TOWN OF
GUILDERLAND

TOUR GUIDE
of
HISTORIC SITES
and
LANDMARKS

PROSPICE GELRIA

Prepared by Guilderland Historical Society

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Preface

Use this booklet to guide you as you drive along the tour routes. Either end of the town may be used as a starting point. It is suggested that you read ahead so you will know what to watch for and recognize the things you see.

Except for existing State Historical Markers along the route, no other markers will be used. It is, therefore, important to read the descriptive material carefully. For additional information, read Town Historian Alice Begley's 1995 booklet, *Markers,* which details the historical background of each of the town's markers.

Select a passenger in the car to act as guide so the driver will be free to devote most of his or her time to driving. Since there are few pull-offs available, and slowly moving vehicles can become a hazard, we cannot overemphasize the use of extreme caution while driving, looking and/or parking or stopping.

The contents of this booklet originally were prepared as a Bicentennial project by the Guilderland Historical Society's founder and first president, Fred B. Abele, and has been revised and updated by a committee of the Historical Society.

Guilderland is rich in history. We trust this guide will increase your knowledge of the history and geography of the Town of Guilderland.

Introduction

If you start your tour at the eastern end of the town, entering from Albany, you will no doubt have traversed Western Avenue, Route 20. This highway was, from 1800 to 1906, the Great Western Turnpike, also known as the Cherry Valley Turnpike.

The Great Western Turnpike began at the point in the City of Albany where Western and Washington avenues meet in front of the Engine No. 1 firehouse — milepost 0.00.

The road was built and operated by a private company chartered in 1799 as the First Company of the Great Western Turnpike. Its revenue was derived from the tolls collected. Construction began in 1800 and the road was opened for most of its length in 1804. It was completed to Cherry Valley in 1805. It was planked in 1849 for 10.75 miles to Fullers at Fuller Station Road in the Town of Guilderland.

Immediately east of Allen Street in Albany, the Turnpike was crossed at grade from 1831 to 1844 by the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, first steam-powered common carrier railroad in the state. At this point, a historical marker is located on the south side of Western Avenue which reads, "Near here Mohawk and Hudson first railroad chartered in this country 1826 began its run Albany to Schenectady."

West of Manning Boulevard, at the intersection with Winthrop Avenue, stood Toll Gate No. 1. The residence portion of this gate was moved in 1907, when the Turnpike had closed, to a site on the corner of Lehner Road in Guilderland (adjacent to Crossgates Mall), west of McKownville Methodist Church. It still faces the same points of the compass.

The Town of Guilderland line is presently crossed at the entrance to the State University, mile 3.2 on the Great Western Turnpike.

If you start your tour from the Schenectady end of the town, or enter from Rotterdam, you will probably travel Route 146. This road is now known as Carman Road. It was originally known as the Fort Hunter Road. This road began at its intersection with the Old State Road, followed most of the present Route 146 alignment through Guilderland, and continued through South Schenectady and along the south side of the Mohawk River to Fort Hunter in Montgomery County, nearly 25 miles distant. It dates to the era of the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

On Route 146, just before you reach Greulich's Market, may be seen the roadbed of the Saratoga & Hudson Railroad which crosses on a skew. A power pole line now occupies the roadbed.

The Old State Road, from which the Fort Hunter Road diverged, crosses present Route 146. East of Route 146 on the Old State Road, nestled against the hill on the north side, once was the former Quackenbush Tavern, built before 1800.

If you enter Guilderland from Rotterdam on Route 158, you will pass the area once known as Parker's Corners, located where Route 158 intersects Old State Road. The Parker House*, circa 1830, is a large frame house with cupola standing on the south side of Old State Road, west of the intersection. There was once a Methodist church and one-room school in this area.

* Note that whenever you see an asterisk (*) with the name of a building, this indicates the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In Altamont, Main Street between Thacher Drive and the railroad station is designated a Historic District which contains 38 19th Century residences.

THE TOUR ROUTE

Begin tour on Western Avenue, Route 20, at the Albany City Line at the entrance to the University at Albany, State University of New York.

You are now on the Great Western Turnpike. Prior to the opening of this road, a wandering trail through the Pine Plains (a/k/a "Pine Bush"), known as the "King's Highway," was the only route through this area. At this point it passed a scant half mile to the northeast, running through the State University property behind the lake. This road was in use before the Schenectady Massacre took place in 1690. Beyond the hill, on the far side of the lake, stood the "Five Mile Tavern" on that road, "at the Kyl" (a branch of the Krumkill in the area now occupied by the Indian Quadrangle of SUNY Albany). That tavern was operated in the late 1700s, under lease, by the McKown family.

Proceed west on Route 20 — The hamlet is McKownville

Proceeding west on the same side (north) is an old farmhouse at 1245 Western Avenue, built in the early 1840s. It was the home of James F. McKown, McKownville's first postmaster.

At the first traffic light after the SUNY entrance

The road to the left, McKown Road, beside the Passonno Paint Co., led to the site of the home of John McKown, built circa 1800 and demolished in 1970. John McKown, who died in 1809, owned a large tract of land which reached to the Normans Kill. There was a Victorian house built by a descendant, also John McKown, in the 1880s. A "twin" house stood on the site of the paint store until 1986.

