

CHANGING VISTAS

The Koda-Vista Story

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VIS•TA (vĭs' tə), n. 1. a view or prospect, esp. one seen through a long narrow avenue or passage, such as between rows of trees, houses, or the like. 2. a mental view extending over a long time or a stretch of remembered, imagined, or anticipated experiences.

This book is dedicated to my
neighbors, the people of Koda-Vista –
March, 1983 – Jane M. Grant
A Preview Peek At What's Inside This Booklet

Mysteries solved!

Why Stone and Corona aren't aligned
Why some of our streets lack street lights

Interesting trivia –

Koda-Vista almost had a tennis club
Elmguard Street once had a lending library
The builder of many of our houses later became a well known carver of
carousel horses.
The husband of Margaret Woodbury Strong was once a nearby neighbor

A few chuckles (in retrospect) –

“You can assure the people of Koda-Vista that they do not have to worry
about a gas station on this corner”.
– 1952 letter from owner of property at Corona and Ridge.

Kodak has no immediate plan of construction adjacent to Koda-Vista”.
– 1947 Eastman Kodak policy as quoted by President of Koda-Vista
Community Association.

Some old familiar stories –

A burner at Kodak West had caused some annoyance and “in one
instance a fresh paint job on a house was ruined by a particularly heavy
cloud of smoke and soot”.
– 1937 letter from KVCA President to Eastman Kodak.

PREFACE

Many neighborhoods across America have unique features which distinguish them from others, and so it is with this neighborhood called "Koda-Vista". Indeed, the fact that this collection of people, houses, and commercial establishments can be called by the name "neighborhood" is somewhat unique in modern suburbia.

All neighborhoods share a common characteristic, too. They reveal American history in miniature. Many of the small-scale happenings in Koda-Vista mirror the larger scale American past.

It is that extensive record of the so called "important" happenings (wars, political upheaval, social unrest, economic fluctuation) which goes by the name of "history". But, the everyday comings and goings of ordinary people have a place in history, too. Perhaps this brief record of one small neighborhood in America is more of a real history than what we have been taught to think of as history.

It is the story of births and deaths, celebrations and disappointments, buying and selling, disagreements and compromises. It is the story of people like you and me, and a few who aren't like any of us. It is a story that has lived in the minds of some of our older residents, and they have been kind to share it. Now it is a story that belongs to all of us.

BOUNDARIES

The KV neighborhood consisted originally of the streets planned by the Kodak Employees Realty Corporation in the mid-1920's. Corona, Allerton, and Hammond were developed first while Malden, Merrick, Acton, and Ayer were developed later. Vista, Hoover, Elmguard, and some parts of Malden were not part of this corporation's property, but were developed independently and eventually dedicated to the town. In 1952, these streets were voted into the KV Community Association.

An easy way of distinguishing the area developed by Kodak Employees Realty Corporation from other tracts in our neighborhood is to observe street lighting patterns: streets with lights were planned by KEREC, while those without lights were not part of the original KV and thus, not part of the lighting district.

This booklet will also deal somewhat with adjacent areas, since happenings there have impacted upon KV.

THE HAZY PAST

To picture this immediate area in colonial times, the reader must use a great deal of imagination. In the mind's eye, erase the homes, the asphalt and concrete, the commercial establishments, the churches and schools. Let a large forest grow up in place of the white man's fixtures.

Right here in KV there was probably a large stand of beech, and sassafras, and maple. There may have been some sort of Indian pathway through the area, but most of the nearby Indian activity was centered south of us along a large ridge which had once been the gravelly shoreline of a glacial lake. This Indian path is now the site of Ridgeway Avenue; at 400' above sea level, it is a higher ridge than what today's Greece residents call "The Ridge" (route 104).

Archaeological evidence points to the importance of the ridge path (Ridgeway) to the Indians: several burial sites, and even a village have been unearthed close to what is now the intersection of Mt. Read and Ridgeway. There are no recorded discoveries of Indian artifacts in the immediate KV area.

The probable reason that this Indian footpath did not become the main road for white settlers was that early surveyors found the path to be so rough and transversed by so many ravines, that it was judged unfit for extensive use as a road. Instead, they laid out a straighter road, which in some places coincided with the geological ridge and Indian footpath. Thus, Ridge Road, sometimes called "Little Ridge Road" was born.

By 1804, Ridge Road was cut out of the forest as far west as Long Pond Road, although it was narrow, muddy, and scarcely deserving to be called a road. Necessities imposed by the War of 1812 helped to change this. It became a military route; in 1813, \$5,000 of state funds turned the lane into a passable wagon road.

Then came the onslaught of opportunity seeking pioneers. Many coaches and wagons passed our area, sometimes stopping at the taverns which dotted the ridge. At least two were in our town, one located near Latona Road, on the site of the present Falls Cemetery, and another in what is now Streb's Steak House.

Stage coach traffic on the Ridge reached a peak in 1824, when work on the Erie Canal necessitated heavy usage. After the western end of the canal opened, the amount of commercial traffic diminished; water travel was cheaper and often more comfortable.

According to records of land ownership, KV area was included in a large parcel held by a Sir John Lowther Johnstone of Webster Hall in Scotland. It is

doubtful that he ever lived here, or that he even had any interest in the land except as an investment.

After his death, the land was sold through the services of an agent to Aaron Lay of Gates. The year was 1815. At that time, the KV area was part of Gates, since the town of Greece did not exist prior to 1822. In that year, Greece was formed out of the northern part of Gates.

Not much is known about the 19th century farmers who lived in our neighborhood area, except for their names. It seems likely that they devoted much of their acreage to orchards, since nearness to Lake Ontario made for ideal conditions for fruit farming.

In fact, this area is so ideal that one of the earliest nurseries in Monroe County was established near our neighborhood. Across from the present site of Greece Town Hall were the nurseries of Asa Rowe; he specialized in fruit trees and grapevines in the 1830's. His holdings included land in the Koda-Vista area. Records of land ownership, specifically, the abstract for the lot at 107 Merrick Street, show that he purchased land which included part of our neighborhood area in 1815.

The surname of Lay appears on maps and in abstracts from the early 1800's to the 1920's. F.W. Lay was the owner of a large area that included the future Koda-Vista. He was a fruit farmer and also a trustee of school #11, organized in the 1850's.

An 1877 lithograph of his farm shows details which reveal the prosperity of Frederick Lay's farm business. A fence completely surrounds the well groomed yard and residence. Although no persons are seen tending to the orchards, there are a man and a woman playing croquet. This lithograph appeared in a history of Monroe County published in 1877. Pictures of residences were commissioned by individual owners; in fact, one had to pay in order to appear in the book. The prosperous state of the Lay farm may have been enhanced by the artist, but Lay's position as school trustee, and indeed, his very presence in the book, indicate that he was a pillar of the rural community.

The Lay name continued to be an important one in this vicinity. In later years, Chet Lay would provide stables in Lay Road (Mt. Read south of Ridge) for the horses that pulled Eastman Kodak wagons. Kodak's Distribution Center is built on land that formerly belonged to George Lay.

NEAR THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

In 1895, the section of Ridge adjacent to Koda-Vista was still a dirt road known variously as "The Ridge", "Lewiston Avenue", and "Little Ridge Road". It was at this time that Robert Dyson hitched up his wagon, drove down that

country road, and decided to move his farming operations from his Manitou Road holdings to land that would later become Koda-Vista.

The new farm was a 39 acre parcel which he had purchased from two brothers named King for \$4,875 which is about \$125 per acre. The land extended along the Ridge from a ditch parallel to and between Elmguard and Ayer Streets over to a line just east of Hoover Drive (although none of these streets existed then).

