

**THE BRONX COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



Journal

Volume I Number 1

January, 1964

THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JOURNAL

Volume I Number 1

January, 1964

EDITORIAL BOARD

Lloyd Ultan, Chairman

Theodore Kazimiroff

John McNamara

Copyright 1964 by The Bronx County Historical Society, Incorporated. THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL is published semi-annually in January and July by the Bronx County Historical Society, Incorporated. All correspondence should be addressed to 90B Edgewater Park, Bronx, N.Y. 10465. The JOURNAL and its editors disclaim responsibility for statements made by contributors.

OFFICERS OF THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

George J. Fluhr, President
Ray D. Kelly, First Vice President
Thomas J. Mullins, Second Vice President
Arthur Berliner, Recording Secretary
John McNamara, Corresponding Secretary
Arnold B. Joseph, Treasurer
Theodore Schliessman, Curator
George M. Zobelein, Historian
Theresa Lato, Trustee
Erich Marks, Trustee
Ronald Schliessman, Trustee
Elizabeth Seidenstein, Trustee

CONTENTS

A. LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT. 1

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS.. 2

THE BRONX: A STRUGGLE FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENT
George M. Zoebelen. 3

A. SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRONX COUNTY HISTOR-
ICAL SOCIETY
John McNamara. 25

I GREW UP WITH THE BRONX
Bert Sack. 29

The Bronx County Historical Society

This Society was founded in 1955 for the purpose of collecting and preserving manuscripts, books and historical objects connected with the history and growth of Bronx County and the heritage of its people, and to promote knowledge and interest in these fields.

The Society holds nine meetings a year featuring speakers each of whom specializes in certain phases of Bronx history. Each talk is enhanced by the use of films, color slides or exhibits.

Historical tours are made to all sections of our Borough by automobile, by foot, or by boat. In June of each year the Society holds a dinner in a location rich in Bronx history.

As the Society is not endowed, its only source of revenue is from its membership dues.

TO THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

Enclosed please find my check or money order in the amount of \$3.00 for annual membership. Please
\$100.00 for life membership. check
\$ 1.50 for students up to 16. one.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State..... Zip.....

Date.....

Please make check or money order payable to THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY and send to Treasurer, Arnold B. Joseph, 2512 Tratman Avenue, Bronx, New York 10461

Memberships start either June or December.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

On January 1, 1914, Bronx County began its formal existence. Today, on January 1, 1964, we of the Bronx County Historical Society celebrate this golden anniversary and, at the same time, commemorate it with the first issue of THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL.

Our society, dating from 1955, is comparatively young. So too is our county young - the youngest, in fact, in the state. But, both county and society were born to a great tradition. The county fell heir to the memories of men like Archer, Morris, and Pell, Drake, Poe, and Savage, Montgomery, Lafayette, and Farragut. The society fell heir to the works of men like Bolton, Jenkins, and Comfort.

For fifty years, Bronx County has built on its traditions, adding thousands of its citizens to the ranks of leadership in government, art, business, and science. And, since its inception, the Bronx County Historical Society has, through archeology and research, built on the foundations of early historians.

It is indeed fitting that the society has chosen this Golden Year for the initiation of a regular Journal. Young and growing, and proud of the past, both our Historical Society and our County look to the future. We of the Bronx County Historical Society are proud to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Bronx County with the first issue of our Journal. We look forward to the research and recording not only of our county's past but also of its history yet to be made.

George J. Fluhr
President

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL was founded to chronicle and interpret the political, economic, and social history of Bronx County. That history has been impressive indeed. In four centuries, the Bronx has changed from an area of virgin forest to a part of the urban complex of Greater New York City. Its population through the years has included the names of Van Cortlandt, Morris, Poe, Flynn, Morgenthau, and U Thant. Its institutions vary from the seven colleges and universities which make the county their home to the world famous Bronx Zoo. The stories of all these, as well as countless other changes, people, institutions, and landmarks which make up the history of the Bronx will now have a chance to be told.

This, then, is the reason for founding THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL. We hope that the articles published here will spur others to deepen and broaden their knowledge of the Bronx and its people through research. It is in the interest of such research that the source material for these articles are cited. Book reviews are planned for the future; and an index will appear in the July issue.

We wish to thank all those whose constant encouragement and suggestions contributed toward changing THE BRONX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL from an idea into a reality. Among them we must name our late President Fred E. J. Kracke, the present President George J. Fluhr, George Dohmann, Dominic R. Massaro, and those authors who readily responded to our appeals for articles.

Lloyd Ultan
Theodore Kazimiroff
John McNamara

Editors

THE BRONX: A STRUGGLE FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

George M. Zoebelen

To most, Bronx County came into existence only fifty years ago. According to legislative statutes, this is true. However, the background of this political subdivision shows that its county experience is not that recent.

While a Bronx County never existed before the twentieth century, this does not mean that the area was aloof from county functions in the past. In fact, its role as a center for such operations can give testimony that a "Bronx County" did previously exist. So instead of a mere struggle to establish a unit which ultimately became the sixty-second and last county to be created in the State of New York, the struggle for county government was an unrecognized movement to regain what previously had been lost. This, then, is the reason for Bronx County - a return to home rule.

On October 17, 1683, the town of Westchester was designated the county seat of the newly created county of Westchester, one of the ten original counties of New York.¹ The Governor approved this choice on November 1, 1683.² On November 9, 1683, Benjamin Collier was appointed the first high sheriff. However, the County Court did not begin to function until 1688 when John Pell became the first judge.³ The county courthouse was undoubtedly built shortly thereafter at a site that is immediately behind the present Sunday School building of St. Peter's Church (east of Westchester Avenue, just south of St. Peters Avenue).⁴ Court was held the first Tuesday of June and of December to hear civil cases and on the first Wednesday of each December to hear criminal cases.⁵ Thus it was at this site that county government was first established in the Bronx.

