



THE FREE-HOLDER

FALL 1999 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

♦ NEW
SPY
EVIDENCE

♦ MILK
PAINT
MUSINGS

♦ SOME
MASSAPEQUA
MEMORIES

♦ AN 1830
WALKING
TOUR



WINTER IN THE COUNTRY.

Getting ice

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

We are very pleased to present this issue to you, our members and readers. It features some groundbreaking articles, most notably those of John Burke, who sheds new light on the debate over how the West Point conspiracy was uncovered, and Noelle O'Connor,

who penned a most informative article on the once-ubiquitous milk paint. I'm also pleased to note that both these authors are first-time contributors to these pages. I look forward to many future submissions from them, and from you as well!

Happy Holidays!

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THE POST RIDER

To The Editor:

One of your staff members called me a few weeks ago to see if I could supply her with some information or old photos to help her in gathering data about my father's business, William Dean & Sons, which was engaged in the manufacturing

of ice and its delivery to the residents and businesses of Oyster Bay and Bayville. He was also engaged in the delivery of coal to the same area.

Actually the business was started by my grandfather, William M. Dean, Sr. from Bayville. It was probably started back in the early 1900s at a time before ice was manufactured. In those days, ice was cut from local ponds in the winter time and stored in cork-insulated warehouses for year-round availability.

My father, William M. Dean, Jr., and his brother John, worked for their father,

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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,
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ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

This Currier & Ives lithograph, entitled "Winter in the Country: Getting Ice" dates from 1864. Very similar scenes could be seen in Oyster Bay at that time, and even later. See "The Post Rider," below, for one man's reminiscences of one of the companies who provided ice to local residents.

hence the name William M. Dean & Sons. In the early 1920s my Uncle John was killed in an auto accident on Shore Road, just beyond the L.I.R.R. trestle in Mill Neck. Thereafter my father ran the business with occasional help from my grandfather, who died a few years later.

I believe that somewhere around 1915, the ice plant was built at the foot of South Street and was equipped with the technology that enabled the company to actually freeze water in a huge tank, into

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NEW EVIDENCE IN THE BENEDICT ARNOLD/JOHN ANDRE/ROBERT TOWNSEND DEBATE

by John A. Burke

What is probably the most important intelligence coup in the history of the United States has been shrouded in mystery and controversy since the day it occurred. In the Fall of 1780, the American Revolution was in desperate straits. The states were not sending their quotas of men, food, or money to Congress or the Continental Army. The French army in America had become a paper tiger, exciting everyone by its presence but engaging in no major baffles. The Americans had not won a major victory since Saratoga three years earlier, when Benedict Arnold had carried the day. Arnold had informed the British commander Sir Henry Clinton that without a major victory soon the American people would give up.¹

Brevet Major John Andre, Clinton's aide de camp and chief of intelligence, had acted as intermediary to help Clinton and Arnold prepare what Clinton later referred to as a "coup manque" which "had it succeeded all agree it would have finished the rebellion immediately..."² The surrender of West Point by Arnold would have given the British their long-sought strategic goal of control of the Hudson Valley, and a wedge splitting the country in two. According to Alexander Hamilton the capture of West Point was planned to also include the capture of George Washington and the French

commanding general Rochambeau at the same time, who were scheduled to be there then. Surely if such a double blow had occurred, there would not have been a United States after 1780.

Despite the importance of this episode, exactly how the plot was uncovered has remained shrouded in mystery. The tale as told at the time and retold in most history books says that the discovery was the accidental result of the search and robbery of Andre by three Americans



A 19th c. woodcut depicting Andre's capture.

who found plans to West Point, and other important documents in Arnold's handwriting, hidden in Andre's boot. However, Washington's chief of intelligence, Benjamin Tallmadge, said in his memoirs that "some things relating to the detention of Major Andre... are purposely omitted..."³ Despite being pestered by journalists to the day he died, Tallmadge refused to reveal more. He said only that, "There were only four

officers of our army who knew all the circumstances relating to the capture and detention of Major Andre." ⁴ After historian Morton Pennypacker in the twentieth century discovered that Robert Townsend of Oyster Bay was the long-sought Culper Jr., leader of Washington's New York spy ring, various historians turned their attention to how the ring may have discovered the plot. Outside Raynham Hall, the Townsend family home, an historical marker says that "information from here lead [sic] to Major Andre's capture..." This refers to a Townsend family tradition that Robert's younger sister, Sally, stumbled on a coded letter left by a mysterious visitor for Andre when he visited the home the week before his capture. Newly discovered evidence weighs against this theory, as well as against the accidental discovery story.

