

HAMMERTOWN

by

Charlotte Slingerland Tuttle Kester

Hammertown is a half mile east of Pine Plains Village, a narrow little valley carved out by the Shekomeko Creek (part of which bed is blue clay) between the hills, opening at either end north and south into broad, level meadows, reminder that in earlier times in its youth the creek was wide and deep. In earlier years abounding in eels and other fish, it is fed here by an underground stream from Mill Hill, supposed to be part of the Catskills water system. This superb spring, now buried by the new highway, has been a blessing to innumerable families, to the old scythe industry, and later to the dairy industry for cooling the cans of milk in its chill water. Abundant huge old trees of sycamore, spruce, hemlock, oak, and willow once covered the valley, later maple, elm and locust, keeping the valley cool on hottest days. On Mill Hill grew great chestnuts, pines and oaks. Mill Hill, of same age as Stissing and the Fishkill Mountains, furnished the hard limestone from a quarry on its east side for the buildings of the scythe factory, retaining walls, and foundations.

Hammertown lies in the very upper center of Lot No. 30, Rip Van Dam's, of the Little Nine Partners division, just south of the eastern part of Lot No. 48 (James Graham-Isabella Graham Landon). Lot No. 29 on the west meets it on the west slope of Mill Hill. Part of its lower territory, Bethel, became the property of James Alexander.

The first white settlers were from the Palatine Camp on the Hudson River, and had worked their way up the Shekomeko valley as far as Johannes Rau's mill (east of Bethel) in 1750. So it is likely that the Snyders were the first settlers and landowners in Hammertown and Willowvale, adjoining upstream. John Hisrodt (Housrodt as spelled in the old deed) owned land therein, and to the northeast of

Hammertown, but no evidence has been found that he or his heirs lived there; no military, road, or church records mention his name until in a petition concerning the road there in 1816. John Hisrodt conveyed a small acreage "on which a dwelling house for some time past" (later where Silas Harris came to live) in 1804, from Hendrick (Henry) I. Hisrodt deceased, to Isaac Von Luen, father-in-law of Hugh Gamble who probably lived there while working as a partner with John Harris, his brother-in-law, when they operated the scythe works in Hammertown, since 1790. This house, probably the oldest in Hammertown, on its one-plus acre, across from the Slingerland house, later conveyed by Edward Pugsley to his daughter Maria, wife of Silas Harris, in 1832, ¹ was still in use in 1890, but soon thereafter taken down as a hazard. The large wall, part of the foundation, is still there. In front of the wall today there is a pump to a well, which was the original old one. Until 1899 the water was still hauled up by a well-sweep—a long pole acting as a lever from one end of which hung the bucket. The old barn with this house was also taken down at this time. It stood by the highway built into the bank. Some time before 1863 and after about 1832, a two-family house was built in front of the old one, with vertical board siding. This later housed many tenants whose menfolks worked on the farm, until it burned down in the night in 1914, no one being in the house at that time, as was learned next morning.

A Yunghans (also Yonkhonce) is said (1897) to have lived "where the Duxbury farm is" in 1786, ² when Clara Yonkhans married Alexander MacIntosh. Yonkhan-ses and Elizabeth Schneider (Snyder) were communicants at old Round Top Church in 1763, along with Raus, Richters (Righters), Hofmans, and others, but no Hisrodts. Henry Hisrodt built a large barn over in the fields (now still there, fully restored) by Trout Brook, with boards he purchased from Old Round Top Church in 1827. It is said that there was once a house there, reached by the continuation of the old road crossing what is now No. 199 by Muriel Pulver's garage, which wound around the hill, beginning at the Slingerland barn. A lane from this across the fields to Willow-

1 Land Records, Dutchess County Clerk's Office, L. 49, P. 475

2 Commemorative Biographical Record of Dutchess County New York, (Chicago, J. N. Beers & Co. 1897), pp. 580-581.

vale was used as late as 1915, especially in winter, to avoid the great drifts of snow up where the Near house now is, to Righter's Corner. This lane led past the old "Long Barn" where in the 1870s many of Barnum and Bailey's show horses were kept in winters, and which later housed herds of fine Jersey cows, and also made a cozy place to sleep for drunks who had filled their jugs at the cider mill across the fields. This is probably how a fire in the night quickly consumed the barn in 1924. The site is directly under the new highway back of Mrs. Weaver's house.

Going back to the Snyders, it was they who must have cut the big wilderness trees in the valley and built the first shelters. Adam, Hendrick and William Snyder were landholders in the 1770s a bit upstream (in Willowvale), Adam having sold land (100 acres) to John Harris in 1783 for 425 pounds. Snyder had built the old house and saw mill (now property of Mr. and Mrs. Wiebke, saw mill long gone); but Harris shortly in 1787 built another mill, grist, a few hundred feet downstream, across the road from the present Lyons house. This old mill of heavy timbers was pulled down recently, having become a hazard, and Mrs. Lyons incorporated some of the beams in a large porch at the rear of her house. Perhaps it was a hundred years ago that this grist mill became a cider mill, which was in operation as late as about 1935. (Many farmers made vinegar from the cider in big hogsheads in their cellars.) Peter and Polly Husted of Hammertown had sold to William A. Stickle in 1803 sixty-one plus acres between land of John Harris and Hendrick Snyder, which Stickle sold in 1821 to Joshua Culver for \$2320.76.³ Two years later Hendrick Snyder sold seventy-five acres to Joshua Culver for \$2500.00,⁴ which was the same parcel sold to him by William Snyder at Schodak, Albany County, in 1791, "part of Lot No. 30 as the same surveyed and marked by Charles Clinton." Both of these deeds of Stickle and Snyder were signed by their marks. In 1785 road commissioners "entered and recorded" an alteration in the east-west road through the pines plains "from Ebeneezer Dibblee (now Isaac Kilmer's) with nearly a straight line along the North Side of the Mountain (Mill Hill) to a Bridge across the creek near the house of Philip Snyder's." (Hammertown earliest referred date.)

