



THE FREE-HOLDER

WINTER 1999 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

♦ THE
 WRIGHT
 SISTERS
 PART II

♦ NASSAU'S
 FIRST
 HUNDRED
 YEARS
 PART II

♦ ALFRED
 WALKER:
 OYSTER BAY
 ARTIST

♦ A
 MYSTERY
 SOLVED



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

I would like to thank our contributors to this issue for some timely articles: Millie DeRiggi's piece on the Wright sisters concludes in this issue, during Women's History Month, appropriately enough. Ed Magnani's article on the formation of Nassau

County a century ago coincides with the Nassau County Centennial Conference at Hofstra (see story on p. 13); and Steve Walker's article on his uncle, artist Alfred Walker, will be brought into sharper focus when the author delivers a slide lecture on Alfred on March 23rd as part of our 20/20 Lecture Series (see p. 14).

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THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

Regarding the poet, Edward L. Stanton, whose verse was printed in the Summer '98 issue, I knew the name well but couldn't nail it down. After several false starts, I found him in the '54

Americana.

Stanton was born in Charleston, S. C., on 22 Feb. 1857 and died at Atlanta on 7 Jan. 1927. Joel Chandler Harris ("Uncle Remus", etc.) spotted his talent at the Savannah *Morning News* when Stanton was only a 12-year old copy boy (who had started writing poetry the year before) and encouraged him. Stanton became a reporter and started one of the first regular "columns" in the U.S.

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Purpose: The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 with the express purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Oyster Bay. The Society maintains a museum and research library in the Town-owned c.1720 Earle-Wightman House, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay.

Call (516) 922-5032 for more information.

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ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

This photograph, courtesy of life-long Oyster Bay resident Gloria B. Tucker, shows a group of formally-dressed young hockey players on one of the many small ponds that abounded in this area. Gloria's father, Waldron Bayles, is second from right. Was the pith helmet for protection or strictly fashion? See related story on p.17.

He wrote a poem a day for almost 40 years, mostly in Georgia cracker and black dialects, and some were set to music; probably the best remembered of the latter would be "Going Home."

Stanton was named Poet Laureate of Georgia in 1925. His poems were published in many collections from 1892 to 1927.

Sam Berliner, III

THE WRIGHT SISTERS: 17TH CENTURY QUAKER ACTIVISTS

PART II

by Mildred Murphy DeRiggi, Ph.D

The following article was originally published in Long Island Women: Activists and Innovators, edited by Dr. Natalie A. Naylor, and appears here courtesy of the editor. Our readers may wish to acquire a copy of this publication, which also includes articles on two other Town of Oyster Bay residents, Abigail Leonard of Farmingdale and Barbara McClintock at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Laurel Hollow. Please call the Long Island Studies Institute at 463-6411 for more information.

Two years after Hannah died, the third sister, Lydia, traveled to Boston. Lydia came to the attention of the authorities as a result of an incident at South Church on Sunday, July 8, 1677. Lydia had entered the church during service in the company of a woman Friend, Margaret Brewster of Barbados. It was the appearance of Margaret Brewster that caused the disturbance. She was barefoot with her hair loose and with ashes on her head, her face blackened and with sackcloth covering her garments. Brewster was following a

practice of some early Quakers who would make a visual statement by dressing or acting in ways that referred to Biblical sources for meaning.

The authorities arrested Lydia along with Brewster and several Quaker companions. On August 4th, Lydia appeared in Court with the other Quakers to be tried before the Governor and the magistrates. The testimony of Lydia is significant and deserves examining because it indicates how remarkably poised she was in the face of hostile questioning by magistrates who possessed all



The Friends Meeting House in Oyster Bay was built on land donated in 1672 by the Wright sisters' uncle, Anthony Wright (west side of South Street, just north of Audrey Avenue).

the power of office.

When Governor John Leverett began by asking Lydia if she were one of those who came into the meeting-house to disturb the minister at his worship, Lydia denied that she had disturbed anyone since she had not spoken a single word. The Governor asked why, if that were the case, had Lydia come to the service. Lydia reminded the Governor that it was the law in Massachusetts that everyone attend religious service on Sunday and that the magistrates did not recognize the validity of Quaker worship.

Magistrate Simon Bradstreet then interrupted by demanding to know if Lydia had gone to the service to hear the Word of God. Lydia's response was that if the Word of God were there, she had been ready to hear it.

Noting that she was alone, the Governor asked Lydia if she had her parents' permission to come to Boston. Her father had died, but Lydia assured the governor that she had her mother's permission. When asked to produce a proof of permission, Lydia answered that she did not have a note from her mother, but if they would wait, she would send home a request that her mother write one. Since Lydia's mother was living in Long Island, it would have meant a long pause in the proceedings.

Exasperated, one of the magistrates, named Juggins, exclaimed to Lydia, "You are led by the spirit of the Devil, to ramble up and down the country, like whores and rogues a cater-wawling."

Lydia's response to the outburst was as follows: "Such words do

not become those who call themselves CHRISTIANS, for they that sit to judge for God in Matters of Conscience, ought to be sober and serious."

Magistrate Juggins later accused Lydia, saying: "You are led by the spirit and light within you, which is the Devil: There is but one God, and you do not worship the God which we worship."

Lydia's final comment was that he was certainly correct in saying that they did not worship the same God, for if the magistrates worshipped the God revealed in the Bible whom the Quakers worshipped, they would not persecute His people.⁶ The Court's decision was that Lydia be tied to a cart along with Margaret Brewster and dragged out of town. From Boston, Lydia traveled to Sandwich, Cape Cod, to Rhode Island and finally home to Oyster Bay.⁷

And what do we know of the private lives that followed after Mary and Lydia had so dramatically asserted their opposition to policy in Massachusetts and demanded freedom of religion for Friends?

A Quarterly meeting of Friends in Flushing in 1682 issued a certificate to Quakers in the Caribbean islands of Barbados, Antigua, and Jamaica declaring that Lydia Wright had movings within her heart and mind in the love of the Lord to visit with them. Interestingly, at the same meeting notice was given of the intention of marriage between Lydia Wright and Isaac Horner, a Quaker from Oyster Bay.⁸

Lydia Wright had time to make her intended mission to the

Caribbean because her marriage to Isaac Horner was not solemnized until February, 1684. Among the witnesses to the ceremony were Lydia's sister Mary and her husband, Samuel Andrews. Mary had married Quaker Andrews in 1663 and had become the mother of eight children.⁹

Alice Wright, mother of Mary, Hannah and Lydia, had remarried after the death of their father. Her second husband was Richard Crabb, a Quaker from Oyster Bay. Alice and her daughters remained active in the Friends meeting at Oyster Bay and Mary and her husband acted as overseers of the meeting house.

In the 1670s and 1680s, the Quakers in the Oyster Bay area were disturbed by a group of individuals who disrupted meetings by singing and making noises and who caused scandal by rejecting the need for traditional marriages. The names of Mary and her mother appeared among those who signed a Testimony in 1675 against a "People who Stiled themselves New or Young Friends." In doing so, Mary supported the social values traditional in the Quaker community.

Alice Wright Crabb died in 1685. Her will was significant because it gave freedom to a man known as "Black Tom," granting him in the words of the document "1 calf, 1 iron skillet, one mare and Liberty." Mary Andrews confirmed the terms of the will of her mother, making the transaction probably the earliest manumission of a slave on Long Island.¹⁰

In the fall of 1685, Mary and

Lydia with their husbands and children left Oyster Bay and moved to Springfield Township, Burlington County, West Jersey.¹¹ The families were part of a movement in the late 17th century of Long Island residents who resettled in the Quaker colonies of the Jerseys.

Several months before the move, Samuel Andrews, one of the wealthiest men in Oyster Bay, assigned to his wife a power of attorney. He expressed his confidence in Mary to sell property and settle affairs as he himself would do if he were personally present.¹²

In all, the evidence is scant concerning the way in which the Wright sisters lived their everyday lives in Oyster Bay. The few references which do exist suggest that they fulfilled traditional roles within their families and in their community. It is really the documents that record their public protests in Boston, the Court transcripts that present their ideas, that define the Wright sisters as exceptional. Mary, Hannah and Lydia traveled considerable distances as young women, unaccompanied by either parent or spouse, at a time when most women lived their lives in confined domestic spheres. In an age when women lacked legal status, each proved able to represent herself competently and to express her demands forcibly before a legal tribunal.