No doubt one of the four officers who would know what really lay behind the discovery of the plot was Washington's chief aide, Alexander Hamilton. Copies of his private report on the episode to President of Congress Henry Laurens lie in an archive at the main New York City Research Library at 42nd Street in Manhattan.⁵ Here, days after Andre's arrest, Hamilton informs the then chief officer of American government that, "There are particulars to which

This would have been June 1780, and clearly rules out the official story that the discovery was a lucky accident on the day of Andre's arrest, as well as the claim that any Townsends were the agents of discovery during Andre's visit in September. This timing is bolstered by a letter from Arnold's predecessor as West Point commander, General Robert Howe, who said Arnold asked him for the names of local American spies with whom he could work. Howe says that he wrote to the spies he had used but all refused to cooperate with Arnold, one insisting they had been warned that "a general officer high up was in compact with the enemy..."⁶ And it was June 15, 1780, that Tallmadge sent off an urgent letter to Governor Trumbull of Connecticut, who was in charge of supplying West Point's garrison, warning that the fort was in danger and that he should expect "some sudden and unexpected stroke," adding, "Depend on it, they will know your force and situation well, and for God's sake be guarded against such a movement..."⁷

hands of the enemy. Arnold was very anxious to ascertain from him the precise day of his return." This would have been Clinton's "coup manqué."

A decorative map of the Hudson River region, framed by a hand holding a dagger at the top right and a snake coiled around the bottom and left sides. The map shows the Hudson River flowing from the top left towards the bottom right, with various locations labeled along its banks. Key locations include Ft. Putnam, West Point, Robinson's House, Ft. Muncie, Ft. Clinton, Stony Point, Verplank's Pt., Smith's House, Haverstraw, Haverstraw Landing, Nyack, Tappan, and White Plains. Other features include the Continental Village, Peekskill, Croton R., Kings Bridge, North Castle, and the Hudson R. The map is titled 'HUDSON RIVER' and includes a scale bar for 5 miles.

sending it, he kept this copy for his files.⁸ Someone in New York who got a look at the files, when he returned in June 1780, could have seen this. We of course wonder who.

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while the official morals of the day demanded chastity outside of marriage, the mores of British officers abroad could be so relaxed that even Clinton openly kept his butler's daughter as a mistress, casually known to New Yorkers as Mistress Blundell. Countless British officers sired illegitimate children in America.¹²

The Hamilton-Laurens letter with its June 1780, discovery date bolsters the theory that some American agent was close enough to Andre to get a look at his files when he returned to New York. We know from surviving Culper ring correspondence that after Andre's execution, Benedict Arnold went on a rampage in New York trying to find the spies who had betrayed him. It suggests that there was something in the official story that Arnold knew to be a lie and that convinced him Andre's capture was no accident. The very fact that Washington, Tallmadge, and Hamilton concocted an elaborate, false cover story of how the scheme came to light, implies that there may have been an agent still in place, or vulnerable to the British, whom they were trying to protect. Nowhere during Andre's court martial was the evidence mentioned which Hamilton relates to Laurens in his contemporary letter. Whatever the Americans' true plan was after discovering Arnold's plot in advance, something went terribly wrong because Arnold got away (a consequence they would certainly not have intended). Culper Sr. wrote their chief

Tallmadge, after Arnold began his investigation in New York, "several people have been taken up, including one who has been ever serviceable to our correspondence."¹³ We know from a subsequent letter from Culper Sr. (Woodhull) that Townsend was emotionally devastated by the arrest of this particular person. After this Townsend refused to spy for some months. This led historians to assume that the member of the spy ring whose arrest emotionally incapacitated the otherwise steel-nerved Townsend was the woman Woodhull recruited, that she was probably incarcerated on a prison ship and died there, perhaps after giving birth to Townsend's child.¹⁴ Is there other evidence for or against this theory?