Dyson had a pear orchard in the general area of what is now Acton Street. Cherry trees were planted where Malden Street now lies. Other fruits and berries were raised on the primary commercial farm.

In 1902, Dyson decided to move his family from the Manitou Road location. He and a carpenter-helper built a white frame house for his wife and daughters, Nellie and Hattie. The house still stands where it was built, although its location is now a corner (#1387 Ridge Road at the east side of Ayer). According to a 1902 county map, it was one of only four homes on the south side of Ridge between Eddy Road (Mt. Read) and Fetzner Road. Dyson's barn stood behind the farmhouse, approximately where the homes at #32 and #26 Ayer are now located.

Mr. Dyson later acquired other land in the vicinity, including the woodlot on Mt. Read just north of Thorpe Crescent and also a lot fronting on the north side of Ridge where his daughter Nellie still resides.

Shortly after the farmhouse was built, Dyson expanded his agricultural operations by building a "dryhouse" on his property. This was a familiar business, for he had been involved in an apple-drying venture in Illinois before returning to Monroe County in the 1880's or 90's. In fact, one mechanical part of the operation on Ridge Road was invented and patented by him.

Hand operated machines peeled and sliced the apples. Slices were placed on trays and stacked up inside a tall "dumb-waiter" type mechanism. Inside this structure, they were treated with the fumes of burning sulfur to prevent discoloration and kill bacteria. After sulfuring, apples were sent upstairs and spread on lath strips to dry. Although Dyson's fresh fruit was sold in local markets, his dried apples were destined for faraway places; daughter Nellie recently discovered a letter of inquiry to her father from Russia.

The dryhouse building still stands. After the drying business was discontinued about 1912, the building was converted to a residence. After that it became Mrs. Drake's grocery store, then a liquor store; now it is the location for Babin's Coins and Curios at #1439 Ridge Road.

The farm was well-run and successful enough so that eventually a tenant farmer was needed. Various tenants resided in a small house situated south of the dryhouse on the lane through the pear orchard. The lane lay approximately where the driveway between Erwin's Dry Cleaners and the coin shop is now situated.

This little house has had additions and has been moved somewhat from its original location, but if you look closely at the home at #38 Acton Street, you can see the outline of the original structure. Moreover, this is probably the oldest building in Koda-Vista, for it was not built by Dyson, but by some previous farmer.

Besides being a good commercial and agricultural location, the farm was also a fine place to raise a family. Nellie Dyson Carter, now in her eighties and living in a house on Ridge, opposite Koda-Vista, has detailed many of the everyday delights of growing up in rural Greece in the years before World War I.

NELLIE CARTER'S GREECE

School was an important part of Nellie's life. The "3 R's" were taught in a 2-room schoolhouse called #11 school, or sometimes the "Lay District", presumably because Frederick W. Lay was an original trustee. The half acre schoolyard was donated to the school district in 1854 by Charles Filer. It was situated near the corner of Ridge and Eddy Road, where the skating rink is now located. Although the school site was unchanged from 1854 to 1928, the brick building which Nellie attended was not the original facility. This was an addition to a wooden structure.

The school's two teachers boarded with local families. Once when a host family had a bout with Scarlet Fever, the teacher left their home and came to stay with the Dysons. This boarding practice continued until the early 1920's when Nellie herself was a trustee of school #11.

Population was sparse in this part of the county; moreover, school attendance regulations were not strictly enforced. This helps to explain why Nellie and a boy from Weiland Road were the only 8th graders from school #11 who traveled to Charlotte to take their first Regents exams and to subsequently attend the four year high school. Nellie would walk up the Ridge to Lake Avenue to catch a ride to school; sometimes she would even walk the Lake Avenue stretch to save the 5¢ carfare! She was one of 9 graduates who comprised Charlotte High School's class of 1916.

When school was not in session, there were picnics with friends on the cliff overlooking the ravine which has virtually disappeared from the present day landscape. This feature was formed by the Paddy Hill Creek bed and was located on the property since occupied by the former Holiday Inn and the Mascot professional building at 1577 Ridge Road.

The original creek has been diverted, filled-in and sent through culverts and underground pipes to the extent that the Paddy Hill Creek we now know (along the northern boundary of Hoover Drive schoolyard) is literally a “drop in the bucket” compared to the stream that existed in the early 1900’s.

Nellie’s friends came to play from neighboring farms, but there were places where little girls did not go in those days. Gus Weiland was a nearby landholder with an establishment that has been referred to both as a “hotel” and “saloon”. Weiland’s young son was welcome in the Dyson home, but Nellie was not allowed to play at his home behind the hotel.

Weiland’s Pine Tree Inn was located at the corner of Eddy Road and Ridge for many years under various owners. While it is difficult for us to picture Ridge as a dirt road, it is even harder to picture pine trees clustered around a rural drinking establishment where the West Ridge Road Professional Building now stands. Ridge and Eddy Road (called Lay Road south of Ridge and also known as Scott Road) intersected then; the overpass is a fairly recent development.

As a youngster, Nellie watched the construction of a home just east of the Dyson farmhouse. Mr. Sawyer, a successful Rochester businessman built an eye-catching house with gingerbread trim and a turret. A large barn which served as a carriage house was also constructed on the property.

Near the home was an elm tree which would one day in the future (1924) find itself at the corner of a new street. It was the Sawyer’s elm which would “guard” the entrance to Elmguard Street. The large white house there (1367 Ridge) retains much of its Victorian charm. An interesting thing has happened to the Sawyer barn. (See pg. 13).

Nellie remembers summertime walks back to a water filled quarry on the southern edge of the farm. Digging and quarrying operations had ceased even in those pre-World War I years. According to three independent sources, this depression was more the depth of a gravel or sand pit than a stone quarry. On a 1927 topographical map, it appears to have been just south of the homes at #211 and #191 Malden Street. It was drained by a ditch which formed the eastern boundary of the Dyson property and which would later be the low spot which homeowners on Ayer and Elmguard found to be a source of mosquitoes and nuisance in their backyards. Reminders of the ditch are most apparent in the side yard of the home at #184 Malden.

Two different offices within Kodak stated that the company filled in the depression with inert materials such as ashes, boiler slag and demolition debris. Waste chemicals were not buried here, but taken to a special dump. The Environmental Management Council of Monroe County confirmed that information.

Another pond was enjoyed by Nellie and her friends. It was located south of Vista Drive and has its own interesting story in the 1950's. (See pg. 35).

In the winter there was ice skating near the "gully" where Stoneridge Plaza now stands. The gully was the continuation of the Paddy Hill Creek bed; near it were several ponds. The Keene family would come there to cut ice for their summertime refrigeration needs. Their home, greenhouses and ice-storage barn were situated east of Eddy Road on Ridge where the Sunoco gas station is now located (across from Kodak parking lots).

Nellie probably took a great interest in this ice cutting and storage process, for one of the workers was a young and handsome Englishman who lived with the Keenes since his arrival in America. His name was George Carter. In 1916, he and Nellie were married in another house which Mr. Dyson had built on the farm. It was next to the dryhouse and would later become a rental property for him. In recent years, this building has housed Cass's Funeral Home and Royal Oak Realty.

For a while, Nellie and George lived on Stone Road, but most of their married life was spent on Ridge. Little by little, the landscape and landmarks were transformed into what now exists. It is interesting to reflect on the fact that present day residents barely notice these places that were so important to one who has literally lived out her life on Ridge Road.

MARGARET STEELE'S GREECE

While Nellie experienced a girlhood on the Ridge at the turn of the century, Margaret Brown Steele came to the area during the years of World War I. Her father, Charles Brown was a business partner of Leveritt Lee; together they operated a general store on Ridge to the east of Eddy Road, the Ridge Road Food Shop.