Finally, Mary Wright's name has been associated with the charge of witchcraft in some Long Island histories, going back to references by the historians Nathaniel Prime and Benjamin Thompson.¹³ According to

Thompson's account, after being accused of witchcraft in 1660, Mary Wright was sent to Massachusetts for trial. When there was insufficient evidence for conviction for witchcraft, Thompson concluded, Mary was convicted of Quakerism and banished.

However, the Wrights were a leading family in Oyster Bay and there is no evidence of any incident or charge concerning witchcraft originating in that settlement. Furthermore, the Court at Boston had no jurisdiction over Long Island.

It is much more plausible that Mary Wright went to Boston of her own accord to protest the hanging of Mary Dyer. The association of witchcraft with Mary Wright is understandable, however, when you consider that many of Mary's contemporaries connected witchcraft with Quakerism. Quaker women were routinely stripped naked and searched by authorities, who were looking for any unusual marks on their bodies that would identify them as witches and servants of the Devil.¹⁴ When Mary went to Boston to protest a policy of persecution, she was outspoken and did not defer to the authority of magistrates and ministers. Recent research has emphasized the connection between assertive or insolent speech, or lack of deference by women and resulting charges of witchcraft.¹⁵

Mary Wright was no witch. She was just ahead of her time.

6. Testimony Quoted in Bessie, Sufferings of the People Called Quakers, II: 263.

7. Howland Delano Perrine. The

Wright Family of Oyster Bay, L.I.: With the Ancestry and Descent from Peter and Nicholas Wright, 1423-1923 (New York: privately printed, 1923).

8. Entry in the Friends Quarterly Meeting, copied in Perrine, The Wright Family of Oyster Bay, 56.

9. The certificate of the marriage of Lydia Wright and Isaac Horner is copied in the Flushing Monthly Meeting Records (Haviland Records Room, NYC)

10. Oyster Bay Town Records, 2: 702, John Cox, Jr., Quakerism in the City of New York, 1657-1930 (New York: Privately printed, 1930), 55.

11. Perrine, Wright Family, 57.

12. Oyster Bay Town Records, 1: 303.

13. Nathaniel Scudder Prime, A History of Long Island, From its First Settlement by Europeans to the Year 1845, With Special Reference to Its Ecclesiastical Concerns (New York: Robert Carter, 1845), 89; Benjamin Thompson, History of Long Island from Its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time. Ed. Charles J. Werner (3rd ed., New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1918).

14. Karlsen, The Devil in the Shape of a Woman, 13.

15. Jane Kamensky. "Words, Witches, and Woman Trouble: Witchcraft, Disorderly Speech, and Gender Boundaries in Puritan New England," Essex Institute Historical Collections, 128: 4 (Oct., 1992).

Christine Leigh Heyrman, "Specters of Subversion: Societies of Friends: Dissent and the Devil in Provincial Essex County, Massachusetts, : Saints and Revolutionaries, 38-74.

PART II

by Edward Magnani

In 1874, New York City took the first steps in expansion by annexing a portion of southern Westchester and the construction of tenements quickly followed the extension of the city's elevated lines across the Harlem River. But the city wanted to control its harbor, not the mainland. It could then promote the comprehensive development of shipping, railroads, and related facilities. Greater New York would encompass southern Westchester, Richmond, Brooklyn and Kings County, as well as much of Queens and part of the town of Hempstead. Possession of the latter two areas would ensure the city's possession of Jamaica and Little Neck Bays.

Completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 had linked the nation's first and third largest cities, and political union seemed only a matter of time. By 1890, the population of Queens was only 131,227, almost two-thirds of which lived in Long Island City. Accordingly, when consolidation came, Queens played a much smaller role than did Kings County. In November 1894, the legislature called for a nonbonding referendum on consolidation to appear on the ballot in the area encompassed by the proposed metropolis. Long Island City, Jamaica, Newtown, and the small portion of Hempstead (the Rockaway Peninsula) included in the referendum voted in favor; only in Flushing did consolidation fail to win a majority. In all, more

than 60 percent of the electors in Queens voted yes, with the greatest number of votes coming from Long Island City.

In the end, Tammany Hall came out against consolidation fearing that the Republicans would take away its control of the city. In 1894, the Republican ticket had carried the area that would become Greater New York and by the end of 1895, GOP Boss Thomas C. Platt was solidly behind the measure. Using his



control of the Republican Party, Platt pushed the Greater New York Bill through the Albany legislature. On 2 May 1897, Governor Frank S. Black signed the act and the law, which took effect on 1 January 1898.

The birth of Greater New York left the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay in the position of being in Queens County but not part of the new metropolis. Overwhelmingly rural, and dotted with small suburban villages along the railroad lines, the eastern towns had never been included in discussions about the greater city's boundaries. Suburban and agricultural

interests were in conflict with the industrial economy and rough and tumble politics of Long Island City. In the year after consolidation, property valuations in the eastern towns actually decreased, indicating that taxes from the rural districts had been siphoned off to finance improvements in urban and suburban sections. Just as the wealth was concentrated in the annexed section, so was the county's indebtedness. Out of a total debt of more than \$10 million, the eastern towns accounted for only about 6 percent of the total, excluding their share of the county bonds and school bonds. The mismanaged and corrupt administrations of Long Island City had incurred the bulk of the debt, almost 35 percent of the total. Not all of that figure, however, could be charged to corruption. As the most

rapidly growing portion of the county, expenditures for water and sewer mains, schools, and street paving were required.

The citizens of the eastern towns also recognized a crucial difference between the brand of politics practiced in the city and, from their perspective, the more virtuous politics of Long Island. In addition, the 1860 census revealed that for the first time the population of the three western towns surpassed that of eastern Queens, a development that presaged a shift in the locus of political power. The unwelcome prospect of Tammany machine control, combined with fears that the growing urban population

would dominate county politics, prompted citizens of Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay to organize a drive for secession.

In response to the formation of Greater New York City in 1898, three to four hundred prominent citizens of the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay met in Mineola on Saturday, January 22, 1898, to discuss the possible formation of a new county. P. Halstead Scudder, of Glen Head, issued the call, and acted as temporary chairman. Scudder proposed five possible solutions, namely; annexation of the three eastern towns to New York, annexation to Suffolk County, annexation of the borough of Queens to Kings or New York County, formation of a new county composed of the

three eastern towns of Queens County and the western towns of Suffolk, and the erection of a new county out of the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay. The last plan was thought to be wisest and most feasible.

At the conclusion of Scudder's remarks Benjamin Hicks, of Old Westbury, was chosen Chairman and called for a discussion of the resolution. It was evident that the majority of those present were in favor of forming a new county and it was resolved that it was "for the best interest of the citizens of the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay to withdraw from the County of Queens" and "to carry into effect the desires of the people to have a county free from any entangling alliances with the

great city of New York."

In what probably set an all time speed record for government action, the county was conceived at this meeting on January 22, introduced to the legislature by Assemblyman George Wallace on February 17, 1898, and passed the Assembly on March 25. It was later passed unanimously in the Senate after initial Democratic opposition. On April 27, 1898 Governor Black signed the bill which authorized the formation of Nassau County effective January 1, 1899.

The author found Jeffrey A. Kroessler's article, "The Greater City and Queens County," Long Island Historical Journal, Fall 1998 to be a valuable reference among the many consulted in preparing the article that appears here.

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS SCENE?

We think this picture, which was acquired in a Salvation Army Thrift Shop on Long Island, is of a portion of a seashore (or perhaps sound shore or bayshore) vacation community of some circa World War I date. Some of the buildings are perhaps much older than others suggesting that the beginnings of the community was many years before the taking of the photograph. Several questions occur to us that our readers may be able to answer. Where was the picture taken? How far does the settlement extend, beyond the limits of the photograph? Is it indeed located on a shore? Is our tentative dating of the photograph in the ball park?

