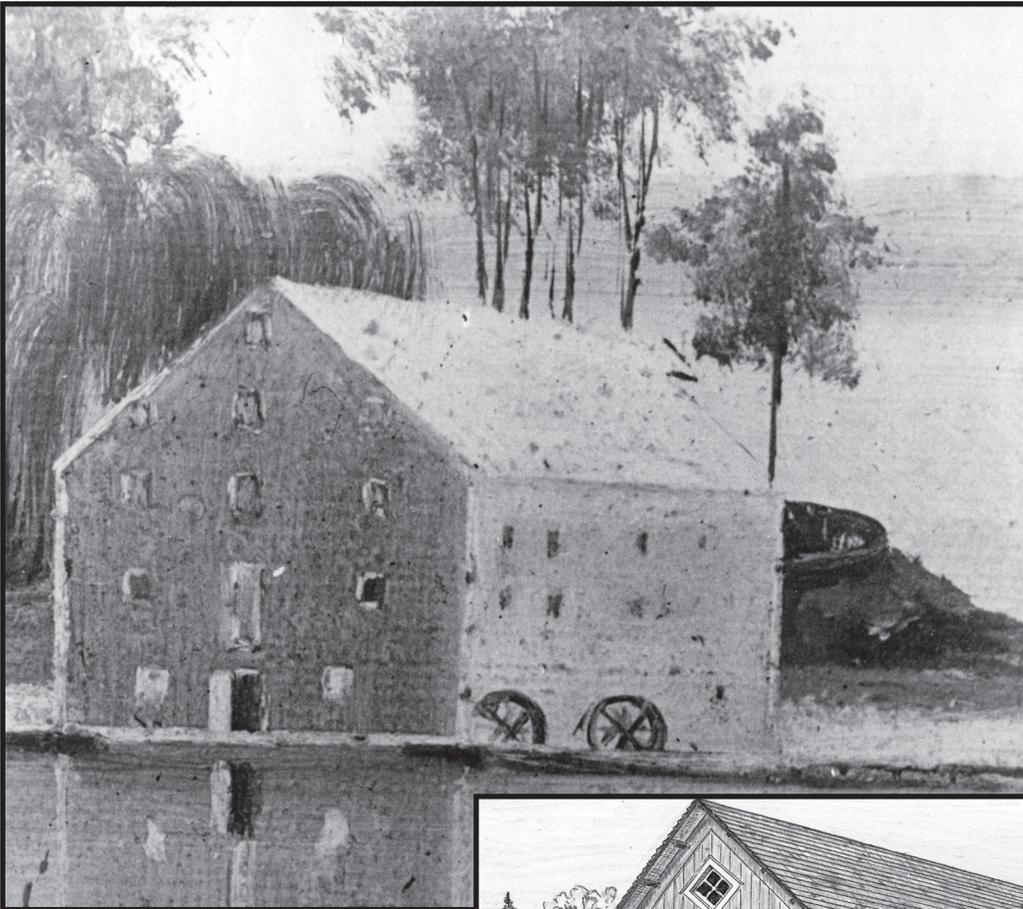
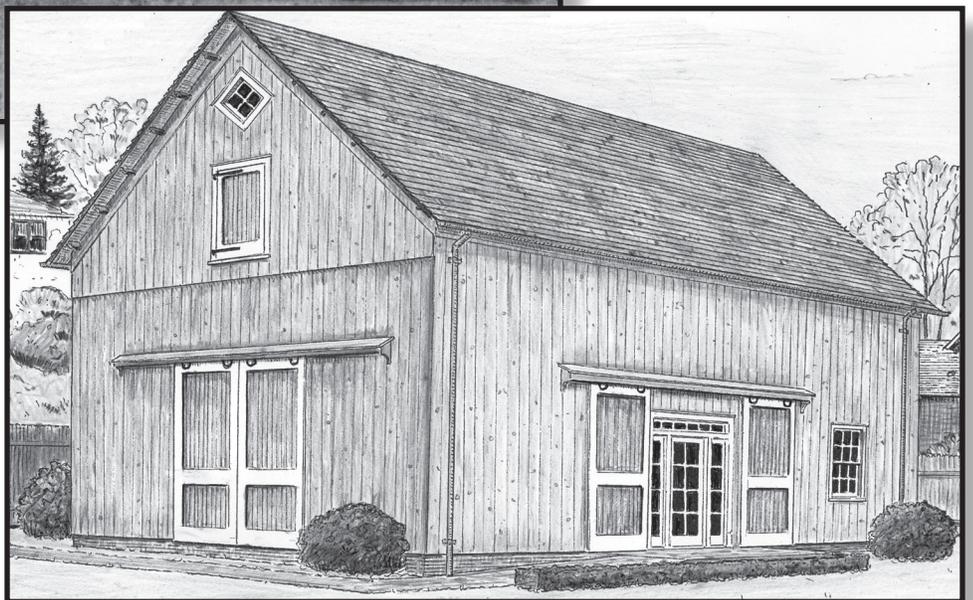




The past is our future...
Fifty Fabulous Years at the
Oyster Bay Historical Society



Dosoris Grist Mill c. 1797



*The Angela P Koenig
Research and Collections Center
2010*

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Administrative Assistant

George Wallace
50th Anniversary Curator

This catalog has been compiled and published in conjunction with the Oyster Bay Historical Society's fiftieth anniversary exhibition *The Past is Our Future: Fifty Fabulous Years at OBHS*.

