



A VILLAGE WALK

JUNE 12, 1977

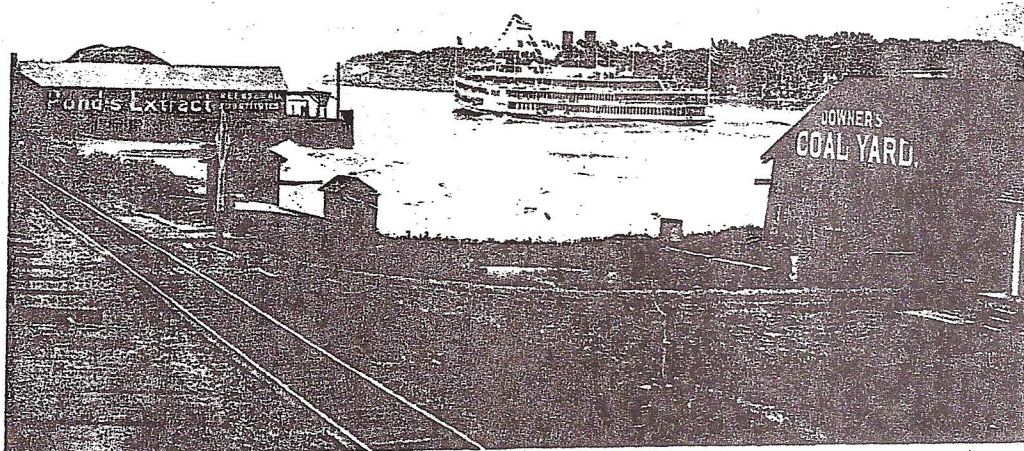
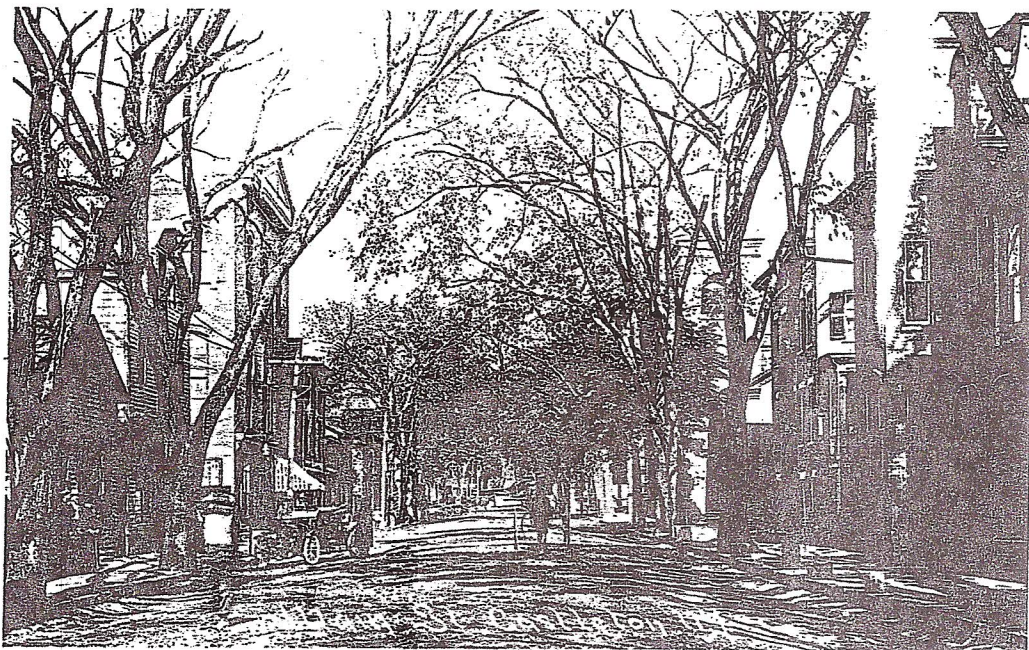
A VILLAGE WALK *at Castleton, N.Y.*

JUNE 12, 1977

TOUR COMMITTEE

Barbara Auen
Marian Beebe
Mary Bol
Walda Cobain
Shirley Dunn
Raymond Gietz
James Greenfield
John Goodlow
Pauline Harden
Amelia Harter
Vivian Ingalls
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FRONT COVER SEAL	Carol Ainsburg (Winning Design, Sesquicentennial Seal Contest)
BACK COVER SEAL	Carol Ainsburg
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OLD PHOTOGRAPHS	John Goodlow, Shirley Dunn, Elton Mizener
BOOKLET DESIGN	Maurice Ainsburg
OWNERS	Mr. and Mrs. Enrique Alvarez Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Conlin Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Holmgren Mr. and Mrs. Robert Littell Village of Castleton Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church St. Paul's Methodist Church Trinity Lutheran Church



Cast. Jan 1st 1880. All mine. L. singly. Notice

A VILLAGE WALK — AN INTRODUCTION

A sesquicentennial celebration provides an opportunity to plan activities outside the normal routine. It pushes people into study and new evaluations of the familiar setting around them. That is the explanation for this tour. Welcome to the sights and unique architectural charms of Castleton-on-Hudson!

Your tour book will take you from a house built before the Revolution to a mini-park dedicated last year. It will take you from Main Street by the Hudson River to the upper part of the village "on the hill." Primarily, as you look closely at the village through the eyes of history, you will have the opportunity to examine buildings from various decades of the 1800's.

Many of the houses that you see will be of brick. Naturally Castleton, a community which in the mid-1800's contained five brick yards in or near the village, has many fine brick buildings. The style ranges from John Stearns' simple storefronts of the early 1800's to the Italianate windows, brackets, and mansard roofs of the late 1800's. Much of the pleasure of a Castleton tour is the enjoyment of brick and wood put together, and of Victorian detail seen down driveways, under porches, and at roof lines.

The scale here is human. Not so long ago Main Street, while broad, was only dirt covered, as the postcard at left shows. The river, shown in another postcard at left, was closely associated with the historic stores, "freighting companies," ice cutting, and ferries. It still exerts its influence. The railroad, which arrived in 1850, is still also part of the scene, and sounds, of Castleton.

The farms of the Colonial period gave way to village growth here just before 1800, at the end of a decade of great growth and prosperity for the whole Albany area. On the farm of Johannes Van Buren, docks and stores were put up, lots were sold, and houses of wood and of local brick were built. April 13, 1827, the Village was incorporated. A list of buildings given in the Village minutes for May 21, 1827, enumerates nineteen structures lining Main or River Street - Castleton's first tour! This list is printed at the back of this book, with asterisks to identify sites from the list which are on today's tour.