As a local seat of government, the town grew in size and importance. One of the factors for this growth was as capital of the county, it held an open and public market every week and a county fair twice a year.⁶ A most singular honor was bestowed on Westchester when it was incorporated as a borough on April 16, 1696, the only other borough-town in the entire colony being Schenectady.⁷ This status entitled the town to have a mayor and aldermen and representation in the Colonial Assembly in New York.⁸ The first representative from the borough-town of Westchester was County Court Judge John Pell.⁹ As a borough-town, Westchester held a Mayor's Court on the first Tuesday of every month to hear all cases involving amounts not exceeding twenty pounds.¹⁰ The first Mayor and judge of this court was Caleb Heathcote.¹¹ A town hall was to be built to house this court as early as March 31, 1697, but it was not erected until November, 1700. The structure was built near the County courthouse and, in addition to housing the Mayor's Court, it also served as the first St. Peter's Church.¹²

The county seat remained at Westchester for seventy-six years. On Saturday, February 4, 1758, the courthouse was destroyed by fire of unknown origin.¹³ Although a new courthouse was built at the same location, an act passed the Legislature of December 16, 1758 which compelled the aldermen to select a new site.¹⁴ Because of the shifting population within the county, the necessity of selecting a more central location was to be taken into consideration.¹⁵ The capital of the county was finally transferred to White Plains on November 6, 1759, and this inaugurated a new era for the Bronx - one in which it would be without a county seat for the next century and a half.¹⁶

It was not until January 1, 1898 that the entire area north of the Harlem River annexed by a growing New York City officially became known for the first time as the Borough of the Bronx. The Commissioner of Street Improvements, an officer elected by the previously annexed area west of the Bronx River, was replaced by a Borough President.¹⁷ Louis F. Haffen, the incumbent Commissioner, with the help of a strong political machine which he had built up, was elected to continue in office in this new capacity.¹⁸ Under the new City Charter, however, there was no borough autonomy. The Borough President was merely a figurehead.¹⁹ The legislative and congressional districts continued as if the area east of the Bronx River were still part of old Westchester County.²⁰

It immediately became apparent that the new City Charter did not grant home rule, and a true county status for the Bronx was freely and seriously discussed for the first time.²¹ The first published material to suggest that the Borough of the Bronx become a separate county was in a letter to John Davis, which was published in the North Side News in 1898 or 1899. The suggestion was brought about by the fact that a lower Bronx assembly district was bisected by the Harlem River. Many clashes for leadership were fought by the Bronx and Manhattan segments of this district. It was felt that the problem could be solved only by the erection of a separate Bronx County, since assembly districts had to be confined within a county. Consequently, the first Bronx County bill was introduced in the Legislature in 1900 by Senator Richard H. Mitchell and Assemblyman William E. Morris. The bill subsequently died in committee.²²

In the next two years, no bill was

submitted to create a Bronx County, the only support for one coming from the North Side News.²³ This idea was overshadowed by the fight for a new City Charter which would decentralize governmental operations within the city. The Taxpayers Alliance, a band of six groups representing thirty-seven organizations, and Borough President Haffen, a prominent civil engineer, who was also a staunch advocate of "Home Rule of Local Improvements," led the fight to a victorious conclusion. The new charter became effective on January 1, 1902.²⁴

This new "independence" for the Bronx coincided with the beginning of the Bronx Bar Association in 1902. A year later, interest in creating a Bronx County again began in earnest. The Bronx Bar Association almost unanimously adopted a resolution favoring a Bronx County bill.²⁵ The great increase in population, the erection of numerous buildings, and the resulting transfer of property and other matters relating to real estate became so heavy that a commission was appointed by the North Side Board of Trade to bring before the Legislature a bill to form a new county to be called Bronx County.²⁶

In the same year, H. Gerald Chapin, a staff writer for the North Side News, gave a talk before the North Side Board of Trade, which seemed to rekindle an interest in a Bronx County. He indicated that he wanted the proposed county to include Mount Vernon, Yonkers, and New Rochelle. He said that these cities were against the measure because they were fearful of being denied a voice in a bigger city. Eventually if these areas were not part of a Bronx County, when they would become built up, one side of the street would be in the Bronx and the other in Mount Vernon, he warned. Chapin pointed out that

the fees paid by the Bronx to New York County were ample to run a separate county. Thereafter, a resolution was adopted by the Board of Trade calling for a Bronx County, and citing as its reasons the natural geographical boundaries of the Bronx and the numerous delays in court cases in Manhattan.²⁷

On January 25, 1904, a bill calling for a Bronx County was introduced by Senator John A. Hawkins.²⁸ Two days later, Albert E. Davis, President of the North Side Board of Trade, called for its passage, but the bill was doomed to die in committee.²⁹ Thereafter, a Bronx County bill was introduced each year in the Legislature until it passed and became law.³⁰ There were numerous reasons why such a bill did not pass in the immediately ensuing years. The earliest and greatest handicap to a new county was that the public thought that a new city or other new government would arise apart from New York City.³¹ It was also thought that Tammany Hall was using its influence to prevent such a bill from passing because the establishment of a county would mean a loss of power for that organization in the area.³²

Active support for the erection of the Borough of the Bronx into a separate county was given by the Bar Association in 1905.³³ They supported a measure which was introduced by Senator Hawkins and Assemblyman Everett on March 11, 1905 at the request of the Association of the Bronx, the Taxpayers Alliance, and the Twenty-third Ward Property Owners Association. These groups pointed out that the Bronx was the only borough of the city that was not a county, although it exceeded the combined population of Queens and Richmond and had real and personal property twice as great as that of Queens. They emphasized that any court action involving

amounts over \$500, the trying of any criminal case, and the recording of all deeds had to be done in Manhattan.³⁴ On April 15, a delegation spoke in favor of the bill before the Judiciary Committee. The bill was reported out the next day only to be recommitted and consigned to its usual death.³⁵ Some people speaking against the bill contended that with the coming of the rapid transit subway, travel to Manhattan would no longer be an inconvenience. Nevertheless, weighing everything, there appeared to be no strong argument against creating a Bronx County except that in political matters it might ally itself with Brooklyn to the detriment of Tammany Hall.³⁶

The Bronx Bar Association had made moderate advances in improving the Bronx and in arousing self-interest in the area. One significant contribution that it had helped to achieve was the erection of a new courthouse at Third Avenue and 161 Street, which was built with the view that it would some day house the County Court.³⁷ Within the Bronx itself, the Bronx County proposal was not a political question; not one civic group was opposed to the idea at that time. It was thought that the Democrats were solidly in favor of the county proposal and that even the Republicans were not opposed to having a Bronx County, since J. Homer Hildreth, President of the Bronx Bar Association and a leading Republican, was laboring zealously, persistently, and effectively, for the county idea.³⁸

If any significant opposition was found, it could be traced to only a few Republican leaders. Local Republican opposition was this weak because the idea was put forth to include Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, and Yonkers in the new county in

order to achieve an equal number of Republican and Democratic voters.³⁹ In fact, it was a common thought that the various railroad lines would compel these and other cities, including Tarrytown, White Plains, and Port Chester, to become part of the Bronx and to rival Manhattan in greatness.⁴⁰ However, one popular prejudice against forming a county was that real estate interests would be injured; it was believed that it would probably be more difficult to get loans on good property. This suggestion was ridiculed by Adolph C. Hottenroth, President of the Taxpayers Alliance. Politicians outside of the Bronx also became envious of Borough President Haffen's success in contributing to the growth of business and public improvements in the borough.⁴¹

On February 22, 1906, Assemblyman John B. Cohalan introduced a Bronx County bill. There was much interest aroused in the bill that year. However, it died, as did similar bills introduced by Assemblyman George M. S. Schulz in 1907 and in 1908. Delegations went to Albany in support of the 1907-08 measures, but to no avail. All this time, however, the Bronx Bar Association gave out leaflets to property owners and civic bodies explaining why a separate county was needed.⁴² It was generally conceded that Republican legislators refused to create a Bronx County, not because they were against the idea, but because the act would create a new Democratic county, and the Republicans thought that the Democratic counties in the State were too numerous already.⁴³

In 1909, George M. S. Schulz, now a Senator, again introduced a Bronx County bill. Instead of the Republicans being

charged with its defeat, this time the Manhattan Tammany organization was blamed.

