

Topics for 350th Celebration

1. The Land

- Three and a half centuries ago the area that is known as Eastchester today is two and half times the size that it is today
- The historic town of Eastchester includes all the land stretching from the southern border of Scarsdale (Heathcote Manor) between the Hutchinson and Bronx River down to the northern Bronx and Eastchester Bay
- The original settlement is a land of beautiful lakes, roaring brooks, marshes and meadows, and forest of chestnut, walnut, and oak
- This wilderness is a dangerous place filled with rattlesnakes, wolves, panthers, and bears

2. Native Americans and Anne Hutchinson

- The Leni Lenape that Peter Minuit buys Manhattan Island from are neither primitive nor noble and defenseless
- In 1642 Anne Hutchinson came here because she was persecuted for her religious beliefs by the Puritans in Massachusetts
- A year later there is a brutal massacre of 120 Native Americans by the Dutch
- In retaliation Anne Hutchinson and 14 others are massacred near where Co-Op City is today in the Bronx

3. The Original Settlement

- In 1654 Thomas Pell purchases 9,000 acres of land from 6 Siwanoy chiefs that include large portions of the Bronx and Westchester County
- A year later he encourages settlers from Fairfield, Connecticut and Long Island to start the town of Westchester
- On June 24th, 1664 Pell sells the land that would be named East Chester to Phillip Pickney and James Eustis from Fairfield, Connecticut
- Ten Puritan farm families would come in August of 1664 by boat and settle on land previously occupied by Anne Hutchinson while the land was still under Dutch ownership

4. The Eastchester Covenant

- In 1665 16 additional families joined the original 10 and draft a covenant or mission statement for what the settlement would be like
- The Eastchester Covenant is a blueprint for town development based on moral principles and their Puritan traditions
- The Eastchester Covenant is one of 125 that are drafted throughout New England and adjoining areas
- The principles of the articles in the Covenant state that the town would be based on Christian love and honesty, helping one another, running public affairs jointly, and providing education

5. John Peter Zenger and the Great Election of 1733
 - In 1689 70 Eastchester farmers take part In Leisler's Rebellion, a failed attempt to gain control by ordinary citizens (Leisler was caught and hung)
 - In 1733 East Chester citizens resist an attempt by a corrupt royal governor to fix an election to the colonial assembly
 - A Dutch printer named John Peter Zenger prints an article about this fixed election in the first edition of his newspaper, the *New Weekly Journal*
 - Zenger is later imprisoned for writing other articles but in his 1735 trial is acquitted on the grounds that he is printing the truth

6. The coming of the American Revolution
 - Before the American Revolution the attitude of most citizens of the town is apathetic but Patriot and Loyalist leaders begin to recruit converts
 - In the summer of 1776 patriot Town Supervisor Stephen Ward would imprison his own brother for his loyalist sympathies
 - By October of 1776 George Washington's Continental Army loses Long Island and New York City
 - At the Battle of Pell's Point on October 18th, 1776 Colonel John Glover prevents the British and the Hessians from coming across Eastchester and splitting Washington's army in half

7. The Neutral Ground- The Bloody No Man's Land between British held New York City and Patriots to the North
 - From the late fall of 1776 to the summer of 1783 New York City is under the control of the British
 - Eastchester and large portions of Westchester are not under the control of any government
 - Militia loyal to both sides and roving bands of marauders called Cowboys and Skinners terrorized the country side, killing and looting
 - At the end of the war, Loyalists were forced to relinquish their land

8. After the War Was Over
 - In the present town of Eastchester it is likely that every house was destroyed
 - To rebuild farmers mortgage their farms to pay for livestock, seeds, machinery, and to rebuild barns
 - These once contented people trust no one and become quiet and morose
 - In 1797 Abigail Adams spends the winter in Eastchester with her husband, President John Adams, and describes our town as "a desolate place with not a creature in twenty miles to talk to."