The extent to which the village grew will be evident by examining the picture map titled "A View of Castleton, New York, 1884," republished in March 1977 by the Tour Committee. Another map, the survey map of the village lots laid out in 1796 on the farm of Johannes Van Buren, has been published in the booklet "Castleton's Sesquicentennial Program" which is available free of charge at the Village Hall and Trinity Lutheran Church. The first page of the village charter, giving the boundaries of the village in 1827, is also printed in the same booklet.

The Tour Committee has greatly enjoyed the preparation of this tour. There have been many surprises. Research in basic documents has uncovered so much additional information about the history of Castleton that the Committee intends to continue the work after the celebration is over. The hope exists that the new information can be put together to be published in the future.

The Tour Committee was composed of members of the Esquatak Historical Society and Castleton village residents. This tour booklet was funded by the Committee through donations, sales of the 1884 map, and tour admissions. Our thanks are expressed to those who helped us sell the map, gave us information, shared old photographs, and opened their homes and buildings.

June 12, 1977

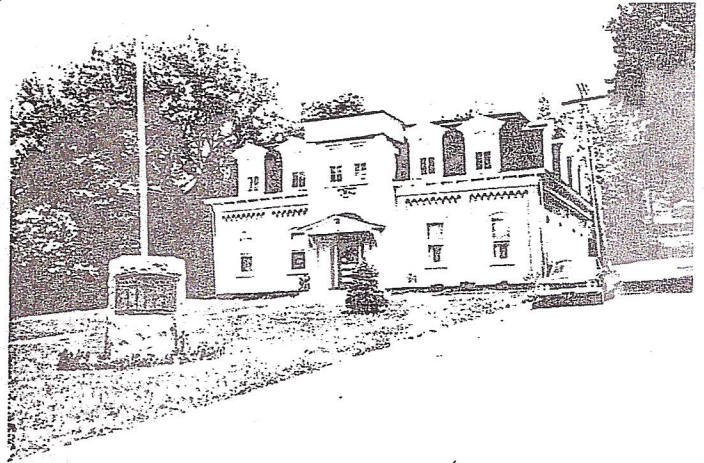
A CASTLETON WALKING TOUR OF HISTORIC SITES

Map on page 16

1. Visitors over 13 years of age must present a tour booklet to enter homes open for the tour. Visitors age 13 and under must be accompanied by an adult.
2. Please stay on sidewalks and do not enter any private grounds except those open for the tour.
3. Please do not take pictures inside any of the open buildings.

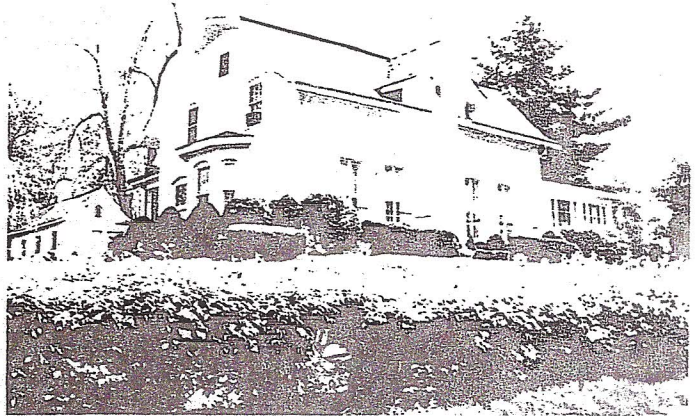
1. OPEN Village Hall, 85 South Main Street

A parcel of the Van Buren farm became the site for a frame schoolhouse, traditionally about 1820. A school is listed on Main Street in 1827 (see page 14.) Following the official deeding of the lot by Catherine Van Buren to the Trustees of School District #10 in 1837, a new brick school was built in 1838. This was replaced about 1866 by the present building, known as the Union Free School, acquired by the Village in 1924. It also houses the Castleton Library.



2. The Johannes Van Buren House, 99 South Main Street

The earliest house in the village is the 1½ story gambrel-roofed house of Johannes (Hans) Van Buren and his son, Maas Van Buren. Built in 1763, the house appears on a map of Rensselaerswyck drawn in 1767. Two tiles set into the front of the house give the initials of the builders. Tour takers have permission to walk carefully up the driveway and across the yard to read these tiles. You may walk around the house and go back down the driveway. Look carefully to identify the "mouse-toothing," triangle shaped brick-work, close under the eaves in the south gable. The bay window, French windows, and dormer date from the 1860's; the house once had a fireplace at each end. The farm of Johannes Van Buren was the largest in Schodack. This is the residence of Dr. and Mrs. William Cobain.

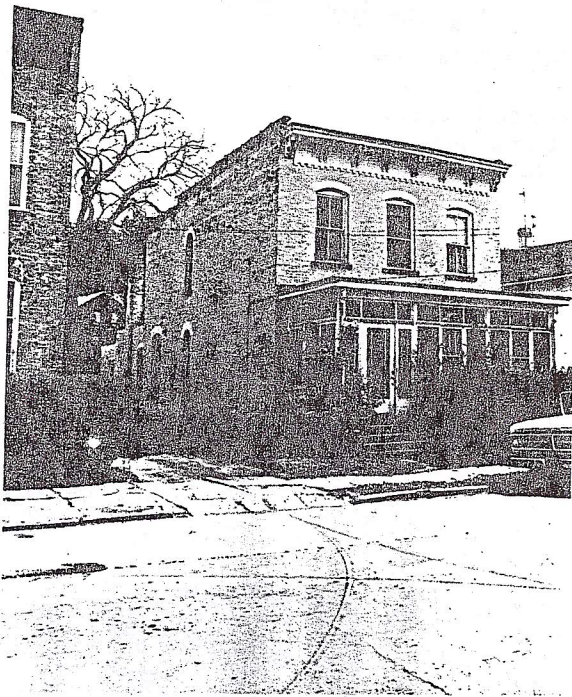


3. Stimpson Brick Yard

This stop is optional. Tour takers pressed for time may wish to save it for a later day. Beers Atlas of 1876, on its Castleton segment, shows two brick yards lying south of the village limits not far from the Vlockie Kill. Land along the Vlockie Kill is now owned by the Town of Schodack and includes a skating rink. Visitors will please either walk in, or drive in only as far as the skating rink. The exact site of the brickyard is not known, but evidence of brickmaking is plentiful along the creek. A foundation visible across the creek was for an old house (see 1884 map).

