



THE FREEHOLDER

*Celebrating 40 Years
of Preserving
Our Town's History*

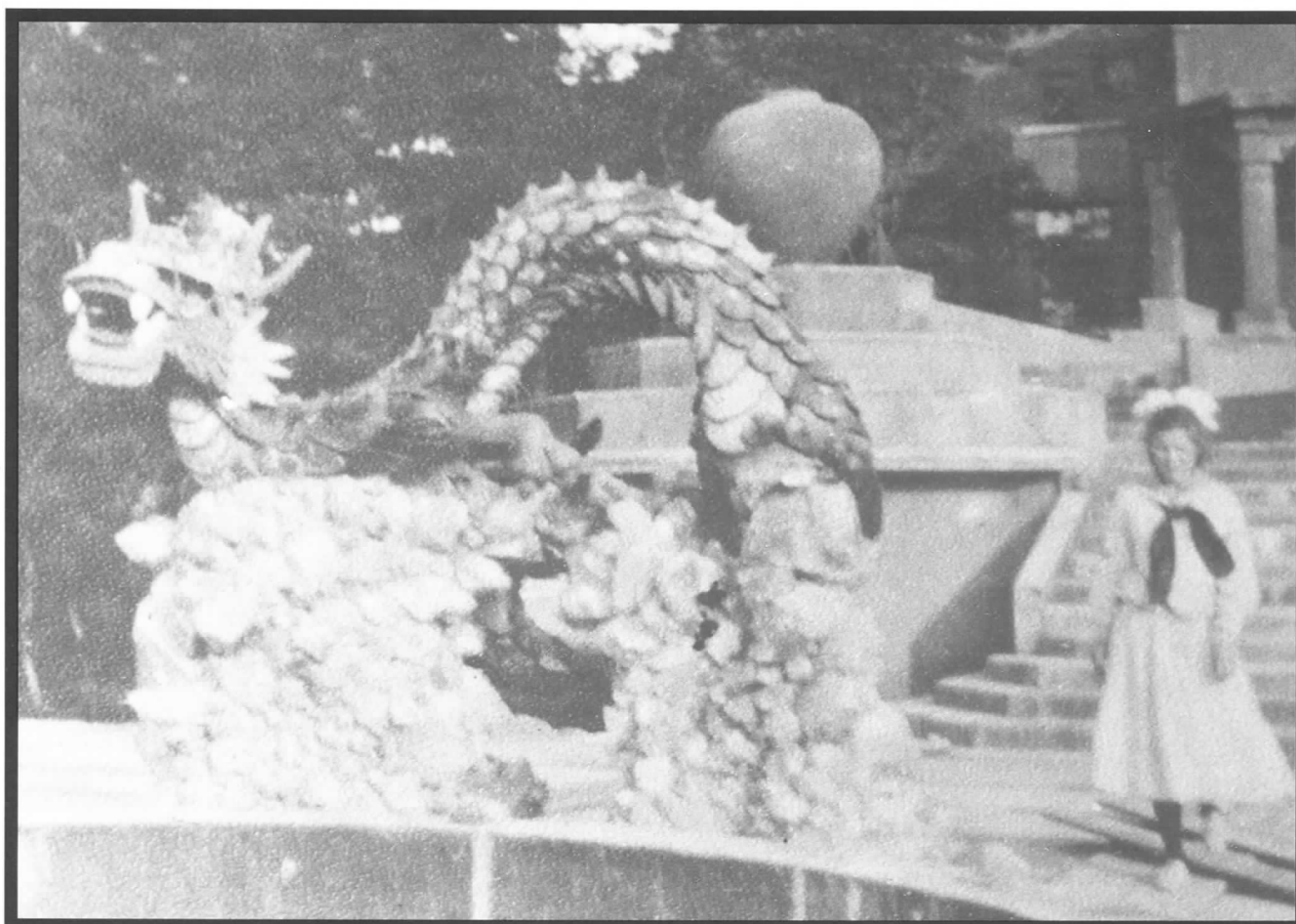
SUMMER 2000 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

👉 OYSTER
BAY'S
HOMEFRONT
IN
W. W. II

👉 OYSTER
BAY'S
SCHOOL
DAYS,
PART II

👉 NEW
AMSTERDAM
PORT'S
POLYGLOT
POPULACE

👉 UPCOMING
TIFFANY
EXHIBIT &
RELATED
EVENTS



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

A word of thanks to all who called to express their delight with the special 40th Anniversary issue which was our Spring 2000 offering. It certainly was a learning experience for me, not only in seeing how far the Society has come, but in the nuts and bolts aspects of putting a publication like that together.

Thanks also to all our sponsors for their support and especially to Harry

L. Dickran and the staff at Levon Graphics for their assistance with the anniversary issue and for the beautiful job they did of printing the magazine.

As we begin our fifth year we would like to encourage you, our readers, to continue sending in your comments. We aim to please, so let us know what you would like to see more of in upcoming issues of *The Freeholder*.

THE FREEHOLDER

of the

Oyster Bay Historical Society
Vol. 5 No. 1 Summer 2000

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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 just came and I really got misty-eyed. Is Snouder's still open?

Dr. Miner Hill was my father's pediatrician as well as mine and my two sons' when my husband and I lived on the Island after our marriage. He called the boys his "grandpatients." My grandmother was responsible for bringing him to Oyster Bay.

A classmate of mine from Friends

Academy, and neighbor and playmate in Oyster Bay, now lives in Rockwall a 40 minute drive from me. It is comforting to have someone to talk to about "old times."

I will renew my membership.

Margaret Whitney Shiels

Thank you, Mrs. Shiels for sharing those memories and for your kind words regarding our special commemorative issue. We still have copies available (\$5, postage paid) if you know of someone who would like one. Members: take a moment (as Mrs. Shiels did) and send in your membership dues. Your dues are a large part of our operating budget.

To the Editor:

Could you tell me how your readers can

ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

Taken from the collections of the Historical Society, this image has a handwritten inscription on the back which reads, "Feb. 1968--Enlarged for Tiffany lecture publicity by Mrs. Louis de B[rest of name illegible] Moore whose picture is in background. She says picture was taken about 1905." For more on the upcoming Tiffany exhibit and related events, see "Currents of the Bay."

receive back issues and/or additional copies of *The Freeholder*?

S. Berliner, III

Well, Sam, you no doubt would like some extra copies of the Winter 2000 issue which included your informative article on the Long Island Motor Parkway. Those wishing to receive either back issues or additional issues may do so by sending a check for \$3 per issue to the address above. Back issues are available for all issues save the first two, Summer and Fall 1996 (they are now collectors' items!).

continued on p.23

FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FRONT LINES: OYSTER BAY DURING WORLD WAR II

by Rebecca Rhodes-Weinreich

History has always fascinated me. Oyster Bay is, in my mind, a little slice of heaven, rich in history and beauty and the constant parade of past and present blending together in a casual walk through town. Raynham Hall might sport a redcoat, a colonial soldier, or a gang of schoolchildren out front at any given time, and to walk through its door is to walk through a time portal, right in my own backyard. Wander down past Fleet Bank, and you may hear the sounds of a turn-of-the-century motor as vintage cars park by the white picket fence of the Earle-Wightman house. Stop by one of the delis in town, order a hero, and drop a quarter in a donation box for the Humane Society while you wait, and another two bits in a box for restoration funds for the Christeen, a ship older than my centenarian grandmother. Side by side, history and future smile at one another, war with each other, or coexist in sullen treaty, on every street in town.

When studying history, one tends to gravitate toward one subject matter in particular, be it politics, culture, or war. Then there are the subcategories, and World War II is, especially, broken up into theaters of study. One may spend a lifetime researching the Pacific theater battle tactics, but know next to nothing about the European ground invasions. The conflict was just too immense.

War is a subject all too often pigeonholed by the enormous variety of large battles and heart-breaking casualty figures; locked into a venue which few wish to explore, for the simple and perfectly understandable wish of

avoiding the unpleasantness of discovery. When given a war which encompasses every major country in the world at once, the sheer magnitude of horror is impossible to imagine. The task of relaying battle tactics and enemy firepower is relegated to dry-as-dust historians and obsessive compulsives preoccupied with tallies and tonnage.

Historians, unfortunately, are as often pigeonholed thus, as the subject of World War II is in the average high school classroom, or even the average topic of conversation, anywhere in the world. Mention a foxhole, and half the room will flee mentally while nodding politely. That is, if you're lucky. Usually the numbers are far higher.

But what most people rarely think about is the individual experience, the hundreds of millions of all-important personal stories that came out of that terrible and phenomenally huge war. It's the personal aspect that captures the imagination of the average person.

In general, people are interested in other people's business a lot more than they are in how many tons of mortar shells were dispensed on Hellzapoppin' Ridge on 23 December 1943, on the island of Bougainville, in the Pacific theater, during World War II. It was probably hard to even read the last part of that sentence. I know it was hard to write.

But it's this interest, this nosy-parker fascination, that is the heart of mankind's humanity, as well as its most irritating trait. Without it, people would never bother to help their fellow man. It is this interest that has given

hope, food, and shelter to untold millions of the wretched and the hungry of our world's history.

