



# THE FREEHOLDER



FALL 2009 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

☛ HOW  
IMPORTANT  
WAS MUSIC  
TO 19TH C.  
AMERICANS?

☛ A BRITISH  
SPY'S TIES  
TO REV. WAR  
OYSTER BAY;  
MYTH OR  
FACT?

☛ LONG  
ISLAND'S  
DEAD POET  
SOCIETY,  
PART X

☛ SOCIETY  
BREAKS  
GROUND FOR  
KOENIG  
CENTER



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY



## Editorial

From the highest of highs to the lowest of lows... That aptly described my feelings in mid-December. Less than twenty-four hours after the ceremonial groundbreaking on the Society's new "Angela P. Koenig Research and Collections Center," our old friend, regular contributor and original "plotter" in the birth of *The Freeholder*, Elliot Sayward, passed away at the age of 88.

Although health problems had caused his regular contributions to these pages to cease, his influence on the *The Freeholder* will be felt for a long time to come. Elliot's ideas were critical in the early development of the magazine and he helped set the parameters of what could, and should, be covered in the pages of *The Freeholder*.

*Ave Atque Vale*, Elliot. You will be sorely missed!

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## THE FREEHOLDER

of the

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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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### THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

The latest issue of *The Freeholder* was an especially good one. Congratulations!

The article "Glenwood's Gatsby Era" interested me because my mother grew up there and I could recognize most of the names mentioned. You asked for the identity of the author, and I believe he was Charles Mouquin, born 1914, son of Eugene and Grace (Wiggins) Mouquin. He says that his family lived on Shore

Road, and that's where the Mouquins lived in the 1920s. He also mentions his grandfather Henry Wiggins, and that was Grace's father's name. Charles died in Glen Cove in 1986.

I think this article may have been published before. You might want to check the *LI Forum* in the 1970s or '80s.

With best wishes,  
Harry Macy

*The article in question, or at least a typewritten copy of it, had been sent to me, some time ago, by a man in Florida who was interested in tracking down the author. He did not know exactly where it had come from, but thought it had been written by a family member. He requested*

### ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

An enthusiastic crowd of the Society's trustees, members, staff, and representatives of state and local government were on hand to celebrate the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Angela P. Koenig Research and Collections Center on Tuesday, December 15. The heavy equipment moved in shortly thereafter. More photos on p.14.

*Photo courtesy of the Oyster Bay Enterprise-Pilot.*

*my help in tracking down the author's identity.*

*Since I thoroughly enjoyed the article, I figured I would put it in **The Freeholder**, along with a plea to our readers for their assistance. See, it worked!*

*Your memory is, as ever, spot on! Phil Blocklyn looked it up in the online **Forum** index and found that it had indeed been published, in the November 1978 issue.*

*Thanks Harry!*

To the Editor:

A friend sent me a copy of a page from the Summer 2009 issue of *The Freeholder*  
*continued on p. 24*



## MUSICAL LIFE, 1830-1860

by Michael Goudket

Music was as important to 19th century people as it is to us today. It expressed their hopes, their fears, their values, and sheds light on their lives. For them, enjoying music meant going to a concert, a dance, or making it themselves. Music was always live and, though the sound itself has disappeared, there are material remains to examine. Our subject is the secular music that belonged to two people: Maria W. Williamson, about whom we know very little but can make some good guesses, and Richard Kirby, a tailor who lived in Hempstead. Both were accomplished amateur musicians whose music and musical ephemera survive intact.

### The Music Industry in New York and Long Island

The 1830s was a time of optimism and invention for a young America, in the arts as well as in industry. The Erie Canal's completion in 1825 made New York City (then only Manhattan Island) a thriving center of commerce and culture. A port city, New York brought grand things from European centers of culture to the affluent and the middle class. Buildings which were large enough to be used as concert halls and theaters were constructed. Churches housed concerts deemed proper for that setting, too. So, there were places where professional music could be heard, instruments and sheet music were for sale, and students had opportunities for private study on instruments and voice.

There was even the "Normal Musical Institute" (founded 1853) at 23 Park Row where George F. Root and the Mason brothers, then famous composers, would instruct would-be music teachers in pedagogy and instrumental technique or singing in a ten week summer course.<sup>1</sup>

Music publishing was a huge industry. Of the many local places in New York City where Long Islanders could purchase music and instruments we have: Hall and Son, F. Riely, Dubois and Warriner, all at 239 Broadway; William Vanderbeek at 419 Broadway; Firth, Pond and Co. at 1 Franklin Square. All published music right in New York City and also sold instruments imprinted with their name but manufactured by others. Horace Waters, 333 Broadway and S. C. Jollie, 300 Broadway, and numerous other small dealers competed with the bigger vendors selling sheet music and instruments by small makers. Important publishers, represented in many Long Island 19th century collections, also include Oliver Ditson of Boston and W. C. Peters of Cincinnati.

As for instruments, standard orchestral instruments of all kinds were readily available. Mr. Martin's guitars, as well as pianos by various makers, could be had at Horace Water's shop at 333 Broadway. Those guitars were already very well regarded.<sup>2</sup> Melodeons (little keyboards which pumped air through reeds with foot pedals) could be purchased for as little as \$75 at Goodman and Bald-

win.<sup>3</sup> If you had lots of money, a violin by Antonius Stradavarius, Cremona 1739, played by "L. Spohr" (Louis Spohr, German composer b. 1784 d. 1859), was available from the shop of Schuberth and Company, 539 Broadway, for \$400.<sup>4</sup>

Large sums of money weren't necessary for musical purchases. If you needed a bargain, there was Novello's Cheap Music, 289 Broadway, which had large books of music for as little as \$1, as well as self-tutor books on many instruments, so that the ambitious could play without having the expense of lessons. The Novello name survives today as the Chester Novello company in Great Britain. The cost of instruments and music in today's dollars can be calculated in various ways. We should figure that \$1 then was worth about \$30 now, at least, using the Consumer Price Index, or it could be as much as \$4,000 using the GDP

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*A period advertisement for pianos and melodeons.*



index. (Various calculating programs showing relative value of money are available online).

If regular business didn't take you to New York from your Long Island community, you could always stay at a modest hotel and get to "the city" by stage coach, boat, or even the Long Island Rail Road. In those days there was no tunnel to New York Island so it would be necessary to take a ferry to complete your journey. Then you could attend a concert by the Hutchinson Singers, The Christy Minstrels, Jenny Lind, or a show in one of the theaters or concert halls. If you liked the tunes you could buy the sheet music, take it home, and play it on your piano while you or someone else sang the lyrics. No cultivated home would be without a piano. Many gentleman and lady

amateurs played flute, violin, or guitar and would gladly make music for social dancing and singing. Traveling musicians would perform for the wealthy in private homes wherever they were enticed to go. Churches provided a place for music that transcended pure entertainment to include a message of moral worth – such as temperance or abolitionism. So the opportunity was there to hear music, even away from the big population centers like New York or the City of Brooklyn. It is safe to say that Long Islanders had their fair share of musical entertainment, even as far away as Stony Brook. Famous Long Island artist William Sydney Mount depicts fiddlers in his genre paintings of Long Island and was a fiddler himself. He was not alone.

### Maria W. Williamson's Book of Music

It was the custom to bind your individual collection of various sheet music into a large, single, custom bound book. These books preserve not only the music, but often the name of the owner and other interesting bits of information.

Maria W. Williamson had her name embossed in gold on the cover of her book. She also hand wrote her own index of all the songs, dated it, and had it bound into the book. So, it is safe to assume that the book was bound in 1857.

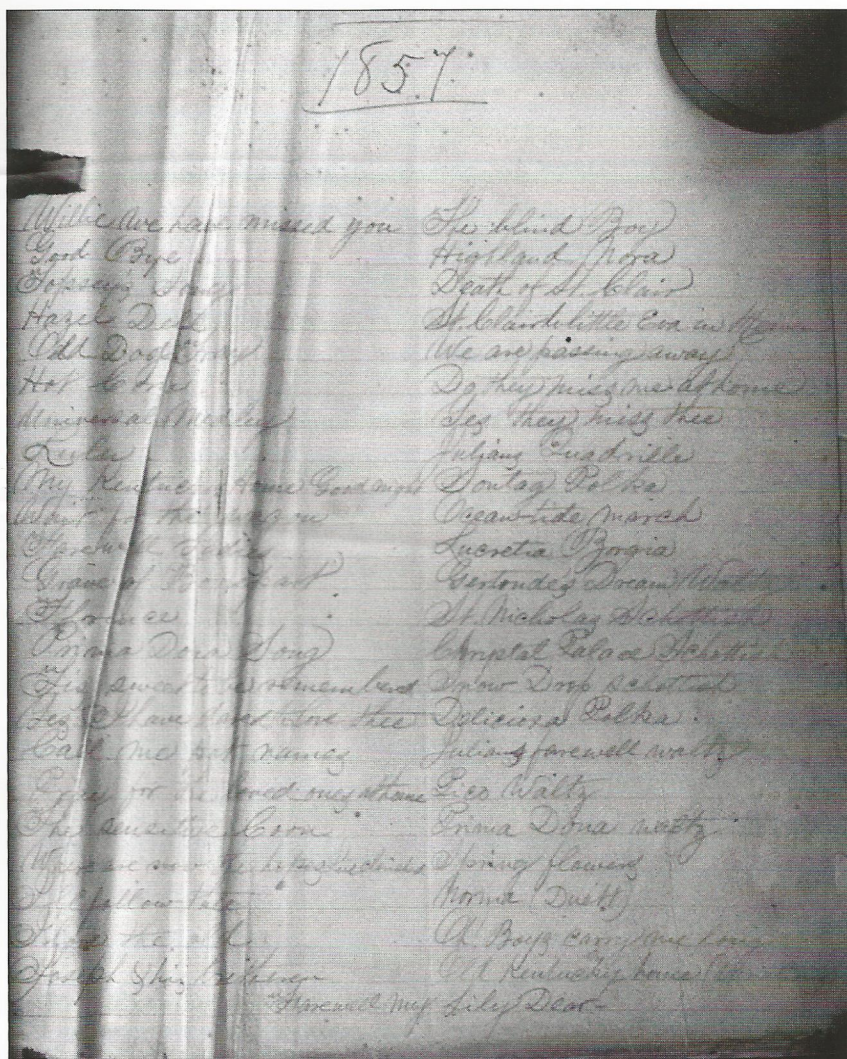
It is hard to be sure exactly which Maria W. Williamson we are speaking about, because the provenance is confusing, but research<sup>5</sup> only lists one Maria W.