³ County Clerk of Deeds, p. 144, 145, 146, 147

⁴ Land Records, Dutchess County Clerk's Office, L. 27, p. 152

All of the houses at present in Hammertown, except that of Mrs. Weaver, are old ones, having been built before or shortly after 1800. Up on the east hill Miss Muriel Pulver's and the adjoining house are built into a bank with basement-kitchen and cellars, as were the two west of the bridge (one the Harris-Husted house) and the old Harris house above mentioned, and also the John Righter house to the east. The 1858 map of Pine Plains indicates three houses up on the east hill, so it may be that an old house standing where Mrs. Weaver's now is, was destroyed before 1872, when Philo Wooldridge, a carpenter, built a new house there for his bride, she having purchased the land from Mrs. Silas Harris. The other two houses there were purchased from William Righter (conveyed to him in 1801 by Hugh Gamble) by John and Silas Harris 1819⁵ along with ten acres in meadow below, also in Lot No. 30 for \$600.00. A well was to be used in common. They were sold separately by Mrs. Silas Harris, Miss Pulver's to Abraham Johnson in 1866⁶ and the adjoining house, home of the late Gilbert Turner, to Sidney Wilkinson in 1876, who had been a paid alternate in the Civil War and had lost one of his legs. Mrs. Jordan recalls how, when she and her cousin, the late Dr. Paul Duxbury, were youngsters, his shaking his peg leg at them would send them running home terrified. Mr. Turner, spading his garden, unearthed an old Spanish silver coin, date unknown. These were frequent tender in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Wilkinson's sister, Isaphine, became Anthony Barton's second wife, the romance featuring a white handkerchief laid on a bush by Isaphine, and visible across the meadow to Barton's house.

Abraham Johnson was the father of Mrs. Horace (Artemis) Buckner; Horace was a freed slave. He was a beloved character, notable for his inspiring prayers in prayer meetings, and for the fine melons he grew in his garden and peddled through the village. One of his daughters, Josephine, usually carried off the prize at "cake walks" and was famous as a cook and personality. She married a handsome Lakeville youth, part Indian, part negro, Elmer Rice, who, after years as a capable farm worker, became the popular major domo at the Poughkeepsie Court House.

5 Ibid., L. 27, p. 288

6 Ibid., L. 131, p. 416

The two big houses in Hammertown are not in their original form. Dr. Duxbury's house, purchased by Peter and Polly Husted in 1796 from Cornelius Elmendorf, part of the Isabella Graham Landon holdings, was a story-and-a-half house standing back from the road where the new high stone wall is. Peter moved it, enlarged it for his family of nine children, the two youngest of whom were born there, and who later settled in Penn Yan. The house across the road, probably built by Peter and lived in for a time by his son Cornelius, was originally similar to the house in the village owned by the late Angelo Peppe. Joshua Culver purchased this house with farm land from George Barton, a distant cousin of the Husteds, in 1825. Culver had been associated with the Husteds in the tannery work since perhaps 1800, he and his wife having come from Amenia in 1798. Two little gravestones in the cemetery testify to their having lost two little boys in infancy and a daughter in 1820, but older children, three daughters and a son Bacchus, survived him. He enlarged the house, adding the west half and front porch, lack of fireplaces indicating that this was done after 1830 or 1840. He deceased in 1848. His son Bacchus who owned land, the old John Harris place south of his father's in Willowvale, was unable to keep all going; his sons Walter and Dudley finally deeded back to George Barton who held the mortgage, from whom Mrs. Julia W. Husted Duxbury purchased the house (in which she had been born in 1820) and farm in 1867,⁷ moving with her family from the house in the village now owned by Miss Fanny Snyder. Mrs. Duxbury subsequently purchased the scythe factory property in 1878⁸ from Mrs. Silas Harris and from the other heirs, her father's farm and buildings in 1876,⁹ which had been her grandfather Peter's, and in whose house she had grown up with three brothers, Peter W., Walter and C. Henry.

The Husteds were Huguenots, having come to America by way of England in 1632, and settled in Horseneck (now Greenwich, Connecticut). Anya Seton in her book, "The Winthrop Woman," writes of Robert and Angel Husted, proprietors. A sixth generation came to Charlotte Precinct in 1750, purchasing property from Isaac Thorn in Lot No. 26 (Great Nine), later this Ebenezer or his son, Major

⁷ *Ibid.*, L. 127, p. 451

⁸ *Ibid.*, L. 192, p. 514

⁹ *Ibid.*, L. 144 p. 127; L. 185, p. 110; L. 212, p. 434

Ebenezer, buying land further north, perhaps building the house now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Busch, formerly known as Jucket place, where Peter and his two brothers and two sisters were probably born; their mother was Mary Germond. Peter was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. His father had outfitted and led a company. He married Polly, daughter of Isaac Smith, Esq., and Tammy Mead, one of seven children surviving to adulthood. We do not know just where they had lived previous to coming to Hammer-town in 1796 to establish the tannery there by the creek



portrait by Ammi Phillips

POLLY HUSTED 1762 - 1825

across the road from where later was built the scythe factory, but possibly near Thompson Pond as they sold two hundred acres there in 1807 to Matthias Hoffman. The tannery was a large building four stories high with tall smokestack. Peter was a civic leader, having been town clerk (then Northeast) in 1798, 1802, 1805-1806, and sup-

ervisor in 1799 and 1800. He was a founder and trustee of Pine Plains Union Library in 1798, a patron of district school (Righter-Stickle-Pulver) where his children held a record for attendance. He was a member of Temple Lodge of Spencer's Corners (Northeast) and given a large Masonic funeral at his home when he died in 1808, age forty-eight.

The Husteds were sensitive, artistic, but not vigorous, none living to an old age. Three of Peter's sons died in early manhood, leaving no heirs. There were five sons and four daughters. There is none of Peter's descendants with the Husted name living, though many descendants surviving from his four daughters and son Cornelius, three of the latter owning the Hammertown property, Julia S. Jordan and Charlotte S. Tuttle Kester, and Dr. John Hedges Duxbury, the sixth generation to occupy the old house. Most of the descendants of Peter and Polly Husted are known to the writer (herself one of them), at least eighty-three of them now living. Cornelius, like his father, had wide interests besides operating the tannery and farm. He was one of the organizers and first directors of the Pine Plains (later Stissing) Bank. The first meeting of the newly organized Baptist Church in Pine Plains was held in his home. The first baptism (1835), witnessed by a huge crowd, and many subsequent baptisms were made in the Shekomeko Creek ("the Little Jordan") by his house, which Isaac Huntting describes rather vividly¹⁰ and which is further described in the old record book of the Baptist Church.¹¹ Cornelius and his family were loyal and generous supporters of this church. In partnership with him for a time tannery associate and neighbor, Joshua Culver, and neighbors Silas Harris and Henry C. Myers (Huntting Winans Farm) and George Barton, he was at one time owner of the old iron furnace in Northeast (part still standing) near Rudd Pond, built by the Dutchess County Iron Company in 1848. Isaac Huntting says, "This family of Husted, from the first settler, Ebenezer, were noble men, resolute, positive, and companionable, and highly esteemed."¹²