Our resident automobile specialist thinks the ruts in the roadway were made by automobile tires. Supporting this assertion is the fact that no worn path of either a team or single draft animal can be distinguished. The near buildings all seem to be residential but at the end of the street is a building of relative large size, perhaps devoted to some other, not obvious function. Commercial? A Coast Guard Station?

Atop the roof stands a mushroom shaped structure that might be a ventilator. That might suggest the upper floor was a dormitory.



ALFRED J. WALKER, OYSTER BAY ILLUSTRATOR

by Stephen V. Walker.

Alfred J. Walker, Oyster Bay High School Class of '27, was a gifted artist whose talent led him to an interesting and varied career in commercial art. In addition, he contributed his distinctive artwork freely to the local community throughout his life.

Alfred was born in Cove Neck, on December 18, 1908. He grew up, along with his older brother Daniel, on "Shoredge," the estate of Howard C. Smith, at which his parents, Alfred and Mary, lived and worked as caretakers. The beauty of his father's gardens, and the beautiful vistas of sea, sky and ships from the sloping lawn of Shoredge inspired young Walker to an aesthetic life early on.

Alfred attended the Oyster Bay schools from 1914 to 1927. Kindergarten through the eighth grade, he attended a small two-room schoolhouse in Oyster Bay Cove, the Cove School, which is now a private residence. When famous neighbor Theodore Roosevelt came to visit the school and give out presents at the annual Christmas program, young Alfred was given the detail to draw colorful Yuletide motifs on the chalkboard.

Alfred continued his education at Oyster Bay High School from 1923 to 1927. During his high school years he provided artwork for such events as the class play

of 1925, "Bird's Christmas Carol." He was also an avid sportsman and played on the 1927 championship varsity basketball team.

After high school, he took up studies at the School of Fine and Applied Arts at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N.Y. He graduated in 1931 with a degree in Illustration and Advertising Design. During those years he contributed artwork to the Oyster Bay Guardian. In 1929 he drew

Symphonies," as well as the feature film "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," while with Disney.

Alfred returned to the East Coast because of homesickness brought on by his mother's declining health. He soon gained a position with Fiction House Comics in New York City and developed several serial characters, including "Greasemonkey Griffin" in Wings Comics, and "Flicker Funnies" in Movie Comics.

Al Walker's cartoon legacy did not only flourish in the pages of his employer's comic books, but also on the walls of the Oyster Bay community at large. Various public gathering places had Alfred Walker drawings on their walls, from the former Trio Bar on South Street, to the Seawanhaka Yacht Club on



several installments of his cartoon strip, "Nip and Tuck," and two years later designed a new masthead for the paper, in Old English lettering, which was in use for over sixty years.

In May 1938 he won third prize in a national competition for a postal cachet designed for National Air Mail Week. Later that year he was accepted for a position as an artist with the Walt Disney Studios in California. He worked on various "Silly

Centre Island.

Both Fire Companies of Oyster Bay extended yearly clambake invitations to Al Walker, in thanks for the innumerable plaques and programs which he drew for them. St. Dominic's Church and School was also a beneficiary of many artistic contributions, including elaborate sets for plays, dances, and program covers.

In 1943 Alfred Walker entered the army. When his artistic

prowess became known to his superiors, he was transferred to the P.W.B. (Psychological Warfare Branch) designing insignia, and contributing artwork for the Allied propaganda effort. Insignias which he designed include the emblem/ patch for the "Rainmakers (Propaganda Unit for the Fifth Army P.W.B.), the insignia for P-40 Fighter planes of the 66th Pursuit Squadron (adapted from his own "Slug the Penguin," in Planet Comics), and the insignia of the American Red Cross Clubmobile Unit in Italy.

In May of 1944, while in Italy, he was given the assignment to design a cover and musical score for a new song of Irving Berlin's, entitled "The Fifth Army's Where My Heart Is." The song was interpolated into Berlin's "This Is The Army" show, for the troops of the Fifth Army in Italy. He always treasured the memories of those four days in 1944 when he met Irving Berlin personally, as well as the cast of the entire show.

Later that same year, moved by the devastation he saw in a small town in Italy, Al Walker wrote a letter to the Superintendent of the Oyster Bay Schools, Leon Deming, asking if the students could send clothing to a poor family of children who had just lost their parents. This relief effort became a reality through the kindness of Oyster Bay's citizens and was fully chronicled in the local newspapers of 1944-45. In 1945, Alfred Walker was assigned a new position as a staff artist on the Stars and Stripes newspaper, where he filled out the remainder of his army service.

Al Walker returned to the states late in 1945 and resumed his position as cartoonist at Fiction House. In January 1946 he married Katherine Moore, and soon they began raising a family of three sons, Alfred, Perry and Paul at their home in Huntington Station. In 1948, he became a commercial artist for the New York Trust Bank, which later merged with Chemical Bank.

In 1953, he designed the commemorative program for the 300th anniversary celebration of the founding of Oyster Bay, which also coincided with the opening of Sagamore Hill as an historic site. At Sagamore Hill's request, he designed a 1902-style calendar which hung in the kitchen for many years.

In August 1956, Al Walker designed the seal of the Town of Oyster Bay for then Supervisor Thomas Pynchon. The ubiquitous seagull logo can be seen today throughout the Town of Oyster Bay. In the 1960s he drew a pamphlet of "Historic Oyster Bay," with minutely detailed historic sketches, for the Oyster Bay Chamber of Commerce. Much of the artwork is still utilized in the pamphlets of today.

While his three sons attended Walt Whitman High School in the 1960s, he combined his love of art and basketball by designing elaborate 20-foot banners with brightly colored cartoon characters, gratis, for the school's basketball games.

He also designed banners for both sides of the Suffolk championship games, regardless of whether Whitman High was in the game or not.

In 1964 he designed a commemorative plaque in memory of John F. Kennedy which was commissioned by the Pan American Society. Later he received personal thanks from Robert F. Kennedy for his work. In 1970 he was commissioned by the Air Force Association to design a plaque in honor of the workers of Grumman Corporation, for building the lunar module, which successfully brought the imperiled astronauts of Apollo 13 home from the moon after the rockets on their spacecraft malfunctioned.

Also in 1970, Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Ethel Derby, requested that Al Walker hand-letter on parchment the words of a 50-year old newspaper eulogy for her beloved brother Quentin. In 1971 he designed a commemorative painting for the centennial of the Seawanhaka Yacht Club. Alfred Walker's all too brief life ended in 1972, at age 64. He allowed his artistic talent to flourish and grow, and gave it away freely to the people around him. This writer, a nephew, remembers especially the handmade birthday cards, and three beautiful backdrops for a fifth grade "Wizard of Oz." Throughout his life, Al Walker created such memories.

Stephen Walker, a trustee of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, past contributor to The Freeholder (Spring '97), and editor of its predecessor Currents, will give a slide lecture on Alfred Walker on Tuesday, March 23 as part of our 20/20 Lecture Series. See related announcement on p. 14.



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

Recently a friend noticed a neighborhood kid running across his lawn and stepping in a flower bed on the way. He was livid. Although it being winter, I doubt the kid hurt the flower bed any.

My friend said, "I've yelled at him a dozen times about making my yard a shortcut on his way home. If I catch him doing it again, I'll 'sic (sp?) the dogs' on him!" Since he doesn't have a dog, his remark wasn't as vicious as it sounds, but it made me wonder what exactly "sic" (or is it "sick") means? Can you tell me?

Nancy Pomeroy

"Sic" is a corrupt pronunciation of "seek." It usually means "find" or

"attack" in the sense in which your friend used it.

Dear Uncle Peleg,

At a meeting of people active in promoting efforts to prevent drunken driving a speaker discussed some proposed legislation of which he disapproved, and offered a countermeasure, saying, "If we adopt my suggestion, we will effectively spike their guns." What does the expression "spike their guns" mean?