Long Island artist William Sydney Mount depicted a fiddler (left) in one of his early genre paintings, *Rustic Dance After a Sleigh Ride* (1830). Musicians appeared in many of his paintings. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



As we explore her music collection we will learn a little bit about Maria. The first song in her book is “Willie We Have Missed You”, lyrics and music by Stephen C. Foster, published 1854 by Firth, Pond & Co. New York. Stephen Foster (1826 – 1864) was an American born composer of Irish descent who was the first to try to earn a living as a professional composer/song writer. This is the first verse of the song:



Oh! Willie, is it you, dear,  
Safe, safe at home?  
They did not tell me true, dear;  
They said you would not come.  
I heard you at the gate,  
And it made my heart rejoice;  
For I knew that welcome footstep  
And that dear, familiar voice,  
Making music on my ear  
In the lonely midnight gloom:  
Oh! Willie, we have missed you;  
Welcome, welcome home!

published in 1844 by F. D. Bennett of New York (no address found). It is the other side of the Willie song just mentioned, where someone is welcomed home. Saying a tearful goodbye was considered even more romantic. What young woman could resist?

The third song in the book is very interesting. It is “Little Topsy’s Song” with words by Miss Eliza Cook, and sung (composed?) by Asa B. Hutchinson. The Hutchinson Family Singers were a wildly popular group which



toured America and England. Their fine performances packed houses, even in London. This song, published by Oliver Ditson in 1853, is an example of one of the causes that the Hutchinson Singers promoted: abolition. The lyrics begin like this:

Topsy neber was born. Neber had a moder; speks I growed up a n--  
-- brat, Just like any oder. Whip  
me till the blood pours down Ol  
Missus used to do it...

The story goes that, in spite of mistreatment, this slave was still

loyal and had sympathy for the people who abused her. The song implies that Topsy was a better Christian than her mistress ever could hope to be. That's a very interesting song for a teenaged girl to be playing in an America divided into slave and free states.

The next song, "Hazel Dell" was for piano and voice and contains a four part choral section. It was sung by George Christy and "Wood's Minstrels" (soon to be "The Christy Minstrels") and composed by "Wurzel". It sold for 25 cents and was published in

1853 by William Hall and Son, 239 Broadway. Here is how it begins:

In the Hazel Dell my Nelly's  
sleeping, Nelly loved so long!  
And my lonely, lonely watch I'm  
keeping, Nelly lost and gone...

If saying goodbye was romantic, then actually dying was even more so. Dying young, dying old, dying of fever, departing this world whatever way you could, would most assuredly put you in heaven with the angels and forever in the memory of your loved ones. It also sold lots of songs and stories in the popular press.

The songs continue much this way through Miss Williamson's bound volume. One particularly interesting one later on is "The Grave of Bonaparte" as performed at the principal concerts of the Hutchinson Family. Music is by L. Heath and there is no date on the music which was published by Oliver Ditson, 115 Washington St.. Here are some lyrics:

On a lone, barren isle, where the  
wild roaring billow, assail the  
stern rock and the loud tempests  
rave, The hero lies still, while the  
dew drooping willow, like fond  
weeping mourners leaned over  
the grave.

It seems that Napoleon Bonaparte had taken on the status of a cult hero by the mid-19th century. His grave became part of the grand tour which wealthy Americans made to Europe. People would even pick and press leaves from the graveside and bring them home as souvenirs.

As evidence of this adoration,



*A small pressed floral arrangement, purported to be from Napoleon's graveside, is included in Alice Delano [Weekes'] scrapbook, which dates from the 1840s, in the collection of Raynham Hall Museum.*



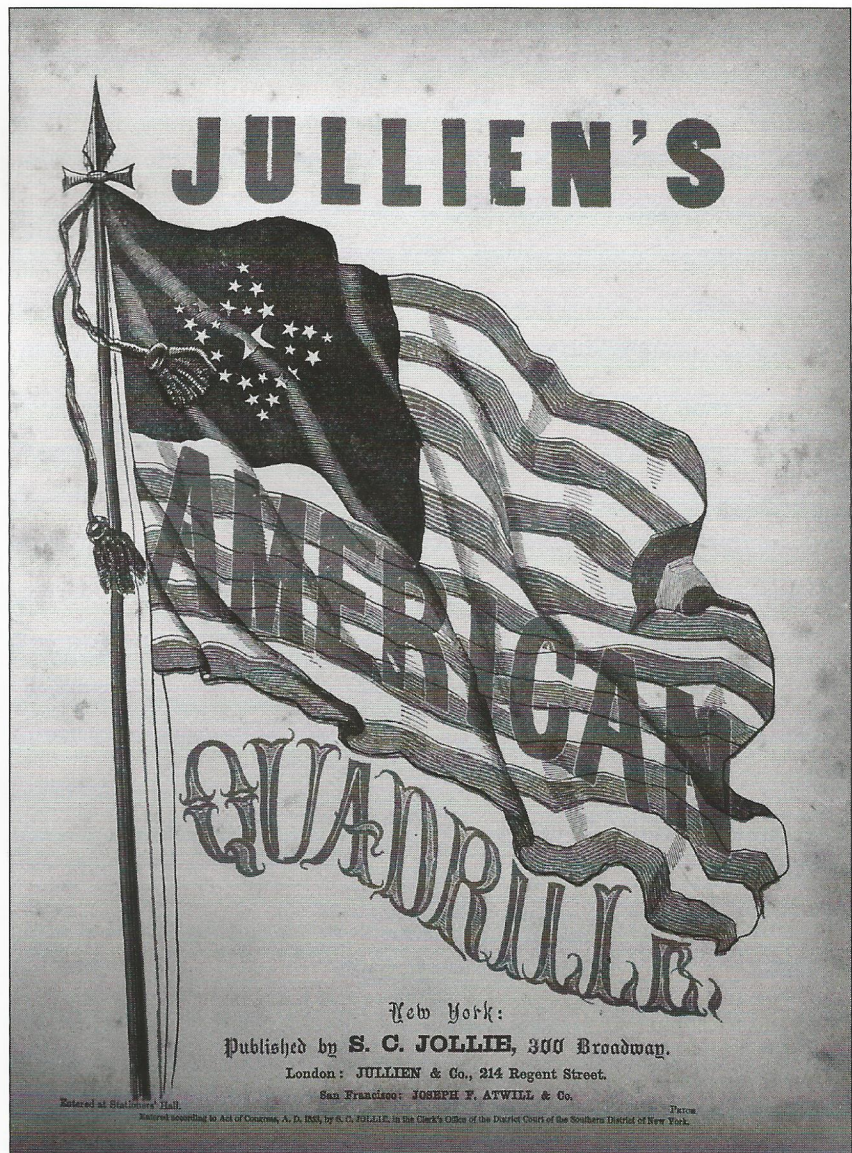
we find a small pressed floral arrangement from Napoleon's graveside in the 1840s Alice Delano scrap book in the collection of Raynham Hall Museum.

There is a wonderful collection of dances written for piano bound into Miss Williamson's book. It is "Jullien's American Quadrille" published in New York by S. C. Jollie at 300 Broadway. It is patriotic ("Our Flag Is There", "Hail To the Chief", "Yankee Doodle") and popular ("Old Folks At Home", by Stephen Foster, arranged as a quick dance). These pieces require some real skill to play well and at tempo for social dancing. Was Miss Williamson playing for social dancing? If so, she'd be invited to all the best parties in town.

Other dance music in Maria W. Williamson's book includes "Gertrude's Dream Waltz" by Beethoven (an adaptation), schot-tisches (a couple's social dance done in a circle), a polka and a waltz. All were published in New York.