Partly contradicting this version is the fact that historian Pennypacker mistakenly identified another illegitimate child of Townsend's as the baby of the spy. Harry Macy has proven that that child was born two years later.¹⁵ Estelle Lockwood of Setauket has written that the entire story is false because women were not imprisoned on the infamous *Jersey* or other prison ships.¹⁶ However, I myself found several women's names on a prisoner's list, which does not even include those incarcerated in the last few years of the war (which records are missing).¹⁷ Furthermore Robert Townsend's financial records show that, beginning days after the arrest of this mysterious ring member, he began pulling huge sums of money out of every business he had access to -- a total of about

£700, which was a fortune then.¹⁸ It ended his business with Henry Oakman.¹⁹ Since Culper ring member Anna Strong of Setauket had previously bought her husband's freedom from the *Jersey*, it suggests that Townsend may have been engaging in a desperate effort to buy this ring member's freedom.²⁰ Every other major member of the ring is accounted for after the war. New York tailor Hercules Mulligan, who was briefly arrested at the same time, was released within days.²¹ Austin Roe, Abraham Woodhull, Anna Strong, Caleb Brewster, and Robert Townsend all remained free. There is no mention in Culper Ring correspondence of the arrested member's ever being released. After the arrest Townsend refused to spy again for six months, spending much of his time grieving at Woodhull's home.²²

Whatever the details of the truth may be, it seems clear that there is an as yet unrecognized individual in our collective past who alerted Washington in time to prevent the blow which would most likely have put an early end to our United States.

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MUSINGS ON MILK PAINT

by Noelle O'Connor

Humble milk paint has a long history both in America and other parts of the world. Proof of its use in antiquity are the wall paintings in the tomb of King Tutankhamun (ca. 1350 BCE). Museums and historical societies proudly acknowledge it (when known) in catalogue descriptions and gallery labels, and dealers in antiques are quick to point out its probable use on early objects. No doubt under many later layers of oil based and latex paints in old homes an unassuming milk paint layer remains. Yet it is not as well known or appreciated as it merits, although of late preservationists and artists have rekindled interest.

Paint itself consists of three component parts: pigment, solvent, and binder. The pigment is the ingredient which gives paint a particular color, the binders hold the pigments to the surface (wood, metal, etc.), and the solvents thin the binder to a state which can be easily worked. Pigments such as burnt sienna are made from specific earth which is ground, baked, and sifted to form fine powders. Solvents can be either water, oils (such as linseed) or other materials. Binders can be organic materials, such as milk, or inorganic compounds, as are found in many modern paints.

The colors of milk paint were organic pigments; red and yellow ochre from earthen deposits, lampblack from chimney soot, verdigris from scrapings of old copper and Prussian blue from animal blood. Lead white was

also used, and mixing and adding white achieved many differing values of color.

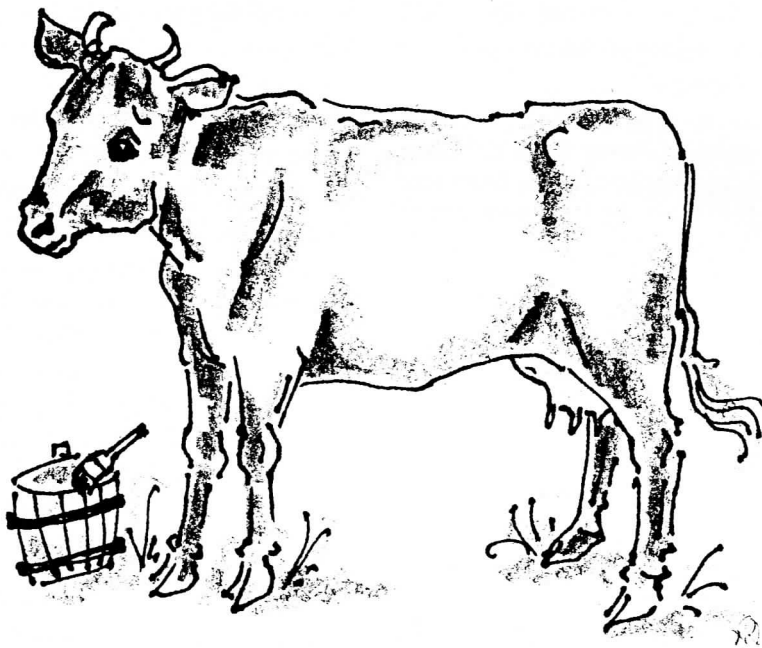
... it was painted with the paint left over from the barn. Mrs. Appleyard has been told that the paint was made out of Venetian red and skim milk. Hearsay is never good enough for her. Within a week she had mixed a batch herself and applied it to the outdoor dining table...In fact, it is the perfect Vermont paint — sturdy, loyal, as independent as a hog on ice, and stubborn about keeping its affairs to itself (p. 118, *Mrs. Appleyard's Year*).

