THE FREE-HOLDER

WINTER 1998 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

- A TIFFANY CHRONOLOGY PART I
- ROADSIDE RHYMESTERS
- SOUTH OYSTER BAY MILITIA IN WAR OF 1812
- SEARCH FOR NOAH SEAMAN

ONE OF OVER 400 POSTCARDS DONATED TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY! SEE PAGE 11!

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

Did you notice that your ***Freeholder*** was a little bulkier this issue? Thanks to Harry Dickran of Levon Graphics and more of our members' contributions, we have been able to expand ***The Freeholder*** to twenty-four pages.

Not only have our members come forward with articles and notes of interest, but with this issue we have had assistance from volunteers in editing and illustrating the magazine. So, if your talents are geared more toward an artistic, rather than a literary bent, we can still utilize those talents!

THE FREEHOLDER
of the
Oyster Bay Historical Society
Vol. 2 No.3 Winter 1998

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The Freeholder of the Oyster Bay Historical Society is published quarterly with the generous assistance of private individuals. The views expressed herein are not those of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, but of the individual authors.

Purpose: The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 with the express purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Oyster Bay. The Society maintains a museum and research library in the Town-owned c.1720 Earle-Wightman House, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay.
Call (516) 922-5032 for more information.

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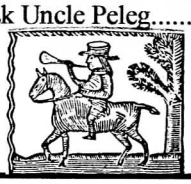
ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

This bucolic view of a tree-lined West Main Street, looking east, shows the old Oyster Bay Inn, now the Masonic Lodge, on the left and the former Post Office building on the right, next to Ludlam's Store which was on the south corner of South Street and West Main Street. See page 11 for related story on Ken's donation.
A postcard from the Kenneth Summers Collection, Oyster Bay Historical Society.



THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

In your Summer 1997 magazine, I read the article, "A Pioneer As A Neighbor" written by S. (Sam) Berliner III.

Mr. Berliner refers to the pond behind North Shore Acres in Glen Head and Valentine Lane in Glen Cove as "The Baxendale's." I, too skated there in my youth and so did my mother, a native of Glen Cove, who is now 84.

However, my mother and her aunts, also natives of Glen Cove, referred to this pond and property as Kajenski's (spelling unsure). It was also said at the time that the Baxendale's property did not reach as far down as the pond.

Unfortunately, having moved back to this area after years, I saw the present condition of the pond which is now just a puddle and my fond memories are just that - memories. I was hoping to rekindle these memories by skating there now, but alas, now forever lost!

Yvette Rannou, Sea Cliff

continued on p. 22

ARTISTRY IN GLASS; THE UNDISPUTED MASTER, OUR OYSTER BAY NEIGHBOR

By Judith A. Spinzia

Judith Spinzia is the former president of the Long Island Studies Council. Since her retirement to Central Pennsylvania, she continues to find time, while pursuing projects "long set aside," to research and write about Long Island and the stained-glass windows of Louis Comfort Tiffany, always a special fascination.

The most recent work by Mrs. Spinzia is a collaboration with her husband Raymond, Long Island's North Shore Families and Their Estates. This four-volume database is on deposit at the Long Island Studies Institute, Hofstra University, for use by researchers interested in the estate era on Long Island. An article, "Gatsby: Myths and Realities of Long Island's North Shore Gold Coast," also co-authored by the Spinzias, appeared in the 1997 Nassau County Historical Society Journal.

Who was this Louis Comfort Tiffany? The question eventually arises in the minds of members of each new generation, who pass by the remnants of *Laurelton Hall* or view Tiffany's power house smoke stack with its stained-glass insets, inspired by the art of Islam, from the beach at the foot of Laurelton Beach Road or from a boat out on the bay. The answer all too often is a superficial, "Oh, you know, the man who made the lamps." There is so much more to this extraordinary artist who, together with a handful of "opalescent era" stained-glass artists, pioneered an extraordinary American art form. The lamps, you ask? No, not the lamps! In fact, the manufacture of the lamps was a savvy business decision to use up the glass pieces left over from the ecclesiastical division. The lamps were an artistic embarrassment to Tiffany who supposedly neither spoke nor wrote about the objects which, ironically, brought the greatest profit to his firm.

Louis Comfort Tiffany died in 1932, by which time his art had fallen from favor. America and Americans had been changing in the late 1920s and 1930s. The nation endured the Depression and was hurtling toward a conflict in Europe again. The great, complex, allegorical ecclesiastical windows were "old-fashioned." Even the lamps were discarded to make way for "the new look. " The eclectic, but fascinating, home which he designed in Laurel Hollow was destroyed by fire; its contents lost or dispersed to collections or museums or the ash heap. It seemed that Louis Comfort Tiffany was a forgotten talent.

The renewed interest in his art and his art form is heartening, especially to someone who has learned to understand the complexity of his stained-glass images. In addition to his stained-glass legacy, many of his paintings survive and had he chosen to be a painter, instead of experimenting with glass to the glorious ends which he achieved, he would have succeeded as a painter and would still be acclaimed.

Long Islanders can be very grateful that the magnificent ecclesiastical windows that the artisans of Tiffany Studios created have not been destroyed

Louis C. Tiffany seated in one of his gardens, characteristically dressed in a white suit, a habit which necessitated changing suits three or four times a day.

or replaced by congregations, as is the fate of so many of these treasures throughout the country. They are still here for the public to enjoy and Tiffany did believe strongly that art should be accessible to all economic levels of society. Ninety-three have been identified and are listed in an appendix in the 1991 revised edition, *Long Island: A Guide to New York's Nassau and Suffolk Counties.* They are close at hand to inspire awe and to reaffirm the "artistry in glass" that was created by Tiffany and by those under his supervision, for nothing left his studio without his approval. There is a significant artistic difference if one closely evaluates commissions completed after 1916, after Tiffany's personal involvement in the design of ecclesiastical windows had ended with his retirement to Laurel Hollow and the establishment of his art school. Those completed by Westminister Memorial Studios after the 1932 bankruptcy of Tiffany Studios, using Tiffany Studios cartoons and glass and fabricated by former Tiffany artists and artisans, lack the lush, almost voluptuous, quality and are little more than lifeless mechanical ghosts of the original idea; ghosts that do not bring light to life.

The following chronology should help answer the question as to who was this Louis Comfort Tiffany and, hopefully, whet your appetite for pursuit of the artistic genius of the man. You will never look at glass or light the same way again; I can promise you that!

LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY: A SELECTED CHRONOLOGY
Relevant To the Man, His Work, and His Oyster Bay, Long Island Home

1848 Louis Comfort Tiffany was born in New York to Charles Lewis and Harriet Young Tiffany on February 18th. His father was a founding partner of Tiffany and Young which became Tiffany and Co. in 1853.

1865 Tiffany left school at seventeen years of age, choosing not to continue with formal education but to study painting instead. He had studied at Hushing Academy on Long Island and Eagleswood Military Academy in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

1865-66 Tiffany toured Europe; the first of many visits.

1869 Tiffany lived in a studio at the 23rd Street Y.M.C.A. in New York City, across from the National Academy of Design.

1870s He continued to pursue a career in oil painting after returning from Europe, exhibiting regularly at the National Academy of Design, New York City.

1872 Louis married Mary Woodridge Goddard (1946-1884), known as May.

1873 The first of their four children was born; Mary Woodbridge [Lusk] (18731963), Hilda Goddard (1879-1908), and Charles Lewis, II, (1878-1947), survived to adulthood. Charles and his sister Mary, who married Dr. Graham Lusk, maintained homes in Laurel Hollow.

1875-77 Experiments continued at the Thill glasshouse in Brooklyn with the goal to eliminate the need for paint on windows. Drapery glass was developed during this period.

1878 Tiffany's first ecclesiastical figure window was installed in St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Islip, Long Island. The window was originally installed in the 1847 clapboard church which preceded the present Norwegian *stavkirke.* The window, *St. Mark,* was removed from the 1847 church and reinstalled in the 1880 church. In 1895 it was replaced by the nine lancets, presently in the church apse, by Tiffany and at his expense. The whereabouts of the original figure window is unknown.

Tiffany opened his first glass-house under the supervision of Andrea Boldini of Venice. It burned down, as did his second glasshouse.

1879 L. C. Tiffany & Associated Artists was formed--Louis Comfort Tiffany, Samuel Colman, Lockwood de Forest, also a resident of the Town of Oyster Bay, and Candace Wheeler.

An abstract window was designed and installed in his apartment in the Bella Apartments in Manhattan.

1880-83 Tiffany's experimental work continued at the Louis Heidt Glasshouse in Brooklyn. John La Farge was also conducting experiments at Heidt at the same time.

1880 The trefoil pebble glass window was installed at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Islip, Long Island, at the same time that the first St. Mark (1878) was transferred to the new stave church.

Tiffany was granted two patents on November 25th for variations on the opalescent glass techniques originally developed by John La Farge, who first incorporated opalescent glass into windows. La Farge's patent was granted on November 10, 1879.

1882-83 L. C. Tiffany & Associated Artists redecorated several rooms and a corridor of the White House, Washington, D.C., by invitation of President Chester A. Arthur, who, incidentally, summered in Sag Harbor during his presidency.

1882 Tiffany continued interior design as Louis C. Tiffany and Co. while Candace Wheeler and her decorating associates became Associated Artists.