Doug Piro

When in battle one force had occupied the ground held by another, but did not expect to keep it for long, it was customary to leave nothing usable for the enemy to recapture. An old-fashioned cannon takes a lot of destroying, but it can be put out of action for quite a while simply by sledgehammering a spike into the touchhole in the breech end. This meant the

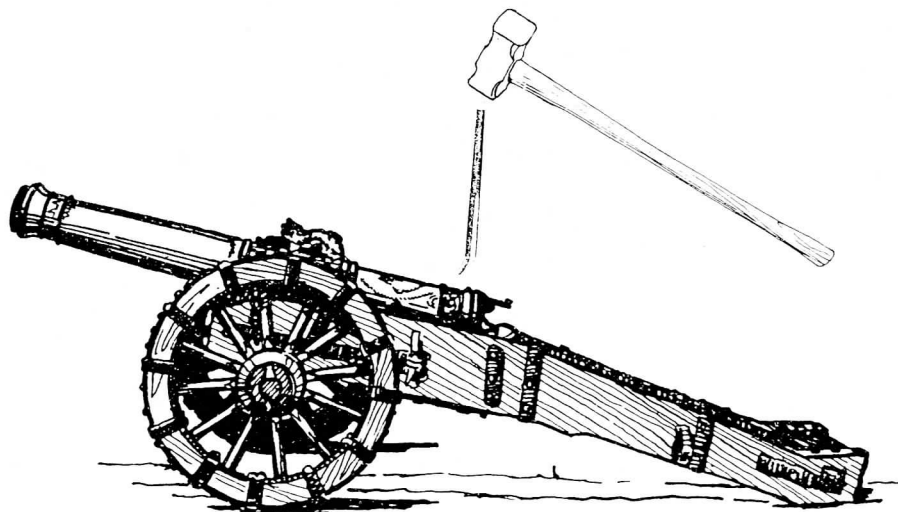
cannon could be loaded, but not fired, because there was no longer a passage by which the gunpowder could be touched off.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

What is the meaning of the phrase "by rule of thumb?"

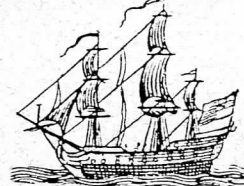
Tom Pollice

Today it is an expression meaning "to guide the performance of some task by experience rather than scientific knowledge. The expression came about because in an earlier, less precise age the width of a thumb was regarded as an acceptable standard for the measurement of an inch in many places. For instance, the Dutch words for "thumb" and "inch" are the same, "duim." Something about the pseudonym with which you signed your note suggests you know this. "Pollice" is also the Italian word for "thumb" and "inch!"





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 WELCOMES FOUR NEW TRUSTEES

The Oyster Bay Historical Society recently elected four new members to the board of trustees. Joining the board, effective with the trustees' meeting of Wednesday, February 17 are Philip Blocklyn, The Hon. Fanny L. Corsentino, Frederic R. Coudert Esq. and The Rev. Kenneth W. Nelson Sr. These four new trustees were unanimously elected at the January 20 board meeting.

A native of Philadelphia, Philip Blocklyn graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1979 and worked in publishing for fifteen years before opening a bookshop in Oyster Bay. Mr. Blocklyn writes the "Blocklyn's Books" column in the Society's quarterly magazine, *The Freeholder* in which he reviews books related to Long Island's history. He and his wife Jacqueline live in Hicksville.

Fanny Corsentino is the popular elected clerk of the Town of Oyster Bay. Corsentino was appointed to fill a vacancy in that post in May 1995, was elected to the position in November 1995, and again in 1997. A resident of Brookville where she lives with her husband Joe, Fanny Corsentino has compiled an impressive record of government and public service, while many civic and charitable organizations have been beneficiaries of her talents and energies.

Frederic R. Coudert, graduate of Princeton University, Columbia Law School and assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, recently retired as senior partner of the international corporate law firm of Coudert Brothers after a forty-year career with that firm. Currently trustee and executive vice president of the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club (Bronx, NY), he has been active in that organization for over thirty years. He is currently involved also in many local organizations, having been elected to the boards of the Boys & Girls Club of Oyster Bay-East Norwich, the Doubleday-Babcock Senior Center, Friends of the Bay, and the Concerned Citizens for 25A, in addition to that of the Oyster Bay Historical Society. The Coudert Family has been in Cove Neck for four generations, but Fritz is the first to become a full-time resident.

The Rev. Kenneth W. Nelson, Sr. is pastor of Oyster Bay's Hood AME Zion Church and is employed by the State of New York's Department of Labor. A former resident of Riverhead, he is active in both African American and Native American issues. Rev. Nelson is president of the Kiwanis Club of Oyster Bay/East Norwich, a former distinguished past lieutenant governor of Kiwanis International Inc., a member of the board of directors of the Nassau County Chapter of the American Red Cross, the board of the Inter-Religious Council of Oyster Bay and now a member of the board of trustees of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OPENS NEW EXHIBIT

Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the closing of the recent "At the Water's Edge" exhibit, which utilized every exhibit room in the museum, Curator Dick Kappeler, Director Tom Kuehhas, and volunteer Elliot Sayward decided it was time to change things around a bit in the one-room house exhibit (the c. 1720 section of the Earle-Wightman House). They have changed the trade of the man of the house to a shoemaker (from a tailor) to reflect recent research that suggests the area of South Street on which the house was situated was home to several artisans who



Director Tom Kuehhas puts the finishing touches on the new exhibit.

worked in leather-related trades. For example, William Butler, who owned the house during its expansion in the 1750s and 1760s, is listed as a saddler in the Town Records.

Shoemakers (also known as "cordwainers") in early 18th century America would have done much more than make shoes. While in contemporary England, tradesmen were highly regulated and tended to specialize in one aspect of work, ie. bootmakers strictly made boots, cobblers only repaired shoes, etc., the severe shortage of skilled labor in America meant that one tradesman would handle all sorts of work. For our shoemaker, it meant that he would be making and repairing boots and shoes, and most likely would take odd jobs of rejuvenating leather articles in need of repair. All of this is reflected in the current

interpretation of our one-room house.

If you haven't visited the museum recently, now's your chance to see something different!

SOCIETY MEMBER EXHIBITS AT NASSAU COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

Society member Sillia Rossler currently has three holiday

rooms in miniature on display at the Tee Ridder Miniatures Museum at the Nassau County Museum of Art in Roslyn Heights. The rooms will be on display through Easter (April 4, 1999).

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For the first time in several years, craft classes were conducted on four evenings in the museum, coordinated by Ethel MacGill. In the early days of the Society, craft classes were held each spring and fall, and it is hoped this revival will continue.

Long Island watercolors by Evangeline Squires (1871- 1959) have recently been on display at the Lauder Museum. Mrs. Squires always took along a sketch book with her and from these sketches she produced watercolors and sometimes

worked in oil paint. The museum owns ten of her paintings.

Hours are Tuesday, Friday and Sunday, 2 to 4 P.M. For more information, call (516) 598-1486.

CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society has received its first Historic Marker documenting the location of the grand Beau Sejour. This restaurant stood on the corner of Central Avenue and Stewart Avenue, and played host to the very notable and the local community organizations of Bethpage. The Beau Sejour spanned the years of elegant dining from the horse and carriage trade to the space age. Mr. Ed Wilson's family owned and operated the restaurant from 1907 to the day it closed its doors. The Beau Sejour was demolished in 1975 and the Central Park Historical Society is honored that the Wilson family has helped with the financing of the marker through a memorial fund.

COW NECK PENINSULA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Port Washington)

A compelling exhibit: "A Hidden History -- Slavery, Abolition and the Underground Railroad," based on the book by former curator Mary Vahey, will be on display at the Sands-Willets House, 336 Port Washington Blvd., until March 31st. The hours are Sundays, 2-4 P.M. or by appointment (365-9074). The book and exhibit focus on the underground railroad in Cow Neck and on Long Island.