### Richard Kirby's Music

We know a good deal about Richard D. Kirby thanks to the generosity of his family in donating his home, furniture, house wares, library and papers to Nassau County. Born in Roslyn in 1809, he worked on his father's farm as a youngster. He became apprenticed to a tailor and in 1832 married Rachel Denton. His Hempstead house, which is now relocated to the Old Bethpage Restoration Village, was built on land he purchased in 1838 and is restored to 1845. At that time he worked as a tailor and studied for



*"Jullien's American Quadrille," a wonderful collection of dances written for piano, including both popular and patriotic songs, was published in New York by S. C. Jollie.*

the Methodist ministry. He must have done well in his business in order to allow him to pursue his musical interests. There is now a melodeon in the parlor of the Kirby house, and the parlor is set for a music rehearsal. Some of his personal music resides in a folder that is part of the Nassau County Museum collection.<sup>6</sup>

His musical selection reflects a conservative taste. There is some dance music, but most pieces are

songs scored for voice and piano. There is Steven Foster's song "Uncle Ned"; a romantic song of youth, "O Would I Were A Boy Again," by F. Romer, 1848 published by W. C. Peters; and "Black Eyed Susan," a romantic song, by Mr. Incledon, which was unusual for its old fashioned, nearly 18th century, engraving style.

*continued on p. 16*



## THE MYTH OF THE FORGOTTEN SPY: MAJOR JOHN ANDRE AND OYSTER BAY

by Lawrence Singer

September 23, 1780, is perhaps one of the most important dates in American history. Yet, for a vast majority of Americans, it has passed into obscurity. On that day, a man purporting to be "John Anderson" was stopped by Abraham Williams, Isaac Van Wart and John Paulding at the Clark's Kill Bridge along the route to Tarrytown, New York, in Westchester County. The three men were waiting to apprehend anyone who might have been stealing local cattle. "John Anderson" was in possession of a pass that bore his name, and which had been authorized by General Benedict Arnold. However, he harbored a secret about his identity. His real name was Major John Andre and he was an officer in the British Army. Inside his stocking were papers from Benedict Arnold detailing valuable information about the Continental Army. Less than two weeks later, on October 2, Major Andre was hanged as a British spy.

If you were to ask contemporary residents of Oyster Bay who Major Andre was, you would probably be answered with blank stares and vague responses. However, ask them who Benedict Arnold was and you will be provided with a response along the lines of, "the traitor who tried to hand over West Point but was uncovered before doing so." Yet, it was Major Andre who coordinated the plot, received the plans to West Point from Benedict Arnold behind Continental Army lines, and was just miles from

delivering them to British commander Sir Henry Clinton. It was Andre, not Arnold, who would have benefited most from the success of this nefarious plot. Unfortunately, most residents of Oyster Bay do not recognize Major Andre's name, despite the fact that he remains a salient component of their own town's



*John Andre, an engraving based on a self-portrait.*

history. In this case, a lack of knowledge of Major Andre's importance to Oyster Bay and the American Revolution is the result of the supersession of national history over local history.

Andre's capture is usually remembered as an anecdote in connection with the infamous

treason committed by Benedict Arnold. History has framed its perspective on John Andre in relation to Benedict Arnold. In fact, "it is clear that we are not interested in Andre alone...Where Arnold is base, Andre is (and becomes even more) noble; where Arnold's motives, for all the times they have been explored, still remain obscure, Andre's are made to seem clear."

Although Major Andre has been somewhat forgotten in the national history and culture of the United States, he remains a vibrant part of local and town histories. His memory is preserved in the folklore and myths of the small towns through which he passed. Towns in New York such as Oyster Bay, Tarrytown and Tappan all emphasize Major Andre's importance to their own histories. In fact, Major Andre is often incorporated into the myths and popular cultures associated with these small towns. For example, one can eat lunch in the "Old '76 House" in Tappan, New York, "where Major John Andre, British spy, plotter with Arnold, to deliver West Point, was confined before his execution." Towns such as Oyster Bay capitalize on Major Andre's relative fame in order to emphasize his presence in that town. His fame and pertinence to local history serve to enrich and amplify the importance of towns like Oyster Bay on a local and national level. As a result, local histories are sometimes exaggerated, fact often becomes lost in a sea of fic-



tion, and myth becomes intertwined with history. For example, Tarrytown, which is adjacent to Sleepy Hollow, has incorporated Major Andre into its local folklore. Most notable is "Major Andre's tree," which Washington Irving wrote about in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

Major Andre is known to have stayed at the home of Samuel Townsend in Oyster Bay. The home, located on present day West Main Street, is now called Raynham Hall Museum. From 1778 to 1779, British commander Lt. Col. John Graves Simcoe established his headquarters in the house and was regularly visited by Major Andre. Major Andre frequented the home until just two weeks before his capture on September 23. While visiting the house, he is alleged to have painted likenesses of the Townsend's daughter Sally, with whom he is said to have had a romantic relationship. Major Andre is also believed to have hidden baked goods in the Townsend family cupboard. This lighthearted behavior was not surprising since "John Andre seemed the least dangerous of His Majesty's officers."

Outside Raynham Hall Museum in Oyster Bay, New York, stands a historical marker. It reads:

Raynham Hall Built 1740, Used by British as Col. Simcoe's HDQTS, information from here led to Major Andre's capture after his visits; Home of Robert Townsend Washington's spy.

This sign was created by the State of New York and

has been standing in front of the Raynham Hall historic site for over sixty years. It is striking in that it prominently displays a description of Andre's relation to the house that is known to be a theory rather than a historical fact. The question then remains: Why would a museum post a sign that mixes fact with fiction? The answer lies within the fact that Major Andre as a mythological figure has become intertwined with actual Oyster Bay history.

The "history" section of the Raynham Hall Museum website states, "Simcoe was often visited by British officer Major John Andre. According to legend, on one of these visits Samuel's daughter Sally overheard the two officers discussing Benedict Arnold's traitorous plot to surrender the fort at West Point to the British. Sally passed this information to the patriot Culper Spy Ring via her brother Robert ("Culper Junior"). The plot was thwarted, and Major Andre captured and hanged." As with all myth, the more the story is repeated over time, the more lost the actual history becomes. As a result, some literary and scholarly works reflect Oyster Bay's telling of how Major Andre was

caught regardless of whether or not this version of history can be proven true. What is certain is that Major Andre remains an important figure in Oyster Bay history.

In 1952, former Oyster Bay town historian Dorothy Horton McGee published a book entitled *Sally Townsend, Patriot*. In this book, McGee espoused the story that Sally Townsend's transfer of information through her brother significantly contributed to the capture of Major Andre. She writes "There was nothing to do but hurriedly write that a letter addressed to Mr. John Anderson had been left under mysterious circumstances by a stranger, seemingly dressed as a Whig, and that she was certain that Major Andre had taken the letter from its hiding place in the china cupboard. And that, later, she had overheard the major and Colonel Simcoe talking of West Point and some attack which seemed almost sure of success." The front cover of her book states "How she helped to save West Point from falling to the British and the young Republic from a possible death blow is a thrilling story." McGee is both right and

*continued on p. 19*



*A float featuring a two-faced effigy of Benedict Arnold being egged on by the devil was drawn through the streets of Philadelphia after word arrived of his treason.*



by Philip Blocklyn

## City Directories

City directories served obvious practical purposes in mid-19th century America. They provided alphabetical listings of inhabitants and their addresses, naturally, along with a table of cross streets; a roster of municipal and judicial officer holders and functionaries; trustees of prominent professional and civic organizations; and a listing of churches, banks, and lodges.

Such publications still serve the reference needs of local historians, and so they are hardly outdated relics. It is interesting to note, for instance, that some directories inserted an asterisk before the names of "colored people." Widows were usually identified as widows, this being a sort of occupation—like daguerreotypist or segar maker—in the 1840s. Meanwhile, some occupations have fallen out of favor. There may still be a professor of the broad and small sword exercise on Adams Street, as Christopher G. Taafe claimed to be, but probably not. I suppose you can Google it.

But directories are also worth studying as artifacts of interest in themselves. The Oyster Bay Historical Society's *Brooklyn Directory and Yearly Advertiser for 1848-9* is a modest representative of book arts from the press of Lees & Foulkes on Fulton Street in Brooklyn. Bound in thin card boards covered with printed paper advertisements mounted over brown cloth, the book

stands only seven inches high and would have been handy to use and shelve at home or office. Its subscription price, too, was agreeable: only a dollar, with costs underwritten to some degree by advertisements. Even so, the publishers, Henry R. and William J. Hearne, claimed that even an entirely sold-out edition would "leave them barely a remunerating profit."