The description of milk paint above is as near a perfect description as this author has found to date, with the polite exception of its olfactory aura when applied, which is, in a word, dedicated. A certain similarity to an aged fish comes to mind. The very strength and determination of proteins, which in other applications is a delight, becomes a convincing argument for painting *en plein air*. To be fair, not every milk paint artist has this reaction.

In the colonies methods of interior decoration varied according to date, wealth of the homeowner and

taste. Before 1725, paint was not widely used in colonial homes, as linseed oil was scarce and imported pigments expensive. Scenic wallpaper was advertised in the 1730s in colonial newspapers. After about 1750, the majority of wealthy homes were painted, inside and out. The first ready-mixed paints in America didn't appear until the late 19th century. Prior to that date, homeowners intent upon beautifying their domiciles and possessions had to pay local or itinerant limners and painters to apply their wares. Their recipes for paints were jealously





simple, homemade, economically feasible alternative for many.

Made from earth pigments mixed with skim milk (casein as the binder), milk paint was an ubiquitous alternative to expensive oil based paints, and had many properties which in certain lights might be considered to be preferable. It was durable, although flat, and had the benefit of fading over time rather than flaking. It could be made at home with a few simple ingredients, a batch at a time, and dried quickly. It was completely organic, and non-toxic when dry. When wet the water combined with lime could burn the skin, so caution was (and is) needed in its application. It has a very hard surface which wears well and was likened by one connoisseur to cement!

In medieval Europe milk paint was used for both interiors and exteriors of buildings

ranging from homes to guildhalls to castles. Caution was used in its application, especially to ceilings, as its strength in adherence, its "grip," might often result in cracked or damaged decorative plasterwork; for this reason, and others, painting was done by specialists trained in its use.

Popular in Europe, milk paint fell from favor once the Netherlandish artists perfected the technique of oil based pigments. A recipe from the late 18th c. in France was published extensively in this country after 1800, with varying results (p. 153, *Paint in America*). It should be noted that homemade milk paint is difficult to mix without diligence, and some streaking can occur if it is not stirred vigorously and often.

I think your correspondent in yours of September 12th (*New England Farmer*, 1828) has taken a too favorable

view of milk paint. This is a revival of a subject on which some French chemists indulged opinions, which, to say the least, were hardly realized... If so cheap a substitute for oil painting could be had, it would be a great benefit, extending a neatness of appearance through the country (p. 253, *Paint in America*).

Obviously this New Englander met with some of the less facile aspects of milk paint production and application and suffered a disappointment, notwithstanding his opinions of French chemists and the need for neatness in rural America!

A recipe written by Cader-de-Vaux was published in London in 1801, and involved the following materials: two quarts of skim milk mixed with six ounces hydrated lime putty, four ounces of a drying oil (caraway, linseed, or nut), five pounds of Spanish white (calcium carbonate pigment) and colored pigments, "if desired" (p. 253, *ibid*). Additional materials were suggested for exterior application.

For laying on of your Colering, for outdore work it must be mixed with linseed oil, but for indore work it may be mixed with Strong Beer or Milk" (account book, 1801, p. 255, *ibid*.)

A few of the benefits of milk paint are its ease of manufacture, its deep and rich colors which, although flat (milk paint cannot give a lustrous finish on its own), holds deeper hues than oil paints (which often yellowed with age), its versatility and its benign

nature when cured or dried. Streaking, uneven application, the unattractive odor when wet, and the caution needed when applying the wet paint to avoid lime burns, are and were a few drawbacks. Milk paint also has a powerful adherence to its foundation; it can literally pull up veneers if used on plywood, or former layers of paint if painted over a latex paint, for example. Nowadays it is recommended that it be used on a virgin surface. It is recommended for use in homes for persons with extreme allergies, for example, to latex and petroleum products, both of which are used in modern paints.