Margaret's mother was apprehensive about moving to the country from Rochester, but was encouraged when she learned that a house with indoor plumbing and gas lighting could be rented from Robert Dyson. It may have been a dryhouse at one time, but according to Margaret, presently of Holyoke Street, it was the only one to be rented in this area with the conveniences of urban living.

Life was small town style with Charles once telling his daughter, "I just talk about the weather", since gossiping with his customers was a risky activity: many of the Greece folks were related to one another. The family attended Greece Baptist Church, although Mr. Brown claimed he was not a Baptist "by choice". Since it was the nearest Protestant Church, persons of many denominational backgrounds worshipped there.

Margaret attended the same brick schoolhouse that had served Nellie Carter. She remembers the bell calling youngsters to class at 9:00 and the large oak tree that provided shade during recess. She recalls that although it had outdoor bathroom facilities, the schoolhouse was considered well-equipped, for it was heated by a furnace, rather than a wood stove. Maintenance of this equipment was the duty of the teachers.

During her years at the school, enrollment declined; this is perhaps traceable to the fact that in 1916, the city of Rochester annexed the area of Greece in which Eastman Kodak was located, so some youngsters would then have been transferred to city schools.*

After grammar school, Margaret had her choice of high schools: Spencerport Charlotte, or "Kodak High". She chose the latter since it was nearest; Kodak High occupied a portion of the top floor of school #41 on Ridge Road. As enrollment increased, a separate facility was built for secondary students and was named John Marshall High School.

When the Browns first moved onto the Ridge in 1914, it was a dirt road; it was paved with bricks in the early 1920's. This modern pavement proved unsatisfactory for the Brown family. The sound of the horses' hooves grew unbearably loud, "especially at 3:00 or 4:00 AM when the Belgian farmers took their produce to the city". So, in 1924, Charles Brown bought a lot from Julius Miller, the new owner of the Sawyer house and of what was labeled the "Elmgard Subdivision" on a 1924 county map.

He built a sturdy house at #125 Elmgard and the irritating sound of the hooves was diminished. The Browns must have given good reports of life on Elmgard, for former business partner Lee soon built a home next door at #119.

While Margaret lived on Elmgard she saw Julius Miller make some changes in the large corner house he now owned. Miller, who was an optician in Rochester, moved the carriage house/barn from his lot to the east side of Elmgard. He converted the structure to a house and then sold it. This is the home at #126. A former owner who grew up there was delighted to explain to visitors how her living room had once stabled horses!

Brown's store closed its doors in 1927, outpaced by the modern Mohican Market on Ridge near Dewey (in Simon's furniture store building). This same story would be repeated years later when Koda-Vista residents stopped patronizing the Mohican in favor of the newer and closer "Red and White" Store. This latter grocery was located in a building it shared with Cook Hardware at 1451 Ridge Road. It also went out of business due to stiff competition, this time from the Star Market of present day and located in Stoneridge Plaza.

* Some data to dramatize the economic impact upon Greece of the city's annexation of Kodak lands: In 1918, the town's total assessed valuation was listed as \$10,856,782. In 1919, it was down to \$4,266,276.

It was Margaret Steele who first mentioned the possibility that Margaret Woodbury Strong was a one-time Ridge Road resident. This theory was seemingly confirmed by Nellie Carter, whose father sold acreage to a party who in turn sold it to three Strong brothers, Homer, Charles, and Bill (L. Wilton). A 1918 map shows a parcel of 24 acres with a house under the name of Homer Strong.

Although he had a law practice near Schenectady, Homer Strong moved to Rochester and founded Homer Strong and Company, "a small tool and steel company", on State Street* He married Margaret Woodbury in 1920. By this time he had sold his land to various others, including his brothers and W. N. Britton.

Margaret Steele recalls a fire in the Strong home around that time, a fire which routed the occupants in the nighttime. She always believed that the woman who ran from the house clutching her pearl necklace was Mrs. Homer Strong. It now seems more likely it was Mrs. Wilton Strong.

Mrs. Strong's biographer, Betsy Brayer, believes it highly unlikely for Margaret Woodbury Strong to have resided in her husband's former Ridge Road home. While the couple honeymooned, the Woodbury family purchased and prepared a house on Culver Road for them. According to diaries and other records this was their first home. Charles Strong Jr. now of Fishers, also had no recollection of them living there. Of course, this information does not preclude an overnight visit of the Homer Strongs to the home that had become the residence of the Wilton Strongs.

At the time of Homer's marriage, when brother Bill was on the Ridge, brother Charles occupied the small residence that had once been Dyson's tenant house. What a striking contrast exists between that small place and the large, famous Allen's Creek estate on which Homer and Margaret would settle in 1937.

What became of the Strong's Ridge house is somewhat clouded, although William Riker of Corona Road recalls a home being wrecked to make way for Schraft's, the forerunner of Holiday Inn. Much of the debris was simply used to fill in the ravine which was on that property for so many years!

A MAN WHO CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE

As he became older, Robert Dyson gradually divested himself of much of his property. In the early 1920's he sold his remaining holdings west of the pear orchard lane (now he driveway between Irwin's and the coin shop), while retaining the remaining eastern acres for his wife and family. Most of the land eventually came into the hands of a man who had a pivotal role in the development of our neighborhood, our town, and, because of his association with

* From Mr. Strong's obituary

George Eastman, the entire Rochester metropolitan area. This man was Willis N. Britton.

Early 20th century maps are peppered with the Britton name. His holdings were primarily on the west side of the river with many in Greece. He once told his young daughter that he was a farmer, but this puzzled the youngster, for he wore a business suit, rather than overalls, and he had a downtown office.

His daughter, Avis Britton Miller, now in her 80's, talked about her father in September 1981. She called him an "orchardist". Much of his land was planted accordingly, but several of his acquisitions bore different "fruits".

Mr. Britton purchased some land and turned it into subdivisions, such as the Knickerbocker farm off Dewey Avenue, where he named one street for his daughter. Other land was sold to Eastman Kodak. What he called the "Todd Farm" was 159 acres which now contain many Kodak buildings which Koda-Vista residents view from their homes. (See 1902 map).

He also owned Wagg's Corners (Southwest corner of Ridge Road and Lake Avenue) and even played a role in Kodak's acquisition of the other corner at the intersection, thus paving the way for "Kodak Park".

Mrs. Miller has described her father as a "business associate" of George Eastman. She explained that Eastman considered moving his corporation out of its present location, and perhaps even out of Rochester, due to lack of water supply and railroad tracks. Britton went about looking for land where he could pay the owner for the right to lay Kodak's water pipes.

She recalls the excitement in her family when her father was scouting for shoreline property. How wonderful it would be to own a cottage! Her girlish enthusiasm was later dampened when she realized that he was looking for land for Kodak's pumping station.

An interesting story surrounds Eastman's desire for accessible rail transport. The amount of coal that could be brought to the factory via horse-drawn wagon was deemed insufficient for Kodak's projected expansion; moreover, certain state laws had made it difficult to build new tracks across main thoroughfares.

About 1907 Britton went to Albany to talk with state officials about a rack across Ridge Road. They hinted that tracks already laid down were seldom torn up. When he returned, his crews began laying the needed tracks; they worked all night to complete the section across Ridge and Palm Street. In the wink of an eye, so to speak, Kodak had its needed rail spur. These tracks have since been abandoned in favor of roads and rails designed to run underneath city streets.

Mrs. Miller tells other stories which are more directly related to Koda-Vista. She speaks of her father's purchase of the Dailey farm (Robinson farm on map) and of her brother's family living in the original farmhouse. This was the white house with broad porch and cupola that stood for many years at what is now the southeast corner of Hoover drive and Ridge Road. One later occupant of the home claimed it was built by a sea captain, but this cannot be confirmed. It seems likely that the person confused two different stories.