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

**[http://members.aol.com/
OBHistory](http://members.aol.com/OBHistory)**

**HICKSVILLE GREGORY
MUSEUM**

At the December board meeting, John Kean, retiring president of the Board, was honored for his long and faithful service as benefactor, advisor, trustee, vice president and president by being named President Emeritus of the Museum. He will also remain as a trustee. The new President is Valerie Pakaluk, a longtime Hicksville resident who works at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. She is a past president of the Hicksville Historical Society, current vice president of the Hicksville Community Council, and a member of the 350th Anniversary Committee.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

At the Jan. 7th meeting the Executive Board voted to participate in the community effort to lobby the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to clean up the Liberty Industrial site on Motor Avenue.

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
THE MASSAPEQUAS**

The Society's annual Antique Fair is scheduled for Sunday, March 21, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Refreshments are offered by the Society and there is a small admission charge. The site is the Massapequa High School

gymnasium, Merrick Road, Massapequa. Also, the Strawberry Festival will take place on June 19th. More information to follow.

The Society also informs the editor that there are eight additional historical markers in Massapequa and Massapequa Park which were not included in the article on historical markers in the last *Freeholder*. Those who would like a list of their locations should send a SASE to the Historical Society of the Massapequas, Box 211, Massapequa, NY 11758.

**BAYVILLE
HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

The museum's classic school room, country store and oystering exhibits are always available, plus vintage clothing and children's toys. The museum is located on School Street at the Village Hall complex, off of Bayville Avenue. Our hours are 1 to 3 PM, Sunday and Tuesday. For more information, contact the Director, Gladys Mack, at 628-8975.

The museum is open Sunday and Tuesday from 1 to 3 p.m.

For appointments call 628-1439. Closed holidays.

**NASSAU COUNTY
CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION**

County Executive Thomas S. Gulotta hosted a special 100th Birthday Party for Nassau County on January 3 at the Old County Court House in Mineola as the kickoff of a year-long schedule of special events. A centennial exhibit is currently on display at Hofstra University entitled: "Nassau County at 100 -- The Past and Present in Photographs." Assembled by guest curator Linda B. Martin, the exhibit will be in place until March 23. It is located in the Lowenfield Exhibition Hall on the tenth floor of the Axinn Library, located on the South Campus. The hours are 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., Monday through Friday, and 1 to 5 P.M. on weekends. For more information, call the Hofstra Museum at 463-5672.

A three-day conference on Nassau County's centennial will take place at Hofstra University from March 18 through March 20. Visit their website at

**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.

OUR THANKS TO THESE 1998 ANNUAL APPEAL DONORS!

Ms Rose Ann Bencivenga
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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

www.hofstra.edu/ncc for more information.

SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

The museum is about to launch its new educational field-trip programs. They are designed for elementary school children and intended to support the curriculum objectives at each grade level, K-5. Amy Arnoff and Tara Seidman are lending their teaching experience to the project, and more staff members are always welcome.

Call the Museum at 671-0090 to volunteer, or to learn more

about our spring exhibit devoted to the beautiful gardens designed by Shogo Myaida, the renowned

Japanese landscape architect who was a Sea Cliff resident during the 1920s.

1999
Ninth Annual
20/20 LECTURE SERIES
The Oyster Bay Historical Society
and
The Friends of Raynham Hall
cordially invite you to attend
A Free Lecture Series
at 8:00 P.M.
The Masonic Lodge
14 West Main Street
Oyster Bay, NY

March 23
Stephen Walker, Trustee, Oyster Bay Historical Society
"Alfred Walker: Oyster Bay Artist"

April 13
Andrew Batten, Director, Raynham Hall Museum
"The Loyalists: The Misunderstood Americans"

May 11
Thomas Kuehhas, Director, Oyster Bay Historical Society
"Oyster Bay: Then & Now"

REFRESHMENTS

HISTORIC OYSTER BAY?

Below are just a couple of the many historic Oyster Bay buildings which have been demolished over the course of the last half century, as well as some which are in imminent danger of suffering a similar fate. Our architectural heritage has been steadily allowed to erode. What will be left of "historic" Oyster Bay to pass down to our children and they to theirs? Will we put up more historic markers, showing future generations what **had** been on this site? We must find some means of preserving these endangered buildings or, like the Job Wright House and the Wicker Jackson House, only old photos will remain as a reminder of what was once "Historic Oyster Bay."



*Job Wright House, west side of South St.
Built c.1665; demolished 1948
Reason: space "needed" for Town Hall parking lot*

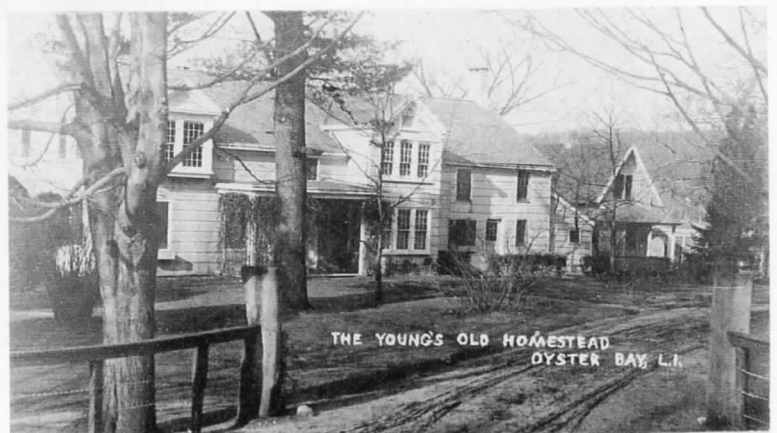


*Dr. Wicker Jackson House, west side of South St.
Built c. 1860; demolished c. 1970
Reason: space "needed" for parking lot*



*Florio Building, west side of South St.
Original building (to rear) built c. 1865, demolished 1999 (?)
Reason: space "needed" for parking lot*

*Youngs Homestead, Cove Rd. & Cove Neck Rd.
Built c. 1680-1715; demolished 1999 (?)
Reason: subdivide land and build 2 new houses in place of historic home in which President George Washington stayed on his 1790 visit to Oyster Bay.*





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: A Dozen Dutch Derogatories by Lee Myles

The English of early days died not much like the Dutch, whom they envied greatly. Their feelings toward their neighbors across the North Sea are expressed by the many derogatory sayings the English used in more or less conscious efforts to insult their Dutch contemporaries. Here are some of those sayings, not a few of which are still with us:

Dutch nightingale: a frog

Dutch courage: valor found in a brandy bottle

Dutch comfort or Dutch consolation: expressed as "Thank God it's no worse!"

Dutch bargain: a contract, the parties to which are both drunk

Dutch concert: any cacophonous combination of sounds

Dutch reckoning: any account presented as a lump sum without particulars

Dutch treat: a meal or outing at which each participant pays his or her own way

Dutch feast: one where the host gets drunk before the guests

To do a Dutch: to run away, to desert

Dutch widow: a prostitute

To talk Dutch: to talk gibberish

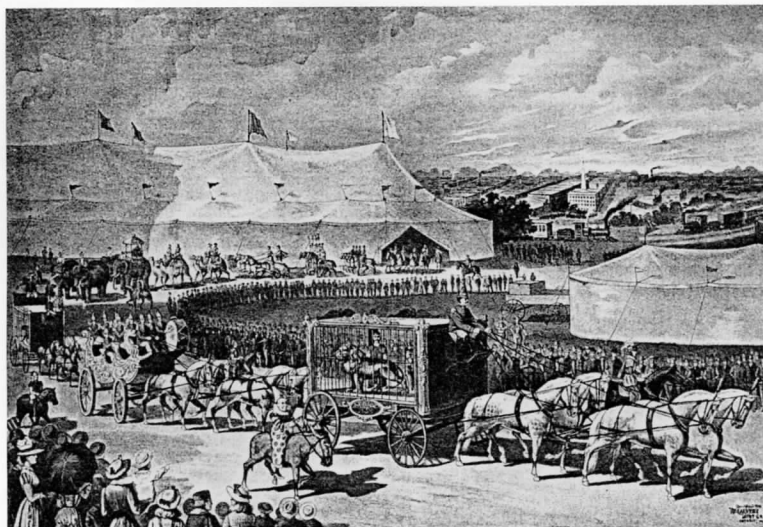
Enough blue sky to make a Dutchman's britches: fine weather; quite a lot of blue sky, as Dutchman's britches were regarded as voluminous.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Over the many years of Long Island's settlement circuses, carnivals, menageries, and traveling shows of many kinds have visited our towns, villages, and hamlets during the months from April to October. The visitors brought with them - and still do - a world all their own and a language seasoned with expressions unknown to most of the home folks. Perhaps you know the meanings of some of these expressions. Define for yourselves what the visitors would have meant when they used the words on our list and then check the explanations we provide on p. 23.

1. Mit joint
2. Gaff
3. Pitch
4. Joey
5. Duckets
6. Slum
7. Spieler
8. Mug joint
9. Three card monte
10. Shilleber
11. Mud show
12. Roustabout
13. Tip
14. Geek
15. Grease joint



Hockey Was Once A Gentlemen's Game! by Rick Robinson

Today's rough-and-tumble style of play in the National Hockey league --including the constant interruptions caused by fist-fights among players -- is a far cry from the more dignified origins of this fast paced sport. Although the Dutch most likely perfected the first strap-on skates by the 1860s, the Canadians can certainly lay claim to the early game of ice hockey. In fact, the term "hockey" was probably derived from the stick which the early players used. It was curved at the end (rather than today's a sharp angle) in a hook shape similar to a shepherd's crook, or, in French, hoquet.

The earliest documented ice hockey activity is attributed to an army unit in Kingston, Ontario. By 1875, more formal rules had been adopted by students at McGill University in Montreal. It is interesting to note that McGill is also renowned for its participation in the first genuine football game against Harvard in May 1874. The schools played two separate games at Cambridge, Massachusetts -- one was essentially soccer, as we know it today, while the second contest employed the rules of British rugby. The latter sport was to evolve among Eastern colleges and universities into American football, a process that continues to this day.

The Eastern connection is also apparent in the introduction of hockey in 1893 at two prominent schools -- Yale University in New

Haven and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Hopkins, of course, is also the shrine of collegiate lacrosse in America, but that's another story (with Canadian origins as well!).

Two Yale tennis stars, Malcolm Chace and Arthur Foote, during a visit to Canada for net competition, became fascinated with ice hockey and brought the game back to their campus. It is recorded that a visiting scholar from Montreal, C. Shearer, formed a team of Hopkins students. He is said to have persuaded a squad from Quebec to come to Baltimore to take on the collegians.

The first hockey league of any consequence in America was organized in New York City in November, 1896, with four teams participating. Within a month, the league's inaugural game brought together the St. Nicholas and Brooklyn Skating Clubs. Although the Brooklyn-based team was the first recognized league champion in the United States, the St. Nicholas Club became the yardstick of amateur hockey. Its most famous player, just prior to the outbreak of

World War I, was Princeton's Hobey Baker, the first and only American to be inducted into the Canadian Hockey Hall of Fame. The current indoor rink at Baker's alma mater is named in his honor.

Hobey Baker's skills and gentlemanly behavior on the ice set the standard for amateur hockey. Perhaps his influence is still felt on the collegiate level, where NCAA rules against fighting are strictly enforced. That is to say, any player who throws a punch is immediately ejected from the game.

As for the Stanley Cup -- the championship trophy of the National Hockey League -- this venerable object was donated to Canadian hockey by Lord Stanley in 1893. It did not become a part of the NHL until much later. The NHL can trace its origins to a professional league organized north of the border in 1909. It was not until 1926, however, that three U.S. franchises, the New York Rangers, Chicago Black Hawks and Detroit Cougars, were admitted to the NHL.

When the NHL was officially formed in December, 1917, Toronto was the only city that had a rink with artificial ice! In



THE LONG, LONG TRAIL

the United States, it seems probable that the wealthy St. Nicholas Club had electric lights and artificial ice by the early 1900s. At Harvard, he famous 1903 football stadium was usually flooded during the winter months to provide three natural hockey rinks.

On the secondary school level, early hockey was played, for the most part, at Eastern private schools on frozen ponds and lakes. The most notable pre-World War I prep-school power was probably St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, where Hobey Baker honed his skills. The St. Paul's squad was quite capable of taking on neighboring college teams, and often appeared at the St. Nicholas rink and other venues in New York City and Boston.

Here on Long Island, present-day high school hockey is conducted as a club sport and receives most of its funding from



In memory of the anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt's death, eighty years ago this past January.

parents and alumni. The hockey is still to be seen occasionally; although the gradual warming trend in the east has reduced the availability of natural ice. On the grass roots level, pick-up

YESTERDAY IN OYSTER BAY

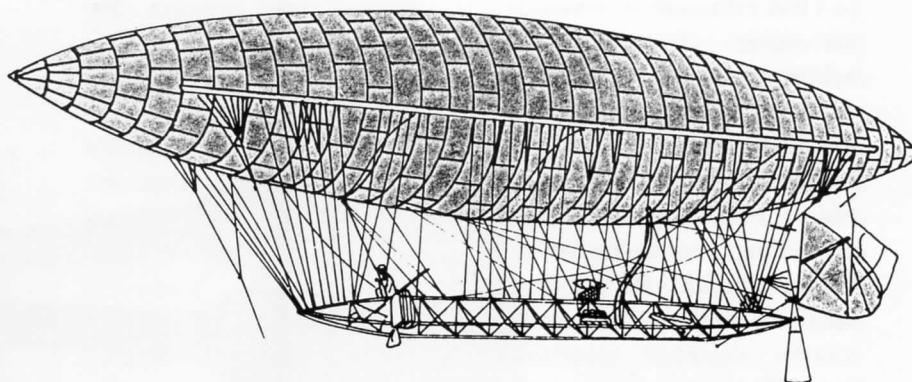
by John Hammond

Politics and government action have changed somewhat during this past century. In 1926 the drinking water in the Oyster Bay Town Hall was considered too warm to be fit for drinking. The town employees asked that ice be regularly kept there to make the water drinkable. Justice of the Peace Augustus Moray suggested that the town employees cross the street where the local well had a steady supply of clean, clear spring water which was always at 45 degrees. Morey's suggestion was outvoted, however, when Justice Haberer motioned that the Town Clerk be authorized to buy a water cooler for the employees.



Dispose of your dead horses properly! In July 1926, the owner of a horse which had suffered a broken leg shot the animal and left it in the middle of the street in Oyster Bay village. Dr. James S. Hall, acting as the local health official ordered a local contractor to cart it away and bury it. Town Supervisor Chester C. Painter then ordered that the owner be billed \$25 by the Town.

95 years ago, in December 1904, Hanophy's Market on East

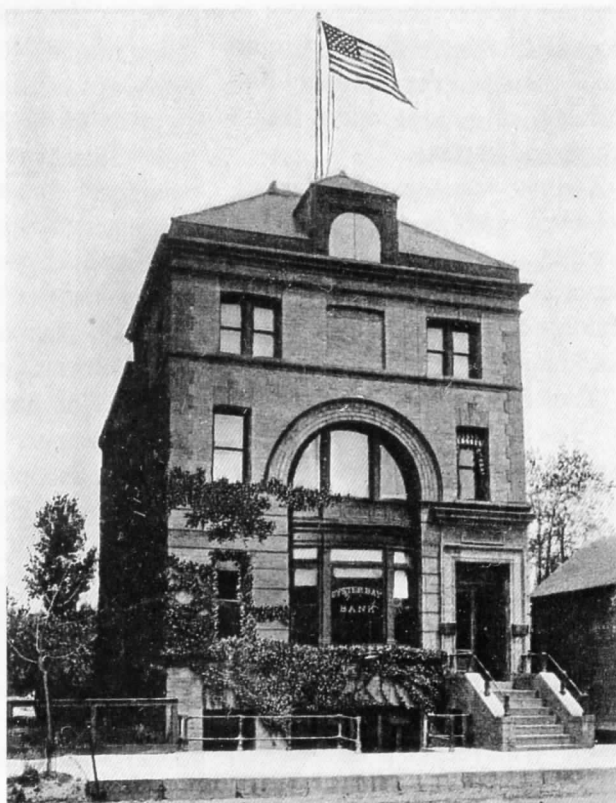


Main Street was offering Prime Rib Roast for 10 cents per pound, Porter House Steaks for 16 cents a pound and Sugar Cured Hams for 12 cents. Hanophy also had a store on School Street in Glen Cove at the time.

Residents of Oyster Bay village were amazed at the sight of an "Airship" passing over the village on Tuesday, August 6, 1907. According to the *Oyster Bay Guardian*, "Some of the inhabitants of this place were surprised on Tuesday, to see an airship go sailing overhead, going from west to east. The time was 1:10 p. m. Those who saw it describe it as a double ender affair, resembling a boat. She was going at great speed."

The first commercial building in

Oyster Bay to have concealed electrical wiring was the Oyster Bay Bank building on Audrey Avenue, built in 1892. The building had one hundred lights. The following year the first home to have concealed electrical wiring was built by William Lundy on Bayles' Hill (Summit Street). The electric rate from the hydroelectric Oyster Bay Electric Light and Power Company was 1/8 cent per hour for each light.



A MYSTERY SOLVED

We received a most interesting letter in response to our photograph of a "Whatsit?" in the Fall issue of *The Freeholder* and felt that it told a story of its own compelling enough for inclusion in full. We hope our readers agree.

Dear Editor:

When my wife saw the "Whatsit?" question on page 21 of the *Freeholder* for Fall 1998, she cried out that she knew what the object was.

"Look! Look!" she said, holding the picture up so I could see it. "It's a *klepper*!"

My wife was born in Holland and did not emigrate to the U.S. until she was a young woman, and, at emotional moments, Dutch words come rushing out in a great flurry. In this way, over the years, I've learned the meaning of a good many Dutch words and phrases.

Klepper was a new one for me, however, and, in answer to my puzzled query, she said that no Dutch child passes through childhood without a *klepper* of one kind or another.

They are noise-makers.

You hold the two wooden mallets in much the same manner in which chopsticks are held and, with a swift, rhythmical, snapping motion of your wrist (actually it's more akin to snapping down a yo-yo), cause the broad, hollowed out wood surfaces to bang against each other. The racket it develops is bright and loud and, once a child

gets worked up and proficient, the sound is usually continuous; it can be devastating in the typical little Dutch house or apartment.

As children grow adept at producing the maddening wooden noise, they modulate their wrist's rhythm, so that the most precocious of children are able to *klep* the rhythm and even the intricate modulations of Dutch folk tunes, like *Stokjes Rapen*, *De Vrolyke Melkmeisjes*, and even *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*.

Searching further in her memory my wife, Loes, remembers having been told as a child, that *kleppers* were used by Dutch farmers, who preferred *kleppers* that were larger and sturdier than those sold in city toy shops. The farmers would take their *kleppers* out to their orchards and planted fields and, standing stolidly in the flat landscape, work up a thunderous cascade of nerve-wracking wood banging - to scare away crows and ravens.

"Oh, you mean 'clappers,'" I said, naming the English cognate for the Dutch *kleppers*- and then

it all came back to me: for we too, my friends and I, as children, had driven our parents crazy with the identical sort of noise maker.

And who could ever forget the famous clapper contests that were played out from one week to another, in the late '30s and early '40s, in such venues as the Major Bowes Amateur Hour on the radio and the Amateur Nites at various movie houses, such as the Brooklyn Fox and RKO Cortelyou (every Wednesday night).

The most famous clapper of all time, of course - at least in the U.S. - was Professor Rythmo, actually an orthodontist from West Los Angeles whose real name was Dr. Abe Rothberg, who, on weekends and holidays, played the Keith and Orpheum circuits in the early 1930s.

Dr. Rythmo's skill was such that he was able to manipulate the clappers so delicately - and ingeniously! - that he could imitate and differentiate the sounds of the tap dancing Fred Astaire, Buck and Bubbles, the Nicholas Brothers, and Bill



"BoJangles" Robinson, using the clappers to bang out such syncopated melodies as "The Continental" and "The Good Ship Lollypop."

Dr. Rythmo's most famous encore was to use the clappers to simulate the sound of the engines that were heard during the famous airborne meeting between the *Hindenburg* zeppelin and Amelia Earhart's twin-engined Lockheed Electra that took place in the sky over Sao Paulo, Brazil, during Lent, in 1936.

Dr. Rythmo passed away under extremely heroic circumstances during World War II and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously. It was reported in the *Daily Variety* for April 4, 1945, and was reprinted a month later in the dental journal, *Modern Orthodontia and Bridgework*. I still have the clipping from *Variety*, and because I believe your readers may be interested in this little known episode of klepper (or clapper) history, I'll quote an excerpt of it here, verbatim:

Second Lieutenant Abraham Rothstein (aka "Dr. Rythmo" - the Clapper King) of West Los Angeles, California, an orthodontist attached to the 3rd Armored Division Field Hospital unit during the Battle of the Bulge, was alone, heroically attending to three reconnaissance GIs who had been wounded by a land mine in an open field outside the village of Hotton, in Belgium. Glancing up at a nearby country road lined by wintry trees, Lieut. Rothstein was stunned to see a German panzer grenadier division,

with armored cars, mortars, and Mark V tanks rolling toward the village where, near a deserted schoolhouse, Headquarters Company was innocently preparing to spend the night. Almost instinctively, Lieut. Rothstein (Professor Rythmo), half crouching, withdrew from his medical kit, a set of wooden clappers which, during lulls in the battle, he would sometimes play, going through his repertoire to entertain the troops or to stay in practice. On that December afternoon, however, his intent was far more serious. At great risk to his life, holding tight to his clappers, using the rhythmic beat of his wrist and fingers, he sent out a Morse Code signal that was heard three-quarters of a mile away, by the GIs at the schoolhouse. Alerted, the 3d Armored Division rose to meet the foe. The rest, of course, is history. German Army Documents uncovered after the final battle revealed that Professor Rythmo's signal was also heard by the panzer grenadiers but was mistaken by them as the

forlorn calls of a lost woodpecker, to which the German troops responded only nostalgically.

Following the battle, Dr. Rothstein was never seen again and was listed among those sadly lost in battle.

T-4 Paul H. Cartoud, of Cleveland, Ohio, found Professor Rythmo's wooden clappers lying beside the men he had been tending in the field. At war's end, the clappers were returned to Mrs. Rothstein. She declined an invitation from the Smithsonian Institution to put the clappers on display and keeps them, instead, in a special glass display cabinet on her mantelpiece at home, together with his Medal of Honor, and a letter signed by General Eisenhower.

We greatly enjoy reading through *The Freeholder* and look forward to future issues.

All best wishes,
Marvin Schiller

We thank Mr. Schiller for taking the time to write and call upon our other readers to share their memories on this or any other historical topic with us.



A German Mark IV Tank

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Country, Park, And City: The Architecture And Life Ofalvert Vaux. By Francis R. Kowsky. Oxford University Press, 1998. 378 pp. B&W Illustrations. Notes, bibliography and index. \$45.

"Individual interest is a sleepless, while public interest is a sleeping force," wrote Calvert Vaux who, in Richard Kowsky's new biography, emerges as America's quintessential architect of the public interest. Although highly esteemed for his private and domestic work in the Hudson Valley, his greatest legacy remains the public achievements of Central Park in Manhattan and Prospect Park in Brooklyn.

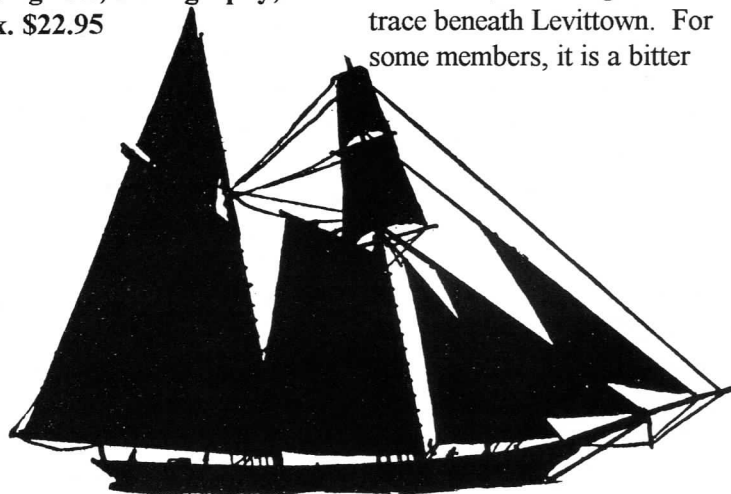
Of course, much of what Vaux envisioned never panned out. Brooklyn, for instance, never became a city "set apart and guarded by nature as a place for tranquil habitation." Still, Vaux and his sometime partner Frederick Law Olmstead were at the forefront of integrating park design with urban planning on a scale as grand as New York.

Perhaps Vaux was just too much the romantic idealist. Certainly his influence declined

after 1880, as America turned to cold, standoffish neoclassicism. Unable and unwilling to adapt to changing tastes, he remained instead faithful to large if unrealistic ideals:

"Public baths, gymnasiums, theatres, music-halls, libraries, lecture-rooms, parks, gardens, picture-galleries, museums, schools, and every thing that is needed for the liberal education of an intelligent freeman's children can easily be obtained by the genuine republican if he will only take the trouble to want them."

From Canoes To Cruisers: The Maritime Heritage Of Long Island. By Joshua Stoff. Empire State Books, 1994. 112 pp. Illustrations by the author. Reading lists, bibliography, and index. \$22.95



Joshua Stoff presents a literary children's fair of Long Island maritime history. The author's illustrations, although not sophisticated, are active and entertaining, while the text is clear and never condescending. Stoff's emphasis is perhaps too much on maritime commerce, at the expense of recreation, but this might be just as well, for his assertion that Grumman's

aluminum canoes were "better than the old wooden ones" is sure to knock wooden-canoe enthusiasts off their caned seats.

"High Society." By John Fleischman. *Air & Space/Smithsonian*. February/March 1999. Volume 13, Number 6. Pages 32-39. Illustrated.

This magazine article recalls the Aviation Country Club Of Long Island, operating in Hicksville from 1929 to 1948. All you needed to join was fame, money, and social acceptability. Although the Club was briefly under guard against German attack during World War II, it met its actual demise under invasion by William Levitt's bulldozers, vanishing without a trace beneath Levittown. For some members, it is a bitter

memory still. "That horrible time," laments Betty Gillies. "Those little houses. Hundreds of them."

Ed. Note: A photograph of the Aviation Country Club, courtesy of the Cradle of Aviation Museum, was included in the Fall 1998 issue of The Freeholder.

AUNT EEK



Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eek,

I own a radio made by RCA in the 1920s called a Radiola 18. I want to hear the old speaker rumble again but I cannot find anyone who knows how to fix it. Will you please help me find a person or place where I can get a repair or parts to help me do it myself?

Nostalgic Ned
Farmingdale N.Y.

Dear Ned,

Usually these sets can be made to play again but generally at a great cost of time and materials. You have two options which may make sense, depending on your own ability. First you may try to repair the unit yourself. Assuming that you have the equipment and the knowledge, the parts are attainable through a number of catalog suppliers. One such supplier (Antique Electronic Supply, 6221 South Maple Ave. Tempe, Arizona 85283) will send you a free catalog upon request. Your second option is to hire a professional to restore your unit.

In this case you must find a competent, honest repairman and leave the work to him. Normally Aunt Eek leaves these specific recommendations out of the column, but since I do not have an address or real name to respond to I will make an exception and include the name of a local technician who has been extraordinarily competent over the many years we have known him. Please call Reid Diamondstein at 516-681-8402. If these suggestions do not answer your needs, write us again and please include your name and address.

Dear Aunt Eek,

I bought a can of shellac last month and when used, it would not dry. I waited a week and removed the shellac with alcohol and re-coated, only to have the same thing happen. What did I do wrong? Has this happened to you? When I asked the clerk at the store, they said that I must have used the wrong solvent, and tried to sell me another can. Makes me mad; can it be me?

Anne Coleride
East Meadow, N.Y.

Dear Anne,

It makes me mad too. The merchant has probably done you in. Most likely the clerk did not know the real issues and will never learn until someone like you challenges the issue. Shellac is made from a resinous substance deposited upon trees by exudation from the female of a scale-insect as a protection to its eggs and larvae. Simply, this is an organic substance which has a shelf life. Most shellac

containers have an expiration date stamped on the bottom of the can (from the manufacturer).

No amount of work can freshen spoiled shellac. Take the can back and show them the date and get a new can that is fresh. Denatured or isopropyl alcohol is the correct solvent. I hope you are able to educate the "experts" so that the next person will not suffer as you have.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

1. Tent or booth of the carnival fortune-teller, who read palms
2. Game or concession crookedly operated
3. Stand or location at which carnival salesman or showman operated
4. Traditional name of the circus clown
5. Tickets at the circus
6. The cheap and gaudy prizes offered at the joints along the midway
7. Also the barker, talker, or ballyhoo man who fronts the show or attraction, persuading the passersby to enter

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

MARCH

Tues., Mar. 23, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Stephen Walker, trustee of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, will present a slide lecture on "Alfred Walker: Oyster Bay Artist." Steve will cover the wide-ranging career of this local artist with particular emphasis on his projects in Oyster Bay.

APRIL

Tues., Apr. 13, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Andrew Batten, the new director of Raynham Hall Museum, will give a presentation which is sure to enlighten many regarding the loyal majority on Long Island during the Revolutionary War, entitled "The Loyalists: The Misunderstood Americans."

MAY

Tues., May 11, 8 p.m.

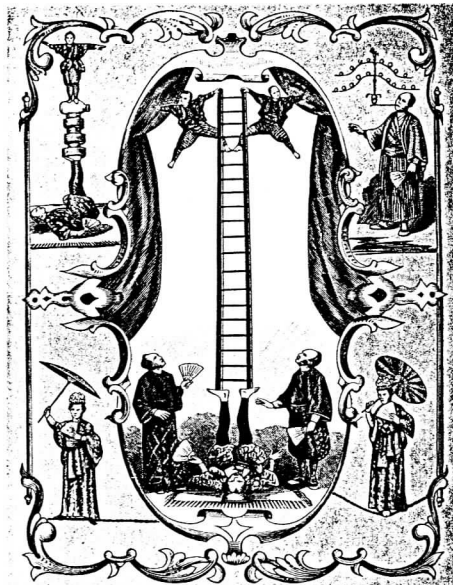
20/20 Lecture

Join Director Tom Kuehhas for a slide lecture/ armchair walking tour of "Oyster Bay: Then & Now." See how Oyster Bay's architecture has changed since TR's presidency and take part in a discussion of what our hamlet might look like a hundred years hence.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge

continued from p. 23

8. A concession where the visiting "Ruben" could have his photograph taken
9. A betting game in which the operator exhibits three cards, two red ones and one black, and lays them face down on his table; the "mark," who has followed what looks like a clumsy manipulation of the cards, is encouraged to bet on which one is the black. He is only right when the deft and swindling operator wants to raise his confidence and the stakes; compare "shell game" where three walnut shells and a pea are used.
10. Shills are assistants to the pitchman or spieler who clamor to see the show or win prizes at the game, luring the mark to participate
11. A circus that traveled from village to village in horse-drawn wagons, often over unpaved roads
12. A member of the hammer gang or other functionary whose task it was to raise the tent and seating stands at the circus and to "slough" them after the show
13. The crowd of potential customers assembled by the ballyhoo man and his pitch
14. A "wild man" exhibited at a carnival or circus who eats snakes or live chickens and growls like an animal
15. a hamburger stand



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S' Patrick's Day.