The other industrial family in Hammertown in these early days, the Harris family, had also men of ex-

¹⁰ Isaac Huntting, *History of Little Nine Partners* (Amenia, N. Y.: Charles Walsh & Co., 1897), p. 212

¹¹ Baptist Church Record

¹² Huntting, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

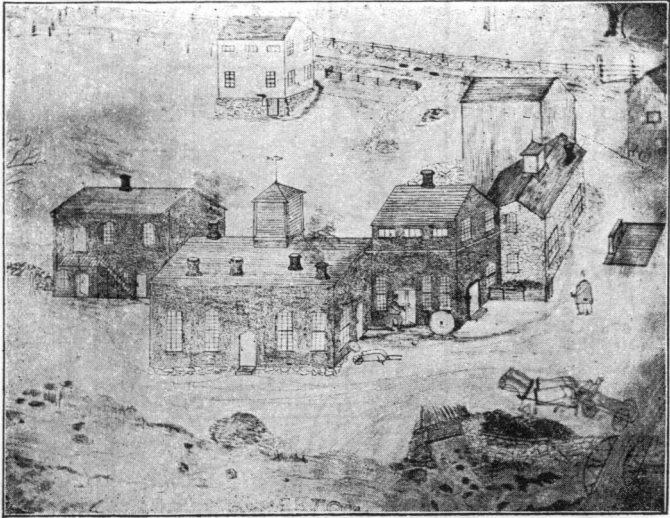
ceptional worth and were true pioneers. Of Welsh descent, (in descendants red hair occasionally crops out) Thomas and Elizabeth came to America previous to 1630. Their great-grandson, Daniel, and several brothers came to Cornwall, Connecticut, a bit over one hundred years later. From there Joseph, Moses, and Jonathan moved to Northeast and Sharon. Jonathan's son, John, in 1783 bought the property, as previously stated, of Adam Snyder, in what is now Willowvale. He had previously gone to upper New York State where his cousin, Moses Harris, Jr., had been granted land at Ft. Ann as reward for his services as a spy in General Washington's army. Due to danger from Indians, he and his family (then only two children and wife Mary Gamble) had precipitously fled, returning to his Uncle Joseph, the scythemaker at Smithfield, about 1770. They had ten children, several about the same age as the Peter Husted children living across the meadows, and the older children of both families attending Charles Hoag's boarding school in Bethel (formerly Kiefer place, now Bartholf) after district school. A cousin of John Harris and son of Joseph, Seth Harris, came to Hammertown about 1806 from Burlington, Vermont, with his three children, Silas, John and Elizabeth, their mother Isabella Gamble, sister of Mary and Hugh, having died a few years previous. John had moved his scythe works from Willowvale where he and Hugh Gamble had carried it on near his grist mill, to Hammertown (about where the new highway, route no. 199, runs back to the Slingerland barn) about 1790. Seth and his two sons joined the business which later expanded to a new factory across the creek, where a really extensive manufacture of scythes continued under the very capable management of Silas after the death of John in Salisbury, Connecticut, in Taconic section, until his own death in 1862, and the younger John had started one in Winsted, Connecticut. Isaac Huntting has rather fully described this important industry in Hammertown, so we will not go into it here.¹³ This is also described in the **Pine Plains Register**¹⁴ of July 7, 1882 and in James H. Smith's **History of Dutchess County, New York**.¹⁵ Silas Harris had a young second cousin Silas Harris, grandson of John, son of Israel, and the two seem to have been

¹³ Huntting, op. cit., p. 305-313

¹⁴ **Pine Plains Register**, July 7, 1882

¹⁵ James H. Smith, **History of Dutchess County, New York** (Syracuse, 1882)

devoted. Silas and his wife, Maria Pugsley, had lost a son of three years. They had two daughters, Margaret Pugsley Luqueer, and Mary Elizabeth Pomeroy, two of whose surviving letters are in possession of the writer, one written from Hammertown in 1840, and the other shortly after she



HARRIS SCYTHE WORKS

Established 1776.

SILAS HARRIS'
Best Steel Back
Full Set Grass
SCYTHES.



*Manufactured at the Old
Establishment,
PINE PLAINS,
Dutchess County, N. Y.*

had left in 1853. One getting to know these Harrises is impressed with the devotion and closeness of their family ties.