4. Blacksmith Shop, 126 South Main Street°

The bay window over the large shop doors identifies the William C. Corts blacksmith shop. In 1889, Corts, son of blacksmith Frederick Corts of South Schodack, paid \$950 for the property on South Main Street. The 1876 map shows the lot occupied by Nicholas Effler, who was also a blacksmith. In 1908 Corts advertised as "The Village Blacksmith" and later as "Corts and Smith."

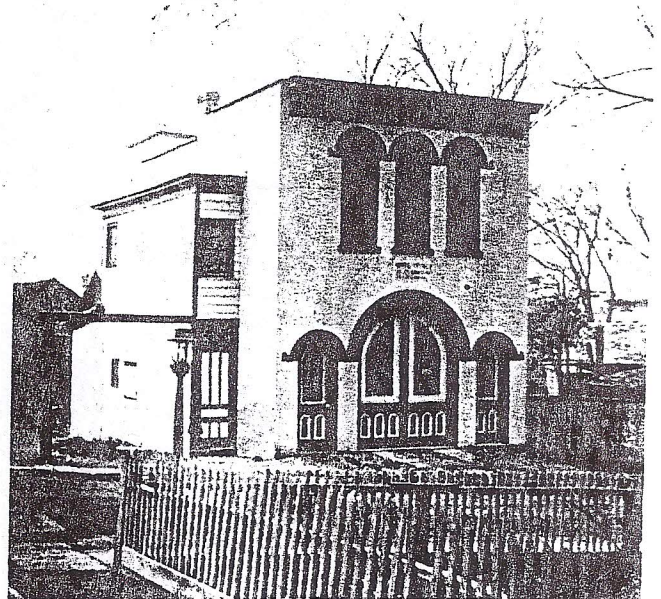


5. Old Methodist Parsonage, 71 South Main Street

About 1851, the frame house on this lot became the first parsonage of St. Paul's Methodist Church, but in 1870 the frame structure was moved to the east end of the plot and this 2-story brick dwelling was erected at a cost of \$2500. It was sold to a private owner after a third parsonage was built on Benedict Street in 1961.

6. OPEN Noyes (Harder-Citizens') Firehouse, Green Avenue

In 1871, after a severe fire in the Village, the Frank P. Harder Steam Fire Engine Company No. 1 organized and built this engine-house on land donated to the Village by William Custis Noyes for educational purposes. A handsome Clapp and Jones "steamer" (steam engine) was secured which was in use for over thirty years. The building later housed the McKnight Company truck as well. The Harder Company in 1897 became Citizens' Hose Company No. 1. Tour takers can note the jail cell at the back of the building, with its bunk for vagrants. A fire-ladder still hangs on the wall. An old photo is shown. The building is owned by the Village of Castleton.



7. OPEN Stearns-Smith Store, 1 Green Avenue

According to family tradition, John Stearns, an early store-keeper and builder, and first President of the Village, erected this store. In the minutes of the May 21, 1827, meeting of the Trustees the building was listed as a shop belonging to Jacob P. Smith and later it was owned by Joel D. Smith. The older part of the building is the west end, between the two chimneys. Entry to the cellar store may be seen on the southwest corner of the building. Inside, note the plaster moldings at the ceiling and interesting metal fireplace fronts added during Victorian times. The owners are Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Conlin.

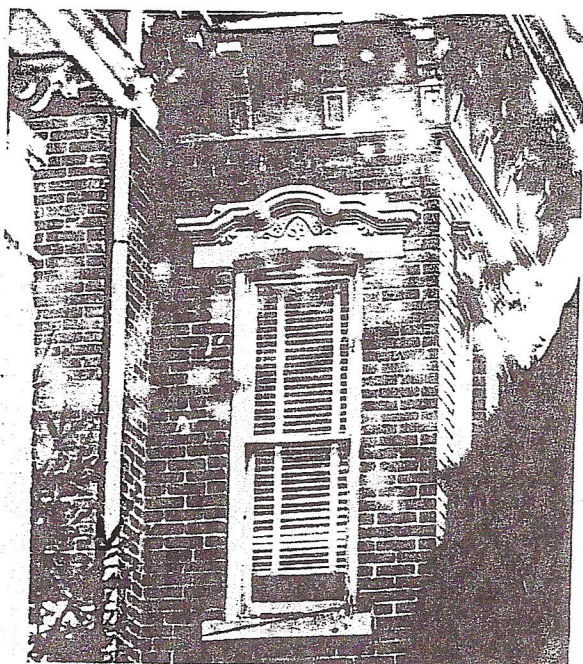


8. The Lower Dock, 92 South Main Street

Tour takers may walk through to the lower dock. This, "the old red dock," seems to be an extension of the one shown on the survey map of 1796. The store and dock of Livingston, Hurd, and Company were located here before 1827. The buildings on this dock burned in 1898; those on the two docks to the north had burned the year before. Close by to the north is the middle, or Seaman, dock. The Castleton Boat Club occupies the lower dock at the present time.

9. Paddock Inn, 88 South Main Street

Constructed about 1804, the old store is one of Castleton's most historic buildings. It was built by John Stearns, active as village official, storekeeper, and brickmaker. Prior to 1920, related members of the Stearns and Richards families kept the store for over 100 years. In the 1920's the store became Clinton's Hotel. An old photograph of this hotel was the inspiration for the drawing on the back cover. A different old photograph is shown here.