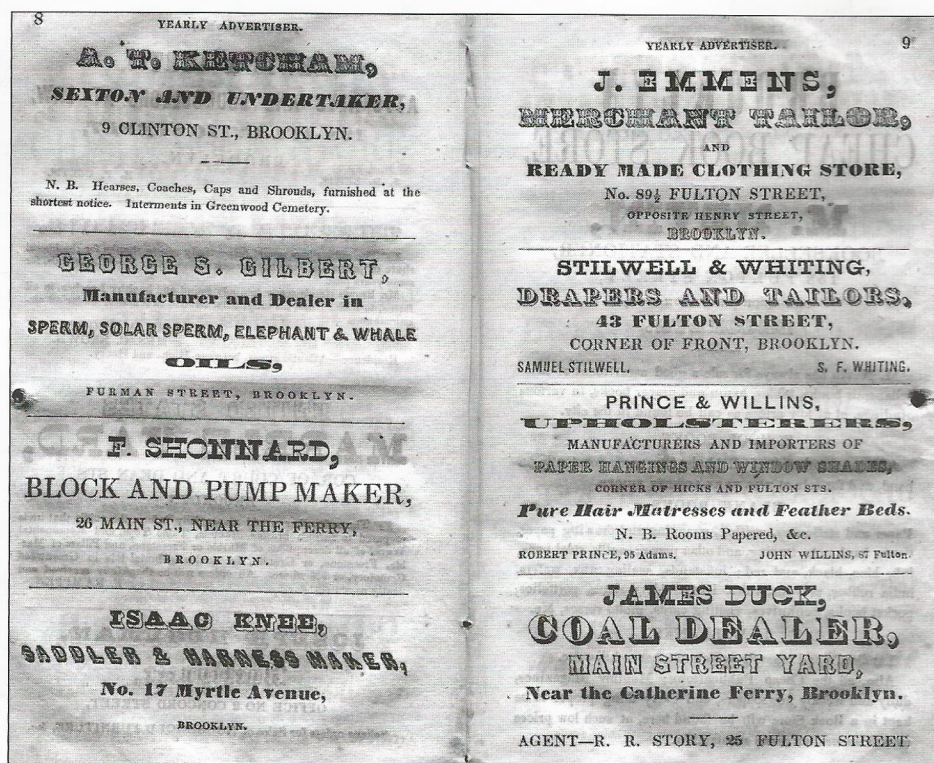
The Hearne directory's aberrant page numbering testifies to common printing practices with directories of the period, during which printers routinely printed off the statistical and advertising matter at the rear of the book while awaiting the directory's main text. For the 1848 edition, the Hearnese grossly underestimated the number of Brooklynites and so had to produce a 56-page insert numbered in Roman numerals following page

276.

Finally, the advertising pays tribute to the nineteenth century's furious and delirious expansion of typographic display fonts, in all their condensed, ornamented, expanded, shaded, backsloped, historiated, modulated, and tooled glories. Many of these are particularly ugly if not entirely illegible.

*Brooklyn Directory and Yearly Advertiser for 1848-9, containing the usual arrangement of names, occupations and residences....* Compiled and published by H. R. & W. J. Hearne. Brooklyn : Lees & Foulkes, Printers, 35 & 41 Fulton Street, [1848]. 18 cm. 75.260.235. The Oyster Bay Historical Society Library. 917.4723 B872.

For more information about the collections, visit our blog at <http://reposit.blogs.com/>.



Advertisement display types, tasteful and otherwise, from the *Brooklyn Directory*, 1848.





## 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 in **The Freeholder**.*

### OB HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES THE HISTORY OF ITS HISTORY

Our new curator George Wallace is pulling together a special commemorative display that will be used to help celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

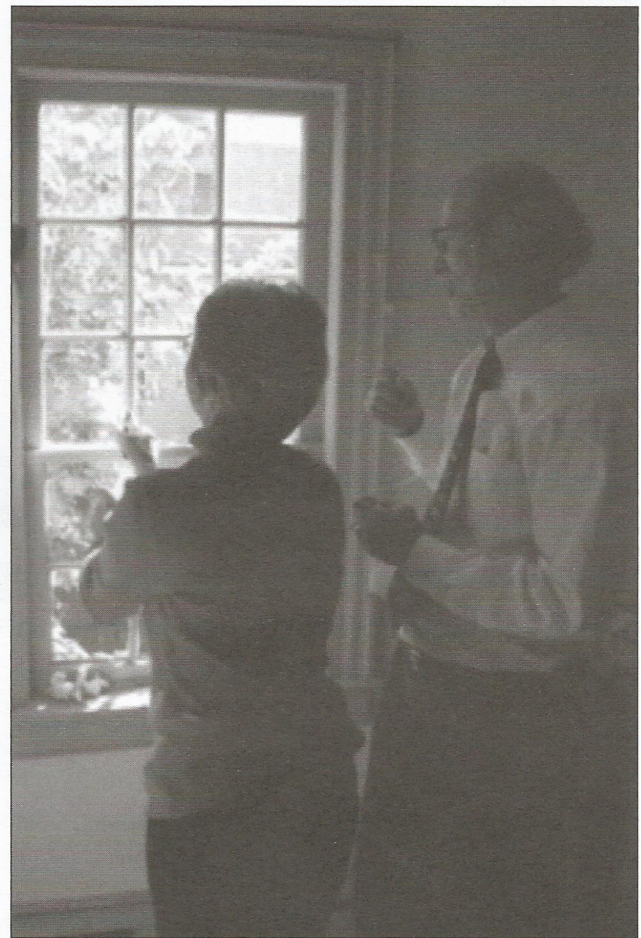
George, who brings to the job years of experience writing historical columns for local newspapers -- as well as creating exhibitions for the Northport Historical Society -- has been hard at work poring over old photographs and documents and interviewing folks whose memory of the OBHS go back to its origins in the early 1960s.

"Oyster Bay is blessed with a long and rich history, dating back to the pre-European Native peoples and early settlers, right through to those who turned a tiny 17th century village into what we see today -- a great thriving town on the North Shore of Long Island," he notes. "Meanwhile in the past fifty years, Oyster Bay has also been blessed with a group that has recognized the value and importance of the wide scope of our town's history -- the Oyster Bay Historical Society. My hope is to create a display that will not only celebrate the society's anniversary, but will be valuable as an informational tool going forward into OBHS' second half century."

The commemorative display, which will be mounted on full-size portable folding panels, will trace the society's story back to

the founders and visionaries who created it in 1960, and recount our activities and accomplishments since then. "My concept is to look at the narrative in terms of the building blocks of a vital historical society," says George. Categorically, that includes: Early Visionaries, Bricks and Mortar, Collections, Information Gathering, Publications, Programs and Exhibitions, and Associations with the many individuals and institutions which, over the years, have helped to build the OBHS' story.

The display will conclude with a reminder to everyone of their own role in the historical society's success, says George. "Our ultimate success is when individuals in our community learn about Oyster Bay's heritage, start to care about it, and get involved in preserving and advancing that heritage. I'm hoping this display will be one more way we can make that happen."



*Society Archivist Philip Blocklyn and Administrative Assistant Milicent Pittis apply new UV film to the windows in the Exhibition Room in order to protect the collection from the sun's harmful rays.*

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOSTS NEW MEMBERS' RECEPTION

It was a dark and stormy night. But that didn't stop more than 120 history-minded folks from attending a brilliant reception to attract new members to the Oyster Bay Historical Society. Board members Frank & Stefanie Leone generously opened their magnificent Mill Neck home to the crowds in a successful effort to bring new energy and new





*Members of the Society's Executive Committee with Trustee and host Frank Leone at the new members' reception in October. From left, Director Tom Kuehhas, Mr. Leone, President Maureen Monck, and Vice Presidents Barrie Curtis Spies and Bradford Warner. Photo by Rob Rich.*

ideas to this venerable Oyster Bay institution.

Founded 50 years ago by a group of dedicated community leaders, headed by Mrs. Miner Hill, the Society was formed to preserve and protect the irreplaceable heritage of this historic hamlet and town. Keeping up the tradition, Mrs. Hill's grandson, Brad Warner, now serves as First

Vice-President of the Society. "It's an honor for me to help bring this venerable organization into the 21st century. An evening such as this one shows how much interest and enthusiasm the Society can generate. I think my grandmother would be very proud to see how far we've come."

But, said Tom Kuehhas, the

Society's Director, "We still have a long way to go. And a key part of that journey is our proposed 'Angela P. Koenig Research and Collections Center.'"

Society President Maureen Monck introduced the officers of the Society, and then the Director conducted a power-point presentation for the crowd, which detailed the necessity for this new building.

"Simply put, we're out of room!" said Kuehhas. "The Society has grown dramatically in recent years, and our current headquarters just can't accommodate the constant flow of researchers, genealogists, visiting school children and the increasing staff required to serve the community. Also, we have to face the very real possibility of fire in our current struc-

#### **OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** **Categories of Membership**

Individual	\$ 35	Business	\$ 75
Family	\$ 45	Business Sponsor	\$ 100
Contributing	\$ 75	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 (516) 922-5032 for more information on joining the Society.



**Visit the Oyster Bay  
Historical Society's  
NEW website!**

**[www.oysterbayhistory.org](http://www.oysterbayhistory.org)**

ture. The dangers of housing an irreplaceable historical collection in a 300 year old wood frame structure were made all too vivid by the October 2003 blaze which destroyed the historic Masonic Lodge just a few blocks away."

To address these issues, the Society is in the process of constructing a non-combustible building to be located behind the Colonial Garden at the rear of the Earle-Wightman house. The new structure will have the heating, ventilation and air conditioning needed for proper archival storage. Kuehhas also commented that the Society was deeply grateful to The Dolan Foundation for generously providing a matching grant to aid their cause. "We're not there yet," said the Director. "We still need about \$250,000 to make the building a reality. But we've bitten the bullet and we're going full speed ahead!"

Kuehhas obviously made his point. Dozens of guests headed for the "Sign-Up Table" to become new members.

"This has been a really memorable evening," said hostess Stefanie Leone. "We're delighted to open our home for a cause as important as this one. And the fact that so many new people attended and joined the Society is proof that there's a new interest and a new vitality in the organization!"

**OB HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ARCHIVES**

by Philip Blocklyn

The Oyster Bay Historical Society Archives' three contributing volunteers have all marked their first anniversary at the Earle-Wightman House.

