

TIBBITS PARK ("the village commons")

Now known as Tibbits Park, this area of parkland in the middle of Broadway was the original "commons" of colonial era White Plains. A "commons" was an area generally central to a Village that was used for community assemblies, celebrations, militia training, and grazing animals. The area was just about the equivalent of a dump when it was adopted in 1918-1919, by Charles H. Tibbits at the age of 75, after his retirement. Mr. Tibbits organized the White Plains Village Park Association in 1898, and was generally seen in then "Broadway Park" planting, nurturing and caring for the trees and flowers. He died in 1937 at the age of 93. In 1931 the North Broadway Citizens Association suggested that the park be renamed after Charles Tibbits, and the Citizens of White Plains are forever grateful for his vision and dedication.

1. SUMMER HOUSE AND LILY POND

The original rustic Summer House was erected in 1906 on South Broadway at a high point overlooking the newly restored Broadway Park. It was a simple design with a thatched roof and provided shady seating for those who wished to stop and rest on their way up the grade from Westchester Avenue to Railroad Avenue (now Main Street). The old Summerhouse deteriorated and was torn down. In 1984, the White Plains Beautification Foundation applied to the City to design and rebuild the Summer House in its original location. John C Bailey came to White Plains in 1937 to assist a small group of business and professional and formed the Civic and Business Federation. That eventually grew into the Chamber of Commerce with nearly 1,000 members. This group of like minded businessmen were instrumental in assisting with the project and the Summer House was named for John C. Bailey. Today our Summer House provides the same respite with benches for people to sit, rest and enjoy the beautiful garden and Park below.

2. G. KENT HAWKS MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

G. Kent Hawks was by profession an award winning young architect who lived in White Plains. He served as Vice President of the White Plains Beautification Foundation (successor to the Village Park Association). He also served his community as a member of the White Plains Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Highlands Civic Association, the Steering Committee of the Citizens Conference for the Future of White Plains. He was a member also of the First Urban Design Odyssey of the White Plains Beautification Foundation which studied civic design abroad for ideas to apply to the vast urban renewal area in White Plains. On the global scene, he was a volunteer for the International Technical Assistance Project, and among his tasks was the design of a technical school in Pakistan and an elementary school for a Mexican Village. During the last weeks of his life, Hawks had been laboring to complete designs for new facilities for the Westchester Lighthouse for the Blind. G. Kent Hawks, died at his home in White Plains on 6/21/1976 at the age of 39. In commemoration of his too short life, but public service of two lifetimes, by action of the White Plains Common Council on June 7, 1977, and dedicated in 1978, the fountain at Armory Place and Westchester Avenue was renamed the G. Kent Hawks Memorial Fountain.

3. CIVIL WAR STATUE

Funded by the White Plains Veterans Association and \$1,600 from the Village, the Civil War Statue was created by National Art Foundry of East 25th Street, New York City, to be erected on the Village Commons (now Tibbits Park). J. Warren Tompkins opposed its location in front of his property and secured an injunction, dated July 1st, to stop the project. Nearing midnight of the 1st, a number of veterans convinced the contractors to put it into place that night. All work was done by 2:00 a.m. by the light of a huge bonfire. Deliberately the Soldier's back was turned to the Tompkins property. Mr. Tompkins attempted to sue for removal but the case was dismissed. The monument was dedicated on July 4, 1872 and has been guarding the entrance to Tibbits Park ever since.

4. RENODA HOFFMAN CLOCK

For well over 30 years, Renoda Hoffman was the City Historian for White Plains. During that time she compiled scrapbooks of news clippings, created nine drawers of index cards related to people and places, photographed all aspect of White Plains, and collected memorabilia, all of which eventually became the foundation for the City Archives. Over the years Renoda wrote three books on White Plains as well. She was a rare individual who dedicated her life to public service. Her contributions to our City's history and to the lives of its citizens is immeasurable. The clock that stands in Tibbits Park at Main Street, is a Victorian inspired cast iron clock modeled after one that stood on Main Street near Grove in front of the earlier Home Savings Bank. In 1991, the White Plains Beautification Foundation celebrated its 25th Anniversary and chose to commemorate it by dedicating the clock to Renoda Hoffman for her contributions to both the Foundation and the City of White Plains.

5. HARRY D. TRIANTAFILLU MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

In 1977, the fountain at Main Street was named for Harry D. Triantafyllu who was born in Greece but established White Plains as his home. In ancient Athens every young Greek made a pledge "to leave the city better than he found it." Harry Triantafyllu took that pledge very much to heart. His fame came from the development and marketing of the famous Blue Coral Auto Polish, which he manufactured on Holland Avenue. In his own culture he was renowned for assisting young Greeks studying in the U.S. during their first year, as they were not permitted to work to help pay for room and board. He also hosted students in his home during the holidays. Additionally he was a benefactor to the YMCA, Memorial United Methodist Church, White Plains Hospital, Westchester Heart Association and the Lighthouse for the Blind.

6. EDWIN MICHAELIAN GAZEBO

Edwin Michaelian served as a Councilman from 1940 - 43, served in WWII, and as Councilman again from 1948 to 1953. He was Mayor from 1950 to 1957. He then went on to serve four terms as Westchester County Executive from 1958 to 1973. The gazebo was erected by the White Plains Beautification Foundation and supported by donations in the amount of \$40,000 from corporations, non-profits and individuals. The structure is 18 feet wide at the base and 12 feet high, with doric columns. The roof is cedar shake, and there is a copper cupola topped with a rooster weather vane. The rooster, since the middle ages, has been a symbol of eternal vigilance. Fittingly, the gazebo is just four blocks from the original Michaelian Family home on Cottage Place and Mr. Michaelian's elementary school, church and City Hall workplace, all within a short distance of each other.

7. SOLDIERS SAILORS MARINES MEMORIAL

The Memorial Cannon was unveiled on Armistice Day in 1922, commemorating the ending of World War I and in honor of the men of White Plains who gave their lives in the Great War. The Cannon was donated by the Daughters of the American Revolution to Annex Post 532 Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Cannon is believed to be off the U.S.S. Portsmouth which was a wooden sailing sloop of war that set sail in 1844 and was decommissioned by the Navy in 1915. The unveiling ceremony was greatly attended and afterward refreshments were served to over two hundred members of the Veterans of Foreign War Posts.

8. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS STATUE

This ten ton white marble monument was imported from Carrara, Italy and paid for by funds raised by the local Star of Italy Society at a cost of \$3,000. It was to be erected in 1914, but World War I prevented its delivery until 1915. Inscribed on the base are the words, "To Christopher Columbus in imperishable remembrance from the Italian citizens of White Plains." It was dedicated on October 12, 1915. Within several years the Antonio Meucci Lodge 213 order of the Sons of Italy was formed and held annual ceremonies at the monument. In 1954 the statue was moved about 85 feet to the north of the original site to allow for traffic flow through the Park.