At the third traffic light

Opposite Fuller Road, on the southwest side of Route 20, stood the tavern of William "Billy" McKown. *(See illustration 1.)* It was built in 1796 and burned in 1917. The site is now occupied by a Burger King. In anticipation of the building of the turnpike, William McKown erected this tavern and subsequently leased land to the Turnpike Company to pass before it. Around the tavern grew the Hamlet of McKownville. "Billy" McKown served as Town Supervisor from 1813 to 1824. He built a water system for the tavern and its buildings by damming the adjacent Krumkill, using hollow logs for a distribution system. The tavern served as the Post Office for McKownville which existed from 1862 to 1905.

At the entrance to Stuyvesant Plaza

Here stood the four mile marker on the Great Western Turnpike, opposite present Christ Lutheran Church.

At the next traffic light — Schoolhouse Road goes left

On the southeast corner stood the McKownville District School No. 11 (1875-1953). The land for this brick schoolhouse was donated by John McKown. Presently this is the site of a bank.

Pass the Northway entrance — beyond on your right

The church with the steeple is the McKownville Methodist, second structure built in 1896, superseding an 1866 building, now removed. A newer modern structure has been erected on the west side. The 1896 building was built on land donated by John McKown. Next to the church

Illustration 1. Erected in 1796, the McKown Tavern stood at the edge of the Great Western Turnpike (Route 20) opposite Fuller Road. Innkeeper "Billy" McKown was known as a genial, well-liked and well-thought-of man and his tavern was a popular stopping place for stage-coaches and travelers going west and drovers bringing livestock and fowls east to the Albany markets.

stood a blacksmith's shop, a hotel and several dwellings. Harrington's Ice House stood at the pond behind the church.

Opposite the Crossgates Mall entrance

There is a large Jewish cemetery which contains several sections established by Albany synagogues and the Hebrew Tailors' Society in the 19th Century.

At Lehner Road, on the right

The road is identified to the right of Wendy's. The white frame house on the east of Lehner Road was the living quarters for former Toll Gate No. 1, moved here in 1907, using many teams of horses.

Continue west on Route 20

Pass through Guilderland's fast-growing hamlet, "Westmere." Its fire department, on the right, was organized in 1935.

Beyond Price Chopper and a dip in the road, on the left, at Mile 6.3 on the Turnpike, stood Toll Gate No. 2. Its site is now the entrance to the Highwood Village Apartments.

Near the northeast corner of the intersection of Routes 20 and 155 (State Farm Road) once stood a large tavern, circa 1830-1914, which ended its days as the Elmgrove Hotel.

Pass the Twenty Mall

Climbing out of the dip on Route 20, on the left the large frame building in need of paint is the former Jackson Tavern. Built in the early 1800s, it is the largest remaining tavern building along the pike in this town.

Beyond and on the right is a cobblestone vault* belonging to Prospect Hill Cemetery, one of five known cobblestone masonry buildings which existed in the Town of Guilderland. Four are still standing: two schools, two vaults. This one was built in 1863.

Prospect Hill Cemetery, on the right up the hill, contains the graves of many early Guilderland families.

On the right — beyond the cemetery and Guilderland Elementary School

The majestic house on the hill was the home of J.P. Veeder, reputedly built in 1842 and identified as "Rose Hill" on maps dating back to 1854*. The grassy mound on its left is said to house a brick-lined cistern.

On the left

Just beyond, a state marker indicates the site of "Redmen's Hall," which served over the years as a Baptist Church, Catholic Church, Temperance Hall, Redmen's Hall, and polling place. *(See illustration 2.)*

Illustration 2. For 136 years, travelers along the Western Turnpike (Route 20) passed Redmen's Hall. Built originally in 1809 as a Baptist church, it served at various times as St. Ambrose's Catholic Church, a temperance hall, the fraternal order of Redmen's Hall, and a community center. It burned in 1967.

On the right

Opposite, on the east bank of the Hunger Kill, stands the original parsonage of the Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church*, which was built in 1857 and is now a private residence.

Along the bank of this stream are the remnants of an old road, believed to be the original road to Schoharie. In 1712 the Palatines crossed here on their way to Schoharie.

Beyond the stream is the Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church. The present edifice was constructed in 1888 on the foundation of its predecessor.

Within the area of the church's parking lot stood the original octagon-shaped building which served as a church and school. It was constructed in 1797 by the Glass Factory as part of its planned village.

On the corner of Route 20 and Schoolcraft Street is the Gothic Revival-style Schoolcraft Mansion*. It was built circa 1835 by John Schoolcraft, president of the Commercial Bank of Albany, and owned by him until 1850. In 1994, the Town of Guilderland acquired this historic house.

On the left

Opposite the mansion of John Schoolcraft stood the Sloan Hotel, built in the 1840s and burned in 1899. It was once a famous eating place.

On the right

The brick building on the corner of Schoolcraft Street, built in 1849, was a wagon and carriage shop owned by the Batterman family, prominent in local and county government.

You are in the center of the planned village built by the Glass Works which was located in the Hunger Kill Valley. Begun in the 1790s, the village was called "Hamilton" in honor of Alexander Hamilton.

