

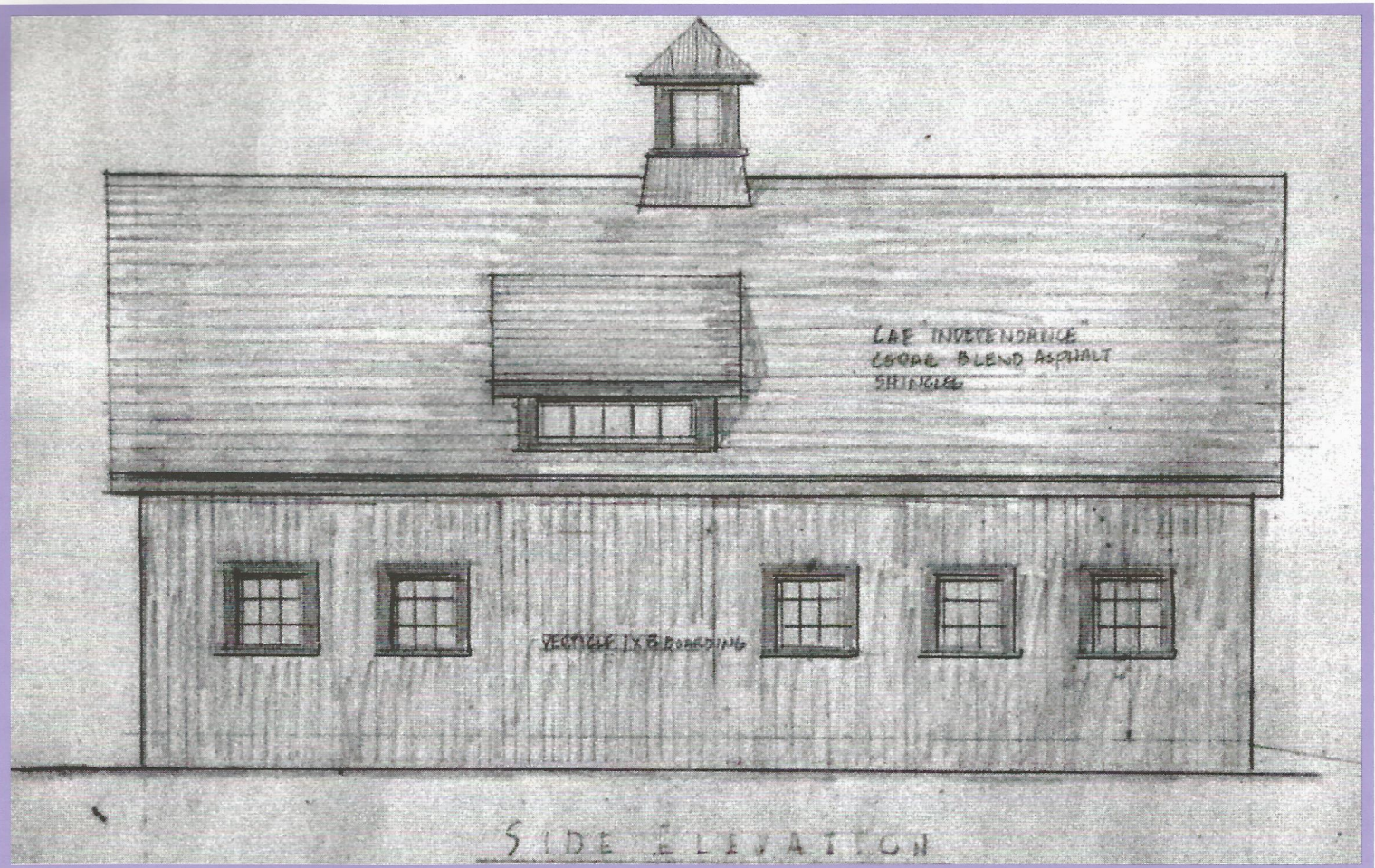
# THE FREEHOLDER

SPRING 2004 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

👉 FULL-SPEED  
AHEAD FOR  
SOCIETY PLANS!

👉 A  
COLLECTOR'S  
RECOLLECTIONS

👉 SOCIETY'S  
AUCTION  
SUCCESS!



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY



# Editorial

As we close our eighth volume of *The Freeholder*, I wanted to pause a moment and reflect on the passing over the last year of several seminal figures in the founding and growth of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

We lost Dorothy H. McGee, Charles D.W. Thompson, and most recently, Edward F.L. Bruen, Esq. Mr. Bruen was among the Society's founders;

Miss McGee joined shortly thereafter. Both served the Society for decades as Board members and were guiding lights as the Society sailed uncharted waters. Their efforts were recognized when they were made Honorary Trustees in 2000.

Charlie held every office in the Society, from Secretary up to President, and paid special attention to the Society's research library (see p. 16). They shall all be missed.

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### THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

I hope your recent benefits were a huge success and that you received a lot towards your goal. I want to thank Tom Kuehhas, the Officers, and the Trustees for the very thoughtful way the art donations were handled.

It was professional, and considerate of the artists. The manner in which artists were invited to donate and participate, and the broad inclusion of us all was truly special. It was my first experience with

donating work, and for those of us who donate only the work that we really like and have labored over, it eased the decision to part with a favorite.

Thank you again for your wonderful accomplishment, you are truly an organization with a heart.

Trixie Taylor

*Thanks for your letter, Trixie. And thank you and all the other artists who participated in the “Art of Oyster Bay” exhibition. Your generosity allowed the Society to raise over \$15,000 for our Building Fund from the art alone.*

To the Editor:

A recent visitor to the Historical Society was looking for information about a

## THE FREEHOLDER

of the

Oyster Bay Historical Society  
Vol. 8 No. 4 Spring 2004

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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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### ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

A side exterior view of the proposed plans for the Oyster Bay Historical Society's new research and collections storage center behind the Earle-Wightman House, as envisioned by Locust Valley architect Austin T. Gray. It is a crucial step in safeguarding the Society's collections for future generations.

For more on the Society's plans, please see story on p.3.

motion picture studio in this area that was pioneering a technique called “Cinerama” in the 1940s or '50s. According to this person, they were using an old indoor tennis court as a studio. I tried to search for information at several Nassau County libraries and managed to find some general information on the Cinerama process, but not on any local connection.

I was wondering if you or your readers have any information on this “studio.”

Walter Karppi

*How about it, readers? If anyone has any information on Cinerama and this tennis court studio, please contact the Society.*



## SOCIETY UNVEILS PLANS

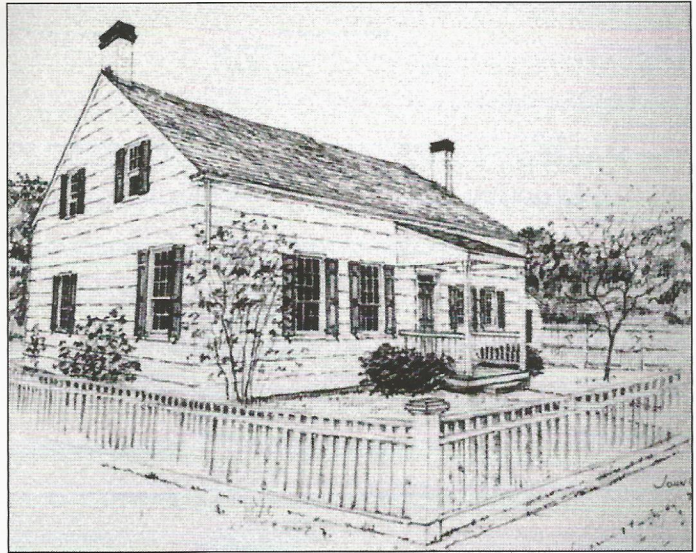
by Thomas A. Kuehhas

Since 1720 the little house on Summit Street has been expanded, renovated and even moved to suit its masters. And now it's time for a major new addition.

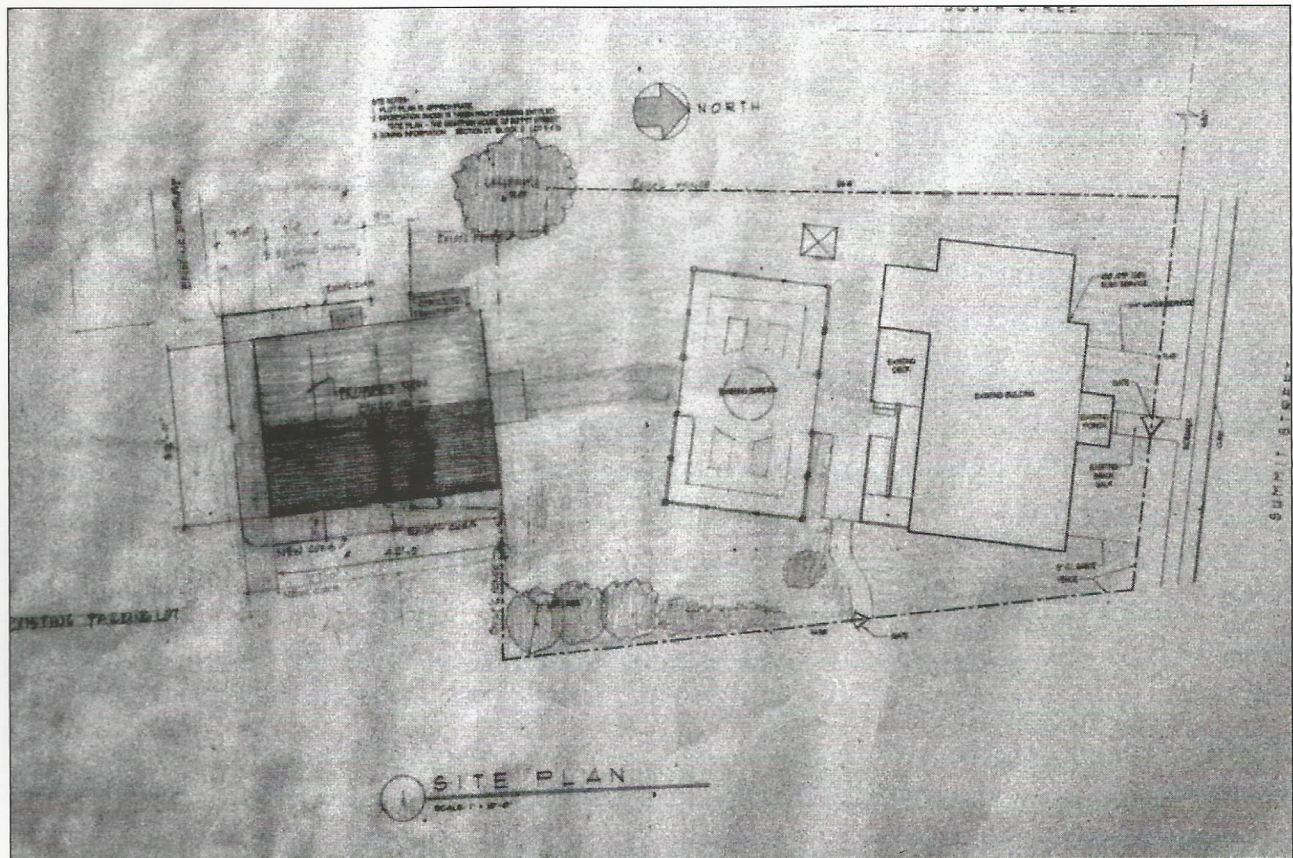
Originally built on South Street as a small, one-room dwelling, the Earle-Wightman house grew over the next 150 years to its current size. During that time the house had several owners. As the 19th century began, two successive Baptist ministers, the Reverend Marmaduke Earle and the Reverend Charles S. Wightman, made their home there, each for over fifty years.