1884 Louis' first wife, May, died.

1885 Tiffany formed The Tiffany Glass Company Inc., New York City.
The Flower, Fish, and Fruit window was designed for the Garret home in Baltimore; one of Tiffany's earliest floral commissions, now in the Baltimore Museum of Fine Art, Maryland. Tiffany liked it well enough to recreate it in his *Laurelton Hall* home on Long Island.

1886 Tiffany moved into the Romanesque mansion, which he designed with Stanford White, on the northwest comer of Madison Avenue and 72nd Street where he installed several windows including the *Magnolia* window, a triptych, which is now on display in The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida, as is the magnificent *Butterfly* window which responds to both transmitted and reflected light. The latter had also been in the 72nd Street home.

The Townsend Jones Memorial window, Annunciation, St. John's Episcopal Church, Cold Spring Harbor, designed and fabricated by Tiffany Studios. Extensive use of opalescent glass and extravagant plating make this window one of the most beautiful in the Town of Oyster Bay.

Louis married Louise Wakeman Knox (1851-1904). Three of their four children survived to adulthood; twins, Julia de Forest [Parker; Weld] (1887-1973) and Louise Comfort [Gilder] (1887-1974), and Dorothy Trimble [Burlingham] (1891-1979). Louise and her husband Rodman Gilder and Dorothy and her husband Dr. Robert Burlingham, maintained homes in Laurel Hollow while Julia and her second husband Francis Minot Weld lived in Cold Spring Harbor.

1888 The Kempner Memorial window, *Christ Leaving the Praetorium,* was installed in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is believed to be Tiffany's largest figure window.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF ***THE FREEHOLDER***

THE ROADSIDE RHYMESTERS

By Gus Stahl

RIOT AT THE/DRUG STORE/ CALLING ALL CARS / ONE HUNDRED CUSTOMERS/ 99 JARS/ BURMA-SHAVE

Do you remember the processions of 3' x 10" red and white sign boards with the funny jingles that used to be found spaced along America's main roads? Advertising the brushless shaving cream, Burma-Shave, they furnished millions of automobile travelers with innocent amusement and, coincidentally, provided the Burma-Shave makers with substantial profits for nearly 40 years. Uprooted in 1963 when the Burma-Vita Company sold out to Philip Morris, the signs, except for a set in the Smithsonian, are now only a memory. However, a recent media story that Burma-Shave may be the subject of a new marketing effort might offer some small hope that the jingles might return to amuse the American public. Whatever one may feel about signboard pollution on the margins of some of our highways, that might be a good thing. Few of today's advertisers fail to take themselves very seriously. We would gain much if there were a few more who could issue such self deprecating ads as this one: OLD DOBBIN/ READS THESE SIGNS/ EACH DAY/ YOU SEE HE GETS/ HIS CORN THAT WAY/ BURMA-SHAVE. Old Dobbin--there were some of his tribe left on America's roads when the Burma-Shave signs appeared--couldn't have enjoyed his corn half as much as the motorist enjoyed that on the little red signs.

In Minneapolis, back around the beginning of the twentieth century, a lawyer named Odell found there wasn't enough law business to engage his energy. Acquiring a recipe for a liniment said to have been brought from foreign parts by an old sea captain, Odell began to make and bottle the embrocation in unused office space. He developed a local market sufficient to continue his interest in the product for twenty years or more. When his grandsons had grown to manhood he passed it on to their father Clinton Odell. Father and sons made an attempt to expand the market area of the product. Since an important part of the ingredients came from the locality around Burma, they named the mixture Burma-Vita. It did not prove a runaway success and the Odells looked around for an additional product to increase their sales. Someone suggested that what America needed was a good, inexpensive, brushless shaving cream.

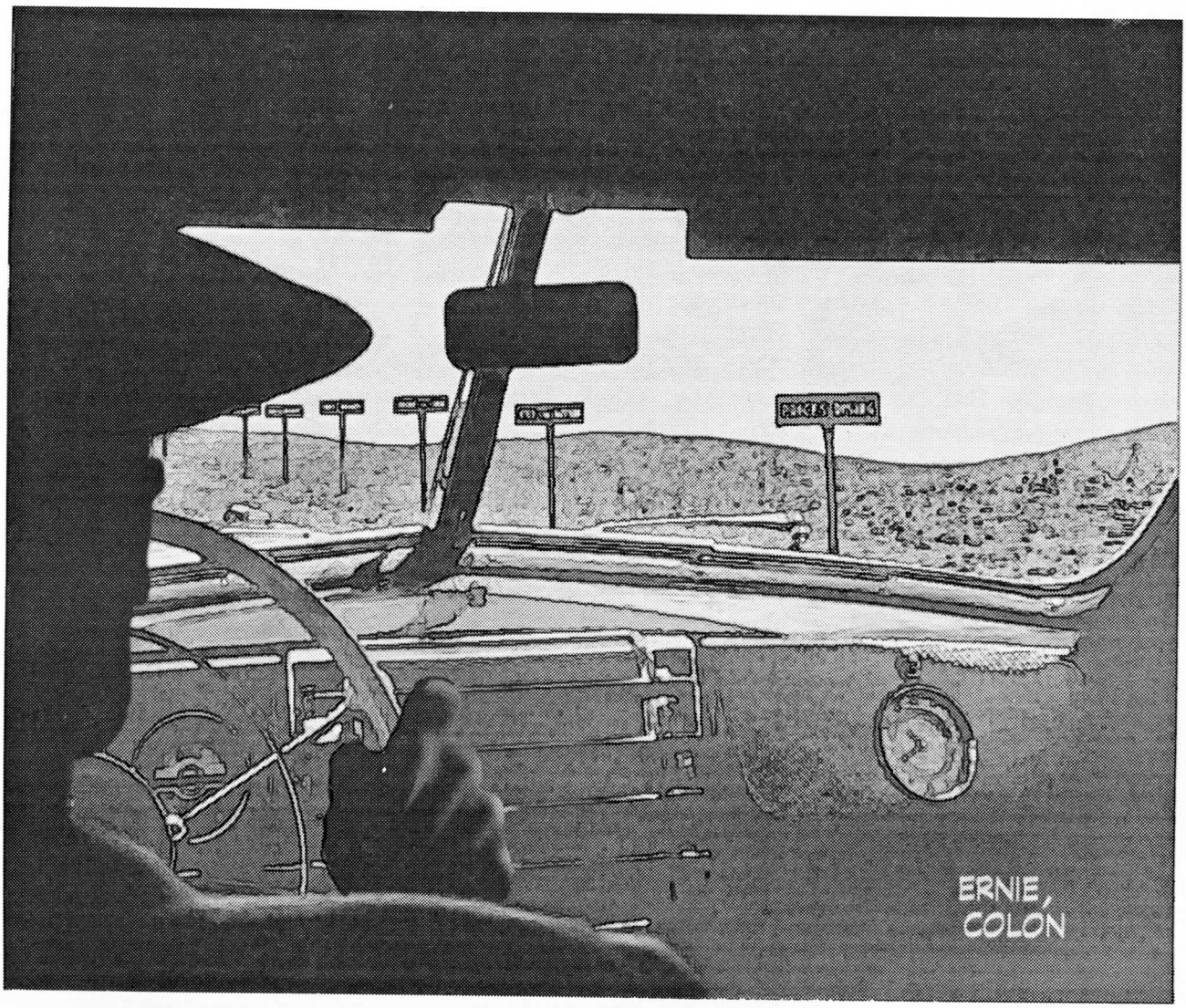
Clinton and his sons, Allan and Leonard, with a friendly chemist, Carl Noren, set out to develop one. After a discouraging series of failures they found a formula that met their requirements. They named it Burma-Shave. Customer satisfaction confirmed that it was a good product but a good product was apparently not enough. Sales were disappointing. Although funds were low, a promotional jump-start seemed essential. Allan Odell, who was on the road for the firm, found a possible promotion that might not exhaust their slender resources. If you are old enough, you may remember that as gasoline stations began to spring up on through-traveled roads, the proprietors often announced the motorist's approach to their establishments by stringing out for a quarter of a mile on either side of the road a series of single message signs mounted on fence posts, trees and stakes. These read, in no special order, Flats Fixed, Soda Pop, Gas, Oil, Water, Free Air, Restrooms, Eats, Smokes or the like. Quite commonly the terminal sign at the station itself, was much bigger than its predecessors and read HERE! As he drove from one sales call to another, Allan Odell noticed these signs as most drivers of the day did. He realized that when he noticed them he read them. It occured to him that such simple attention-getters might be the way to sell Burma - Shave. The family agreed, perhaps not from total conviction but because no other method was within their reach.

In 1925 the first signs, constructed of cheap, recycled materials were planted on two through routes running into Minneapolis. There were perhaps two dozen sign series with simple messages like: GOODBYE SHAVING BRUSH/ HALF A POUND FOR/ HALF A DOLLAR/ DRUGGISTS HAVE IT/ CHEER UP FACE/ THE WAR IS OVER/ BURMA-SHAVE. Within six months repeat orders from local drugstores were so satisfactory that the firm went public in order to raise enough capital to expand both promotion and production.

They set up a sign painting shop and both brothers went on the road. This time Allan's mission was to buy sign locations, a very modest investment. Leonard was in charge of the Ph.D's, the brothers' name for the posthole diggers who planted the attention-getters.