In the summer of 1909, the sixteen year reign of Louis Haffen came to an abrupt end. The Borough President was removed from office by Governor Charles E. Hughes. Haffen's political enemies made charges that started investigations of his office. Many thought that these charges were flimsy and based on falsehoods. Nevertheless, Haffen was removed for inefficiency and extravagance after the Governor's special commissioner had uncovered scandals in the borough government.⁴⁴ Some of the incidents cited included the new courthouse, which cost four times as much as the original appropriation and had an architect so incompetent that another had to be hired before the plans were approved; the building of the Grand Concourse, which took six years to build instead of the one thousand days specified; and the laying out of irregular streets to aid Tammany land owners.⁴⁵ Haffen defended his actions by stating that Bronxites knew by experience that home rule was far more economical and efficient than centralized municipal governmental operations by separate departments.⁴⁶

The actions that occurred during the election campaign of 1909 had an important bearing on the future of the Bronx County bill. Instead of retiring from politics, Haffen, with the backing of the Manhattan Tammany organization, ran again for the borough presidency. In fact, one Bronx realtor, who resided elsewhere, wanted to regain the good business climate that he had under Haffen and staked him to a \$50,000 campaign fund.⁴⁷ The outcome of the election was that enough Tammany votes were split between Haffen and the regular Bronx Democratic contender, Alderman Arthur Murphy,

who was the leader of the Twenty-third District, to give the election to the independent Democrat, Cyrus C. Miller. Miller won by a majority of 3,091 votes over Murphy. A coalition of Republican and independent Democrats won all the posts for Alderman in the Bronx.⁴⁸

The Bronx County bill was again filed by Senator Schulz in 1910 and eventually suffered the same fate as had all such previous bills. One factor in this result was that Charles Murphy, the head of Tammany, now refused to approve a new county.⁴⁹ More important was the discontent of the Bronx leaders with Murphy's political machine which had sacrificed the regular Democrats in supporting Haffen in a losing bid. The discontent was so great that the district leaders were making independent decisions and that Eugene McGuire and Arthur Murphy, both district leaders, refused a suggestion from Tammany to nominate a wealthy Manhattanite to run for Congress, although a \$20,000 campaign fund was offered in his behalf. Furthermore, Eugene McGuire was still irritated over the fact that Charles Murphy did not give him a spot on the New York County ticket. To add to the confusion, the Tammany organization was more interested in trying to get a Democrat elected Governor. Thus, patronage given to Bronx Democrats fell to an all time low.⁵⁰

The year 1911 saw the Democrats take control of the State government.⁵¹ Senator Stephen J. Stilwell, a Bronx Democrat, had the honor of introducing the bill that year.⁵² Excitement ran high with the feeling that the Bronx County bill would finally pass and much public interest was aroused in favor of its passage. The general belief was that the Republicans feared a new Democratic county

and thus opposed it. However, the Republicans in the Assembly were in favor of the bill that year.⁵³ Nevertheless, the measure was finally killed on June 21, 1911 when Senator Stilwell withdrew it and joined in a bipartisan filibuster against it. He had lost interest in it a month previously when a referendum amendment was attached to the bill. He had said publicly that such a referendum would show Bronx support for separation from New York County, but that he had withdrawn the bill because it had no chance to pass. Privately, it seems that he had made a deal with Tammany to receive favors in return for its withdrawal. This was indicated by the fact that the other bills of both Senators from the Bronx, Stilwell and Griffin, had been passing smoothly through the Senate.⁵⁴

The district leaders were restless in the Bronx that year. Arthur H. Murphy and other Bronx district leaders resigned from Tammany Hall. Charles Murphy believed that the effect of these resignations would blow over, but his followers were fearful because these leaders were responsible for the large majorities in the Democratic column in the past. As for the Bronx Democrats, they felt that Charles Murphy's grip on the Bronx could be broken only by crushing him at the polls.⁵⁵ Although Tammany won by a narrow margin in the City that November, its leader's eyes were opened by the election of four Republican Assemblymen and all but one of the Republican candidates for Alderman in the Bronx.⁵⁶

Now feeling strong as a result of the blow they had struck "Downtown Tammany," the Bronx Democratic leaders were frank about those opposed to a Bronx County. They said that Charles Murphy seemed to think that a separate county was a good thing until the

American Real Estate Company, Henry Morgenthau, and George Johnson went to see the Tammany leader and told him that they were opposed to it. Thus, the Bronx leaders argued, these large realtors had more influence than Bronxites. They said that this had caused them so much humiliation that they had resigned from Tammany Hall. They admitted that Murphy might have feared that the area would get beyond his control and that this might have been one of the reasons for his opposition. However, they asserted that if it had not been for the opposition of the real estate dealers, Murphy would have been in favor of a Bronx County.⁵⁷

After the election of 1911, the citizens of the Bronx made preparations to make sure that a Bronx County bill would be enacted at the 1912 session of the Legislature. Thus, on November 16, 1911, the Bronx Democratic district leaders held a conference at the home of Representative Ayres in Riverdale to discuss the formation of a separate county. The meeting, which was the first without downtown Democrats, produced pledges of support for the Bronx County bill. In addition to choosing the motto, "Bronx for the Bronx," they were careful to point out that the fees paid by Bronx residents to New York County would amply cover the cost of a new county government.⁵⁸

On December 6, 1911, three hundred civic groups were represented at a meeting at the Bronx Church House, 171 Street and Fulton Avenue, to discuss the movement to establish a proposed new county. This meeting was necessary because the work became too great for the Bronx Bar Association's Bronx County Committee to handle alone. Businessmen and people in political office attended, including George M. S. Schulz who suggested the formation of a "Committee of 150."