Ethan Abbe is at work transcribing the Society's collection of oral history interviews, including tapes of conversations with Zeb Wilson conducted in conjunction with the Society's Fall 2002 exhibition, "Recreation during the 20th Century in Oyster Bay: From Doing to Viewing." Danielle Apfelbaum is preparing an online version of her Fall 2009 exhibition, "Tracing Peg: Slavery in Oyster Bay" (see *Freeholder* volume 14, no 1, Summer 2009, 11-12). Stephanie Gellis has begun the long-term project of reorganizing and indexing the Society's genealogical files.

The Society is grateful for the dedication of these three volunteers.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

The Society celebrated its 46th program year in October. The November 15th program "Civil War Medicine" was co-sponsored with the Central Park Historical Society.

The first program of the Society's 2010 programs was "Claimed by the Sea: Long Island's Shipwrecks," presented by Adam Grohman. The second program was "George Washington's Long Island Spy Ring," presented by Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan on February 14, at the Village Hall. March 21 marks the Cen-

tennial of Pennsylvania Station and the associated tunnels under the East and Hudson Rivers. The event will be observed with a presentation by David Morrison and Pierre Lehmuller.

**SAGAMORE HILL  
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

Saturday, October 24, 2009, was the occasion of Theodore Roosevelt's 151st Birthday and was celebrated from 11am to 4pm at Sagamore Hill. The following day, October 25th, saw the appointment of Noreen Hancock as Acting Chief of the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services. She succeeds Scott Gurney and Josh Reyes. The annual Holiday Party was held December 10, 2009, at the Swan Club which boasted a record turnout of 62 attendees.

**CENTRAL PARK  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The December program featured a showing of the DVD appropriately entitled "A Victorian Christmas" at the Bethpage Library on December 16th. The March 2010 Program will feature Rosemary McKinley introducing her latest book, *101 Glimpses of the North Fork and the Islands*.

The Society's goals for 2010 include the continued expansion

**Many thanks to Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics Corp., 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!**



The Society now has available a "1900 View of Oyster Bay," which shows every building in existence at that time and includes a list of businesses and prominent residences. Eminently suitable for framing, this print is a great bargain at \$25 plus shipping. Contact the Society at (516) 922-5032 to order yours today!

Also available are an 1833 map of Oyster Bay (\$10) and a map of Gold Coast estates c. 1920 (\$17). Shipping is additional.

of the work in process on the *Encyclopedia of Central Park/ Bethpage*, continuing the collection of documents, pictures and articles, and installing historical markers in areas of significance. Work is continuing on preparation for the celebration of the Bethpage Fire Department's 100th Anniversary in August.

#### LOCUST VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This fall the Society launched their website, [www.locustvalley-history.org](http://www.locustvalley-history.org). Please take a look and let them know what you think.

The Society was successful in their efforts to convince Bank of America to keep a painting by local resident George Deforest Brush, long displayed in what was then a locally owned business (Matinecock Bank), on Long Island. They also prevailed upon Bank of America to donate another painting, of the Locust Valley main depot by artist Jon Legere, to the Locust Valley Library.

#### GLEN COVE

On Sunday, January 31, the library honored Frank and Edith

Ludlam-Uhlendorf for their generous donation of archival materials to the Robert R. Coles Long Island Historical Collection. The

donation consisted of a rich collection of maps, artifacts, and photographs documenting the history of Glen Cove.



Two views of the construction on the Angela P. Koenig Research and Collections Center as it begins to take shape. At top, the excavation for the foundation begins. Bottom, the pouring of the concrete footings.





## THE GATHERING PLACE



*"The Gathering Place" is the department of the magazine housing contributions of an historical slant but of 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.*

### SOCIETY LAMENTS THE PASSING OF ELLIOT M. SAYWARD

The Oyster Bay Historical Society, and in particular *The Freeholder*, has lost one of its staunchest supporters and its most prolific contributor throughout our almost fifteen years of publication.

Elliot M. Sayward passed away on December 16, in West Lafayette, IN, where he had moved about ten years ago with his wife, Mary Jane.

For many years Elliot served as Editor of *The Chronicle* of the Early American Industries Association, and he was happy to share the experience gained thereby with the editor of this publication. His myriad of interests from early trades and crafts, to Dutch contributions to Western Civilization, to poetry and the arts served as fodder for articles which he submitted under his own name and several nommes de plume. Perhaps the most endearing of these personae was as our own "Uncle Peleg". He was also the "Lee Myles" who penned the popular "Dutch Next Door" column which for many years appeared in this space.

However it was not only as a regular contributor to the pages of *The Freeholder* that Elliot assisted the Society. He also paved the way for the donation of the Reichman Collection of Early American Tools and served as Assistant Curator for several exhibitions in the 1990s and as

co-Chair of the Society's Maritime Heritage Fairs in the late '90s. Bob Graham, a long-time associate of Elliot's who collaborated with him on the article, "The Crooked Knife," (*The Freeholder*, Vol. VI, No. 1) sent the following to your editor upon hearing of Elliot's passing:

"I know that Elliot was a long-time editor and contributor (under several names) to *The Freeholder*. Elliot and I met only twice--at an EAIA meeting in Albany, NY in 1976, and at an EAIA meeting in Sacramento, CA, four years later. But we had a long continent-wide correspondence that went for over thirty years. Elliot was certainly one of the most interesting and interest-

ed people I have ever known.

"In 1976, the two of us co-founded the British-American Rhykenological Society (carpenters' planes). I coined the name from the Dutch word, so Elliot appointed me "president," and Elliot edited and produced a quarterly magazine we called *Plane Talk*, to which we both contributed articles for a ten year period, after which the magazine passed on to Emil Pollack for a second ten-year run.

"I recall during the seventies we both parallel read (with much back and forth mail comment) each annual installment of the definitive eleven-volume University of California edition of *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*.



*Elliot Sayward, in addition to his work on **The Freeholder**, was active in Society exhibitions and events, here at the Maritime Heritage Fair, 1998.*



2

CHARLES FERRIS

# BLACK EYED SUSAN.

A Popular Ballad,  
 Sung by  
 MR. INCLEDON.

London.—Printed by G. Walker 106 Great Portland St.—

—PR 6d

Allegretto

All in the Downs the Fleet was moored, The streamers wa—ving  
 in the Wind, When black ey'd Su—san came on board, O where shall  
 I my true Love find, Tell me ye jo—vial Sai—lors tell me  
 true, Does my sweet Wil—liam, does my sweet Wil—liam sail a—

CHARLES FERRIS

The music to "Black Eyed Susan" was unusual for its old fashioned, nearly 18th century, engraving style. Below, a detail of the label in the upper right corner.

This led to Elliot's adopting as the official motto for the British-American Rhykenological Society of plane collectors a quotation from Pepys on the occasion of the delivery to him by one Mr. Foley of a chest of carpenter's tools: 'Which please me mightily, yet I will have more.'

"Elliot will be missed, but I have decades of fond and cheering memories."

I can think of no better way to describe Elliot than in the words he himself wrote after the passing of his good friend Charles Reichman, "Suffice it to say that we all feel better for having known him even though that does not relieve the sadness at having lost him."

## Musical Life

continued from p. 7

"Black Eyed Susan" is imported music — printed in London by G. Walker of 106 Portland Street (no date). There is a curious label in the upper right corner of the title page. It shows that book dealers were selling used music and, somehow, this one came into Mr. Kirby's possession. This one is labeled "A. M. Livingston Book Stand".

Mr. Kirby's piano music came from various publishers. Many are from New York. Others, like A. Fiot (Philadelphia), Henry Tolman and G. P. Reed of Boston, come from further away but are mostly domestically produced. All the selections stressed the kind of values that would be worthy of a Methodist minister. One of the Kirby songs, "Be Kind To The Loved Ones At Home," is printed by stone lithography rather than engraving on metal, as in the majority of the printed music of the time. Stone lithography

BOUGHT AT

**A. M. LIVINGSTON'S**  
**BOOK STAND,**  
 Cor. Forsyth & Grand Sts.  
 NEW YORK.

New and old Books, Music,  
 Plays, Pamphlets, &c., bought,  
 sold, exchanged, or lent out for  
 re.—Open daily.



was invented in 1796 by a Bavarian, Alois Senefelder, as a low cost way of reproducing any kind of printed material. A special, flat, polished limestone slab has a drawing made on it with a grease crayon. The stone is treated so that the wet stone repels the ink and the crayon holds the ink. Paper is then pressed against the inked stone and the drawing transfers a mirror image to the finished page. The stone can be re-inked indefinitely so that many impressions can be made. A very nice image results from this process. Here we see a very simple lithographic image that retains the power of the artist's original drawing.

As you might suspect, Richard Kirby also had hymn books. He used his musical talent in the service of his ministry. He also played the flute. Solo music and a flute self-tutor manual of his survive in the Nassau County Museum collection. Sacred music and music tutors are really separate topics deserving of individual treatment.

Mr. Kirby subscribed to *The Musical World And New York Musical Times* and many volumes of this publication reside in the Nassau County Museum collection. The magazine was the work of Richard Storrs Willis, as both Editor and Proprietor. This newsy publication gives a picture of the music scene in New York and the area. There are reviews of concerts, letters to the editor, music scores for playing, and helpful hints on many musical topics. Most interesting for historians are the classified advertisements.

The Saturday, December 24,



The title page of "Be Kind To The Loved Ones At Home," is unique for the time, as it was printed by stone lithography rather than engraving on metal.