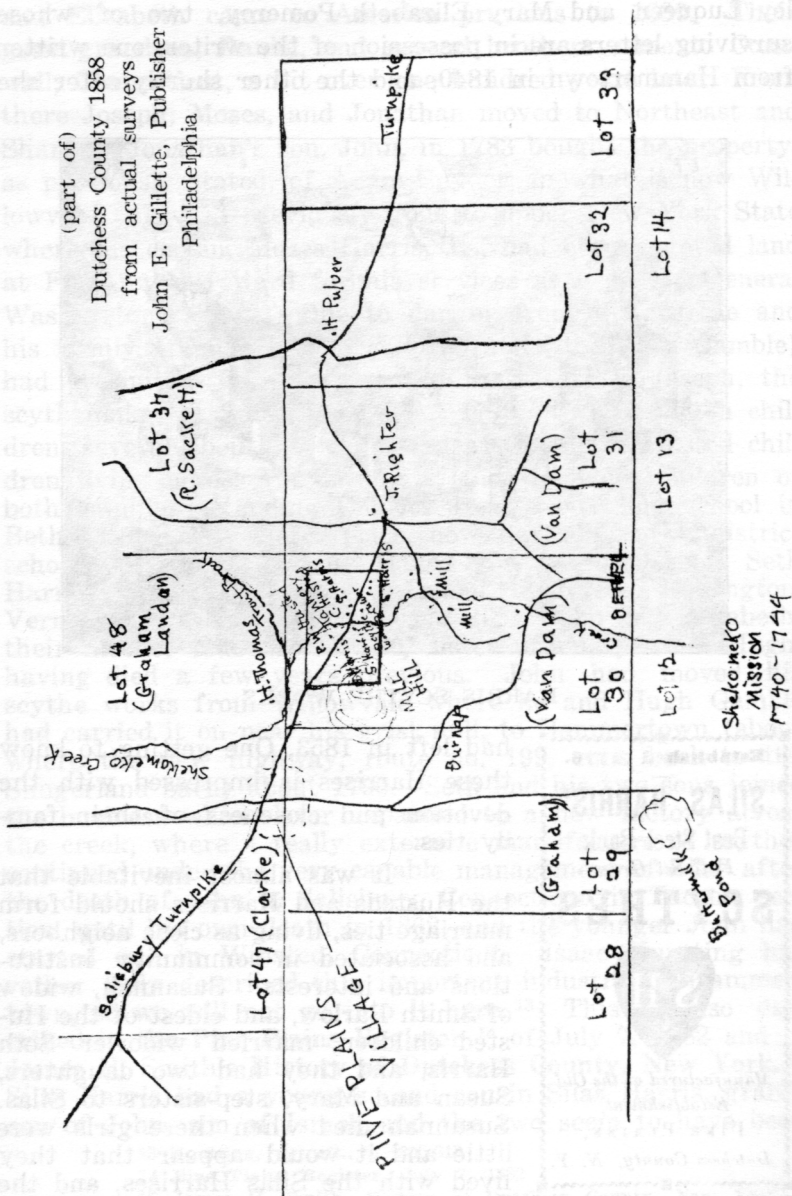
It was almost inevitable that the Husteds and Harrises should form marriage ties, living as close neighbors, and associated in community institutions and interests. Susannah, widow of Smith Barlow, and eldest of the Husted children, married widower Seth Harris, and they had two daughters, Susan and Mary, step-sisters to Silas. Susannah died when these girls were little and it would appear that they lived with the Silas Harrises, and the four girls grew up together, aunts not much older than nieces.

Dutchess County 1858

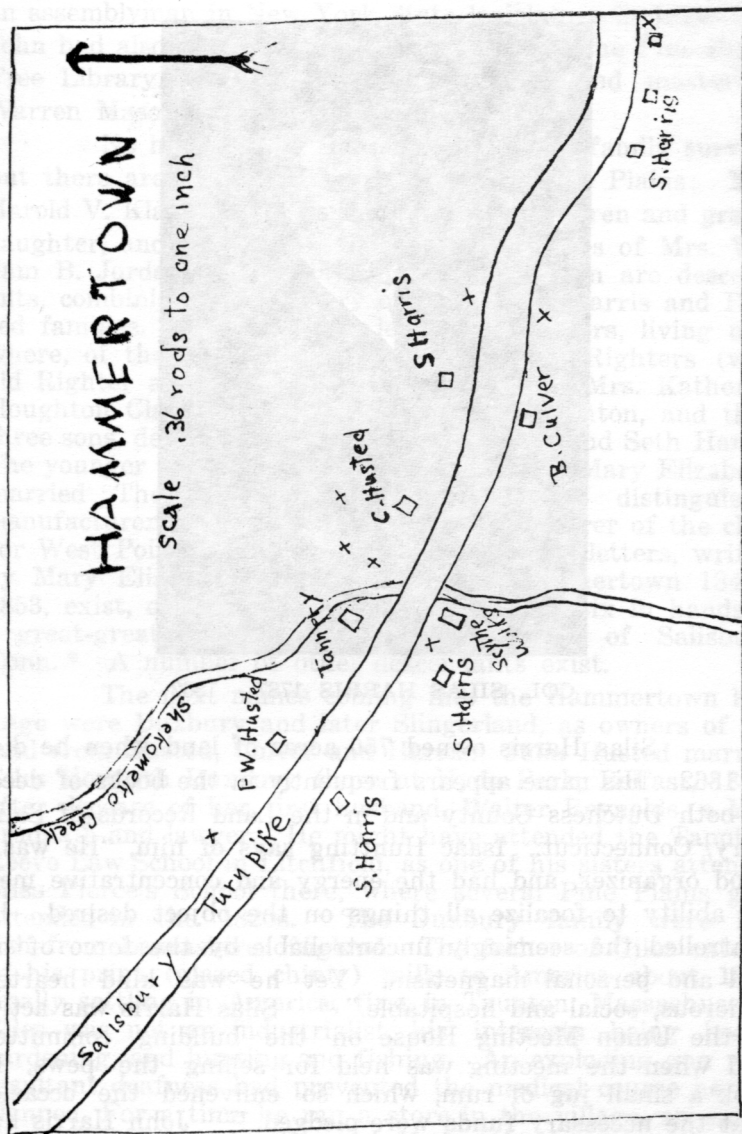
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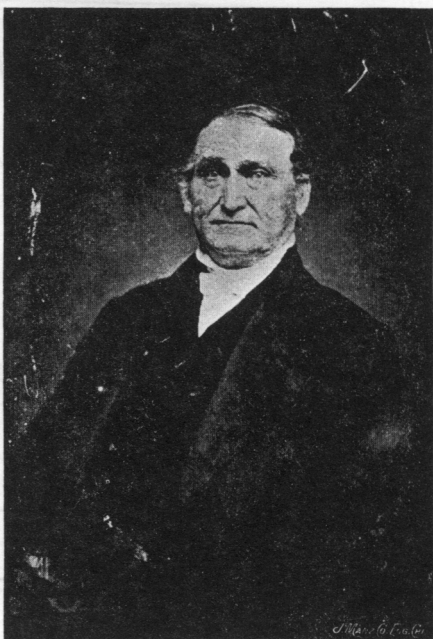
John E. Gillette, Publisher

Philadelphia



scale .36 rods to one inch


$$X = \bar{b}a^n$$



COL. SILAS HARRIS 1787 - 1862

Silas Harris owned 750 acres of land when he died in 1862. His name appears frequently in the books of deeds in both Dutchess County and in the Land Records of Salisbury, Connecticut. Isaac Hunting says of him, "He was a good organizer, and had the energy and concentrative mental ability to focalize all things on the object desired. He controlled the seemingly uncontrollable by the force of his will and personal magnetism. Yet he was kind hearted, generous, social and hospitable."¹⁶ Silas Harris was active in the Union Meeting House on the building committee, and when the meeting was held for selling the pews, he took a small jug of rum, which so enlivened the occasion that the necessary funds were pledged.¹⁷ John Harris had also been active in church matters, his home in Willowvale having been the meeting place for early Methodist Society

¹⁶ Hunting. *op. cit.*, p. 312

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 172 and family legend.

services. John's son, Israel Harris, was supervisor in Northeast and the first supervisor of Pine Plains Township, and an assemblyman in New York State legislature in 1820-1821. John had also been a founder and trustee of the Pine Plains Free Library, patron of a school district, and master of Warren Masonic Lodge.