And attention-getters they were. Business began to build and kept on building as the signs spread farther and farther and the messages became more and more persuasive. The sign texts for the first three years were straight prose statements, albeit often containing amusing lines like, "Takes the 'H' out of shaving,"a rather daring double entendre in 1928, considering that profanity in advertising was then a major no-no.

In 1929 Burma-Shave had reached two hundred thousand customers and a new twist was added to sign composition. From then on messages would be cast in rhyming quatrains. Watching for Burma-Shave signs and reading them when spotted would become the #1 time-passer for people on long auto trips. There were usually six signs to a group spaced 100 feet apart. The verses got and held attention for five hundred feet and were often memorized by the reader. Few billboards could make such claims. Perhaps equally important, touring motorists would return home with a whole



The Editor would like to thank illustrator Ernie Colón for his original artwork for this article.

repertory of new verses and a compulsion to recite them to someone else. It is doubtful that any other advertising ploy ever received so much attention from the audience to whom it was directed.

The sales grew apace. In 1930 they reached 600,000. The next year saw 800,000. In 1933 the one million mark was reached and passed. In 1935 it was two million. Three million was racked up in 1936 and by 1947 the Odells were able to announce in verse: ALTHOUGH/ WE'VE SOLD/ SIX MILLION OTHERS/ WE STILL CAN'T SELL/ THOSE COUGH DROP BROTHERS/ BURMA-SHAVE.

The mention of the Smith Bros, product was typical of the Odell Bros.' custom of using the slogans or sales features of other American consumer products as starting places for blurbs about Burma-Shave. They pointed gentle fun, for instance, at a tobacco company and a coffee company with: IT'S NOT TOASTED/ IT'S NOT DATED/ BUT LOOK OUT--IT'S IMITATED/ INSIST ON BURMA-SHAVE. Later on the signs carried this salute to a successful soap seller: HE PLAYED THE SAX/ HAD NO B.O./ BUT HIS WHISKERS SCRATCHED/ SO SHE LET HIM GO/ BURMA-SHAVE. B.O. was, of course, the bete noire of all users of Lifebuoy Soap.

One of Ipana Toothpaste's selling points came in for a bit of a rib: THAT "PINK TOOTHBRUSH"/ IS A CURSE/ BUT THAT PINK RAZOR IS/ A DARN SIGHT WORSE/ BURMA-SHAVE. Hardly the last reference to then readily recognizable ad slogans was: 20 MILES PER GAL/ SAYS WELL-KNOWN CAR/ TO GO 10,000 MILES PER GAL/ BUY A HALF-POUND JAR/ BURMA SHAVE.

There were other themes. One was a serious one, traffic safety, which was treated many times. Serious, and so intended, the verses on the subject were also amusing and usually drove home the point that Burma-Shave was a popular product, as: DON'T TAKE/ A CURVE/ AT 60 PER/ WE HATE TO LOSE/ A CUSTOMER/ BURMA SHAVE. Another theme was an effort to limit competition by not too subtly suggesting that other brushless creams were mere substitutes. One of many such jingles was: SUBSTITUTES AND/ IMITATIONS/ SEND 'EM TO/ YOUR WIFE'S RELATIONS/ BURMA-SHAVE.

The Odells' most popular target for thirty years or more was not, however, similar brushless cream products but the old fashioned shaving brush and soap. The signs regularly lambasted these old time shaving aids which the Odells equated with the "one horse shay." They offered this critique: MUG AND BRUSH/ OLD ADAM HAD 'EM/ IS YOUR HUSBAND/ LIKE ADAM, MADAM?/ BURMA-SHAVE. By 1951 mug and brush were almost finished and the truth of one of the early jingles had been established: SHAVING BRUSHES/ YOU'LL SOON SEE 'EM/ ON THE SHELF/ IN SOME/ MUSEUM/ BURMA SHAVE.

Unhappily, the museum is also the place you'll have to go to see a run of Burma-Shave signs. No longer is travel enlivened by the catchy little verses that simultaneously sold shaving cream and entertained the motoring public. The Odells had recognized in the '60s that the changes brought by super highways, restrictions of highway advertising and the growth of other forms of travel was eroding the effectiveness of the rhyming signboards. Perhaps the final jingle we'll consider was in that sense prophetic: T'WOULD BE/ MORE FUN/ TO GO BY AIR/ IF WE COULD PUT THESE/ SIGNS UP THERE/ BURMA-SHAVE.

We've been told by old timers that Burma-Shave signs appeared on Long Island just as they did in other parts of New York State. Other old timers have testified to the contrary. Do you know? We hope you will share your memories with us.

We do hope that our readers will take Mr. Stahl's invitation to heart. We would greatly enjoy hearing your views on the subject of whether there were Burma-Shave signs on Long Island or not, as well as hearing your anecdotes about life in days gone by that we could include in our "Yesterday in Oyster Bay" column, "The Gathering Place" or in "The Post Rider." (We also like to receive mail other than bills!)

Ed.

SOUTH OYSTER BAY MILITIA CALLED UP FOR NEW YORK'S DEFENSE

by Arlene Goodenough

The 101 year old Delancey Floyd-Jones Free Library of Massapequa is the depository of some interesting documents related to the war of 1812. Delancey Floyd-Jones, who founded the library in 1896, had an uncle named Thomas Floyd-Jones who was a Captain in the Queens County Militia in the War of 1812. In the autumn of 1814, he twice led bands of local men to Fort Greene, Brooklyn. The muster rolls of the two excursions are preserved in the Library.

It is very thought provoking to read over the names and imagine what it must have been like to be a militiaman in 1814. These were perilous times for the young United States of America; the possibility of her losing the war was very real.

The official name of our group of men was the Detached Militia, 2nd Regiment, N.Y.S. Infantry, under the command of Colonel Daniel Bedell. The men came from present day Massapequa, Amityville, Seaford, and Bethpage.

Captain Floyd-Jones was a very wealthy man, being the oldest son of David Richard Floyd-Jones who owned thousands of acres of land in the area. He was 26 years and had just been married in 1812. He saved the muster rolls of two of his tours of duty and they were given to the Library by one of his descendants in 1901. They have been preserved there ever since.

There was much cause for apprehension in September of 1814. The Capital City of Washington had been burned by the British on August the 24th. The defense of Fort McHenry and the writing of the "Star Spangled Banner" would not occur until September 14th. Fort Clinton had just been built at the Battery on Manhattan Island, joining with Castle William (situated on Governor's Island and built in 1811) in guarding New York City. On the shore of what is now Astoria, Fort Stevens was built by volunteers in the summer of 1814. An organization named the Coast and Harbor Defense Association supervised the building of a steam frigate designed by Robert Fulton which was launched in October of 1814. Earlier that summer, Fulton built a floating battery to aid in the city's defense. The men of every city and town in America were expected to do their part by participating in drilling exercises for hours every week. So we can see that the relatives of the men had good reason to be concerned for their safety. Wives, mothers, sweethearts and children left behind must have been hard put to say a cheerful good-bye as the men marched away. They would have either marched or traveled in wagons since only senior officers would have been allowed to take their own horses.

Out of 119 men comprising the area militia, only 83 were fit and ready to serve. Two were servants, referred to as waiters, similar to modern day orderlies. One was for Captain Floyd-Jones and one was for Second Lieutenant Daniel Raynor. The only other commissioned officer was an ensign. Non-commissioned officers included two first sergeants, a second sergeant, and third, fourth and fifth sergeants. There were also a first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth corporal. The other 101 men had to make do with the rank of private.

All the men would have been between the ages of 18 and 45 and able bodied. Each would have had to bring his own musket, cartridge box, bayonet, knapsack, and enough food for four days. They would probably have had little in the way of a uniform, though Captain Floyd-Jones himself had a regular uniform. He left his sword, scabbard, epaulets and chapeau

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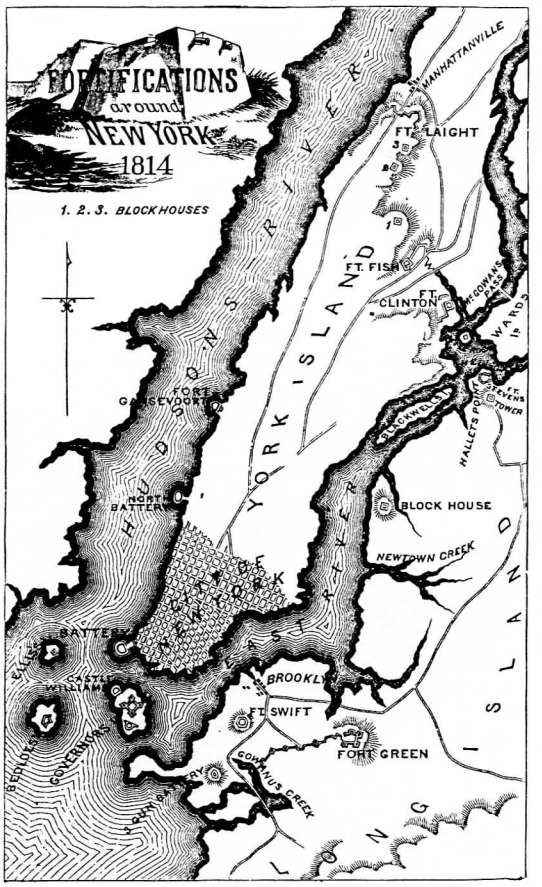


A map of New York's fortifications from Lossing's Pictorial Fieldbook of the War of 1812.

ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

Having gone shopping for sandpaper to smooth down the handle of a leaf rake, I discovered it was only one of a number of abrasives sold in sheets. Other examples are emery and garnet paper.

It set me musing about the origin of sandpaper. Has it been with us long?

Paula Pomeroy

Although the earliest date cited in the Oxford English Dictionary for sandpaper is 1825, the stuff was mentioned in a newspaper ad in New York City in 1764. I hazard that it was no new product then or it would have been described instead of being merely mentioned in a long list of products for sale. Previous to sandpaper, artisans used fishskin, the Dutch reed or rush (note, Lee Myles) and other materials including seal skin.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

I was in a restaurant in Ohio that was decorated by all sorts of old fashioned things on the walls. In the corner next to our table was a strange looking object that I have sketched. I'm pretty sure it was for pounding something -- but what? I asked the waitress who said she didn't know but thought it could be for pounding clothes. That made about as much sense as trying to skate across a river in the summertime. Can you help?

Richard Charles

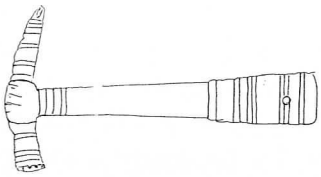
Sure. Your drawing shows a roadmaker's beetle used to solidify paving material by pounding. However, dirty clothes being washed were pounded by all sorts of instruments from the battledore that eventually gave its name to the badminton racket, to an item called a dolly which was thought to resemble a human figure. Some washerwomen used rocks.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

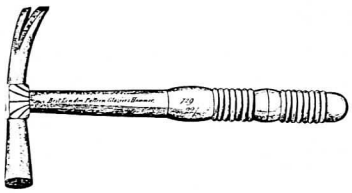
In the magazine *Colonial Williamsburg* (August 1997) in an article about casement windows in early Virginia, Ivor Noel Hume quotes from the probate inventory of a Williamsburg carpenter, James Wray who was active in the first half of the 18th century. In the quoted part of the list appears "1 Glazier's hammer." How does a glazier's hammer differ from an ordinary hammer?

Clara Payne

To find out I consulted a member of the editorial staff of this magazine who is a tool collector. He said that it's easy to see the difference in a 19th centuy glazier's hammer and supplied a picture. He pointed out that the glazier's hammer of the early 18th century and before had some differences and provided another picture. This he thinks might have resembled Wrays' tool. He had much to impart and it was very difficult for me to escape. You owe me.



18th c. glazier's hammer



19th c. glazier's hammer

Early 20th c. glazier's hammer

CURRENTS OF THE BAY

This section focuses on the doings of local historical societies, museums, and communities in the Town of Oyster Bay and its neighbors. Upcoming special events, exhibits, lectures, and tours are featured, so send your submissions to the Editor if you would like to see your events covered by ***The Freeholder.***

HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES POSTCARD COLLECTION

By Rick Robinson

For more than 25 years, Kenneth Summers, a former resident of Oyster Bay, has spent many weekends searching flea markets, garage sales and church fairs looking for postcard views of his hometown. "It all began out at the North Fork of Long Island when I attended a Presbyterian Church rummage sale," he reports. "I came across some 'views' of Oyster Bay and that got me hooked. Eventually I ended up with more than 400 cards relating to Oyster Bay and the surrounding area."

A 1968 graduate of Oyster Bay High School, Summers earned a degree in Business Administration from the University of Vermont. He is employed as a technical planning analyst with Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and his computer expertise has come in handy in his postcard hobby. "I've scanned most of my cards into my home computer." he explains, "and this gives me a high-resolution color image of each one. I can print extra copies, enlarge them, and even enhance the detail in a particular picture when necessary."

Last December, Ken donated more than 400 postcards from the era 1900-1920 to the Oyster Bay Historical Society. The Society's director, Tom Kuehhas, was understandably delighted to acquire such an extensive collection. "This will certainly enhance our existing photo archives," Kuehhas stated, "and many of the unusual 'views' and obscure subjects fill a lot of gaps in the more recent history of Oyster Bay."

Ken Summers adds, "Most of the cards I once paid 25 cents for have risen in price to 12 dollars or more. I belong to the Long Island Postcard Club and we meet monthly at the Lutheran Church in Levittown to buy and sell cards, and discuss various specialties within our hobby." Speaking of special card subjects, Ken also donated approximately 30 cards to Sagamore Hill last year.

A resident of Brightwaters these days, along with his wife, Nadine, and daughters, Kimberly and Katie, Summers concentrates on the Brightwaters- BayShore area in terms of postcard collecting. He admits that postcards still serve a purpose today, in that "they provide a means of sending a picture and a note to the folks back home when you're traveling, or they also serve as a keepsake of a particular place. That's why many old postcards were never sent through the mail and remain in mint condition."

Postcard "sets" of scenes in Oyster Bay were often sponsored

A rare leather postcard from the Summers Collection showing TR as an oyster.

A view of an unpaved South Street from the Summers Collection

by a local merchant, such as Joseph Randall, whose former building stands on the northwest corner of South Street and Audrey Avenue. The cards were, oddly enough, often produced and hand-tinted in Germany. This, in turn, resulted in some wildly inaccurate colors for many local buildings and homes. Nevertheless, as Ken Summers and Tom Kuehhas are both quick to point out, these by-gone scenes convey a remarkable sense of tranquillity and the fascination of a vanished era.

In one classic summer view of Snouder's Corner (often reprinted), there are more than half a dozen bicycles to be seen, but not a single automobile. Two young woman in long skirts are leisurely crossing the dirt road, probably to seek protection from the sun under the striped canvas awnings of Snouder's.

CHARLES REICHMAN TOOL COLLECTION: A PROGRESS REPORT

By Kenneth Gambone

All artifacts have been arranged into categories, measured and identified. Cleaning, numbering and storage locations remain to be done.

Books and printed matter which came with the collection are to be recorded and catalogued into a bibliographical format. This work is still in progress. Most donations do not come with documentation, and the Reichman Library is unusual because it provides a working order to the collecting habits of the donor.

With more than 200 artifacts in the collection, it must be photographed and given order. Perhaps the publication of the collection is an important step for the OBHS.

The book collection is so large that it is quite possible to see the Oyster Bay Historical Society as the prime research body for tools and trades on Long Island.

The Society would like to thank dedicated volunteer Ken Gambone for his assistance with the cataloging and registration of the Reichman Collection.

NEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXHIBIT AT TOWN HALL

Ever wonder how people survived the cold winters in Oyster Bay? Find out by visiting the latest Oyster Bay Historical Society exhibit near the Town Clerk's office at Oyster Bay Town Hall, 54 Audrey Avenue, Oyster Bay.

In the past, people did not dread the onset of winter as they seem to today. For one thing, travel was actually easier than at other times of year: sleds and sleighs could race over snow and ice where roads were almost impassable for carriages stuck in mud after a rainy spell. Of course, quick and quiet travel could be dangerous for pedestrians encountered along the way; thus the reason for sleighbells! See a "snow-knocker" a hammer-like tool with a ring used to knock snow and ice out of the horse's hooves. To combat the cold, passengers wore muffs on their hands and feet, and a flannel-wrapped soapstone handwarmer, taken from the fire prior to the trip.

Winter recreational activities were eagerly pursued. Sledding and skating were as popular then as they are today, but prior to this century, skiing was almost unknown here. Did you know that Oyster Bay had its own ski slope? A bygone sport enjoyed on the North Shore was bobsledding. Locust Valley, Oyster Bay and Huntington each

fielded several teams of up to 20 men or women on locally made bobsleds up to thirty feet in length. The automobile's need for plowed roads and some nasty accidents caused the sport's demise in the 1920s.

Ponds weren't only used for skating: ice-fishing and ice-harvesting (necessary before freezers) were also carried out there. An auger was used to drill a hole in the ice and then a saw was used to expand it. Then a simple line on a reel, with a primitive lure was lowered into the water. For harvesting, ice was chopped into blocks and carried away to waiting sleds with the tongs.

The exhibit will be in place through April, so pop in to Town Hall and let us know what you think!

HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND FRIENDS OF RAYNHAM HALL TO AGAIN SPONSOR 20 /20 LECTURE SERIES

The two above named organizations share a common street number (20 Summit Street and 20 West Main Street) from which is derived the title of their annual jointly-sponsored lecture series in Oyster Bay. This season's series will feature four talks, three at the Masonic Lodge next to Raynham Hall on West Main Street, and the final lecture at the Carpenter's Shed of Jakobson's Shipyard on West End Avenue, where the oyster sloop "Christeen" is being restored. The first three sessions will begin promptly at 8 P.M. The finale will begin at 7:30 P.M.

The first lecture on Thursday, March 12th, will be a slide presentation by Rick Robinson, sports writer for the Oyster Bay Guardian and a trustee of the Historical Society. His topic, "Basketball --The Early Years" will cover the invention (in 1891) and rapid growth of one the world's most popular team sports. Rick will discuss the development of the rules and techniques of the game as they apply to both men and women athletes. He will also touch on the early teams and venues in Oyster Bay, plus the organization of the first teams at nearby Friends Academy.