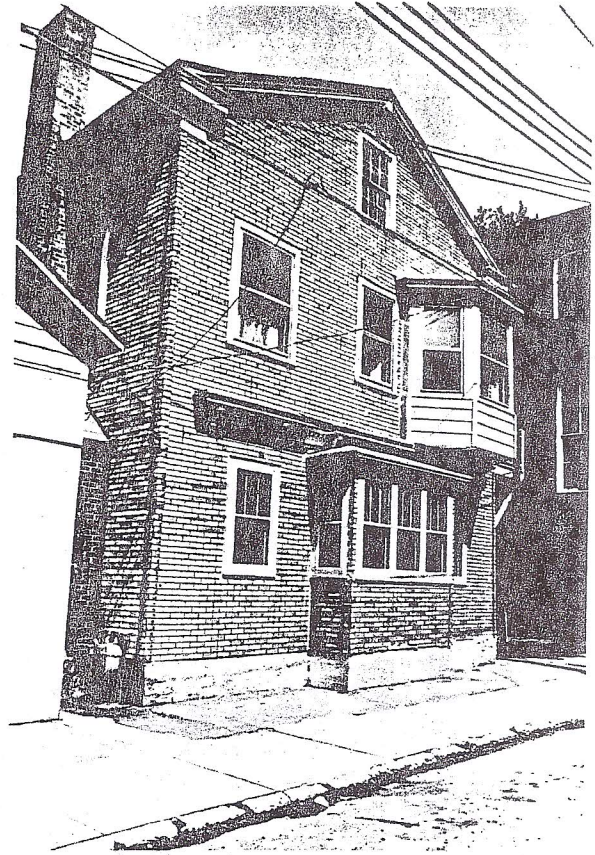


10. Jacob Seaman House, 47 South Main Street

In the 1880's, this elegant house was built by Jacob Seaman on the site of the old Nathan N. Seaman house. Nathan Seaman had owned a store next door, and docks across the street, as well as a brickyard (see page 15.) Seaman chose the site on Main Street although most of the Victorian dwellings were being built "on the hill." Mansard roof of slate interrupted with shaped dormers, ornamental entablatures, and a front tower are all intact. The building is owned by Mrs. Katharine Marra and Mrs. Robert Mallory.

11. The Old Yellow Store, 65 South Main Street

The "Old Yellow Store" stood at least fifty years on the dock at Schodack Landing, before the Hudson River Railroad was routed through its site in the early 1850's. At that time the building was sold to Nathan Seaman and moved to Castleton. One tradition has it that it was moved intact by barge, but it may have been taken down for moving and then rebuilt. The owner is John della Rocca.

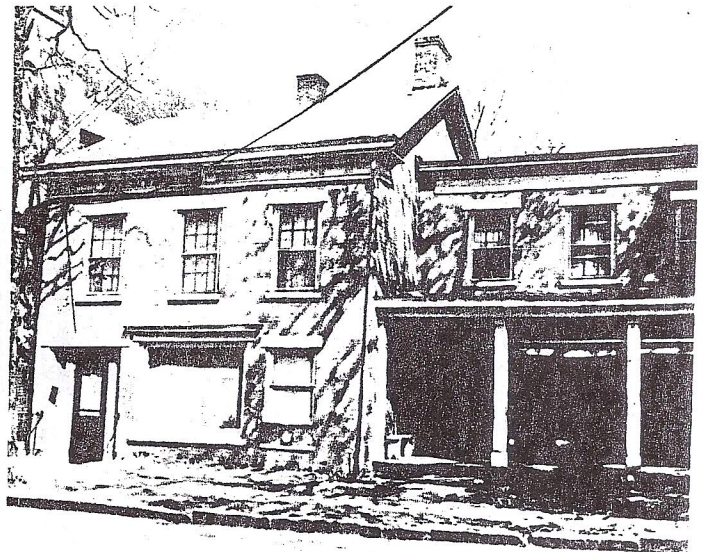


12. Opera House — IOOF Hall, 60 South Main Street

In 1891 this structure was erected by William H. Phibbs on the site of the village's ice house. In addition to serving as a theatre and movie house, the ground floor housed stores and in 1911, the village's first library. The Catholics met temporarily in the building in 1919 when the first Catholic Church burned. The building is shown in an old photo, with Phibbs' name over the door at left. It is now owned by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

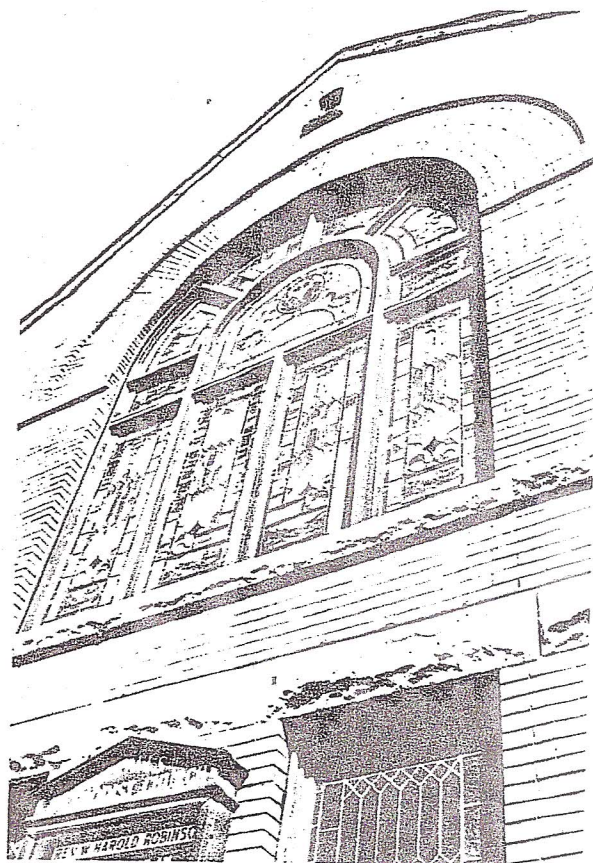
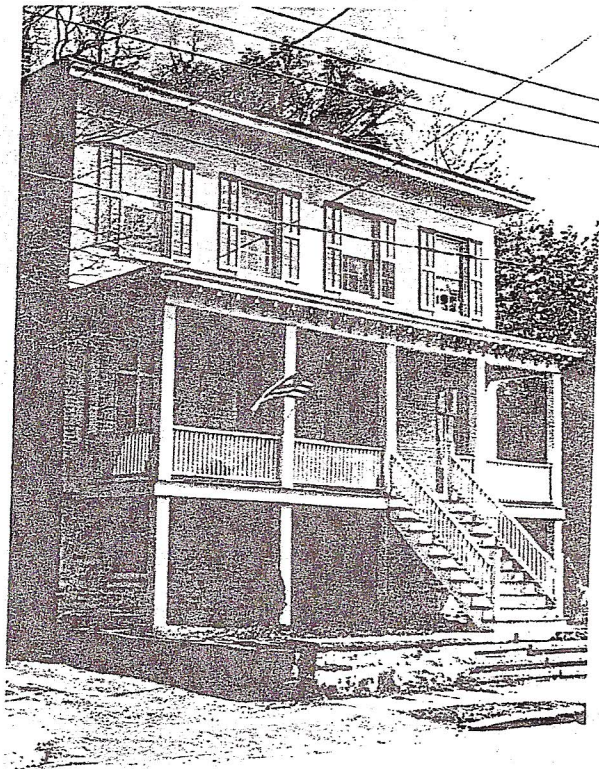
13. Dorr-Ostrander House, 43 South Main Street

This blue brick house occupies lot number 82 on the survey map of 1796. It was reportedly once used for a private school. In 1871, the parcel was transferred to Jane Ostrander by Widow Jemima Dorr, daughter of Isaac Esleeck, an early landowner. In 1889, Christian Snyder bought the building. His son, Peter Snyder, kept a cobbler's shop here. Present owner is Mrs. Mabel Prins.