Large gardens behind the home extended down to the ravine. Forget-me-nots and yellow iris were abundant. The home was apparently as handsome on the inside as it was on the outside, with a circular staircase as a prominent feature. The house was torn down in 1975, a victim of vandalism and of fears by a new owner of further damage and fire.

In the early 1920's, Mr. Britton decided to build a home on the two lots to the east of the Dailey farmhouse. This was the large yellow concrete house with green tile roof which stood from approximately 1925 until 1975.

Its walls were made by a gadget which Britton patented. His "VanGuilder Hollow Wall Machine" was a mold which consisted of separated chambers which held wet concrete. As the concrete hardened, the machine as moved along until, section by section, a wall was formed.

To the rear of the home was a roque court, possible the only one that has ever existed in the Rochester area. Roque was a game that Britton had learned in Florida. Avis Miller describes it as a type of technical croquet which utilized short mallets, narrow wickets, and a hard surface court edged with raised curbing. This striking home was also demolished by the new owner in 1975.

A 1924 map shows that a portion of Britton's holdings had already been sold to Kodak to form the Koda-Vista subdivision. Although the original core streets were laid out then, houses had not been built.

Another Britton parcel bordered by Ridge on the north, Koda-Vista on the south, and the Strong property on the east was called the "Brittonridge Subdivision". Today there are three houses on the Ridge between Hoover Drive and the Mascot Professional Building are what is left of that tract.

The map also shows a road to the west of the Britton (Dailey) home, but it was a road that would exist only on a few maps and in Willis Britton's dreams. He wanted to lay out Brittonridge Boulevard as the thoroughfare between Ridge and Driving Park. It was planned as an alternate route for residents of Greece whose destination was downtown Rochester. But Kodak has plans for the parcels it had purchased from Britton; the boulevard had vanished by the time the 1928 county map was printed. Instead, Britton laid out a street perpendicular to the Ridge and

named it for the man who was the United States President between 1929 and 1933.

One of Britton's real estate deals had greater impact upon our neighborhood than all the others. In 1928, he conveyed a little over five acres to the local school district for purposes of erecting a school building. This land would belong to the district in perpetuity as long as it was used for educational purposes. A breach of the contract would cause the land to revert to the Britton estate. This is one of the reasons why Greece Central School District has not closed or sold Hoover Drive School. The original school yard was expanded some 20 years later when four more acres were sold to the district by the Britton family.

When the building first opened in 1929, it was called the Willis N. Britton School, but various architectural additions and alterations have obscured the original name. The earliest records of the Koda-Vista Community Association show that the school building was the center of the community. This was where discussions took place, debates raged, and compromises were agreed upon within our organization. It's no wonder that Avis Britton Miller regrets that this building is no longer called by the name of its benefactor.

Willis Britton has left his imprint in various Rochester locations, but perhaps none so concretely as in our neighborhood. Not only did he give us land for a school, but he also put the "Koda" into our vista.

FROM FARM TO SUBDIVISION

When Robert Dyson sold the western portion of his farm, he retained the small parcel which contained his house, his barn and other buildings, and which lay between the pear orchard lane and the eastern ditch. Mr. Dyson was growing older and this smaller farm was worked mainly by tenants. Mr. Dyson died in 1922.

A few years later his widow Lucy decided to give up this land. Nellie Dyson Carter recalls how proud her mother was – proud of herself – for having assertively marched up to the Kodak office and offered the land for sale. Kodak bought it for \$21,000.00.

The fact that the land for the Koda-Vista tract was purchased at two different times had a surprising effect upon this neighborhood and upon the entire town of Greece: the misalignment of Stone Road with Corona can be traced to this happening!

As Kodak purchased the land from W.N. Britton, it set aside a particular section for what would become Koda-Vista. When Kodak Employees Realty Corporation originally planned the street layout for the neighborhood, the parcel

in consideration was bordered on the east by the pear orchard lane. To the best of Nellie Carter's knowledge, this lane was in alignment with Stone Road; it would have been a fine location for a street in the new subdivision.

The problem was that Kodak did not own the eastern side of the lane at this time, and thus could not build houses on both sides of the street. The solution was to move the location of the street slightly west so that home could be built on both sides. And so, Corona came to be the first street in the subdivision, located exactly where it is today!

The fact that the streets were not in alignment created little controversy. This section was basically a rural one; few people foresaw the post-war rush to the suburbs and the subsequent development of Ridge Road as a main thoroughfare.

One person did try to block the plan. This was a Mr. Elliot. He was a real estate man from Rochester who had purchased some Dyson land north of Ridge. Perhaps his interest in preventing Corona from being located where Kodak wanted it was related to his business and a possible desire to purchase the remainder of the Dyson farm. Whatever the case, nothing came of his complaint, for he died in the midst of his efforts.

An early map of Koda-Vista shows the streets planned by Kodak Employees Realty Corporation plus a few which never materialized. One shows Malden Street connected to Mt. Read. Another map indicates that there was some plan to eventually link the streets of the tract with adjacent land still owned by Willis Britton.

A 1927 map shows a "Mirror Street" beginning at the northern end of Merrick Street and running in a westerly direction along the bank of the stream bed. Two other unnamed streets begin on the west side of Merrick, but are shown as dotted lines, indicating that they were only proposed. Presumably the idea for these roads died when Mr. Britton donated his land to the school district.

The home at #137 Merrick is probably of more recent construction partly because this lot was kept vacant for awhile to accommodate one of those proposed streets. The vacant lot between #91 and #85 Merrick would have been the location of the other street; it is now owned by the town because a sewer line runs beneath it.

How Koda-Vista streets acquired their names is a mystery. Hopefully a postscript can someday be added to this story with the information. Neither a K.E.R.C. real estate salesman nor the home builder nor the early residents have known the origin of our street names. One conjecture is that Willis Britton laid out the streets and named them as he had done elsewhere in Greece and Rochester, but his daughter could not confirm this.

THE KODAK EMPLOYEES REALTY CORPORATION

Exactly how and why Kodak got into the area of housing is a bit mysterious too. There is very little information about it in the corporate archives. What is available is rather sterile. For example, we know that Kodak Employees Realty Corporation was incorporated in 1921, but we don't know whose brainchild it was. A ledger and journal were kept by the K.E.R.C., but these are no longer in existence. All of the officers and directors of the corporation are now deceased, with one exception, and that person has been uncommunicative from his Florida residence.

According to available records, the K.E.R.C. was organized for the purpose of "acquiring real estate and construction of homes for employees of the Eastman Kodak Company". A former treasurer of Kodak, J. Donald Fewster, believes that the corporation developed in response to the post-World War I housing shortage.

With capital stock of \$250,000.00 the corporation went about purchasing various properties. The records mention the "Bonesteel Farm" and properties on Wilton Avenue, Dewey Avenue, and Clay Avenue. George Long, a builder employed by the corporation has mentioned working on the Bonesteel tract in 1925. This area includes Falmouth Maynard and Everett streets.

After Koda-Vista was established, the K.E.R.C. began the neighborhood tract in Brighton. Mr. Long also mentions the "Rowlands Tract", begun in 1934 near Allen's Creek in Brighton.

The activities of the K.E.R.C. apparently drew to a close about 1942. And so the corporation that made home owning possible for our predecessors faded away and left few clues about its origin.

It seems curious that this seemingly progressive move on the part of a 1920's corporation has such brief documentation in the archives of Kodak. On the other hand, we do not know to what extent the realty corporation was developed for self serving reasons. For example, was it designed to woo employees?

