Ossining, NY Village History

By William Joseph Reynolds

Early 17th century Dutch maps of the Hudson River Valley show an Indian village, whose inhabitants were part of the Mohegan Tribe, named "Sint Sinck." That phrase, when translated, means "stone upon stone" and refers to the extensive beds of limestone found in the southern part of the village.

In 1685, the Sint Sincks sold their land to Frederick Philipse who incorporated it into his land holdings known as the Manor of Philipsburg. The Manor comprised of about 165,000 acres and extended from Spuyten Duyvil Creek at the tip of Manhattan on the south to the Croton River just north of the Village of Ossining. The land was leased to tenant farmers of Dutch, French, and English origin.

The area remained with the family until the end of the Revolution when the last Lord of the Manor, Colonel Frederick Philipse, was imprisoned for being a British loyalist. His land was confiscated by the Commissioners of Forfeiture of the new State of New York and sold at auction. Many of the farms were sold to the tenant farmers who had work them, especially those who had supported the American cause. At this time the area became known as Sing Sing.

As the eighteenth century drew to close a, the Sing Sing hamlet became a successful port where local farm produce was shipped to New York City from docks at the mouth of today's Kill Brook and Sparta Brook.

On April 2, 1813, Sing Sing became the first incorporated village in Westchester County to be state chartered.

In 1825, construction of Sing Sing Prison began. Native granite was used to build the first cellblock. Commerce and industry flourished throughout the 1800's. The industrial growth included a shoe factory and a stove foundry, both of which relied on convict labor. As the prison became notorious, the village tried to distance itself from the prison's harsh reputation and changed its name to Ossining on March 25, 1901.

Road to Cedar Lane Park

Main Street, Ossining, NY

Sailing on the Hudson near Shattemuc