14. **OPEN** St. Paul's Methodist Church,
35 South Main Street

Visitors are invited inside to enjoy the fine stained glass windows of this 1909 church. Local Methodism dates from 1836, when services began to be held in the old schoolhouse. In 1838 the John Stearns family donated lot number 81 for the first church, which was remodeled and enlarged in 1879. This building was demolished and the "new church" was dedicated on March 21, 1909.

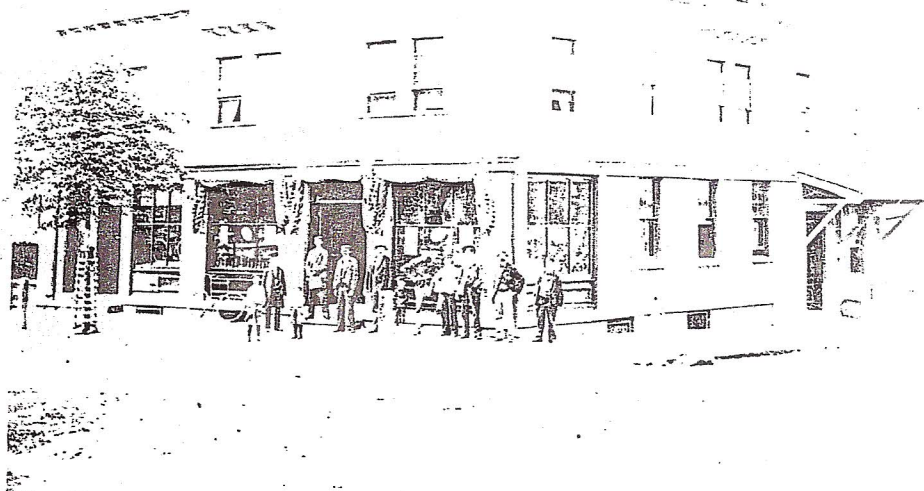


15. **OPEN** Harder-Hogeboom House,
11 South Main Street

Recently restored to its former grand proportions and dignified Federal appearance, this historic home was occupied by Lawrence C. Hogeboom by the 1820's. Later it was the residence of Andrew Harder, a Director of the National Exchange Bank, formed in 1865. After buildings across the street burned in 1889, the bank was relocated here, and the building was used as a bank until 1923. Today it is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Littell.

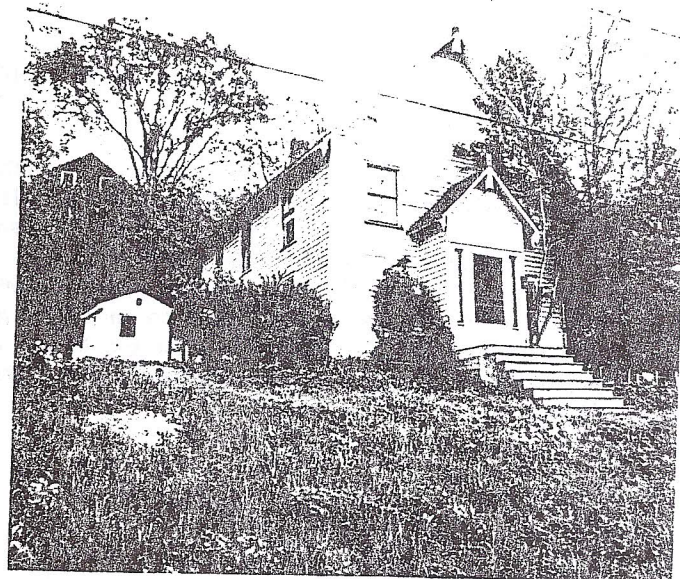
16. Railroad Station - Olsen's
Auto Service, Main Street
and Scott Avenue

After the 1889 fire, a newspaper account noted that the fire "affords the Hudson river railroad company the opportunity of erecting a passenger and freight depot." The building erected, containing a station, a store, and apartments, is shown in an old photograph. A 1932 fire destroyed the top of the station shown, but Olsen's garage incorporates the walls.



17. Consistory Building, North Main Street

The first record of this small Victorian building, owned by the Emmanuel Reformed Church of Castleton, appeared in the church minutes about 1886, although it is shown on the 1884 map. It was the sexton's house at that time, and rented for \$8 per month. Currently the church rents the building to tenants.



18. Castleton Bicentennial Park, North Main Street

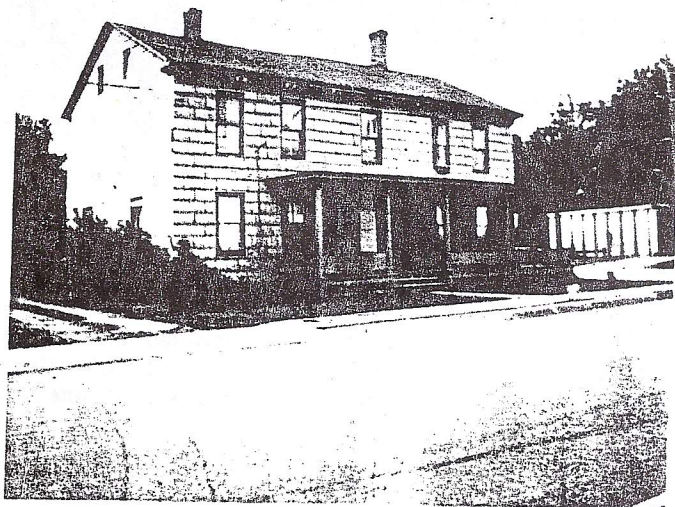
Tour takers are invited to rest at this mini-park overlooking the Hudson River. The park was developed by members of TERRA, the environmental studies class of Maple Hill High School, and their teachers, on the hillside site left vacant when the Emmanuel Reformed Church building was torn down in 1971. The park was dedicated Memorial Day, 1976, as a Bicentennial Park.