In 1966 the house was donated to the Town of Oyster Bay by Hempstead Bank President, Bruce Wood Hall with the stipu-

lation that it be used as the headquarters of the Oyster Bay Historical Society. It was moved to Summit Street and renovated and under the direction of John Collins, an authority on architectural history and historic preservation. Mr. Collins' drawing of the house is seen above. Today the little house with

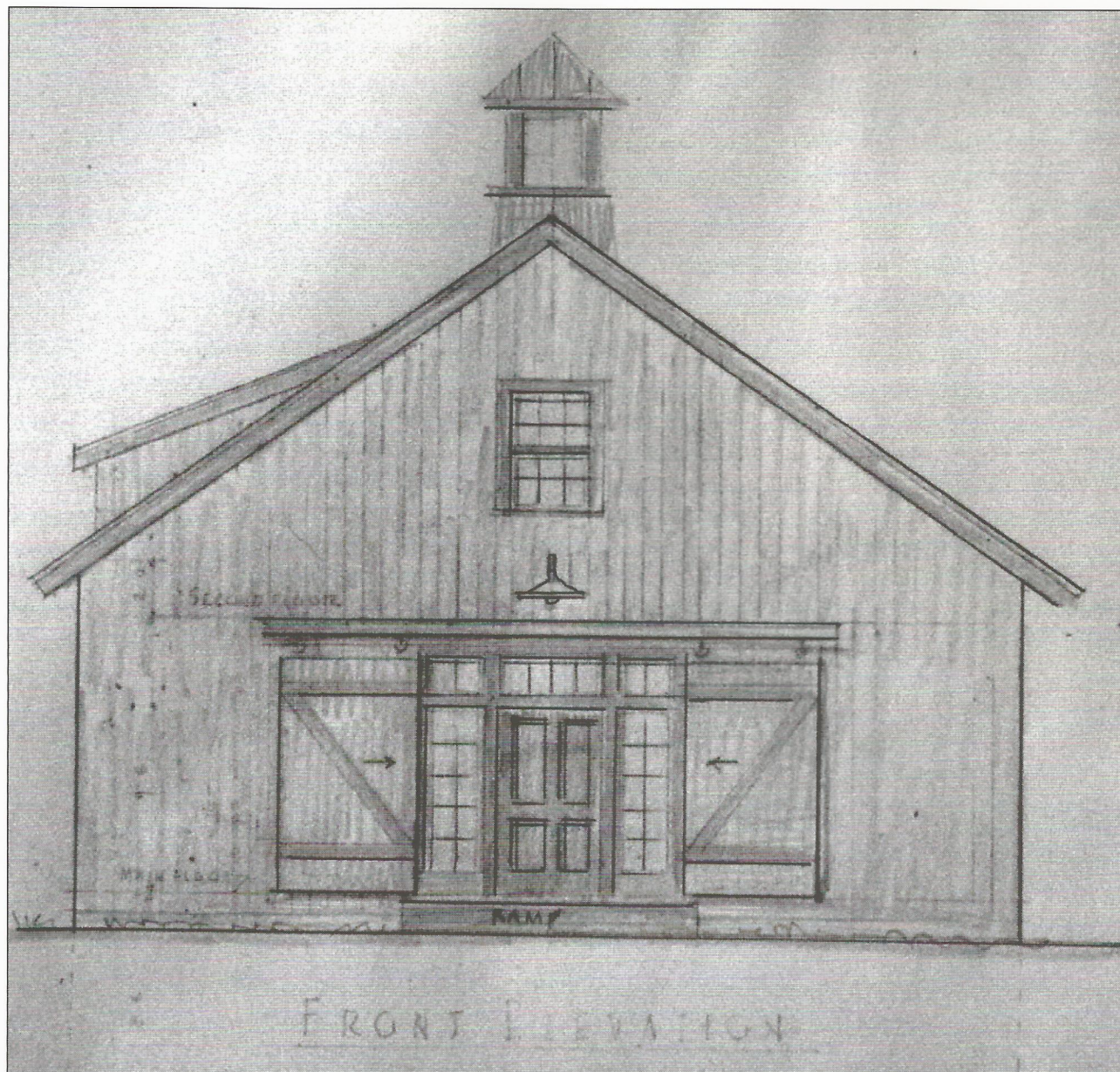


charmingly irregular windows, hand-wrought nails and riven-oak furring, serves as the headquarters and museum of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.



*The site of the proposed OBHS research and collections storage center in relation to the Earle-Wightman House.*





*The front of the proposed OBHS research and collections storage center.*

The Society uses the house for historic exhibitions -- such as the just-ended "Art of Oyster Bay" exhibit; educational programs--over 1000 schoolchildren visited the Earle-Wightman House for exciting, hands-on programs this past year alone; a research library -- well over 1000 researchers utilize the resources of our library each year, either through person-

al visits, telephone calls, U.S. Mail, or via email; a gift shop; and office space for staff. It is also used to house the Society's ever-growing collection of historic documents, books, photographs, and artifacts.

Of course the house was not built with any of these purposes in mind. The fact that we have run out of space in which to

house all of our operations is a minor consideration compared to this: the dangers of housing an irreplaceable historic collection in a 300 year old wood frame structure were made all too vivid by the October 2003 fire which destroyed the historic Masonic Lodge just a few blocks away. Many artifacts, historical records, and Masonic memorabilia were



lost forever in the fire.

Spurred both by growing pains -- since its founding in 1960, the Society has become a vital part of community life -- and by the need for a safe archival site for its historic collection, the Society has begun raising funds to construct a non-combustible, masonry building which will be located behind the Colonial Garden at the rear of the Earle-Wightman House.

The new building, which will have the heating, ventilation and air conditioning needed for proper archival storage, will be made to look like a period barn. It will serve the Society as its research

and collections center.

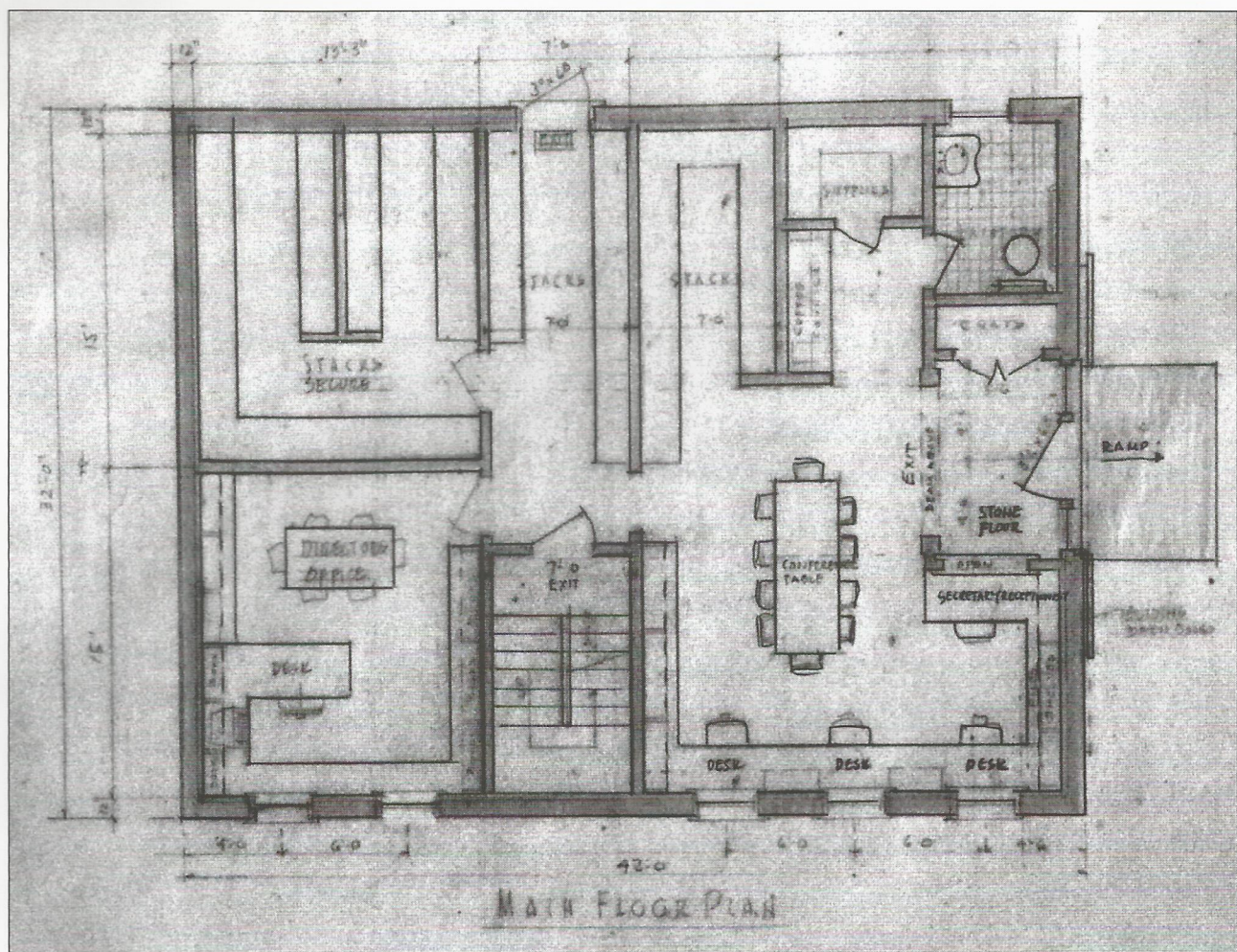
The estimated cost of the building, which was approved in concept by the Oyster Bay Landmarks Commission in October 2003, is between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000. Through our various fundraising efforts and pledges from our benefactors, the Society has raised almost \$200,000.