Oyster Bay swam with hidden tales of its own during that dreadful war, and I have been fortunate enough to be shown a page or two in the story of a boy who grew up here; a boy who was riding in the back seat of his parents' Plymouth when the news of Pearl Harbor broke in on a football game they were listening to on the radio. A boy who turned nine soon after, and helped his dad search for enemy planes atop the big tower of an abandoned school on a hill, where the new St. Dominic's church now stands. It was the highest point in town.

World War II swallowed the whole of Europe, nibbled at the shores of Australia, and left mainland America untouched, save for the blood of her many sons and daughters, who left her shores and prairies to fight overseas. Had they not done so, she would have lost all trace of innocence in the blitzkrieg that demolished England's cities; suffered the same deluge of explosives that destroyed Britain's citizens and municipal buildings, if not its spirit. And not just from the Atlantic; the rain of fire would have come from all sides.

Oyster Bay slid with quiet efficiency into war mode less than a week after Pearl Harbor. "Dumbo" was playing at the Cove Theater, "Weekend in Havana" showed at the Lyric, Masini & Company had a special on fruit baskets for the holidays, and Oyster Bay adopted the slogan, "Buy a War Stamp and Lick the Other Side!" as its indigenous motto for the duration. Her sons

enlisted, her daughters volunteered, and every street corner had some reference or other to supporting the war effort.

Little Jacob Bernstein grew up in a house on Anstice Street, and had just entered third grade when Pearl Harbor interrupted the football game on the car radio. The family was flabbergasted and horrified, and the trip to Brooklyn was continued in solemn fear.

His cousins enlisted, his friends' brothers shipped out, and Jacob helped out on weekends and after school in his dad's shop, the family-owned haberdashery on the corner of South Street and West Main. Dave's Shop sold hats and accessories to both men and women, and Dave would tuck nylon stockings under the front counter, on the rare occasions they could get them during the war. Rayon stockings were the only things readily available, but they were itchy and opaque, and in Jacob's opinion, ugly as well. His father hoarded nylons when they came in, stashing them away for his best customers.

The radio was the main source of entertainment and, next to the newspapers, information in the winter of 1942. Jacob's parents listened to FDR's fireside chats, "The March of Time," Edward R. Murrow's "This is London," and other such boring grown-up programs; he listened to "Lights Out," "The Shadow," "Tom Mix," and Jack Benny. Uncle Don plugged Good Humor Ice Cream and told funny jokes on the radio, and Jacob was too small to remember Orson Welles' nationwide panic fest, "The War of the Worlds."

Jacob was a hard worker in his dad's store, moving boxes to and fro, sweeping the front sidewalk every day, and redressing the windows for holidays and seasonal changes. Redoing the windows was his favorite.

He rode a blue bicycle with big fat balloon tires, which he filled up at Stedman Motors on East Main, the present site of the Doubleday Babcock Senior Center. After America's entry into the war, Stedman's was quickly converted to a tool manufacturer run by the George brothers.

Mrs. Bernstein shopped at Bohacks grocery store, bought her fruits and vegetables at Costas Karajanis, the green grocer on South Street, took their shoes to be repaired next door at Florio's, and had lunch at the Snouder's luncheonette, where you could feast on cream cheese and jelly or tuna fish sandwiches. No meat; don't you know there's a war on? Dave Bernstein went into the city every Thursday, to stock up on shop supplies and purchase poultry for the week.

Jacob attended third grade in the east wing of the Oyster Bay High School, where the elementary classes were sectioned off from the rest of the building by big

gates in the hallways. An obstacle course was built on the playground that mimicked those found in an army boot camp; Jacob scaled walls and swung across ditches full of water, did sit-ups and side straddle hops, and struggled with the chin-up bars. His class did scrap drives and rubber drives and paper drives, and he and his buddies collected tons of paper and old junk by knocking on doors and hauling years of musty newspapers out of people's garages and attics. Edward McDonough, the Executive Secretary of Salvage, quickly set up bins and containers at the schools as well as all the local grocery stores, to handle the veritable mountains of recyclables brought in by the kids.

Hanophy's Market, the butcher shop in town, collected fat (used in explosives) for the war effort. Jacob's mother poured grease from the day's cooking into a large coffee can every evening,



Jacob's father's store in an earlier incarnation as Kursman Brothers clothing store, c. 1910.

and sent little Jacob down to Hanophy's each week to deliver it.

"Fat Can Matinee" was a collection stroke of genius devised by Edward N. Freiburger, executive director of the War Council's Salvage Committee, and Mrs. Benjamin Moore, Salvage Chairman of the AWVS of Nassau County. For one pound of fat, a child was admitted to any matinee movie in any theater in Nassau County on Saturday afternoon, October 16, 1943. The day broke all previous records for the collection of grease for the entire county. "From the Frying Pan into the Front Lines" was the slogan of the salvage committee.

Jacob flourished as a young entrepreneur at school, selling phosphorescent rings to his classmates. His dad Dave was an air raid warden, and all the wardens wore glow-in-the-dark armbands. Jacob and every other boy in town listened to the cowboy Tom Mix on the radio every weekday at three-thirty. He was a serial character sponsored by the Ralston Cereal Company, and all the kids had Tom Mix rings they'd sent in three boxtops for. Jacob would cut up his dad's air

raid warden armbands and glue a phosphorescent piece down inside the initialed insert in his ring. He wore it to school, cupped a palm around it to show off the glow, and settled back to take orders. Business boomed.

Jacob went with his dad whenever he had air raid duty, climbing the steps of the old school tower and studying the skies, eager to spot any of the silhouettes he'd memorized in the toy planes downstairs. The government had sent each coastal community silhouette maps and miniature toy versions of enemy planes to hang from the ceiling for the volunteers to study. Jacob could identify Japanese Zeroes, German bombers, and American B-17's. He could also pick out, with the rest of the town, which air raid alarm meant Red, or danger, and which meant "All Clear." Chaos ensued in town during the first test alarm, with citizens running about in circles, unsure as to what was happening, and Mr. McDonough had quickly released the official code of air raid precaution. People were warned to fill their bathtubs and laundries with water in case of a real air raid, and households began storing spare water in quart jars as a precaution.

Jacob and his dad pulled air raid duty together, both sporting flash-

lights and phosphorescent clothing: Dave with his arm band and Jacob with his glow-in-the-dark ring. Father and son would patrol the town, blowing whistles at any windows with the shades not yet drawn. The shades were heavy and a very dark green, and any skylights on the factory roofs were painted in non reflective black. Jacob knew to use only a fine spray from the hose, never a stream, to put out the flames of an exploded bomb, and to never use chemical fire extinguishers. That was a tip from England, which had survived the Blitz. Many bombs dropped on cities were incendiary, and mixing chemicals could produce toxic fumes.

Oyster Bay consistently broke records up and down the coast with their salvage runs, their bond drives, and their knitting bees. Armies of women took up knitting sweaters for boys overseas all year long, and a thrift shop was opened downtown to raise money to buy wool. The *Oyster Bay Guardian* ran an article encouraging citizens to help fill the shop as well as buy the merchandise. People read the newspapers, saw the need, and donated endless piles of knick knacks and old furniture. The shop thrived.

The Oyster Bay Branch of the Red Cross, headed by Mrs. Eben Howell, achieved overwhelming success in surpassing quotas for dressings, both folded and sewn, desperately required by every branch of the armed forces. High school students gave up precious hours of holiday vacations to volunteer in making the bandages.

Jacob nursed a broken heart



"Red Cross Surgical Group at Schiff's Playhouse, 1944."
Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.

when he came home one day to find his entire collection of Captain Marvel and Superman comics donated to the soldiers guarding the airplane factories in Bethpage. His mother was as fiercely patriotic as she was tidy.

His boy scout troop (Troop

Rotary Club member, was a neighbor who lived two doors down on Anstice Street. He bought a whopping one thousand dollars worth of bonds, placing young Jacob in the "brigadier general" status. Jacob was presented with the other boys in the

troop at a Rotary meeting, his first, where he was given the bars of a brigadier general. His chest was swollen with pride for the rest of the week.

Jakobson's Shipyard was instantly made off limits to little Jacob, who lived on the east side of town, but he listened with interest to the whispered secrets and half-truths told about the west side, and all the construction going on there. Everyone knew how unpatriotic it was to snoop

pork feet; these were all approved. And chicken. Everybody ate chicken until they were heartily sick of it.

Eleanor Roosevelt was mocked by every diplomat in Washington for refusing to serve black-market beef at her table during state dinners, but it endeared her even more to a nation that loved her already. The president and the first lady had always caught a lot of fire for their radical beliefs, but during the war the vitriol subsided in most newspapers to simple vinegar. It was especially difficult to mock Eleanor when she wore the uniform of the Red Cross, and handwrote letters to the families of wounded soldiers she had visited on the still dangerous island of Guadalcanal. Inspired by Mrs. Woodrow Wilson years before, Mrs. Roosevelt spoke to tens of thousands of injured men throughout the course of the war, and wrote to all their families. Years after VJ Day, she was still writing.

