



History of the Pocantico Hills Estate, by Edwin C. Bearss

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English

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
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Biographical / Historical

Edwin C. Bearss (b. June 26, 1923) is a world renowned military historian specializing in Civil War and World War II history. He had a long and distinguished career with the National Park Service, including discovery of the long lost Union gunboat U.S.S. Cairo as well as locating two forts in Grand Gulf, Mississippi.

Over the course of his career Bearss conducted many detailed area studies for the National Park Service. Several of his most notable studies include, but are certainly not limited to: Vicksburg, Eisenhower Farm at Gettysburg, Fort Hancock at the Boston Navy Yard, Lyndon B. Johnson Ranch, William Howard Taft House, and Big Horn Canyon.

Bearss served as Chief Historian for the National Park Service from 1981-1994.

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Scope and Contents

Edwin C. Bearss History of the Pocantico Hills estate was created for the National Park Service, and ultimately served to begin building the case for Kykuit's designation as a National Historic Site. The study is primarily focused on the business and philanthropic activities of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and his impact on Pocantico and the surrounding area.

The collection is comprised of a draft version of Bearss study, with minor corrections or additions and comments noted among the pages.

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Arrangement

As received.

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Conditions Governing Access

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Controlled Access Headings

- Pocantico Hills (Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.)
- John D. Rockefeller House (Pocantico Hills, N.Y.)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
History Basic Data (Draft), 1970 March 31	
Title/Description	Instances
I. The Dutch Influence	
II. The Revolutionary War	
III. The Winds of Change	
IV. The Area Becomes Fashionable	
V. John D. Rockefeller, Sr., Comes to Pocantico	
A. Rockefeller as an Industrialist	
B. Rockefeller as a Philanthropist	
C. Rockefeller Buys a Westchester Estate	
VI. The Development of the Park Estate	
A. John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and the Estate	
B. The Construction of Kykuit	
1. The Construction of Kykuit, 1907-1909	
2. Kykuit is Rebuilt and Enlarged	
C. The Formal Gardens	
1. Their Construction	
2. Description of the Formal Gardens	
a. The Forecourt	
b. The Inclosed (House) Garden	
c. The Morning Garden	

d. The Aphrodite Temple

e. The Orange Tree Terrace

f. The Oval Swimming Pool and Japanese Garden

g. The Circular Garden

D. The Estate Golf Courses

1. The 9-Hole Course

2. The 18-Hole Course

E. The Orangerie and Greenhouses

1. The Orangerie

2. The Greenhouses

F. The Garage and Stables

1. The Initial Work

2. The Building is Enlarged

G. Abeyton Lodge

H. The Kent House

1. The First Kent House

2. The Second Kent House

I. Stephens House

J. The Hawes House

K. The Rookery

L. The Sheep Barn - Kennels

1. As a Sheep Barn

2. As a Kennels

M. The Playhouse

N. "Modern Art Museum House"

O. The Administration Building

P. Other Structures

1. Muller-Scheu House

2. Scheu Barn

3. The Wannier House

4. Davis #1, Davis #2, and Double-Davis Houses

5. Tuttle House #1 and Tuttle House #2

6. The Laundry and Laundry Cottage

7. The Shop Building

8. Other Structures

Q. The Andre Spring

R. The Relocation of Bedford Road

S. Relocation of the Railroad and Construction of Lake Road

1. The Relocation of the Railroad

2. The Village Green

3. The Construction of Lake Road

4. Maintenance of Lake Road

T. Fences and Gates

1. The Estate is Fenced

2. The Pocantico Village Entrance

3. Sisters Gate

VII. The Development of the Pocantico Hills Estate

A. The Farm Group

1. Farming Operations Before 1930

a. Barns and Stables

b. The Poultry Plant

c. Dairy Building

d. The Vegetable Garden

2. The Olmstead Study

3. The Construction of the Farm Group

4. Changes in Farming Operations

B. Buttermilk Hills Triangulation and Radar Stations

1. The Buttermilk Hills Triangulation Station

2. The Buttermilk Hills Radar Station

C. Saportas Place

D. The Christian Brothers School

E. Rockwood Hall in the 20th Century

1. The Rockwood Hall Country Club

2. The Washington Irving Theatre at Rockwood Hall

3. The Demolition of the Buildings

4. Laurance S. Rockefeller Acquires the Property

F. Hudson Pines

G. Fieldwood Farm

H. The Governor's Retreat

I. Hillcrest

J. The Mount Mercy Property

K. Roads and Trails

1. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Fights the Depression

2. His Efforts to Relocate Bedford Road are Rebuffed

3. Improvements to the Sleepy Hollow Road

4. The Three Stoughton Bridges

L. Lakes and Reservoirs

1. Tarrytown Lakes

2. Hemenway Lakes

VIII. Recommendations and Comments

A. The Pocantico Hills Estate

B. The Croton Aqueduct

C. Sites of Regional and Local Significance