We shall be undertaking a capital campaign shortly to raise the remainder. Any fundraising ideas, or willing volunteers to serve on the committee, would be greatly appreciated!

Although quite a bit of "tweaking" remains to be done to the

proposed exterior design, in cooperation with the members of the Landmarks Commission, we felt that the time was right to unveil these plans to you, our members, so that you were aware of how seriously the Society regards its role as caretaker of Oyster Bay's history and of how great our needs are in order to properly safeguard the collections.

We are indebted to Locust Valley architect Austin T. Gray for all his work in taking our concepts and needs and formulating them into the coherent plans you see here.



*The ground-floor interior plans for the proposed OBHS research and collections storage center.*



## THE COMPLEAT COLLECTOR

by Al Town

In the back booth at the Roadside Diner sat three men. Affectionate deference shown by two of them to the third would have indicated to a sensitive observer that the eldest of the trio was also its leader. But the only other customer was up in the front at the counter. He was balancing a newspaper in one hand and a doughnut in the other. If he had the faculty of observation, he was too busy to concern himself with anyone else. This was probably a good thing for the aura of exultation that surrounded the back booth was so palpable that anyone whose mood was less jubilant might have been stirred to emit a sour, "Shurrup, you guys."

The back-boothers were drinking coffee and eating apple pie. "Didn't I tell you I'd take you to the best apple pie in the county?" chortled the leader, a shortish, stoutish man.

"On any day like the one we've had, any old pie would taste wonderful but I do admit that this one is delectable," replied the older of the other two.

"Absolutely!" said the third. "What a grand day it was. I never imagined an auction could be so much fun."

The year was 1958, the day was the last Saturday in June, it was 3:30 in the afternoon. The men were: C.C., who was called that because long ago somebody had titled him "The Compleat Collector" and others had made the phrase his nickname until some merciful person had shortened it to the two initials; Cowboy, who had grown up in a large Western city but had never been closer to a cow than a seat at a rodeo in Madison Square Garden; and the

youngest, Tyro, whose name was actually Tyrone but who had originally been laughingly referred to by the other two as Rooky when he had accompanied them on a round of tag sales, first by coincidental meetings and then by invitation, and had failed to recognize articles they deemed desirable. When he burst out, "Hey guys, give me a break," they gave him one that decided him not to complain further.

But that had been weeks past. In the interval the little group had become a unit dedicated to both the cause that had brought them together, the pursuit of the wily antiquity, and, as well, to the success of the group and its members. Like the Musketeers of old they had adopted the motto, "One for All and All for One." They might bicker and grumble but under the mellow influence of C.C. they always found accommodation and enjoyed doing it.

The antiquities they sought were not necessarily of great age or of great value. They sought objects from the American past, preferably ones that would not exhaust their budgets to obtain and would give them pleasure. The objects need not have been made in America as long as they had been used in America. Three motivations dictated their choices. Something about the antiquity acquired must please and give promise of continuing to please. If the object qualified as a furnishing or a useful instrument, still sound and effective and having promise of, if not life everlasting, at least long years of service, that was a second reason for collecting it. Last of all was the doctrine of C.C.: If an object

did not have beauty or current usefulness, then it must be acquired for the information it provided about the lives of our ancestors. Collecting such an item imposed a duty to acquire those items normally associated with it. One does not collect one antique golf club, said C.C. It has little meaning. It would not be justified even by the argument that it was used in the first United States Golf Association championship in 1895. That would render it nothing but a souvenir. Further, said C.C., someone, why not ourselves, must fight the continual erosion of our knowledge of the past brought about by the constant trashing of now outmoded objects that made our ancestors' lives livable. The selection process that determines what shall stay and what shall go is in the hands of thoughtless descendants who often mindlessly discard everything left by generations past and of antique dealers who sunder families of objects to sell the "best" items while the rest filter down to ever less alert dealers finally reaching the secondhand man and the junkman. The result is that a meaningful complex of objects with something to tell us about life of former times is divided beyond hope of easy reassembly. It is the duty of the collector to attempt to reestablish such complexes, not to create more divisions. Above all said the Compleat Collector, we must not regard the antique as an investment. That will lead to all the wrong choices and will blight the motive for preservation. His disciples were not sure this last idea could be sold to many collectors but they were not



disposed to argue.

Raising his coffee cup, Tyro announced, "I propose a toast. To us, on our best single day's collecting since I joined the three-some."

"Hear, hear," exclaimed C.C., elevating his cup. "Let's announce our best wins. You first, Cowboy!" They drank the toast and Cowboy beamed with pleasure.

"My best win," he said, "was a lot of them. You saw me buying box lots of china. Those box lots are going to make my homelife soft and easy for a long time to come. A couple of weeks ago my wife came home with an old-fashioned looking blue and white cake plate on a pedestal. It was marked "W.T. Copeland, Stoke upon Trent." She remembered it as being a pattern of china owned by her grandmother that had passed to some other relative when the old lady died. She was jumping with joy at having found a piece of the precious stuff. But it had awakened her appetite and she wanted more, lots more.

Can you imagine how my stock will rise when I unload all the pieces I got today? I think I swept the tables. Nobody else seemed enough interested in it to bid very hard against me."

"You did very nicely," said C.C. "That lovely old blue floral pattern must go well back into the 19th century and, if all the pieces are sound, methinks you have enough to set a holiday family table. When you and your good lady have had time to inventory the lot you must give us a list of any

pieces you're still hoping to find. Four sets of eyes are better than two and I get a lot of sale lists that might point us to fill ins."

He beckoned the waitress to replenish their coffee and pie. "Considering that all we had for lunch was a hot dog apiece, it's not going to spoil our dinners. Do you know that Stoke upon Trent is in Staffordshire in the district called the Potteries, the same general area where Josiah Wedgwood created his famous ware? We must do a little research for Mrs. Cowboy. But we have business to finish here. It's your turn, Tyro."

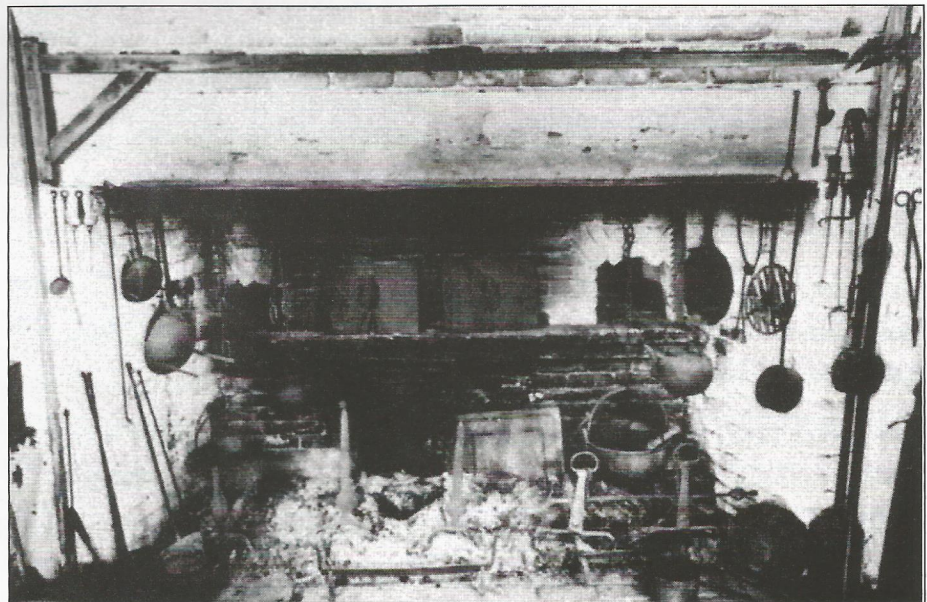
"Gosh," said Tyro, "I don't know if I got the best but I certainly got what I wanted most at this juncture. Our house has a bigger than ordinary fireplace. The previous owner who built it must have been in love with those old-fashioned, cavernous ones that seem to have been common in early New England. Anyway, we could burn a five foot log in ours but it makes modern fireplace furniture

look silly. What I wanted was some tools to match the fireplace and I believe I did it. My wins included some great big andirons, a wrought iron poker about five feet long and a peel. And...a waffle iron with long handles, some pot hooks, a stand-on-the-hearth trivet and a nifty big hanging pot. Now I've got to find a crane to hang it from and some other pieces and we'll be able to cook in the fireplace, not that I really want to."