In an effort to conserve precious heating oil in Oyster Bay, town supervisor Harry Tappen had the Town Hall closed on Saturdays, and converted the entire heating plant of the building to coal. An uproar ensued around town as dozens of Oyster Bay residents tried the doors on Saturday mornings and found them locked.

Women signed up for classes in nursing and health procedures at the Nassau County Red Cross Chapter house in Mineola, having their names added to the roster of local civilian protection units as soon as they earned their diplomas. *continued on p. 20*



One of the comic books sacrificed to the war effort, unbeknownst to its owner.

Thirty-nine, Teddy Roosevelt's troop) entered a war bond contest where the winners were given officers' ranks. The ranks depended on the amount of bonds a scout sold. Jacob was rather taken with the idea of selling enough to become a lieutenant, and sold twenty-five, fifty, and one hundred dollar bonds door to door.

His best sale by far came from Jack Stevens, who ran the Sidway Lumber Company. Mr. Stevens, a

important part of the war effort, which was guarded anyway, and Jacob took his patriotism very seriously. Besides, there was plenty to do with all the drives.

The column "Betty Crocker's Kitchen Corner" warned folks of the need overseas for meat, and to not be tempted by the unpatriotic consumption of more than your two and a half pounds a week. Unrestricted meat, however, was actually encouraged. Liver, tongue, kidneys, sweetbreads,

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OYSTER BAY SCHOOLS, PART II

by John E. Hammond

The following is a continuation of Mr. Hammond's article which appeared in the Winter 2000 issue of The Freeholder. Please see that issue for Part I.

The area served by the district experienced considerable growth and within ten years the new school on School Street was more than filled to capacity. It then became necessary to begin renting various buildings within the village to be used as additional classrooms. This continued until 1899 when the voters approved plans to construct a new building to house a high school (which the district did not have before) and the primary school. Although women did not yet have the right to vote in 1899, Miss Addie Hicks of Oyster Bay ran on the Democratic ticket to unseat Schools Commissioner Cooley. Miss Hicks received much local support and the endorsement of the local newspaper editor, but lost by 100 votes out of 2300 cast. Cooley had been appointed schools commissioner when Nassau County was formed in 1899.

The vote for the new school proposal was taken at a regular school board meeting on June 14, 1899, and was 50 to 34, by those residents in attendance at the meeting, in favor of appropriating \$25,000 for a new school. The approval by the voters was reluctant and only after the conditions at the frame schoolhouse became somewhat poor. The board then had to obtain the consent of the entire

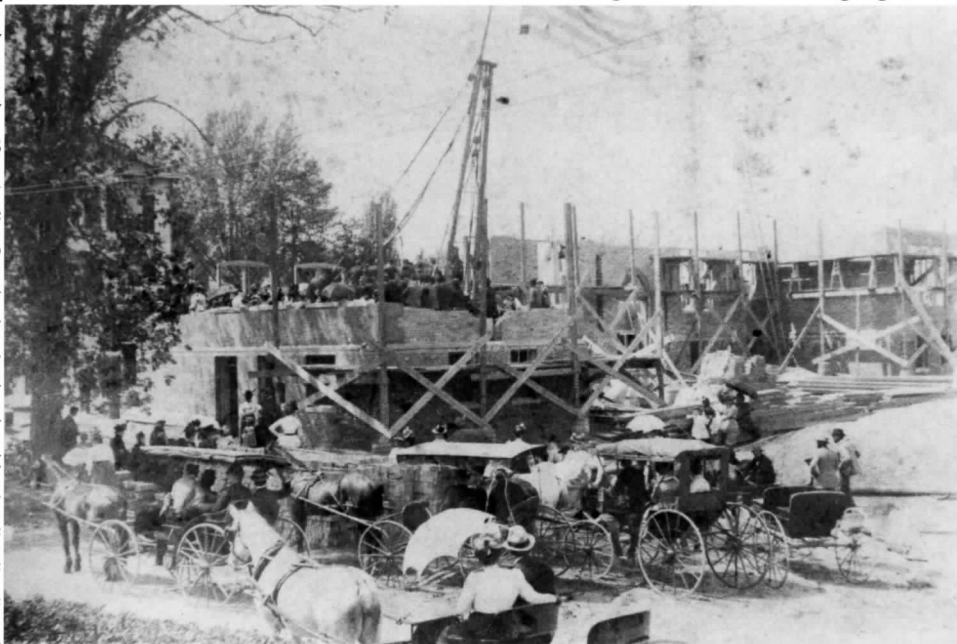
school district through a special vote which they scheduled for October 4, 1899. In the months between, much discussion was held within the community and at the school board meetings.

The question of the site for the new school became a very hot issue. Twenty seven years earlier the district decided to acquire the School Street lot because it was \$1500 less than the much larger lot on East Main Street. In 1899 a lot on the corner of Kellogg Street and Burtis Avenue was offered to the district for \$4000 at the same time that an offer was made to purchase the School Street lot for \$2500. The Kellogg Street lot measured 300 by 210 feet and was considered much more accessible.

The ventilation in the 1872 school building was extremely poor; many children were attending classes in the damp, cold basement. The Oyster Bay Guardian reported in its June 16, 1899, edition, that 82 children

were crowded into the basement, with 22 of them in one 16 by 18 foot room. The district acquired additional land adjoining the School Street location. The contract for the new high school on the corner of Weeks Avenue and Anstice Street was given to George H. Duryea for \$26,680; however, the cost rose to \$42,974 by the time of its completion. The cornerstone laying ceremony for the new high school was planned for Tuesday May 15, 1900; local organizers had wanted an earlier date but that was the earliest that Governor Theodore Roosevelt was available and they wanted him to participate in the ceremony. Roosevelt arrived in Oyster Bay by yacht from New York City and took up his summer residence at Sagamore Hill on the Saturday before the ceremony.

James M. McQueen was president of the Board of Education and he went down to the railroad station early on Tuesday morning to greet the arriving guests.



The cornerstone-laying ceremony for the new high school building, May 15, 1900.

Among the guests was Professor MacDonald who had been the very first principal when the 1872 school was dedicated. McQueen was joined by the entire school board as they met the 12:20 train and then escorted the guests by carriage to the old 1872 school building where a luncheon was served.

The cornerstone ceremony began at 1:00 p.m. when the Oyster Bay Band took up its position and Rev. Alexander G. Russell of the First Presbyterian Church at Oyster Bay pronounced the Invocation. Board member George B. Stoddard gave the opening address wherein he related how the new school building became a reality. He paid special tribute to the principal, Professor Woodard, who had reportedly declined an increase in salary for himself and urged the Board of Education to instead hire another teacher. Stoddard said that a proper epitaph for Woodard's gravestone would be: "Here lies a teacher and an honest man."

By the time several more speeches had been concluded, the afternoon sun had begun doing its work on the crowd. The conditions were reported as "torrid" by the time Governor Theodore Roosevelt was introduced; many of the scheduled dignitaries were nowhere to be found. In his usual exuberant manner Roosevelt addressed his remarks to the children telling them about the importance of having the courage to do the right thing and the very important need for strong character. After his speech Roosevelt was escorted to the northeast corner of the building where he took

the trowel in hand and performed the ceremony of laying the cornerstone.

Over the next few months the building architect, C.I. Carr, was on hand to help direct and speed along the completion of the project, but a ferocious storm in July 1900, did considerable damage. The Board of Education voted a special appropriation to reimburse contractor William S. Moore for the losses he had sustained due to the storm. More delays and rising prices forced the Board of Education to go back to the voters in October 1900 to get an additional \$7,700 approved so that the project could be finished. Upon its completion the new Oyster Bay High School was touted as among the very best and most modern facilities in the entire county!

On November 2, 1906, the school held its First Annual Field Day on the grassy area on the Anstice Street side of the building. Among the winners of the events were Elbert Griffin, first place in the Baseball Throw, and Clarence Gaskill, first place in the Shot Put.

The new school attracted many new students; many continued on to high school where previously they had stopped after the eighth grade. With continued growth of the community during the years of Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, it soon became necessary to consider building an additional, separate primary school. This was done by first razing the old 1872 school building and constructing a new building for the primary school on the site. This new school was completed in 1910 by Richard Carman for the

contracted price of \$55,000 including the acquisition of some additional land. The two buildings were used during the World War II years as the Defense Training School where many local men and women were trained to work at the various defense plants, including Grumman and Republic. The 1910 primary building was also used for many years as the meeting place for local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The building was razed in 1961 for the construction of the new St. Dominic Church.

In 1916 Oyster Bay Cove was still its own school district (No. 10) but had no high school. A bitter battle took place between the residents of the village and the Cove about combining the two districts. The small Centre Island district was also part of the consolidation but there was no opposition from the Centre Island contingent. Former President Theodore Roosevelt advocated the merger of the districts and felt that the estate owners should share in the burden of costs of the villagers in supporting a high school. The estate owners looked on their little Cove school as a sort of private school even though their servant's children also attended; most of the children from the estate families went to private high schools. The heated arguments put the former President in some difficulty with many of his longtime estate friends and relatives. The merger was finally passed, which resulted in District No. 10 being combined with No. 9 and taxes going up in the Cove and down in the village.