9. The Two Rivers, Cotton, and Marble to the Rescue

- After the Revolution, the Bronx and Hutchinson Rivers provide power and transportation to allow pork, beef, grain, and lumber to NYC from the farms and mills
- As a result of a British blockade of American ports during the War of 1812, the Eastchester Manufacturing Company (renamed later the Tuckahoe Cotton Factory) produces textiles starting in 1814. Today this building is in the second oldest standing cotton mill in America
- On the property of Jonathan Ward, the son of the famous American patriot, Stephen Ward, marble is discovered in 1823
- Tuckahoe marble becomes one of the largest sources of marble in the US, more durable, fireproof, and resistant to rain than other stones. This vein of marble rests along a steep and irregular ridge stretching from Tuckahoe to the north end of Eastchester

10. The Tuckahoe Marble Industry

- Tuckahoe Marble makes this community nationally famous
- Tuckahoe marble is used in important buildings, monuments and statues in New York City, Brooklyn, Washington D.C., New Orleans, Jersey City, Boston, Portland, Chicago, and Newport
- One block of marble could weigh 33 tons, be 150 feet long, 8 feet thick, and 7 feet wide
- In the beginning oxen drag these massive blocks down Marbledale Road, up to the Post Road (Rt. 22 today) and down to the port of Eastchester

11. Here Comes the Train

- In 1844 the newly constructed New York and Harlem River line makes its first stop in Tuckahoe
- Alexander Masterton, the most important figure in modernizing the industry, make use of the train to transport marble
- The train bring Irish immigrants fleeing the potato famine of the 1840's to work both as unskilled quarrymen and also as maids
- This change in the movement of people and goods is the most significant change since the early settlers began making use of the two rivers

12. The Great Real Estate Boom of the 1850's

- Affluent people looking to escape the crowded conditions in New York City build estates throughout the town
- Two of those estates that are still standing are the Crow's Nest in Bronxville and the Fairview Estate in Eastchester

- John Stevens, an affluent businessman in New York City has a vision to build affordable housing for working class people in New York City and in 1850 buys 5 adjoining farms of 365 acres in lower Eastchester
- By 1850 the new village of Mount Vernon has 1400 people, 300 homes, a hotel, a church and a railroad depot

13. One Room School Houses

- While Article 14 of the Eastchester Covenant in 1665 makes provision for the education of the children, it is not until 1729 that the first school house is built
- The first school house in the present town stood at the corner of White Plains and Wilmot Road in 1798 and was one of many
- The present One Room School House operated by the Eastchester Historical Society is built in 1835, moves to its present location in 1869, and closes in 1884
- At the advent of the Civil War, most people can read and write, do some math, and respect their faith and community

14. The Civil War

- A slim majority of the people in Westchester and Eastchester opposed Lincoln and entry into the Civil War
- In August and September of 1862, 41 volunteers from Eastchester answer Lincoln call for 300,000
- These volunteers will fight in every major battle after Gettysburg in Virginia as part of the New York Sixth Heavy Artillery, that consists of over 1,000 soldiers from the area
- On July 18th, 1863 Tuckahoe quarry workers take part in the New York City Draft Riots, tearing up train tracks and threatening to burn down homes of Republicans
- On July 30th, 1864 William Thiselton, an Eastchester sergeant in the NY 6th witnesses the heroic charge of colored troops at the Crater at Petersburg, "No body of men could have fought more bravely..."

15. At the Dawn of the Twentieth Century

- In 1892 Mount Vernon separates as a city, its population having grown tenfold to 14,076 since its inception
- Most people travel by foot, on horseback, aboard a train, or by trolley
- Up to 1895, where Tuckahoe High School is today, is the Allendale Race Track for trotters
- None of the four 18 hole golf courses that later exist have been built
- The Tuckahoe marble quarries were beginning a gradual decline and the major employer in town became Hodgman Rubber factory
- Large portions of the town outside of the two villages are undeveloped

16. William Van Duzer Lawrence builds Lawrence Park

- Lawrence is a Gilded Age millionaire who has a vision to create a suburban haven cut off from the urban ills of society, with no crime, disease, congestion, or filth
- On an abandoned ramshackle farm on a hill starting in 1890, Lawrence builds 2 or 3 beautiful homes and sells or rents them to people of "character and social standing"
- Soon Lawrence Park is known as a famous artist and writer's colony

- In 1898 Bronxville was incorporated as a village and according to the notes historian, Kenneth Jackson, became the prototype of the high prestige, high status suburb

17. The Village of Tuckahoe as the Twentieth Century Begins

- Sitting on a piece of land a little more than half the size of the recently arising affluent suburb of Bronxville is the village of Tuckahoe (incorporated in 1902)
- Tuckahoe, situated between the Bronx River and a ridge of hills that included the marble quarries, had been a center of industry and commerce, for over half a century
- Large number of southern Italians and later African Americans were move in and the village would experience both the positive and negative aspects of growth
- People of different ethnic and later racial background live side by side; there is no room for separate neighborhoods

18. A Community Divided: 1900 to 1930

- There is a good deal of evidence that the government of Eastchester located in the village of Bronxville discriminates against Bronxville in regard to basic services included the schools
- In 1905 the three present school districts in town are formed
- Bronxville and Tuckahoe did not have a high school. Students residing in district 2 Tuckahoe attended Waverly High School along with Eastchester students
- Like the rest of the nation discrimination in all three communities exist.