Paul Kramer of Merrick Street added some helpful information when he mentioned that the first president of the K.E.R.C., Frank Lovejoy, had a reputation for being greatly concerned with employee welfare. Mr. Lovejoy also served as president of Kodak from 1934 – 1941. Perhaps the realty corporation was his idea.

Of perhaps the idea came right from "the top" – George Eastman. With his reputation for philanthropy, it is conceivable that he developed the idea which

helped employees with housing needs. Gleason Works accomplished a similar move with its Brighton Terrace subdivision (Nunda Blvd).

Mr. Barnes believes that there were other American corporations engaged in this practice. The 1920's were boom times. There was great faith in real estate as an investment; moreover, population was expanding at a rapid rate. The need for housing was accentuated when World War I ended. To a great extent then, it was the times that helped to bring about the K.E.R.C. and our neighborhood.

In all fairness to Kodak, it must be mentioned that the corporation did not abandon the neighborhood after it was launched. It was the good-heartedness of the company that prevented numerous mortgage foreclosures during the economically depressed 1930's.

A NEIGHBORHOOD IS BORN

Who were the first people to live choose living here and why did they choose it? Most of them worked nearby at Kodak Park. The tract also provided them with urban housing in an almost rural setting. There were chemists, middle management personnel, workers on the assembly line and researchers.

Although a degree of diversity existed, most of those who signed on as charter members of the Koda-Vista Community Association had Anglo-Saxon names. The 1928 list of 60 signatures shows one name of probable Polish origin and no recognizable Italian names. Although this represents a small sampling of Kodak employees, this list is probably quite representative of the ethnicity of the total Kodak work force of that era. Nowadays, Koda-Vista as well as Kodak Corporation enjoy the richness of ethnic pluralism.

Betty Jean Green Anderson, who spent her childhood in the home at 127 Corona, remembered an article from a 1940's magazine, probably the New Yorker. This article mentioned that the "typical" Kodak executive started out in a Koda-Vista home, then moved to the Sagamore Drive area of Irondequoit, and finally settled in the Meadowbrook tract of Brighton. The implication is that this was the pattern in a number of cases and also that many of the Koda-Vista residents were young couples, just starting out.

As for why people settled here, nearness to Kodak Park seems to be an important factor. Ruth Riker of Corona Road remembers that her mother couldn't understand why her daughter and son-in-law wanted to live here. "It's nothing but a swamp", her mother said. She was probably picturing some of the low places kept moist by Paddy Hill Creek. Even when Bill Riker first laid eyes on Corona Road, he saw that the horses which were pulling the scoop shovels to dig basements were "up to their bellies in mud".

Roy Herrick of Corona Road hesitated to move here because his little girl would have to attend an old and tiny school (the two room brick school that Nellie Carter and Margaret Steele attended). He was persuaded when he learned about the school planned for the Britton property.

Although the tract was close to the workplace in terms of mileage, it was not necessarily close in terms of time spent getting there. Before Roy Herrick owned a car, he would bicycle to his job in the paper sensitizing division. William Riker remembers how he often walked to work; if he was lucky, a farmer might offer a ride in his wagon on a blustery day. Ruth Riker recalls bundling up her youngster, putting him into the carriage and pushing it all the way to the Mohican market on shopping day.

The quality of the housing in Koda-Vista was very attractive to potential buyers. Even today, Roy and Thelma Herrick point out the leaded glass in their attic windows and the compartment built especially for the icebox (to facilitate ice delivery).

The craftsman who planned and worked on many of these homes later became well-known locally for his craftsmanship in another arena, the amusement park. George Long has carved horses for carousels since his 75th birthday. Most of them are in Seabreeze amusement park.

Before Mr. Long shaped horses, he shaped houses, 700 of them, he figures. While he was employed by Kodak Employees Realty Corporation, he worked on the various Kodak tracts around Monroe County. Some of the houses were built according to plans drawn up by a company in Iowa, but others were based on Mr. Long's own plans. Some of our homes, particularly those on Corona, are testimony to his workmanship and skill.

By February, 1928 there were enough residents in the tract to form a homeowners' association "to promote the welfare of the residents. . . and to foster such activities among the members as the association may consider for their interest".

These phrases are part of the original constitution, a four page document which is sufficiently formal to include a handful of words like "thereat" and "thereof". Duties of various officers were detailed in the by-laws. An annual meeting was also established "at such a place as the Executive Committee may determine at 8:00p.m. in the second week of January of each year for the election of officers and transaction of other business".

The constitution specified an initiation fee of \$2.00; members in arrears more than 30 days were "automatically suspended from membership", but could be reinstated when payment was made.

Some sixty persons signed their names in favor of acceptance of this constitution, and the neighborhood association was born. All of the signatures belong to men. The constitution designated that each household had one member, one vote. Other people in the household were considered "associate members" and did not vote at meetings, except in the absence of the member.

This certainly implies that men were running the neighborhood association, although women undoubtedly had influence on association business, as evidenced by a 1937 letter from K.V.C.A., President Murphy to Eastman Kodak; the letter complained that "washings have been spoiled by black soot" from an open burner at what was called "Kodak Far West". Men have been managing the neighborhood association, but the women were quite possibly managing the neighborhood itself!

Lest one think that our Koda-Vista predecessors were a stiff group of sober-faced men, one needs only to chat with some of the early residents to dispel that notion. Charles and Betty Green, now of Brighton, speak with nostalgic delight when they recall their years in Koda-Vista.

They mention the neighborhood Bridge games where the person with the "dummy" hand would make the rounds to check on sleeping children. They remember skiing down the slope near the south end of Britton's lane (Vista and Hoover Drives).

They speak of friendly and ordinary people as well as some who weren't so ordinary, like the couple living on Corona who kept Rhesus monkeys in a backroom.

Mrs. Green recalls going to the "library" on Elmguard. This was a small lending library run by Marian Lay (Mrs. Fred Ellsworth Lay) in her home at 120 Elmguard. She charged a small fee to borrowers so that she could make new purchases; she also sold magazine subscriptions. These monies supplemented her income as a teacher. She maintained the library until she was forced to move to a sanitarium because of declining health.

Mrs. Lay performed a vital service, for there was no Greece public library when the tract opened. Even in 1935, a request by the K.V.C.A. for the county library truck to stop in Koda-Vista was denied. Instead, 50 books were brought to the Willis N. Britton School library ever 6 weeks. The school facility then opened for a few hours at night so that adults could borrow books. Greece Public Library was not organized until the late 1950's and did not have its own building until the early 1960's.

Mr. Green remembers buying freshly picked sweet corn on his walk home from work. He often stopped at "Stephany's Stand", the predecessor of VerHulst

Farm Market. It is ironic that the business we today associate with the VerHulst brothers began with a VerHulst sister.

Cy VerHulst, the oldest of the brothers, explained that his father started working "on shares" for Gus Weiland, the same man mentioned in the section on Nellie Carter. By this arrangement, Weiland and VerHulst split the profit of the harvest, 50-50. When Weiland died in the 1930's, the VerHulst family bought the approximately 30 acre farm.

Stephany sold her brothers' produce on a stand fashioned from three orange crates, a humble beginning for a business that now includes nearly 1000 acres around Monroe County, and which in 1974 sold its 16 acre market site to Kodak for \$1.2 million.

The fact that Koda-Vista residents could consume produce grown practically "next door" points out the rural setting of the tract. Many of the problems mentioned in the associations' minutes emphasize this fact. For example the 1930 K.V.C.A. President complained to Kodak Employees Realty Corporation about "considerable shooting" during hunting season in the areas east of Corona and south of Malden.