On Wednesday, March 25th, Amy Verone, Curator at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, will speak on "The Restoration of Sagamore Hill, Plus Current Tours and Programs." The home of President Theodore Roosevelt has enjoyed enormous popularity since it was opened to the public in the early 1950's and continues to undergo restoration and improvements.

Theodore Roosevelt's presence will continue to be felt on Wednesday evening, April 22nd, when James Foote, noted Roosevelt re-enactor, will present "T.R. -- His Life and Times." Mr. Foote will, of course, appear in vintage T.R. attire, and his appearance and demeanor are strikingly similar to that of the late President.

The final presentation, as mentioned earlier, will be at Jakobson's Shipyard. Charles Hatton, Resource Chairman of the Christeen Oyster Sloop Preservation Corporation will discuss and demonstrate the work being done to restore the historic vessel. All lectures will be followed by refreshments and an opportunity to visit with the speakers. For more information, call (516) 922-5032 or 922-6808.

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society's most recent exhibit, arranged by guest curators Virginia and Raymond Thomas, celebrates the Carousel. It demonstrates the wonderful heritage of the "Merry-Go-Round" and includes items relating to the exciting Empire Carousel, which is nearing completion in East Islip.

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Categories of Membership

Individual	$ 20	Business	$ 50
Family	$ 30	Business Sponsor	$ 100
Contributing	$ 50	Business Friend	$ 300
Sponsor	$ 100	Business Patron	$ 500+
Sustaining	$ 250	Benefactor	$ 1000+
Patron	$ 500		

Member Benefits: Quarterly Magazine, Members' Party, Invitations to Exhibition Previews and Special Events, 10% Discount on Publications and Workshops. Call 922-5032 for more information on joining the Society.

FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

More than 80 people turned out for the January meeting . The topic was "Winters of Yesteryear" and Dr. Benjamin J. Giminaro, deputy mayor of the Village of Farmingdale and Society vice president, moderated a panel of lifelong area residents. The five discussed the rigors of winter as experienced in the 1920s and '30s, and the session was also tape-recorded. This year marks the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Bethpage Preparative Meeting House of the Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers). The Society will be assisting with the celebration at the Meeting House on Sunday, March 29th.

In other activities, the New York City of famed architect Sanford White was the subject of a slide lecture delivered by David G. Lowe, president of the Beaux Arts Alliance, on Sunday, Feb. 22nd at the Farmingdale Public Library. The free program was supported in part by the New York Council for the Humanities. White's extraordinary life (1853-1906) and works coincided with one of New York's most fascinating periods of growth.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS

The Historical Society's annual Antiques Fair is scheduled for Sunday, March 29th from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. at Massapequa High School. This is a fund-raiser for the society and there will be vendors aplenty, with "wares of yesteryear" for everyone! There is a small admission charge and refreshments will be offered by Society members.

The Society is presenting an extensive exhibit at the European American Bank on Hicksville Road near Merrick Road in Massapequa. It will be a salute to the old mansions of Massapequa and the families who built them. Main emphasis will be on Tryon Hall, later known as Fort Neck House, built in 1770, burned in 1940 and Massapequa Manor, built in 1836, burned in 1948. The exhibit will be in place from April 1 to May 29, 1998.

Visit the Oyster Bay Historical Society's website!

http://members.aol.com/OBHistory

COW NECK PENINSULA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society's exhibit "The Imagination of Fontaine Fox," featuring original illustrations by the late nationally-renowned cartoonist, opened on Feb. 1st at the Sands-Willets House. Compiled from the Society's collection and other sources by acting curator Clare McKay, the show consists of old photos of real trolley cars and many other items based on the Fox-created Toonerville Trolley theme. No other museum has such a collection of Fox material. The exhibit and other display rooms are open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 2 to 4 P.M. or by appointment. Call (516) 365-9074 for more information.

ANCHO TO BE RE-FORMED

The Association of Nassau County Historical Organization, which had been inactive for many years, is being rejuvenated under the leadership of Alexandra Karafinas (Long Beach Historical Society), Evelyn Fitzsimmons, (Cow Neck Historical Society), Joshua Soren (Seaford Historical and Wantagh Preservation Society), and James York (Village of Hempstead Historian). Programs of interest to historians are being planned for the future, and will be publicized. Anyone interested in being on the ANCHO Board, please call Arlene Goodenough, 799-4676 for further information.

LONG BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society's dream came true on Sunday, Dec. 14th when their new museum and headquarters at 226 West Penn Street, Long Beach, was dedicated. All are invited to visit, but call first to set a date.

Many thanks to Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics Corp., 210 Route 109, East Farmingdale, for printing ***The Freeholder*** for the Society. His generosity allows the magazine to reach a much wider audience than was heretofore possible. Please patronize our sponsors!

YESTERDAY IN OYSTER BAY

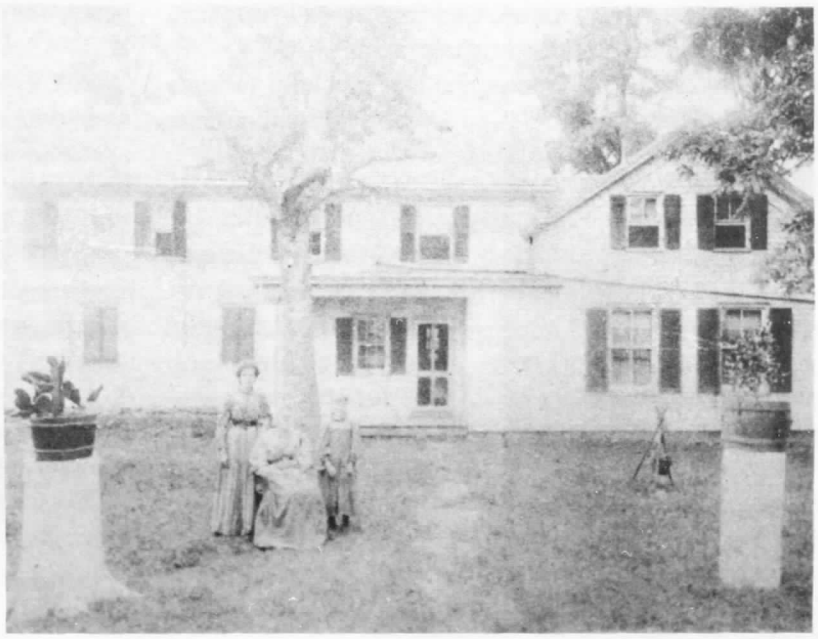
By S.(Sam) Berliner, III, Editor

The building which now houses the Muttontown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, which had always been known to parishioners as one of considerable antiquity and interest, is now known to have formerly been the Layton house. It was built somewhere between 1766 and 1797; 1797 is the year in which Peter Layton, great- great grandfather of Oyster Bay's present-day David Layton, was born in this house. The house, which was in the Layton family until sold to John Bermingham before World War II, stands on 2.9 acres on the south side of the North Hempstead Turnpike (Northern Boulevard/ Route 25A) just west of the Route 106 crossroads in East Norwich. The land was part of East Norwich until incorporated into Muttontown Village.

It is one of the oldest buildings in this part of Long Island; combining three different houses, the easternmost of which was a toll house for the North Hempstead Tumpike, and was located on the north side of the highway according to an 1873 map. Another may have been the gate house and the third the pump house of the original estate.

Beams in the meeting room, under the white paint, are believed to be chestnut. There is a very low ceiling in this room and one can not help but notice that the beams are hand hewn, with adze marks clearly visible; one must think of the person who made them. While two beams appear to be later replacements, "later" is purely relative in a house as old (by North American standards) as this one.

In the basement under the meeting room (accessible only from outside - be sure to duck as you enter), you will see what looks like the original planking, over which oak floors were laid at a later date. Also in the basement are the original walls, about 5' to 6' high (I. 5 to 1. 8m -watch out for your head on the beams!). The wall is made up of stones, laid one on top of another.



The Layton House around the turn of the century.

Under the coffee room floor, the foundation wall sits only a few feet down, on the dirt ground, and this seems to be carried through under the kitchen and the northwest room off the kitchen (now the church office). The steep staircase going up from the kitchen indicates considerable antiquity as did a former original staircase from the coffee room.

A chimney protrudes through the roof in the kitchen area; it now vents heat from two wall ovens. A pair of back-to-back fireplaces, facing inside both the coffee and meeting rooms, was the original heating system. Both fireplaces are now closed off.

The architecture and fence of the Fellowship's property is quite similar to the two adjacent homes directly to the east. A Mr. Riley lived there- he spoke to members around 1985 or so and remembered being with his grandfather in the Fellowship house.

The coffee room (the middle one on the first floor) was reconstructed between March and August of 1983 due to sinking of the foundation. A sub-basement was added under the floor and kitchen areas and a steep staircase then located to the north (toward 25A) of the fireplace in the coffee room was removed. The Fellowship house would probably be a registerable landmark were it not for the fact that vinyl siding was once used, as an economy measure, to

continued on p. 22

THE GATHERING PLACE

"The Gathering Place" is the department of the magazine housing contributions of an historical slant but short length that might otherwise be lost among the longer pieces. To our members who are not ready to attempt long or deeply researched articles, this is the place for your notions and comments, however brief.

