decided to go into business for himself. He became a highly-qualified gardener with an overlay of Penn State education as a landscape architect.

Hemlock Disaster

Then came the hemlock and hurt back.

"I went to clinics and doctors and to a chiropractor who straightened me out but he died," Mr. Rodier said. "I had attacks of pain and some doctors thought maybe I should have a fusion. In discouragement I went to a Mr. and Mrs. Binkley of Philadelphia, who had come to South Salem. They were students of the Alexander technique and Marywade, our daughter Christine, and I went to see them. I had 10 lessons—this was in 1957—and I improved."

Mr. Rodier became suspicious that he didn't have a "bad back" but had misused his perfectly good back. A lot of gardeners, he found, had back troubles. By pursuing the Alexander technique he learned that everything we do, sitting, standing, walking, getting in or out of a chair, affects the body's well-being.

"Matthias Alexander offered an educational process, a new way of doing old things, of unlearning old habitual responses," Mr. Rodier said. "The Alexander technique is a one-to-one affair. The teachers show you with their hands what needs correction. You go back to where you were as a child and learn, with a teacher, how to use your body optimally."

"Thinking along certain lines makes your muscles move. If a great skill is involved, you have to think and learn from people who know how to do it properly."

"Musicians have breathing problems," he continued, and he should know; he has been a violinist with area musical groups. "Dancers and actors also have their specific problems. Everything you do is an activity and there's a right way and wrong way of doing even the simplest things." Mr. Rodier is presently taking lessons in the Alexander philosophy from a teacher in Woodbridge.

Does it work?

"A while ago I hauled a half cord of wood up to the house, split it and stacked it," he said expansively.

"Nuff said. For William Rodier the Alexander technique works beautifully.

Car Pool

(Continued from page one)

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