Catalog design by Jacqueline and Philip Blocklyn

facing page

Parade Watcher, Moore Building



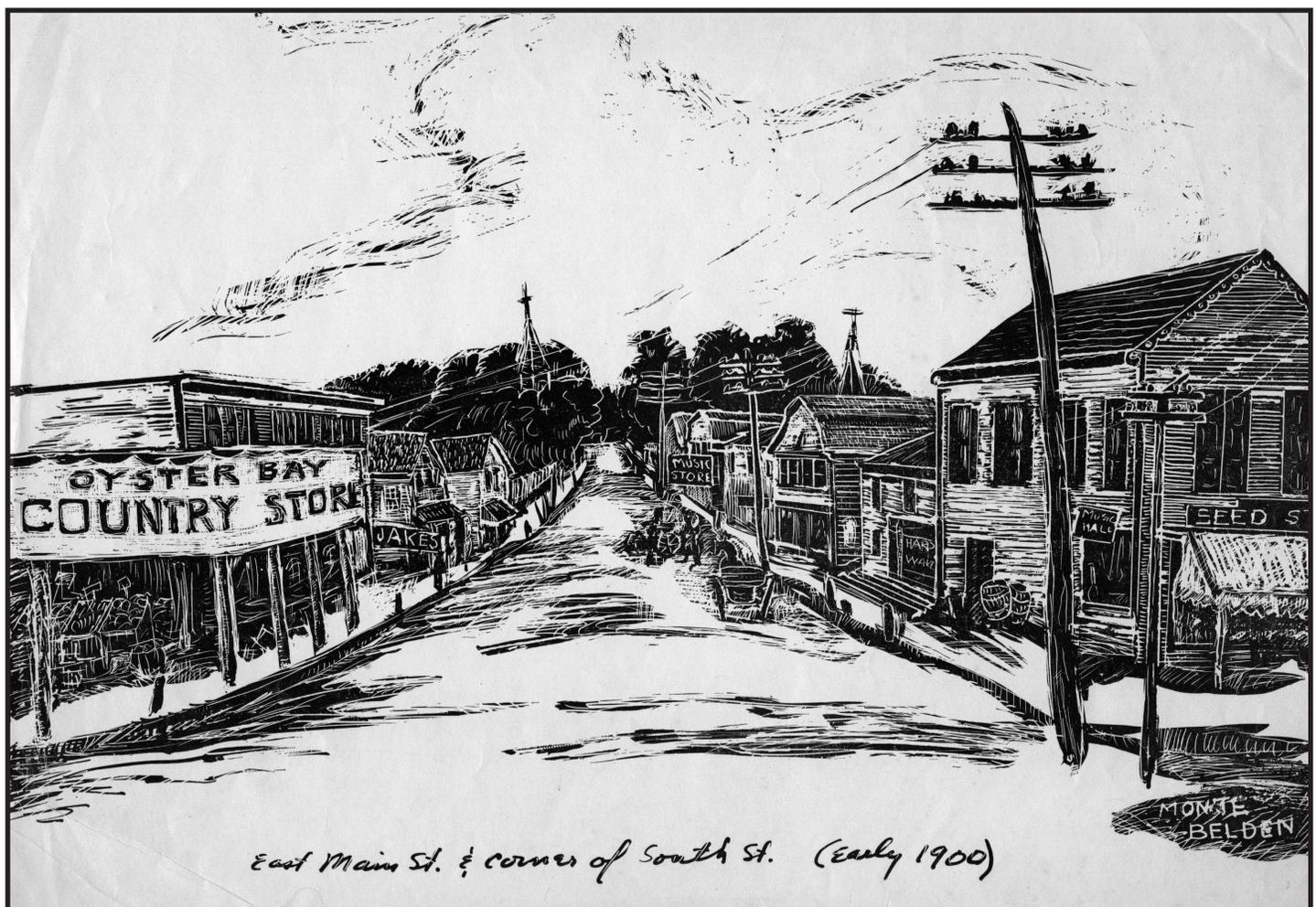
THESE ARE THE STONES

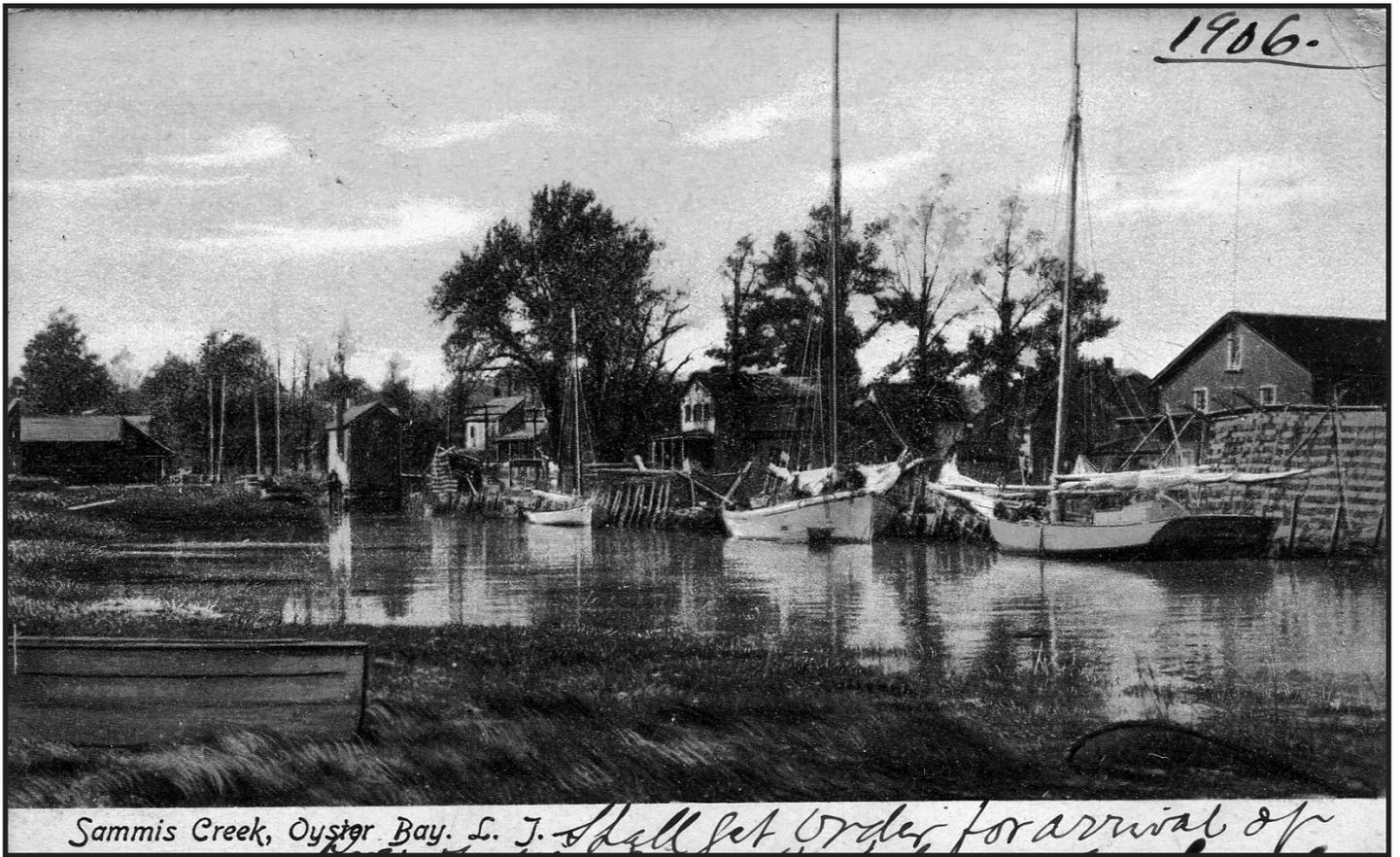
Oyster Bay is blessed with a long and rich history dating back to the native peoples who populated our coves, inlets and headlands, as well as to the early European settlers who established a thriving village.