In colonial America, milk paint was a relatively inexpensive way to decorate and preserve buildings which could be produced at home. Some furniture was painted using milk paints, such as chests, tables, benches and shelving. A few early American homes had milk painted baseboards and stairs. Some surprising effects could be and were achieved by early decorators, such as large black polkadots on white ceilings, painted in milk paint. Milk paint was also used to paint the interiors of cabins in sailing ships, and many modern shipwrights and model builders still use it. The Shakers, an American religious sect mostly active in the 19th century, used milk paint extensively on their handsome furnishings.

In short, this wonderful paint has proven itself a consistent

participant in the protecting and decorating of homes and furnishings, with its idiosyncrasies often becoming part of its not inconsiderable charm. How fortunate it is that much of it remains to be appreciated and carefully treasured, as Mrs. Appleyard admonishes: "In friendship and in painting," she says, "save the surface and you save all." (p. 118, *Mrs. Appleyard's Year*).

For the modern milk painter, the best source for the most authentic paint in powdered form is the Old Fashioned Milk Paint Co., P.O. Box 222, 436 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450; 508-448-6336. They carry a wide range of colonial colors and provide helpful brochures concerning the properties of the paint and how to achieve the best results.

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A CLERGY FAMILY'S LIFE IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

by Arlene Goodenough

A book written by Ralph H. Wiley, entitled *Preacher's Son*, gives a wonderful glimpse into the life of a rector of a small church, Grace Church, in a fairly small community, Massapequa, at the end of the last century.

In it he describes the day to day activities of his father, the Rev. William Wiley, and his wife and six children. The reader is immediately struck by how busy things were for Mrs. Wiley. Her husband had a position of great prestige in the hamlet and she was expected to keep up appearances, while working very hard. She made all the clothes for herself, for all her six children when they were small, and for the girls until they left home. She had a garden and grew and canned all their vegetables, aided by the children and even the Rector when necessary. Jams were made from

wild berries and such. All breads and cakes were homemade.

Breakfast began with a sixty second prayer service and consisted of oatmeal with heavy cream, ham or bacon, eggs, and pancakes. Sometimes they had steak and potatoes. They had their own cow and pig and chickens, also Mrs. Wiley's responsibility, and two Collie dogs. She also grew flowers for the church altar, and played the organ on Sundays!

Sometimes clergy from the city would bicycle out and Mrs. Wiley was expected to provide lunch. There was always plenty of ice for the icebox, which was harvested locally in the wintertime. The Wileys got theirs for free, being one of their "perks." Mrs. Wiley was often given pieces of material for the children's clothes, and sometimes it wasn't especially

attractive.

She was expected to doff her apron and put on her good dress and hat to visit in the neighborhood. Many of the residents at the time were very wealthy and had house servants, gardeners, and coachmen or chauffeurs. It is interesting to note that the Wileys were most friendly with Mr. and Mrs. George Stanton Floyd-Jones, who were Roman Catholics.

The people with money mostly stayed in Massapequa only during the months of June, July, August, and September, spending the rest of the year in the more exciting New York City. Ralph Wiley had good friends among the boys of his own age, and he missed them when they left.

The Reverend Wiley had a lot of responsibility. He ran the church, with no vestry and most definitely no

women's groups! If there was some financial need in the parish, he would have a quiet word with one of the well-off members and it would be taken care of. All his children sang in the choir and when he went to visit Grace Chapel, Mrs. Wiley was expected to be at his side. Grace Chapel was built by members of the German-American farm

cont'd on p. 21



Grace Church Rectory, where the Wileys lived, as it appeared in 1998.



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

Reading an inventory from a 17th century estate in connection with my work as a museum volunteer, I found a curious grouping of listings. On a more or less evenly divided list of a dozen tools of the hammer, saw, and plane variety was the item "1 plow." I thought that entry was probably to correct an oversight occurring when the inventory taker was listing the agricultural articles and missed the plow, or that some other consideration operated to introduce the plow out of order. An associate, however, believes the "plow" is some sort of craftsman's tool, although she can't tell me what sort. Who is right here?

Puzzled in Garden City



Plow

It is not at all unusual for inventory items in an early household to be listed in a scrambled

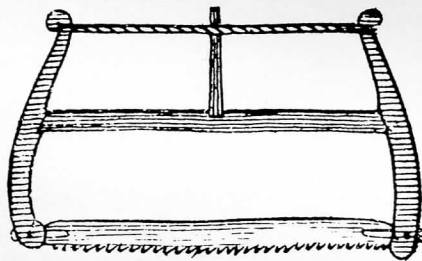
fashion, but I am nevertheless inclined to agree with your associate. One of the objects described by the word "plow," today, is a woodworker's plane used to make straight, square-cornered channels in the surface or edge of a board. In the circumstances this seems to be the most likely interpretation of the entry, but of course we will never know for sure.