19. It takes 2 Villages

- 1908: The first 20th Century charity started in Bronxville: The Relief Association of Eastchester
- 1909: Lawrence Hospital
- 1913: The Day Nursery starts by Elizabeth Austin
- 1916: A Settlement House in Tuckahoe: Neighborhood House
- 1919: The first public nurse and the Spanish Flu epidemic
- 1921: The Eastchester Neighborhood Association is formed and professional social workers begin case work

20. The communities' emerging suburban character before the stock market crash

- The town outside of the two villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe experiences the greatest growth 1910 1,837 1930 7815
- Also known as the unincorporated part of the town, the town outside never experiences the communal ties of the 2 villages
- The village of Tuckahoe experiences growing pains as a result of unplanned growth and diminished employment
- Hodgman Rubber factory moves out in 1925 and the last Tuckahoe quarry closes in 1930
- Bronxville has become a restricted, carefully planned, and well landscaped village with an obtrusive business district and high grade apartments

21. The Devastating Impact of the Great Depression

- Financial help from local charities cease and support from state and local relief stop and the social safety net from the federal government does not exist
- In Tuckahoe unemployment runs as high as 33% and 2 hunger marches are planned in Depot Square in Tuckahoe
- World War I Veterans petition the town board for relief and in Eastchester people can their own food, raise animals like pigs, chickens, and goats
- In Bronxville executives lost their jobs, whole blocks of homes stand vacant, and store were empty

22. Coping with the Great Depression

- Public welfare officer worked with the private relief organization to offer financial help and guidance to those who could not take care of themselves
- Amie Dusenberry, last of the Masterton clan, is the last overseer of the poor and the first public welfare officer who becomes a key figure in helping those in need to survive
- Amie works hand end with the private charity to help families to triumph over the challenges of the depression
- Churches provide help, families leave out food for hobos (homeless), and store owners provide credit
- Federal programs like the WPA and PWA provide jobs and erect building like Greenvale School, the Tuckahoe nursery, and the Bronxville library and post office

23. Dealing with Blighted Housing

- Rapid unplanned growth without proper building codes as early as the mid nineteen twenties cause the mayor of Tuckahoe to lament about “the dilapidated condition of its building and property.”
- During the depression the problem became more acute
- A coalition of service and civic clubs, neighborhood associations, the Eastchester Neighborhood Association, and officials in Eastchester and Tuckahoe government begin to address the problem
- In 1939 the Tuckahoe Housing Authority is started and on April 12, 1941 a \$325 loan is secured from the federal government. Construction begin after World War 2

24. Some Heroes from the late Twenties and Thirties

- Mario “Jack Vecciarelli : Scholarship Athlete, Boxer, Businessman, War Hero, and Community Builder
- Eddie Heinzenger: Arguably Eastchester, Greatest Athlete, and War Hero
- Buzzie Bavasi: Bronxville athlete and General Manager of Jackie Robinson after Branch Rickey
- Douglas Van Buskirk from Bronxville: The first to die
- The Kennedy family in Bronxville
- Milt Gibbons and the Police Associates of Tuckahoe

25. World War 2 and the Greatest Generation

- Bob Creamer on the Greatest Generation
- “We came to learn, we leave to serve” Motto on north wall of Waverly.
- Hard work, discipline, and reverence are part of the character of the community
- Trudy Elion and Robert Hitchens from Burroughs Welcome in Tuckahoe win the Nobel Prize for medicine
- The story of the DiRienzo family
- Quote from Carmen DiRienzo “We believed in the American dream. Even though we faced some discrimination, we found more opportunity than we left behind. Our dreams were bigger than the land we left behind
- Captain Edward Woodward and Tuskegee Airmen

26. Since World War 2

- Many events have happened in Eastchester and the two villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe
- It will be left to each community to select those people and events that they wish to celebrate
- One suggestion for Eastchester would be President Nixon coming in 1972 to dedicate the World War 2 memorial in Veterans Park
- One suggestion for Bronxville would be the formation of the Holocaust Commission in 1990
- One suggestion for Tuckahoe would be to highlight the life and sacrifice of Ron Bucca who died during the terrorist attack of September 11th, 2001