19. Former Seaman Brick Yard, corner North Main and Seaman

Just east of the present car wash was located the Nathan Seaman brick yard, begun in 1834. The huge shed is shown on the 1884 map. This brickyard was the subject of the suit printed on page 15 of this booklet. In 1866, Nathan Seaman sublet the brickyard, giving the users right to take sand "from the sand point next to Seaman's rye lot and north of his potato lot," and also giving them "the right to dig clay from the south side of the flat... and in the Hill all that they might want for the manufacturing of Brick."

20. Hosea Noyes House, 38 North Main Street

One of the village's very early buildings is this ample 50 foot by 30 foot house, with its New England style chimneys which, coming up ten feet from the gable ends, permit fireplaces in each room. In 1827, Hosea Noyes for \$800 sold lot number 52, bounded "on the west by River Street, now known as the Farmer's Turnpike..." to Peter Proseus. Sometimes remembered as the Van Vechten House, the building is now owned by Miss Winifred Leonard.



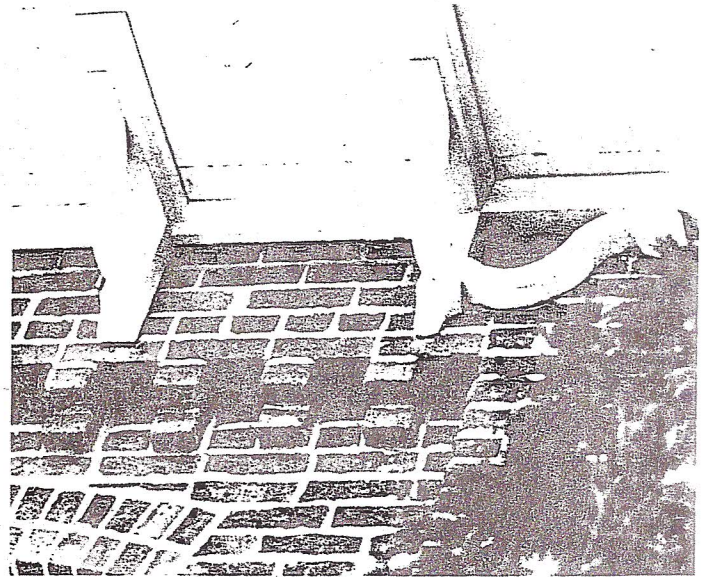
21. Dr. James L. Hogeboom House, 42 North Main Street

James Hogeboom came to Castleton as a merchant about 1802. Both his son, James, and his grandson, James, became physicians. The grandson, Dr. James L. Hogeboom, lived in this distinctive brick house by 1876. Born in 1830, he was a land surveyor as well as doctor, and was Rensselaer County coroner for several terms, also. He died in 1914. Later the house was owned by O. Earing. The present owner is Mrs. Edward Price.



22. The North Main Street Block

This block of Castleton's brick houses is outstanding for its detail and integrity. Seldom does a neighborhood retain its beautiful facades to such a high degree. Visitors are urged to walk toward the north end of the block to study doorways, porches, wood brackets, and brick detail.



23. Sesquicentennial Sign

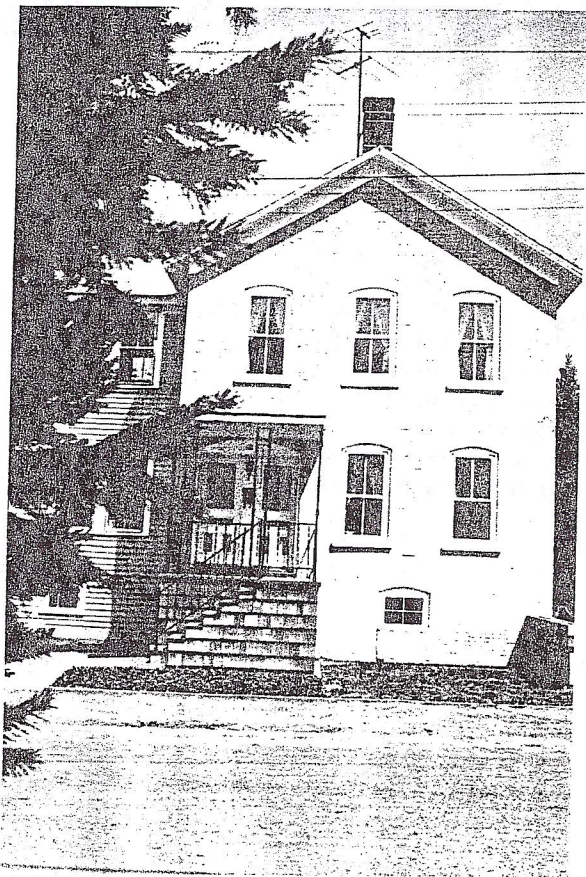
The seal adopted in 1828 by the Village has been used in this wooden Sesquicentennial sign of welcome. It was made by Donald Guarino, a village trustee, and Howard Lammerts, Jr. "C V" stands for Castleton Village.

END OF MAIN STREET SITES

24. OPEN Trinity Lutheran Church, Green Avenue

The Lutheran congregation was formed in 1880; the original church was built in 1883 and had carriage sheds between the church and Hudson Street. When, in 1955, the church burned and was rebuilt within the shell, the windows and the steeple were modernized. An old photo of the church is shown. German services were held here exclusively until the beginning of the 20th century.

**REFRESHMENTS, HISTORICAL DISPLAY,
AND TOUR STARTING POINT**

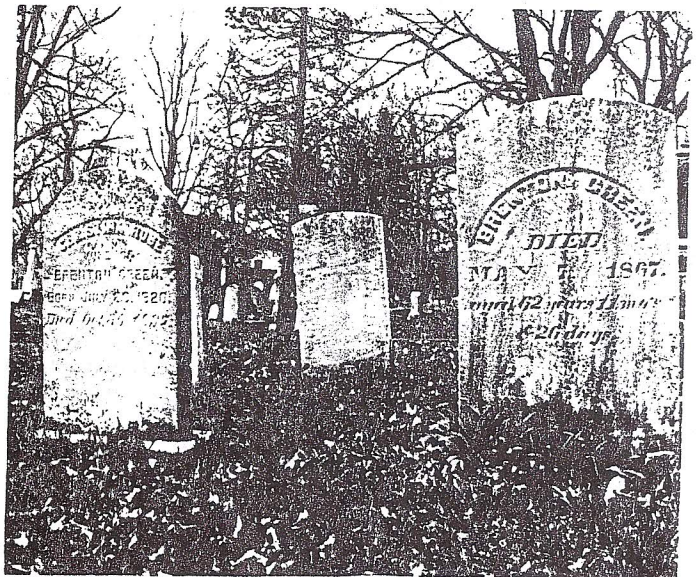


25. Hudson House, 79 Green Avenue

This blue-painted brick house was constructed in the 1840's on part of the 41.5 acres on the South Hill purchased by William Hudson in 1839 from the former farm of Johannes Van Buren. The Hudsons became a prominent family. The exterior walls of the house are built of three courses of brick with decorative arches over the windows. While renovated inside, the exterior is little changed. The owners are Mr. and Mrs. Alex Gregorewsky.

