

Amy Pearsall Uptegrove Bull Crist

By now, many of us know how indelibly Sarah Wells, the matriarch of our historical Bull family, left her mark on the history of Orange County. But do you know how much Bull family descendent, Amy Pearsall Uptegrove Bull Crist, also made her impact on our local history? Seventh generation and from the lines of John, Thomas and William, Amy played a significant role in the 20th century history of the County, especially as it related to education.

Amy was born on March 9, 1906 to Bartow Wright Bull, a dairy farmer and Mary Ann Manning Bull, a school teacher. Her home was the 1788 Brick Castle, built by Captain William Bull III overlooking the Wallkill River at Stony Ford, where Bull descendents still reside. Amy spent the last years of her life at Brick Castle until she passed away on May 20, 1995.

She began teaching at age 18 and taught for 15 years. Her salary was \$27.50 per week and she rode a horse to school. The first school where she taught was a one room school house, the Goosetown School. The actual school building was moved to the Hill-Hold property where it is now part of their tour. Amy continued her education, achieving both a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts from NYU.

In 1926 Amy married her friend and fifth cousin Clarence Herman Crist at the Brick Castle. Amy was never blessed with children of her own. Perhaps this was what helped make her so dedicated to education whether it was higher education, vocational education, or opportunities for the disabled.

Amy was instrumental in the founding of Orange County Community College (SUNY Orange) and was a member of the first board of trustees. She had a vision to develop a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) facility that would serve all children: the gifted, the average and those with special needs. Amy had a 34 year tenure as district superintendent of schools and executive officer of BOCES. The BOCES complex was named, "The Amy Bull Crist Area Education Center" In her honor. Another of Amy's projects was the formation of Occupations, Inc. a sheltered workshop for the handicapped and she served as President of its Board of Directors.

She continued to show her ties and dedication to the rural life and history of Orange County by helping to set up The Orange County Farmers Museum, her service as President of the William Bull and Sarah Wells Stone House Association, and by serving as Chairman of Hill-Hold and Brick House Museums.