For the past fifty years the Oyster Bay Historical Society has worked to preserve that history and to make it accessible to everyone through its collections, programs, and exhibitions. It is not just the story of the Gold Coast's captains of industry but of slaves and servants, foot soldiers and immigrants, farmers and fishermen.

'Where are the stones that mark the bones of those who lived in Oyster Bay?' asked Samuel Youngs over a hundred years ago.

Today the Oyster Bay Historical Society remains dedicated to answering that question.





Facing Page: Monte Belden, East Main Street and Corner of South Street (early 1900s).

Above: *Sammis Creek*. Oyster Bay, L.I.

Left: *The Old Home of Marmaduke Earle (The Baptist Parsonage)*.

BRICKS AND MORTAR

In 1960 Mrs Miner C Hill and a core group of visionaries made it their mission to create an organization dedicated to preserving the history of Oyster Bay. Others became ready partners in their dream.

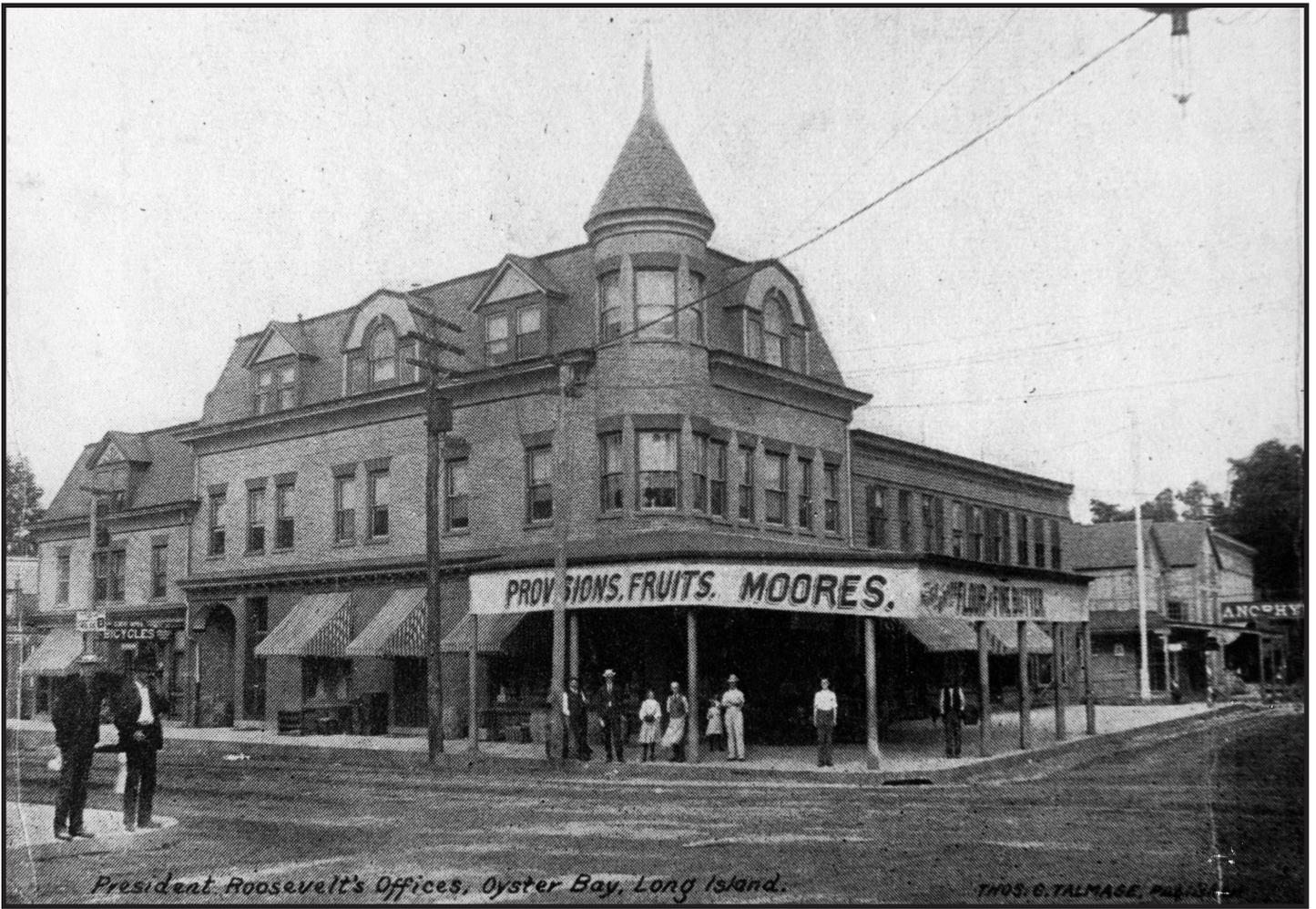
Among the society's earliest interests was 'Bricks and Mortar' work, aimed at preserving the community's landmark buildings and properties.

A key program was the Society's commitment to rescuing old cemeteries. In the 1960s, the future of many cemeteries was very uncertain. Through the persistence of the Society, a number of our community's most historic burying grounds were saved.