Another convention was held on December 14 at Niblo's Garden, a popular watering spot at Third Avenue and 170 Street. There, citizens representing various geographical areas of the borough were picked to serve on the Committee of 150, or, as it was sometimes known, the Bronx County Committee. The Committee was formally organized on January 24, 1912 at a meeting held in the Y.W.H.A. building at 165 Street and Boston Road. Henry K. Davis, who had headed the Bar Association's Bronx County Committee since 1905, was chosen chairman. The function of the Committee was to carry on the fight, draft legislation, and arrange for further public demonstrations in support of a Bronx County bill.⁵⁹

As the legislative session opened on January 3, 1912, the Bronx County bill was introduced by Senator Stilwell. This time, he was joined by Assemblyman Morris Schector, a Bronx Republican. There were high hopes for its passage. However, there was a rumor that Tammany leader Murphy made a deal with Assembly Republicans to kill it, although Murphy had publicly announced that he was in favor of the creation of a county. Senator Stilwell, by his subsequent actions, practically confirmed this rumor.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the Bronx County Committee began to rally support for the measure by contacting all social, church, trade, labor, and fraternal groups throughout the borough.⁶¹

Meanwhile, another Bronx County bill calling for a referendum by Bronx voters was introduced on January 23, 1912 by Assemblyman John Yule and Senator Josiah T. Newcomb from Manhattan. A hearing was scheduled before the Joint Committee on Internal Affairs at the same time, and Senator Stilwell predicted that half of the voters in the

Bronx would come to Albany to attend the hearing. It seemed that upstate Republicans would support any of these Bronx County bills, since either would prevent a shift in control of the Republican Westchester County to New York City, and it was felt that a Bronx County could be kept under the control of Westchester.⁶²

Real estate men, particularly those in the North Side Board of Trade opposed the bill. In fact, Clarence H. Kelsey, President of the Title Guarantee and Trust Company, said that larger offices and more money for furniture and clerical work would be needed if it passed. Julius T. Tobias, one of the prominent men to first advocate a separate county said that the Bronx was dominated by Tammany Hall and by realtors, some of whom did not even live in the Bronx.

On February 13, the meeting of the Internal Affairs Committee was held. For the occasion, a train was chartered, and 450 people wearing white silk badges encribed "Home Rule and Bronx County" arrived in Albany. Capitol reporters termed it the largest and best appearing group in years.⁶³ A list of speakers was heard and a convincing closing argument was given by Louis O. Van Doren, a prominent Bronx lawyer. The opponents of the bill numbered about twenty people.⁶⁴

An amendment calling for a referendum in the Borough of the Bronx was tacked onto the Stilwell bill on February 28 by opponents of a Bronx County to make the bill unconstitutional, thereby nullifying the whole measure. It was agreed that this maneuver represented a compromise between Stilwell and Tammany Hall. Tammany would now support the bill. Senate majority leader, Robert F. Wagner, attempted to have the referendum apply to all of New York County, but he

finally accepted a Bronx-only vote.⁶⁵ An official Bronx flag was adopted on March 1 by Borough President Miller, but whether this action helped the passage of the Bronx County bill is questionable.⁶⁶ The bill finally passed the Senate by a vote of 34 to 6 on March 13, and the Assembly on March 20 by a vote of 106 to 6. Some legislators who voted for the bill were still opposed to it, but consented to an expression of the will of the people of the Bronx in the referendum. In fact, the reason why the Republicans voted for the bill was because the new county would not begin to operate until 1914. The feeling prevailed among them that the Democrats would win at the polls in 1912.⁶⁷ The Democratic and Republican County Committees of New York were both opposed to the bill and presented their side to the voters.⁶⁸

In early April, a hearing on the bill was held by the Governor, and was attended by opponents of the bill, and by a small representative group of the Committee of 150, including Senators Stilwell and Griffin.⁶⁹ On April 19, 1912 the Bronx County bill, which included the referendum of dubious legality, was finally signed by Governor John A. Dix.⁷⁰

The months before the referendum was to be held saw both sides wage a vigorous battle. Proponents for a Bronx County contacted property owners to assure them that no new taxes would arise from a separate county. Opponents started to hold frantic demonstrations and give harrowing pictures of bankruptcy. These people declared seriously that the cost of county administration would be so great that a county tax would be established, and that it would be a crushing burden on the people so that homes would have to be sold to pay taxes. However, the

upcoming United States presidential election and the talk about tariff revision and currency reform overshadowed interest in the Bronx County question.⁷¹

On November 5, 1912, Bronx voters went to the polls to answer the question, "Shall the territory within the Borough of the Bronx be erected into the County of Bronx?"⁷² The voters answered "yes" by 38,872 to 28,274.⁷³ The first Bronx County position was filled on January 1, 1913, when John A. Mason was appointed Commissioner of Jurors by Governor William Sulzer.⁷⁴

However, there was still another hurdle to be cleared before the Bronx as a county could legally exist. About two months after Governor Dix signed the Bronx County Act, Joseph J. McKenna was alleged to have strangled to death a young girl, Sigfrid Eckstrom, on June 6, 1912. The case was tried before Judge Rosalsky in the Court of General Sessions, the county court of New York County, and subsequently, McKenna was convicted of murder on October 25, 1912.⁷⁵ Justice Seabury sitting in Special Term upheld the conviction.⁷⁶ The case was finally presented to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, where it was argued that McKenna should have been indicted by a grand jury in Bronx County. This court again upheld the murder verdict, but the majority opinion delivered by Presiding Justice Ingraham on January 18, 1913 also stated that the irregular method of selecting county officers in the Bronx, which obliged them to serve two distinct counties until January 1, 1914, made the whole Bronx County Act inoperative.⁷⁷

Immediately, there was a call for the passage of a new Bronx County bill. However, the New York Times praised the decision of the Appellate Division. It called the bill "highhanded" and said that the Legislature

had not only blundered, but had passed a bill unwise in principle. Furthermore, it favored the Citizens Union plan to consolidate all the counties of New York City into one, and indicated that an expensive plan of segregation favored only a cabal of politicians who wanted offices, and politically favored contractors who would erect public buildings.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Senator Stilwell filed another Bronx County bill on January 27, 1913.⁷⁹

The McKenna case was entered in the Court of Appeals on January 17, 1913, and argued on February 6. The arguments revolved around whether people of a restricted locality could determine whether a law should become operative. Attorney Louis O. Van Doren defended this proposition.⁸⁰ Justice Hiscock, writing the majority opinion, stated on March 14, 1913 that the Legislature did not err, and had the power to pass a bill providing for a referendum on the measure.⁸¹ Bronx Borough President Miller expressed his disappointment at the decision by stating that the new county would only aid Tammany by creating new jobs and that more money would be spent needlessly.⁸² Immediately after the court's decision, the name of the "Association of the Bar of the Borough of the Bronx, in the City of New York" was changed to the "Association of the Bar of the County of Bronx, Incorporated."⁸³