The community continued its growth; in 1916 Professor Burtis Whittaker, the principal of the high school, reported that total enrollment was at an all time high of 837. By the end of World War I the district had to again rent buildings in the village to be used as additional classrooms.

School board meetings once again became very heated affairs. Board president John Bermingham led the board in the direction of buying a new parcel of land and building a completely new high school, the opposition favored buying the Thompson house property on Anstice Street and expanding the existing building. The issue was discussed at every board meeting for more than two years before it came to a head in 1920. Prior to the May 1920, board meeting, John Bermingham announced that he had obtained an option on the eight acre Minor property on East Main Street and that its purchase would be discussed and voted

upon at the May meeting.

More than three hundred residents attended the May 1920 Annual School Meeting in the 1901 high school building. Bermingham presented his proposal to the residents to exercise the option for \$50,000 but he also warned them that the option to buy the property would expire if it was not exercised at this time. After much discussion a vote was taken and surprisingly there were only 69 votes against the proposal.

The Minor property contained eight acres of land, mostly on a large sloping tract. There were two houses on the property, the Minor house which was moved to 78 Harbor Road, and the White house which was moved to the rear of a lot on Anstice Street. After taking title to the property, the school district set up the property as athletic fields while the board of education continued to put forth various proposals for the construction of a new high

school building; each proposal was voted down. The district continued to rent numerous buildings throughout the village where additional classes were held as enrollment continued to grow; in 1926 there were eleven such annexes. Reception classes, or Kindergarten, as we now call them, as well as one of the third grades, were held in the Oddfellow's Hall on South Street, which is the present Oyster Bay Fire Co. No. 1's firehouse. Miss Anna Sammis had her first grade class in the Giordano building on Anstice Street, and Miss Mildred Sammis had her second grade in the Rothmann's building, previously the Fisher property, on East Main Street.

The issue of a new school building finally came to a head in January 1927, when four classrooms were condemned as unsafe for use by an official of the State Education Department. The 1927 fight for the new school was led by the Oyster Bay Civic Association and its candidates, Dr. Myron Jackson and Daniel Kraft. The Oyster Bay Taxpayers Association opposed the new school and had as its candidates John Devine and Edward Waters. The vote for both the candidates and the school proposal was held on May 3, 1927, and the attendance was so great that the five policemen called in by the board of education had all they could do to keep things orderly. Because of the crowded conditions and all the pushing and shoving, Assemblyman Leonard Hall made a proposal that the women be allowed to line up and cast

continued on p. 19



Oyster Bay schoolchildren photographed outside one of several additional classrooms rented in the village due to increased enrollment.



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

A friend(?) asked me if I knew what woman said, "It's better to be looked over than overlooked." I said I didn't and I didn't think it was very funny. He laughed but wouldn't tell me. I said, "I know somebody who will--Uncle Peleg."

Jeanette Hardt

Mae West, who could deliver an unfunny line and bring down the house is credited with this bit of wisdom. It is now largely forgotten that she was not only a movie actress but a stage star, a playwright, and a novelist. She created many of the lines she spoke in the movies and a large number of off stage wisecracks as well. It is said that her film, "She Done Him Wrong" saved Paramount Studios when, driven to the wall by the Depression, they were on the verge of selling out to MGM.

Dear Uncle Peleg

The origin of the word "guy" meaning "a man", "a person" is a mystery to me and my dictionary doesn't help much. It suggests that "guy" has something to do

with Guy Fawkes but doesn't explain how. Eric Partridge, the English lexicographer suggested that the word "guy" meaning "fellow" is an Americanism originating perhaps before 1891 and Anglicized about 1910 (later pushed back to 1903). Though he covers it in the same entry in which he speaks of the dark lantern getting the name guy from Guy Fawkes (because Fawkes was thought to have carried one), he notes no connection with guy, "fellow."

Helena Fremke

My own opinion, and the thought is to be found in more than one dictionary, is that the meaning you query is an Anglo-American effort. "Guy" seems to have made two trips across the Atlantic. It came here on its first trip with folk who had the custom of holding up Guy Fawkes to disrespect on the 5th of November, the date of the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605 against the British Parliament, in which Guy Fawkes was one of the conspirators. English children began soon after that event to commemorate (in a negative sense) the participation of Fawkes and, quite unfairly, the Pope and the Devil, in the Plot.

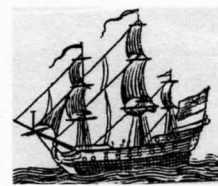
They constructed ugly effigies of old clothes of all three and dragged them from house to house in search of firewood, or money to buy it, in order to burn the effigies in a grand patriotic display. Their salutation to the householder was, "Something for the Guy" which might just be the ancestor of the Halloween cry of "Trick or Treat" voiced five days earlier, on October 31, on our side of the water. There is evidence that Guy Fawkes night, without the accompaniment of Pope or Devil, was celebrated here in the early days (Don't ask me to find it for you.). It is also reported that the Halloween or Harvest figures displayed in New England in the fall are sometimes called "Guys" to this day. As an insulting epithet, it was soon applied to persons here, but the insult was eroded by friendly humorous use. Having lost its pejorative quality, "guy" here became another synonym for "fellow" and it nowadays signifies "woman" as well, at least in groups. And, of course, it was after the ugly side relating to the Guy figure dropped away that the term made its way back to England, its second Atlantic crossing.



Pray remember the 5th of November. Huzza!



CURRENTS OF THE BAY



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

**OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY BRUNCH
TO BE HELD AT
THE EVERGREENS ON
SEPTEMBER 17TH.**

A hard-working committee headed by trustees Doris Amos and Adelaide Beatty has put together an event that is sure to please: a late-summer brunch at the beautiful, historic Cove Neck home of John and Lola Grace.

Known as The Evergreens, it was rebuilt in the 1870s as a summer place after a fire destroyed the original building. Owned by Edward H. Swan at the time, it is an early and splendid example of Second Empire architecture. High-ceilinged and spacious, this solid brick mansion has a cast iron-columned and balustered verandah and a gabled mansard roof, covered with hexagonal slate shingles.

In 1919, the Swan family sold The Evergreens to investment banker Van Santvoord Merle-Smith, and the William Mathers family bought it after World War II. Mr. Mathers was Mayor of the Incorporated Village of Cove Neck for many years, and the greenhouse frequently doubled as the most elegant polling place around.

We have spoken often in these pages of the Society's dire need for more

space for its archival and artifactual collections, as well as more exhibition and work space. The Society has appointed a committee to examine these needs and to come up with suggestions as to how best to address them. Regardless of the solution, it is a certainty that the Society will have to raise capital to fund some type of expansion.

This benefit brunch is the opening of the capital campaign. Please support the Society as it goes through this necessary "growth spurt!" Hope to see you at The Evergreens on the 17th!

**SOCIETY PLANS FULL
FALL CALENDAR OF
TIFFANY EVENTS**

This Fall, the Society is sure to have an event or program to please even the most jaded of Tiffany aficionados! Trustee Maureen Monck and Director

Tom Kuehhas have been working for months on the Society's Fall exhibit "Louis C. Tiffany: His Life in Oyster Bay." The exhibit will focus on Tiffany's family life at his two Oyster Bay estates, The Briars and Laurelton Hall.

In support of the exhibition the Society has planned a full schedule of events on related topics, which will kick off on Sunday, October 22, with a cocktail party at the Bryant and Cooper Steak House on Northern Boulevard.

The following Sunday, October 29, the exhibition opening will begin with a 2 p.m. lecture by Michael Burlingame, author of *The Last Tiffany* at the Oyster Bay Community Center. We will then move over to the Earle-Wightman House Museum for a chance to view the exhibition and enjoy some refreshments.

On Wednesday, November 1 we have tentatively scheduled a

Join us for Brunch

at the home of

John and Lola Grace

The Evergreens

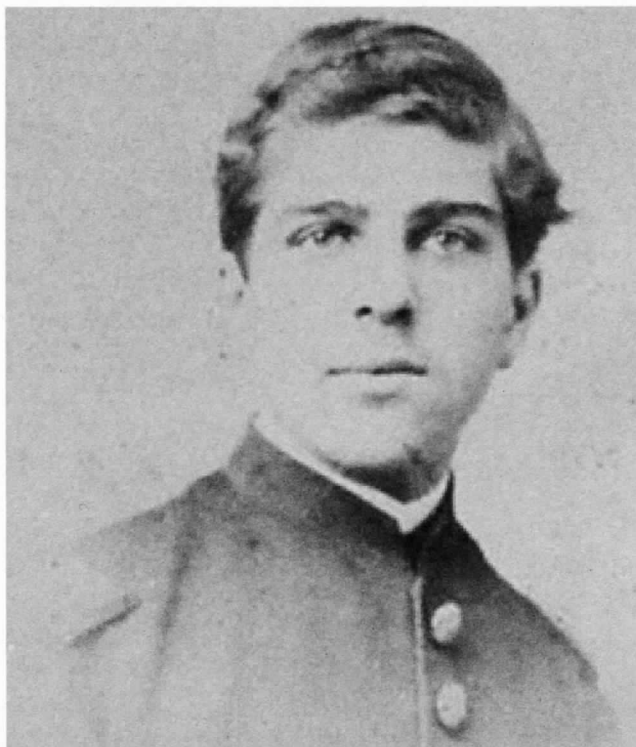
40 Cove Neck Road

Oyster Bay, New York

Sunday, September 17, 2000

11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

*for the benefit of the Oyster Bay Historical Society's
Building Fund*



*Louis C. Tiffany as a young man.
Courtesy of Judge Thomas Platt.*

guided tour of the ruins of Laurelton Hall, which will enable participants to view Cold Spring Harbor as Tiffany himself saw it and which provided inspiration for his art.

