

HAMLETS ALONG THE RAILROAD

One of these was Mount Kisco which in 1950 celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of its establishment. Located partly in the Town of Bedford and partly in the Town of New Castle, Mount Kisco drew its economic strength from a large area lying in both townships. It had the further advantage of being somewhat nearer New York City than its two Bedford neighbors on the railroad — a factor that was to prove of particular importance when the era of the commuter opened, some 50 or 60 years ago.

The name of Bedford was incorporated into that of the next railroad community to the north of Mount Kisco, originally called Bedford Station — which was exactly what it was. It was the station that served Bedford Village and the area immediately surrounding it. For many years a stage, carrying passengers as well as mail, plied between Bedford Village and Bedford Station, now known as Bedford Hills.

Shortly after the American Revolution there grew up on Cherry Street, which ran along a ridge to the west of the present village of Katonah, a little hamlet of the same name. Cherry Street boasted its own general store, a harness shop, a village hall and a post office. In 1812 Wood and Whitlock, the hamlet's principal merchants, moved down the hill to a point nearer the spot where the Cross River flowed into the Croton, and there built a grist mill. This new community became known as Whitlockville and soon put Cherry Street into eclipse.

When the railroad opened for service, Whitlockville was a thriving community, with a number of homes, a church, a school, stores, a grist mill and other commercial enterprises. A highway across Wood's Bridge led to Somers, Yorktown and Peekskill, while Cherry Street led to communities to the south.

Unfortunately for the Whitlockville folk, the railroad engineers saw fit to lay out its right-of-way about a mile eastward of their village. Since there was no way of forcing the railroad to come to them, the people of Whitlockville, or some of them, acted after the fashion of Mohammed and the mountain, and went to the railroad. At the nearest point on the road, where a depot building had been erected, a number of residences and places of business soon appeared. Known for a time as Mechanicsville, this community was later named Katonah. Katonah was destined to move again, as will presently be seen. But with this exception the Town of Bedford was beginning to assume the form with which its present-day residents are familiar.

BEDFORD BECOMES "COW COUNTRY"

The coming of the New York and Harlem Railroad to Northern Westchester, introduced a new economic era in the region through which it ran. One of the urgent needs of New York City, as it grew in population, was an adequate supply of milk. The rolling hills and flatlands of Bedford made it ideal for pasturage purposes and thus potentially fitted it to supply a part of the needs of its urban neighbor to the south. All that was needed was a rapid means of shipping the supply of milk —