The Dutch Next Door: A Hodge-Podge of Edibles

By Lee Myles

My desk dictionary defines *hodge-podge* as a heterogeneous mixture and derives it from *hotch-pot* which in turn is derived from the Anglo-French *hochepot* of the Norman conquerors of England. Hochepot is defined as the combining of properties into a common lot for division among heirs. The *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us that by 1440 the term means a stew of various ingredients. It also points to the reduplicated form *hotch-potch* which, to a large degree, seems to have replaced hotch-pot, but remarks on the Dutch term *hutspot* which also means a stew.

The title of our present *Dutch Next Door* feature thus becomes doubly meaningful. First because our subject is a heterogeneous mixture of English and American food-related items with a Dutch connection and secondly because by 1440 Dutch immigration into England with its cultural influences had become increasingly significant. It is not unlikely that the Dutch word for a stew of mixed ingredients, hutspot, was heard by the English as very similar to hotch-pot and hotch-potch (both the Dutch and English words seem to have originated with the French hochepot) and as a term for stew was assimilated to hotch pot adding a new term to English recipe books.

O.K. Let's get a little closer to home. In the mid 19th century A.B. Allen was a famous New York City nurseryman, seedsman and dealer in garden and agricultural supplies and equipment. His business was not limited to his immediate area but extended to customers distant from the city. That the Netherlanders were greatly influencing the contents of our American gardens can be seen by examining Allen's 1849 catalog

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

The towns of our early Colonies were quite thoroughly organized to deal with the many tasks that were required to assure that municipal life ran smoothly. As there was no class of professional civil servants to perform the business of the town, the residents were expected to accept the responsibility of the town's work as it was apportioned to them, often arbitrarily by town governments. Many of the required tasks are with us yet but these have for the most part been absorbed into professional departments of town administration. The titles assigned to early job descriptions have fallen into disuse as far as the public is concerned so that when we find in an old record a reference to some old timer who performed what was in his day a familiar function we are likely to be puzzled.

Here is a list of twenty job titles of ancient days. Can you describe to yourself the job belonging to each title? You'll find the answers on p. 23.

1 Chimney Viewer
2 Constable
3 Culler
4 Fence Viewer
5 Field Driver
6 Fireward
7 Hayward
8 Hogreeve
9 Leather Sealer
10 Measurer
11 Moderator
12 Overseer of the Poor
13 Pound Master
14 Searcher
15 Selectman
16 Surveyor of Highways
17 Tithingman
18 Town Crier
19 Watch and Ward
20 Weighmaster

which lists "Dutch Case Knife Pole Beans," "White Dutch Runner Pole Beans," "Brussels Sprouts," "Large Flat Dutch Cabbages," "Red Dutch Cabbages," "Brown Dutch Lettuce," "Yellow Dutch Onions," and "Flat Dutch Turnips."

A good deal of prepared food and food vocabulary came to us from the Dutch as well. Beer and brandy were both Dutch words and tipples as bier and brandewijn. Another B-word, bacon came to us from the French but *Bense's Dictionary* says they got it from the Dutch. Some other Dutch foods or food names came to us either from New Netherland directly or from the Low Countries by way of England. I list our words for these followed by those employed by John Cheese, a nickname for a Dutchman employed commonly in earlier days. Consider: cruller; krullen, pancake; pannekoek, waffle; wafel, pit (as in peach pit); pit, tart; taart, pasty; pastei, and probably hash; hachee (the *OED* suggests our hashis from the early French but it doesn't show up until the 17th century, a period of much Dutch influence.) And, let's not forget the Dutch Sauce of our early cookbooks, a great invention that we nowadays call Hollandaise.

Oystering

By Gloria Bayles Tucker

Gloria Bayles Tucker, tenth generation and life-long resident of Oyster Bay. She is Corresponding Secretary of the Underhill Society of America, Inc. and President of The Underhill Burying Ground.

The Oyster Bay Oyster Company was started by Samuel Youngs Bayles back in the late 1800s. The things I remember begin much later when as youngsters we would go down to the oyster house.

Oysters were dredged by hand in those days even on the coldest of days. The harbor would be frozen over and the boat would be taken out during the night to open the lane. Then the men walked home on the ice and when it was time to begin work the next morning, they walked back out to the boat.

In the dredges were starfish which are a detriment to oysters, as well as horse shoe crabs. We were warned about their tails but were allowed to play with them on deck.

Upon getting back to the dock the oysters were taken to the shuckers who were lined up on both sides of a long trough. The oysters were put in quart containers, shown to the bookkeeper, Ann Rapp, who then gave them a coin for each quart they shucked. After receiving their coin the quart was taken to Jack Patranek and his job was to wash the oysters before they could be packed for shipping. At the end of the week the shuckers turned the coins in and were paid accordingly.

The oysters were shipped in both wooden boxes and metal containers. Oysters were also shipped in their shells and sold locally to anyone who went to the oyster house. The shells were pushed to the back onto a conveyer belt which took them outside the building up over the roof. There they were emptied onto the ground. When the pile was huge the shells were put

Jack Patranek directs the shuckers. Photo courtesy of Gloria B. Tucker.

aboard boat and taken out to be used as sets for future oysters. Before they are ready to be harvested oysters are moved from bed to bed.

"We'd Watch Anything...!"
By Rick Robinson

Television, for all practical purposes, has been with us just over fifty years here in the village of Oyster Bay and surrounding communities. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 brought most research and development of commercial broadcasting to a halt in America until 1946. The first post-war television receivers available for the general public were manufactured by RCA and although transmission was limited to a few hours of evening time, there was no shortage of viewers. In fact, most families in Oyster Bay soon found they had a whole cadre of "new best friends" whenever an antenna was spotted on the roof of their house.

In the business section of most villages, radio shops often placed TV sets in the display window and this in turn drew throngs of viewers - young and old - to watch whatever was on the screen. A major event in many households was the day the crew came to install the roof-top antenna and fine-tune the TV set. The latter exercise was aided by on-screen test patterns that most channels broadcast throughout the daylight hours. The flat antenna wire was twisted in a corkscrew manner, apparently to cut down wind resistance, and run down the side of the house and under a window sill near the TV set.

Neighborhood kids flocked to the house in question; hopeful of being invited inside to view the latest electronic marvel. The less fortunate tried to catch a glimpse through a window or headed home to beg their parents again for the luxury of television. "I won't watch it too much, and only after all my homework is done!" was part of the pleading process. The majority of screens measured ten inches diagonally and in addition to RCA, sets carried such exotic manufacturer's names as Dumont, Olympia, Admiral, Capehart, Motorola, Emerson and good old Zenith, an early maker of radios.

To say that families and bar patrons watched virtually anything was an understatement. In the period from 1946 to 1948, professional wrestling burst upon the TV screen after lying dormant during the war. Of course, all of it was fake, but none of the costumes and antics of those days approached the sadistic nonsense of the 1990s. Baseball and boxing were the other sports staples of early TV in the metropolitan area, at least until Milton Berle came along on Tuesday nights at 8 P.M. (who can forget the exact day and time?) as well as another bogus sport to compete with pro wrestling -- the roller derby!

Uncle Miltie and fellow comedian Sid Caesar, along with Ed Sullivan's Sunday night variety show, did much to rescue early television from the grip of Gorgeous George and other prime-time wrestlers. The mat sport countered with, first, tag-team contests, then women's wrestling, and finally, midget wrestling. All of this was long before color TV, instant replay, hand-held remote controls and VCR's. Nevertheless, television was, and is, a miracle of sorts -- and viewed (forgive the expression) in the larger context of the earlier cathode-ray tube and today's computer monitors, it is possibly the most significant technological advancement in the history of mankind.

An entire season of baseball action—from Opening Day to World Series—is yours with RCA Victor television.

You're right in the game—with Television

Comes the shout "Play Ball!" and there you are—on top of every play.

Through television developments in RCA Laboratories, all the action is yours—the crack of bat against ball—every step of fast infield plays—even sidelights in bull pen, dugout, grandstand and bleachers.

At the ball park, RCA Image Orthicon television cameras—rivalling the human eye in sensitivity of "vision"—get all the action in day or night games. Shifts from over-all views of the field, to "close-ups," are swift and revealing . . .

And at the *receiving end*—your RCA Victor "Eye Witness" home television set gives you brighter, clearer pictures. You can see the ball that the batter misses, or you can watch his home-run sail over the fence.

Today, because of the original and continuing work of RCA scientists, millions can enjoy sports, entertainment, educational and news events, on television. Research at RCA Laboratories—always a "step ahead"—centers every instrument marked RCA or RCA Victor.

When in Radio City, New York, be sure to see the radio, television and electronic wonders at RCA Exhibition Hall, 36 West 49th Street. Free admission. Radio Corporation of America, RCA Building, Radio City, N.Y. 20.

RADIO CORPORATION of AMERICA

An early ad for RCA televisions, 1948

South Oyster Bay Militia
continued from p. 9
to his brother Henry, (also a general) when he died.

The men most probably would have been acquainted with one another and in many cases been related to one another. They would have been worried about leaving their farms or occupations as tailors, blacksmiths, tanners, or fishermen. Perhaps many had never been as far west as Brooklyn in their whole lives. The burning of Washington must have seemed shocking and outrageous and tension must have been high. Fourteen of the men had the last name of Smith, including a father and son. David Smith was a First Lieutenant, all the rest were privates. The second most common name was Raynor, with Daniel Raynor a Second Lieutenant and nine privates Raynor. There must have been a certain amount of confusion and the use of first names a must. Other popular names were Seaman with six, Walters with four, and Verity, Doty, Combs and Baldwin with three each.