On Saturday, November 4, the Society has scheduled a guided bus tour of significant Long Island examples of Tiffany ecclesiastical windows.

are invited to bring one piece of their own tea equipment for discussion by the speaker. The lecture will be followed by a proper tea.

The event schedule concludes on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, November 29 & 30. Professor Ira Prilik will lead gallery tours of Tiffany and other

A lecture on "Tiffany Glass Art" by Cynthia Williams of the Smithsonian will be featured at 2 p.m. on Sunday, November 12. On Thursday, November 16, from 1:30 - 4 p.m. Professor Jennifer Goldsborough will speak on the history and various silver services used in hosting a "Proper Tea."

Participants

Visit the Oyster Bay Historical Society's website!

<http://members.aol.com/OBHistory>

fine stained glass makers of the period at his Garden City gallery.

As of press time we were still ironing out final details, so please check on the status of each offering by calling the Society at (516) 922-5032.

SOCIETY RECEIVES CONTRIBUTION FROM OYSTER BAY MANOR

Mr. David Wagner, manager of the Oyster Bay Manor assisted living facility on South Street, has gifted the Society with the first installment of an eventual \$30,000 donation toward the Society's capital campaign.

Last year Society Director Tom Kuehhas and others had worked to find some means of preserving the historic property known as the "Florio Building" on South Street. It sat squarely in the way of Oyster Bay Manor's planned expansion. Though preservation on its original site would have been the ideal, it soon became apparent that this could not happen. When an eleventh hour attempt to have the house preserved on another site fell through, the building's fate was sealed.

Mr. Wagner, having pledged \$30,000 toward the cost of the move, did not forget that pledge even after the building's demise. He recently presented a \$10,000 check to the Society, stipulating that the money be used for capital expenses.

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Categories of Membership

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

Member Benefits: Quarterly Magazine, Members' Party, Invitations to Exhibition Previews and Special Events, 10% Discount on Publications and Workshops. Call (516)922-5032 for more information on joining the Society.

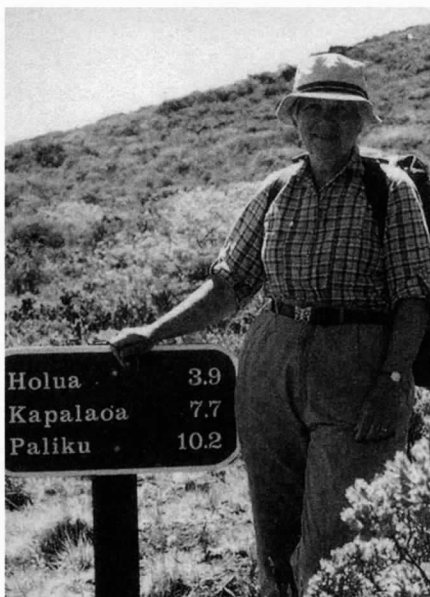
The Society would like to extend its thanks to Mr. Wagner for his generous donation.

SAGAMORE HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

On October 10, 2000, at 11 a.m. Sagamore Hill National Historic Site will host Dr. Polly Welts Kaufman, author of *National Parks and the Woman's Voice* for a slide lecture at Old Orchard Museum that will include information from interviews with National Park Service employees, wives and park activists in every region. This historical study, entitled "Who Walked Before Me," begins with the first woman to travel in Yosemite and Yellowstone and other parks in the 19th century, and leads up to the present. Included are women travelers and explorers, park founders, historic preservationists and environmentalists, NPS career women and wives. This program was first developed for the NPS Women's Conference in New Orleans in 1991.

Ms. Kaufman is the author of several books, a recent Fulbright scholar, and has taught American studies in Norway and presently teaches history at the University of Southern Maine at Portland. Recently she served on a panel for the Howard Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders at Yale University discussing social, political, and environmental problems - past and present - surrounding the national parks.

A reception will follow the program, which is free and open to the public. Contact Sandy Brue



Dr. Polly Welts Kaufman

at (516) 922-4272 for more information.

CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Bethpage)

Recent lectures have ranged from the many dimensions and educational benefits of Long Island Cablevision to the history of the Long Island Motor Parkway. Their monthly newsletter also features recollections of growing up in Bethpage and the Society welcomes additional manuscripts for their archives.

FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Troop 604, Boy Scouts of America, conducted a rehabilitation program at Bethpage Cemetery, Quaker Meeting House Road, during August. The project was planned and directed by Daniel Agnese, a junior at Bethpage High School who is seeking Scouting's highest rank of Eagle Scout. Daniel's plan included rebuilding the central frame structure, which is the

cemetery's most distinctive feature. The historic burying ground is directly opposite the main entrance to Bethpage State Park. The Society provided refreshments for the scouts and their helpers during the weekend work sessions.

LOCUST VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On Saturday, September 23, 2000 (rain date, Sept 24), the Locust Valley Historical Society is organizing a 3 hour sail on Long Island Sound aboard the *Christeen*, a 40-foot, 1883 wooden oyster sloop. Join the Society and know how it is to sail the waters of Long Island Sound the way it was done over one hundred years ago. The sloop will sail even in inclement weather, unless small-craft warnings are posted. If it looks like rain, bring weather gear. Wear sneakers or non-slip shoes. Reservations are required.

The *Christeen* has been carefully restored to meet all current U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations by a group of hardworking and dedicated people in Oyster Bay, New York.

The tour will leave from Jakobson's Shipyard, West End Avenue, Oyster Bay, NY at 11 AM and return at 2 PM. Parking is available at nearby Beekman's Beach. Bring your lunch if you wish. Anyone with questions about this wonderful historic boat, please call The *Christeen* Sloop Preservation Corporation, (516) 922-1098.

The cost is \$30 per person. Reservations may be made by mailing your name, address and telephone number, along with a check for the number of persons

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!

attending to: The Locust Valley Historical Society, 170 Buckram Road, Locust Valley, NY 11560. Space is limited, so please reserve as soon as possible.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS

On Merrick Road in Massapequa, the Massapequa Historic Complex includes Old Grace Church (c.1844), Elbert Floyd-Jones Servant cottage (c. 1870), the Floyd-Jones Family Burial Ground, and the De Lancey Floyd-Jones Library (c. 1896). Charming Old Grace church was established by founding families, enjoys landmark status, and is now the headquarters of the Historical Society of the Massapequas. The restored servant cottage houses furnishings and photographs depicting the times it was occupied. The burial ground is a history lesson in itself. The De Lancey Floyd-Jones Library, with its varied research collection, remains open to the public, Saturdays and Wednesdays from 10-2, 516-799-6722. The church and cottage are open most Sundays, June to September, 2:00-4:00. For further information 516-799-202;,, tours 516-798-8047.

The Historical Society of the Massapequas will be hosting its

annual Apple Festival on the Old Grace Church grounds, Merrick Road, Massapequa on Saturday October 14th, from 10 to 4pm. Historic buildings, apples, vegetables, crafts, music and fun. For information 799-2023.

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society's 31st Annual Heritage Fair on June 3rd included a blacksmith, Civil War encampment, hay ride, trolley tour and sounds of an antique Wurlitzer Band Organ. Proud residents can also now purchase an Amityville flag from the museum's Salt Hay Gift Shop. The cost of the attractive green and gold banner is \$35 plus tax. We mourn the passing of Irene B. Pinnell on February 27, 2000. She was a charter member of the Society and for many years she chaired the Heritage Fair's tea room, an area of the fair that she created.

HUNTINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Back in May a group of Society members traveled to Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn's "Victorian Necropolis," the final resting place for such notables as Horace Greeley, Currier and Ives, Samuel F.B. Morse, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Alice Roosevelt and Leonard Bernstein. After touring the 478-acre cemetery, tour participants enjoyed lunch at the famous Lundy Brothers Restaurant overlooking Sheepshead Bay.

COW NECK PENINSULA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Port Washington)

This past spring a Community

Garden was established at the Dodge House. This project enables volunteers of all ages to join together in sowing and harvesting vegetables, herbs and flowers. There are several small herb gardens around the property, a kitchen garden with culinary herbs, a lavender garden, and special flower bed for cutting and drying flowers. For information, call 883-1985.