Whipsaw

This inquiry from "Puzzled in Garden City" is only one of several about 17th century tools that have come to your Uncle Peleg's attention recently. The bulk of these occurred in conversations and we made a note of them for later use. "Puzzled"'s letter suggests that it is now later, so here for the benefit of our readers who are not "tool buffs," are the answers to several recent tool questions.

"What is a whipsaw?" - These were long, two-man saws used in turning tree trunks into lumber.



Tenon Saw

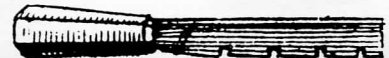
"What does 'tennant saw' mean?" - This is a curious one. "Tennant" is a rendition of the word we know as "tenon." Saws of this name, stretched in a wooden frame, were used by the

carpenter to saw out the giant tenons of a timber building frame when making mortise and tenon joints. A handsaw with a metal stiffener along its back was used by the cabinetmaker in constructing similar, but much smaller, tenons for furniture and other fine woodwork. In ancient inventories the two forms can confuse the investigator, unless it is remembered that the bigger saw usually cost considerably more than the smaller.



Scew-former

"What is a 'scew-former?" - Formers, according to Joe Moxon, were used for the early heavy work in jobs like mortise-making, before the paring chisel was employed to bring the work to exact dimensions and smoothness. A scew (skew) former has its edge at an acute angle and is used for cleaning out angled cuts.



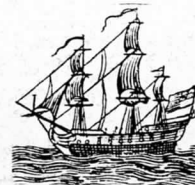
Saw Rest

"How was a 'saw rest' used?" - When "setting" and sharpening most saws, every other tooth is bent slightly to the right or left to make the "kerf" slightly wider than the back of the saw, to prevent binding. The saw rest is a notched lever used to bend the saw teeth.

"How was a 'hook pin' used?" - Also called a draw-bore, a hook pin is a temporary fastening to test a joint. It will be replaced by a permanent pin when the work is assembled.



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 TO PUBLISH AN OYSTER SONGSTER!

The Oyster Bay Historical Society is in the preparatory stages of publishing a booklet of songs about oysters and Oyster Bay entitled, "An Oyster Songster." One might well ask how much music our town and its namesake have inspired, but the answer is... more than one would think!

Over the course of three centuries of history, Oyster Bay has been mentioned in a variety of song. Perhaps the earliest is a Revolutionary War ballad about Colonel Nathaniel Heard, sung to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." In the 1800s, Samuel Youngs penned "Where Are the Stones," a ballad which asked, "Where are the stones which mark the bones of those who die in Oyster Bay?"

In 1846, a verse attributed to Caleb Wright, to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne," decried the attempt to change the name of Oyster Bay to the Indian word "Syosset." With the turn of the new century, the name of Oyster Bay was incontrovertibly set as a place name in our national vocabulary as the home of our

twenty-sixth president, Theodore Roosevelt.

"T.R." was celebrated in over two hundred songs, one of them even entitled

"Down in Oyster Bay."

One of our greatest song writers, Cole Porter, mentioned Oyster Bay, not once, but twice in song. Every one knows that "Birds

do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it," but those in the

know, know also that "Oysters down in Oyster Bay do it." Besides the famous "Let's Do It," Cole Porter also wrote a humorous parody of an oyster with upward class aspirations entitled "The Tale Of The Oyster."

Novelty songs by other composers include "What Kind Of A Noise Annoys An Oyster?" and "You're Not the Only Oyster in the Stew." Lastly, in the 1970s, Billy Joel sang, "From a town known as Oyster Bay, Long Island, rode a boy with a six-pack in his hand..." in "The Ballad Of Billy the Kid."



Claire Bellerjeau of Pleasant Valley Gallery (with book) was one of many volunteers who gave a much-needed hand at the Society's Annual Maritime Fair in September. Thanks to all!

The new, updated, handsomely-bound edition of the Society publication *Walls Have Tongues: Oyster Bay Buildings and Their Stories* is now available, just in time for the holidays! Pick up a copy of this unique publication. \$30 until January 1; \$35 thereafter. Members receive 10% off!