The Moore Building, site of the executive offices of Theodore Roosevelt's summer White House, was preserved in part through the Society's efforts.

Bruce Wood Hall, president of the Bank of Hempstead, offered the Earle-Wightman House to the Town of Oyster Bay, with the provision that the Society maintain headquarters in the building. The house was officially dedicated as Society headquarters on November 25, 1972. Since then it has been home to a growing reference library, special collections, programs and exhibitions — all in the service of local historic preservation and interpretation.





Facing Page: *The Earle-Wightman House, hauled on a flatbed truck to its home at 20 Summit Street.*

Top: *The Moore Building, where Theodore Roosevelt's office staff worked during his presidency.*

Left: *Carolyn Hill, President of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, 1960-1970.*

Above: *Memorial plaque at Fort Hill Cemetery.*

Below: *Skirt and matching bodice, from the Society's Costume Collection.*

Right: *Agricultural implements from the Charles Reichman Collection.*



Left: *Society volunteers working on the 1976 Bicentennial Quilt.*

Above: *Jervis art pottery, c. 1910, from the Oyster Bay studio of William Jervis. Donated by Mr and Mrs Harold Kraft.*

THIS HOUSE IS OUR HOME

From 19th century tools to fashions, and from period postcards to pharmaceutical paraphernalia, the society has judiciously added to its storehouse of Oyster Bay history.

Among the key collections:

We maintain an extensive **TEXTILE** collection, a colorful assemblage which includes 19th and 20th century men's and women's clothing and appurtenances — including hats, fans, handbags, and uniforms, along with other textiles, such as quilts and flags and more.

We are particularly proud of the **CHARLES REICHMAN TOOL COLLECTION**. Acquired in 1997, this collection of blacksmithing tools, farm implements, carpenter's tools, 19th century printing materials and the like was the foundation of a traveling exhibition brought to Oyster Bay Town Hall, local libraries, and banks.

Our small but significant collection of **JERVIS POTTERY** consists of fine art pieces produced locally ca 1910, and was a generous donation from Mr and Mrs Harold Kraft. So too is a core donation of **PHARMACEUTICAL** items. It includes a wonderful array of bottles, scales, mortars and pestles, furnishings, and other appurtenances.

Of continuing value to those who love local history are our **POSTCARD** and **PHOTOGRAPH** collections. And over the years we've amassed a rich collection of individual photographs, family photo albums, tintypes, cartes de visite and other historic images, which have been enjoyed by the casually curious and studied by serious researchers.



Guests of a Society-sponsored dinner cruise prepare to board the Thomas Jefferson.



Above: *Frances Roosevelt, Grey Cottage (Cove Neck).
Mary Cooper wrote her diary here, 1768-1773.*

Right: *Diary Donor Alice Finehout, with Dorothy McGee.*





Above: Ice boating on Mill Neck Creek.

Left: Elizabeth Roosevelt, Waldron II Working.



EXPANDING OUR STOREHOUSE OF KNOWLEDGE

The Society's RESEARCH LIBRARY, lovingly built by Jane Soames Nickerson, represents the very heart of collection development, including as it does a fine collection of manuscripts and documents from the 1680s to the early 20th century.

The Society has worked hard as well to develop an impressive series of interviews and ORAL HISTORIES conducted with area residents whose words and memories interpret not only their own lives but also the times in which they lived.

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS, by both historians and lay people, have proved vital assets to the Society's outreach programs. A 1972 address by historian Dr Myron H Luke, delivered during the tercentenary of George Fox's visit to Oyster Bay, remains a memorable highlight.

Outreach will always serve the Society well in its determination to inform and engage residents and visitors alike regarding the history of Oyster Bay. EXHIBITIONS on the Italian-American experience, 20th-century recreation, local art and artists, estate life, architecture, the Second World War, and slavery in Oyster Bay have drawn people closer to the Society and even proved to be successful venues for fundraising and membership development.

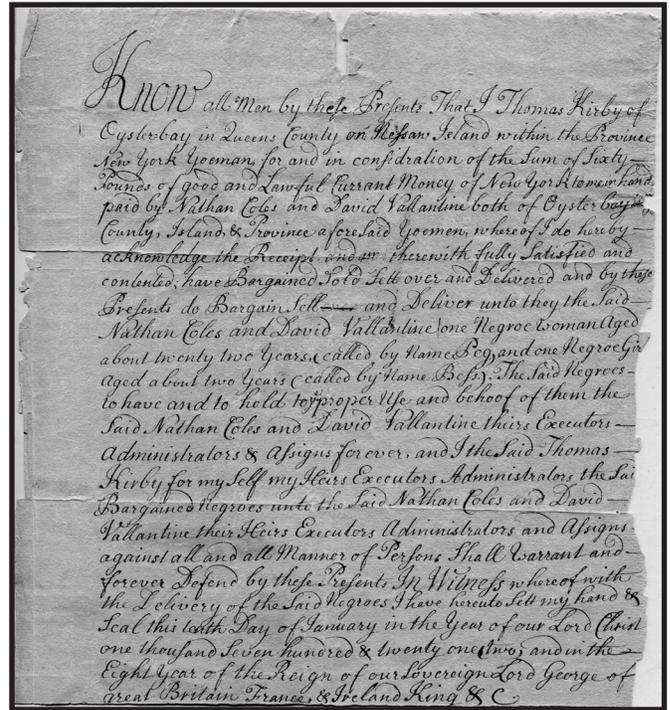
Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Colby with the Diary of Mary Cooper.





Left and Below: *The Society's Library and Archives, home to over five thousand books and manuscripts.*

Bottom: *Committee Chair Ruth Imhof with Society volunteers at work on the Bicentennial Quilt.*



WE COULD WRITE A BOOK

The Society has published a number of books and newsletters since 1960. Some of these include:

OYSTER BAY: A SKETCH by Frances Irvin.

In 1960, Mrs Irvin donated to the Society her original manuscript of *Sketch of the History of Oyster Bay*, which was bound for library use but not edited for publication until 1987, when it appeared as *Oyster Bay: A Sketch* under the revision and emendation of Jane Soames Nickerson.