No heirs of the Harris name of this family survive, but there are descendants living now in Pine Plains: Mrs. Harold V. Klare (Betty Jordan) and her children and granddaughter, and Mr. B. Jordan Pulver; also sons of Mrs. William B. Jordan, Jr. (Julia) and their children are descendants, combining the ancestry of both these Harris and Husted families. There are at least seven others, living elsewhere, of the combined ancestry: two Miss Righters (with old Righter ancestry also) in Brooklyn, and Mrs. Katherine Houghton Clarke, her brother William Houghton, and their three sons, descendants of Susannah Husted and Seth Harris. The younger daughter of "Col." Silas Harris, Mary Elizabeth, married Theodore Pomeroy, wealthy and distinguished manufacturer in Pittsfield, Mass. (manufacturer of the cloth for West Point uniforms). Seven delightful letters, written by Mary Elizabeth, six written from Hammertown 1840 - 1853, exist, one in hands of the writer and six in hands of a great-great-grandson, Theodore Pomeroy, of Salisbury, Conn.* A number of other descendants exist.

The next names coming into the Hammertown heritage were Duxbury and later Slingerland, as owners of the land from Husted, Culver and Harris. Julia Husted married Giles Howarth Duxbury (born at Hyde Park, Belfast, 1821) after decease of her first husband, Walter Reynolds, a Yale graduate and lawyer. He might have attended the Tapping-Reeve Law School in Litchfield, as one of his sisters attended Miss Pierce's School there, where several Pine Plains girls attended in the 1820s. The Duxbury family were British from Lancashire, England. The father of Giles extended his print (glazed chintz) mills to America about 1830, finally settling in America, first in Taunton, Massachusetts. Giles was not an industrialist, his interests being books, gardening, and hunting and fishing. An exploding gun with resultant deafness had prevented the medical course he had planned. For a time he ran a store in the village, an extension of a family (Van Deusen) Hudson business, and in New York City possibly in connection with his uncle, Giles Duxbury, importer, who later went West (1847) to establish an

* a great-great-great-grandson of Col. Silas Harris

of Silas Harris.¹⁸ It adjoined the scythe works, and the house had probably been built when the factory was enlarged by Silas Harris and employed many workers, in 1840 or thereabouts. The rocky hillside did not deter a Scotsman from raising crops for his two cows, oxen (later horses), and chickens and pigs. Their daughter, Violet, married Isaac Carman, a neighbor in Willowvale (1859), one-time owner of the mill there, who became County Superintendent of the Poor. Descendants live in Millbrook. Mr. Slingerland purchased the property in 1903. The old barn near the road, left of the driveway, was torn down about 1912. It was across from this driveway that the "Harris-Husted" house stood.



HARRIS-HUSTED HOUSE IN ORIGINAL LOCATION

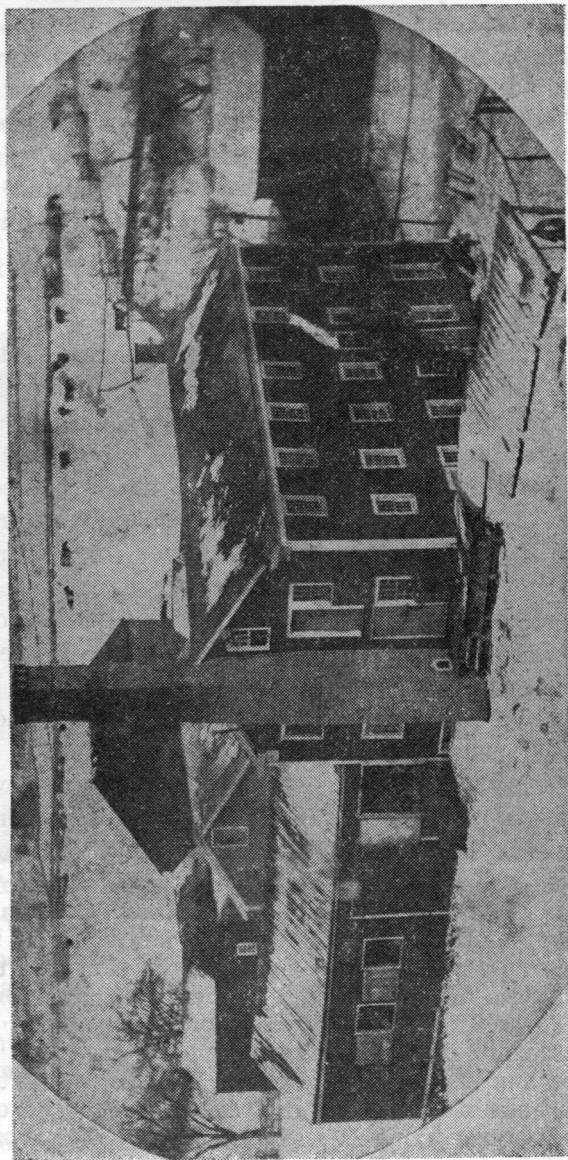
We do not know who first lived in this, the Harris-Husted house, but quite likely Philip Snyder. We do know that John Harris, who married Hannah Righter, a neighbor, son of Seth and brother of Silas, lived in this house until he moved to Winsted in about 1828. and also Jonas Knickerbocker, who became a partner of, and for about two years successor to, Silas Harris (he deceased in 1862), lived in this house in 1863 "and several years previous."^{18A} John and Susan Palmatier lived here

¹⁸ Land Records, *op. cit.*, L. 184, p. 591

^{18A} Huntting, *op. cit.*

some time after its purchase from the "Widow Harris" by Peter W. Husted, in 1863, who was operating the tannery and lived in the old house adjoining it (where Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hetherington and daughter live at present.) The "Rance" (for Van Rensselaer) Kipp family lived for a time in the east half of the Harris-Husted house before moving up on the hill in the now Miss Muriel Pulver's house. Later a daughter, Cassie Pectal, and a grandson, "Kippy" (Theodore or "Ted") Douglas, lived in the west half, and another daughter, Lizzie Kipp Neville, and her family had lived earlier in the east half; so that for many years Kipps (descendants of very earliest settlers of that name in Dutchess County) were Hammertown people.