"The utensil you call a peel was iron, wasn't it?" asked C.C.

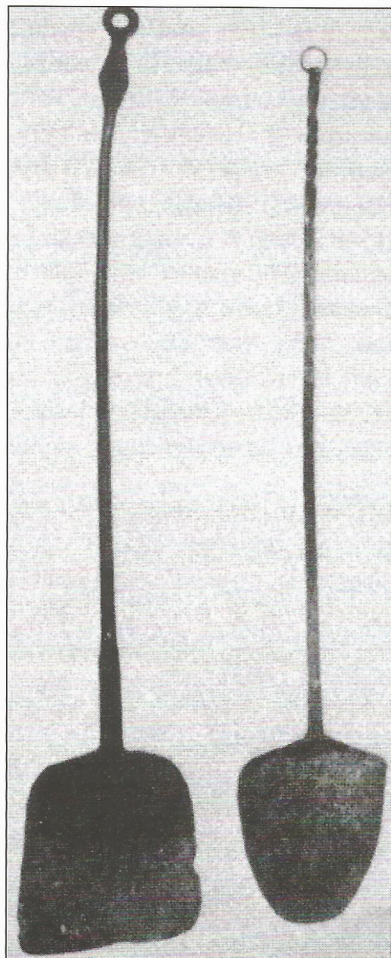
"That's right," replied Tyro, "I didn't know what to call it till the auctioneer named it."

"A lot of people would call it that," said C.C., "including, I think, some of those who owned them and used them long years ago. But I think the better name is fire shovel. While you could deposit bread in the oven with one of them the reason they were made of iron was to use them to shovel out the still burning embers after heating the oven.



*18th c. kitchen fireplace*





*18th c. fire shovels*

The baker used a wooden peel with a somewhat bigger business end to deposit the loaves of bread and other items for baking in the oven and not unusually pushed in several loaves at a time. You did well. Fireplace gear is growing scarce and is often hotly contested for."

"Now, C.C.," said Cowboy, "We want to hear about your best win. But if it wasn't the bundle of sticks and the broken conch shell and the weird looking iron gizmo we want to hear about that too!"

C.C. stared at his juniors. "Think the old man has just gone over the hill, don't you? That's going to cost one of you a trip to the car. Get me the box with the

bunch of sticks, the conch and the gizmo and I will expatiate on them after I've explained my best acquisition."

"Hop it, Tyro," said Cowboy, laughing, "You're the youngest and I'm the chauffeur. "

Tyro came back quickly, peering into the box and shaking his head dubiously. C.C. accepted it with a gracious nod and placed it next to him on the banquette. "Like Cowboy I had a special goal today. Last week a friend gave me a small group of wheelwright's tools that had belonged to his grandfather and perhaps his great grandfather. Except in the pages of Henry Mercer's and George Sturt's books I had never really gotten close to such tools but I was glad to get them, particularly since there was a record of the user's name, the location of his shop and the dates of both his life and his working years. But this laid on me the responsibility of trying to assemble specimens of all the gear that was likely to have been in his shop. That will now be a regular part of my search list. I'm not sure how much help Sturt will be, he being an Englishman, or Mercer for that matter as he doesn't go deeply into the wheelwright's and wagon builder's trades. But I shall persevere and younger men will correct my mistakes. What I got today was a bench or stand on which the wheelwright assembles a wheel. No information came with it but it certainly looks old enough to be contemporary with my friend's grandfather. The great thing about the stand is that the last, unfinished piece of work it ever held is still on it bolted down tight by an iron rod through

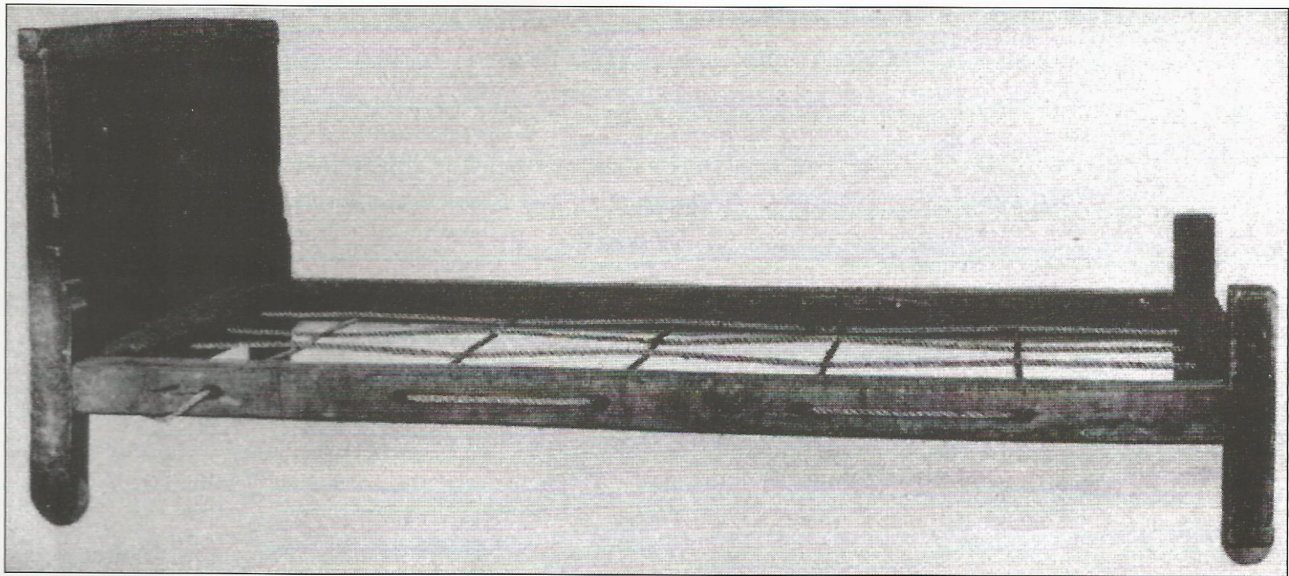
the hub. It has a lot to teach me about my new quest, I think."

C.C. lifted the box and put it in the middle of the table. "Now for my box of junk," he said to his grinning friends. "Do either of you know how to rope a bed?"

"Do what?" said one. The other said nothing but looked his bewilderment. "Fine bunch of antiquarians you are," said C.C. "Before bed springs came along one of the ways of supporting the bedding in a bedframe was to weave a network of bedcord running from side to side and head to foot. Drawn tight, the cord or rope had a wee bit of resiliency and if the mattress were thick enough the sleeper did not arise with the pattern of the woven cording dented into his flesh. The holes you see in the rails of antique beds allowed for threading the rope back and forth but the real task was to draw each succeeding length good and tight."

C.C. took a bundle of short sticks wrapped in many turns of heavy cord from the box. He slipped the sticks out of the winding. They proved to be three rods about six or seven inches long with turned, fairly sharp points, an old fashioned hammer, a roughly foot long turned piece of wood with a slight taper and a round turned, somewhat heavier piece with a cross-wise round hole near one end and a two inch slot sawed out of the other end so as to leave two stout parallel prongs. C.C. took up the two last pieces and thrust the tapering end of the smaller one into the hole through the other. The result was a tool that looked in general outline a little like a T-auger.





*An 18th c. rope bed, similar to one on exhibit at the Society's Earle-Wightman House Museum.*

"This is a bed wrench," said C.C. "You use it to tighten the bed cords. One end of the coil of line is knotted so it can't pass through a hole in the rail in the assembled bed frame, usually the first one next the head of the bed. Then the whole length of the cord is threaded through the hole in the rail and on through the hole in the opposite rail from inside the bed frame. Now the trick is to draw this length tight and to keep it from slipping back while you're drawing the second length through its set of holes. Pull it hand tight from outside the sec-

ond hole and holding onto it a few inches beyond the hole have your confederate (the job is easier with two) put the two prongs of the wrench over the line and, grasping the T-handles, begin to turn the wrench so that he tightens the line to rigidity. Your job then becomes to grab the hammer and one of the pointed pins and to drive the point into the hole alongside the bedcord until it jams hard and keeps the cord from slipping back. Continue the process at the next hole and keep at it till your web is complete."

"And they call them the good old days!" said Tyro.

"What's the gizmo for?" said Cowboy.

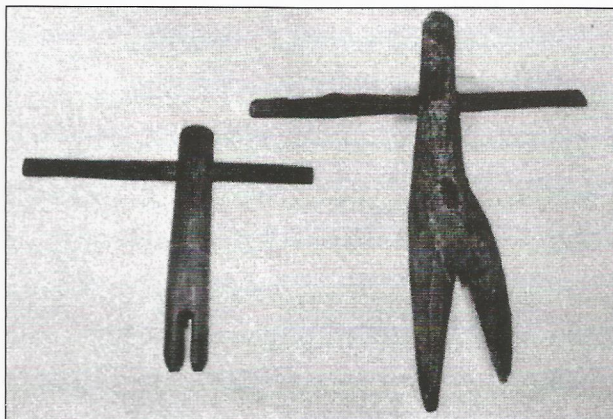
"That's called a bed key," said C.C. "When it isn't called a bed wrench. In fact both objects are called by both names so the choice seems to

be up to the individual. Many beds, even those that are roped, are held together with screw fastening. The key is a sort of universal tool suited to most any old bed. It's said that firemen carried them to facilitate the job of rescuing beds from burning houses. With the key a bed could be dismantled very quickly. They were too big to carry out unless disassembled."