1853, issue begins with a brief table of contents and the rest of the page is devoted to various small classified advertising. It is a glimpse into musical life in New York City and Brooklyn, but also that of the surrounding area, as many of the well-to-do would regularly shop and do business in

the city.

The magazine was published every Saturday by P. K. Deyo at 257 Broadway, directly opposite City Hall. Subscriptions were \$3 a year, payable in advance, with postage additional. Music teachers giving instruction in organ, singing, piano, violin, and com-



# The Musical World AND NEW YORK MUSICAL TIMES.

"Music is the Art of the Prophets; it is the only Art which can calm the agitation of the Soul, and put the Devil to flight."—Martin Luther.  
"I ever held this sentence of the Poet as a canon of my creed: that whom God loveth not, they love not Music."—T. Morley, 1589.

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VOLUME VII, No. 17.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1853.

WHOLE NUMBER 143.

RICHARD STORRS WILLIS,  
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

### THE MUSICAL WORLD & TIMES

Is published every Saturday by R. K. Deyo, at  
207 Broadway, (directly opposite the City Hall).

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Each subsequent insertion.....	10 "
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A COLUMN.	
One Insertion.....	\$25 00
Each subsequent insertion.....	25 "
Three Months.....	125 00
One Year.....	400 00
One Insertion.....	\$50 00
Each subsequent insertion.....	50 "
Three Months.....	250 00
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Payment for advertisements in advance. Yearly advertisements, quarterly in advance.

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#### Special Notice.

Correspondents are informed that we cannot keep or return rejected communications.

### PROFESSIONAL CARDS.

John B. Marsh,  
TEACHER OF MUSIC, ORGANIST and DIRECTOR of MUSIC, St. George's Church, Schenectady, Room, No. 38 State street. 424-17

F. H. Nash, Teacher of Singing,  
PIANO-FORTE AND VIOLIN. PIANOS FOR SALE AND to Let. Rooms 510 Broome street. 491-17

O. Bassini,  
223 Atlantic street, Brooklyn.

G. H. Curtis,  
No. 50 GREENE STREET.

E. & C. Hook, Organ Builders,  
LEVERETT, corner of Second street, Boston

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THIS IS RESPECTFULLY TO INFORM THE READER, that for a few weeks, PORTRAITS will be painted in Oil Colors, in the best style of the art, upon the following terms:  
• Bust Picture, life size, . . . \$ 12 00  
• Half length, do. . . . . 35 00  
• Whole length, do. . . . . 50 00  
• Children, full length, with landscape, 40 00  
Groups in proportion. Daguerreotypes of deceased persons accurately copied. Likeness in all cases guaranteed.  
n18-3m ALONZO CHAPPEL, Artist, 501 Broadway.

New Editions—Just from the Press,  
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THE GOLDEN LYRE: A New Collection of Church Music, adapted to the various seasons now in use, together with a new and extensive variety of Anthems, Responses, and Chants, for Choirs, Singing Classes, &c. 334 pages, usual style.

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This was the first production of Mr. T. as a musical author. It is known and highly prized by most lovers of Sacred Music, and the constantly rushing tide of new ephemeral works of this class has not yet caused them to lay it aside.

Copies of either of the above books for examination, will be sent free of postage to any part of the United States, on receipt of seventy-five cents in money or post-office stamps.

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For the convenience of Choirs who wish to use a portion of this work on special occasions, such as Thanksgiving, Ordinations, single Concerts, &c., the publishers have arranged an edition in parts of about 40 pages each, in which certain anthems and doxologies will be sold separately at 25 cents each, or \$2 50 per dozen. The complete work will still be furnished at the same price as heretofore, viz. \$1 per copy, \$10 per dozen.

The music is graduated, so far as difficulties of reading are concerned, that in the first part being plain and simple and admirably adapted to ordinary Sabbath exercises, while subsequent ones become progressively more difficult, and are better suited to concert and special occasions.

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#### JUST PUBLISHED:

THE CONCORDIA: A new collection of Glee, Quartettes, Trios, &c., for Musical Societies, Quartette Associations, and Social Circles. By Virgil Corryson Taylor, author of "Sacred Minstrel," "Choral Anthems," "Golden Lyre," &c. The music of this book has been conceived in Mr. Taylor's happiest mood. His musical friends, who have so long looked for a collection of gems of secular music of his preparation, will not be disappointed in this work. It will be forwarded in any quantity, to any part of the country, and transportation paid, on receipt of the price (25 cents per copy) by the publisher.

Published by DANIEL BURGESS & Co., 60 John Street, New York.

#### Valuable Musical Publications.

UNION GLEE BOOK, BY E. F. BAKER and L. M. SOUTH-AND, 4th Edition just issued and for sale by the publisher and all the principal Music Dealers and Bookellers in the country—price \$4.00 per dozen.

EATON'S HARMONY, Nos. 2 and 3; containing ten pieces and No. 4 containing twelve pieces, arranged for full MILITARY BRASS BANDS; consisting of Quicksteps, Marches, Waltzes, Polkas, &c. (all original). Price, each No. \$2. Nos. 1 and 2. National Airs and Popular Songs, arranged for Small Bands, (from five to twelve instruments,) each containing twelve air pieces \$1.50. No. 3. National Airs, &c. Any of the above works will be sent by mail, postage paid, to any part of the United States or Canada, in receipt of the price.

HEBRY TOLMAN, 153 Washington street, Boston.

#### Portraits from Daguerreotypes.

BY A POWERFUL DRUMMOND-LIGHT APPARATUS, constructed by Mr. John A. Whipple of Boston, for Mr. Ransom, of the New York University; Daguerreotypes can be magnified and thrown off on canvas, paper to any required size, and the reflection PERFECTLY COPIED. Persons wishing portraits of deceased or absent friends, can see them life size, by bringing their daguerreotypes to Mr. RANSON'S room, any day between two and three, P. M.—Outlines made for artists.

### THE HUTCHINSON FAMILY.

The Hutchinson Family's  
TWELFTH YEAR IN NEW YORK,

101st Night: at the Tabernacle,  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4th;

102d Night,  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11th;

103d Night,  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18th.

Tickets, 25 cents to all parts of the house. Doors open at 5½ o'clock—Commence at 7½ o'clock.

#### The Great Violin Improvement!

THE INVENTOR OF THIS IMPROVEMENT, an AMATEUR of some twenty years' practice, being fully conversant with the difficulties of the Violin, the most formidable and discouraging of which is the "STOPPING IN TUNE," has, after experimenting for years, at length perfected and patented his

#### Keyed Stopped Finger Board.

Which enables the performer, with ease and unerring certainty, to stop in tune, and bring out each note in the utmost perfection, giving that ease and confidence to the bow so invaluable in this instrument. Those who already perform, need no new or different instruction, but with this improvement, play their own instrument at first sight with the most satisfactory accuracy and facility, obtaining in one month's practice a more perfect mastery of the Violin than can be acquired without it in one year. This KEY STOP IMPROVEMENT can be always affecting the instrument, and is guaranteed to give satisfaction, or the purchase money will be returned. The subscriber is now prepared to attach them in a few moments' time in the most substantial manner at his manufactory, 131 Broadway. WM. ROBERTSON.

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MR. EMILIUS GIRAC RESPECTFULLY INFORMS THE public that he will give a regular course of Musical Composition, as follows:

1st. A Class of Harmony—from 8½ to 9½ A. M. Monday and Friday.

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The Class of Orchestration will be useful to those who intend to compose for bands.

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Not more than 10 pupils will be received in each class, in order that the teacher may be corrected every day, and the pupils will be called to the black board to work, under the supervision of the professor.

This Course will commence on Monday, October 3d, 1853, to be continued until the 1st of July, 1854. Apply at the office of The Musical World & Times, from 11 o'clock A. M. to 8 o'clock P. M., or to Mr. E. GIRAC, 38 Lispenard street, from 8 to 11 o'clock, M.

There will be an additional Class in High Composition or Part-Writing, for persons already knowing harmony, if applications be made for this special branch.

#### T. G. Gates's Historical Gallery

No. 600 Broadway, now open for Exhibition.  
THIS GALLERY CONTAINS SOME OF THE FINEST and most VALUABLE PAINTINGS ever offered for PUBLIC INSPECTION IN THIS CITY.

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town green. The Hutchinson Family would be singing at the Tabernacle, a New York church on January 18th. Admission was 25 cents and the concert started at 7 1/2 o'clock.

A great invention is being marketed by William Robertson of 181 Broadway: a key stop mechanism that can be attached to any violin finger-board so that you can press a key and always get a perfect note. And, for the cultured who also enjoyed art, you could visit T. G. Gates's Historical Gallery containing "... some of the finest and most valuable paintings..." available for "Public Inspection" for only a 25 cent ticket, good for a month of admission. There were no public art museums at this time, only private collections which charged admission for viewing. This is all on page one, with many more pages to go.