At the traffic light at Willow Street and Foundry Road

Foundry Road on the left and Willow Street on the right were the Old Schoharie Road of the late 1700s and early 1800s, predating the Great Western Turnpike. *(See illustration 3.)* The Schoharie Road diverged from the previously-mentioned "King's Highway" about two miles northeast at the Widow Truax Tavern. It followed Willow Street and then Foundry Road to the bottom of the hill, then bore west up the hill on a right-of-way still discernible. It crossed the Hunger Kill at the bottom of the hill. *(See illustration 4.)*

Illustration 3. This was the corner of Foundry Road and Route 20 in the early 1920s before paving. Then the residence of Dr. DeGraff, the house still stands today.
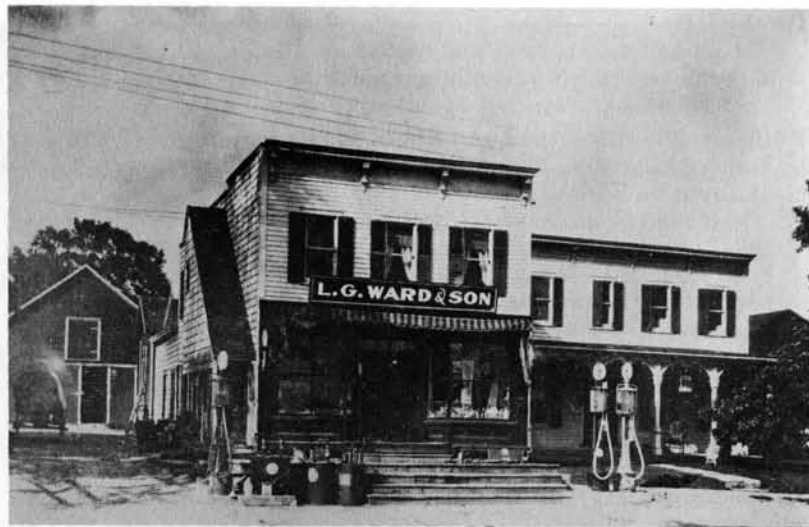
Illustration 4. L.G. Ward & Son's general store, was typical of the many small general stores which served their immediate surrounding community. This one stood on the Western Turnpike (Route 20) in Guilderland near Willow Street. Several of these existed in various areas of Guilderland, often serving as the post office and gas station as well.

For Side Tour No. 1 — turn left on Foundry Road

Proceed to the bottom of the hill. On the right is a large house which appears on maps to the mid-1800s. It is suspected to have been built before 1800 and connected with the Glass Works. Immediately beyond on the right was the pond which supplied water for the foundry which later existed here in the 19th century.

Across the Hunger Kill, the Old Schoharie Road bore right up the hill. The hill you have traversed was once known as "Glass Street."

In this Valley of the Hunger Kill were located the several glass factories, beginning with DeNeufville in 1785 and ending with the Hamilton Glass Mfg. Society in 1815, closed by lack of fuel.

Turn left at the bridge and follow Foundry Road

As you turn, the water wheel for the foundry was immediately on your left and its buildings stretched along the Hunger Kill. Just beyond a red barn close to the road on your left, the Hamilton Glass Society plant was located across the creek. Here, archeological digs have taken place. It is believed the earlier sites were nearer to the foundry site. Look for the Town Historical Marker.

Turn Left on Nott Road

On the left stands a white frame house which is known as the "Cooper House." It is said that James Fenimore Cooper stayed here while writing some of his novels.

On the right in the distance, along the Normans Kill

In this area, but not visible from the road, is a gambrel roof brick house reputed to be the oldest in the town in existence today. It was built circa 1700, but has been considerably altered.

On the left

About half mile beyond, and beyond the Hunger Kill crossing, on a sharp curve, is the Nott family mansion "Normanvale," circa 1790. The Veeder family graveyard is on this property.

Return to Foundry Road and Route 20 by retracing your route or by Routes 155 (State Farm Road) and 20. For Side Trip No. 2, proceed north on Willow Street

On the left is old District School No. 4, later Town Offices, and as of 1996 N.Y. State Police Station. On the site of its parking lot stood the First Methodist Church (1852-1942). Beyond, on the left, is the house where Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was born in 1793. His father, Lawrence, was superintendent of the Glass Works. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft left Guilderland at an early age and wrote many volumes about the American Indians and their culture. Schoolcraft married an Indian woman and was technical advisor to Longfellow for his poem "Hiawatha." In that poem is mentioned the "Vale of Tawasentha" (Valley of the Normans Kill). Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

Turn left on Edgewood Street and left on Hamilton Street to Route 20, then turn right

On your right you pass the mill pond. Here stood Batterman's Mill, built about 1800, and which stood into the early 1900s. On your left is the M & M Motel which is on the site of the Case Homestead, built in the late 1700s and owned by several generations of the Case family. It burned in 1950. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

Turn left at the traffic light on Route 146

This intersection was known as Hartman's Corners after the family who built a large house where the Stewart's Shop stands today. *(See illustration 5.)* Route 146 was the third Schoharie Road, the Plank Road, built in 1849. It closed as a toll road in 1867. Proceed along this route.