26. Mountain View Cemetery, Scott Avenue

Please walk into the cemetery by way of the drives. Many of Castleton's historic figures are buried here, including Elizabeth Burlingham (1804), Isaac Esleeck, Nathan N. Seaman, the Reverend George Hudson, and Samuel B. Campbell. Two burial grounds have been joined; the "old section" existed before the incorporation of the Castleton Cemetery Association in 1855.



27. **OPEN** Jackson-Witbeck House,
41 Seaman Avenue

The farm of Jonathan and Tobias Witbeck adjoined that of Johannes Van Buren in 1787. Their house was near the river. J. A. Witbeck's house, on the hill, is later. The age of the house, built in three sections, is not known but surveys of the farm were made in 1807 and 1830. Look for eyebrow windows, fine doorway, wide board floors and paneling under windows. Rowland Jackson lived here in the 1870's. Restored by former owner Mildred Van de Wal, the house is now the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Holmgren.

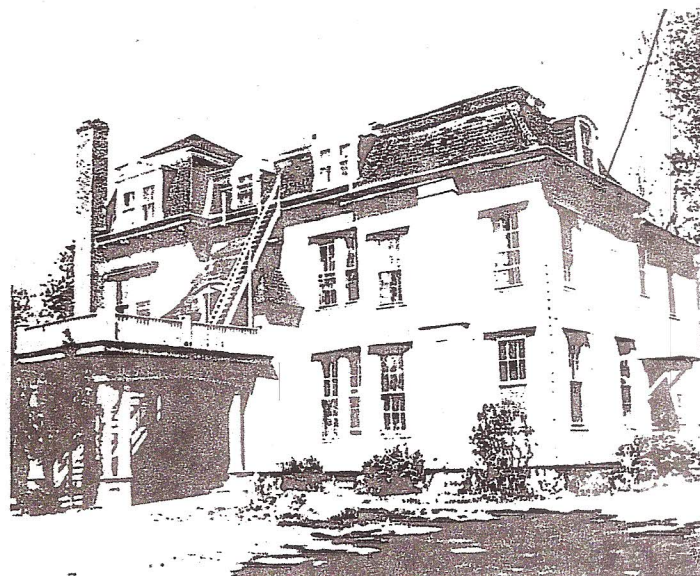


28. Taylor Residence, 10 Lynch Avenue

This square block house with its central tower was built in the 1880's. The windows of the tower once had a commanding picture of the Hudson River, but trees have since shut off the summer view. The house was built for Bernard Lynch by Martin Sossau, who was advertising in 1876 as a "carpenter and builder", and by Gus Hougstine. The owners are Mr. and Mrs. William R. Taylor.

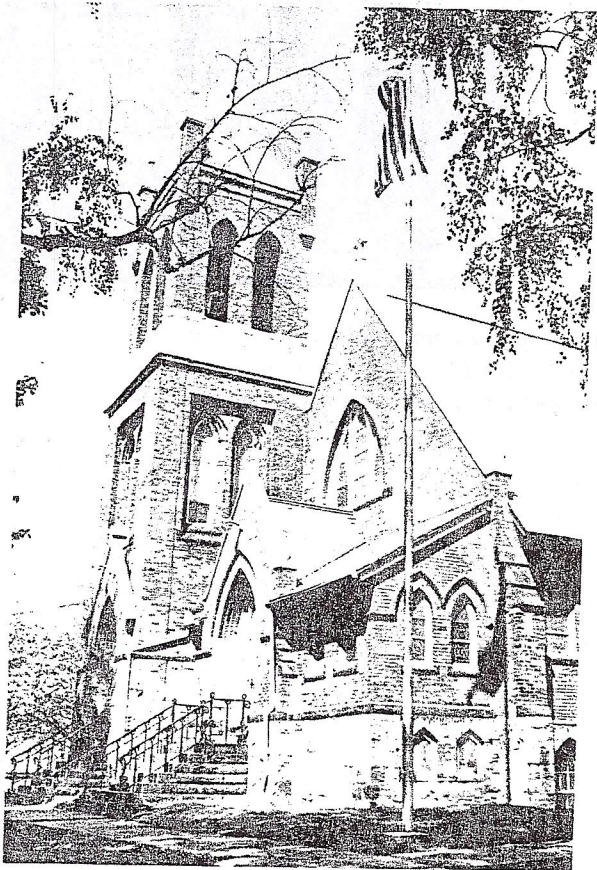
29. Sprague-Daggett House, Mann Drive

It was the fashion to build large houses on the heights around Castleton in the mid and late 1800's. The elaborate homes commonly were approached through landscaped grounds. One of these houses was built, in the late 1860's, by members of the Sprague family. Later it was occupied by the Daggets, and from 1925 to 1955 it was held by the Congregation of the Resurrection. Owned by ~~Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Wilson~~, it now houses apartments.



30. **OPEN** Catholic Chapel, 41 Simpson Avenue

Before the Catholic Church was completed in 1888, the Catholic congregation worshipped in this house built before 1884. It once had a front tower located above the front door. Heavy trim decorates the typical Victorian front doorway. Inside, the room used for worship is separated from an altar area by a panel of oak carving. The owners are Mr. and Mrs. Enrique Alvarez.



31. **OPEN** Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, Stimpson Avenue

The Church and Rectory can be reached by means of a stairway leading up from lower Stimpson Avenue or by the drive at the top of the hill. The first church was begun in 1887 and, with the Rectory, was completed in 1888. Destroyed by fire in 1919, the Church was rebuilt on the same foundation and to the same exterior plans as the original, even retaining part of the outer walls. Tour takers are invited to see the 1920 interior, including beamed ceiling, marble altars, and stained glass windows.