As the author points out, page 1 of the Dec. 24, 1853, issue of *The Musical World and New York Musical Times*, contains a wealth of information!

position were offering their services. New editions of Professor V. C. Taylor's *Musical Works*, collections of sacred music for choral singing, were available for \$1 for one and \$10 for a dozen copies to church groups. *Music*

for Military Brass Bands consisting of *Quicksteps, Marches, Waltzes, Polkas &c.* was a book for concert band being offered with score and parts. This kind of music would be popular for amateur concert bands playing on the



So, popular music was very much alive. Amateurs were singing and playing everywhere, from cities, to proper homes, to barns in the countryside. Professional performers and teachers were to be found in the bigger towns and cities. Music in the homes of the well-to-do would likely be performed on a piano or melodeon, with or without singing, by a member of the family. Band concerts on the town green were popular, too, especially in the summertime. In rural areas, an amateur fiddler would play for farm folk. Dancing would take place in any room large enough to accommodate the crowd. This could be the ball room, at the local inn, on a cleared lawn, or even on the threshing floor of a barn. The idea was to sing, play an instrument, and dance as well as you could and not to worry about being perfect at it. The time before the Civil War was one where Americans were confident that theirs was the greatest country in the world and anything was possible. Their music reflected this while foreshadowing the events of a stormy future.

#### Notes

1. *The Musical World And New York Musical Times*, April 1, 1854
2. *The Musical World And New York Musical*

*Times*, Dec. 24, 1853

3. *The Musical World And New York Musical Times*, April 1, 1854

4. *The Musical World And New York Musical Times*, March 18, 1854

5. Ancestry.com and Database of Long Island Genealogy

6. L72.3.34 B

7. *The Musical World and New York Musical Times*, p. 1, Dec. 24, 1853

The author wishes to thank the Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums for access to their collection of 19th century music. Those readers who wish to hear 19th century fiddle tunes played in an authentic way should try to come to an event at the Old Bethpage Restoration Village and listen to Mr. Eric Martin, the fiddler, who entertains at special Village events. For hours, directions, and to find out when 19th century music can be heard it would be

best to call the Village at (516) 572-8400.

#### Major Andre and Oyster Bay continued from p. 9

wrong here. It is indeed a thrilling story and one that has enriched the town history of Oyster Bay. However, the factual accuracy of the story itself is predicated on myth and is far from "good history."

McGee incorporated local myth and folklore into a work of literature that presents the story as if it is historical fact. Just as Raynham Hall Museum presents the Andre myth, so too does the McGee book. Tom Kuehhas, the current director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society posted on the society's message board disputing the position taken by McGee and the Raynham Hall sign. He wrote, "What I did call into question was whether or not Sally had anything to do with saving West Point from the Arnold-Andre



*The New York State historical marker outside Raynham Hall Museum.*



conspiracy to hand the fort over to the British. The work that you quote, *Sally Townsend, Patriot*, is a work of fiction, and owes its premise to the unsubstantiated story of Sally overhearing a conversation about the plot that Morton Pennypacker put forth in his 1930 work, *The Two Spies*.”

Major Andre’s story is revisited daily by those who dine at the “Old ’76 House” in Tappan, New York. In Tarrytown, New York, where Major Andre was captured, stands a monument erected in remembrance of that event. In 1980 and 2005, Tarrytown also conducted celebrations that commemorated both the bicentennial and 225th anniversary of the capture of Major Andre. As a Major Andre enthusiast and proud resident of Oyster Bay, I believe Major Andre’s connection to Oyster Bay should be made a more public and prominent subject. The rich history of Oyster Bay is too often overlooked. I urge the reader to be more attentive upon their next trip down West Main Street in Oyster Bay. It was in that small colonial home on West Main Street that one of the most important and least remembered figures in American history rested just days before his fateful horseback ride that could have ended the American Revolution.

#### Notes

1. Malcolm Decker, *Ten Days of Infamy* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 70-74.

2. Ibid., 78.

3. Robert D. Arner, “The Death of Major Andre: Some Eighteenth Century Views,” *Early American Literature* Vol. 11 No.1 (Spring 1976): 62.

4. “’76 House” Website, History Section

5. Raynham Hall Museum Website, History Section

6. “Relics at Oyster Bay Interesting Mementos of the War of the Revolution Preserved in the Home of the Townshends,” *New York Times*, July 20, 1902.

7. Ibid.

8. Wayne Franklin in introduction to James Fenimore Cooper, *The Spy* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), viii.

9. Raynham Hall Museum Website. Oyster Bay, New York. Accessed on October 25, 2009.

10. Dorothy Horton McGee, *Sally Townsend, Patriot* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1952), 263-264.

11. McGee, front cover.

12. Thomas A. Kuehhas on March 31, 1998 at 13:40:59 on the Message Board at the Oyster Bay Historical Society in regard to “Did Sally Townsend Save West Point?” Accessed on 11/7/09. A conversation I had with Mr. Kuehhas provided me with great insight into the problems and flaws of Dorothy McGee’s argument and led me to further explore Major Andre’s stay in Oyster Bay and the myths and historical inaccuracies associated with it.

13. Tarrytown, New York Government Website, History Section.



A nineteenth century engraving depicting the discovery of the incriminating papers on John Andre, which would send him to the gallows shortly thereafter.



**Suicides and Murdered Poets**

Of the causes of death of the more than one hundred Long Island poets I have written about, only two were suicides and one was murdered. In 1923, at the Surf Avenue Hotel in Coney Island, the lawyer Charles Greene turned up the gas in his room and expired. While the New York City medical examiner declared that his death might have been an accident, the detectives at the scene thought he committed suicide due to his inability to devote himself to the writing of poetry, ill health, and financial problems.

More than 150 poems written by lawyer Greene were found in his gas-filled room. His poem, "The Fatigue of Earth," was among them and the last stanza read:

I try to find truth in holy places  
And all I see is falsehood everywhere;  
I am tired, and I believe that God  
above  
Is tired and weeps over his labor  
of love.

Greene was found with a *Bible* in his right hand and the last entry in his diary read:

These poems cover a period of twenty years and reflect the life and thought of one who longed to be a poet in a practical age, but who, instead, became a lawyer.<sup>9</sup>

The only known murdered Long Island poet was Charles Kelsey, referred to as the "Bard of Huntington" by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. Charles was in his thirties and was smitten by Julia Smith, a younger woman back in 1872. It seems that Julia disliked Charles and that she and her

boyfriend Royal Sammis plotted to punish him for his misplaced affections. Charles was lured to Julia's bedroom window one night and jumped upon and tarred and feathered by a group led by her future husband.<sup>10</sup> No trace of Charles Kelsey was found until the following year, when the bottom half of his body was found by two fishermen in Oyster Bay Harbor. Only half of the reward for the finding of Kelsey's body was given, since only half of his body was found. This injustice was soon rectified due to public outcry. A grand jury in Riverhead dropped murder charges against Royal Sammis and his brother. Julia and Royal soon married and moved to New York City, where they had twins.<sup>11</sup> Local people in Huntington were said to remark that the twins were named "Tarred" and "Feathered." This whole drama made great press for the Long Island newspapers. Even the *Long Island Signal* from Babylon tried to cash in on the story by offering Kelsey's last poem, "The Vale of Huntovia," to their readers for 25 cents on tinted paper.

One of the most brilliant poets to grow up on Long Island was George Sterling (1869-1926). This future poet would later be called the "Bard of San Francisco," "Poet of the West," and "the American Keats," among other accolades.<sup>12</sup>

Sterling grew up in Sag Harbor, the son of a physician who wanted him to be a priest. But the high-spirited Sterling enjoyed astronomy, mythology, sailing on Long Island Sound and practical jokes instead. According to the tales about him, Sterling, with the

help of his friends, placed a pirate flag on the steeple of the Presbyterian Church before Sunday services. On another occasion he released hundreds of June bugs in a different church during a crowded service. The antics of this future famous poet were many, and his father sent him at the age of 17 to a Catholic college in Maryland. But the priesthood did not appeal to the handsome young Sterling and so his next stop was at an uncle's real estate business in Oakland, California.

In Oakland, Sterling became a clerk and pursued his growing literary ambitions during off hours. Sterling befriended the journalist Ambrose Bierce, who influenced Sterling's writing and behavior for the rest of his life. In 1903, Sterling published his first book of poetry to receive notoriety, *The Testimony of the Suns*, which was dedicated to Bierce.

The first lines were-

The winter sunset fronts the  
North. . .  
The light deserts the quiet sky. . .  
From their far gates how silently  
The stars of evening tremble  
forth!  
Time, to thy sight what peace  
they share  
On Night's inviolable breast!  
Remote in solitudes of rest,  
Afar from human change or care.

Sterling followed up with another poetry book in 1907, entitled *A Wine of Wizardry*, which made Sterling a celebrity because of his approach to poetry and bohemian lifestyle. Sterling would later add another nine books of poetry, four verse dramas, a critical paper on Robinson Jeffers and many short stories



before he died. His many new friends included the authors Jack London and Upton Sinclair, each of whom would later write about their relationship with him. It was Jack London who cast him as the poet Russ Brissenden in his book *Martin Eden* (1908), and as Mark Hall in *The Valley of the Moon* (1913). London and Sterling were drinking companions who spent many a night at Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon on the Oakland waterfront.<sup>13</sup> Sterling did return to Long Island and Sag Harbor for several visits during these years of increasing fame.

Some of his poems include thoughts about the Island and his family that was still here. From his poem "The Return":

The wholesome flowers of  
autumn blow  
And squirrels chatter in joy,  
In woods I rambled when a boy,  
Careless, and many years ago.

Old scents and sounds. . . I find  
no change,  
Revisiting, a wanderer;  
The trees and roads are as they  
were,  
Untouched, and I alone am  
strange—

Strange even to myself! And  
they,  
The lads who roamed the woods  
with me,  
Are changed from what they  
used to be,  
And some are gone, and all are  
grey.