Besides the 83 men fit for duty, ten were not present because of illness, their own or that of someone in their family; fourteen were absent without leave. It is possible that these men were not deliberately staying away; there might have been a communication problem. However First Lieutenant Smith is listed as on duty after deserters.

Two men who were not present in September nor in November when our company traveled to Fort Greene once again, were the two musicians, Richard Sands and John Walters. Sands was AWOL in September and sick at home in November. Walters was sick on furlough in September and not on the roll at all in November. Their loss would have been sorely felt. A fife player and a drummer, their tunes would have given orders and instructions over a distance, such as "fall in" or mealtime.They also played marching tunes to encourage weary footsteps.

The mustering place was very likely the grounds of the Van De Water Hotel at the junction of present day Hicksville Road and Merrick Road in what was then called Fort Neck or South Oyster Bay (now Massapequa). It is about 38 miles from there to Fort Greene, which consisted of earth works and a blockhouse. The men were camped there until October 18, 1814.

During that time, on the night of September 13-14, Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor was being defended from attack by the British under the anxious eyes of Francis Scott Key. Since our men were so close to New York City, it would seem likely that news of the American victory would have reached them before they left for home. Key's composition, "The Star Spangled Banner," was an immediate success, printed and widely distributed in Baltimore. If it had reached the city before October 18th when they were still in Brooklyn, it is possible that the militiamen heard the song and brought it home with them and repeated it to their families and friends. It no doubt would have been of great interest to the habitués of the Van De Water Hotel.

Another important battle occurred on September, 11, 1814: the victory at Fort Plattsburg under General Macomb. Then, Captain Thomas MacDonough, by very clever maneuvering, defeated the British fleet on Lake Champlain. So all in all, our band of would be warriors must have returned home in a more confident frame of mind than when they left.

On November 15, 1814, the militia set off for Fort Greene again. At this time they may have joined in the celebration of Evacuation Day on November 24th in Manhattan. This day had been celebrated every year since 1783 when the British had at long last left New York and George Washington rode in triumph up Broadway. Were the men part of the parade? Perhaps they guarded Fort Greene while others took part in the festivities. In any case they left for home on November 28th.

In 1871, fifty-six years after the end of the war, the Federal Government granted the veterans pensions of $8.00 per month. It is possible that some of Captain Floyd-Jones' men received such a payment. There is evidence that the Captain, (later General) wrote letters on their behalf. The youngest man who could possibly have been in the war would have been 74 years old in 1871.

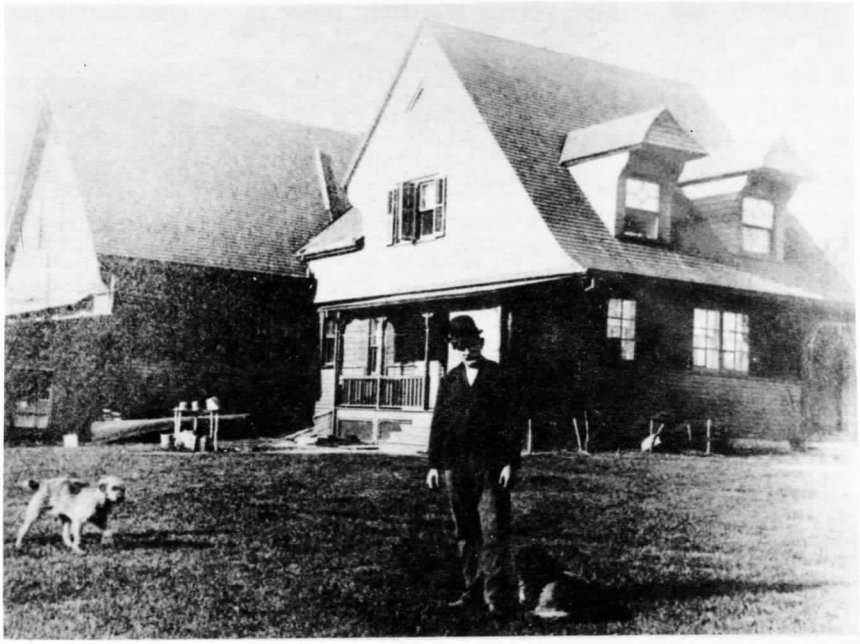
Interested in viewing the muster rolls? Visit the Delancey Floyd-Jones Library, Wednesdays & Saturdays, 10-1.

THE SEARCH FOR NOAH SEAMAN: T R'S SUPERINTENDENT AND FRIEND

By Franklin R. McElwain

We welcome new contributor Tim McElwain. Since retiring from his career as a social studies teacher in 1990, Tim has been researching the estate and gardens at Sagamore Hill. He was a part-time interpreter at the National Historic Site for eighteen years, and is a frequent visitor to the Historical Society's library.

In his early twenties and just married, Theodore Roosevelt, commonly known as TR, wrote to his sister Bamie that "It would be lovely to have a farm..."[1] People visiting Sagamore Hill often are unaware that this was once an operating estate farm. During my eighteen years as an interpreter at Sagamore Hill, I became interested in finding more information about the farm and its superintendent, Noah Seaman. The Sagamore Hill archives, local historical societies and libraries yielded little information.



Noah Seaman in front of his cottage at Sagamore Hill

Phoning the many dozens of Seamans all over Long Island seemed counterproductive. Where to turn next? My main contact with the name Seaman was a large African-American family that sent me delightful students to teach in my high school history classes. Serendipity sent me to my own church, St. John's in Cold Spring Harbor. Before World War II a Negro woman, Mrs.Seaman, sang in the choir and her daughter was in the Sunday School. The church records were of little help, but it is of interest to note that the first two couples to be married at St. John's Church, Cold Spring Harbor (1837) were black.

The church administrator next sent me up the hill to the Community Cemetery of St. John's. Within a few minutes the director had Noah Seaman's card for a burial plot purchased in 1892. Noah, his wife Ida, his daughter Mary, and friend and boarder William Gardner are buried there. As we walked to Seaman's grave, the director commented, "It's probably in the Negro section." (Actually, it was adjacent.) Because this Seaman monument had the dates of birth and death, it was possible to use death certificates[2], newspaper reports, correspondence and telegrams to expand knowledge of Seaman's life at Sagamore Hill. The death certificate had a blank space for race which indicates that Noah was white. Seaman turned out to be a distant relative of the famous John Smith who came to America in 1630.[3]

One of the earliest references to Seaman is in a letter that TR wrote, while on his honeymoon with Edith in Europe, to his sister Bamie back at Sagamore Hill. Dated January 6,1887, Florence, Italy, he encouraged her to keep down expenses, for he was concerned that they might lose Sagamore Hill. He also inquired, "Would Seaman do as well with the garden as Davis?"[4]

Newspaper editor Albert Cheney in his *Personal Memoirs of the Home Life of the Late Theodore Roosevelt*(1919) was full of praise when he wrote that "Noah Seaman, the superintendent of the Sagamore Hill estate, was an exceptionally fine man, and the President regarded him highly, treating him almost like a brother, both in public and in private." [5] Despite all the pressures of his work as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, attempting to get the United

States to go to war against Spain over human rights in Cuba, TR talked of going small game hunting with his friend Noah. In letters to Seaman, TR addressed him as "Esq."[6]

Over the years Noah Seaman, who ultimately became superintendent of the estate farm, earned the respect and friendship of Theodore Roosevelt. In turn, Mrs. Roosevelt and TR's personal secretary William Loeb had considerable confidence in him. Noah was dealing with a vibrant family in constant motion, physically and psychologically. There was also the threat of serious illness striking the Roosevelts or the Sagamore Hill staff. Above all the superintendent had to try to control expenses.

Only one article has been unearthed that is completely devoted to the farming activities at Sagamore Hill and Noah Seaman's skillful management of the estate. Walter E. Andrews visited Sagamore Hill in 1906 to obtain materials for his one-page article "Theodore Roosevelt As A Farmer" (*Farm Journal* December, 1906).[7] This magazine is still published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The following quotations indicate that during Andrew's visit he developed a high opinion of Superintendent Noah Seaman,

> Noah Seaman and his good wife acted as host and hostess, for the Roosevelt family were, at the time of my October visit, in Washington. Mr. Seaman has charge of the entire farm, and I found him to be a very pleasant man and an excellent farmer -- just the kind we like among our Folks. I spent a very instructive afternoon walking over the place, asking questions of everybody, taking photographs [no longer in existence], and admiring the grand water view northward.

Seaman told Andrews that Sagamore Hill totaled about ninety-seven acres with forty-seven acres under cultivation, including pasture. The rest were woodlands. The stable/lodge was built in 1884 for $5,160. The main house was finished in 1885 for a total cost of $16,975.

Andrews went on describing farming at Sagamore Hill by interviewing farmer Seaman,

> I see that your soil is a sandy-loam. What fertilizers do you use? Seaman replied 'None, except stable manure. We use all we can get of that. We keep, usually, about five horses, six cows, eight pigs and a flock of Barred Plymouth Rock chickens. Some turkeys, too. All the hay and straw needed for our stock are grown on the place.'