WALLS HAVE TONGUES: *Oyster Bay Buildings and their Stories.*

The third edition of this work dedicated to detailing important Oyster Bay buildings appeared in 1999. The first edition of 1977 was dedicated in memory of Society founder Carolyn Hill.

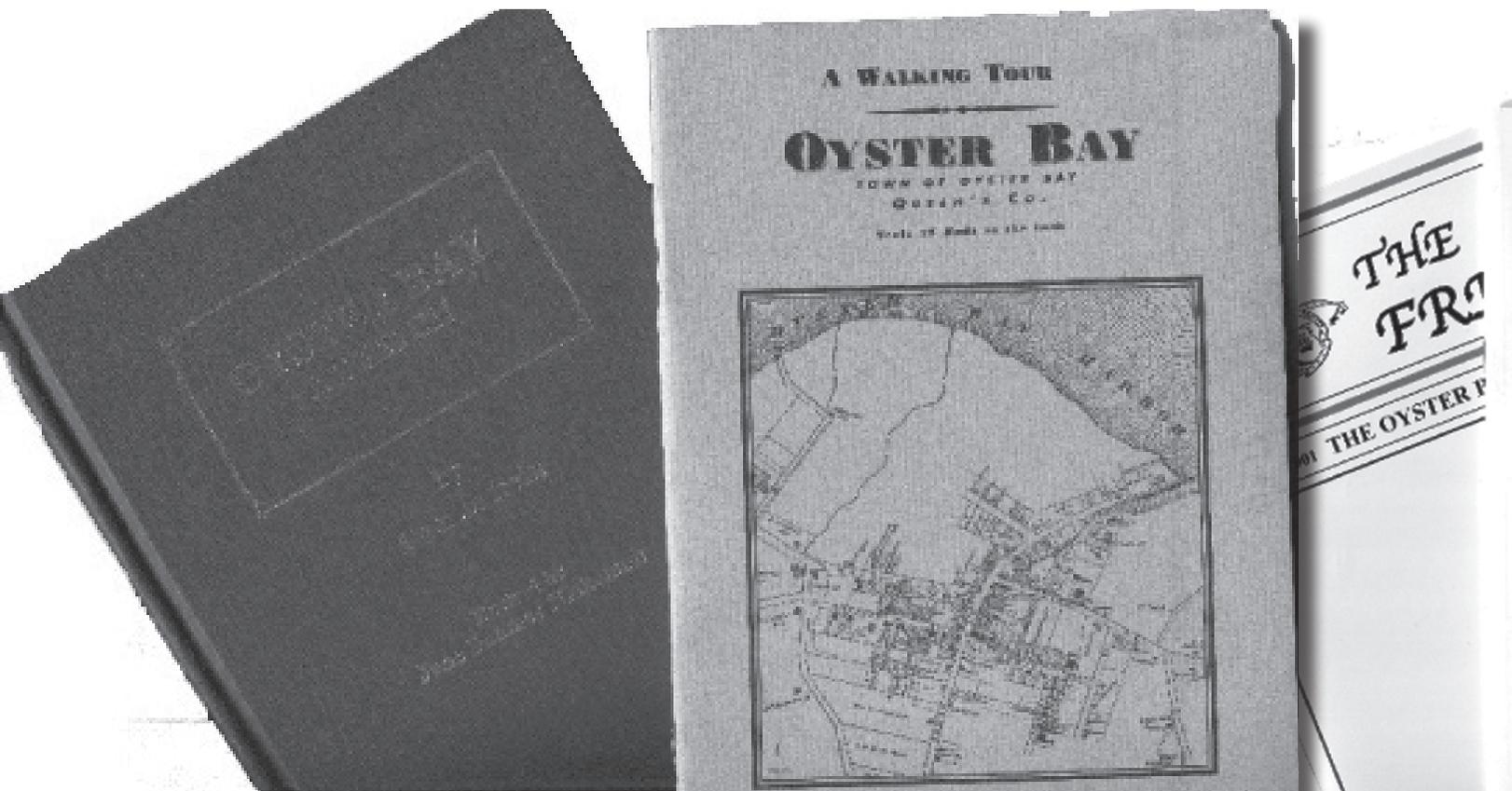
A WALKING TOUR OF OYSTER BAY, 1996.

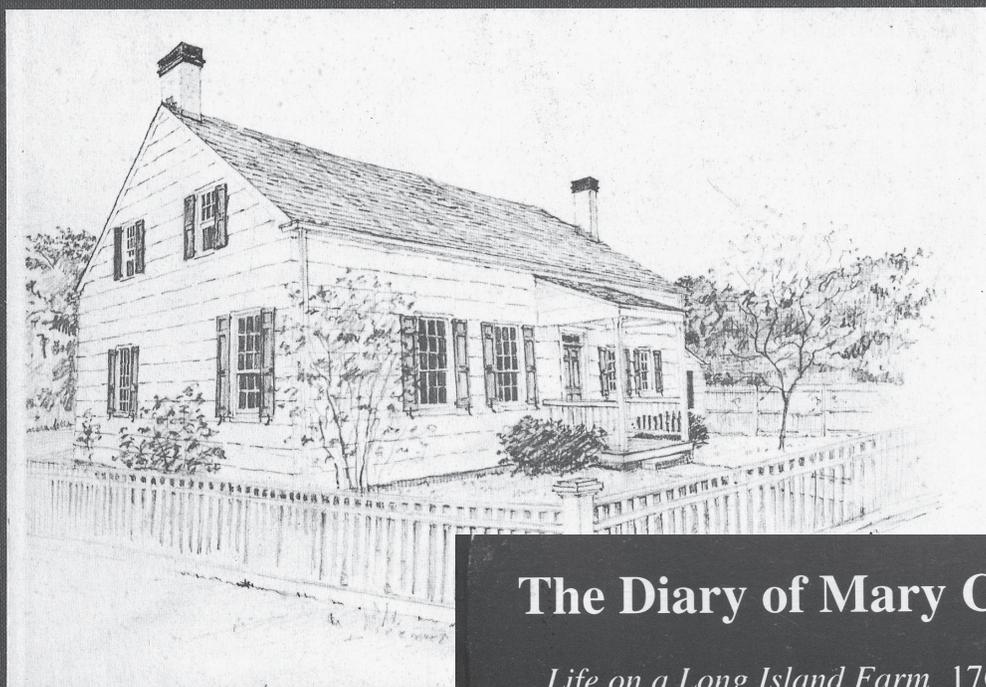
This walker's guide to downtown, with 31 stops along the way, is designed both for individuals and groups who wish to experience historic Oyster Bay on foot.