A British family, the Sadlers, came to Hammetown from Tuxedo, to help in the tanning, Thomas Sadler presumably being skilled in that work when great skill was needed in that day before modern machines had eliminated much of the delicate as well as arduous processes involved. In 1881 William, son of Thomas and father of the late Edward Sadler, purchased the tannery from the Peter W. Husted interests, and tannery property, but not the adjoining house in which the Sadler family then lived, Peter W. Husted, after the death of his wife, having gone to live in Bangall and later with a granddaughter, Mrs. Herman Vedder at Silvernails. Three years later William Sadler and his wife, Ellen E. Aston, sold the tannery property to John Duxbury, who ran a cooperage business there a few years with Russell Bard as helper. Like the scythe factory operation, individual tanneries with hand labor were no longer profitable and could not compete with large modern enterprise. The old building became a hazard, especially the tall chimney, and about 1900, owned since 1891 by Mr. Slingerland, was torn down. Dr. Paul Duxbury, after purchase in 1931 of all Slingerland property on the north side of Route No. 199, graded the old foundation off so that no trace is discernible. Mr. Slingerland purchased the two old houses (one the "Harris-Husted") on either side of the road there from heirs of Peter W. Husted in 1903. The old barn west of the house along the north side of the road was shortly torn or fell down.



PETER HUSTED TANNERY

James H. Smith in his **History of Dutchess County, N. Y.** states that this tannery was built about 1776.¹⁹ If that is so, possibly Philip Snyder had carried on a small operation there, but this seems doubtful. Three generations of Husteds - Peter, Cornelius and Peter W. - operated the tannery. Ledgers of Cornelius Husted for the years 1821-1854 (in possession of descendants Mrs. Julia S. Jordan and Mrs. Charlotte S. Tuttle Kester) reveal that a John Snyder was one of the rather steady workers, who received from \$10 to \$19 a month, John given the largest wage. Hiring was done in the presence of someone, a witness to the deal: \$10 (or whatever) "and if he is smart and attentive" something was to be added in "potatoes," etc., or money, with "washing but no mending." Account was taken of time lost and deducted: "less time going to Rhinebeck; "2 days to wedding;" "½ day to town meeting;" "1 day work on road;" "1 day to camp meeting." An entry for March 28, 1828 states, "Jeremiah Palmatier hired for 7 months at 12 dollars per month. Began work March 29 on Thursday and if I want for 8 months at a per hour - C.H. & J.P." The Palmatier family, another of the very earliest families in Dutchess County) Jeremiah's son John and his wife Susan and children, Mary, Orrin, John and Cora, lived in Hammertown several years and during the 1870s or 1880s in the Harris-Husted house. John later occupied part of the Slingerland house with Giles Duxbury and his daughter "Maggie" (later Mrs. Charles Rudd; Mr. Rudd purchased the farm of the late Anthony Barton across the fields, now owned by Hunting Winans and the house now owned by Mr. Charles Virion - "Monblason"); they being the remainder of the Giles Duxbury family living in that house until another daughter, Mary, Mrs. Slingerland, came with her family in 1891.

To return to the tannery ledger, items sold or charged include the following: 1 (or more) side leather, sole leather, tanning and curing calf skin (or other hide), grain, leather, Calcutta wax, bridle leather, harness leather, plaster, hair, oil, candles, use of horse and wagon, wheat, oats, rye, potatoes, boards, barrel mackerel, hides of cow, sheep, bull, pig, stag (seldom), pasture of cow, etc. There was a great deal of barter. On "Contra" side of ledger would be payment by skins and hides, feet of bark (this to be used in tanning), help in haying, produce of meat, apples, etc., as well as "by cash." Produce was hauled from

¹⁹ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 228

the Hudson River. A bill of lading reads: "at the request of Lieut. Stevens by barge, Dutchess Co. today a Bbl of oranges marked Cornelius Husted, Pine Plains, Dutchess Co., N. Y." Here is a typical entry:

1822	* Isaac Huntting	D.	Contra	Cr.
Nov. 27	To tanning and curing 2 skins	0 2 6	Jan. 5	By 1 calf sold to J. G. Husted 0 8 0
Dec. 12	½ side upper leather		Oct. 5	1 hide 513L at 6
13/		0 13 0	cts	1 4 10
Dec. 31	cash paid John on hide 4/	2 13 0	Dec. 31	1 hide 65 W at 9
	1 sheep skin 2/6	0 2 6	cts	1 11 2
			1 calf skin sold 8/0	0 8 2
			By cash in	0 6 0
		3 18 0		3 18 0

The list of customers reads like an index or census of early settlers. There was a tannery at the Square (Smithfield) and another in Amenia. Smith says that Dutchess County led the state in production in this industry, and Hammertown seems to have done its share for at least half a century and more, when leather was a prime necessity. This was the leather of utility, for harness, boots, shoes, work aprons and breeches.

The tannery and the scythe industry caused much coming and going through the little valley, where there had been a road as early as 1790 for certain, and possibly some earlier, though not over the hill, (as there was no road through the now village before 1785) but around by the old Robert Thomas place (now Hatch), thence to North Avenue to where the traffic light now is. This Salisbury Turnpike (now route no. 199) became the main highway from northwest Connecticut to the Hudson River, chartered in 1802, "the Ulster & Delaware Turnpike," over Winchell Mountain, thoroughfare to New Jersey, northern Pennsylvania, and Washington. This was the route taken by the Moravian missionaries from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to the Shekomeko mission in the 1740s. Early Connecticut writings testify to the contact of residents with Albany, rather than with the eastern part of their Colony and State except in legislative matters. Oxen and horses hauled carts of pig iron, charcoal,

* grandfather of Isaac Huntting, author "Little Nine Partners"