"O.K.," said Cowboy "We were wrong to see your tools as a bundle of sticks and a gizmo. We owe. But what on earth did you want a broken sea shell for?"

"Oh," laughed C.C., "It's not broken. It's been fixed. Except as an ornament it wasn't any good to anybody until some clever make-do mechanic made a dinner horn out of it by knocking off the point and opening the innards to a rush of air."

And raising it to his lips he blew a dreadful blast on it that sent the doughnut eater scurrying to the cash register and signaled the collectors that it was time to leave.



*Bed wrenches, (keys)*





### ASK UNCLE PELEG

*Your old uncle gets more than a few inquiries each year about obscure words, most frequently those that have gone out of use because they had to do with some process or article that has been outmoded. The understanding of such words is made more difficult by the fact that even as late as the 18th century most people were poorly educated and, except for Bibles, there were few widely available texts that provided standards for spelling. Wordlists and dictionaries, although such things had existed quite early, were not generally available and people spelt according to their understanding of the pronunciation of words in speech.*

*I think it more meaningful to accumulate inquiries of this nature until there are enough to devote the whole of an "Ask Uncle Peleg" page to them. This issue contains such an accumulation.*

Dear Uncle Peleg,

In a volume of genealogy I was consulting I found some interesting wills from the 17th century. They made it plain that to some extent our language and its

spelling has changed in three hundred years plus. Even so most of the wills were understandable although there were some words I didn't recognize either because they were the names of things that are no longer with us or because their spelling has altered. Could you explain what a "thwart cut saw" and a "peesee hook" were?

William Mongescu

*Sure can, Bill. Although the more commonly noted form of the first is thwart saw, this is a large saw for cutting across the grain of a log or a piece of timber. The common name today is cross cut saw, sometimes rendered x-cut saw. See our illustration.*

Uncle Peleg,

In an inventory of my first American ancestor copied long ago by some interested family member appears an item called a scupit. It was valued at two pence or should I say tuppence? What was a scupit?

Richard Clark

*You can call it either. It's your letter. The scupit or scuppet, (there are many spellings) was a sort of spade or shovel chiefly used in ditching and draining work. It is apparently related to the word scoop. I have seen an early New England inventory in which a "Ditching Spade" is followed by "three Scupits."*

Dear Uncle Peleg,

I have an assignment to find out something about the stuff used in an early Long Island kitchen. I asked a neighbor who was a reenactor from the French and Indian war before he moved here. He likes to talk about that kind of thing and he said he didn't know much about early Long Island but probably it was pretty much the same as Massachusetts where he came from and he gave me a list of things that had to do with cooking.

One thing was a powdering trough. He didn't know what that was but he said to just leave it out. If nobody knows what it is it's the best thing for my report if I can say I found out.

Your magazine is in the school library so I thought you are the best one to ask. If you write about this don't use my name.

Call me X.

*We think asking Uncle Peleg is a good and proper way to do research so we responded to this anonymous student quickly enough to make the report date due. A powdering trough, like a powdering tub, is used in the preservation of meat by sprinkling salt over and around animal flesh in a container. Meat from a butchering that could not be eaten before spoilage could be preserved thus for long periods of time. Corned beef is beef that has been treated with salt; many people find it delicious.*







## 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**.*



*Members of the "Art of Oyster Bay" committee share a light-hearted moment with host Henry Luce III and lecturer/auctioneer John Loring at the cocktail party and auction which took place on May 15, 2004, at Mr. Luce's home, Wychwood.*

*From left: Bradford Warner, Yvonne Noonan-Cifarelli, Barrie Curtis Spies, Mr. Luce, Chair Maureen Monck, Mr. Loring, and Society Director Tom Kuehhas. Photo courtesy of Robyn Bellospirito.*

### **SOCIETY'S "ART OF OYSTER BAY" AUCTION A GREAT SUCCESS**

Over 130 members and friends joined the Society on May 15th at "Wychwood," the stately home of Henry Luce III, for a cocktail party and lecture by John Loring, the celebrated Design Director of Tiffany's, while placing bids in our silent and live auctions of works by local artists.

The Society's Fall 2003 exhibition presented "The Art of Oyster Bay" in celebration of the Town's 350th Anniversary. I must thank the dozens of local artists who donated their artwork for the exhibition, which was auctioned as one means of raising the funds necessary for the erection of a desperately-needed new library and collections storage facility. Thanks also to those who attend-

ed the various events hosted by the Society and bought the artworks. Your support enabled the Society to raise over \$45,000 for the Building Fund.

### **PASSPORT TO HISTORIC OYSTER BAY**

Local historic and cultural sites have joined forces to present the "Passport to Historic Oyster Bay" program this summer. The Passport weekend of July 3-4 will include: July 4th festivities at Sagamore Hill, a Friends of the Arts music concert, a special exhibit, "Hands-On History" at the Society's Earle-Wightman House, a Revolutionary War Encampment at Raynham Hall, and regularly scheduled activities at other sites.

Other "Passport" weekends include July 24-25, August 6-8, and September 4-5. A jitney will

be available to transport tourists arriving by boat, railroad or car to all of the attractions. Log onto [www.oysterbay.org](http://www.oysterbay.org) or call 516-922-6464 for more information.

### **SOCIETY MOURNS PASSING OF**

#### **EDWARD F.L. BRUEN, ESQ.**

Long-time OBHS trustee Edward F. L. Bruen passed away on May 23, 2004, following a lengthy illness.

Mr. Bruen was a founding member of the Society and served on the Board of Trustees for decades. He was the editor of *The Chronicle*, which was an account of the Historical Society's doings over its first fifteen years, when it progressed from a small informal gathering at the local library, to an organization charged with running a museum,



public programs, and its own research library.

In recognition of his long period of service to the Society, Mr. Bruen was made an Honorary Trustee, along with Dorothy H. McGee, at the Society's Fortieth Anniversary Dinner in 2000.

The Officers and Board would like to extend their condolences to Mr. Bruen's family.

### NEIGHBORHOOD NIGHTS IN OYSTER BAY

The 2004 Neighborhood Nights series will take place on six consecutive Tuesdays\* in July and August. \*(Please note that the Waterfront Center and Planting Fields will hold their nights on Thursday). The Neighborhood Nights are FREE events for the entire family to enjoy at some of the most enchanting places in town.

All events will run from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets, a picnic supper and their family and friends. Take this opportunity to sit back and enjoy the historic and natural jewels of your community. The evenings will include crafts, games and activities for the children, and

entertainment.

Enjoy your community while visiting the places of interest in your "own backyard." For more information, please call individual sponsor sites at: Sagamore Hill National Historic Site - 922-4447; The Waterfront Center - 624-2221; Raynham Hall Museum - 922-6808; Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary - 922-3200; Coe Hall at Planting Fields Arboretum - 922-9210, and The Oyster Bay Historical Society at the Earle-Wightman House - 922-5032. In the event of rain, the events will be canceled.

### FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Village of Farmingdale historians Bill Johnston and Dan Looney presented a slide program entitled "Farmingdale Through the Years" at the March meeting of the society. The program was part of the Centennial of Incorporation of the Village of Farmingdale commemoration that carries through December. Over 100 people attended the event that included a background of popular music provided by Eric Goldschrafe covering the

period 1904-2004.

### SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

The museum was thrilled recently to get their hands on a large collection of slides belonging to the late Bert Scholes, a professional photographer and resident of Sea Cliff. A cursory examination has revealed hundreds of color slides of New York City, the World's Fairs of 1939 and 1964, circuses, and many views of Sea Cliff in the late '50s and early '60s. Archiving and preserving the collection will be an internship project this year for a college photography major working at the museum.

### HUNTINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society's most recent exhibit, "When You See This, Remember Me; Stitches In Time: Huntington Samplers" has been recognized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Unknown by many, the samplers in their collection are very significant and known by other museum curators. The Met is currently doing a survey of New York State samplers, and this project will include the Society's collection.

### OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Categories of Membership

Individual	\$ 25	Business	\$ 50
Family	\$ 35	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 (516)922-5032 for more information on joining the Society.

### GREENLAWN-CENTERPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is proud to present a new exhibit revealing the impact of the railroad on Huntington. It is entitled "1868 - All Aboard, Next Stop Greenlawn." This exhibit will be on display at the Suydam Homestead on Fort Salonga Rd. (Route 25A) in Greenlawn on Sunday afternoons, 1-4 P.M., or by appoint-



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

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

ment til September 26th. For more information call 631-754-1180.

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF THE MASSAPEQUAS**

Personalized engraved bricks are being offered as a way to pave the way to the Old Church headquarters. The brick pathway leads to and around the church building. Each brick carries two lines of engraving and costs one hundred dollars. Donors can purchase more than one brick and all proposed engravings are reviewed by the board and the trustees to ensure there will be no commercialism.

**CENTRAL PARK  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society's Encyclopedia Project is located on the Bethpage Library web site. Lois Lovisolo recently presented an evening program in which she demonstrated the progress that has been made on the project and how it can be improved. She demonstrated the importance of documenting, preserving and making available the history of the area. Lois also took attendees on a "tour" of other historical society sites. Among those viewed were Brooklyn, Oyster

Bay, Riverhead, Levittown, Huntington, Farmingdale and Port Washington.

**SAGAMORE HILL  
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

From the volunteers' newsletter, *The Rough Rider*, comes word that all the curatorial staff is now housed at Old Orchard Museum. All items that can be affected by exposure to mold will eventually be moved to Old Orchard where there is a climate-controlled environment. A thorough spring-cleaning is also going on at Sagamore Hill, and this includes polishing, rug repair, spider-web removal, and washing of china. For more information on the organization, contact the editor of *The Rough Rider*, Milt Elis, at (516) 921-3414.