On your right, about a half mile, a historic marker directs attention to the farm of Evert Bancker. He was the third mayor of Albany. His farm along the Normans Kill was one of the first. He died there in 1734. The present house, circa 1895, replaced an earlier house built in 1825.

Just beyond, near the entrance to Tawasentha Park, the old Schoharie Road crossed present Route 146 on a skew and then dropped to the west bank of the Normans Kill which it paralleled for a distance before climbing back to Route 146 at the intersection with French's Hollow Road.

Pass Tawasentha Park on the left and drop down to the Vale of Tawasentha. The stream is now called Normans Kill after Albert Bradt, the Norseman who settled downstream in Bethlehem. The Indian name "Tawasentha" refers to the burial ground, reported to have been located near the stream's confluence with the Hudson, and means "Place of the Dead."

This stream was the only artery of travel for both Indians and early settlers to reach points inland from the Hudson. Until 1875, when it was washed away, a covered bridge spanned the stream near the present bridge site. It was known as "Bancker's Bridge" and the hill approaching it as "Bancker Hill."

Illustration 5. The coming of the automobile increased the number of travelers passing through Guilderland on Route 20 who needed service stations and tourist accomodations. Fonda's Place at Hartman's Corners was one of the earliest gas stations in Guilderland. Today Polito's Tavern stands on this spot.

Beyond the bridge and on the right stood Toll Gate No. 5 of the Schoharie Plank Road.

Ascending the hill, to the right, may be seen in the Normans Kill flats, the site of the Battle of the Normans Kill which took place in August 1777. Here, Tories planned to intercept food supplies bound for the Colonial Army at Saratoga. They hid in a barn and were smoked out by militia units from Schenectady and were captured. Many Guilderland farmers fought in the militia during the Revolution and many others provided food for the armies. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

Continue on Route 146 to Guilderland Center

At the point where Route 146 crosses the railroad stood Hurst's Feed Mill, a hotel and the railroad station, all removed when the road was rerouted after the coming of the automobile.

Although the buildings along the railroad have been decimated, most of the Hamlet of Guilderland Center has remained nearly untouched. Here buildings range over a period of 200 years.

Proceed west on Route 146 — the main street of Guilderland Center

At the first curve on the right is the Freeman House*, the oldest frame house in the town. It was reputedly built in 1734 and rebuilt in 1755 and again in the 1850s. It is painted red. Built by Robert Freeman, the house was subsequently owned by the Mynderse and Crounse families. It has been beautifully restored. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.
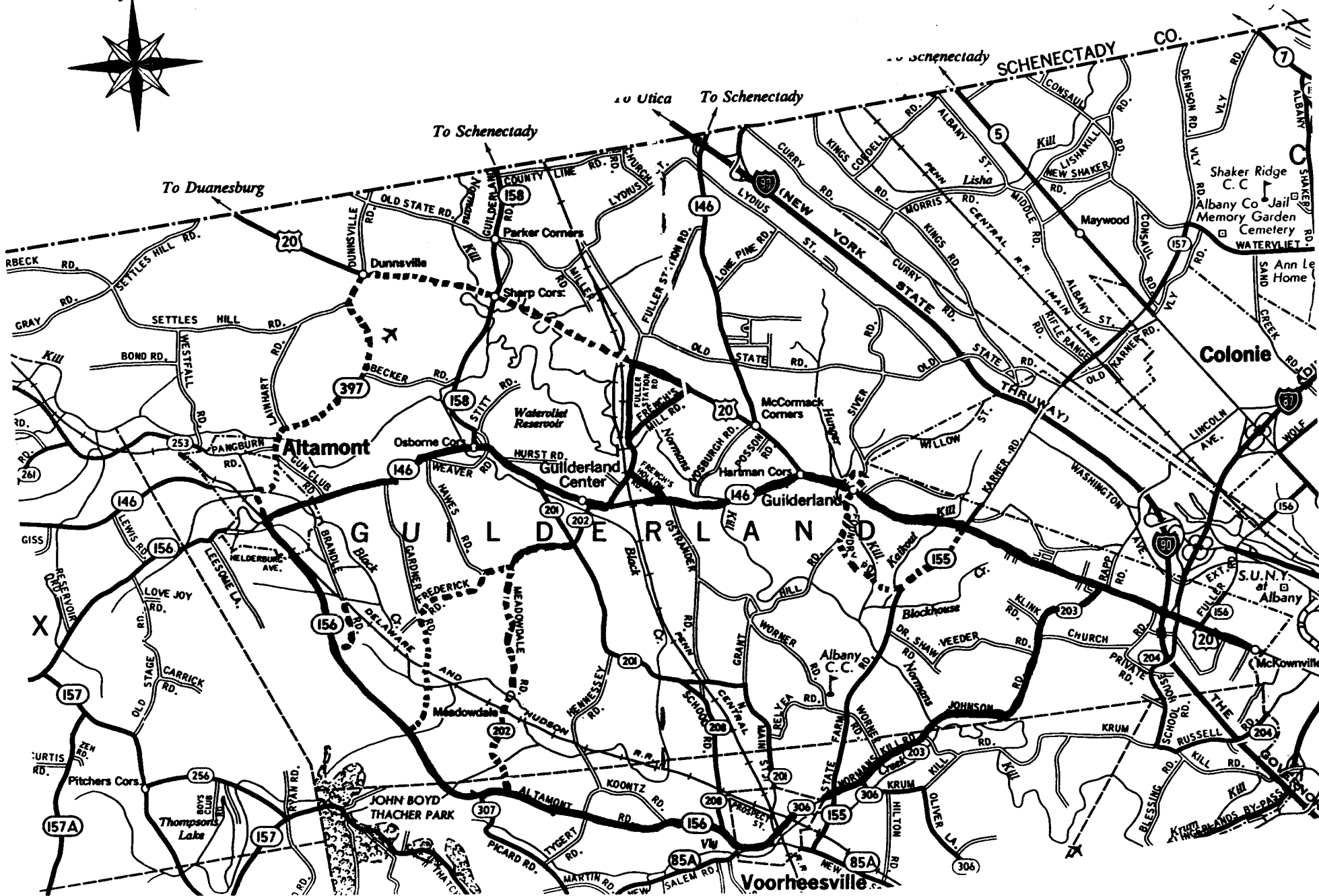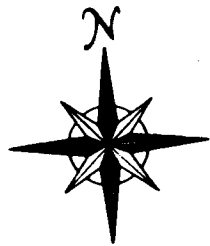
On the right, next to the Freeman House, is the Helderberg Reformed Church. The present structure, built in 1988 to replace the 1896 building lost through an arsonist's fire, is the fifth since 1750. The three earlier structures stood near present day Osborne Corners.