Perhaps our bivalve town has inspired other undiscovered gems, and the reader who knows of any other songs about oysters or Oyster Bay is urged to contact the Historical Society, so that they can be added to the project.

SENATOR MARCELLINO AGAIN SPONSORS SOCIETY GRANT

Senator Carl Marcellino has once again arranged for the awarding of a \$7500 grant to the Oyster Bay Historical Society for 1999-2000. According to Director Tom Kuehhas who made the

request to the Senator, the Society will seek to build on last year's objectives for the grant, which were to computerize the Society's holdings and for the installation of new exhibits in the museum, as well as traveling exhibits. "Last year's grant allowed us to make some progress in these areas. We're hopeful that even more headway can be made with the money from this grant."

The Society wishes to express their sincere appreciation to Senator Marcellino for all his efforts on their behalf.

CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Back in September, the society was invited to be a part of the celebration marking the 100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The veterans in attendance lent dignity to the occasion and honor to their uniforms. The society is in the early stages of compiling information to be used in an encyclopedia about and for Bethpage. They are seeking accurate and concise comments/recollections about people, places and events that have shaped the history of their community.

FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"The Origins of Aircraft Manufacturing in Farmingdale, 1917-1928" was the title of an illustrated lecture presented by Roy Douglas at a meeting of the society in late November at the Farmingdale Public Library. Mr. Douglas is a longtime officer in the Long Island Republic Airport Society and a noted researcher and writer on regional history. He has also contributed many articles to the *Long Island Forum* and other publications. On Oct. 20th, the society marked its 36th anniversary with the annual installation dinner, held at Captain Andy's Restaurant in Farmingdale.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS

Durable board member, Gene Bryson, recently celebrated his 50th year as a volunteer firefighter with the Massapequa Fire Department. The official founding date for the department is January 10, 1910. The annual Holiday Open House is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 12th, from 2 to 4 P.M. at the society's

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

headquarters in the Old Grace Church. The venerable church will be decked out in Victorian splendor, and there will be music, refreshments and even a visit from Santa! Members of all historical societies are welcome to attend.

SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

To commemorate the recent past, the rotating exhibit is entitled: "Hits and Misses -- A Look Back at Our 20 Years." The staff of talented energetic volunteers has prepared the museum for its October re-opening, including the gift shop. The museum is normally open on Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 P.M. Sea Cliff is also a wonderful village for informal walking tours, where a wide variety of historic architecture can be seen.

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

To honor the 20th Century, a display of fashions spanning the past 100 years began its first phase at the Lauder Museum back in September. The initial segment covered the 1900-1919 era, and in October the '20s and '30s were featured, followed by the '40s and '50s during November. The exhibit has been organized by Ethel MacGill, the museum's clothing curator, assisted by Virginia Breen. Also, many

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.

new books for young people have been added to the Gift Shop's inventory. All just one dollar, plus tax.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ISLIP HAMLET

This is their first appearance in the *Freeholder* and all readers are invited to participate in their Sixth Annual Holiday House Tour on Sunday, Dec. 6th, from noon to 4 p.m. Ticket donations are \$15 for adults and can be reserved by calling the society at 581-9540 (the Suffolk area code is now 631). In other news, the Islip Main Street Restoration Trust committee, chaired by Rob Haedrich, has raised \$55,000 of their \$60,000 goal for the installation of 45 lamp posts in the Islip community.

"WASHINGTON IN GLORY: AMERICA IN TEARS"

Review of the newly opened exhibition at Fraunces Tavern Museum, 54 Pearl Street, New York, 212-425-1778
Curator Mary Anne Caton
October 8, 1999 — April 5, 2000
by Noelle O'Connor

This year, 1999, marks the 200th anniversary of the death of George Washington. The current exhibition at the Fraunces Tavern Museum both commemorates this event and explores its significance in terms of the political and cultural lives of early Americans. Prints, sculpture, textiles, ceramics, jewelry, paintings and silver, all relating to the theme of George Washington, his death, apotheosis, importance to the Revolution, and founding of our country, as well as more general

themes pertinent to the time, such as medical practices, mourning, cemeteries and memorials, all contribute to a rich and varied look at America in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

What constitutes a hero? Is it courage, leadership, integrity, commitment, grace? What is it inherent in humankind which needs a hero? How do we honor our fallen heroes? Our loved ones? Why is it important to do so? This exhibition answers some of these questions by portraying America's national culture, both contemporaneous with Washington, as well as long after his death in 1799.