RAILROAD MUSEUM OF LONG ISLAND

The new Riverhead Visitors' Center opened the weekend of May 27-28 and included guided tours of the museum's locomotives and rolling stock. The event also featured special displays by different railroad and rail preservation groups from throughout the Island, including the Locomotive No. 35 Restoration Committee, whose steam engine is expected to be permanently relocated to Oyster Bay. For more information on our Riverhead site, call (631) 727-7920, or for our Greenport facility, call (631) 477-0439. Our website is <http://www.bitnik.com/RMLI>.

As announced in the Spring issue, 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.

YESTERDAY IN OYSTER BAY



Do any of these images depict people and/or scenes in Oyster Bay? The only thing that they have in common (in addition to having been photographed at roughly the same period) is that they were stored together in an Oyster Bay attic. None have been labeled with names, dates, or places. Let this be a lesson to our readers. You may know every person in your photographs, and the exact day and place they were taken, but your children or grandchildren (and certainly the archivist of your local historical society) may not. So please take the time to jot down this information (in pencil; pen bleeds through!) on the back of the photo.

Can any of our readers identify the people or places in these photographs?





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

Our near neighbors, the Dutch of New Amsterdam (otherwise New York City), were not exclusively Dutch by any means. In fact we can say that the American melting pot began in what was to become the world's greatest city.

It began with an impressive mixture of nationalities: Dutch, Walloons, English, Swedes, Portuguese, French and Finns. Not the least of the ingredients was a group who were to continue to be an important part of the city's population, Blacks, who arrived here not from their ancestral homeland, but from Brazil.

It is said that during the 17th century eighteen different languages were spoken on

Manhattan Island and in the nearby Dutch settlements.

We should not forget that there were five Dutch towns on Long Island before the founders of our own town entered negotiations with the local Indians to acquire the acres that would be called the Town of Oyster Bay. The bay itself had apparently already been named by Dutchmen who left us many maps covered with Dutch names when they finally accepted English sovereignty in 1664.

Under the Dutch, local commerce to and from the city had developed early, most importantly up and down the Hudson. Goods arrived at the city from abroad and the products of the New Netherland farms and forests passed through the city on

their way out to the world. Besides having the advantage of one of the world's finest harbors, and the great river highway that poured into it, the city held a monopoly on the milling and shipping of flour and flour products from the grain lands cleared by the industrious Dutch. A wind-driven flour mill commemorating this fact is to be seen to this day on the great seal of the city.

In all things agricultural the patroonship of Rensselaerswyck led the way, transmitting the important progress in farming technology continuing to be made by the Dutch at home in Holland. It may be wondered if New York's long history of flourishing agriculture, progressing

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

How is your knowledge of the movie films of long ago? In this edition of "Test Your Knowledge" we list for you ten early films. Along with them is another list of ten movie actors who were stars or leading players. All you have to do to show how well informed you are cinematically is decide which players appeared in which flicks. Both young and old readers start with a handicap, the young lack original experience, the old may be a tad forgetful. However at least some of our movie choices have appeared on TV or in revivals. We hope you were paying attention.

Insert the number of the matching player alongside the correct movie and then check your answers against the list on page 23.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| A. Sunny Side Up__ | 1. Bebe Daniels |
| B. The Lost Patrol__ | 2. Janet Gaynor |
| C. Dodsworth__ | 3. John Gilbert |
| D. Rio Rita__ | 4. Lillian Gish |
| E. Les Miserables__ | 5. Helen Hayes |
| F. The Big Parade__ | 6. Walter Huston |
| G. The Singing Fool__ | 7. Al Jolson |
| H. A Farewell To Arms__ | 8. Boris Karloff |
| I. The Scarlet Letter__ | 9. Charles Laughton |
| J. The Trial of Mary Dugan__ | 10. Norma Shearer |

hand in hand with her commerce and industry, has not its roots in the Rennsselaers' great experiment.

Yesterdays are easily forgotten. Let us try to remember what has only been hinted at here, that the great state of New York and its great seaport city of the same name helped in a major way to lead our country into its preeminence in the world. Without the Dutch settlers and their polyglot companions that preeminence might never have been achieved.

As a tailpiece to our thoughts on the subject of the Dutch contribution to New York's glory there is an apocryphal story to the effect that a Dutch tavern keeper in Manhattan, Peter Koch invented the Martini cocktail some time after his arrival in 1633. We cannot doubt that gin was served in 17th century Dutch public houses but the *Oxford English Dictionary* finds no mention of vermouth before the 19th century. It is a tribute to the inventive abilities of Hans Brinker and Co. to credit them with the creation of the world's premier cocktail but the value of the claim is, we think, only symbolic.

The New Car

Transcribed and Edited
by Karen Ann Sayward

Browsing among the tables at a weekend flea market I came on a disorderly offering of paper items, old letters, dog-eared magazines, thirty or forty year old Christmas and birthday cards, anonymous photographs and the like. In the jumble was a shoe box overflowing with not terribly



New Amsterdam as it appeared c. 1661.

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.

attractive odds and ends. Among them I saw what I thought was an ancient well, elderly railroad ticket. I have an interest in railroad memorabilia. The box was 50¢; the ticket when I examined it at home turned out to be a half of a ticket. I won't bore you with an inventory of the dismal junk that made up the rest of the contents but there was one item that was worth fifty times my 50¢ to me. It was a small notebook bound in manila paper with fifty or sixty ruled sheets. It had been used as a sort of commonplace book and it was filled with notes, bits of information, and reminders which made fascinating reading since they were roughly seventy years old. The most fascinating were the first twelve pages, which described the purchase and ownership of a new car.

Apr. 5, 1929 - Got machine from Olivers. Drove around square a couple times and then right home. (13M)

Apr. 6, 1929 - Boys took it down street for try out. Rode wife up as far as Coutures Rd. Boy liked it real well. (28M)

Sun. Apr. 7 - Drove Margaret to East & brot back her sister, Walter and Wally. Walter drove and liked it. (45M)

In another part of the notebook is a long list of jokes. Our auto buyer seems to have been a bit of an amateur comedian, which may explain the following entry:

Mon. - Took car down st. & entertained at Am. Leg. Smoker. Came home at 11:20 (64M)

Tues.- Took a ride after supper & returned back on the worst road ever known in the world. (B. P. Road) (74M)

Wed. was a very stormy day & I left car home.

Thurs. - Took the car down & bought first gas at Bates. Came

home at 10:30. Car had got 100M
Friday - Left it home. It rained
and hailed all day a nasty day.

Sat. 13th - Went to work & brot
Margaret after her shopping.
(115M)

Sunday morning - I washed the
car and made a mess of it. Henry
is going to show me how to wash
a car. In the afternoon I forgot to
set the spark and I couldn't stop
the starter. I ran to the house and
as the noise grew dimmer I ran
back to the garage. Then I ran
back to the house and the noise
grew dimmer so I ran back to the
garage and after a marathon race
I got help from Dick & Bill (SOS
call) and they stopped the starter.
Henry also arrived on the scene. I
got a real thrill and I feel more
like an automobile owner now.
Left the car in the garage all day.
Took it on my birthday, Mon.,
Apr. 15th to a meeting. Arrived
home at 10:15. Car went fine.
(130 M)

Tues., Apr. 16 was terribly stormy
& left it home.

Wed., the 17th, went to Victry at
nite & saw "Weary Rivers."
(143M)

Thur., the 18th, took car to work
& came home after lodge meet-
ing (Oliver fixed starter) (160M)

Fri. - took car to work & after
supper took the 2 for a ride to W.
and back. Trip 26 mi. (201M)

Sat. - took car to work & then in
aftern took the 2 ladies for a
shopping tour. (216 M)

Sun., the 21st was a nasty day,
rain & cold & didn't take
machine out at all.

Mon., the 22nd was a very nasty
day, so I left it stand without use.

Tues. was nice. Took it to work
and at nite went to see
"Syncopation" at the Victry fine
picture. (254M)

Wednesday the 24 - took car to
work & then at nite to Moose
Entertainment. Wife got an awful
ducking from spilled coffee.
(285M)

Thurs. the 25th - took it to work
and return. (297M)

Fri. the 26th - took car to work &
after supper took ladies for a ride
up South Road (341 M)

Sat. was a wonderful day & drove
car to work and wify home from
shopping. Car got washed.
(355M)

Sun., the 28th - went to church in
morn & to the H.S. Concert in the
aftern.

Mon. - took car to work. Home at
8. (399M)

Tues. - took car to work, Y.M
Soc., Brat Wurst and Sour Kraut.
Home at 10:00. (415)

Wed. - took Margaret home from
shopping. Evening took Bill and
Herman to see "Simba"(437M)

*After May 1 the diarist stopped
making regular entries in the
notebook and reduced most of the
entries he did make to records of
mileage and or the cost of*

*repairs. By September 22 he had
clocked 5200 miles. In December
he bought new Goodyear tires
and two days after Christmas had
the car greased at 8089 miles. On
January 11 one of the new tires
blew out "at High Pressure." A
little short of a month later there
was real trouble;*

Fri., Feb. 7 - Had serious oil trou-
ble. Scotty, after hard work,
repaired a bad leak thru the main
bearing and transmission at 9170
miles. Charged \$6.75.