Beyond the church, on the right, is the Mynderse-Frederick House* of 1802. Built by Nicholas V. Mynderse who became the first Supervisor when the Town was formed in 1803, it was later sold to the Frederick family who owned it until 1940. It was a turnpike tavern and hotel and is now owned by the Town and is used for historic purposes.

Next, on the right, where the entrance to Park Guilderland is presently located, stood the Centre House (1845-1971), a popular tavern. On the opposite side, where the gas station stands, stood the general store and post office. Beyond on both sides of the road are interesting houses from all eras.

On the right

Watch for a cobblestone building that was District School No. 6*. *(See illustration 6.)* It was erected in 1860 and used as a school until 1941. It has been restored by the Guilderland Historical Society.

The tall spire of the Berean Baptist Church* is next. Opened in 1872, it was originally St. Mark's Lutheran Church until 1973.

Here the present Route 146 is the long Main Street of Guilderland Center with the Black Creek (Schwartz Kill to early settlers) behind the houses to the south side. Old Schoharie Road followed the same route on a map of 1837. The hamlet ends at Depot Road.

Illustration 6. Before centralization, Guilderland was divided into 14 school districts, each with its own one or two room school. Students attended the District No. 6 cobblestone school, which still stands in Guilderland Center, until 1941. In the background is St. Mark's Lutheran Church and the horse sheds which once stood to shelter horses while their owners were inside attending Sunday services.

Continue west on Route 146 to the intersection with Hurst Road

On the left, beyond the intersection, is located, complete with N.Y.S. Historic Marker, the Tavern of Henry Appel*. The original portion of the building was built in 1765. It has been enlarged many times. Here in 1803 was held the first Town Board Meeting in Guilderland when it was created from the parent Town of Watervliet. The inn is now a bed and breakfast.

At the intersection of Routes 146 and 158 was the first settlement of the town. This remnant is now called Osborne Corners after a later owner of the old Appel Tavern.

Here, the Schoharie Road turned south to cross the Black Creek. It is presently called Weaver Road. On the right the old road to Schenectady is now called Osborne Road. Immediately beyond Osborne Road on the right stood three of the previous structures of the Dutch Reformed Church of Hellebergh. The original structure of 1750 was a log building. In 1787 it was replaced by the "Old Red Church" and in 1834 by the "Gamble Church," a spectacular structure demolished in 1896 when the Helderberg Reformed Church (present spelling) was built in Guilderland Center. *(See illustration 7.)*

On the right side of Osborne Road stood the parsonage and behind, on the hill, is the old cemetery with its cobblestone vault* to call attention to the pioneers who sleep here. Behind the church stood another cobblestone school, District No. 9. (1860-1890). You are now at the geographic center of the town.

Illustration 7. The Gamble Church was the third Reformed church built at Osborne Corners since the 1760s. Named for Pastor Samuel Gamble, it was demolished in 1896 when the congregation erected new Reformed churches in Guilderland Center and Altamont. The cemetery with its cobblestone vault remains on the hill, but the parsonage burned in the late 1960s.

Proceed west across Black Creek along Route 146

At the top of the hill on the left is Fairview Cemetery. Here stood St. James Lutheran Church, circa 1785-1872. In 1872 the congregation split forming St. Mark's in Guilderland Center and St. John's in Altamont.

Immediately west, where the power line crosses Route 146, stood Toll Gate No. 4 on the Schoharie Plank Road.