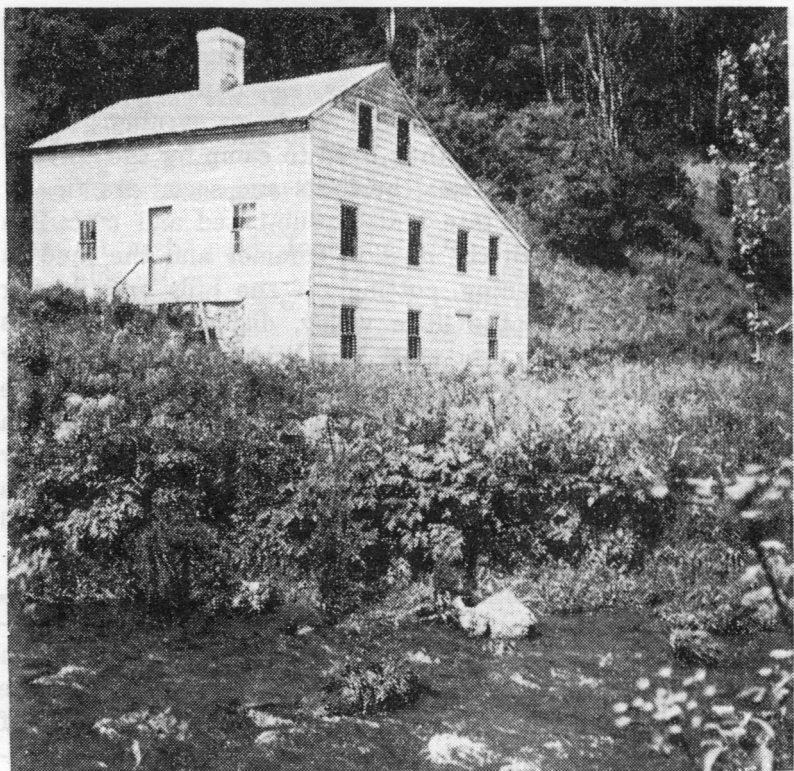
hides, lumber, produce going to and coming from boats on the Hudson.

Droves of cattle, peddlers (one of whom was Jay Gould who slept overnight in Righters' barn) on foot and in wagons, tramps, country circuses, elephants (panicked at the tannery), poor trained animals on chains earning pennies for their captors, gypsies (they liked to camp by the spring) gave excitement to the usual business and social traffic.

In 1915 the State built a sub-based and macadam road, doing away with the dust in summer and the mud in spring and also widening, cutting off the hills and raising thereby the level in the little valley, displacing driveways and some walls. The pretty old iron bridge was replaced by a higher, undecorative one which no longer allowed passage through the creek for thirsty horses, and gone was the fun for children sitting in the carriage and watching the water flowing in ripples beneath them. Gone from the valley was the echoing thud of the horses' hooves as they struck the old wooden planks.

And now that bridge is gone, and the new one, built over where the old scythe works stood, is a concrete open-ended box with the Shekomeko flowing through it over a concrete bottom. The new road makes a high wide arc cutting through the lovely old meadow, going back of the old houses, cutting through the old orchard, and emerging at Righter's Corner. The maples lining the old road will give their shade on a dead-end road, leading to the old houses, well-preserved symbols of the Past.

As many as a hundred families, perhaps more, lived temporarily in the smaller houses in Hammertown, as farm help or renters; the building of the C.N.E. Railroad in 1872, which cut through the northeastern part of the Husted farm, brought some tenants, such as the English and Boice families. At about this time the Duxburys made some efforts to have a milk or other factory established in the old scythe works building or site with its water power. Two advertisements were placed in the **Pine Plains Register**. The last, but impressive remains of this old factory, a wall of great, handcut stones, was demolished, and the great old spring adjoining it, was buried beneath the new bridge, in the 1964-65 reconstruction of the highway, which would also



HARRIS-HUSTED HOUSE IN NEW LOCATION

have demolished the old Peter W. Husted house had not the Little Nine Partners Historical Society moved it to its present site by the creek on land donated by the Estate of Mary D. Slingerland, through its executrices. What of the future? With active farming no longer in the valley, will a sort of suburbia take over?

The following poems memorialized the active youth of the picturesque community enjoyed by so many passing through. Would that another versifier would lament the passing of its phase just ended: its peaceful middle age.

HAMMERTOWN

Written for the "Herald" by Charles Knickerbocker

'Tis winter now, but spring is near,
And A-teen A. T. 5 is here;
And nineteen hundred soon will be
A welcome guest on land and sea.
Old Dutchess County true and tried
Is yet today the nation's pride.

New York State has a claim on thee,
But thou hast none to royalty.
Our famous Hudson marks a line,
A boundary for future time.
Thou art a country rich and strong
For right contending, not for wrong.

Near the Columbia County line,
A factory stood in "fifty-nine" --
But when the civil war began
It changed the entire future plan.
The Colonel died and business ceased
Except the factory farther east.

This, did a corporation buy,
And thought they would the business try;
They built an office, and beside
Repairing did, displaying pride,
And for a while went matters well
But troubles soon the firm befell.

These works at home, no person bought,
And very soon they came to naught.
Of brick and stone were they, and fine,
With wheels and shafts of oak and pine,
But steadily they went to rot
And in a short time they were not.

The hammer's stroke we failed to hear,
It came not ringing on the ear;
The hum and buzz of wheels had ceased,
From duty was the works released.
Distress lay pictured soon around,
And quiet reigned in Hammertown.

The tannery across the way
Fine workmanship did then display;
Now, workmen there have few become,
But yet the place the people shun.
The chimney tall doth trav'lers spy
But perfumes never gratify.

The Colonel's residence was sold
A little cottage quaint and old;
The workmen's dwelling also went,
But not without the heirs' consent.
The grinding works were sold for ought,
With soldier's bounty money bought.

The building built of stone yet stands,
And seems to satisfy demands;
A farmer keeps his milk in it,
And possibly with benefit.
The roof is gone, the dyke is dry,
And marvels man when passing by.

Here, scythes were made the grass to mow,
Before machines were all the go.
Here, labor triumphed in its day;
The men worked not alone for pay.
Here goods as fine as any made
Found market with the jobbing trade.

For many years did business thrive,
The men were daily on the drive;
The firm ambitious were and knew
'Twas policy good work to do.
Harris & Knickerbocker's scythes
Were first to carry off the prize.