**LOCOMOTIVE 35 AIR  
COMPRESSOR IS  
REBUILT**

by Ben Jankowski

The rebuilding of steam locomotive appliances in the twentieth first century is akin to reviving a lost language; few know the tongue and even fewer know the proper grammar. Sixty years ago, all major railroads had shops dedicated to the rebuilding of air compressors, injectors, and dynamos in places such as Altoona, Pa.; Sacramento, Ca.; Elkhart, Ind.; and Morris Park in Queens, N.Y.

Today, only one company is engaged in the rebuilding of steam locomotive appliances. Backshop Enterprises of Wheat Ridge, Colorado, continues the

time-honored tradition of rebuilding and renewing locomotive air compressors and other appliances based on the manufacturer's specifications. Bernie Watts, the owner of Backshop Enterprises has purchased the rights, drawings, and patterns to all Westinghouse and Pyle National products and actually can build a new steam appliance from scratch if necessary. After reclaiming Locomotive 35's compressor from a New Jersey tourist railroad in pieces, the board of directors of Friends of



*Bernie Watts (left) and Paul Wood (right) pose with Locomotive # 35's air compressor cylinder in their Colorado shop.*

**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!**

**COMING SOON!**

**A NEW PUBLICATION!**

**THE OYSTER  
SONGSTER**



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 \$20 plus shipping. Contact the Society at (516) 922-5032 to order yours today!

Also available are an 1833 map of Oyster Bay (\$5) and a map of Gold Coast estates c. 1920 (\$7.50). Shipping is additional.

Locomotive 35, Inc., approved the funds to have the air compressor totally rebuilt.

A word about what a locomotive air compressor does. Steam from the locomotive drives the air piston pump that supplies air for the train brakes. Today's diesel locomotives also have air compressors for the same function, but are operated off the diesel generator.

I visited Bernie Watts at his company in February. The two thousand square foot shop contains numerous drill and milling machines not unlike a modern day machine shop. What sets this work area apart is the boiler of Mr. Watts' personal steam engine in the middle of the floor. Mr. Watts is well qualified for his business. A railroader for over thirty years, his expertise includes Master Mechanic at several tourist roads in the western United States. His customers have included the Union Pacific Railroad, Grand Canyon Railway, and numerous theme park railroads in the U.S., Canada, and Japan.

On an inventory shelf sat our compressor. Locomotive 35's air compressor dates from the 1940s



*"The Friends of Locomotive #35 Inc. are proud to announce the arrival of our newest piece to join the long and historic list of equipment destined for the Oyster Bay Railroad Museum. This car, a Pennsylvania Railroad style BM-62 baggage / mail combine, has been on our wish list for a good many years beginning back in 1990 when it was first spotted in Long Island City's Yard 'A.' It has served through the years as a storage shed, office space, work shop and crew facility. However, thanks to the dedication of various railroad employees with an eye toward history, the car was always maintained and cared for in such a manner that it retains most of its original amenities and is in remarkably good condition.*

*Special thanks go out to James Dermody, President of the LIRR for facilitating this donation, John Dermody and Charlie Powers of the LIRR for facilitating the move to Mitchel Field, LIRR retiree Bob Schwenker for his assistance and guidance in obtaining the car, LIRR Car Inspector and Friends of Locomotive #35 member Mike Efthymiou for his special attention and efforts in getting the car ready to go and Wayne Beers and Steve and Regina Napolitano for being at Mitchel Field to assist in receiving and securing the car in spite of the awful weather."*

*Steve Torborg, President*

*Friends of Locomotive #35 Inc.*

and is modern by compressor standards. With one modification, it can operate on any train in use today and provide proper air for braking and stopping a train. Mr. Watts and his associate Paul Wood renewed all moving parts and rebuilt the lubricator. The next part for rehabilitation is the governor and this will be accomplished when further parts arrive

from the New Jersey tourist operator. There were several other compressors awaiting shipment, along with dynamos and water injectors.

If rebuilding a steam locomotive and its parts are an ancient language, Bernie Watts and his company are the Rosetta Stone to recreate the golden age of railroading.





## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



### Dick, Tom and Sam

Dick, Tom and Sam were the names of the three Rover brothers who were the protagonists of *The Rover Boys*, a series of books for boys written by Edward Stratemeyer under the pen name, Arthur M. Winfield. But there is no question here about the characters of what may have been Stratemeyer's most popular series. The "Test Your Knowledge" questions in this issue have to do with what person, place or thing bore a form of one or more of the three names. We provide a short statement about each holder of one of the names and you tell us which name matches the statement and the commonly used full name of that entity.

1. He said, "Be very careful of widders."
2. A Massachusetts landmark on the bank of the Connecticut river.
3. His legend tells us he thought the streets of London were paved with gold.
4. That happened in the reign of \_\_\_\_\_, that is, never.
5. Booth Tarkington wrote a famous short series of books about Penrod Schofield. The title of one of them bears the name of Penrod and his best friend. What was it?
6. This public servant associated with persons named Pat Patton and Tess Trueheart.
7. The thief of some pork on the hoof. His name and his father's profession, please.
8. Among his possessions were an electric rifle, an electric runabout and a photo telephone.
9. He was a whale of a fellow.
10. He can be said to have made his Mark in American literature.
11. It was ----- who first found out that Peter Rabbit was back in the dear Old Briar Patch.
12. He watched a lady make a political statement in the altogether.
13. Aboard ship he was celebrated for his ability to hurl a ball a great distance.
14. A forerunner of Terry of *Terry and the Pirates*, this young fellow was drawn by a succession of cartoonists, Milton Caniff, Colton Waugh and Mabel Odin Burvik.
15. He got a bird but not the bimbo at the end of a classic American mystery novel.

*Answers will be found on p. 24.*





## 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.*

### The Dutch Next Door

by Lee Myles

What this department has been suggesting since it was started is that we owe a great deal to the Dutch. The first recipients of the Dutch bounty were the English who were to begin permanent settlement in America around the beginning of the 17th century.

But the Dutch settled here too in the same century and began to influence other settlers here to accept gifts of Dutch culture directly. Those gifts were many. We want to remind you in this issue of only one of them, vocabulary.

For that purpose we have composed a bit of doggerel verse which we hope will both amuse you and remind that there are far more words of Low Country origin in English than is generally understood. Dutch as used in our rhymes refers to all the dwellers in the Low Countries.

#### Gifts from the Lands of the Wearers of Klompen

Yes, all of us who English speak  
Owe plenty to the Dutch.  
They gave us free of charge, the  
geek  
And since that wasn't much,  
They gave us groat and jolly boat  
And many other words of note.  
Examples: spool and stripe and  
sour.  
Perhaps they also gave us sour.

They gave us boss  
And Holland sauce

They likely gave us gherkin.  
They gave us snuff  
They gave us luff  
Oh yes, they gave us firkin  
They gave us mops  
They gave us hops  
Perhaps the man's name, Perkin

They gave us scoop  
And stoup  
And sloop  
And shallop through the French  
chaloupe  
They gave us dope  
And forlorn hope  
And then they gave us scow  
They gave us croup  
And barrel hoop  
What's more they gave us plough  
No wooden shoes  
But gave they booze  
And gin, they showed us how!

### A Tribute to Charlie Thompson

April 17, 2004

by Susan Peterson

*Ed. Note: We print here verbatim the eulogy delivered by Society President Susan R. Peterson on the occasion of the memorial service for long-time Trustee Charles D. W. Thompson.*

It is an honor and privilege to deliver this tribute to Charlie Thompson at his Memorial Service here at Christ Church Oyster Bay. The reasons why I am accorded this honor give some insight into the special kind of person Charlie was. First, I met Charlie here at Christ Church where I serve on the Vestry, and

where Charlie was a lifelong member. As a good Episcopalian, Charlie had firm ties in his own church while making occasional forays into other churches both locally and in Manhattan. The leadership of the church gives tribute today to Charlie for his loyal support and active participation.

Secondly, I am currently President of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, in large part due to Charlie. As a past President of the Society, Charlie took great care to recruit and nurture Trustees in historic preservation, the local history of the North Shore, and the maintenance of the Earle Wightman House, where Charlie took special interest in the garden. On behalf of the several Trustees here today, I give tribute to Charlie for his enthusiasm and dedication.

Another major focus of Charlie's philanthropic spirit was the Locust Valley Library, where he was also a past President of the Board of Trustees. His well-known landmark house across the street from the library graced the neighborhood for many years. As many of us will recall, its well-appointed rooms were a reflection of Charlie's personality -- classy, comfortable, and cultured, with a little bit of clutter.

A true representative of Long Island's North Shore elite, Charlie was educated at the Greenvale School, the Middlesex School and Harvard University. In 1957, Charlie received a Master of Edu-



cation degree from Columbia University, where he was Dean of Teachers College until his retirement. At the time of his death on March 8, 2004, he was still an active member of the Alumni Council of Teachers College. For many years, Charlie divided his time between residences in Manhattan and Locust Valley, fortunate to have most of his family nearby. We are thankful to his family for offering this memorial service and reception today to allow us to share our recollections of our friend.

Let me share one such recollection. Liz Roosevelt sailed with Charlie in the Junior program at Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club during the 1940s, when Charlie had a Sea Bird called *Curlew*. When Larchmont Junior Day races got written up in *The Herald Tribune*, Charlie's boat was mentioned as *Curfew*, which Liz thought was rather appropriate, since it came in last!

What none of these objective facts reveal is an adequate picture of the man himself, with his upbeat personality, civility, good taste, and cultural interests. A true product of his time and place, he was -- by breeding and by behavior -- a true gentleman. His circle of friends and acquaintances extended well into and beyond the *Social Register*, for he was genuinely interested in all sorts of people. His impish grin, infectious charm, and insatiable



*Celebrating the Society's Fortieth Anniversary in 2000 are (from left): Alexandra Roosevelt Dworkin, Charlie Thompson, current OBHS President Susan R. Peterson, and Dorothy H. McGee. Photo courtesy of Oyster Bay Enterprise-Pilot.*

curiosity made him a welcome guest, good conversationalist, sound historian, and good friend to so many of us.