About a mile beyond this point, before reaching Altamont, is old Knowersville. On the right is the Inn of Jacob Crounse*, later the Keenholts Hotel where the Schoharie Stage changed its horses. It was the post office from 1840 to 1857. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

Beyond the Inn, on the right, is the Knower House*, a large Federal-style house built in 1800 by Benjamin Knower, prominent merchant, banker and politician. He ran a hat factory here. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

On the left, opposite the Knower House, stands a 1 1/2 storied house. Reputedly built about 1825 as a dining hall for the Jacob Crounse Inn, it served as a "station" on the Underground Railroad just prior to the Civil War.

At the corner of Route 146 and Gun Club Road stands the 1833 house of Dr. Frederick Crounse*, a physician in the area from 1834 to 1898. The doctor played a leading role in the Anti-Rent period (1839-1865) centered in the hill towns above Altamont. The doctor's father made caskets in the barn on the corner. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

Beyond Gun Club Road you enter the Village of Altamont, where the Old Schoharie Plank Road veered off to the right. The original Schoharie Road followed Main Street.

Turn left onto Brandle Road

The third dwelling on the right is the Jurie Severson farmhouse. Built prior to 1765, it is the oldest building in the village. The remains of a family cemetery can be seen on the opposite side of Brandle Road. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker. Return to Main Street and turn left.

Continue along Main Street to the railroad crossing

Driving Main Street reveals a series of gracious homes dating mostly from the second half of the 19th century.

When the Albany & Susquehanna Railroad reached the area in September 1863, a newer village grew around it. This was still called Knowersville until the incorporation of the village as Altamont in 1890, the only village in the Town of Guilderland.

The railroad station*, no longer used by the railroad, was built in 1897. The original station of 1864 stands down the track on the left, and was used as a freight house for many years.

The Albany & Susquehanna Railroad later became part of the Delaware & Hudson Rail Co. For just over a century, Albany-Binghamton passenger trains passed through this station (1863-1964) and locals from Albany terminated here.

Across the tracks on the left stood the Commercial House and on the right the Altamont Hotel, both large commodious structures whose sites are now occupied by a convenience store and a service station.

Turn left on Route 156 and proceed toward Voorheesville

As the turn is made, a N.Y.S. Historic Marker near the Stewart's

Shop indicates the site of the Severson Tavern, the Wayside Inn of Jurie Severson, built in the 1760s. It served as the area's first post office, known as "West Guilderland" from 1829-1840.

Continuing about one and one half miles, opposite the intersection with Brandle Road, under the towering Helderberg Escarpment, stands a majestic white house*. *(See illustration 8.)* This is the Crounse Homestead and the third homestead. The first, erected by Frederick Crounse in 1754 upon his arrival from Germany, was a log hut. The present house was built in 1803. The family burial plot contains the grave of the forefather of all the Crounse family members in America.

Illustration 8. The Frederick Crounse homestead on the south side of Route 156 opposite Brandle Road was built in 1803. The Crounses settled here in 1754. When walking their way to Schoharie with their few belongings, wife Elizabeth said to Frederick, "Not another foot can I go. Here we will make our home."

Turn left on Brandle Road

Running due east from the Frederick Crounse homestead, this road once went straight through to the homestead of his brother, Philip Crounse, who settled there in 1767. The present road turns sharply left toward Altamont. At the railroad crossing is the family plot of the Van Aernams. Here is buried Capt. Jacob Van Aernam (1723-1813) who served with the Third Regiment, Albany County Militia, 1776-1778. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

Return to Route 156 and turn left on Meadowdale Road

On the left is the Fryer Homestead and near the railroad crossing is the Hamlet of Meadowdale which once boasted its own post office, general store and railroad station. The old Albany & Susquehanna station stood on the southwest side of the tracks from 1864 to 1931 when local service was discontinued.

Continue along Meadowdale Road to the junction with Frederick Road, bear left

At the intersection of Frederick Road with Gardner Road, straight ahead is the homestead of Philip Crounse and between Gardner and Meadowdale Roads is the private burial ground of Revolutionary War soldier Michael Frederick.

Turn left on Gardner Road across the railroad and return to Route 156

Find old District School No. 8, now painted white. On the right side of the road is the Gardner Mansion*. Proceed to Route 156 and turn left to go toward Voorheesville in the Town of New Scotland.

At the junction with Route 85A in Voorheesville, turn left and you will be on Maple Avenue

Opposite the Methodist Church, turn left on Voorheesville Avenue. Bear right and cross the Conrail tracks and then the former Delaware and Hudson tracks. Continue to Route 155 and cross it. This is the old Normans Kill Road.

Descend the grade to the valley floor. Shortly before crossing the Normans Kill, the Town of Guilderland is re-entered. Immediately to the right or south, at that point, is the confluence of the Vly and Normans Kill. It was from this point as it existed at the time of the original survey, that an east-west line was struck that formed the east boundary of Guilderland.

This was the land of the Jan Hendrikse Van Baal Patent, a tract of land centered about the Normans Kill, purchased in 1660 from the Indians. This tract, in the middle of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck, was the center of the lawsuit by the Van Rensselaers to recover the property. Van Rensselaer won the suit in 1789 to have the original 11 mile square reduced to 5 1/2 miles square. A large portion of the plot was in the Town of Guilderland. The land was settled by Omie De La Grange who purchased a portion of the tract. He was one of the first settlers along the Normans Kill.