*The mileage turned 10,000 as he
turned into a gas station on
Sunday, March 3, going to see
"Sarah And Son." On April 4 he
drove to the movies to see "The
Vagabond King" with Dennis
King. He thought it was "Great."
On the sixth he had tire trouble
and on the seventh the entry was
"fixed lites - 50¢." That evening
he saw Fred Stone in "Ripples".
A blow out, broken front springs,
and a radiator leak marred the
next few days. The worst was yet
to come.*

April 21- Got caught without a
tail lite. Got a tkt and had to turn
it in at the police station.

*The outcome was not described.
Succeeding days brought more
expenses, a repaint job on the
hood, a new brake rod, springs to
stop a rattle, a grease job, brake
adjustment and a new back seat.
The reason for these outlays
became clear with his final entry
in the new car story.*

May 20, 1930 - New 1930 Ford.

We can hope he got a good trade-in.

Oyster Bay Schools

continued from p. 9

their ballots first. His proposal was shouted down and was not even voted upon. In the end, the Oyster Bay Civic Association's candidates won as the school proposal was approved by a vote of 696 to 345.

The plan called for an expenditure of \$650,000 but had to be voted on again in June 1927, because of "voting irregularities"; the district had no voter registration

requirements and anyone who showed up at the meeting was allowed to vote. The new vote was scheduled with registration done according to Section 210 of the Education Law, which required that a voter be a citizen of the United States, twenty one years of age, and a resident of the county and district for at least thirty days immediately preceding the election. The proposal was passed at the second election.

Within a month of the passage of the proposal an artist's rendering of the project was shown to the community and bids were immediately requested. Bids were received in October 1927, and the groundbreaking was held on November 21, 1927. By the Spring of 1928, the steel girders which formed the frame of the structure were being put in place as the bricklayers began closing in the structure. On April 21, 1928, a cornerstone laying ceremony was held. Mrs.



The 1929 High School building on East Main Street at the time of its opening.

Theodore Roosevelt loaned the trowel with which President Theodore Roosevelt had laid the cornerstone of many other notable buildings, including the Nassau County Courthouse, for the occasion. In July 1928, the Minor house was loaded onto skids and moved along East Main Street to its present location on Harbor Road. In August local contractor Frank Faraco began grading the lots behind the school into two levels as the interior work on the building rapidly progressed. By the early Fall it became apparent that the building would be ready for use before the 1928-1929 school year was finished.

On February 15, 1929, the superintendent, Leon Deming, made an announcement at 2:30 that all students were to carry their books and papers down to the new building at the end of that day's classes. The principal, Glenn Halladay, supervised the

removal of material from the old school while Superintendent Deming placed himself at the new school to direct the students as they arrived. The new high school building was immediately the envy of every district in the county; enrollments immediately increased and within two years the closed-up 1910 grade school had to be re-opened to hold additional classes. Other nearby districts soon began improving their school facilities and the overcrowding eased up.

The seventy year old Oyster Bay High School building has served the district and several generations of students very well, as the building and its design has demonstrated its adaptability to changing needs. In the 1950s the Donald N. Luckenbill Music Wing was added and, as we begin the new millennium, a major addition in the form of the long-awaited Howard E. Imhof gymnasium has been completed.

Oyster Bay During World War II

continued from p. 6

The Parish Hall of Christ Church was the meeting place of all sorts of organizations before and after, as well as during the war, and it was here that young Jacob had his boy scout meetings. He used to wander about the room, studying all the propaganda posters encouraging Lend-Lease with Britain before Pearl Harbor, and the rapid change to U.S. soldiers in every conceivable kind of danger afterwards. "Loose Lips Sink Ships" (with a drowning American sailor), "Keep 'Em Coming!" in reference to metal drives, and the most heart wrenching poster of all, that of a liquid-eyed little cocker spaniel lying on a flag graced with a gold star. It read simply, "Somebody Talked."

The flags were a trophy of sorts thought up by the government to honor the armed forces. Families with boys in the war would purchase enlistment flags. They were

simple, small flags, about eighteen by twenty four inches in diameter, and each one was graced with a star for every son enlisted. If the young men were fighting but still alive, the stars were blue. If killed in action, the blue star was replaced with a gold one. The flags were hung in the front window, and it became a not uncommon sight to see them in many of the residences around town. Jacob walked to school every day and counted them for fun; his pleasure swiftly dimmed when one of the flags turned to gold. Two sons lost. By the end of the war, gold stars had replaced many of the blue.

The Lyric Theater continued its annual Christmas tradition of a free movie for all the kids, fourteen and under, on Christmas Eve morning. The event had become a staple, funded by Mrs. Leonard W. Hall, Mrs. Alvin Hutchinson, and the North Shore Bank Trust Company. Each child got a box of candy, a small gift, and a ticket to see the movie. Almost every kid in town went, whether they celebrated Christmas or not.

Jacob went to the movies every Saturday afternoon at the Lyric Theater, the old site of the current town hall annex. His mom would drive him and his buddies to the village and drop them off, and they would spend the afternoon watching

films like "Bataan" and "Casablanca," "The Maltese Falcon" and "Boston Blackie," and squirm in their seats in anxiety at the serials; the "Lone Ranger" was Jacob's favorite. The newsreels often terrified everybody in the theaters, adults and children alike, and one particular scene in a propaganda serial left Jacob with nightmares for a week. It showed an American soldier tied up to a stake with the tide coming in, and crabs were scuttling closer for a good feed.

Movies cost nine cents. Jacob's mom would give him a dime, and that left one penny for two peanut butter "Mary Janes" during the picture.

Ice cream was plentiful during the war, thanks to Snouder's Drug Store's homemade flavors. Jacob would be in sheer heaven when he and his dad would go for sundae after work, spending a whopping fifteen cents for hot fudge and all the trimmings. His dad smoked Lucky Strike cigarettes, resplendent with their new wartime colors on the pack. The tobacco company changed the colors from white with green stripes to white with red stripes for the duration. "Lucky Strikes Goes to War!"

The price of cigarettes skyrocketed after Pearl Harbor, and you'd put two quarters in the vending machine and get a pack of cigarettes with three pennies inside the cellophane. Vending machines didn't give change, and a pack of cigarettes was an astronomical forty-seven cents.

The family used to drive into Brooklyn every weekend to visit Jacob's aunt, reading Burma Shave signs along the way, but



The heartwrenching poster which made such an impact on those on the home front.

the trips were cut way down during the war. Being an air raid warden, Dave was able to fill his gas tank easily and often, and they took the two and a half hour drive to Brooklyn through Roslyn, down 25A, driving underneath the Roslyn Fire Company Tower and up and down bumpy roads. One evening the brakes failed on the Plymouth and they ended up, unhurt, in a farmer's field.

1943 began with a slap on the wrist for Oyster Bay residents. The tin can drive, which had started with such overwhelming success, was sliding downhill as people began to tire of recycling, and refuse collectors got lazy. Town Supervisor Harry Tappen issued a proclamation making it a civil offense for garbage collectors to dump properly bagged and prepared cans anywhere but at a de-tinning plant. He also urged housewives to continue recycling or face the consequences. The backlash of outrage against the proclamation swiftly settled down when the majority of the townspeople viewed any complaint as unpatriotic.

Rotary meeting attendance fell dramatically because of gas rationing. Gallons of blood were drawn and stored at the hospital in Farmingdale for local emergencies in case of attack. The Nassau County Chapter of the Red Cross collected blood from thousands of volunteers and shipped it overseas, where it saved the lives of thousands of wounded soldiers. Nassau County residents bought millions of dollars' worth of war bonds every month despite no one being

able to drive anywhere.

A retired chauffeur for the Atlantic Steamer Company Number One was found dead in his cellar at the age of fifty-two from self-inflicted gunshot wounds. He had suffered a paralyzing stroke some months before, and the stress of day to day life and worry about the war combined to drive him to suicide. He was born in Oyster Bay, died in East Norwich, and was buried by the Devine Funeral Home on South Street. It was the first suicide of the war.

Private First Class William H. Albert, a Marine rifleman who grew up on Anstice Street in Oyster Bay, returned home in July 1943, after five months of hell on Guadalcanal. He was a member of the legendary First Marine Division, which had stopped the Japanese offensive dead in its tracks on that terrible island, and was the first Oyster Bay resident to set foot on the shores of the 'Canal. He was home on sick leave with a bad case of malaria and yellow jaundice, and had spent four months recovering in Australia, where the people showered the entire division with affection and gratitude. If not for the First Marine

D i v i s i o n , Australia would have been attacked next. In six bloody months of constant fighting, Guadalcanal became the center of the Pacific and the pivot toward the out-

come of the war.

VE Day brought laughter and tears to the entire nation, and New York City celebrated with a ticker tape party that took two weeks to clean up. Jacob Bernstein was eleven years old and longed for the festivities in the city, but contented himself with his family and friends in his own quiet hometown.