THE DIARY OF MARY COOPER: LIFE ON A LONG ISLAND FARM, 1768-1773.

This fascinating diary illustrates daily life in Oyster Bay prior to the American Revolution. The published transcription includes a foreword by Jane Soames Nickerson, with introduction and notes by editor Field Horne.

The first Society NEWSLETTER was issued by Herbert Hale and Peter L Van Santvoord in the 1960s. Since 1996 THE FREEHOLDER has brought an entertaining and informative mix of articles, notices, and reviews before an ever-growing readership.

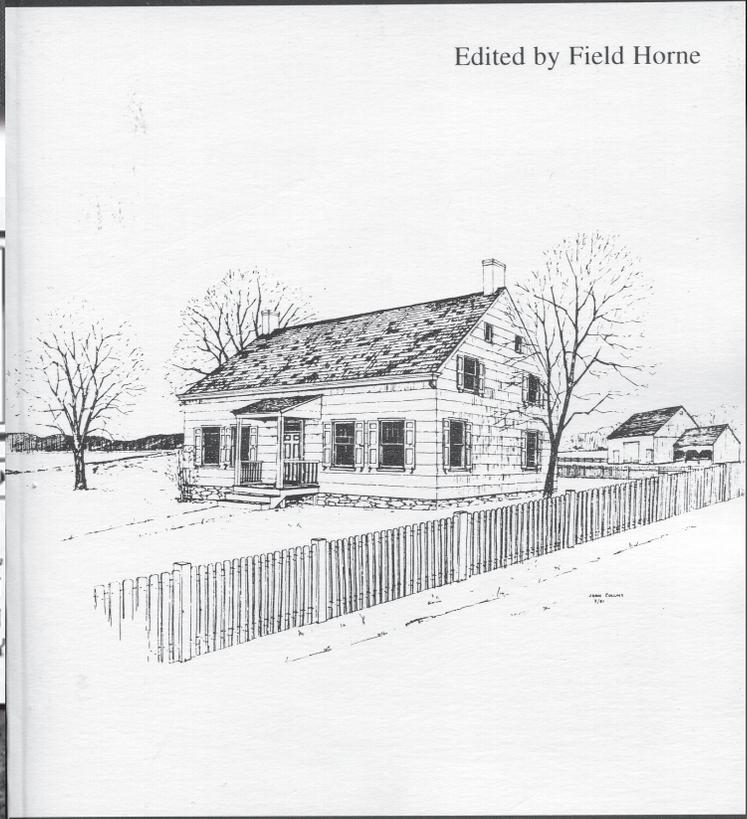




The Diary of Mary Cooper

Life on a Long Island Farm 1768-1773

Edited by Field Horne



THE FREEHOLDER

SUMMER 2009 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

- CLARE BOOTHE LUCE: HER LONG ISLAND CONNECTION
- SAMUEL TOWNSEND, COLONIAL WHEELER-DEALER
- LONG ISLAND'S DEAD POET SOCIETY, PART XI
- SOCIETY OPENS FALL EXHIBIT ON SLAVERY IN OYSTER BAY



WE CAST OUR NET WIDE

The Society has always maintained an ambitious offering of public programs and events. There have been genealogy workshops, candlelight tours, craft classes and fancy teas. We've placed plaques on historic sites and recognized the contributions of both individuals and groups to historic preservation. We've recognized the scientific achievements of Cold Spring Laboratories, the poetry of Walt Whitman, the commissioning of the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, and the tercentenary of George Fox's visit to Oyster Bay.

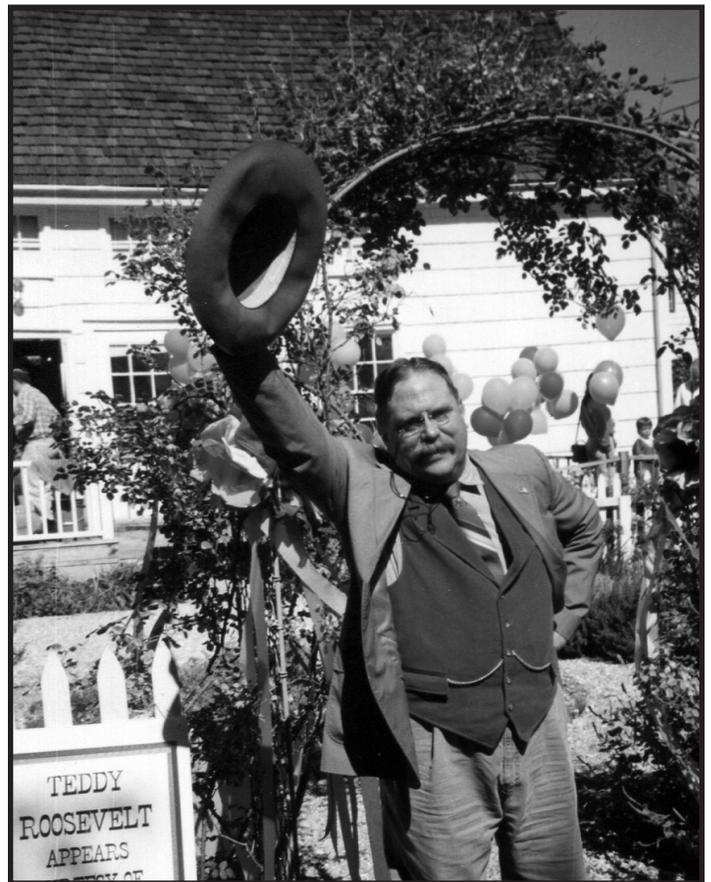
The Society interacts as well with more than a thousand students each year, through visits from local elementary school classes, whose students have an opportunity to experience 18th and 19th century life during their time at the Earle-Wightman House.

