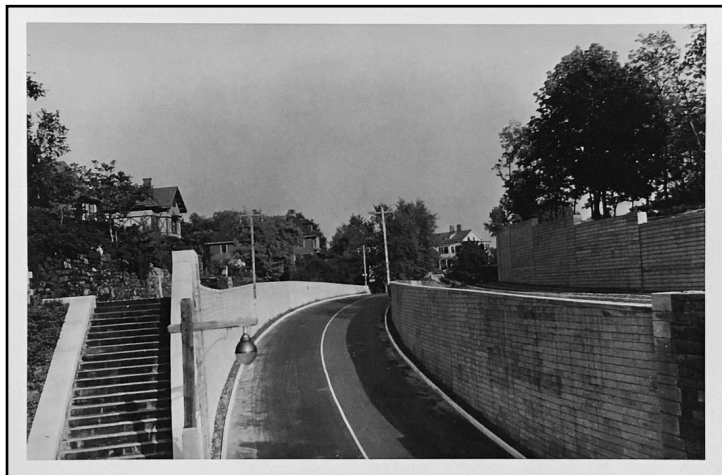


Crossroads: Kappock and Independence, Past and Present

by Jane E House, Congressional shareholder, March 4, 2022

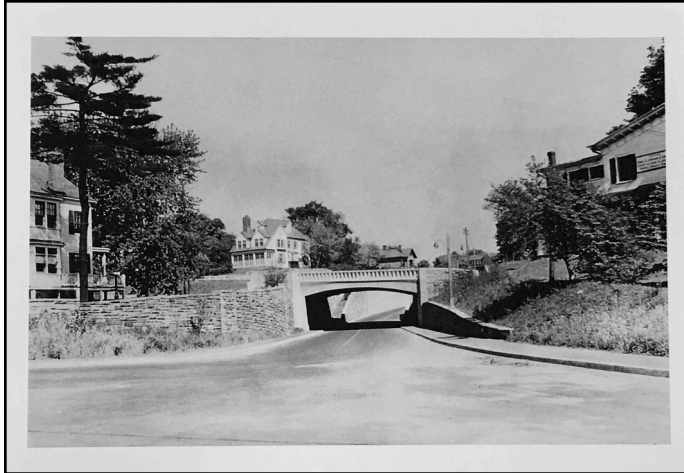
I often wonder what our 609 Kappock neighborhood was like before developers arrived post WWII to build on the strong Spuyten Duyvil bedrock. What people loved, raised families, hunted, farmed, worked, and fought on our hillside? Over my ten years of living here I've discovered how rich our immediate neighborhood is in cultural history; a simple and brief examination of Kappock Street and its intersection with Independence Avenue reveals the intertwining influences of Native Americans, the Revolution, and the Industrial Age.

When Henry Hudson sailed into what is now New York Harbor in 1609 on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, the land was already



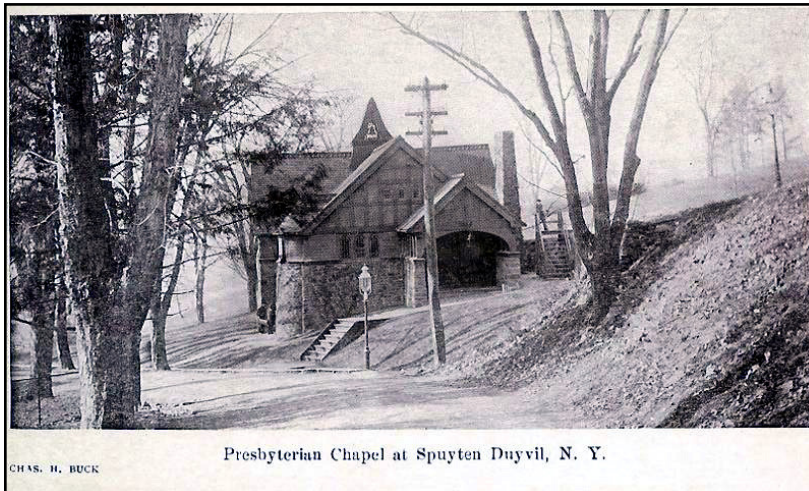
inhabited by many Native American tribes, and particular to this area were the Lenape of the Algonquin family. Kappock is a shortening of the Algonquian word "Shorackappock," meaning "sitting down place at a high height." While I have not yet found any images

of our "sitting down place" in its undeveloped state, two black and white photos fell into my hands, courtesy of Steve Power and former shareholder Steve Huvane. Taken by NYC photographer P.L. Sperr in the 1930s, the first image looks east from the still existing bridge over Kappock, a bridge that was incorporated into the Henry Hudson Parkway. The second image looks east toward the bridge from Kappock and Independence Avenue, a name serving as a reminder



that no less than three rebel forts once stood in our neighborhood. In both photos, one can see the staircase that is still in use, and in the surrounding area, large houses, now replaced by cooperative apartment buildings, including our own 609 Congressional.

Just south of Kappock's intersection with Independence Avenue,



and depicted in the third photo, lies the 1888 Edgehill Church, which once served as the mission chapel for workers at the now vanished Johnson Iron Foundry (1853-1923), a "belching behemoth of the Industrial Age." Taken

in 1903 by Charles M. Buck for his popular postcards, the photo records the isolation of the church compared to today, when the area up the hill to the right holds a playground and athletic courts, and to the left, stand cooperative apartment buildings. Note too the dirt road which is now paved. The church, designed by Francis Kimball, boasts stained glass windows by Louis Comfort Tiffany; designated a New York City landmark in 1980, it was added to the National Register of Historical Places in 1982.

For those interested in further historical research on our neighborhood, see Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, *Names of New York: Discovering the City's Past, Present, and Future Through its Place Names* (2021); and Charles X. Twomey, *Images of America: Northwest Bronx* (2011). If you want to delve still deeper, why not join the Kingsbridge Historical Society: <https://KingsbridgeHistoricalSociety.org>. Have fun!