Senator Stilwell, Father of the Bronx County Act, was accused in early April, 1913, by G. H. Kindall, President of the New York Bank Note Company, of demanding a bribe in order to get a bill affecting the New York Stock Exchange, with whom Kindall had a feud, on the Senate floor.⁸⁴ Stilwell was tried by the Senate and received a lukewarm exoneration.⁸⁵ However, he was brought before Civil Court, and on May 28, he was convicted. He

subsequently served two years in jail.⁸⁶

Each of the political parties jockeyed for position in order to claim the new county offices. District leader Eugene McGuire set up an organization to challenge Charles Murphy's hold on the Bronx. However, other Democrats wanted a younger, more liberal man to become Bronx County leader, and eventually Arthur H. Murphy was elected chairman.⁸⁷ Previously, Arthur Murphy was chosen by Tammany, but he had declined that nomination.⁸⁸ There was so much opposition to the Tammany machine that a Bronx Fusion ticket was formed among the Republican and Progressive (Bull Moose) Parties and the Bronx Jefferson Union and other independent groups. In the end, Douglas Mathewson, a Republican, won the borough presidency, defeating the Democrat, Richard K. Mitchell, by a vote of 34,691 to 25,992. The Bronx Fusionists won three of the four Assembly seats, and the Democrats won the other.⁸⁹

By an omission in the Bronx County Act, there was no provision for anyone to set up the various county offices. Therefore, the officers-elect had to do it themselves without explicit authority.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, on January 1, 1914, the County was inaugurated in the courthouse at 161 Street and Third Avenue. So, after a century and a half, a county seat was again established in the Bronx. Anyone who had any hand in finally creating Bronx County was there, except ex-Senator Stilwell who was still in jail. The first official county act was performed by Judge Louis D. Gibbs, who signed the bond of District Attorney Francis Martin. Some of the other officials in the new county were Surrogate George M. S. Schulz, Public Administrator Ernest E. L. Hammer, Sheriff J. F. O'Brien, County Clerk J. V. Ganley, and

Registrar Edward Polak. The first Grand Jury foreman was George B. Cortelyou, President of the Consolidated Gas Company.⁹¹

Lawyers were pleased with the new county because of the convenience of the new law courts. But some disadvantages also arose. Most lawyers had to keep two offices, their old one at City Hall, and a new one in the Bronx. Thus, it meant two court calendars, longer hours, appointment difficulties, and more expenses, but it was thought that these arrangements were to be temporary until Bronx clients knew the locations of the lawyers' new offices.⁹²

The Bronx has always been a unique county. It has never possessed any land or paid any salaries; both duties are performed by the City of New York. Yet Bronx County will always remain, for as Louis O. Van Doren said when dedicating the new County Court on January 6, 1914, "We read now and then of statements in the papers by certain persons to have counties abolished. They say these things either through ignorance of the history of our State or because of a profound distrust in the capacity of the American people for their own local self-government. Bronx County is established for all time."⁹³

NOTES

1 Frederick Shonnard and W.W. Spooner, History of Westchester County, New York (New York: The New York History Company, 1900), p. 198.

2 Robert Bolton, History of the County of Westchester (2 Volumes; New York: Jno. J. Cass, 1905). I, viii.

3 Shonnard and Spooner, p. 198.

4 Randall Comfort, Charles D. Steurer, and A.D. Meyerhoff, History of Bronx Borough (New York: North Side News Press, 1906),

p. 11.

- 5 Bolton, II, 298.
- 6 Ibid., II, 300.
- 7 Shonnard and Spooner, pp. 227, 230.
- 8 Stephen Jenkins, The Story of the Bronx: From the Purchase Made by the Dutch from the Indians in 1639 to the Present Day (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 396; Bolton, I, viii.
- 9 Bolton, I, xv.
- 10 Ibid., II, 312.
- 11 Ibid., II, 310.
- 12 Ibid., II, 318 - 319.
- 13 Ibid., II, 299.
- 14 Ibid.; J. Thomas Scharf, History of Westchester County, New York (2 Volumes; Philadelphia: L.E. Preston and Company, 1886), I, 644.
- 15 Scharf, I, 644.
- 16 Jenkins, p. 398.
- 17 Ernest E.L. Hammer to Joseph F. Periconi, President of the Borough of the Bronx, September 26, 1963, p. 1, now in the possession of the author; New York (State) Statutes, c. 378 L. 1897.
- 18 New York Evening Post, October 14, 1909, p. 1.
- 19 North Side News, Christmas Number, December 16, 1906, p. 13.
- 20 James L. Wells, Louis F. Haffen, Joseph A. Briggs, eds., The Bronx and Its People: A History 1904 - 1927 (3 Volumes; New York: The Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1927), I, 23.
- 21 New York Evening Post, April 13, 1905, p. 7.
- 22 Henry K. Davis, "History of Bronx County," North Side News, Bronx County Progress Section, May 17, 1914, p. 5.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 William Gill, The New North End - Bronx Borough (New York: Diagram Publishing

- Company, 1910), p. 22; North Side News, May 18, 1901, pp. 3, 27; Harry T. Cook, The Borough of the Bronx, 1639 - 1913: Its Marvelous Development and Historical Surroundings (New York: the author, 1913), p. 25.
- 25 Davis, p. 25.
- 26 Jenkins, pp. 9 - 10.
- 27 H. Gerald Chapin, Bronx Borough a Separate County (New York: North Side Board of Trade, November 25, 1903) pp. 4, 5, 11.
- 28 Davis, p. 9.
- 29 Address of Albert E. Davis, President of the North Side Board of Trade (New York: North Side Board of Trade, 1904).
- 30 Jenkins, p. 10.
- 31 Henry K. Davis, p. 6.
- 32 Jenkins, p. 10.
- 33 Henry K. Davis, p. 6.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 New York Evening Post, April 13, 1905, p. 7.
- 37 Interview with Ernest E.L. Hammer; Comfort, Steurer, and Meyerhoff, p. 174.
- 38 North Side News, December 16, 1906, p. 7.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid., June 30, 1907, p. 5.
- 41 Ibid., December 16, 1906, p. 13.
- 42 Henry K. Davis, pp. 6, 9.
- 43 Ibid., p. 9.
- 44 New York Evening Post, October 14, 1909, p. 1.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Louis F. Haffen, Borough of the Bronx (New York: the author, 1909?), p. 10.
- 47 New York Evening Post, February 10, 1912, p. 2.
- 48 Ibid., October 28, 1909, p. 9;
- July 23, 1910, p. 1.
- 49 New York Herald, November 8, 1911, p. 9; New York Evening Post, July 23, 1910, p. 1.
- 50 New York Evening Post, July 23,