Our volunteer and internship program allows high school, college, and graduate students an opportunity to gain professional-level experience in the Society's library and archives, while making important, lasting contributions to the Society's mission. Students have performed particularly valuable work in indexing photographic and manuscript collections, as well as developing digital collections of such materials.

And over the years, the Society has helped many local institutions — most recently Christ Church — preserve their archival records and make them available to researchers.



The Society's 18th-century garden, maintained by dedicated members of the North Country Garden Club.



Theodore Roosevelt reenactor James Foote.

Right: *Julia Clark led many workshops in archival practices and procedures.*

Below: *Reenactors at a Society's Revolutionary War encampment.*



Middle: *Society volunteers at the Earle-Wightman House's front gate.*

Above: *An 18th century interior, Earle-Wightman House.*

Left: *Education Program Director Gerrie Zambratto (c 1980) in period costume.*





Dorothy McGee



Angela Koenig



Frances Roosevelt



Peter Fisher



Woody Ryder



Susan Peterson



Maureen Monck

WITH SHOULDERS TO THE WHEEL

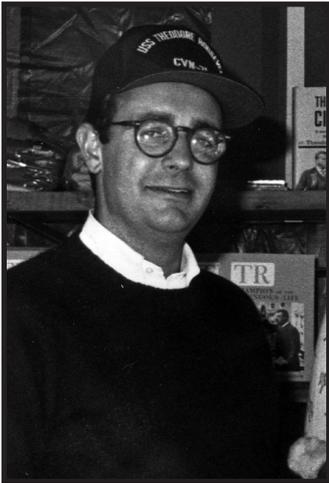
What would a society be without its members, its donors, its volunteers, staff and trustees?

Board presidents have often led the way, from Carolyn Hill and Dorothy McGee to the present. We remember Peter Rowe Fisher, board president for most of the period 1977-85, who tragically died on the road home after having presided at the Society's 25th anniversary dinner. The board's 1992 hiring of Tom Kuehbas, the Society's first director, brought the society to a new level of professionalism.

There have been many other contributors as well. Eleanor Sparks underwrote conservation treatment of the Society's library copy of *Simcoe's Military Journal*. Bertha Rose contributed towards the furnishings of the Earle-Wightman house. Elizabeth Burns Schneider, an aviator, adventurer and journalist who interviewed Einstein, Wiley Post and Amelia Earhart, donated stocks and cash toward the funding of many Society publications.

Curator Lorraine Whittlesey gave many benefit musical recitals, including a concert from Carnegie Hall. Gerrie Zambretto dressed in 1820s garb and greeted visitors to the Earle-Wightman House.

Harry Dickran of Levon Graphics generously underwrote publication of the *Freeholder*. John Collins offered important architectural advice during the restoration of the Earle-Wightman House.