The first resident of #134 Merrick, then Maureen Kenyon, now Mrs. E. W. Schlosser, talks about the frustration in seeing their newly graded and seeded lawn torn apart by some horses who had escaped their pasture.

Many areas of Greece did not have garbage pick-up in the 1930's. A September 1930 letter to residents condoned the burning of trash but said, "burning of garbage, feathers, etc. indicates a lack of consideration. . . "the letter further urged that residents burn this refuse in a vacant lot.

Even in 1934, there were complaints to the town supervisor about a dump opposite Koda-Vista (approximately where National Auto now stands). The town eventually agreed to clean it up.

Because of the newness of the neighborhood, upkeep of snow-covered streets did not match the residents' expectations. A very politely worded letter from the K.V.C.A. mentioned that the snow plow had visited just once during the winter of 1929-1930. The reason for this, said the town, was that some streets were so new, they had not been dedicated to the town yet, and hence were not its responsibility. One-time resident Fred Steele remembered several occasions when the men of a street gathered to cooperatively shovel the roadway.

Some folks apparently could not envision Greece as anything but a rural community. Mary Burke of Allerton Street said that when the Willis N. Britton School was completed, some residents complained about its large size. "They'll never use the top floor," she quotes them as saying. Mrs. Burke's sister, Peg

Guilfoyle Lober was one of the first four teachers at our neighborhood school. The top floor of that building was used within a short time, and Greece children went on to fill a dozen more schools!

In its early days, the community association sought to solve the many problems related to being a new neighborhood, such as street lighting, sewage, road maintenance, mail delivery, etc. But the organization also took affirmative action in helping to create a positive, friendly atmosphere. Once such example was a letter typewritten on K.V.C.A. stationery which inquired about the health of a Koda-Vista neighbor taken ill out-of-town.

Another example was the attempt to form a tennis club in 1932. A tennis committee had polled residents and found that 25 families were interested in a cooperative venture that would have required a donation of manual labor and \$2.00 from every member. The courts were to be constructed on undeveloped K.E.R.C. land located at the north end of Merrick (land kept vacant for "Mirror St."?). Permission was granted by Kodak officials, but from that point on, the project mysteriously disappears from K.V.C.A. records. Charles Green revealed that the idea died because no one showed up at the meeting that was called to lay out the courts!

Problems faced by the association ranged from the serious (like the problem of high fire insurance rates because the Board of Underwriters judged our fire protection inadequate for a "Class B" rating) to the seemingly silly (a 1946 investigation regarding the keeping of chickens in the tract).

The Koda-Vista Community Association didn't shirk the hard work and risks involved in tackling some of those serious problems. At various times the association went head-to-head against Rochester Transit, the Town of Greece, Rochester Gas & Electric, Eastman Savings and Loan, and even the State of New York!

Sometimes the results were positive and immediate; for example, a complaint to the Brighton Place Dairy in Rochester got next-day results. A detailed letter of 1930 complained that the milkman who delivered in Koda-Vista about 2:00 a.m., was starting and stopping his rather noisy truck at every few houses. The dairy responded immediately with apologies and promises to talk to its employees.

Sometimes the desired result was not achieved; a bold request in 1933 was denied by Eastman Savings and Loan. Depressed economic conditions prevalent at the time made it difficult for some Koda-Vista homeowners to pay their mortgages. The Association approached E.S.&L. with the idea of reducing both the principle and interest on home mortgages. The rate of interest then was 6%; the Association hoped for 5%. To achieve this goal, K.V.C.A. even made an

attempt to get the cooperation of two other Kodak-built tracts, Bonesteel and Meadowbrook.

The bank refused to grant the lower rate, stating that it had the lowest net interest rate of any savings and loan organization in Rochester and also that this type of banking institution was already a more liberal loaner than others.

That refusal might persuade someone to believe that Kodak took a tough stance during the depression. But interviews with longtime residents proved otherwise. William Riker mentioned that some homeowners were allowed to pay only the interest on their mortgages for the months in which they were unemployed. Roy Herrick also believes that some were forgiven missed payments. Charles Green said that Kodak even provided house paint in several cases where it was needed by hard-pressed homeowners.

Ironically, the years following the 1929 stock market crash were years of growth for Koda-Vista. In 1930, 25 new houses were built, mainly on Malden and Merrick. A partial explanation for this is that construction of the houses was one method of keeping Kodak employees busy. Demand for labor was so low at the camera works, for example, that according to Roy Hale, employees were working only two days per week. The development of Koda-Vista was an outlet for this surplus of labor.

So on one hand K.V.C.A. did not see the desired 5% interest rate, but on the other hand there were no mortgage foreclosures, as far as anyone remembers.

Another serious problem tackled by the Association was the lack of adequate fire protection, as indicated by the "Class C" rating given to the neighborhood by the Underwriters. This rating was in place until the late 1930's because of insufficient water pressure and lack of a coded siren system. Several letters show our neighborhood association worked closely with the Greece Ridge Fire Department to help secure new equipment, in particular, a new pumper.

One can only guess at the time and energy expended by those suburban "pioneers" in dealing with these problems. Numerous letters, reports and minutes of meetings tell a story of long discussions and years of work, planning and debate. For example, the first attempt to change the fire underwriters' rating occurred in 1934. A "Class B" rating was finally achieved in 1937.

The matter of street lighting apparently involved an even greater expenditure of time. A thick stack of letters, blueprints, and reports testify to K.V.C.A. efforts in this area. The documents show that residents played a major role in choosing the style of street lamp to be used. But they did not choose the lighting district assessment, and this was a real source of irritation.

When the Association learned that some homeowners had been overtaxed by 20% in 1929, anger was directed at Rochester Gas and Electric as well as the Town of Greece. Thus began the practice of K.V.C.A. volunteers checking the tax roles in the summer (before they became unalterable) to keep a watch on those collecting their money.

A 1933 meeting was called to “fight for a fair rate.” The phrase “many heated discussions” also appears in the year end report of that same year. At one point the president of K.V.C.A. offered to go to Albany to meet with the Public Service Commission concerning the high rates; some residents petitioned the town not to renew its contract with R.G.&E. Despite all that friction, R.G.&E. was able to appease the residents. Tax roll mistakes were corrected and some discounts were allowed in the next contract period which ran from 1934-38.

In Greece of the 1980’s street lighting is so commonplace that it is difficult to imagine that it required so a large outlay of volunteer time and effort. But it did, and today’s residents have benefited in two ways; most of the neighborhood has lighting and in addition, a tradition of neighborhood solidarity was established which made town and county officials sit up and take notice.

Another neighborhood improvement which took nearly 20 years to become reality was the construction of sanitary sewers. The idea had first been proposed in 1935, but according to meeting records, “after a lively discussion, the people voted against the project.” That phrase from the minutes of a homeowners’ meeting was the last mention of sewers until 1946!

For some of that 11 year period, the inactivity can be explained by the fact that it was wartime; but, one can also surmise that things were running smoothly in the neighborhood and no major problems were perceived to exist.

The late 1920’s and early 1930’s had been years of tremendous outpourings of energy to get the neighborhood established. Residents were youthful, energetic, and many were just launching their careers, as well as a neighborhood. The outpourings of time and energy helped foster a tremendous sense of community.

During those years, the milkman continued to clatter his bottles in the wee hours and some homemakers traded in their ice boxes for a great convenience called a refrigerator. When bread or milk was needed in a hurry, children were sent over the path through the vacant lot to the little store that had once been an apple dry-house. Trees from the orchard of the Dyson farm and those before it were gone, but residents watched the growth of new trees in their nearly treeless neighborhood: elms were planted the full length of Corona. They would eventually grow tall enough to completely arch the street in green before falling victims to Dutch Elm Disease and sewer excavations. New structures were

appearing in the neighborhood in the 30's. Garages were being built as families could afford automobiles.