That is why one of the most distressing things about Charlie's recent illness and depression was how it robbed our friend of his natural ebullience and love of life. In last few months, he was too frequently too ill to receive visits from even his closest friends, including myself and his friend and neighbor, Suzanne Dillenbeck. However, the person who was the closest to him throughout his life, his friend and companion Larry Aiken, helped him throughout his illness, to the very end. Our disappointment at not seeing Charlie in recent months was lessened by the comfort in knowing that Charlie had the help of his friend Larry and his wonderful caretaker Wieslava (Visha) Czerepah.

When all is said and done, however, the true value of a person's life is measured by the affection it arouses in others. Like God's love, given by grace with no regard to merit, such affection cannot be demanded or expected based on our talents, abilities or worldly accomplishments. As a final tribute to Charlie, let me give him what is perhaps the highest tribute anyone can receive at the end of this earthly life -- he was much loved.

Goodbye, Charlie, we shall miss you.

*We would like to congratulate OBHS trustee and 2nd Vice President John Hammond on his appointment as the Town of Oyster Bay Historian. We believe the Town Fathers have made a wise choice in Mr. Hammond whose grasp of, and love for, local history is second to none.*



Mr. Hammond has been kind enough to forward these "Snippets" he has collected in his lifelong quest for Oyster Bay's history.

We look forward to a new era of openness in the Town Historian's office under Mr. Hammond's direction.

### Oyster Bay Gets an "F"

Shortly after the English drove the Dutch out of Long Island in 1664 they divided the territory into "Ridings" and assigned letters to each of the established towns within the territory. They started on the east end with the letter "A" and worked their way west. The Town of Huntington, which was established only weeks after Oyster Bay in 1653, was designated with an "E" which is prominently displayed in the current seal of the Town of Huntington. Oyster Bay, lying just to the west, was given an "F."

### The School Weather Flags

A century ago, before the advent of radios, television and the Weather Channel, residents depended on the Oyster Bay High School weather flags for an indication of what the day's weather would be. The school would receive reports from the weather bureau each morning and would then fly appropriate flags that would indicate what the weather was expected to be. The school was then located on the corner of Anstice Street and Weeks Avenue, the present site of St. Dominic R.C. Church. A square white flag indicated fair weather; square blue was rain or snow; a square blue and white flag was local storms, and a white flag

with a black center indicated a cold wave coming.

### Andrew Bradford's Apprentice

Oyster Bay's first summer resident, William Bradford, was also the first printer in the New York and Pennsylvania colonies. Bradford owned land along Mill Neck Creek and also operated a paper mill there to help supply his New York printing operations. Bradford later moved to Philadelphia and began the *Philadelphia American Weekly Mercury* in 1717. The *Mercury* was continued by his son Andrew Bradford.

It was for Andrew Bradford that young Benjamin Franklin apprenticed in 1723 after having had a falling out with his brother James in his Boston print shop. Sixteen year old Benjamin Franklin worked for Andrew Bradford for a short time before starting out on his own.

*Facing page: An (unfortunately!) unidentified magazine published a piece on the gardens at Sagamore Hill. The photographs are credited to the J. Horace McFarland Company. It is not dated, though it cannot be any earlier than 1898, since it refers to TR as the "Rough Rider."*

*Thanks to Phil Blocklyn for its donation to the Society.*



*OBHS Trustee and newly-appointed Town of Oyster Bay Historian John Hammond shares a story with Frank Flower at the Society's June 11 Annual Meeting.*

### TR Speaks for Benefit of Oyster Bay Library

Shortly after returning from his expedition to South America, former President Theodore Roosevelt spoke to the residents of the village about his experiences. The talk was held in the Assembly Hall of the Oyster Bay High School on Thursday evening December 2, 1914; Roosevelt had presided at the cornerstone laying ceremony for the building in May 1900. The talk was given for the benefit of the Oyster Bay Public Library and was attended by a large number of village residents.



# The Roosevelt Gardens at Oyster Bay

Photographs by J. HORACE McFARLAND COMPANY



The Garden Is Enclosed by a Rustic, Vine-covered Fence



THE gardens at Sagamore Hill are such as might be expected about the home of this thoroughly representative American. There is no set and formal showing, but a charming mingling of annual and perennial flowers. It is Mrs. Roosevelt who looks after the garden, principally, while the "Rough Rider" is more interested in the bit of woodland which is a feature of the place. He knows American plants thoroughly, and his observations as to their habits and beauties are accurate and appreciative. The unpretentious house is begirt with trees, and the approach to it is through a lovely wood-road.



Flowers for Cutting Are Grown, for the Most Part, and the Garden Is Entirely without Formality



## THE NEW SEAWANHAKA "ONE-DESIGN" CLASS.

by Daniel LeRoy Dresser

*The following article originally appeared in Harper's Weekly in November 1897. Thanks to Phil Blocklyn for bringing it to our attention.*

The number of boats which are to be built by members of the Seawanhaka-Corinthian Yacht Club for its new one-design class for next season is phenomenal. This club originated the racing rule that has been adopted and used by all the clubs in this country and in England, and is known as the Seawanhaka Rule for Time Allowance; advocated the introduction of one-gun starts in this country; and has always encouraged Corinthianism, by allowing only amateurs to sail boats in its regattas. In its latest move the club has made as great a success as in its previous efforts, and it shows that the interest in yacht-racing is as great now as it was in the earlier history of this club, twenty years ago, when its boats were handled entirely by amateurs. In those days no professional was even allowed on board - a rule which was followed until the extreme type of modern boat necessitated the employment of some professionals in the crew. The success of small-yacht racing is dependent on amateur and Corinthian sailing. If you have good capable amateurs you will have good rac-

ing; and if you have healthy boats that are inexpensive, you will get the younger men to come in, and if they once start, they will grow up with the sport.

For the last few years racing-boats have been so expensive that few young men would take up

of yacht-racing in the last few years is that, under existing conditions, boats that have been successful one season can be outbuilt in the following season. It is now practically, only a question of cost, and the use of finer materials and more expensive construction.

But latterly the cost has been so very great that men have shrunk from building a yacht for the sake of one season's racing, with the possibility of having not even that, owing to the retirement of outclassed competitors after one or two races in the early part of the season.

In the smaller classes there have been some very large entries, such as the trial races for the defender of The International Cup in 1896, when there were twenty-six starters; but, in spite of this, it was extremely difficult this year for the Race Committee to get even two boats to start in this class. This was not owing to a lack of interest, but to the fact that the boats were not

adapted to anything but racing pure and simple, and that when the great incentive of an international contest was taken away, people would not take the trouble to race them, as there was little satisfaction to be derived from the actual sailing of them.

The one-design class seems to be the temporary solution of the



THE SEAWANHAKA NEW  
ONE-DESIGN KNOCKABOUT.

yachting, and many have turned to other sports; but that this movement which has been started by the Seawanhaka Yacht Club, for healthy boats that are reasonable in price, will serve to bring this element largely back again is shown by the number desirous to enter the new class.

Another reason for the decline





*Half Model of Seawanhaka New One-Design Knockabout.*

trouble. There are several of these classes already in this country which have met with considerable success, but they have all in their design been somewhat guided by the question of absolute speed.

Now the one-design feature is bound to give good racing, as the boats are all alike, and the Seawanhaka club has come forward in their design with a boat that is also absolutely healthy as a sailingboat- one in which you can comfortably cruise. The boat is built in a thoroughly strong and workmanlike way, but has not the extreme refinements of modern days, in the way of construction and material, which have been found necessary in order to get the last second out of a boat in

open competition.

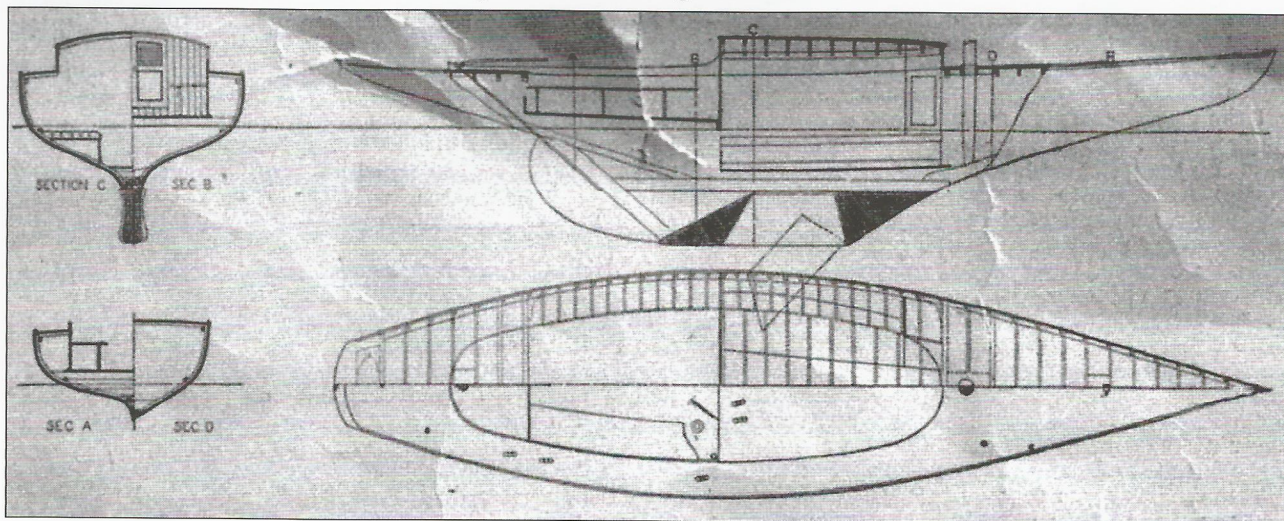
The new Seawanhaka boat would have been called a very finely constructed craft ten years ago, before the days of bronze and doubleskin construction. It has a comfortable cabin eight feet long, a cockpit seven feet long, with head-room enough to sit up comfortably in the cabin. The centreboard is small and does not come above the cabin floor. There is a large stowage-place forward of the cabin for supplies. The boats are twenty-one feet on the water-line, and thirty-three feet over all. Their rig is entirely inboard. They have no bowsprits.