From "Beyond the Breakers,"—

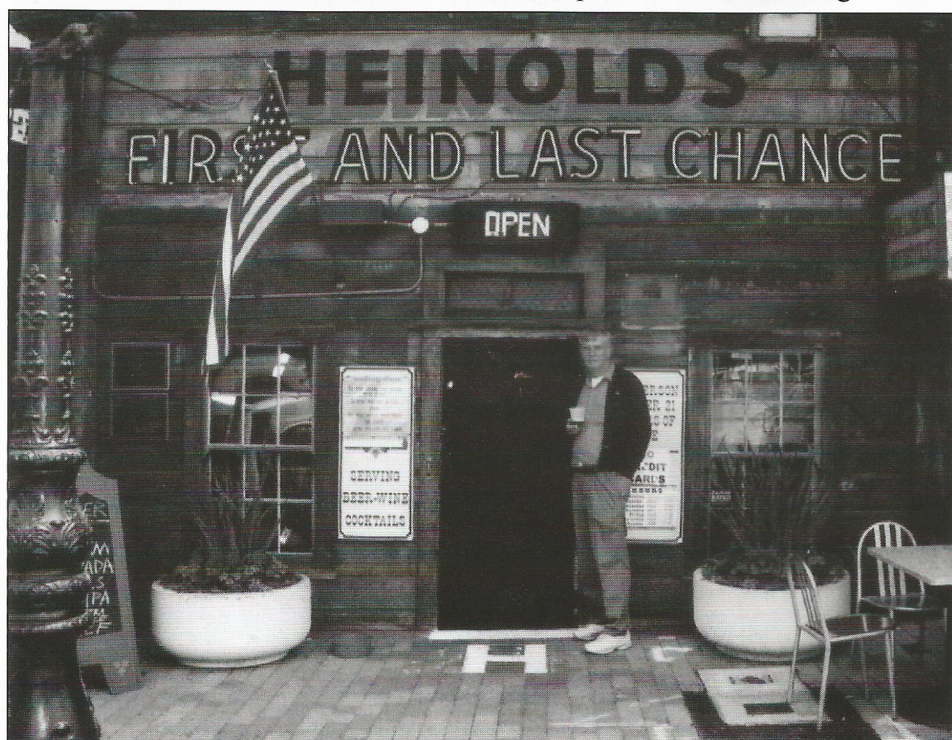
The breakers rose before me  
where the hard  
Wet sands were grey—  
Each in its colored robe, fronting  
the new-born day;  
The singing waves of the sea,  
clean beyond all of clean,  
Beautiful, swift, alive, undulant,  
apple-green.

Other poems included Long

Island-based themes. In "Ballad of the Swabs," Sterling spun a story of a whaling ship returning to Sag Harbor and in "The Master Mariner," Sterling imagines himself as his grandfather, who had been a whaler.

Sterling lived many years in Carmel but kept a room at the Bohemian Club in San Francisco until the end of his life. Sterling was married to Caroline Rand for fourteen years, before she divorced him for his infidelities in 1915. The next year his good friend Jack London died and in 1918 his ex-wife committed suicide. In the meantime, his first mentor, Ambrose Bierce, mysteriously disappeared in Mexico. Sterling went on a downward mental spiral over the next few years until he himself committed suicide, by poison, in 1926 at the Bohemian Club. Sterling was one of America's gifted poets in his

time and San Francisco has preserved a mini park in his name, rededicated in 1982.<sup>14</sup>



The author raises a glass in salute to George Sterling at Heinold's Bar, Oakland, CA.

#### Notes

9. *Lawyers and Poetry*. [www.wvu.edu/~lawfac/jelkins/lp2001/greene\\_charles.html](http://www.wvu.edu/~lawfac/jelkins/lp2001/greene_charles.html)
10. The only other known case of a Long Island poet being tarred and feathered was that of Walt Whitman in Southold in 1841. Reynolds, David S. *Walt Whitman in America*, pp 70-73.
11. DeWan, George. "The Kelsey Outrage,"

continued on p. 24



## Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

***Long Island Moderns: Art and Architecture on the North Shore and Beyond.*** Edited by Kenneth Wayne and Erik Neil, with an essay by Sandy Isenstadt. Hanover, N.H. : University Press of New England, 2009, for the Heckscher Museum of Art. 128 pages. Illustrations, exhibition checklist, and architecture bibliography. \$29.95.

This fine catalog accompanying two ambitious exhibitions at Huntington's Heckscher Museum provides an engaging and useful survey of modern art and architecture both in Huntington and across the broader central region of Long Island's North Shore. In doing so, the authors make a strong case that although the artists who worked and lived in the area have achieved international standing, their actual association with the North Shore has been poorly documented if not outright ignored.

Such associations are in some cases admittedly tenuous and conjectural. Jackson Pollock is said to have been a regular visitor to Huntington and apparently may have juried an exhibition at

the Heckscher Museum and even attended the opening. Lee Krasner's parents actually moved in 1929 from Brooklyn to Huntington, where they lived on Delaware Street and where Krasner may have painted her 1930 *Self-Portrait*.

Many other connections between modern artists and the North Shore, however, are clear and compelling. Following World War II, Dadaist George Grosz taught at the Heckscher Museum and maintained both a home and studio in Huntington. Before returning to Germany in 1959, he had an exhibition at the Vera Lazuk Gallery in Cold Spring Harbor. Collector and sculptor Mary Callery left Paris in 1940 and eventually settled in West Hills, where she lived and worked in a barn thought to be renovated by Mies van der Rohe. Photographer Cindy Sherman, a graduate of Harborfields High School, grew up in Centerport and, according to her current dealer, visited the Heckscher Museum. Cubist Fernand Léger often visited the West Hills modernist home of architect Wallace Harrison, where he installed a 12 by 34 foot curved mural that Daniel Kramer calls "the most important privately commissioned work Léger executed in the United States." Whether the work is actually "akin in scale and power to Picasso's *Guernica*," as Kenneth Wayne asserts, is harder to say.

In his coverage of North Shore architecture from the past eighty years, curator Erik Neil follows a course from modernist beginnings in the 1930s, through a post-modern reaction in the

1970s and 1980s, to current times when "architects seem to have reconciled with the legacy of Modernism." Of particular interest is his discussion of how Long Islanders' increasing awareness of environmental responsibility has brought about a modernist revival of sorts, a "reemergence of design consciousness... now paired with a strong environmental sensibility."

Finally, the fact that your reviewer has now lived long enough to see Levittown at last appear in a thoughtful and coherent essay on modern life on Long Island represents an especially gratifying personal milestone.

### Note:

*Long Island Moderns* has been published on the occasion of two exhibitions: *Long Island Moderns: Artists on the North Shore from Edward Steichen to Cindy Sherman*, 3 October 2009—10 January 2010, curated by Dr. Kenneth Wayne and Lisa Chalif; and *Arcadia/Suburbia: Architecture on Long Island, 1930-2010*, 16 January—11 April 2010, curated by Dr. Erik Neil. For more information, visit the Heckscher Museum of Art, 2 Prime Avenue, Huntington NY, [www.heckscher.org](http://www.heckscher.org)

### Further Reading:

Harrison and Denne, *Hamptons Bohemia: Two Centuries of Artists and Writers On The Beach*. For a review, please see *The Freeholder*, volume 8, no. 3, Winter 2004.





## Dead Poets

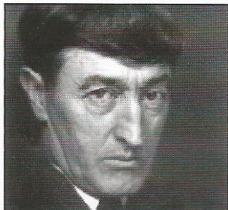
*continued from p. 22*

*Newsday, Our Story.*

12. Many web sites have information on George Sterling, including past articles on him in the *Long Island Forum*. The most informative article was written by Barbara Marhoefer in *Journal of Long Island History*, Vol IX, Spring 1973, No. 2 pp 23-33.

13. To verify this, I visited Heinold's Saloon on the Oakland waterfront and asked the bartender if he knew whether George Sterling and Jack London had ever come to this historic bar. The bartender was sure that London did and checked the ledger for Sterling's name and, finding it inscribed, celebrated this new-found knowledge by pouring me another beer.

14. The public interest in George Sterling keeps growing each year. Of the more than 150 Long Island poets researched so far, Sterling has the sixth most citations on the web.



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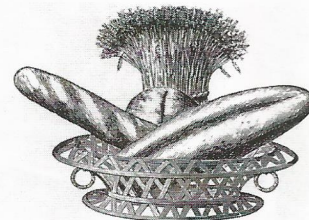
The Italian-American Men's & Ladies Club and the Oyster Bay Historical Society cordially invite you and your family to a delicious Spaghetti Feast on Sunday, February 28th, 2010, from 12 to 5PM, 48 Summit Street, Oyster Bay.

The cost is \$10 per adult and \$5 for children under 12 and includes

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### The Post Rider

*continued from p. 2*

*holder:* It referenced a Thomas Carman. As far as I know my branch of the Carman family fled to Canada after the Revolution and didn't come back to the USA until around 1875. So I am probably not related to this Thomas Carman. But if there is information about the ancestors of Thomas Carman, they would probably overlap with my ances-

tors.

I would very much like to get any information that could possibly include my ancestors.

Thank you!

Don Carman

*We will contact Mr. Kirchmann at the Historical Society of the Massapeguas and ask him to get in touch with you.*

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