

*An  
Historic  
Setting*



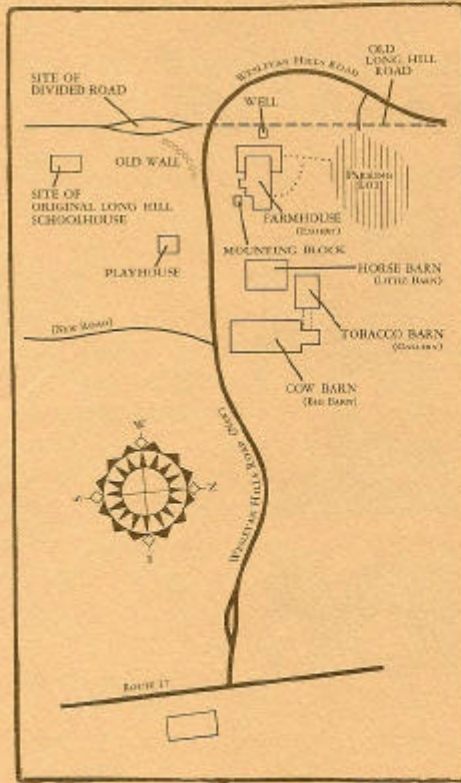
WESLEYAN HILLS



If you should happen to be reading this in the Big Barn, you are in a building that is almost 100 years old. Look up to the apex of the roof and you will see an old pulley mounted on a runner that goes from one end of the Barn to the other. A few strands of rope still cling to this relic. An old but simple device, it was used for decades to operate a giant hay fork that lifted, moved, and stored in towering stacks the feed for the farm's livestock.

The walls enclosing you have heard the shouts of farmhands at work and the laughter of generations of children sliding down the hay mows. On at least one occasion the laughter turned to terrified cries when one tender adventurer was hoisted on an improvised seat on the hay fork by her less tender playmates, and found herself marooned inches beneath the rafters when the pulley jammed! For 15 to 20 minutes she remained trapped until rescuers from the Farmhouse reached her by means of long ladders propped between the hay mows and the rafters.

Now these walls reflect the myriad sounds of 20th century community life—public meetings, concerts, dramatic performances, dances, and exhibitions. And downstairs, where once 26 cows were housed, milking has given way to Montessori! In what is now The Little People's House, neighborhood youngsters receive their early education through the innovative techniques of this unique system.





## An Historic Setting

Explore the area surrounding the Barns and the Farmhouse. This site was first settled in 1650 by George Hubbard and the farm remained in the hands of his descendants until 1951. At that time it was sold to Joseph T. Rossi. Many people in the area still think of it as the Rossi Farm despite more than 300 years tenancy by the Hubbards!

The 1818 List of Polls and Estate of one Jeremiah Hubbard gives some idea of the extent of the farm. Some 66 acres are listed, ranging from ploughland ratable at \$1.34 per acre to uninclosed (*sic*) timber land (a mile from the main farm) ratable at 34¢ per acre. The land on which the Monte Green Inn now stands was once part of this substantial property.

The Farmhouse (now containing the Exhibit) was built in 1872 by Eben Hubbard on the site of a then ancient saltbox house. The Cow Barn (Big Barn) was raised at the same time. The Horse and Tobacco Barns (now the Little Barn and Gallery) were originally located elsewhere on the farm and were moved to their present site around the turn of this century. Eben Hubbard's daughter, Grace, married Mr. Charles T. Davis. Despite only a 6th grade education he became president of the Middletown Savings Bank in 1925. (Before him two Hubbards had also held that office, Nehemiah in 1825-1837 and Henry in 1857-1858.) The present bank building in downtown Middletown was

constructed during Charles Davis' term of office.

Charles and Grace Davis were responsible for much of the present architecture to be seen around the Wesleyan Hills Center. They added the sun porches to the Farmhouse in 1912 and at the same time built a smaller house for use by the farm employees and as a summer home for visiting relatives. Mrs. Davis also built the Playhouse as an inducement for frequent and prolonged visits from her many grandchildren, one of whom still resides here in one of the new homes overlooking the farm. Another building, which also served the farm employees, was the original Long Hill School House where generations of Hubbards and Davises and other local youngsters received their elementary education. Charles Davis' son Harold designed the present Long Hill School in 1923.

Two ancient trees just southwest of the Farmhouse mark the site of another Davis legacy. Early in this century, when City employees came out to pave the roads, Mrs. Davis forbade the destruction of the trees and insisted that the road be forked to pass on either side of them. The trees stand today as mute testimony of one woman's love of nature. The wall adjacent to these trees was once part of one which skirted the carriage driveway. It is a mortared wall, built of stone from Portland, and is probably the oldest man-made



construction to be found on the farm.

On the western side of the Farmhouse is a deep stone well. The bucket and chain have long disappeared and with them the sight of hot, tired farmhands refreshing themselves with ice-cold water cranked up from the subterranean depths of this fertile valley. The croquet and tennis courts on the south lawn, picnics beneath the trees, elegant carriages and graceful mounts assembled before the porch—all have apparently vanished, leaving only in symbolic loneliness a footworn mounting block near the Farmhouse porch to evoke memories of a bygone era. Although they are gone—these signs of gracious living from a time still distinct in the memory of many present-day visitors—the new Wesleyan Hills Center is a worthy contemporary successor.

Through the years the farm has seen a great many changes—from tobacco growing, dairy and lumber farming, horse trading to its present purpose as the nucleus of a special place for living. Wesleyan University, which purchased the farm from Joseph Rossi, made the land available to the Hill Development Corporation beginning in 1968. Hill refurbished the Farmhouse and Barns, preserving all of their historic and traditional features. The Barns were winterized from the inside out by adding furring strips, insulation, plywood, and new barn siding to the existing walls. Thus the interior surfaces of the Barns are the original 100-year old materials. Hill Development Corporation now leases the Barns to the Wesleyan Hills Association.

The Center exists as a showcase encompassing not only the pleasures and pursuits of modern life but also the values of the past. Here you can once again ice-skate and sled in the winter. In the Big Barn you can see performances by the Circle Theatre and other groups, attend public meetings, enjoy a dance, or send your children to school in The Little People's House. The Gallery reflects the creative talents of local artists and sculptors, and the Little Barn provides a craft workshop and studio or a pleasant back-drop for small gatherings.

Whether you are a participant in or just visiting one of these many activities, welcome to Wesleyan Hills. Come back soon and often.

#### WESLEYAN HILLS ASSOCIATION

At Wesleyan Hills the new evolves from the old, blending qualities of the past with present-day refinements, while preserving and enhancing the natural setting. We invite you to visit the Exhibit in the Farmhouse where a comprehensive display tells the story of this evolution. Historic prints and photographs recall the beginnings of the Center, graphic illustrations describe the neighborhood that is Wesleyan Hills and portray the homes presently for sale.

#### HILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION