



# THE FREE-HOLDER

SUMMER 1999 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

♦ A  
LAYTON'S  
LONG LIFE

♦ SAMUEL J.  
SAVES THE  
DAY

♦ LEWD  
LASCIVIOUS  
LIMERICKS?

♦ A  
PATTON  
PUNDIT



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

## Editorial

Bill Payne's reminiscences of "Old Paint" in the last issue were so well-received that we have elected to run another first-person account of life on Long Island as it was lived in days gone by, this time those of Edna T. Layton, a remark-

able nonagenarian who recounts her early life in East Norwich.

Also in this issue are local resident Bill Blatz's memories of Gen. George Patton at the close of World War II. We are looking for more seniors to come forward with their stories. Please contact Director Tom Kuehhas to share yours!

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### THE POST RIDER

To The Editor:

Regarding your *Freeholder* cover of the Winter 1999 edition showing the nine ice-skaters, I inquired of Gloria Bayles Tucker, the photo's supplier, if she knew those shown, other than her father. She did not. Hence this letter.

The photo was taken, looking east, on Oyster Bay's "Mill Pond" with the houses on Bayside Avenue in the background. The skaters are, left to right; Billy Rogers, Al Wright, Arthur Leach, Floyd Griffin, Arthur Snouder, Waverly Wright, Wilfred Hutchinson, Waldron Bayles and Frank (or maybe Ed?) Van Valkenburg. I approximate the date as 1910.

The cover photo has been slightly cropped, for I've seen other copies that show a younger boy to the right rear of Mr. Van Valkenburg. I've been told the

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### ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

Summer traditionally is haying season, hence this image of "TR" supervising workers in his fields. TR wasn't always as careful in navigating the fields of others on his horseback rides in the areas surrounding Oyster Bay. See related story on p. 3! *Collection of the Oyster Bay Historical Society*

younger boy was my father, Peter Layton, who resided on Bayside Avenue at that time.

Interestingly, two Wright skaters on the cover and an article about their forebears, "The Wright Sisters, Part II" inside.

David Layton

To the Editor:

Regarding your "Test Your Knowledge" item in the current issue, on eye-stones: Congratulations for putting the

*continued on p. 18*

## THE EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION OF MISS EDNA T. LAYTON

Mary Jane Lippert, Ed.

I was born March 4, 1906 (at 9:10 p.m. on a Sunday night.) The attending physician was Dr. Mann. I weighed 7½ pounds. I was born at the house on what is now Route 25A and which is about 1½ miles west of Rothmann's Inn [*Ed.'s note: see p. 15 of the Winter '98 issue for a photograph of the house as it appeared about that time.*]. It was planned that I would be a boy named Thompson Layton III. When they found they had a girl, they dropped the "III" and placed Edna in front of it. My mother had a great-grandmother named Edna Mehitable. The Edna came from her.

My parents (Thompson Layton of East Norwich and Edith Willa Place of Greenlawn) were married October 10, 1894, when Mother was twenty-four. They were married on my Dad's twenty-sixth birthday. Grandpa Layton gave them an acre of ground in the northeast corner of his over 100-acre farm. On this property was an old cottage originally designed as a tenant house. That is where I was born. Upon marrying, Dad's salary was \$20 monthly. He got his milk, eggs, chickens, pork (they raised and slaughtered their own pigs) and many vegetables from Grandpa's farm as part of his pay. He worked on the farm long hours. He had only been allowed to go to school (Friends Academy in Locust Valley) after all Fall farm chores were done. He had to stop school as soon as it was time for Spring plowing. So he got little formal education. I doubt that he had the equivalent of a present-day fifth grade

education.

Mother was taken from school at age sixteen and apprenticed to a seamstress. She lived with the lady in Huntington. At first she did basting and hand sewing, then progressed to more intricate sewing. At the end, she could look at a picture of a dress and cut a pattern for it from newspaper and make a similar dress to fit the person who wanted one like the picture. The next move would have been to set up her own seamstress business, but she got married instead. She made all my clothes. I remember how thrilled I was when, at age 10, she got me a coat at a store. I did not have sense enough to realize that the clothes she made me were far superior to the "bought" variety.

I was brought up by five adults: my parents, Grandma Layton, Aunt Sade and Aunt Jen (two of Grandma's daughters who did not marry.) My parents and I lived in "our" house and the three ladies lived in the "big" house. The two houses were about a block apart and there was a well-worn path between them. I spent as much time in one house as in the other. From the time I was about three, each morning I went to the "big" house to help Grandma Layton make the beds. She was a good housekeeper and taught me that anyone who did not have her beds made before 10 a.m. was not a good house-keeper! I stood on one side of the bed and she on the other as we drew the sheets up on the bed smoothly. She told Mama that one day when we finished and started downstairs, I

said, "Let me go first, Grandma. Then if you fall, you'll fall on me."

Grandpa Layton died in 1904, two years before I was born. After his death, Dad, with the help of his unmarried sisters (he had seven sisters and one brother) worked the farm for Grandma. He had pigs, chickens, horses, and cows to care for. He grew potatoes, corn, cabbage and cucumbers and took them to Wallabout Market in New York City to sell them. The family would gather vegetables that were ready to use and load them on a market wagon. Dad would hitch two teams to the loaded wagon to pull it west toward the city. Two teams were needed to get it over the big hill at Roslyn. At the top of that hill was a tavern. He unhitched one team and left it at the tavern; he only needed one team to pull the market wagon the rest of the way. He went to College Point and took a ferry across to the city. He left about 1 a.m. and got to market about 6 a.m. Folks who had restaurants and stores came to the market and bought what they wished from the farmers.

Once his load was sold, Dad came back home. He stopped and got his extra team at the tavern and tied them to the back of the wagon for the homeward trip. Once when he was coming home, a horse stepped in a pot-hole and broke his leg. Dad went to a nearby house, borrowed a gun and shot the horse. So one horse pulled the wagon till he got back to the tavern where his other team was.

In my early childhood,

Theodore Roosevelt lived in Oyster Bay. He had a habit of riding horseback for miles around. It was not uncommon for him to ride right across my Grandfather's farm. He did not go around a field, but right across it, thus ruining whatever crops his horse stepped on. This made nearby farmers very angry. They did not like "Teddy." They said he was "too big for his boots." If Mr. Roosevelt saw a farmer, he might ride up and ask him questions with a superior air which did not please the farmers. I can remember his condescending to say a few words to me a couple of times when he rode over our farm. Looking back, some of the dislike of "Teddy" might have been because the Laytons, like most of their neighbors, were staunch Democrats.

When I was about 4 years old, one of the hired help came in the night and set Grandma's big barn afire. Grandpa, and later Dad, used to go to the dock in New York City and hire youths right off the boats that docked there. Most of these men came from farms and made good farm workers. They lived on the farm. Grandma fed them in the kitchen. They taught them English. Dad had fired one worker because he was lazy and did not do what he was asked to do about the farm. They thought he set the barn afire. Aunt Sade saw the fire and yelled and woke Dad up. Both my parents ran up to the "big" house; the barn was ½ block west of it. The cows were in the cowyard, so someone chased them farther away into a field. Dad threw an old jacket over the



**ESCAPING FROM A FIRE.**

*A late 19th century print shows the fearful effect of fire on a wooden building.*

head of Mama's road horse (Noan) and she walked right over the burning sill out of her stall. Dad had a blooded road horse named Prince Arthur that was his pride and joy. He wet a jacket and threw it over the horse's head. He talked to the horse. He got the horse up to the doorsill several times, then the horse pulled back and wouldn't step over the sill. Dad stayed till the beams above the stall were about to fall. Neighbors from all around had come to help. They urged Dad to come out and leave "Prince." He finally had to do that. Neighbors formed a line from the cistern and pumped buckets of water that they threw on the roof of the house to keep sparks from the fire from setting the house on fire. They succeeded in saving the house. Besides Dad's road horse, about four teams of work horses were burned up.

Of course, the screams of Aunt Sade woke me. After what seemed to me ages, Grandma came and dressed me (I couldn't

understand why her hands shook so as she did it!) and took me up to the "big" house. An elderly neighbor held me in her arms as we watched the barn go up in flames. I can still remember those awful flames.

After the barn burned, neighbors came and helped Dad put up another barn. But it was too hard to get reliable help and Dad couldn't do it all himself, so Grandma rented the farm to John Horan, a good farmer. He had eight children. I was delighted when they came to live near me. I had playmates!

After Grandma gave up working the farm, Dad had to find other employment. He drove all the way to Port Washington with horse and wagon and worked with Uncle Ben Morgan for a couple of years. Then he got a good job as superintendent on the estate of George C. Smith (of Street and Smith Publishing Co. of New York City). Dad had charge of keeping all the estate in good shape and of growing their vegetable garden. He had



helpers. In 1915 Mr. Smith asked Dad if he'd take his wife and child and go to live in the mansion of Mr. O.G. Smith (his brother) for the winter. Mr. George did not live in his East Norwich estate in winter and it needed almost no care. Mr. O.G. needed someone to occupy his place in winter to lower his insurance costs. The pay offered was good, so Dad accepted the offer. In the Spring he returned to work for Mr. George as superintendent again. Dad and I loved living in the O.G. mansion, the first one on Centre Island as you drove onto the Island off the causeway from Bayville. The mansion was on a bluff overlooking L.I. Sound, on the left side of the road that ran the length of Centre Island.

Up to that time, I had attended the two-room East Norwich School. The first four grades were in the "Little Room" and the four higher grades were in the "Big Room." The Big Room was taught by "Maine" Vernon,

sister of one of Dad's best friends, J. Harry Vernon.

I had completed four grades and begun the fifth when we went to Centre Island. Children living on the Island (there were only six or eight of us) went to Oyster Bay to school. "Ep" Tappen drove an old eight-passenger car to pick us up and take us to school. If there was a storm, the causeway flooded and we had to stay in Oyster Bay overnight. I stayed with my aunts.

I was nine years old when I entered Oyster Bay School. Mr. Whittaker, the principal, put me in grade 5B (Grade 5A was for brighter children and 5B for the slow ones). He thought me too young for grade 5! I came home and cried almost nightly. I told Mama I wasn't learning anything. I already knew what was being taught in 5B and "the kids are all dumb." So Mama went to talk to Mr. Whittaker and told him how I felt. He was dubious but said he'd try me in grade 5A. That class was taught by Miss

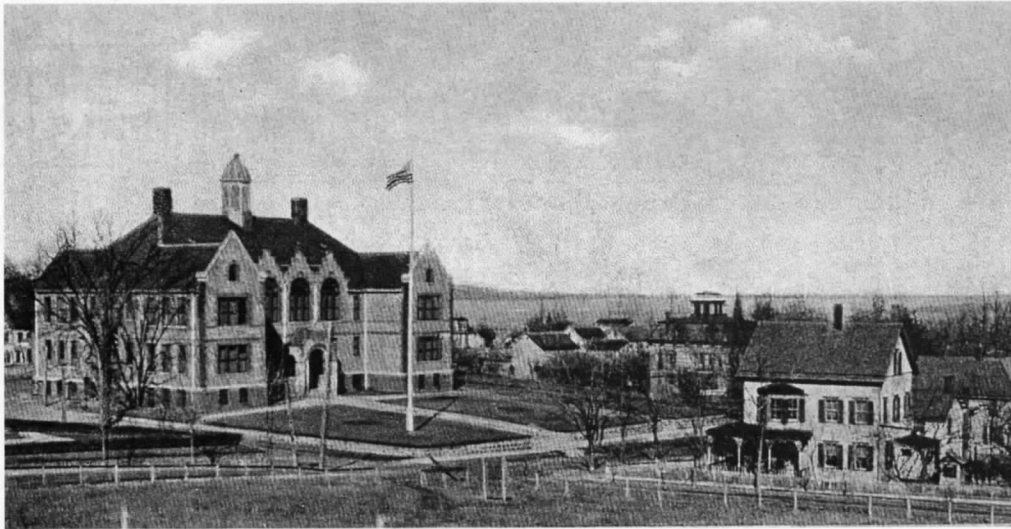
Davis (she later married one of the Summers boys, Stanley I think). She found that I was up to or ahead of her pupils (ahead in arithmetic) in everything but English. She kept me after school and helped me catch up in English. It took me less than two weeks. Her entire class was, I now realize, a group of above-average pupils. By the end of the first term, she had covered what the State said was to be the entire fifth year's work with us. She told Mr. Whittaker that, and that we really knew the work. She didn't want to bore us for five months going over the same work with us. By the time school closed in June, we had covered all of the 6th grade work!

The following year we were kept as a group and called 7B (but we weren't a dumb group!) Our teacher was Mary Scheb. She covered 7th grade work with us the first term. The second term she did 8th grade work with us. At the end of our year with her we took elementary school Regents exams in all elementary subjects except English and History. I don't know why they decided not to let us take those exams.

We were only in Centre Island for the winter months. When we returned to East Norwich, Dad decided I was doing so well in Oyster Bay schools where there was a teacher for each grade that he did not want to put me back in the two-room school. He discussed it with Mr. Whittaker and agreed to pay fifty dollars a year tuition so I could continue going to Oyster Bay to school. I walked from our house to Rothmanns'



*The two-room schoolhouse in East Norwich.*



*The old Oyster Bay High School on Bayles Hill (the present site of St. Dominic's Church) .*

and from there to Oyster Bay (about 3½ miles in all) to get to school. Anyone passing in horse and wagon or in one of the first autos (Dr. Hall of Oyster Bay had a car and picked me up if he was going the way I was) always gave me a ride. But there were many times when I walked the entire distance. It was downhill going, when I was fresh, and uphill coming back when I was tired. I had a large hill leading from East Norwich to Pine Hollow, and a smaller hill west of East Norwich, before I reached home. Both these hills have since been cut down when roads were re-built, as has the big Roslyn hill. (When autos first appeared, a man owning one would drive to Roslyn, get a flying start and go up Roslyn hill. If his auto reached the top without his having to shift into second gear, it was a very good car!).

We lived in the O.G. Smith mansion two winters. Mr. O.G.

left his third chauffeur and one maid to "care for" us. After the family farm was sold, we rented a house just west of Rothmann's on Route 25A that belonged to Mr. Frost, editor and owner of the *East Norwich Enterprise*. From there we went to a rented house in East Norwich near the top of the hill going from East Norwich down to Pine Hollow.

Mrs. O.G. Smith convinced Mama that every "young lady" should be able to play the piano and speak French. Mama bought an upright piano for me. I took lessons from Hilda Waldron, who lived in East Norwich about five houses west of Rothmann's on 25A. (Her Dad owned and ran the Corner Store in East Norwich.) She taught me to play with my right hand only. Then she taught me to play with my left hand only. Then I was supposed to put both hands together. I could not seem to do that. I was discouraged. Mama paid an

elderly gentleman, a piano teacher in Oyster Bay, to teach me piano. He sat with a ruler in his hand. If I hit the wrong note, he cracked me on the knuckles with the ruler! I did slightly better with him, but, after two years, it

became evident that I would never make much of a piano player. So I was allowed to stop my piano lessons.

After my class finished grade 7B with Miss Scheb, we took English and History in the 8th grade room. The rest of the day Mr. Whittaker spread us around in high school courses where he thought we might be benefited by what we learned. I took Business Writing (Mama said I wrote a very nice hand before that. Taking Business Writing spoiled the way I wrote and did not develop a distinctive handwriting to replace what was lost). I also took Typewriting. And I took the first Art Course. (I don't know why!) By January we were allowed to take our English and History Eighth Grade Regents and filled in the rest of that year with high school subjects, where there was room for us. I was

*continued on p. 19*

## SAMUEL JONES, ESQUIRE, SAVES THE DAY

by Arlene Goodenough

On a very hot day in July 1788, in Poughkeepsie, New York, an event took place which affected the future course of our young nation. In the new stone Court House, the New York State Constitutional Convention was taking place. Earlier, on June 17, 1788, the fifty-two delegates met to begin considering the ratification of the new Federal Constitution. Similar conventions were being held at the same time in New Hampshire and Virginia.

Forty-six of the New York delegates were known to be against ratification. They were called Antifederalists. Their leader, and President of the Convention, was George Clinton, Revolutionary War general and the Governor of New York. The nineteen men in favor of the Constitution were called Federalists; Alexander Hamilton was their chief advocate.

There were eleven delegates from Long Island, but only Samuel Jones of Queens County and Thomas Tredwell of Suffolk County were very vocal. Jones, an Antifederalist, enjoyed very close relations with George Clinton. Clinton's nephew, DeWitt, was a clerk in Jones' law office for some months. Jones' wife, Cornelia Haring, had a grandfather who was a friend of Clinton's when they served together in the Continental Congress. Although Jones did not live to see it, his youngest son, David, took as his second wife DeWitt Clinton's daughter, Mary. The leading families of New York had many

such entanglements involving family loyalties.

The main objections of the Antifederalists were that there was no Bill of Rights and that Congress would have too much power. They truly feared that only the wealthy upper classes would be elected. They saw no role for what they called "the middling class." They also worried that states' rights would be



*Samuel Jones, Esquire*

trampled.

On June 21st, New Hampshire voted to ratify, the ninth state to do so, making the Constitution the law of the land. (Three quarters of the thirteen states were needed to ratify.) In New York the news had been expected, but the Antifederalists were very cool and showed no signs of division. Hamilton confessed that he was very concerned about Virginia ratifying. If they didn't, he felt all would be lost in the Empire State.

On July 2nd, news reached New York City that the prosperous and prestigious state of Virginia had ratified. Express riders were sent out, and ten hours later, word reached Poughkeepsie. The Federalists were delighted. Now some Antifederalists showed signs of having second thoughts. The fact that Virginia had ratified really mattered. Most New Yorkers who were in favor of ratification lived in New York City and the southern counties. Would they secede if New York didn't ratify?

Jones' wife, Cornelia, reflected the very strong feelings of the populace when she wrote to her husband from Manhattan, urging him to press for ratification. In fact, the citizens of the city had delayed their Independence Day celebration, hoping for news from upstate. Finally, on July 23rd, they decided to wait no longer. At 8 a.m. ten cannon shots were fired and a huge procession of 5000 people formed to march 1½ miles to the city's parade grounds.

There were ten divisions. The first eight consisted of every manner of tradesman and artisan: millers, brewers, bakers, hatters, pewterers, etc. All carried emblems or rode on elaborate floats. The ninth division was made up of lawyers, merchants, traders, and the students and faculty of Columbia College. In the tenth division marched physicians, militia officers and visiting foreigners. The high point of the parade was a 27-foot float

depicting a frigate named, appropriately enough, the *Alexander Hamilton*, manned by 30 sailors. A banquet was served to all the marchers at 10 tables, each 440 feet long. They radiated like spokes of a wheel from a hub of pavilions which had been designed by Pierre L'Enfant, who would one day design the new Capital city, Washington. All the members of Congress and the clergy of the city joined them.

Up in Poughkeepsie, after thirty-six days of debate, the perspiring delegates seemed to be getting nowhere. Samuel Jones racked his brain, trying to come up with a solution. On July 23rd he rose to his feet to recommend ratification "in full confidence" that a Bill of Rights and certain

other amendments would soon be made. A leading Antifederalist, Melancton Smith of Dutchess County, immediately supported him. The nineteen Federalist delegates, who had always stood firm, were joined by twelve Antifederalists. Eight Antifederalists did not vote at all. The final tally was 31-29 in favor of Jones' proposal.

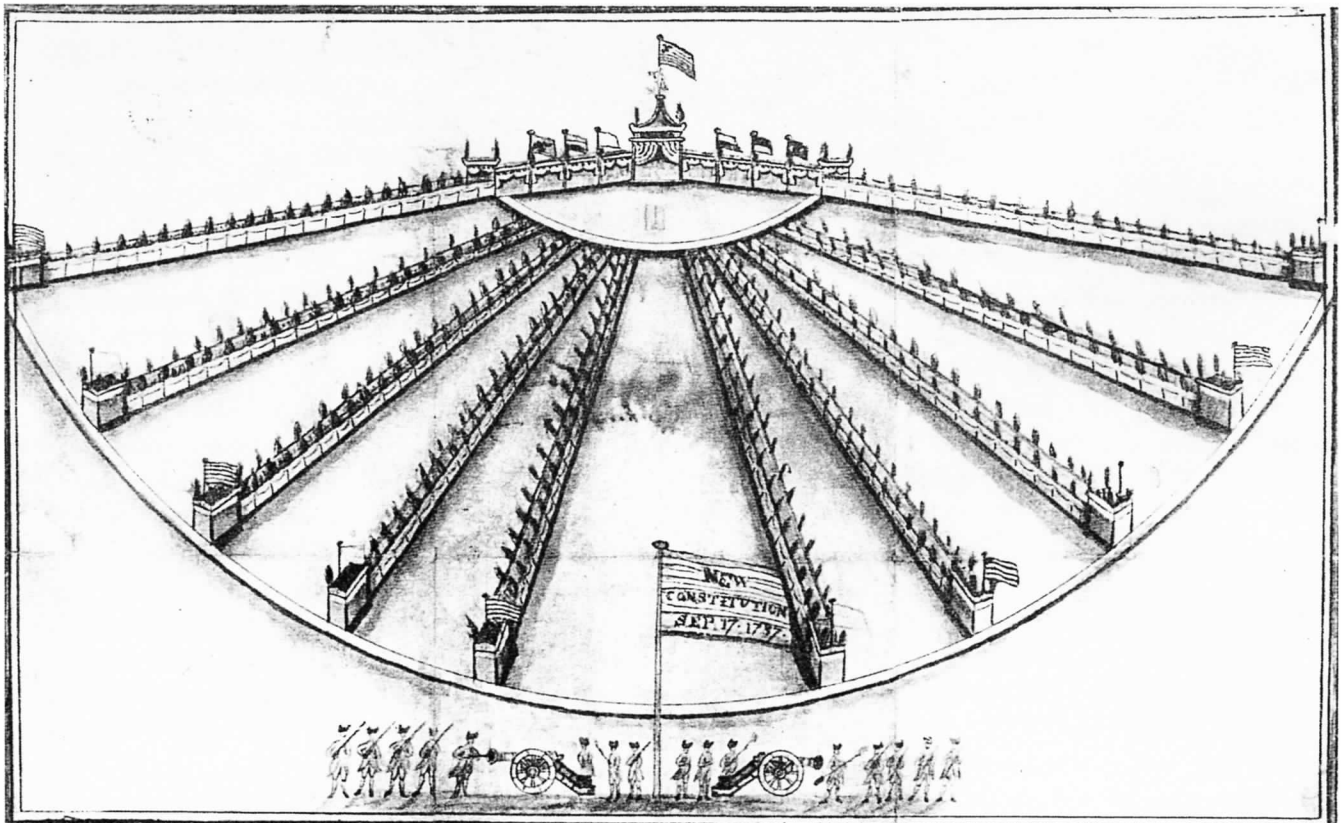
On July 26th, Jones' fifty-fourth birthday, the Constitution was ratified by a vote of 30-27, the closest vote of any state in the Union thus far. Jones could now return to his homes in New York City and Massapequa. He had worked very hard. He was responsible for a large number of amendments. New York had proposed fifty-five amendments, in

addition to a Bill of Rights.

It must have taken courage on Jones' part to desert George Clinton's strongly held stand against the Constitution. Clinton was a very powerful man who would in time be elected Vice-President of the United States. But it would seem that their friendship was not affected.

And so, Jones' solution enabled the Antifederalists to accept ratification. Without ratification, New York would not have become part of the Union, a situation both unacceptable and impractical.

*The author wishes to thank Kenneth Noelsch of the DeLancey Floyd-Jones Free Library for his tireless efforts and assistance in researching this article.*



*A period sketch of New York City's celebration on July 23, 1788, days before New York's Convention officially ratified the Federal Constitution.*



## ORIGINS OF THE LIMERICK: AN UNCLE PELEG FEATURE



Uncle Peleg received a question which was so intriguing that he felt it warranted a special feature.

*Dear Uncle Peleg:*

*At a recent party I attended, one of the guests recited a limerick. It was scurrilous but ingenious. The latter quality seems important. Only five short lines were required to express a fairly extensive bit of narrative, the fifth line being reserved for the snapper that made the stanza ribald and amusing to at least some of the listeners. Those who, like Queen Victoria, were not amused, responded with such puritanical comments as, "Well, if you must snigger over juvenile smut why not confine it to the locker room?"*

*My reason for writing is not to attack or defend the limerick, but to ask what is known of its origin. Where and when did it get its name? How did it enter the ranks of English poetry? Edward Lear is frequently credited with being the father of the limerick but I believe there are examples that predate him. Is this true?*

*Nancy Tucker*

Dozens of collections of limericks have been published and many of these are introduced by commentary intended to provide answers to questions like those you ask. A good deal of information has been offered, but even if it were all assembled into a history of the form there would be gaps only to be supplied by

reasonable conjecture. Always willing to accept a challenge, Uncle Peleg believes he can fashion a conjectural account that matches the known facts and will, if they are ever found, match the missing ones.

Modern limerick makers have tended to describe the five-line verse as constructed of thirteen anapestic feet running like this:

Tittybum, bittytum, bittytum  
Bittytum, bittycum, bittycum  
Bittytum, Bittytum  
Bittytum, bittytum  
Bittytum, bittytum, bittytum

There are frequent departures from this form which do not necessarily remove the verse so cast from the limerick category. One of the most common variations of the form is a first line that begins with an iambic foot as, "There was..."

The rhyme scheme is A,A,B,B,A but occasional variations also occurred.

A common feature of limericks is that often the protagonist, the locale, or both are identified in the first line. Edward Lear, who did not, in the view of the purists, write limericks, did not call what he wrote limericks, and certainly did not invent limericks, often used the first line of his five-line nonsense stanzas to name his chief character and to place him geographically, as in these lines: "There was an old person of Rhodes...." We cannot say with complete assurance that Lear's two identifiers (our word, not his) were an adoption of one of the early characteristics of the limerick form but it sounds very much as if the convention could be traced back to them.

Today, the subject, male or female, of a limerick is usually a fictional person whose name and other characteristics have been assigned by the author. Modern limerick writers do not ordinarily work from life, although they occasionally choose someone in the public eye on whom to base their narrative. This use of a real person harks back to the nature of the early proto- limericks that was intended to express disrespect for, if not cast aspersion on, the subject of the verse. In Uncle Peleg's view the early limericks were written to celebrate, offensively, real persons. These were probably present when the aspersive verse was first offered to the public. As we will learn, these offerings were directed to an audience and were offered in song.

Let us look back at the dimly visible circumstances in which the real limerick was born.

There were in 19th century London a significant number of late-hour drinking and dining establishments whose clientele was composed of a range of males from apprentices through students, half-pay officers, and journalists, to peers of the realm. Many such places probably had been established for a somewhat lower



*Edward Lear*

order of society as porters, casual laborers, navvies (often Irish) and the like. Their charm was their entertainment rather than their menus and the title, "Singing houses" makes clear what that entertainment was. Tavern sing-songs were no new thing, but toward the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth a new feature seems to have been introduced. It was eventually to be called the limerick, but it could have been distinguished by its characteristics: a rhyme scheme of A,A,B,B,A (the pattern had been long established but was seldom adhered to exactly until it came to be used in the limerick)

- a metrical pattern wholly or largely of anapestic feet
- a presentation by singing, not recitation or on paper
- a content of scurrilous reference directed originally toward an actual person present at the sing-song
- a broad and racy, not to mention obscene, treatment, more explicit than suggestive
- a "snapper" final line (the earliest limerick must have used the repeating fifth line employed by Lear and to be found also in the early nineteenth century publications, *The History of the Sixteen Wonderful Old Women*, 1821; *Anecdotes and Adventures of Fifteen Gentlemen*, 1822. These were pretty obviously efforts on the part of someone to disinfect the limericks of the singing houses).

We know the names of some of the nineteenth century London singing houses. Unhappily there is not a single reference in mentions of them, in memoirs or the

like, of the songs that could be definitely construed to be limericks. Accounts of singing houses do use such terms as "disgusting ditties" however, and it would be hard to find anything more disgusting than some of the limericks that have been recorded and in recent years published. In places like the Back Kitchen, the Cider Cellar, the Coal Hole, the Cave of Harmony, one might have heard songs that were "a happy combination of indecency and blasphemy." It is hard to imagine that such a program would not include the limericks.

There are hints that limerick compositions were often impromptu, or presented as impromptu, even though the result of hard labor. One of the regulars in the song and supper establishments was Charles Sloman, "a noted *improvisatore* who could invent rhymes on the spur of the moment about any person who happened to be in the room."

Limericks within living memory were sung. On this side of the Atlantic the tunes were chiefly *Cielito Lindo* and *The Gay Caballero*. Overseas the refrain was, "Oh won't you come up, come up; Oh won't you come up, come up; Oh won't you come up, come all the way up, come all the way up to Limerick." When this latter chorus was introduced it's hard to know. Kipling quotes part of it in *Stalky*, written about a boys' school c. 1875. It seems



*Patrons at a London supper & song club give forth with a limerick*

pretty sure that "limerick" as the name of a verse form came from the use of the word here. The song accompanying the quoted refrain has not yet been identified but the music for its stanzas would seem to have been the same as that adopted for the limerick's. The refrain, if that is so, impressed itself by repetition. Fans doubtless came to refer to these verses by the term limerick. This probably happened gradually in the latter half of the 19th century, long after the verse form had been adopted in the song and supper clubs.

Ignoring the obscenity and tastelessness of many limericks, it is a form that appeals greatly to the rhymester. Into five lines can be packed a long narrative and a boffo ending. The exercise of constructing the rhymes to give the stanza the lilt and swing of which it is capable is a real challenge and the impolite and anti-social message the limerick carries are tremendously appealing to those of free spirit.



## 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**.*



*Society Director Kuehhas (right) presents Harry L. Dickran, President of Levon Graphics, with a plaque signifying honorary membership in the Historical Society.*

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL MEETING

A large crowd was on hand for the Society's Annual Meeting on Friday, June 11th. Out-going President Marie-Claire Pittis was presented with a gift by incoming President Woody Ryder as thanks for a job well-done in the course of her three-year tenure. Director Tom Kuehhas followed with a presentation to Harry L. Dickran, President of Levon Graphics in Farmingdale, in recognition of his efforts on the Society's behalf. Mr. Dickran prints *The Freeholder* gratis for the Society. The plaque, which bestowed Honorary Membership in the Society, incorporated an original rosehead nail from the Society's Earle-Wightman House Museum. Kuehhas explained that the nail was "a concrete reminder of how volunteers and

their contributions hold the Society together, literally and figuratively!"

Those attending the meeting were then treated to a magic lantern show detailing many of the major events and inventions of the 19th century, hosted by Professor Henry Clark.

### SOCIETY HOSTS REVOLUTIONARY WAR ENCAMPMENT

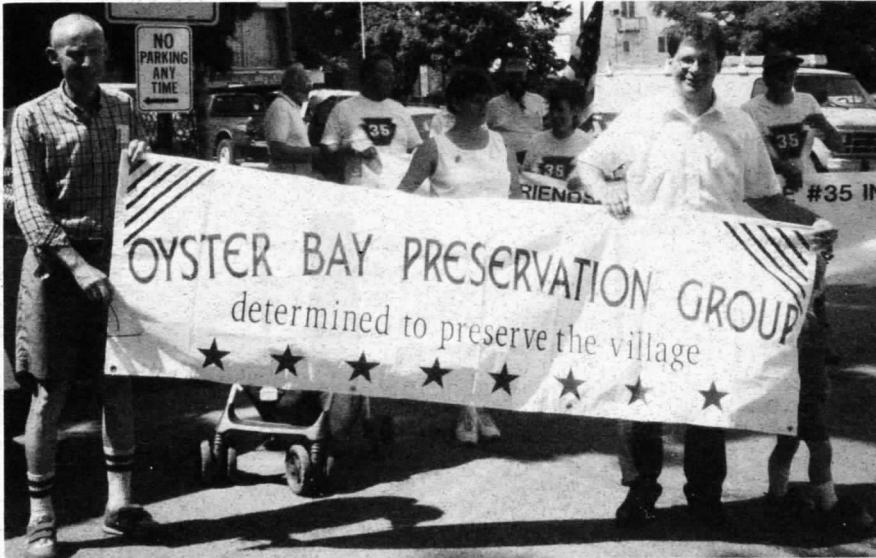
The King's forces were much in evidence at the Society's Encampment on August 1st. The 220th anniversary of the end of the occupation of Oyster Bay by the Queens Rangers

Regiment found nary a patriot soldier in attendance. Instead grenadiers of His Majesty's 23rd Regiment, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, a trooper and his horse of the British Seventeenth Light Dragoons, and several members of the Queens' Rangers, (with artillery!) occupied the grounds of the Earle-Wightman House. In weather that was reminiscent of that during the Revolutionary War Battle of Monmouth Court House, (New Jersey), where almost 500 men died of heat stroke (due to the heat and their woolen uniforms), the reenactors conversed with members of the crowd regarding the role of the soldier in the Revolution, fired off a small artillery piece called a



*Colonel Peter Ford of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers regales the crowd with tales of the regiment's exploits during the Revolution.*





*Trustee Rick Robinson and Director Tom Kuehhas paraded with the banner of the Oyster Bay Preservation Group at the annual Independence Day celebration in Oyster Bay. Tom's wife, Robin (center), had the stroller ready in case their son, Richard (at right) failed to finish the trek! (It wasn't needed!)*

"swivel gun," and recruited men to join their ranks.

The Society is indebted to these dedicated volunteers for attending this event and for making sure our visitors enjoyed the day.

#### **HOGARTH EXHIBIT DEBUTS AT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Oyster Bay Historical Society has gone back nearly three centuries and several thousand miles across the ocean for its latest exhibit, a display of prints by the noted 18th Century artist and satirist, William Hogarth.

The exhibit was formally introduced at a special Society meeting and lecture by Hogarth scholar Dr. Elinor Richter of Hunter College on August 8th. Dr. Richter was quick to point out that the London of Hogarth's time was a dirty, crowded and corrupt city -- and it was this corruption that so fascinated the

artist and provided his principal inspiration.

Hogarth's most well-known series of engravings, "The Rake's Progress," were decidedly explicit and widely available to the audience of his time, on both sides of the Atlantic. As both a painter and an engraver, Hogarth often depicted the debauchery of London's rich and poor. The scenes are full of detail that must be studied closely to appreciate his skills.

The Historical Society's Director, Tom Kuehhas, with the help of Dr. Maureen Monck, a Hogarth enthusiast, and Society curator Dick Kappeler, has arranged a large group of these prints on the walls of the Earle-Wightman House, the Society's headquarters at 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay. Two upper rooms are also set up as vignettes of the interiors depicted in the pictures.

Visitors are welcome to view the exhibit from 10 AM to 2 PM, Tuesday through Friday, 9 AM

to 1 PM on Saturdays, and 1 to 4 PM on Sundays. The Society is closed Monday. There is a suggested contribution of \$1.50 for adults and \$1 for senior citizens. Children and Society members are admitted free. For more information, call 922-5032. The exhibit will remain on view through the end of the year.

#### **MARITIME HERITAGE FAIR SET FOR SEPT. 26**

Join the Oyster Bay Historical Society for a fun-filled afternoon on Sunday, September 26 from 1 to 5 p.m. The Society will reprise its popular Maritime Heritage Fair with lots of hands-on activities such as caulking a ship's side, sawing a log, making hand-cranked ice cream. Costumed interpreters roaming the grounds will engage visitors in conversation; don't be surprised if they ask you if you've heard the "latest" 19th century news! Have your fortune told by a Gypsy "seer." Play period marble games with a "pro." Thrill to the magic and legerdemain of Lawrence the Magician. Lots more is planned, so make plans to join us September 26th !

#### **TR EXHIBIT OPENS AT POST'S HILLWOOD ART MUSEUM**

A major exhibition on Theodore Roosevelt recently opened at C. W. Post's Hillwood Art Museum. Artifacts featured in the exhibition include a Remington oil painting, rare photographs, and personal objects of the late President. A series of lectures will complement the



exhibition, including "Roosevelt's Sagamore Hill: Preservation of a Historic Landmark" by Sagamore Hill Curator Amy Verone on Tuesday, October 12 at 7 p.m. and "Oyster Bay: Then & Now" by Oyster Bay Historical Society Director Tom Kuehhas on Tuesday, October 26 at 7 p.m.

Fall museum hours are Monday-Friday, 9:30-4:30, Tuesday, 9:30-8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 11-3. Call 299-4073 for more information.

### **HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS**

The Society's annual Strawberry Festival took place on Saturday, June 19th and craft vendors filled the grounds with their hand-crafted wares. Also in June, they hosted their annual meeting and strawberry social at the old Grace Church, the historical society's headquarters on Merrick Road. The board is happy to report that the 1844 church structure is getting a new roof. Through the efforts of State Senator Charles Fuschillo, Society Trustee and County Legislator Peter Schmitt, and Trustee and Grant Chairman John Deignan, the Society has secured approval of grant monies to defray the replacement cost. There is still much paper work to be done and people to contact in the \$50,000-plus project, but things are moving ahead.

### **FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

On June 26th the Society and the Village of Farmingdale co-sponsored a centennial celebration in honor of Charles M.



*Visitors to the Historical Society of the Massapequas' Annual Strawberry Festival enjoyed glorious weather on June 19th. Old Grace Church is at left.*

("Mile-A-Minute") Murphy's world bicycle speed record set in Farmingdale on June 30, 1899. Murphy rode his one-speed bike behind a special railroad car that protected him from the headwind that he normally would have encountered. He did briefly lose contact with the protective cowl-ing and had to peddle furiously to catch up. Nevertheless, he covered the measured mile in less than one minute at a speed in excess of 60 MPH.

**Visit the Oyster Bay Historical Society's website!**  
<http://members.aol.com/OBHistory>

### **CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The first Saturday in October, the 2nd, the Society will be celebrating Bethpage Day at the Community Park. Right now, they are trying to coordinate a

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

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

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

program with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, who will be celebrating their 100th Anniversary this September. They will be joined once again by the local PAL organization, which will be celebrating Homecoming Weekend with a parade and continuous football games. All residents, merchants and organizations are invited to participate in Bethpage Day. Please drop the a note at P.O. Box 178, Bethpage, NY 11714.

**Many thanks to Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics Corp., 210 Route 109, East Farmingdale for printing The Freeholder for the Society.**

**His generosity allows the magazine to reach a much wider audience than was heretofore possible. Please patronize our sponsors!**

#### **FRIENDS OF SAGAMORE HILL**

This organization was formed several years ago in response to federal budgetary cuts that have impacted the resources available to preserve President Roosevelt's unique home in Oyster Bay as a National Historic Site. The purpose of the Friends is fourfold: fund raising, advocacy, volunteer recruiting and the staging of special events. Please contact Membership Chairman Tom Smyth at 516-694-7878 for more information.

#### **HICKSVILLE GREGORY MUSEUM**

Set aside Sunday afternoon, Sept. 12th to celebrate a year of great progress. On that day, as its final official act, Hicksville's



*County Executive Gulotta addresses the crowd at the rally to save the Underhill Property in Jericho on June 19th. The 80+ acre plot, slated for development, is the major source of drinking water in the area as well as an historic site; the British fort at Jericho was on the property. Contact Director Tom Kuehhas for materials to send to our elected officials in the Town, County, and State.*

350th Anniversary Committee will bury a time capsule in the museum's front lawn and also donate a commemorative flag to the museum. It is also hoped that the cupola will be back in place on top of the 104-year-old court house, plus new special lighting for the cupola and the flagpole. The nearby L.I. Puppet Theater and Museum will provide entertainment, along with the L.I. Harmonica Club.

**Interested in a map of Oyster Bay in 1833, or a map of the Gold Coast Estates c. 1920? Well, you're in luck! The Oyster Bay Historical Society has what you're looking for! The Oyster Bay map is available for \$5, while the Gold Coast map is \$7.50; shipping is additional.**

**A message to all our readers:  
Get involved in preserving Oyster Bay's  
architecture and history.**

**If you don't,  
WHO WILL?**



## THE GATHERING PLACE



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

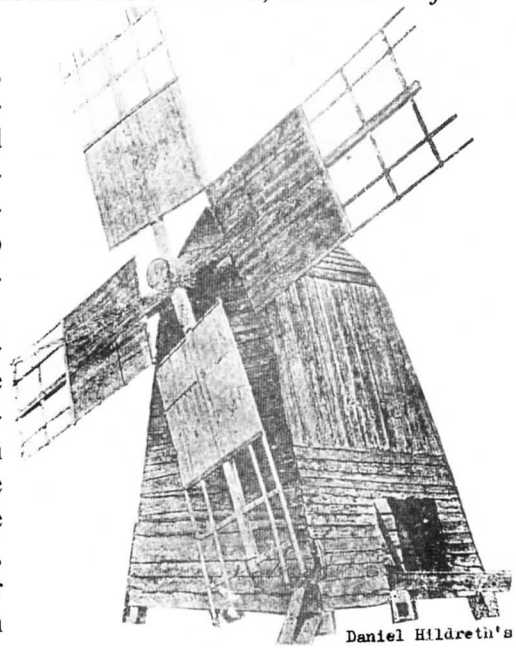
### The Dutch Next Door: Are L.I.'s Sawmills Theirs? by Lee Myles

Was Daniel Hildreth's sawmill a product of Dutch influence, perhaps harking back to the original settlements of New Amsterdam, or was it an independent development among the English settlers of Long Island?

In his diary, Daniel Hildreth III, who was born in 1800 at Seven Ponds on the East End, relates that in 1822 he built a wind-powered sawmill. Over the years the mill was several times repaired or rebuilt and it seems to have continued to stand in Seven Ponds until some time in the 1880s. It was quite capable of heavy work and significant production, depending on the timber available to it. Consider as an example of the mill's capacity the fact that when the brig *William Creary* sprang a leak off Southampton in November 1871, and was beached, Hildreth

bought her white pine masts, one of which was seventy-seven feet long. He sawed these into boards and substantial profit. All very interesting, no doubt, but no suggestion of Dutch influence has been made.

At the time of the early English settlements there were few if any sawmills in England, although they were in use on the continent. The craft of sawyers had the manufacture of sawn lumber, boards, planks and timber locked up tight, and when entrepreneurs attempted to introduce sawmills there were riots and other interferences that discouraged the project. In early America the conditions were much different and English settlers encouraged the introduction of mills from almost the beginning. For the necessary technology to build these it was customary to hire Dutchmen or other Europeans, or to send En-



Daniel Hildreth's Saw Mill

glishmen to Holland to learn the business.

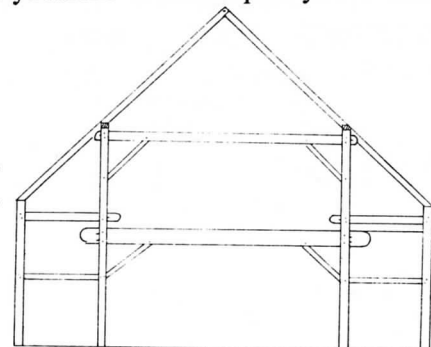
Because the Dutch made much use of wind-power at home they took it with them wherever they went. New York City, originally New Amsterdam, had windmills from very early and among them were wind-powered sawmills called paltrok mills.

Long Island in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had

### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Many of the terms in this issue's test are still in use today, although all of them hark back to a much earlier era when they were common parts of the speech not just of the housebuilder, but the householder as well. Our dozen words denominate the various timbers and other wooden members that go into the construction of a building. As usual, read the list and define the words to yourself. Then compare your definitions with ours listed on page 23.

1. Sill
2. Girder, Girt
3. Joist
4. Summer Beam
5. Stud
6. Post
7. Plate
8. Purlin
9. Principal Rafter
10. Common Rafter
11. Collar Beam
12. Clapboard





many windmills and it may be assumed that the Dutch influence which permeated our island certainly included the erection and use of the paltroks.

By the time of Daniel Hildreth's construction of his mill at Seven Ponds, awareness of the Dutch origin of the sawmills using wind-power had doubtless faded, but the mills would have continued with his contemporaries. Perhaps, occasional paltroks may also have remained in existence, even in use. Surely, Hildreth got his idea from somewhere. The likeliest source was the Dutch. Can we not add his sawmill to the many gifts we have received from our Hollandish brothers?

### **The Burlington Zephyr: A Train for the Ages** by Rick Robinson

In 1933 the City of Chicago celebrated its centennial with a lavish World's Fair entitled: "A Century of Progress." One of the most notable attractions during the two-year extravaganza was a remarkable streamlined railroad train, the Burlington's Pioneer Zephyr. This stainless steel diesel-electric was the first of three such trains eventually built by the E.G. Budd Manufacturing Company for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

The original Zephyr (later named the *Pioneer*) featured a "Thirties Modern" interior which included air-conditioning, indirect lighting and a combination

observation/bar car. It was powered by a diesel unit, which, in turn, provided electricity for the motors connected to the drive wheels beneath the engine/baggage car.

The Zephyr was not only streamlined to reduce air resistance, it was also articulated. That is to say, the three cars in the 197-foot train were connected to one another by a single set of four-wheel "trucks," rather than each car having trucks front and rear. The only drawback to this innovation was the fact that the engine unit and cars could not be readily disconnected, nor could additional passenger cars be easily added.

Weighing a mere one hundred tons, the *Pioneer* Zephyr made a record-setting run from Denver to Chicago, with a top speed of 117 MPH and an average speed in excess of 72 MPH. In 1935 the foremost manufacturer of toy trains, Lionel, offered the Flying Yankee, a tabletop version of the famous streamliner that had captivated visitors to the Chicago World's Fair in 1933-34.

As a youngster living in LaGrange, Illinois in the early Forties, I distinctly remember the day the Zephyr crept through our town on its way to nearby Chicago. The famous streamliner was probably rerouted through LaGrange for some unknown reason, as it had never appeared before and normally traveled at high speeds. I especially recall the enclosed headlamp, located near the top of the engine unit, which swung to and fro in some sort of warning mode.

Compared to the conventional steam trains that stopped many



*The Burlington Zephyr on the rails in the late 1940s.*



times each day at two separate stations in LaGrange, the Burlington Zephyr was truly unique. As a commuter suburb, our town also had a trolley line (or interurban service) that ran as far as Chicago. But nothing, including the somewhat streamlined electric interurbans of The North Shore Line, could top the Zephyr.

A 1935 motion picture featuring the Zephyr, *The Silver Streak*, can still be seen occasionally on television or via videotape. Following the retirement of the original *Pioneer Zephyr* in 1960, it was put on permanent display at the renowned Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

There were two other Zephyrs, the *Denver* and the *Twin* (the latter named for the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul), but these were completely scrapped. Within the past two years, the *Pioneer* has been refurbished and currently has several websites on the Internet, courtesy of the museum and several railroad historians.

### **Restoring and Researching Youngs Cemetery: A Part of African-American Civil War History**

by Winston E. Himsworth

On the west side of Piping Rock Road, between Frost Pond and Duck Pond Roads, lies a two acre piece of Civil War history camouflaged by trees and heavy underbrush. In recent years, the property has been identified only by an old roadside split rail fence with a small faded American flag



*The bloody assault on Battery Wagner, S.C. by the African-American 54th Massachusetts (among others) convinced many in the North that blacks should be given a fighting role rather than a strictly "engineering" one.*

and an equally small plaque reading "YOUNGS CEMETERY — Civil War Veterans Buried Within." Work is now slowly underway to restore this cemetery and to research its historical roots.

Beginning this Spring, thanks to the efforts of a group of students from nearby Friends Academy, a portion of the underbrush has been cut back to reveal a series of old gravestones and plots. Many more can be found by working back into the overgrown area further from the road. The oldest legible stones mark the graves of individuals born

during the Civil War era. Still older, and virtually illegible, stones mark the graves of earlier generations. A listing in the Oyster Bay Historical Society's records notes that the cemetery is believed to be of Colonial origin and that some of the last local Indians were buried there.

Old maps of the area indicate that the property was owned by the Youngs family as late as 1873. Shortly thereafter the property was apparently donated as a cemetery for Civil War era African-Americans to what is now the Calvary African

Methodist Episcopal Church of Glen Cove.

One interesting question yet to be researched is how many African-American Civil War veterans are buried in Youngs' Cemetery.<sup>1</sup> Interest in the history of African-Americans fighting in the Civil War received a big boost last year with the dedication of the African-American Civil War Memorial in Washington, D.C., to honor the soldiers of the United States Colored Troops.

Approximately 180,000 USCT soldiers served in the Union Army (as well as a considerable number in the Union Navy) representing about ten percent of total Union forces. In the New York area, more than 4,000 African-Americans served in the USCT's 20th, 26th, and 31st infantry regiments. These regiments, which included a number of recruits from Oyster Bay, were organized on Rikers and Harts Islands.

Mrs. Alberta Hersey, a member of the Calvary A.M.E. Church, has traced her congregation's roots back to the 1700s when fugitive slaves began traveling north. Those arriving in this area were befriended and supported by the Quakers, who had established their Friends Meeting House on Duck Pond Road in 1725, just down the road from Youngs' Cemetery. The church itself was founded originally as the African Methodist Church of Cedar Swamp, sometime in the late 1700s or early 1800s. By the

time of the Civil War, a simple wooden church had been erected on Dosoris Lane.

Restoration of the Youngs' Cemetery grounds and grave-stones is a necessary first step in reestablishing the dignity of the cemetery and in researching its history. The restoration process is complicated by years of neglect, the limited resources of the Church, and divided political jurisdictions. An earlier church fire, which destroyed all burial records, will make the historical research phase more difficult and will require reliance on alternative genealogical sources.

Fortunately, a growing coalition of community groups - including the Calvary A.M.E. Church, Mayor Suozzi of Glen Cove, the Matinecock Neighborhood Association, Friends Academy, the Oyster Bay Historical Society, and various other volunteer groups - is banding together to tackle the restoration and research efforts. Those wishing to participate in the challenging Youngs' Cemetery Historical project should contact Kate Riley at the Society.

### **The Post Rider**

*continued from p. 2*

first written reference to "eye-stones" into print that I have ever seen. I am not sure of your source, and do not disagree with his explanation, but based on my own experience as a child, I have a different perspective.

I was introduced into the mysterious world of the "eye-stone" by my uncle, Capt. Russell

Miller, Sr. He brought out a small folded paper which he unwrapped, as a sort of ritual. In it there were several eyestones, which were rare, special, but evidently well-known to our ancestors (at least, those who were of coastal stock.)

They were not actually stones, but tiny pieces of shell - the very small "whorl" from which the shell had grown, to be precise. These were flat, polished, evidently smoothed by the action of waves and sand. They had been picked up from the beach.

But were they "local?" From Long Island? I had never seen any pieces like this small, orange-colored shell on any of the beaches I often roamed. Whatever mollusk had originated the eyestones, they were not common - although I have seen entire beaches composed of bits of similar shells in the south. Perhaps they were "imported," or perhaps they were found, but rarely, on the local beaches.

The next mysterious "unveiling" of the exotic eyestone was a demonstration which was odd, and unexplainable. Captain Russ poured some vinegar into a saucer, and put some of the eyestones in it.

They immediately began to spin, pivoting on the center of the whorl. This, it was explained, was the action which they took to "ferret out" the particle of sand or dirt which had lodged in

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with Youngs' Memorial Cemetery in Oyster Bay Cove, the resting place of Teddy Roosevelt.

the eye. The procedure, I was told, was to put the eyestone into the eye upon retiring. In the morning, the eyestone and the particle that it had pursued would be found lying outside of the eye.

My father, who had also watched this demonstration, insisted on trying it out (against my mother's protestations). He lay down and attempted to put the eyestone in his eye. Easier said than done! He could not hold his eye open long enough to put the stone in, and no one would help him.

Perhaps this is further evidence of the strength of character held by our forebears.

Bill Payne

### **Edna T. Layton**

*continued from p. 6*

twelve when I passed my last elementary Regents test.

I don't remember how it was figured. I think a course that met five days a week gave five points. Some half-year subjects gave three points and some two points. We had to have seventy-two points to graduate from high school. We took four or five classes, plus physical education, daily. We all (the whole high school) met in the auditorium and Mr. Whittaker planned the school's class schedule. He'd fit in the English courses first. Then he'd say, "If Plane Geometry is taught period three, how many of you who want to take it can't get it in your schedule?" If too many raised their hands, he tried a different period. He finally chose the period where most pupils

could take a subject. If a pupil wished to take a subject, and did not have a free period when it was offered, he was out of luck. I took four years of English, four years of Math, three years of French, two years of Latin, Botany and Physiography, three courses in Art (including Mechanical Drawing; seventeen boys and me in the class). It stood me in good stead when teaching Solid Geometry and Plane Trigonometry.

There was nothing offered in the a.m. that I was interested in or needed. Mr. Whittaker said to stay home in the a.m. and learn to cook and keep house! I had to walk to school, because others in high school went from East Norwich in a bus that left early in the morning. But I took the school bus home. (All East Norwich pupils who went to high school did so at Oyster Bay.) I ended up with about ninety-two points instead of the required seventy-two as I took six classes daily most of the four years. I did not want to take Phys. Ed. I thought I got enough exercise walking to and from school! If one took six classes, he did not have to take Gym.

I kept saying I wanted to be an elementary school teacher. Mr. Whittaker tried to interest me in high school teaching, to no avail. So during my junior year one day he came and got me out of classes, took me across to Oyster Bay Elementary School and said, "The teacher for this 2nd grade is sick and absent today. You want to teach elementary school. Teach this class." And left me. I

spent most of the day trying to keep the little children in their seats. They kept getting up and wandering around! I'd get one settled and another would get up. At the end of the day I went over to Mr. Whittaker's office. I was exhausted! He looked up as I came in and said, "Do you still want to teach grade school?" I said, "No, sir!" He said, "This is the best day's work I've done in some time. I had to convince you that you should teach high school."

Two of my high school teachers were graduates of N.Y. State College for Teachers in Albany. He got them to come to my home and talk to my parents about that school. So it was decided that I was to go there. I'd admired Miss Waring so much (I took four years of Math with her), that I knew I wanted to be a math teacher like her.

I was sixteen in March 1922 and I graduated that June. I was Valedictorian of the Class of 1922 of Oyster Bay High School.

*Miss Layton double-majored in Mathematics and English, and double-minored in French and History. She graduated from New York State College for Teachers in Albany in 1926, earned her Master's there in 1931, and received her Doctorate from NYU in 1951. She taught High School mathematics for 35 years, retiring in 1961.*

*Edna T. Layton wrote this account for her family in 1993. It was retyped and submitted to the Society by her cousin, Mary Jane Lippert of Locust Valley.*

## MEMORIES OF A WAR HERO

by William E. Blatz, MA

As a member of the Fifteenth Army during World War II, I had the good fortune to cross paths with one of history's greatest generals - George S. Patton.

The advanced detachment of the Fifteenth Army, of which I was a part, arrived in LeHavre, France, from England aboard a LST, in November 1944. Our mission was to occupy and govern certain areas of Germany after the cessation of hostilities. Some days later we learned that the ship carrying the remainder of our group hit a mine in the Channel, resulting in many deaths and injuries; a grim reminder that the coming months would be fraught with danger.

Our group continued eastward through France to the Ardennes Forest early in December, where we found ourselves in the midst of the Battle of the Bulge. It was the Germans' last stand, and Field Marshal Von Runstedt was bearing down on our position, eventually forcing us to retreat to the French border. The enemy's drive was aided considerably by inclement weather. These conditions continued for a period of about a week. When the sky lifted it was filled by the Army Air Force with its bombers, fighter planes, and gliders. Von Runstedt was forced to retreat.

Still moving eastward, we next stopped in the area of the

Remagen Bridge where we encamped for a number of days. Our main activity there was training our rifles on the mines that floated down the Rhine. We then moved on to Bad Neunauer, Germany, where we set up our headquarters in a hospital building. We remained there until the war ended.

Our mission was to contain several thousand prisoners in the

Eisenhower. Patton was guilty of making anti-Semitic remarks at a POW Camp in Bavaria. He was then assigned to replace General Gerow at our headquarters. When word was received of his coming, Lt. John Eisenhower, the General's son and fellow officer, predicted that strict new edicts would be put in force once Patton arrived.

John, incidentally, was a schol-



*The author (at left) and two comrades at the Remagen Bridge over the Rhine River.*

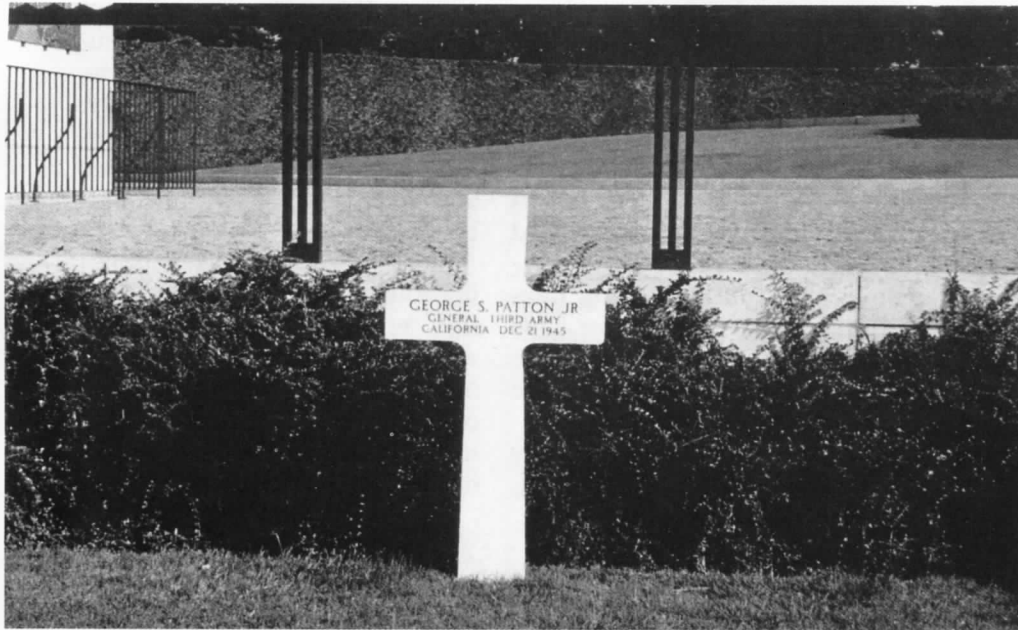
town of Zinzig, until we received orders to release them to return to their homes.

Our final destination was Bad Nauheim, where Fifteenth Army staff under Lieutenant-General Leonard T. Gerow was designated to write a history of World War II.

Late in September 1945, Patton was relieved of his command of the Third Army by General

ar and a gentleman. One of his hobbies was musical glasses. He would place on the table a number of wine glasses containing different levels of water. When he ran the palm of his hand over the top of the glasses he created some very melodic sounds, despite the fact that the German waitresses would switch the position of the glasses whenever he turned his back.





*General Patton's gravesite, Third Army Cemetery, Hamm, Luxembourg.*

The Fifteenth Army took over the entire town of Bad Nauheim, a plush spa, and utilized the various hotels for its headquarter buildings. It was rumored that before the war most of the hotels were owned by William Randolph Hearst. The town had been spared by the U.S. Air Force bombers and was undamaged.

Early in October Patton made his entrance. I was standing at attention on the second floor of the main headquarters, across from the elevator. When the doors opened, out stepped a tall, white-haired, barrel-chested officer dressed in a combat jacket bedecked with ribbons. He wore fancy riding britches, carried a riding crop, and a pearl-handled pistol dangled from his hips. An awesome sight. He was preceded

by a sturdy white mastiff, which he promptly kicked in the ribs. The dog's claws could not grip the shiny marble floor and consequently skidded to the other end of the hall. This brought a broad smile to the general's face. It became a daily occurrence.

Despite all of the rumors that Patton would introduce and enforce tough disciplinary regulations, he appeared to be bored and aloof, issuing little or no communications to the unit.

On Sunday, December 9, accompanied by his chief of staff, Major General Hobeart Gay, he was driven to a turkey shoot in a limousine. When they reached the town of Kafertal, north of Mannheim, a 2½ ton army truck driven by an American private made a sudden turn in front of their 1939 Cadillac, causing

Patton's driver to hit the brakes. Patton lurched forward, hitting an iron grip on the side of his seat. His head snapped back with the impact, paralyzing most of his body.

Patton was rushed to a nearby military hospital where he lingered in a paralyzed state for almost two weeks. He passed away on December 21. Patton was buried in the Third Army Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg, on December 23, 1945. A sad ending for a general whose daring leadership was responsible, to a large degree, for

hastening the end of the war in Europe.

#### **Blocklyn's Books**

*continued from p. 22*

why they make their way so quickly and with so little wear into the maw of the used-book trade.

But this catalogue is worthy of its exhibition, which after visiting Washington and New York, will be on view at C.W. Post's Hillwood Art Museum from August 13 to November 14. James Barber's serviceable text and the accompanying illustrations make for an attractive publication. Amy Verone's concluding essay deals specifically with Sagamore Hill, while John Gable's foreword reminds us that "when we contemplate TR's image... we are in a real sense looking at ourselves as Americans."

## Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

***Paul Revere's Ride.* By David Hackett Fischer. Oxford University Press, 1994. 445 pp. Maps and illustrations. Appendices, bibliography, and index. \$35.00**

For those afflicted with the grade-school memory of that Longfellow poem, it is some comfort now to remember, as David Fischer reminds us, that Paul Revere did not ride alone. In fact, he was indeed, as they say in Arkansas, the Yankee who had to go for help. And a lot of help he had-- from Abel Prescott, William Dawes, and even the mysterious "bare-headed alarm rider." They and others joined in a collective effort to spread the word that the Regulars were coming out.

For Fischer it is the collective nature of the effort that explains not just Paul Revere but the American Revolution itself:

"His genius was to promote collective action in the cause of freedom.... He believed deeply in New England's inherited tradition of ordered freedom, which gave heavy weight to collective rights and individual responsibilities-- more so than is given by our modern calculus of individual rights and collective responsibilities."

Along with these sociological musings, there is much else to like about Fischer's writing, which is vivid in describing battle and sympathetic in treating the traditionally hapless Thomas Gage, whose own wife was apparently a Whig spy. Throughout he sets his eye on the contingencies of history, both great and small. In John Hancock he presents a man who, in fleeing Lexington, sends back for his abandoned salmon dinner while leaving behind a trunkful of the Whig cause's innermost secrets.

The reviewer thanks Henry Thompson for recommending, and lending, this book.

***Cold Spring Harbor: Discovering History In Streets And Shores.* By Terry Walton. Whaling Museum Society, 1999. 72 pp. B&W illustrations. Walking Tour by Ellen Fletcher. \$12.95.**

Think Cold Spring Harbor and you think whaling. But in Terry Walton's compact history, there is much more. Of particular interest is her chapter on Cold

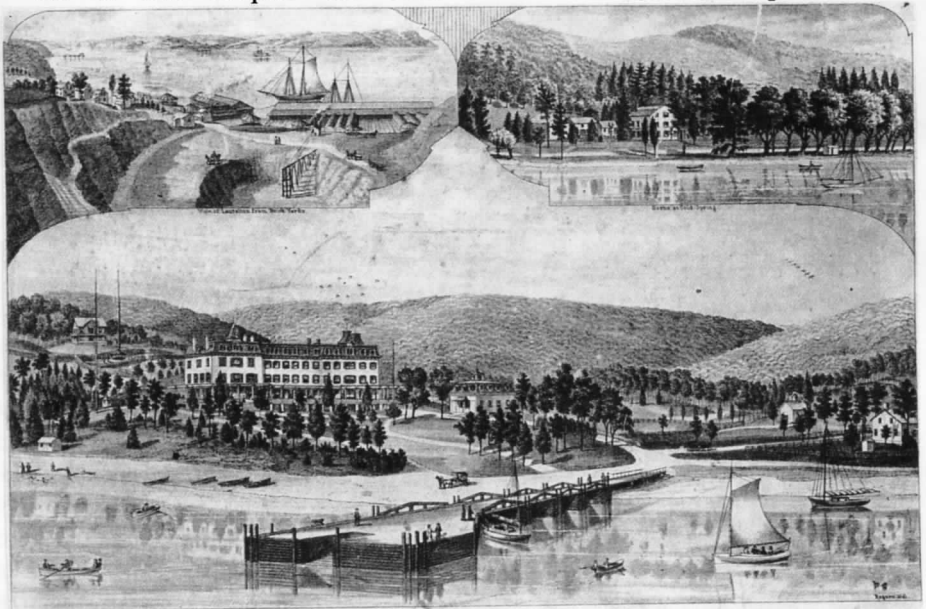
Spring's resort era at the close of the nineteenth century. From 1875 to 1900 the resort hotels of Glenada, Forest Lawn, and Laurelton Hall drew excursionists from the heat of New York City, while sidewheelers like the *General Sedgwick* carried picnickers to Columbia Grove and other harborside parks.

In Ellen Fletcher's short walking tour we also learn where to find an Egyptian Revival doorway and at least two sites of nineteenth-century brothels, in case anyone is interested in writing Cold Spring's more secret history.

***Theodore Roosevelt: Icon Of The American Century.* By James G. Barber. National Portrait Gallery, 1998. 112 pp. B&W and color illustrations. Foreword by John Gable. Essay by Amy Verone.**

Exhibition catalogues are the souvenir T-shirts of the art world. You buy them (or worse, receive them as gifts), and later wonder, what on earth...? Perhaps that is

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*Vignettes of Cold Spring Harbor and Laurelton Hall, c. 1890.*

## AUNT EEEK



Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eeek:

I have been following your column and advice for some time now and have found it to be reliable and interesting. I have a question which may be elementary to you (and to some of your readers), but it troubles me as I am the collector of just about anything that strikes my fancy.

Just what is an "olde" thing, and how do we define "antique?" I'm familiar with Webster; I want to see if we are on the same page.

Curious George

Dear George:

Good question sport!

It rarely comes in such a plain package, but I think Aunt Eeek just got dessert. Your question really should have been asked and answered long before this, so...

There are at least two perspectives from which to approach this issue. From the point of view of the collector and the collected. Without getting philosophical we should differentiate, and we will. To a collector, generally anything as old or older than his life's memory is olde. From the mind of a teenager we expect him to consider the Beatles and Elvis as olde. Aunt Eeek remembers them on stage

just an instant ago and views Al Jolson as olde. My father saw Jolson in vaudeville (olde) and his perspective of olde probably includes John Wilkes Booth (really olde).

As the collected, we can classify just about anything you might imagine as an old thing. Yesterday's newspaper is old, and indeed some collectors save them. You never know when they might come in handy! To qualify as olde it really should tweak the memory, and carry us back to days of innocence.

An antique, as defined in this column, is an object which is collected for its chronology to itself. Sounds confusing but it isn't. A television made in 1937 is an antique television. An automobile made in 1900 is an antique car.

These examples qualify as antiques because they really are among the first ever made. A computer from 1950 is an antique computer, its also old (maybe without the "e").

A clock made in 1650 is an antique, as is one made in 1850... relative to itself and the general passage of time. A clock made in 1920 may be old, olde or antique depending on who is classifying

it and whether it may be the first of its kind stylistically or mechanically.

Let us not ignore "vintage" or "classic," which we take to define the epitome of a certain categorized thing such as a vintage wrist-watch made by Patek Phillipe in 1935, or a classic car such as a Duesenberg from that same period.

Come to think of it, we may have been hasty defining this question as a dessert; we think it turns out to be a little too bitter to qualify. I think we might debate this one another time...but not too long in the distant future...it may get old! Send us your thoughts.

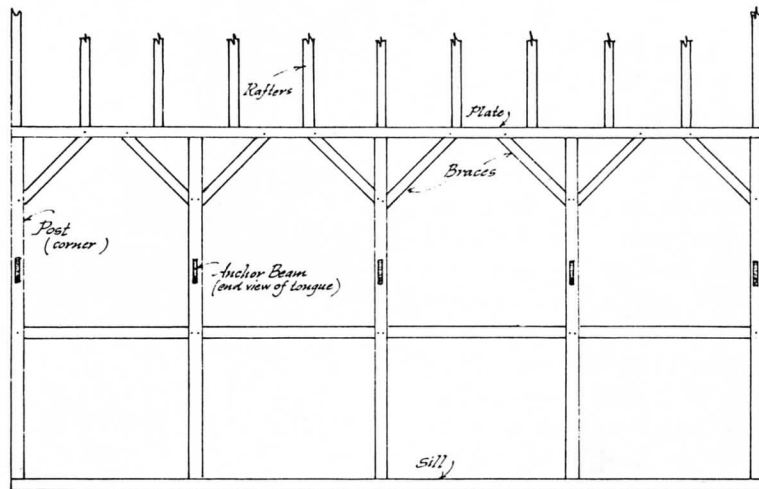
## Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.15

1. The horizontal member (usually timber) beneath the walls of a structure from which the rest of the framework arises.

2. The heaviest horizontal member running beneath the flooring; ordinarily a girt runs between two parallel sills.

3. A horizontal support for flooring running parallel with the girts. Joists spanning wide

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Framing of a modified Dutch barn



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

### SEPTEMBER

Sun., Sept. 26, 1-5 p.m.

#### Maritime Fair

Join in a celebration of Oyster Bay's maritime heritage at the Earle-Wightman House. There will be plenty of hands-on activities, games, prizes, a magician, a gypsy fortune-teller, peddlers, and many interpreters dressed in period costume. You'll think you're back in the early 1800s! [See story on p. 12.]

### OCTOBER

Tues., Oct. 26, 7 p.m.

#### Lecture

For those who may have missed Director Tom Kuehhas' slide lecture/armchair walking tour of "Oyster Bay: Then & Now" in May, here is another chance! View the "TR: Icon of the American Century" exhibit at C.W. Post's Hillwood Art Museum (through November 14) and then join us for the lecture. [See story on p. 13.]

### NOVEMBER

Sun., Nov. 14, 1-4 p.m.

#### Artifact Identification Workshop

Bring your prized possessions to the Earle-Wightman House for a workshop conducted by Society Curator and Nassau County Museums Chief Conservator, Richard F. Kappeler. Mr. Kappeler, assisted by a panel of his expert colleagues, will identify your treasures and suggest methods of preservation.

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openings did not run from sill to sill but from sill to an intermediary major beam called the summer beam.

4. A heavy beam running at right angles to the joists and girts, and parallel to the side sills.

5. One of the vertical members which run between the sills and the horizontal timbers above them, the plates, that are part of the next floor's framing.

6. Posts are timbers, like the studs, but of greater dimensions. They are found at building corners, doorways, and joints in the framing of the plate, etc.

7. A timber analogous to the sill but at the bases of the stories above the ground floor.

8. Purlins are the major supports of the rafters which they carry. They are framed at right angles to them and parallel to the ridge pole, if any.

9. The strongest of the timbers that support a roof, they run at an angle from the plate to the roof tree (ridge pole).

10. The main support, though not the strongest, of a roof; they run parallel to the principal rafters.

11. Part of the framing of a roof, the collar beams tie opposing rafters together, giving strength and rigidity.

12. Exterior siding on a wooden house, clapboards were long in proportion to their other dimensions and were shaped so that their thickness at the top edge was thinner than at the bottom. They were fastened on the house in overlapping, horizontal courses.

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*Come to the Fair, Sept. 26!*