The question of building this class was first agitated in the latter part of July, and it was then hoped that some eight or ten men

might be persuaded to build this type of boat. The principal builders and designers were consulted in regard to plans and prices, and these were submitted to a meeting, held on September 4, at the club-house. Eleven boats were ordered at this meeting. Between that day and the next meeting, which was held on October 14, the number of boats had more than trebled, showing that the type was what was desired. This large number of boats, all of one design, will insure the keenest kind of racing in Long Island Sound next summer.

Interest in yacht-racing will be revived, young men will be attracted to the sport, and will gain training in the finer points of racing, such as it would be very difficult to get in any other way.

The way this class has taken hold shows that people are not tired of yacht-racing, if they can only do it in a healthy type of boat.



*DECK PLAN AND LONGITUDINAL AND CROSS SECTIONS OF  
THE SEAWANHAKA NEW ONE-DESIGN KNOCKABOUT.*

*Length over all, (about) 33 feet. Load water-line, (about) 21 feet. Breadth (extreme), 7 feet 8 inches.  
Breadth, load water-line 7 feet 3 inches. Draught, 4 feet. Draught (extreme), 7 feet.*



## Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

***History Of St. George's Church, Hempstead, Long Island, N.Y.* By the Rev. William H. Moore, D.D. Foreword by Robert P. Rushmore. Empire State Books, 2003. 308 pp. B&W illustration. Appendices and Index. \$25 plus \$3 postage and handling.**

Herodotus, as the Rev Moore informs us right from the start, wrote history "in order that events which have taken place may not vanish from mankind by time." If you feel any trepidation at such a weighty preface, you won't be alone. But fear not. You have only to turn back a few leaves to the frontispiece of Reverend Moore to see that the man is equal to history's task. His steely eyes, gazing out from behind oval-framed spectacles, stare into the distance just past your left shoulder, as though it were Herodotus himself he sees approaching. Surely, this is a man to subdue unruly history and make it serve the interests and desires of his readers.

Moore's *History*, published in 1881 and reprinted here in facsimile, takes as its primary source

the Parish Records, which he notes are "happily fuller and in a better state of preservation than those of most of the Colonial parishes." Although St. George's became a church of some prominence, its early days as Long Island's second Episcopal parish (founded 1702) were hardly promising. According to John Thomas, the first Rector, the parish had no school house, no school master, no books -- not even a simple register book in which to record official acts. As late as 1768, the Reverend Leonard Cutting regretted the deprivations of parishioners living to the south of Hempstead Village:

...but [they] are totally illiterate, [a] great part of them not being able to read, nor have they abilities or opportunity to get their children instructed. A school there would be a real blessing.

When not struggling against ignorance and want, Reverend Cutting found himself embattled with the religious enthusiasms of mid-18th century America. The dissenters of neighboring Oyster Bay parish appeared particularly troubling:

As to the wild set at Oyster Bay, they must dwindle. They already disagree among themselves. Opposition would raise them to a character they can't obtain of themselves, and as it is not worth while for any artful person to make himself their head and form them into a regular sect, they will, I trust, soon sink into their primitive insignificance.

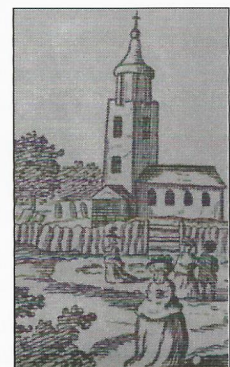
Cutting was referring, of course,

to the New Lights, one of whose tenets was "unrestrained freedom in speaking, the right of every member of the church, in the time of worship." Moore quotes from Charles Wightman's *History Of The Baptist Church In Oyster Bay*, in which Wightman described "the wildest disorder and tumult" breaking out during a New Lights service.

In Appendix C, Moore closes his history with the entire text of St. George's 1735 charter of incorporation. It is your basic royal charter, as far as royal charters go. Yet it is worth a look, as it represents the instrument which allowed this parish to become an *imperium in imperio*, "a corporation endowed with immortality, that could set itself within its corporate limitations, above the State."

Further Reading: *The Rise And Progress Of St George's Church* by William M. Carmichael, 1841. *Adventures For God* by John S. Haight, 1932.

Ordering Information: The book may be ordered from Friends of Historic St. George's Church, P.O. Box 93, Hempstead, NY 11551. Individuals must prepay by check (payable to "Friends of Historic St. George's Church"). Purchase orders will be accepted from libraries.





## AUNT EEK



### Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eek:

I bought an old box lock at a flea market last month and am now faced with just what to do with it. My decision to buy it was an emotional one as it is pretty decrepit and is painted all over with many coats of thick paint, rendering it hopelessly inoperable. It was rather expensive, (I could have taken the whole family out for dinner instead), but I have always admired these devices and I have not seen any like it offered for sale in years. The good news is that it is complete with its strike plate and key (hopefully the right one) wired on to the frame. The lock box is 11" long and 6" wide and is operable from both sides with a key. There is also a sliding lever to open the live bolt from the inside. The case is magnetic, so I feel safe describing it as made of steel.

My question is just what to do with it? I am fearful that if I work on it I may damage it and I don't really know how far to go. I want to try it on my own so I hope that you may give me some general

guidelines and techniques.

Rob

Dear Rob,

Lucky you! I am including a photo of a Box Lock (or Rim Lock) that sounds like a close match to what you have described, both for your reference as well as the readers who may not be familiar with this kind of device. Indeed these are works of primarily 18th and 19th century art, and manage to fetch a good deal of well deserved attention (and dollars) when offered for sale. There are specialists listed on line who deal in and restore these pieces, the most notable and experienced being Ed Donaldson, reachable at <http://www.eddonaldson.com/rimlockmaster.htm>.

Your decision to do your own work should include a visit to his website for a peek at similar objects, as well as a trip to the library for a book or two on the subject. To begin you should remove the back plate for a look at the innards. This plate is generally held in place by a single small screw which is probably gummed shut with the paint you describe. The key here, as with any restoration is to take plenty of study time before you do anything. This includes photos of all angles and details as you dismantle. If the screw is painted solid we need to take a step back. These locks, made of wrought iron, as opposed to steel, or brass were usually delivered blued and this is the finish we would recommend that you aim for. Some components may be brass so check this with your magnet so you know what you are working

with. This being said, your task is to remove the paint in the gentlest manner you can. Any scraping could cause a gouge which may be a permanent scar. Use paint remover and bronze wool, flushed with lacquer thinner. No scraping or wire wheels here please. Take your time and let the chemistry work on each layer of gooey paint. The goal is to reveal the base surface and not to use anything that may gouge or scratch. Once you have the paint off, the screw will likely let go and reveal the beautiful interior assembly of levers and bolts.

Photograph this mechanism so that you may reassemble easily, take notes, make drawings and remember the sequence of the disassembly so that you may reverse for assembly. Now you may wet sand (to 400 grit) all of the parts to clean, rust free condition. If any parts are broken or missing you may find them with Mr. Donaldson or have them made or repaired by a local craftsman. After all of this cleaning the lock should operate cleanly with the key and the sliding bolt. You may visit a local gun store and purchase a cold bluing kit which will include all of the chemicals you will need to finish the entire surface of all components with an even cold blue. Some grease on the moving parts and you are ready to assemble and enjoy. If you have any unexpected or unmentioned detours, call Tom Kuehhas at the Oyster Bay Historical Society and he will search us out for further guidance.

Good luck and let us know how you did.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

### JULY

Saturday, July 3 & Sunday, July 4

#### Independence Day Celebration

"Passport to Historic Oyster Bay" program kicks off this weekend. The Passport weekend of July 3-4 will include: July 4th festivities at Sagamore Hill, a Friends of the Arts music concert, a special exhibit, "Hands-On History" at the Society's Earle-Wightman House, a Revolutionary War Encampment at

Raynham Hall, and regularly scheduled activities at other sites.

Other "Passport" weekends include July 24-25, August 6-8, and September 4-5. Log onto [www.oysterbay.org](http://www.oysterbay.org) or call 516-922-6464 for more information.

### AUGUST

Tuesday, August 3, 6-8 p.m.

#### Neighborhood Night

Bring the family and a picnic dinner and

join your neighbors in the Society's beautiful gardens for a sing-along program led by trustee Steve Walker. Steve will sing selections from his soon to be released *Oyster Songster*, a collection of songs that he compiled (along with original material of his own!) which have to do with oysters or Oyster Bay.

Tours of the museum, hands-on activities, and period children's games are all on tap. Join us!

### Answers to Test Your Knowledge,

from p.15

1. Sam Weller, servant of Mr. Pickwick of *The Pickwick Papers*.
2. Mount Tom
3. Dick Whittington, later to be Lord Mayor of London.
4. Queen Dick, who never existed.
5. The novel was *Penrod and Sam*.
6. Dick Tracy
7. Tom, the piper's son

8. Tom Swift in a series by Victor Appleton, another Stratemeyer pen name.

9. Moby Dick
10. Samuel Clemens
11. Sammy Jay
12. Peeping Tom
13. Long Tom
14. Dickie Dare
15. Sam Spade

### THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

20 SUMMIT STREET, P.O. BOX 297

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**Please remember to renew your membership for the 2004-2005 year!**

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