

TIMELINE for FOREST HOME PARK and HASBROUCK BENCH

Remarks Prepared for the Dedication of the Forest Home Park and the
Rededication of the Hasbrouck Bench

Bruce Brittain September 19, 2015

- Shortly after 1800** Saw mill established in the Forest Home Park, near the current sewer pump station. Later, a cider mill was added. Cider raids were a great sport for Cornell students in the 1880s.
- 1864** First reference to Alfred and Sarah Hasbrouck living in Forest Home (at 2 the Byway). Alfred is a farmer and operates a leather finishing shop on Pleasant Grove Road, making calf hides and kid skins for book covers and ladies' shoes.
- 1864** Son Charles is born in Forest Home, probably at 2 the Byway. (Family eventually moved to 200 Forest Home Drive – house is here, barns and farmland were up on plateau behind.)
- 1880** Charles graduates from Ithaca High School, enters Cornell.
- 1884** Charles graduates with degree in Civil Engineering (age 20).
- 1892** Mother (Sarah) commits suicide by jumping off downstream Forest Home bridge. Was suffering from “insomnia and melancholia caused by attack of the grip.”
- 1893** Charles marries Mary Fobes of Iowa.
- 1902** Father (Alfred) dies, due to “general breaking down.” Leaves house and land to Charles. This is probably when Italianate wing was added to house. House is occupied by Willard M. Kent in Hasbrouck's absence (although the Hasbroucks did spend summers here).
- 1884 -1905** Charles works as bridge engineer:
Detroit Bridge and Iron Co (Detroit)
King Bridge Co
American Bridge Works (Chicago)
American Bridge Co (NY)
- 1905** Charles' health fails (age 40). Quits job, returns to Ithaca, then travels to Texas, Mexico, and California, in vain attempt to regain health.
- 1907** Wife (Mary) dies.
- 1907** Charles buys western end of what is now Forest Home Park.
- 1908** Charles buys rest of Forest Home Park.
- 1910** Charles dies in Pasadena, California (age 45). Is buried in Pleasant Grove Cemetery – 25 ft tall, 24 ton granite monument. Was only child with no children of his own, and his wife has predeceased him. Wills house and land to Cornell. Will states:

I give and devise my old home, with the farm and other real estate that I own at or in the vicinity of Forest Home ... to Cornell University ... as a memorial to my wife, Mary Fobes Hasbrouck, on the condition that the same ... shall not be sold or disposed of by said University so long as it is reasonably practicable for it to hold the same and carry out the wishes of the donor. I earnestly request that this property ... be put to such use as will best subserve the pleasure and enjoyment of the lady students of Cornell University, and would respectfully request that the same be known as the “Hasbrouck Lodge” [Subserve: “help to further or promote”]

House was briefly called Hasbrouck Lodge, used by Cornell to house married students.

1932 Hasbrouck Bench is constructed. Brass plaque states:

In memory of CHARLES A. HASBROUCK of the Class of 1884. A Forest Home boy who gave Cornell University his home and seventy [54?] acres including this ground to be put to such use as would best subserve the welfare of the women students.

Remains of bench are still visible, “preserved” as a ruins. Frank Shipe reported that he and Margery used to make out on Hasbrouck Bench before they were married.

- 1942** Cornell decides that it is “no longer reasonably practical for Cornell University to hold the Hasbrouck Lodge to serve the pleasure and enjoyment of the lady students.” Sells house.
- 1946** Report on Cornell landholdings indicates how farm is being used to subserve lady students:
27 acres – golf course
10 acres – poultry dept, turkey farm
1 acre – transmission building and towers for WHCU
12 acres – woods, Victory Gardens, roads
This land (Forest Home Park) eventually became a park (of sorts), maintained by Cornell Plantations.
- 1960** Construction of Hasbrouck Apartments begins, on former poultry farm (primarily used for married student housing).
- 1992** County road crew damages Hasbrouck Bench. County and Cornell vie for right to rebuild. Cornell wins, but then does nothing (23 years ago now).
- Shortly after 2000** Cornell indicates willingness to divest itself of this park land.
- 2012** Town signs 99-year lease with Cornell for Forest Home Park.
- 2015** Forest Home Park is dedicated and replacement Hasbrouck Bench is rededicated