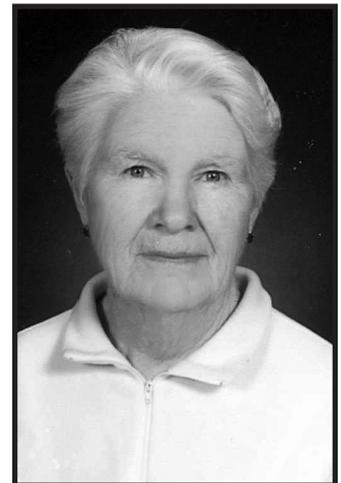
John Collins



Bill Johnston



Howard Imhof



Elizabeth Roosevelt



Margaret Stuurman



Julia Clark



Tom Kuehbas

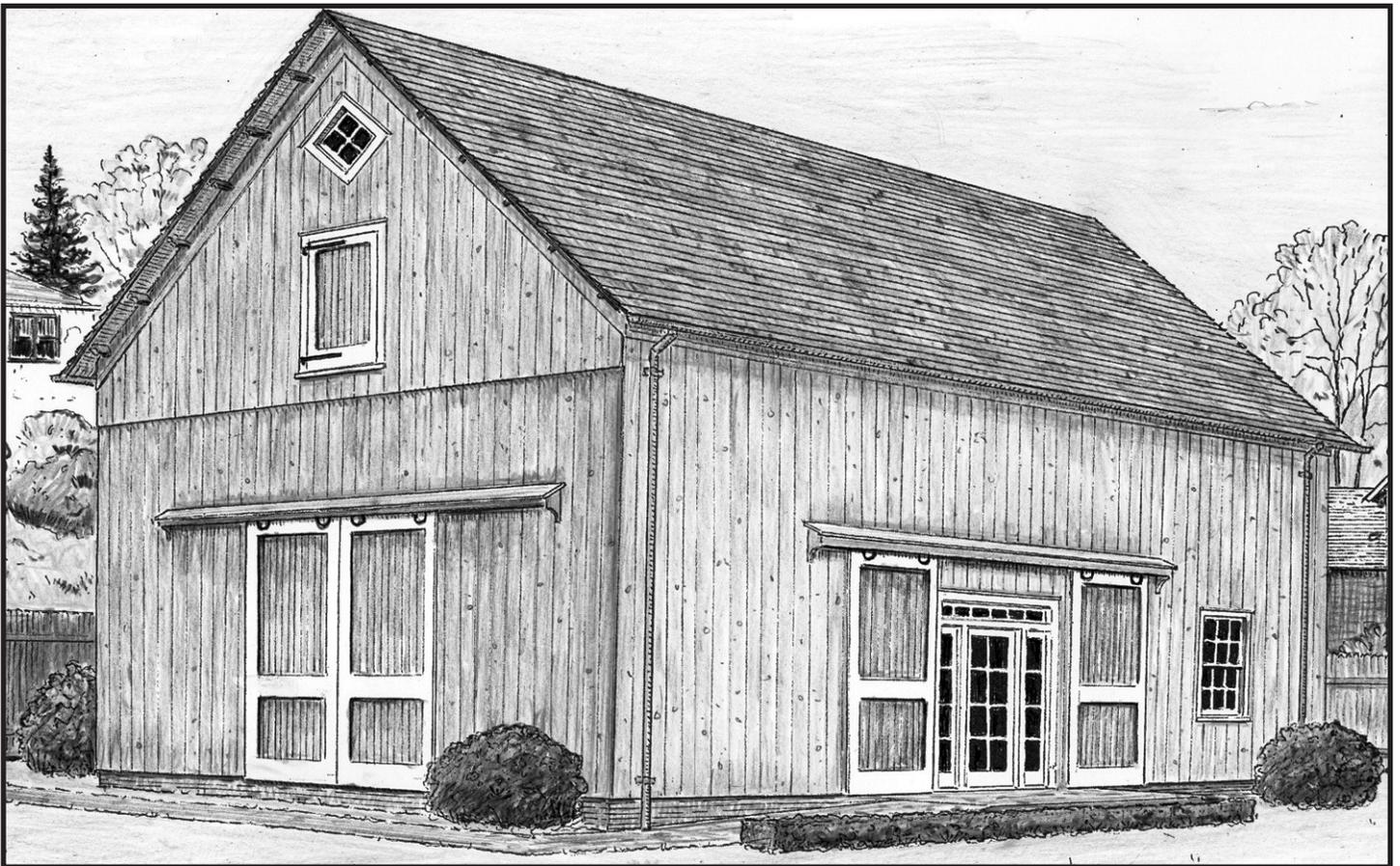
THE PAST IS OUR FUTURE

As we move forward, the Oyster Bay Historical Society is finding new ways to ‘mark the bones’ of those who lived in Oyster Bay.

Central to that effort is the Angela P Koenig Research and Collections Center. Support from Nassau County, New York State, private individuals, and from the irreplaceable generosity of the Dolan Foundation’s matching grant will make the Koenig Center a reality while allowing the Earle-Wightman House to become a setting for both rotating exhibitions and regular programming.

Angela Koenig, the English-born and Oxford-educated publisher of the Oyster Bay *Guardian*, gave so much of her time and energy to worthy Oyster Bay organizations that she became a model for every civic minded individual who recognizes the value of broadly collecting, preserving and interpreting our diverse community’s history. When it came to local history, Angela Koenig’s message of service was always clear — for a mission as important as preserving local history, there’s always room at the table for everyone.

So we invite you to play a part in our efforts now. With your help, the Oyster Bay Historical Society can continue to insure that the past has a future in Oyster Bay.



MISSION

Preserving our past... protecting our future

The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 in order to perform a vital community function: namely, to create broad public interest in and awareness of the rich and distinctive history of the Town of Oyster Bay.

The Society's sworn duty is to collect, preserve, and make accessible to everyone artifacts, books, documents, records, photographs, and other materials pertinent to the history and development of Oyster Bay.

The Society looks to stimulate and educate the community through exhibitions, programs, and publications designed to interpret our past, to reflect on our future, and to bring our history to life in the present.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Society thanks the following for their work in producing *The Past is our Future: Fifty Fabulous Years at OBHS*:

Stefanie and Frank Leone for serving as gracious hosts for the 50th Anniversary Celebration on August 28, 2010.

The 50th Anniversary Committee for their long efforts in developing, promoting, and producing the Celebration.

Tom Kuehhas, Director Emeritus, and George Wallace, Event Curator, for their work on the 50th Anniversary exhibition and catalog.

— Philip Blocklyn
Executive Director

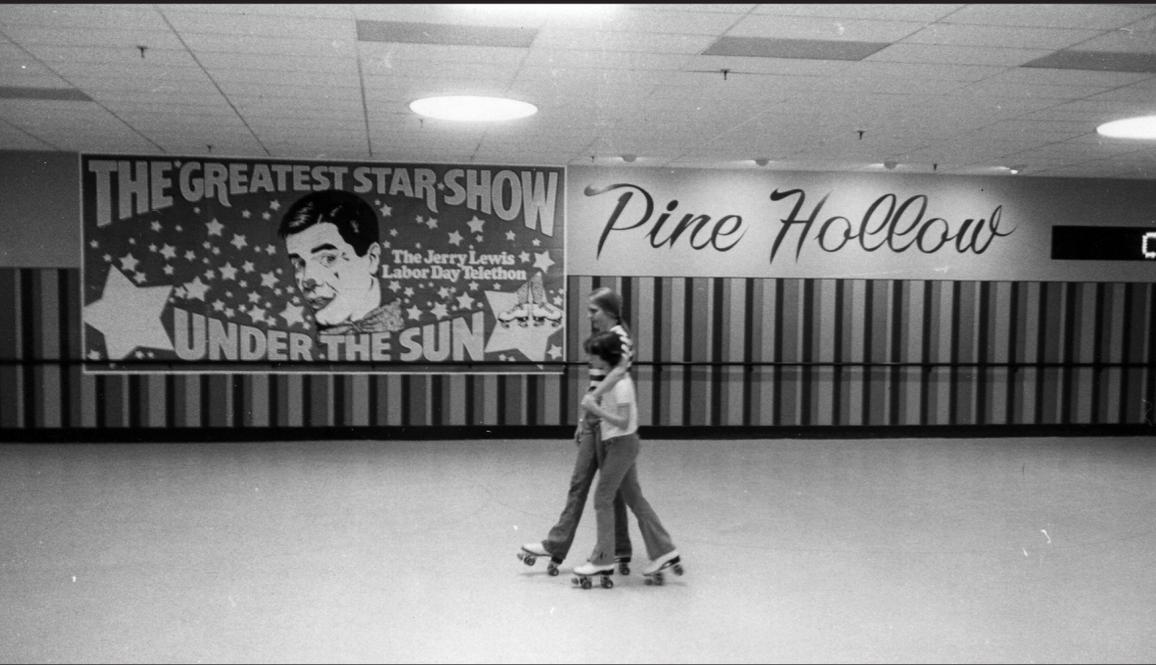
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GRACE SEARBY
KARA TROXLER
BRAD WARNER



The Oyster Bay Historical Society will always remain grateful to Director Emeritus Tom Kuehhas. His leadership, dedication, professionalism, and good humor guided the Society for the past eighteen years. He has been a source of inspiration and pride for the Society's volunteers and staff, members and trustees, friends and supporters, and all who love Oyster Bay and cherish its history.



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