- 1910, p. 1.
51 Henry K. Davis, p. 6.
52 New York Evening Post, June 21, 1911,
p. 2.
53 Henry K. Davis, p. 6; New York Evening Post, January 18, 1911, p. 14.
54 New York Evening Post, June 21, 1911,
p. 2.
55 Ibid., May 27, 1911, p. 1.
56 New York Herald, November 8, 1911,
p. 1.
57 New York Evening Post, November 10,
1911, p. 2.
58 Ibid., November 17, 1911, p. 1.
59 Ibid., December 6, 1911, p. 3; Henry
K. Davis, p. 9.
60 New York Evening Post, January 15,
1912, p. 16; January 18, 1912, p. 14.
61 Henry K. Davis, p. 6.
62 New York Evening Post, January 23,
1912, p. 2.
63 Henry K. Davis, p. 9.
64 Ibid., p. 6.
65 New York Evening Post, February 28,
1912, p. 1; Henry K. Davis, p. 9.
66 New York Evening Post, March 1,
1912, p. 14.
67 Ibid., February 10, 1912, p. 2;
March 13, 1912, p. 3; March 20, 1912, p. 1.
68 Ibid., March 20, 1912, p. 1.
69 Henry K. Davis, p. 7.
70 New York (State), Statutes, c. 548,
L. 1912.
71 Henry K. Davis, p. 6.
72 Cook, p. 32.
73 New York Evening Post, November 6,
1912, p. 3.
74 New York Times, January 18, 1913,
p. 22.
75 Ibid.; New York Evening Post,
March 14, 1913, p. 6.
76 Henry K. Davis, p. 8.
77 New York Times, January 18, 1913,
p. 22; New York Evening Post, March 14,

- 1913, p. 22.
78 New York Times, January 20, 1913,
- p. 10.
79 Ibid., January 28, 1913, p. 13.
80 New York, Appellate Division,
- v. 154, p. 558.
81 New York Evening Post, March 14,
1913, p. 6.
82 Ibid., p. 1.
83 Louis O. Van Doren, "The Bar
Association of Bronx County," North Side
News, Bronx County Progress Section, May 17,
1914, p. 50.
84 New York Evening Post, May 24,
1913, p. 1.
85 Ibid., May 8, 1913, p. 3.
86 Ernest E.L. Hammer to Joseph F.
Periconi, September 26, 1963, p. 1.
87 Ibid., p. 7.
88 New York Evening Post, May 30, 1913,
p. 6.
89 Ibid., November 5, 1913, p. 1.
90 Bronx Home News, December 4, 1913,
- p. 7.
91 North Side News, May 17, 1914,
pp. 13, 37, 42; Cook, p. 33.
92 Edward R. Kock, "What Bronx County
Means to Members of the Bar," North Side
News, Bronx County Progress Section, May 17,
1914, p. 100.
93 North Side News, May 17, 1914,
pp. 13 - 14.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRONX
COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

John McNamara

When, fifty years ago, the Bronx became a county in its own right, there was no such organization known as The Bronx County Historical Society. There were several civic-minded groups which acted in a quasi-historical capacity, however. The Bronx Beautiful Society designed a county flag. The Bronx Council of Arts and Sciences was active for many years, and commemorative tablets and dedications found all over the borough attest to its historical interests. Historian and Borough President Cyrus Miller was closely connected with such societies, but when his title of Bronx Historian passed to Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff, none of these organizations were left. Invariably, after a talk on Bronx history, the Doctor would be bombarded with questions, and a recurring one was, "Why doesn't the Bronx have a historical society?"

This question was also persistently asked of Bert Gumpert of The New York Post who, in his daily "Bronx Bandwagon" column showed an interest in local history. One day in September, 1955, journalist Gumpert wrote in his column, "Why is there no Bronx Historical Society?? There should be one! If one is not in existence one month from today, I shall start one."

October, 1955 came and no society had been established, so Bert Gumpert set about to start one. The New York Post columnist and a small group of about six others met in Dr. Kazimiroff's office and laid the groundwork for The Bronx County Historical Society. By word of mouth, and publicity in the "Bronx Bandwagon" column and in the "The Bronx in

History" column, written by Martin Gross of the weekly Bronx Press-Review, the first official meeting was advertised.

Interested Bronxites were invited to meet in the West Farms branch of the New York Public Library in November, 1955. There, bylaws, a constitution, and a charter of incorporation were hammered out in oftentimes stormy sessions and, precariously and stumblingly, the infant Society began to function. Fittingly, Dr. Kazimiroff was elected President, and the other offices were subsequently filled by enthusiastic and dedicated amateur historians. Bert Gumpert declined to hold office, but continued to lend his aid to the fledgling Society.

The handful of founders that met in Dr. Kazimiroff's office has grown through the years to 150 members. Soon after its early beginnings, the Society outgrew the public library at West Farms and in March, 1956, it transferred its meetings to the Bronx Reference Center off Fordham Road. Growing pains again forced the Society to migrate and, since December, 1961, through the courtesy of Reverend William Kalaidjian, it has used the hall of the Bedford Park Congregational Church for temporary headquarters.

In these years, many people helped make The Bronx County Historical Society an active and vital force in the community. Thus, the members were saddened in 1960 by the death of President Joe Duffy, who had succeeded Dr. Kazimiroff in office in 1958. His place was ably taken by Fred E. J. Kracke who, too, died in office in March, 1963. Vice President Ray Kelly finished Mr. Kracke's term until George Fluhr was elected to office in May, 1963. Two other active members have also passed on: Miss Coralie Doherty, a Trustee of the Society, whose records on the ancient town of Westchester

included those of her pre-Revolutionary ancestors, and Mr. Frederick Haacker, who had conducted fine research into local Revolutionary history.

Through the efforts of these and countless other people, the Society with its different activities has brought the varied richness of Bronx history to the attention of its members. Once a month, the Society hears a speaker on some aspect of the Bronx past. Obsolete transportation, such as horsecars, trolleys, and boats, was once detailed by Joe Duffy. Talks on Edgar Allan Poe, the Morris graveyard, Indian encampments and trails, Revolutionary battles, Gay Nineties beergardens, the village of Westchester, lost islands and inland canoe routes, exploratory "digs," and many more topics have been discussed through the years in which the Society has been active. Tape recordings of these talks are kept in the custody of Curator Theodore Schliessman.

The Society has also endeavored to have members present at all official ceremonies of groundbreaking, cornerstone-laying, bridge-opening, and other civic and military dedications. Taped recordings and photographs of the events have been kept, and are in the Society archives.

Tours afoot, in motorcade, and aboard ship have taken members of the Society to every sector of the Bronx. These trips included the visit to Hart Island, the "dig" near Spuyten Duyvil, where scores of Society members were instructed in the elementary techniques of excavating a Revolutionary War site, and the first chartered boat trip from City Island.

A phase of Bronx history was commemorated when, in November, 1960, the Society placed a new bronze tablet on Glover's Rock in Pelham Bay Park. Immediately afterward,

plans to mark the sites of Pell's purchase and of Howe's landing on Throgg's Neck were discussed, and the members hope they will see the fruition of these projects in the future.

An Anniversary Dinner is held each June at a historic spot, and this has become a tradition. The Society has dined at Crow Hill, Fort Number Eight Ox Meadow Point, and King's Bridge.