Continue east along Normans Kill Road, now called Johnson Road in Guilderland, until you come to Route 20

The road rises sharply and passes through the vast holdings once owned by the McKowns. Opposite Veeder Road once stood the former McKownville District School Annex which later became a residence. Beyond the intersection with Church Road, the road again rises sharply through a section once called "Wolf Hill" and reaches an intersection with Western Avenue-Route 20.

This is the end of the tour.

TOUR EXTENSION: Go west on Route 20 past Town Hall, continue west to French's Mills Road just past the Bavarian Chalet, and turn left

Proceed to the Normans Kill gorge, one of Guilderland's scenic spots. It is called French's Hollow and was the site of Guilderland's earliest industries. (See illustration 9.) Here Peter K. Broeck built a cloth factory in 1795. Abel French built a knitting mill in 1800. There was also a button factory, a grist mill, a tavern and mill employee houses. These

flourished until the advent of the railroads in the 1860s and were gradually abandoned. The last remnants disappeared when the pumping station for the Watervliet Reservoir was built, together with the dam, in 1915.

A covered highway bridge (1869-1932) spanned the stream on the same location as the present bridge which is now closed to traffic. The gorge was spanned by the Saratoga & Hudson Railroad in 1865. This railroad became part of the West Shore Railroad in 1883 and is now Conrail.

Across the creek, at the top of the hill, is the now abandoned right-of-way of the Saratoga & Hudson Railroad. It diverged at this point and was abandoned in 1903. (The roadbed may still be seen crossing Carman Road near Greulich's Market.)
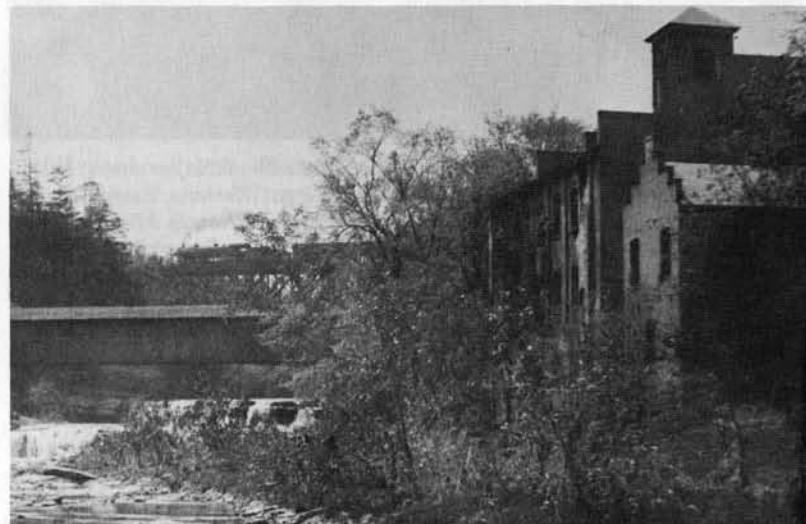
Illustration 9. Guilderland's first "industrial park" was at French's Hollow. This circa 1910 view shows the once busy mills abandoned by this time. The covered bridge was replaced in 1932, while the railroad trestle is still used by Conrail. The West Shore steam engine pictured was a 2-8-2 Mikado-type steam locomotive.

Return to Route 20 and continue west

Approaching the intersection of Fuller Station Road with Route 20, the house on the left was the post office for the hamlet of "Fullers." Across the intersection on the north side of Route 20 stands the 1809 tavern of Major John and Aaron Fuller. (See illustration 10.) Across the fields on the left, at the south abutment of the high railroad bridge, stood Fullers Railroad Station. (See illustration 11.) Years ago, many children of this area were sent to high school in Ravena on the West Shore train. Carloads of hay shipments were dispatched from a large hay barn located here. The planked portion of the Great Western Turnpike ended here. Toll Gate No. 3 stood immediately east of the intersection.

Illustration 10. Home to three of Guilderland's Town Supervisors, this was another of the taverns which lined the Great Western Turnpike in the early 19th Century (Route 20 and Fuller Station Road). Major John Fuller ran the tavern after 1830, serving as Town Supervisor 1846-1847, followed by Aaron Fuller who continued the family tradition of running the tavern and being elected Supervisor 1881-1884. In the 20th Century the tavern became a private home, one of whose owners was John Welsh, Supervisor 1954-1957.

Pass beneath the bridges of the Conrail tracks, formerly West Shore Railroad, a division of the New York Central.

West of the bridge on the left is a marker for the farm of Abraham Wemple. The Wemple and Vrooman homesteads were destroyed in 1915 to flood the Watervliet Reservoir. The Wemple home was built in 1760 from brick made along the Normans Kill.

Pass the expanse of the Watervliet Reservoir on the left. Shortly before reaching the intersection with Route 158 once stood the homestead of Gilbert Sharp, dating pre-1800. The intersection of Routes 20 and 158 is known as Sharp's Corners.

Continue west on Route 20

The crossing of the Normans Kill was a covered bridge from 1800 to about 1920. The large home on the left near the bridge belonged to Judge Clute.