Generally, Koda-Vista had a reputation as a fine place to live. Connie Bullen, now of Vista Drive said that as a girl living outside of Koda-Vista, she perceived the tract as "THE" place to live. This perception was enhanced by the residents' sense of pride in their neighborhood; the 1930 K.V.C.A. president wrote in a letter that, "personally, I don't believe there is a subdivision anywhere around Rochester where any more individual pride is shown by the residents in the appearance of their places than in Koda-Vista."

The advent of the Second World War brought obvious changes to Koda-Vista that were being repeated in thousands of neighborhoods across the nation. The war also left other marks on our neighborhood, perhaps less obvious to us in the 1980's. At least one home in Koda-Vista was expanded due to wartime circumstance. The Charles Green family added a bedroom to their home when they learned they would host one of the "Kodak kids". These were English children whose parents worked for Kodak Ltd. The mother of the young boy who stayed with the Greens thought that her son would be gone for a few months; he lived in Koda-Vista and attended Willis Britton School for approximately three years!

Although the building of the new homes generally came to a standstill during World War II, an accidental occurrence made possible the building of some fine homes in the tract. Paul Kramer of Merrick Street recalls that the government appropriated much of the good lumber during war years. Near the end of the war, a fire at Rochester's Morse lumber yards singed its lumber inventory sufficiently to make it unacceptable to the government, but leaving it in good enough condition for civilian building. In fact, Mr. and Mrs. Kramer pointed out, it was superior to other wood available because it was dried. This was at a time when builders of homes were forced to use "green" lumber. A number of homes on Merrick and Malden were built in 1945 from this lumber.

POST-WAR KODA-VISTA

The war consumed energy and imposed austerities on local residents which contributed to a dormant period in the life of the neighborhood association. Paradoxically, the war also brought about changes in Greece which would reactivate the K.V.C.A. in 1946. By that time Greece was no longer rural, but was rapidly becoming a suburb.

When the association was reactivated, one of the primary desires of its executive board was the construction of sanitary sewers. This desire was not immediately realized. Town Supervisor Gordon Howe explained that the town

planned to do all the sewers from the city line to Long Pond Road at one time, so K.V.C.A. residents would have to be patient. Patience certainly was required; the project was not completed until 1952!

Residents were also interested in getting better bus service from Rochester Transit and in completion of street lighting in the Koda-Vista lighting district. Street lights were obtained within this district, but Gordon Howe reminded Elmguard residents that they were not part of that district.

The transit company's response to the association was apparently unsatisfactory, for one year later, the K.V.C.A. submitted an extremely detailed plan to improve Ridge Road service. The company laid much of the blame for poor service on lack of needed vehicles. Wartime shortages of steel and other raw materials were still being felt in 1947, and demand for bus service was high; Greece was expanding.

One seemingly minor accomplishment of the K.V.C.A. around this same time was the enclosure of a ditch which ran perpendicular to Elmguard Street and emptied under Ayer Street. The ditch was mosquito infested and smelly, and was blamed for flooding under Ayer Street. Since 1947, corrugated pipe has carried this water under Elmguard and into the north-south pipe which runs underground between backyards on Ayer and Elmguard Streets. The existence of the pipe is the reason that the town still owns the small parcel on the east side of Elmguard between #106 and #86.

Low on the agenda for a 1947 meeting was this item: "...agreed to look into the possibility of placing traffic lights at the corner of Stone and Ridge Roads". Although there is little other mention of this item in the 1946-47 records, it certainly gives a foretaste of things to come.

The post-war period seemed to be a time when residents turned their attention to home, family, and children. In 1945 Bob Schellberg and E.W. Schlosser organized Cub Pack 43 at the Britton Road School. This pack has served many boys since then and still exists at Buckman Heights School.

In the 1940's and early 50's, Audra Kramer was taking her brownie scouts up to the pond behind Vista Drive so that they could peer into the water for the answer to the question, "who can be as helpful as fairy-tale elves?". A "child study group" was organized in the tract through the Monroe County Cooperative Extension; it proved so popular that a second one had to be established to accommodate all those women interested in the discussions and mutual support.

A church also made its appearance in the neighborhood. Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church began meeting in the home of its pastor at 1387 Ridge Road, the same home that Nellie Carter's father had built for his family in

1902. The congregation laid the cornerstone for its present facility in 1949 on Hoover Drive property purchased from the Britton family.

In 1952 the Association was reinstated after a period of inactivity since 1948. The constitution and by-laws were updated and Hoover Drive, Elmgard Street and the south side of Ridge which bordered Koda-Vista were formally admitted to the association at this time. The main reason for the reactivation was the desire to expedite the sewer project.

This work had proceeded slowly because of the desire of the town for a more comprehensive plan of construction. The contractors also encountered much more rock than was anticipated; near 1000 cubic yards of it were removed from Koda-Vista alone. Despite this and a change of contractors halfway through the job, the project was completed in 1952 and was apparently within the original cost estimate.

The 1952 appearance of the K.V.C.A. was also a reflection of the post-war population growth in Greece. Traffic was getting heavy enough on Ridge so that the K.V.C.A. in early 1952 asked the state to install a stop light at the intersection of Ridge/Stone/Corona. The state tabled the request pending the completion of the grade separation at the Ridge Road/Mt. Read intersection, for it was felt that the overpass would substantially alter traffic patterns.

Three years later, the Ridge Road overpass was completed and the state commission ordered the installation of the signal lights. In a letter dated 1955, Town Supervisor Gordon Howe says "this is something that we have long sought. I hope it solves the hazardous problem at this intersection".

1953 was a significant year for zoning concerns. Cities Service Oil and Gas Company petitioned for a change of zoning for the southwest corner of Corona and Ridge. Gannett Papers reported that "about 75 Koda-Vista residents" attended a town council meeting to register their opposition to the proposed commercial zone. The town unanimously rejected Cities Service petition. Just months before, the owner of that property had discussed the possibility of an ice cream bar on his lot and vowed that "the people of Koda-Vista do not have to worry about having a gas station on this corner". This property was rezoned in 1959 for use by a gasoline and service station.

Another zoning concern was Kodak's purchase of a 25 acre parcel to the west of the land it already owned which lay south of Koda-Vista. Residents who had recently purchased homes on Vista Drive were not pleased to learn about their new neighbor's request to rezone this residential area to an industrial classification.

Simultaneous with the Kodak purchase was a request by the neighborhood association to change Koda-Vista's status from "Residential-Class

B" to the highest class A rating. This request was tabled until the Kodak proposal could be studied first. The Democrat & Chronicle reported that 75 Greece residents, "many from the Koda-Vista sub-division" attended the town board hearing.

The newspaper article inferred that emotions ran high at the meeting. Some residents feared that their property values would be adversely affected. Others were concerned about Kodak's possible use of the pond on the land – would it be drained and used as a dump?

After emotions had cooled a bit, some serious negotiating occurred which resulted in Koda-Vista acquiring a Class A residential status, and Kodak obtaining its desired zone changes. Kodak appealed the town board and Koda-Vista residents somewhat by reassuring them that "buffer zones" of 100' to 150' would be established between company property and the tract.

These zones were to be a continuation of a "good neighbor policy" begun in 1945 when a 100' non-industrial buffer was set up. According to a 1953 recollection of the 1945 happening, there would be "no annoying, unsightly, or obnoxious operation" carried on or in this zone; representatives of the company gave their assurances that Kodak "had never been in the business of offending its neighbors".

As a show of good faith, Kodak erected its fence on a line 10' within its own property line. This is shown clearly on several maps in Koda-Vista records, the earliest dated 1956. Hence, Malden Street residents currently enjoy larger backyard areas, thanks to Kodak.