The goal of the Society is to have its own headquarters and the members hope to move into the borough's last remaining house of the Revolutionary period. Called variously the Valentine House, the Varian House, and the Valentine-Varian House, this weathered fieldstone home has a historic connection with the War of Independence and with General George Washington. Standing on the heights near Gun Hill Road, it would be a fitting meeting place for the Society, and an appropriate home for its archives, artifacts, and memorabilia. From such a location, The Bronx County Historical Society could build upon its foundations and, in the future, continue to educate and inform the people of the Bronx of the richness of their past.

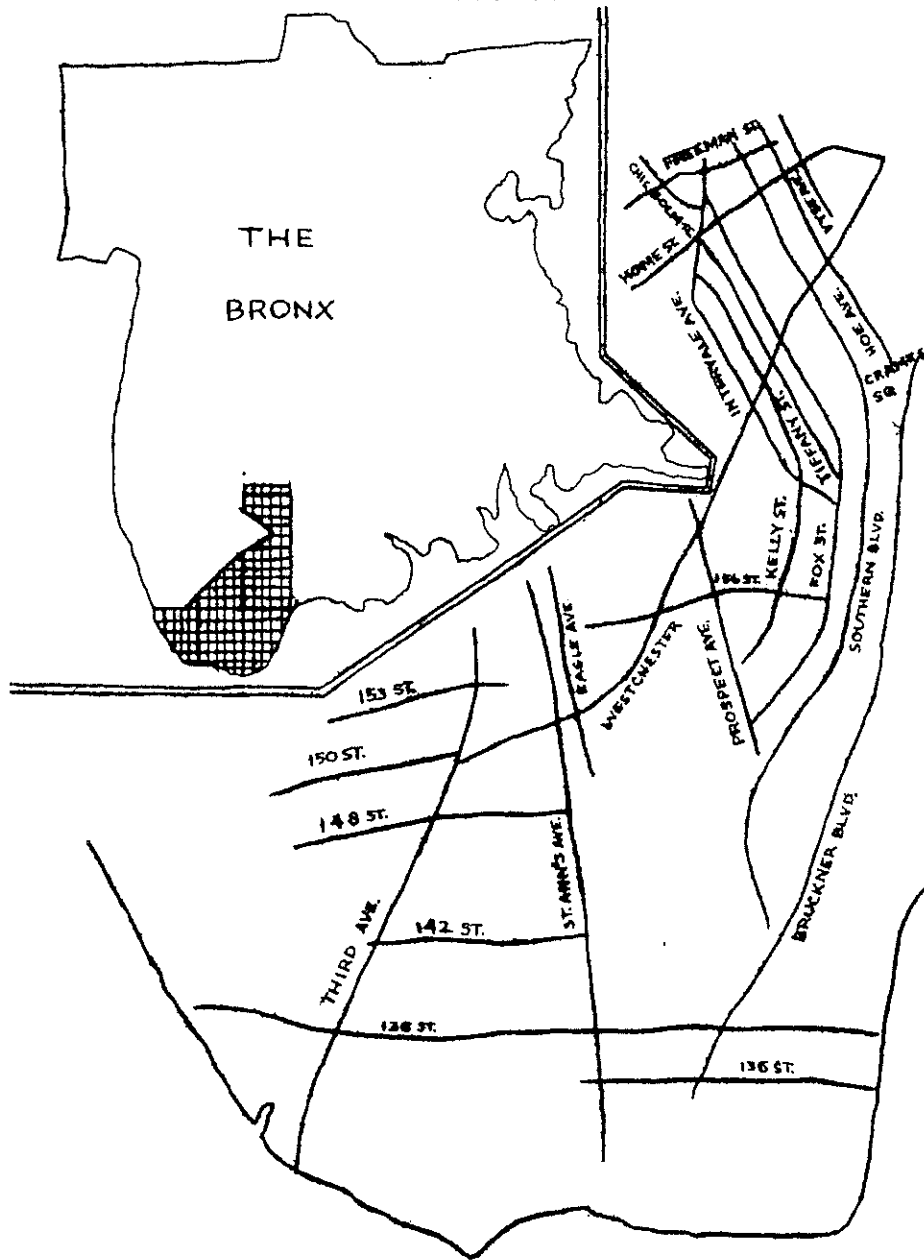
I GREW UP WITH THE BRONX

Bert Sack

The party was over, and the guests were putting on their gaiters and mufflers. My uncle went to get a lantern to light the way to the trolley car. Outside it was still, with only a dog's bark to break the silence of the night. This pastoral picture was not way out in the "sticks," but in the Bronx about the year 1900. It has been my good fortune to live through and witness the vast growth and changes in the Bronx since the early Nineteen-hundreds.

The good old days in the Bronx - what were they like? I was there, I saw, and I remember. Imagine walking ten blocks for an ice cream soda. I did. I had to walk from Fox Street to Zeman's at McKinley Square and to Steiner's bakery next door to it for cake for Sunday's company. We did have a bakery nearby on Home Street, run by Mr. Wilde, where rye bread was sold at four cents for a small and eight cents for a large loaf. I recall a day when my grandmother gave me a quarter to get milk down the street. The owner, by error, gave me twenty-five cents worth of milk instead of the quart I was supposed to get. My grandmother nearly raised the roof of the store because milk sold at about four cents a quart and she did not know what she would do with the five extra quarts.

The family shopping was done on Saturdays. We went down to Third Avenue, which in those days was already the Hub of the Bronx - with a difference. The main stores were located from 142 Street to 150 Street. There were Weisbart's and Roger's Department Stores, Hitchcock's Fish Market, Rafter's coffee and tea market, the Westchester Clothing Store, and Blackman's sporting good and stationery store. Fellows and Smith were on



THE BRONX OF BERT SACK

the site of the present Hearn's Store, and across the street was Lyons and Chabot Department Store. Fried's was up at about 153 Street. Furniture row, which included such stores as Guttags, Pisers, Fennels, and Baumans, was at 150 Street and Westchester Avenue.

Recreation was as simple in those days as transportation was difficult. A favorite pastime on a summer Sunday afternoon was to visit the neighbor's gardens. Besides the gardens, nearly all our neighbors had some kind of fruit trees, and when they ripened, we would swap fruit. Our back yard had two cherry trees, planted by my uncles. Our nearest neighbor, the Clemens, had a pear tree. Others had peach trees and grape arbors. The only theater I remember in those days was the Metropolis at 142 Street and Third Avenue, which ran a stock company. Oh yes, there was a penny arcade at about 148 Street and Third Avenue. The nearest vaudeville house was the Alhambra at 126 Street in Manhattan.