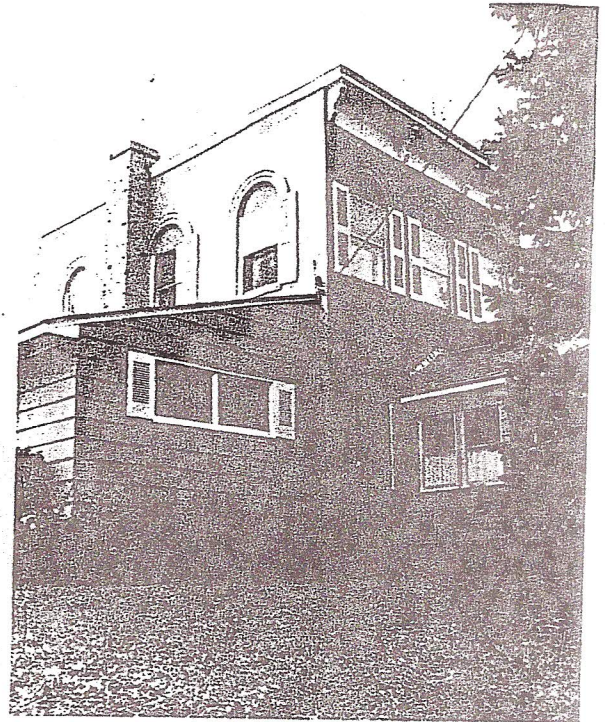
32. Sacred Heart Rectory, Stimpson Avenue

The Rectory, completed in 1888, deserves attention as a well-preserved Victorian building, part of the historic church setting, with especially appealing porch detail.



33. Seth Wheeler Hose Company, 46 Green Avenue at Chestnut Street

In 1897, the newly-formed Seth Wheeler Hose Company No. 2 petitioned the Village Board to become part of the Castleton Fire Department, and during the early 1900's the Wheeler Company rented a barn on Willow Street to house their hose cart. The Wheeler Company was allowed to incorporate as a social club in 1907 and rented out their new Engine House for the first time in 1910. A merger of all the Castleton fire companies in 1958 left the building for residential use. The owners are Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gloris.



THIS IS THE END OF THE TOUR. YOU ARE INVITED TO RETURN TO TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH TO LOOK AT THE HISTORICAL DISPLAY AND HAVE COOKIES AND PUNCH.

Volume I of the Corporation Book of the Village of Castleton has supplied the following extract from the minutes of May 21, 1827, in which all the buildings on Main Street are listed. The boundaries of Main (River) Street were "set in line with" the following structures:

west side

- Henry Proseus
- Joseph Proseus
- Jeremiah Gage
- the Hay Press or Barn of Wm Civill
- store of Jas L. Hogeboom
- (9)*brick store of John Stearns
- (8)*to a lombardy poplar at the southeast corner of the dock late of Livingston and Hurd

east side

- (20)*Peter Proseus
- the white house owned by Lawr C. Hogeboom
- Dudley Peabody
- Ard Buckman
- Hitchcock & Livingston
- (15)*Lawr C. Hogeboom
- Jabish Robinson
- Charles Cragin
- the brick house of John Stearns
- the house of Brenton Green
- (7)*from thence to a corner near the shop of Jacob P. Smith
- (measure to lombardy poplar at dock)
- (1)*school house

Houses and sites marked with an asterisk are on today's tour.

The following law-suit was in the courts in 1876. The brick yard was just east of the corner of Main Street and Seaman Avenue, and the residence of Samuel B. Campbell was located where the Resurrection Nursing Home presently stands.

CAMPBELL v. SEAMAN

Court of Appeals of New York, 1876.
63 N.Y. 568, 20 Am. Rep. 567.

[Appeal from a judgment granting an injunction against operation of the defendant's brick kiln, and damages for its past operation.]

Earl, J. The plaintiffs owned about forty acres of land, situate in the village of Castleton, on the east bank of the Hudson River, and had owned it since about 1849. During the years 1857, 1858 and 1859, they built upon it an expensive dwelling-house, and during those years, and before and since, they improved the land by grading and terracing, building roads and walks through the same, and planting trees and shrubs, both ornamental and useful.

The defendant had for some years owned adjoining lands, which he has used as a brick-yard. The brick-yard is southerly of plaintiffs' dwelling-house about 1,320 feet, and southerly of their woods about 567 feet. In burning bricks the defendant made use of anthracite coal. During the burning of a kiln sulphuric acid gas is generated, which is destructive to some kinds of trees and vines. The evidence shows and the referee found, that gas coming from the defendant's kiln had, during the years 1869 and 1870, killed the foliage on plaintiffs' white and yellow pines and Norway spruce, and had, after repeated attacks, killed and destroyed from 100 to 150 valuable pine and spruce trees, and had injured their grape vines and plum trees, and he estimated plaintiffs' damages from the gas during those years at \$500. * * *

Within the rules thus referred to, that defendant's brick burning was a nuisance to plaintiffs cannot be doubted.

It matters not that the brick-yard was used before plaintiffs bought their lands or built their houses.*** One cannot erect a nuisance upon his land adjoining vacant lands owned by another and thus measurably control the uses to which his neighbor's land may in the

future be subjected. He may make a reasonable and lawful use of his land and thus cause his neighbor some inconvenience, and probably some damage which the law would regard as *damnum absque injuria*. But he cannot place upon his land any thing which the law would pronounce a nuisance, and thus compel his neighbor to leave his land vacant, or to use it in such way only as the neighboring nuisance will allow. * * *

The defendant claims a prescriptive right to burn bricks upon his land and to cause the poisonous vapors to flow over plaintiffs' lands. Assuming that the defendant could acquire by lapse of time and continuous use the prescriptive right which he claims, there has been a continuous use and exercise of the right for twenty consecutive years. Anthracite coal was first used for burning bricks in this yard in 1834, and after six years brick burning was discontinued. It was not resumed again until about 1853, and after four years it was again discontinued, and it was not resumed again until 1867. So that anthracite coal, which caused plaintiffs' damage, had not been used in all for twenty years and certainly not continuously in burning bricks upon the yard now owned by the defendant. If he could acquire the right claimed by prescription, he, and those under whom he holds, must for twenty years have caused the poisonous gases to flow over plaintiffs' land whenever they burned bricks and the wind blew from the direction of the kiln. Such a prescription neither the allegations in the answer nor the proofs upon the trial, nor the findings of the referee, warrant. * * *

It follows from these views that the judgment should be affirmed.