Continue west to the intersection with Route 397

This intersection is Dunnsville, a once thriving crossroads community taking its name from tavernkeeper Christopher Dunn. One tavern survives*. Dunnsville had a school, a post office, a blacksmith shop and a church.

If one continues west on Route 20 from this intersection about 1.25 miles, the Schenectady County line would be reached. This was the west line of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck.

Illustration 11. The West Shore Railroad Station at Fullers was built in 1882 and removed in the late 1920s when the high line was constructed over Route 20. One of four stations in the Town of Guilderland, others were found in Altamont, Guilderland Center and Meadowdale. Today the Altamont Station is the only one remaining, now used for other purposes.

Turn left and proceed south on Route 397, Dunnsville Road. On the left, indicated by a N.Y.S. Historic Marker, is the homestead of George Wagner, Revolutionary War soldier, a lieutenant in the Albany County Militia. The original house is long gone and stood south of the present house.

Pass Becker Road and Altamont Orchard — Settles Hill is on the right

A sharp dip precedes the crossing with the Bozen Kill (foaming or angry creek). It tumbles for several miles from Bozen Kill Falls to its confluence with the Normans Kill, which is now buried beneath the Watervliet Reservoir.

Pass Gun Club Road

On the right is a marker indicating the burial place of John Groote, Revolutionary War soldier. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker.

Bear right at the Village of Altamont. You are now again on the old Schoharie Plank Road. Continue to the intersection with Maple Avenue, named for the trees which once lined it until the street was widened in 1955-56.

Turn left on Maple Avenue

The steeple of the Altamont Reformed Church on the adjacent street may be seen shortly on the left. Farther on, also on the left, stands the 95-foot tall spired edifice of St. John's Lutheran Church, built in 1872.

Turn right on Main Street and go to the top of the Route 156 hill

Just opposite the La Salette Center/Peter Young Center is Leesome

Lane. Many of the large houses along this road were built as the summer homes of wealthy Albanians during the 1890-1910 period. The first stone house on the right is the circa 1790 Hilton farmhouse*. The second stone house was built circa 1825.

The La Salette/Peter Young Center stands on the site of the Kushaqua Hotel, a large summer resort which operated from the 1880s to the early 1920s when it became a Catholic seminary. The original building burned in 1946 and was replaced by the present buildings.

Return to the Village of Altamont, to Route 146, and turn right on Park Street, continuing to Fairview Avenue

Just around the corner on your right is the Hayes House, originally built in 1910 by Miles Hayes, a gristmill owner and lumber dealer. The Colonial Revival style house is listed on the National Register. It is now owned by the Altamont Fair and is open for tours during Fair Week.

Continue straight on Fairview Avenue until you reach Grand Street. Look to your right to see the original entrance to the Altamont Fairgrounds in use since the 1890s. *(See illustration 12.)* The Altamont Fair began in 1893.

Just ahead of you is the entrance to Altamont Elementary School. This was the site of the old Altamont High School. Watch for the N.Y.S. Historic Marker. Built in 1901, it was demolished after the present high school in Guilderland Center was built in the 1950s.

Turn left on Grand Street. On your right is St. Lucy's Catholic Church, built in 1888. It was originally a chapel donated by Mrs. Lucy Cassidy, who also gave Altamont its name.

Continue to Route 146, turn right and return to Route 20
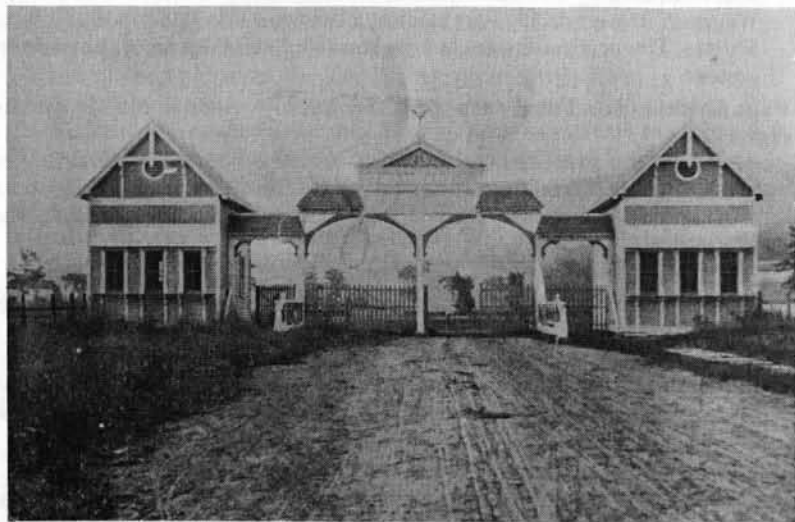
Illustration 12. This was the Grand Street entrance to the Altamont Fairgrounds as it was in 1898. Originally this was the main gate to the fairgrounds.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

During the course of the tour you have passed through a tract of land called "Elizabethfield." This was a tract four miles long and about half mile wide, straddling the Normans Kill. It was granted by lease in 1764 as a wedding present to General Abraham Ten Broeck and his bride, Elizabeth Van Rensselaer. Its western boundary is approximately at the point of crossing the Great Western Turnpike (Route 20), with the Normans Kill near Sharp's Corners. Its eastern boundary is somewhere near Hartman's Corners.