Transportation, while rugged, was cheap. The fare was, of course, five cents, and for three cents more, we received a transfer to the Third Avenue El. The original terminus of the El was at 129 Street, which was also the end of the line for most trolley routes in the Bronx. The original trolley lines, as I remember them, were the Boulevard (or Huckleberry) line; Westchester Avenue line; Boston Road line; Webster Avenue line; 161 Street line; Sedgwick Avenue line, which started at 161 Street and Third Avenue; and Tremont Avenue line. West Farms Square was the terminus of lines coming down from the North: the Mount Vernon, West Mount Vernon, White Plains Avenue, and Williams Bridge lines. Long before the auto, Bronxites took Sunday trips into the country by trolley car to such

places as Glen Island, Rye Beach, and Hudson Park. Some of these trips took hours and required many fares. A popular recreation spot for Bronxites was North Beach. In order to get there, we boarded a boat at Port Morris at about 136 Street and the East River.

A favorite sport today is skiing, but it cannot compare with riding down the hill on a toboggan on Fox Street at breakneck speed three blocks almost up to Freeman Street. The snow and ice brought fun, but also woes to us in those days. A heavy snow storm would not only slow up the trolley cars, but often would knock down the overhead wires, and no cars could run. The only way then to get home was to use "Shanks Mare" (our own two feet). Many the time during the winter our gas line would freeze up and my uncles would have to thaw it out. With all this, the clean, white snow and Jack Frost handiwork made the winter beautiful.

Another way for a family to enjoy the outdoors was to hire a surrey and drive up to Thwaites in City Island for shore dinner. Dinner must have been a lot cheaper then because we could afford to bring about eight of us in the carriage to Thwaites.

One of our neighbors, Mr. John De Hart, an architect who planned many of the local houses, including the one I was born in, had a pony cart with wicker back seats, and often took me for a ride. One Sunday, after he had just bought a steam car, he took me for my first auto ride. That was a real thrill. Mr. Gaffney, who later built about fifty small houses in our part of the Bronx, also got a steamer, and his and Mr. De Hart's were the only autos in the neighborhood for a long time.

While the lower Bronx around 138 Street

was well built up, our section was still rural. Prospect Avenue seemed to be the dividing line, though even there, there were many fine houses set back with large lawns. Coming down the hill from Prospect Avenue on the Westchester Avenue trolley, we could see farms stretching southward almost to 156 Street, and northward to Tiffany Street. Tiffany, Vyse, Fox, Hoe, Bristow, and Chisholm were all names taken from the many estates which were to the south and north of Westchester Avenue. Where the Loew's Boulevard theater now stands, I picked many sweet sickle pears. There were natural springs at the Hunts Point Avenue station of the New Haven Railroad. Later, a business-minded fellow put in a pipe and sold the water to the nearby families who sent their servant girls there with bottles each evening.

Another mode of travel in my early days was the stage coach. A day's picnic was spent at Hunt's Point by taking a coach at what is now Crames Square. We had our choice of going either to Barretto or Hunt's Points. Another coach went to Clason Point, starting about one block south of where the St. Lawrence subway station is now. A large stagecoach holding about forty left Westchester Square for Pelham Bay Park or for Lohbauers for clambakes.

Commercially in those days, the Bronx was the piano hub of the country. Centering around 138 Street were the factories of Pease, Waters, Newby and Evans, and many others. The brewing industry was well represented by many plants on St. Ann's Avenue, including Eblings and Hupfels; and up on Third Avenue between 168 and 169 Streets were Mayers, Eichlers, and others. Eblings used to age their beer in caves under Eagle Avenue.

When we thought of beer in those days, we also thought of beer gardens and picnic

grounds. There were many, including Hoffman's, Zeltner's at 170 Street and Third Avenue, one at 149 Street and St. Ann's Avenue, and another at Prospect Avenue and 167 Street.

When two of my aunts and an uncle first came to Fox Street, they had to walk across fields to get to P. S. 90 at 163 Street and Eagle Avenue because no streets had been laid out between Fox Street and the school. The principal then was Evander Childs, whose name is immortalized by the Evander Childs High School. My schooling started at P. S. 20 at 167 Street. The school was built at the request of the property owners of the neighborhood, who went down to the Board of Education in 1895 to ask for it. It was built in 1896, the year in which I was born. In my day, when there was a storm or bad weather, Miss Mary A. Curtis, the principal of P. S. 20, kept us in school till 2:30, instead of sending us home for lunch at twelve o'clock. I was lucky because my grandmother would come across the street from our house with a sandwich for me. The original building of P. S. 20 was only two stories high, but later, the first annex was added. I had the unique pleasure of speaking last year in the original assembly room of the school that I had attended nearly sixty years before. When the Bronx started to grow, a new school was built on Longwood Avenue; Mrs. Lichtenstein was the principal. The population was so small, the school opened practically without pupils.

All this rural atmosphere could not last forever. In 1903, I watched the building of the elevated structure of the subway on Southern Boulevard from our window on Fox Street. The next year, 1904, the subway started operating, but not in the Bronx. The terminus was at 145 Street and Lenox Avenue. In the meantime, the Second Avenue El came up by a spur at 149 Street as far as Freeman

Street. Finally, about 1905, through service was opened to Bronx Park by subway.

This was the beginning of the end of the Bronx as the home of farms and estates. The Tiffanys, Foxes, and all the other old families soon abandoned their homes. Many streets, such as Fox, Tiffany, and Kelly, which had ended at Westchester Avenue, were cut through to Intervale Avenue. A Sunday pastime then was the inspection of the new flats being built. One of the first was the pioneer at the northwest corner of Simpson Street and Westchester Avenue. The first real estate boom was started by the American Real Estate Company, who built at Westchester Avenue from Simpson Street to Southern Boulevard. They also built a large house at 163 Street between Fox and Simpson Streets. This was, for a long time, the only house on 163 Street from Intervale Avenue to Southern Boulevard. It did not take long before the rest of Simpson, Fox, Tiffany, and Kelly Streets were filled with flats. The change had started. Southern Boulevard, which had boasted of one building between Westchester Avenue and 163 Street, an annex for P. S. 20, soon became a market place.

The building boom also brought about an ethnic change. The first newcomers were German-American families. Soon, they were displaced by many Jewish families from Harlem. Following them came the Jewish people from the East Side. During World War II, another change started. The colored people and Spanish speaking folks came, and now the neighborhood is well mixed with all races and nationalities.

Gone today is the Hunts Point Oval, where I spent many a Sunday watching ball games, and even a Wild West Show. Gone is one of the most popular ball fields in the Bronx at the Catholic Protectory Grounds, where

Parkchester now stands. Gone are the rides and midway at Clason Point. Gone is the Clason Point Military Academy.

Recently, I rode up Bruckner Boulevard, and there, where years ago there was swamp and water to Westchester Avenue, is rising a new city of giant projects on land filled with refuse and garbage. Soon, that vast reclaimed area will be a new metropolis.