By the 1950's Koda-Vista Community Association developed a well-earned reputation for community action and organization. In the files of former association president Dan Suter is a memo from a Kodak colleague who thanked Dan for sending a sample copy of the K.V.C.A. constitution. He wrote, "...unfortunately, the formation of our association was not successful. Typical Irondequoit voter apathy, I guess".

The pond on Kodak property which worried residents so much did cause a good deal of grief, but it was due to local youths and not to Eastman Kodak. According to longtime resident Bob Ransom, this depression was deepened when huge amounts of earth were scooped out to form the Ridge Road overpass at Mt. Read. Fed by underground springs and run-off water, the depression quickly filled and became a favorite summer and winter recreation spot for local people.

After Kodak's purchase of that area in the 1950's, the company decided to gradually drain the pond by means of a dam and spillway. This was being accomplished when, as a current resident put it, some kids "pulled the plug".

About 11:00 p.m. one summer evening, residents on Ayer Street found a flowing stream where minutes before, bare pavement had been visible. A 1927 topographical map shows that the lowest areas in the subdivision are located in the vicinity of Acton and Ayer Streets; these are the areas that quickly filled with water.

Jeanette Crowley of Elmgard Street's western side recalls the stunning effect of looking over her backyard and seeing the moon reflected in a great pool of water that covered most of her backyard. Neighbors were gadding about in their nightclothes and a canoe was plying the waters of Ayer. In one low place in Mrs. Crowley's backyard, the water measured nearly 4' in depth.

Although the footings for a new garage at the Crowley home were washed away, there was a minimum of damage throughout the neighborhood. Had the "flood" occurred at another time of day, Jeanette points out, it could have been tragic, because the pond emptied so quickly.

To this day, the culprits remain unnamed by the several residents interviewed. Nearly 30 years after the fact, "the flood" is often discussed with a smile on the face and humor in the voice, although this was probably not the case in 1953. One suspects that there exists a sense of humor surrounding the incident and the youths who collectively thumbed their noses at Kodak for taking away their recreation area.

The corporation's good will extended to the larger Greece area. For example, the local Girl Scout organization was allowed to use the vacant fields at the end of Corona for a day camp in the 1950's. This community awareness showed that Kodak, while not the neighbor one might choose to have, was at least a very responsive one.

TRANSITIONS/CONCLUSIONS

The early 1950's signaled the end of growth for Koda-Vista. All lots were sold. In less than 30 years the acreage comprising the neighborhood had gone from prime agricultural land to highly desirable suburban neighborhood.

Instead of problems with horses, there were problems with motorcycles. Instead of enthusiastic talk about the "new school", there would be talk in the 1970's and 80's of closing schools. Ridge Road was transformed from the "Honeymoon Trail" and "Lewiston Avenue" to a river of automobiles flowing between the city and nearby suburbs.

In 1959 residential property fronting Ridge Road and adjacent to Koda-Vista was rezoned for commercial use. A gas station and motel were built on

those properties and the ravine where Nellie Carter had enjoyed girlhood picnics began to disappear.

In 1969 more Ridge Road lots were rezoned when the Mascot builders erected an office building on part of the former Brittonridge tract. The creekbed and ravine where avis Britton Miller had enjoyed the forget-me-nots and yellow iris of some long-ago gardener were nearly obliterated.

Although many factors have changed, the neighborhood remains a residential enclave within a great commercial and industrial area. This factor and the well-established pride of the original homeowners have helped to shape a cohesive neighborhood unit.

Fortunate, indeed, are the persons who can refer to the place they live as "MY NEIGHBORHOOD".

BRIEF SUMMARY OF RECENT EVENTS IN KODA-VISTA
1955 – 1983

- 1955 – “Greece Central School” became known as Hoover Drive School when several Greece school districts consolidated. This was the last year that Greece sent incoming freshmen to city of Rochester high schools.
- 1959 – The western corner of Corona Ridge was rezoned for commercial purposes; a gas station was built.
- 1961 – Hoover Drive School became strictly a Jr. High School (then grades 7 – 9). Elementary pupils were sent to other schools.
- 1970 – Kodak completed a project for dealing with rain-water run-off. Prior to this date 33 acres of Kodak property drained into Koda-Vista storm sewers, sometimes causing street and cellar flooding in the neighborhood. Since 1970, run-off has been diverted to a ditch parallel to route 390.
- 1973 – Mascot, Inc. began construction of a professional building at 1577 Ridge Road. Building was well underway when Mascot applied to connect its building’s sanitary facilities to the residential sanitary sewer serving Koda-Vista.
- 1974 – After numerous letters, phone conversations and meetings, Koda-Vista Community Association vowed to stop the Mascot sewer hook-up through litigation; an attorney was retained for purposes of suing the town of Greece to prevent it. Six months later, the town board approved construction of a new sewer line for use by Ridge Road commercial establishments (Mascot Building, Holiday Inn, Stoneridge Plaza) which would bear the cost of the project.
- 1974 – The County of Monroe and Eastman Kodak proposed construction of a new road to empty newly built Kodak parking lots located south of Koda-Vista. One plan would have closed off the north end of Hoover Drive and would have tied it into the new four-lane road. This connection was possible because of land which Kodak owned (and still does) on the northwest side of Hoover Drive. The potential for commuter traffic on Koda-Vista streets made residents fearful. Numerous government officials opposed the plan also. Due to governmental and grass-roots pressure, the county engineering department was forced to reconsider its proposal; instead, Lee-Latona Roads were widened to accept the increased traffic flow.

- 1974 – K.V.C.A. prepared a study of the school facility on Hoover Drive which urged the school board to make renovations in the existing building rather than close it as a classroom facility or dispose of it. The board agreed.
- 1977 – Hoover Drive School renovations began, including such energy conserving measures as replacement windows, new efficient boilers and an energy saving roof. There were also some cosmetic, interior improvements.
- 1978 – The Holiday Inn burned down in a tragic fire which received nationwide attention.
- 1979 – Hoover Drive celebrated its 50th birthday.
- 1980 – The Koda-Vista sanitary sewer situation was improved by the completion of a “gravity feed” system which eliminated an underground pumping station at the Corona-Ridge intersection. This pump was the culmination of several years of efforts to improve this system.
- 1982 – The town Zoning Board of Appeals rejected a proposal by a developer to construct a car wash and gas station on the vacant Holiday Inn property. This came after numerous meetings and after a developer had even threatened to sue the town.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Koda-Vista Community Association records: minutes of meetings, letters, memos, newspaper clippings, constitution.

Interviews with Nellie Dyson Carter, Fred and Margaret Brown Steel, Avis Britton Miller, William and Ruth Riker, Roy and Thelma Herrick, Paul and Audra Cramer, Charles and Betty Green Anderson, Mary Burke, Jeanette Crowley.

Conversation with Connie Bullen, Charley Johnson, Bob Ransom, E.W. Schlosser, Ann Towle, Reverend Ted Georgian, Win Gordon, Cyril VerHulst, William Cass, J. Donald Fewster, Betty Wandling, George Long, Betsy Brayer, Charles Strong, Jr., Darlene Aiken (Eastman Kodak Archivist), Shirley Husted (Monroe County Historian), Virginia Tomkiewicz (Greece Town Historian), Monroe County Environmental Council.

County Plat Maps

Background Resources:

Eight Miles Along The Shore – by Virginia Tomkiewicz and Shirley Cox Husted, published 1982 by Greece Historical Society

The Ridge – by Arch Merrill, Creek Books

“A Glimpse of the Old Ridge”, a script for a tableau by the women of John Knox Presbyterian Church, written by Mrs. John McLeod.

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