VJ Day brought great change to every house in Oyster Bay; the boys were coming home. Jacob saw families glowing with the joy of returning loved ones, and chocolate bars started appearing again. Nylons returned to the shelves, shades were left up in the evenings, and he no longer visited the tower to search for planes. Meat was plentiful, returning soldiers and Marines put away the weapons and trappings of war, and the sleepy little hamlet of Oyster Bay settled back down to life as usual.

As for young Jacob, he was never frightened about the outcome of the war. The Movietone news shocked and horrified, but he never doubted America and the Allies would triumph. He knew they'd win. The radio and newsreels all said so!



The American Legion Building on South Street suffered a fire in March 1942.

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

The Presence Of The Past: Popular Uses Of History In American Life. By Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen. Columbia University Press, 1998. 291 pp. Tables, notes, and index. \$27.50

In *The Presence Of The Past*, history professors Rosenzweig and Thelen review the results of their phone survey aimed at determining Americans personal relations to their history. The good news is that "people pursue the past actively and make it a part of everyday life." This should be cause for celebration in view of recent reports that Americans can't tell one civil war from another and don't much care that they can't. But it's not all good news.

The results from the survey, of course, are interesting in themselves, without any critical overlay, and not all that surprising. The past that most deeply engages us is that of our families. Eyewitness accounts merit more trust than "commerce, entertainment, ideology, and prejudice" (ie, movies, television, and books). Personal visits to muse-

ums and historical sites hold great value as trustworthy sources of history. On the other hand, we cast high school history teachers and "professional historians" into the outer darkness of distrust.

Americans, in other words, have made their history as personal as their politics. This is such a good thing? We seem to have privatized our relationship to the past by focusing so parochially on family history and personal experience while often ignoring any larger, civic connection to the national story. Perhaps this is why we are producing citizens who can't seem to cast their country's history into any coherent shape.

If wallowing in statistics is your passion, you will love Appendix 2 (twenty-three tables of survey findings). Go to it. In the meantime, members of local historical societies can consider these telling responses to one of the surveys questions:

Knowing about the past of which of the following four areas or groups is most important to you?

Your Family	68%
Your racial or ethnic group	8%
The community in which you now live	4%
The United States	22%

Heartbeats In The Muck: A Dramatic Look At the History, Sea Life, And Environment Of New York Harbor. By John Waldman. The Lyons Press, 1999. 178 pp. Illustrated. Bibliography and index. \$24.95.

"Where else is it expected that sometime during mid-April, as the depths warm, bacterial activi-

ty will bloat the previous winter's bounty of murders and suicides and cause them to rise to the harbor's surface-- a synchronized resurrection of the damned that captains call 'Floaters' Week.'" So begins John Waldman's survey of the world's greatest harbor. Can a book with an opening like that go wrong? It can't.

Exotic and temporary residents aside (corpses, pythons, and the like), Waldman's real focus falls on the mundane life of the harbor, to see, as Ed Koch might say, how the waters are doing. Of particular interest will be the fate of the oyster, "the best sentinel for the state of the harbor." Oyster beds once lay from Croton to Raritan Bay in a more or less continuous blanket of shelled bed. Now, it is an encouraging sign to find even a single adult oyster in Newark Harbor, although oysters are to be found along the Battery, in the Arthur Kill, and East River as well. The oyster's demise is nowhere more evident than in the Gowanus Canal, where Gowanus oysters, said to be as large as dinner plates, were once rated the country's best. Recently, a sack of oysters was lowered as an experiment into the canal. Within two weeks the oysters were dead, their shells partially dissolved by the water's high acidity.

Still, the harbor is coming back from its various environmental assaults. New Yorkers can in part attribute recovery to a change in attitude, as they look "toward the harbor, rebuilding the waterfront as an attraction and a refuge, a place to lift the spirit... a place to

continued on p. 23

AUNT EEK



Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

A Long Islander who didn't want his name used if I should answer him through the magazine told me that he had recently rediscovered in his attic a box that was there when he had inherited the place more than forty years ago. He said, "It was marked on a piece of pasteboard tacked to the top 'Great-grandfather's tools used in his furniture shop in the City of New York many years ago.' Among the tools in the box were four wooden planes branded with the same last name as my own and the separate initials E.O. On the front ends of three of them are a double-stamping reading ALFORD and N.YORK. I can find no record of this place in my gazetteer. There were also: a queer old-fashioned hammer with no markings, a small backsaw marked BARBER & GENN, a large chisel marked NEWBOULD, and an unmarked two-foot rule. How do I find out something about these tools and their significance as antiques?"

You did it the easy way, by asking

Aunt Eek, but the best course if you can't consult me is to consult the books. Books about such things can be found through libraries, museum folk and their libraries, collectors' organizations like the Early American Industries Association and the Mid-West Tool Collectors Association, both of which may be reached via the internet, and perhaps even your friendly neighborhood antique dealer.

I examined the *Guide to the Makers of American Wooden Planes* by Emil and Mátyl Pollak and found that ALFORD was not a place but a planemaker. He was Consider Alford who worked at No. 15 Catherine Street in New York from 1812 to 1817. He was the brother-in-law of a very important American planemaker, Leonard Kennedy of Hartford, CT, a member of a family which made planes from as early as 1797 to at least 1846. Barber & Genn were sawmakers in Sheffield, England as early as 1789, but I haven't yet found a terminal date. Newbould was a Sheffield edged-tool maker who is found in the directory of 1787, and was himself active for many years and whose firm was in business until 1881.

As I told Mr. Anonymous, planes marked by Alford are quite rare and are therefore quite attractive to collectors, especially those who concentrate on tools made in the New York area. The little backsaw is also likely to be quite early and desirable. Such considerations dim when one considers the importance of great-grandfather's unique family heirlooms to his descendants.

Examination by experts may help to date, at least approximately, every tool in the box. To make the collection even more significant, great-grandfathers history should be sought in New York City directories and genealogical sources.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

- A. 2
- B. 8
- C. 6
- D. 1
- E. 9
- F. 3
- G. 7
- I. 4
- J. 10

Blocklyn's Books

continued from p. 22

suture the harbor's environmental, public access, and economic activities into a more seamless whole, and in particular, to reconnect the public with the water." We should hope, in this reborn affection for our bays and harbors, that we do not love them to death.

The Post Rider

continued from p. 2

To the Editor:

Jane Hutchinson recently called to tell me that she had read and enjoyed "The Early Life and Education of Miss Edna T. Layton" (Summer 1999) and Edna had her Summers boys mixed up. Miss Davis married Oscar Summers, not Stanley.

Sorry,

Mary Jane Lippert

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MARK YOUR CALENDER FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Sun., Sept. 17, 11:30a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Benefit Brunch

Join us for brunch at The Evergreens, the Cove Neck home of John and Lola Grace for the benefit of the Oyster Bay Historical Society's Building Fund.

A splendid example of Second Empire architecture, the home is featured in the Society's popular publication Walls Have Tongues.

The Post Rider

continued from p. 23

It was brought to our attention that we had erred in assuming (in the Winter 2000 issue) that Alfred Underhill was an Oyster Bay resident. He in fact lived in New York City. Our thanks to Gloria Tucker, Membership Secretary of the Underhill Society of America, for setting us straight! At the same time Gloria was able to identify one of two Bicentennial Quilt Committee members whose names we had been unable to track down for the special 40th Anniversary issue. Ann Evans is the woman standing at far right. We still do not have the identity of the woman seated second from right. If anyone does know, please contact us!

OCTOBER

Sun., Oct. 22, 3 - 4:30 p.m.

Cocktail Party

Mingle with Tiffany family members and scholars as we kick off the Fall schedule of Tiffany-related events at the Bryant and Cooper Restaurant on Northern Blvd. Those attending are welcome to stay for a special "Tiffany" price fixe menu.

Sun., Oct. 29, 2 p.m.

Lecture and Exhibit Opening

A lecture on Tiffany at the Oyster Bay Community Center on Church St. will be followed by the opening of the exhibition entitled "Louis C. Tiffany: His Life in Oyster Bay" and a reception at the Earle-Wightman House museum.



NOVEMBER

Please note that these events are still tentatively scheduled as of the date *The Freeholder* went to press. Please contact the Society for specific times, dates, and events.

Wed., Nov. 1, 11 a.m.

Tour

Guided Walk on the grounds of the former Tiffany estate, Laurelton Hall.

Sat., Nov. 4, Time to be announced

Bus Tour

Guided bus tour of significant Long Island examples of Tiffany ecclesiastical windows

Thurs., Nov. 16, 1:30 - 4 p.m.

Lecture/Tea

Prof. Jennifer Goldsborough will speak on the history and various silver services used in hosting a "Proper Tea." Participants are invited to bring one piece of their own tea equipment for discussion by the speaker. The lecture will be followed by a proper tea.

Wed. & Thurs., Nov. 29 & 30, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Gallery Tour

Professor Ira Prilik will lead gallery tours of Tiffany and other fine stained glass makers of the period at his Garden City gallery.

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See Currents of the Bay for
Fall lineup of Tiffany events!

THE FREEHOLDER SUMMER 2000