But now what doth the passer spy?
Nothing but ruins meet his eye;
The label bore date when the land
Was wrenched from old King George's hand.
In eighteen thirty-five were they
Rebuilt, and most substantially.

The goods were welcomed near and far,
The heart stamp always stood at par,
Throughout this land could they be seen
And second were to none, I ween.
Upon the broad Pacific coast
Did tradesmen of their merits boast.

Australia also for them sought,
And of the New York jobbers bought;
They market on the Gulf coast found,
In short, the whole world well around.
But now they wield no longer sway,
Machines are all the rage today.

C.E.K.

The above was copied from **The Pine Plains Herald**, dated January 30, 1885.

HAMMERTOWN

Twas three and thirty years ago
When I was but a lad,
That Hammertown was all aglow,
A reputation had.
Here men of business could be found,
One Culver did here dwell;
Eight healthy children did abound.
And for them all went well.

One daughter died while young in years,
And Mary was her name;
A son, the eldest as appears,
Died in his search for fame.
The balance moved twelve miles away,
To Harlem railroad near;
The eldest daughter, cheerful, gay,
Was married here - right here.

They were at this date growing gray,
The old folks do I mean;
And Laura soon did move away
Where cares were little seen,
And soon the others married got,
And all things changed became;
New parties anchored to the spot,
Duxbury was their name.

Old Colonel Harris lived across
The road at just this date;
A scythe works had he, they were "boss"
He had a clever mate.
The twain did some fine work here do,
Their goods stood well and high;
And many who these works did view
Will not these facts deny.

Harris and Knickerbocker's scythes
Were not a scanty few;
For years were they truly a prize
Until machines we view.
And then the scythe works went to rack
As fast as they could go;
The cradle works take the same track,
With horses now they mow.

These scythes all round the country went
A good name did they bear;
But they at home were not content,
Few could with them compare.
In California were they found,
And other lands as well;
Success has all their efforts crowned,
But now no more they sell.

Another Hammertown there stood *
Some eighteen miles away;
Eight hammers that were truly good
Did then their call obey.
But after Colonel died they went
To ruin very fast;
The heirs doubtless his money spent,
The income was not vast.

At home we had a place to grind
Some three miles up the stream;
Here did I work, employment find,
Of care I here could dream.
I drove the team when large enough,
Hauling the scythes about;
The hill was steep, the road oft rough,
And here we fished for trout.

* in Taconic, Salisbury, Conn.

One Henry Husted lived next door
To Colonel's cot, and then
Across the bridge ten rods or more
Had Peter's tannery been.
Here did the boys run in when cold
To warm their feet and hands;
But long ago the place was sold
And Sadler changes plans.

In winter here I rode down hill,
And girls oft with us did;
Here noise was rife, 'twas seldom still,
Here now lives soldier Sid.
He fought for colored men and he
Lost in the war a leg;
He fought for black man's liberty,
And made the fellows beg.

A carpenter one dwelling bought,
But he works little now;
The tanner our old dwelling sought,
'Twas homely anyhow;
A colored gentleman bought one,
A cousin did the same;
A farmer here life's cares begun,
McClellan was his name.

An engine in the tan-shop stands,
And ten horse power is it;
This place is now in other hands,
Do not this fact forget.
But Hammertown is quiet now,
No racket there we hear;
The people for a living plow,
And cider make each year.

The world moves on and soon will we
Be called from earth away,
Into that vast eternity
Where comes no night or day.
And all should aim our Lord to please,
Should for salvation try;
Remember He our actions sees,
All flesh are born to die.

C.E.K.

"C.E.K." was Charles E. Knickerbocker,

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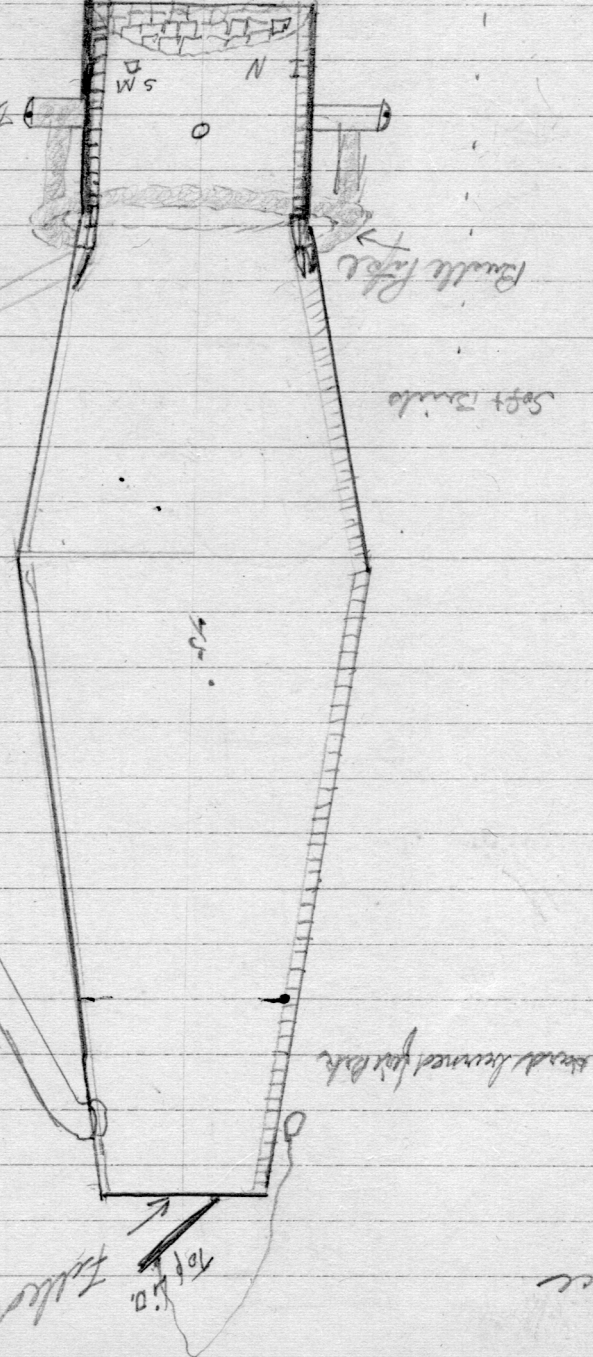
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Thames