It is easy to get the impression that Noah Seaman and TR looked after each other's welfare. Once TR cut his foot badly with his ax. It was Seaman who convinced TR to go to Mrs. Roosevelt in the main house to get it properly dressed so as to reduce the chance of blood poisoning.[8] In turn, TR became concerned about Seaman's health. Albert Cheney,

A period caricature of Roosevelt the farmer

editor of the *Oyster Bay Pilot* newspaper, monitored things at Sagamore Hill when the Roosevelts were in Washington. He discovered that Superintendent Seaman was desperately ill and immediately contacted the White House. The President dispatched a medical specialist from Washington who probably saved Seaman's life.[9]

The *East Norwich Enterprise* of December 24, 1910, reported, "Supt. Noah Seaman of the Sagamore Hill estate has been somewhat indisposed recently."[10] The same paper on March 25, 1911, had the following obituary,

> NOAH SEAMAN
>
> There was universal regret throughout Oyster Bay Saturday when it became known that Noah Seaman, the popular superintendent of Sagamore Hill, was dead. Mr. Seaman had been ill many months with a severe attack of grip [sic], which developed into pneumonia. A few weeks ago he seemed to be gaining but suffered a relapse and

further complications ensued and caused his death. Mr. Seaman had been the superintendent of Sagamore Hill for more than thirty years, and was greatly beloved by all the Roosevelt family, and stood high in the estimation of the entire community. He is survived by a widow and daughter. Funeral services were held Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the Presbyterian church. Mr. Seaman was 54 years of age.[11]

NOTES

1. Elting E. Morison, John M. Blum, John J. Buckley, eds.*The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 90.
2. Oyster Bay Register of Deaths.
3. Mary Thomas Seaman, compiler, *The Seaman Family in America as Descended from Captain John Seaman of Hempstead, Long Island* np, 1928.
4. *Letters from Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles, 1870-1918*(New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 90.
5. Albert Loren Cheney. *Personal Memoirs of the Home Life of the Late Theodore Roosevelt as Soldier, Governor, Vice President, and President, in relation to Oyster Bay.* (Washington, D. C., The Cheney Publishing Company, 1919), 59.
6. Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress , Letters dated February 5 and March 4, 1898.
7. Walter E. Andrews. "TR as a Farmer" *Farm Journal* , December 1 1906, 431.
8. Cheney, 60-61.
9. ibid., 60.
10. *East Norwich Enterprise* December 24, 1910.
11. *East Norwich Enterprise* March 25, 1911.

The Post Rider

continued from p. 2

Dear Editor:

In your Fall 1997 issue of the "Free Holder" you asked for help in making Marlborough Pie (page 6). It just so happens I have 3 recipes for said pie collected over some 40 years. Here they are. I have the Boston version most often. It's an easy make and delicious - even with canned apple sauce (sugar to taste).

Sincerely Yours,
Ruth M. Wendt

Marlborough Pie

3 1/2 cups applesauce
1 tablespoon butter
2 eggs beaten
2 teaspoons lemon juice
3/4 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
pastry for 1 nine inch pie

Heat applesauce - add butter - mix and cool. Stir in eggs, spices, lemon juice, rind and sugar. Turn into pie shell. Bake in 375 oven about 1 hour until pie is firm in the center. Cool. Serve with whipped cream.

We'd like to thank Mrs. Wendt for sending in this recipe. We regret that space limitations have necessitated our printing only one version of the three she sent. Of course we kept the Boston recipe for ourselves! Ed.

Yesterday in Oyster Bay

continued from p. 15

resheath the walls.

Famed socialite Brenda Frazier and her friend "Shipwreck" Kelly lived there in the '20s in the brick manor house south of the Fellowship's back road. Calumet (previously Gamboling) Farms across the driveway (side road) to the southwest was their stables. The Fellowship took title from Albert C. Nolte, Jr., in 1963, having previously met at members' private homes, the Neighborhood House of the Glen Cove Y, the Grenville Baker Boys' Club and the Lower School of the Friends Academy, both in Locust Valley, and then at Norway Hall in Glen Head.

The Fellowship was founded in 1957 as the "The Unitarian Fellowship of Glen Cove", incorporated and changed its name to "The Unitarian Fellowship at Muttontown" in 1961, and became "The Muttontown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship" in 1987, to reflect the inclusiveness of the Unitarian Universalist Association, to which it belongs. The Fellowship is noncreedal, with a popular, open discussion following services. The house and grounds are quite popular for meetings, intimate weddings and celebrations, and small family gatherings.

From notes by Roy Sanger, long-time Fellowship member, 1987, and the Oyster Bay Guardian of Sept. 25. 1975.

AUNT EEEK

Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eeek,

I recently inherited a chair that has belonged in my family for many years. Family tradition says it was part of a set of matching chairs that were in the family home during the Revolutionary War at a time when George Washington used the house as a temporary headquarters. It may be that the Father of our Country actually sat in the chair during his stay. The chair does not conform in style to my furnishings and I am considering giving it to a museum as a memorial to my family and as a record for posterity of the Washington connection. Can you tell me how to go about this?

Susan Coles

While a museum with a need for a specimen of the particular type of chair you own (if expert examination of its age, condition and authenticity established its desirability) might be happy to accept your chair, they would not be impressed by the feeble quality of the Washington connection. The possibility might be recorded in the accession records but it is not likely the chair would be so labeled if displayed. Neither would any notation of its being a memorial gift be attached to the chair itself although, like the Washington anecdote, that information would be noted in the record of the gift. To make your gift, select a museum perhaps near the area in which the chair was owned, that has an interest in the period from which it is believed to have originated and phone them. If they're interested, they will guide you from there. If not they'll probably suggest another institution.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

1 Chimney Viewer: Inspector of Chimneys; he determined that chimneys had been properly swept and that householders had appropriate fire-fighting equipment including ladder, buckets etc.

2 Constable Constables were collectors of taxes when no formal appointment to that office had been made. They served writs and other processes, summoned citizens for coroner's and other juries, kept the peace and apprehended offenders including "rogues and vagabonds." Constables could demand assistance of others and could charge expenses to the town under an established schedule.

3 Culler: The culler was an inspector of certain commodities e.g. fish or barrel staves and was required to bar items which did not meet legal standards.

4 Fence viewer: An inspector who determined that fences were legal, sufficient and properly located. He could direct the property owner to make repairs etc.

5 Field Driver: He was charged with taking up horses, cattle and other domestic animals at large on the public highway, common lands etc. Such strays were normally held in a pound until claimed by their owners who paid proper charges.

6 Fireward: An official with the powers to draft citizens to help fight fires to authorize the tearing down of buildings to prevent the spread of fire, to appoint guards to stand watch over rescued furniture, goods or merchandise etc.

7 Hayward: A field driver whose office is described in terms of his duty to preserve haymeadows etc. from the depredations of stray animals.

8 Hogreeve: A field driver specializing in swine.

9 Leather Sealer: An inspector of leather who marked acceptable material with a seal or stamp.

10 Measurer: The title often had a preceding noun as corn or lumber-measurer. He determined that certain commodities were of legal dimensions. Gaugers and Weighers had similar functions.

11 Moderator: The presiding officer at a town meeting. He was chosen by those in attendance; usually New England.

12 Overseer of the Poor: An official concerned with the relief of the poor.

13 Pound Master: Also Pound Keeper. The official in charge of a public pound for stray animals.

14 Searcher: An inspector of

continued on p. 24

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

MARCH

Thurs., Mar. 12, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Rick Robinson, sports writer for the Oyster Bay Guardian, will give a slide presentation on "Basketball-The Early Years." Rick will cover the rapid growth of this exciting team sport, with emphasis on Oyster Bay.

Wed., Mar. 25, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Amy Verone, Curator of Sagamore Hill N.H.S., will speak on the "The Restoration of Sagamore Hill, Plus Current Tours and Programs." Join us to hear how TR's home continues to undergo restoration and improvements.

APRIL

Sun., Apr. 19, 11a.m-3p.m.

Third Annual Antique Auto Show

Join us at the Earle-Wightman House for a nostalgic look at automobiles from the past during the "Day By The Bay" Antique Auto Show. Over fifty autos of pre-World War II vintage will be featured.

Wed., Apr. 22, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

James Foote, noted Theodore Roosevelt re-enactor will speak will present "T.R. -His Life and Times." Mr. Foote will, of course, appear in vintage T.R. attire, and his appearance is strikingly similar to that of the late President.

MAY

Wed., May 20, 7:30 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

The final lecture in the series will be at the Carpenters' Shed at Jakobson's Shipyard. Charles Hatton, Resource Chairman of the "Christeen Oyster Sloop Preservation Corporation" will discuss and demonstrate the work being done to restore the historic vessel. For more information, call (516) 922-5032 or 922-6808.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge

continued from p. 23

meats and fish etc.

15 Selectman. A member of the town administrative board. Mostly New England.

16 Surveyor of Highways: Not the chap with a transit but the official charged with the maintenance and repair of the town ways and highways.

17 Tithingman: A peace officer; also an order keeper etc, at divine service.

18 Town Crier: One who made public announcements as he proceeded through the streets. Often the crier got attention by ringing a handbell.

19 Watch and Ward: Citizens drafted by a law officer to assist him in making the watchman's rounds or guarding some area in danger of thieves, rioters, etc.

20 Weighmaster: A person in charge of a public scales.

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