Persons of all ages will find much of interest here amongst the seventy five objects composing the exhibition. A bust of George Washington after Houdin, made of plaster colored to look like terra cotta, is at the entrance to the exhibition. Perhaps more than any other image, this sculpture conveys the integrity and dignity of our first President, as well as a sense of the depth of his compassionate humanity. Many of the smaller objects, such as mourning rings and commemorative medals, are housed in cases thoughtfully equipped with magnifying glasses, with which one may more easily



"Sacred to the Memory of the Illustrious George Washington," Enoch Gridley after John Coles, Jr. Mourning Piece for George Washington, 1810, Engraving with etching on paper Collection of Fraunces Tavern Museum

peruse the artist's skill. A handsome selection of prints portrays projected commemorative architecture, and of especial interest is the original plan for the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., complete with the proposed Greek Temple at its base. "Washington's Death Bed," a print after an engraving by H.S. Sadd, after T.H. Matteson, gives a more personal portrayal of the last days of Washington, who died of septic sore throat.

The range of commemorative objects displayed makes it evident that, as Curator Mary Anne Canton remarked, "There was everything from inexpensive penny broadsides (such as "Lady Washington's Lament," on which the letters "s" and "g"

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

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

were printed backwards) to the elaborate and expensive mourning ring with the image of George Washington." Neither was it of paramount importance that these objects be made in the USA — there are printed textiles from Glasgow and export porcelains from China, as well as works of local manufacture. A handsome creamware pitcher belonging to the museum depicts Washington's ascent into Heaven, with the words "Washington in Glory: America in Tears," taken from a eulogy to Washington and now become the title of the exhibition. After viewing the plethora of objects and the sentiments they express, the overwhelming sense of loss his death represented to the American people becomes clearly evident.

Younger visitors will enjoy the interactive "vignettes" where they will see such curiosities as the tools of early medicine, including leeches (fear not—here made of rubber and firmly screwed to the display), a doctor's stethoscope and bag, and a vignette of a (closed) coffin in a parlor. Mourning jewelry, funeral spoons, and coffin plates are also on display, underlining the

importance early in our history of commemoration of the dead.

Three gravestones on view portray the calligraphic styles and the sculptural motifs prevalent at the time, especially the stone of Michael Cressap, 1776, a captain in the Revolutionary Army, whose stone is topped with a bas relief winged death's head. This cautionary image is not so much a grisly skull as a plump yet sober visage, strongly reminiscent of a bewigged judge. Still more ghoulish delight can be found in the display of a map of lower Manhattan, wherein early burial grounds are marked under flaps with black coffins; some remain, most now are themselves buried under buildings.

If the visitor becomes overwhelmed with the reminders of mortality, the first floor of the museum, on which is located the famous "Long Room" wherein Washington bade farewell to his officers, is a heartening sight. The tavern has been arranged as it might have been in the late 18th century. Chairs are drawn up to tables littered with glasses and decanters, as well as clay pipes, and a punch bowl on the tavern's counter is ready to serve. A cloak hangs from a hook near the door, a foot warmer sits at the base of a chair, ready to remove the chill from a weary pair of feet, and what Benjamin Franklin proposed as our national bird (a turkey) sits atop a table ready to be carved. Besides being a frequent haunt of our first President, the tavern

is built on New York's first landfill!

Young George Washington in his teenage years copied out a list of rules for civil behavior and proper deportment. The original of the list was a text from the 16th century. Besides outlining the basic rules of courtesy and personal conduct, rule number 110, the final rule, seems to foreshadow the heroic qualities which this exhibition so aptly portrays, and which both the public and the private Washington strove to live by: "Labour to keep alive in your Breast that Little Spark of Celestial Fire Called Conscience." Perhaps that endeavor, entwined with character and talent, created the American hero whose simple but perfect epitaph is portrayed on the illustration accompanying this review, "a GREAT and GOOD MAN."

Fraunces Tavern Museum is open to the public Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.- 4:45; weekends, 12-4 p.m. Admission is \$2.50 for adults, and \$1.00 for students and seniors; special rates and programs available for groups and schools. This exhibition will close on April 5, 2000.

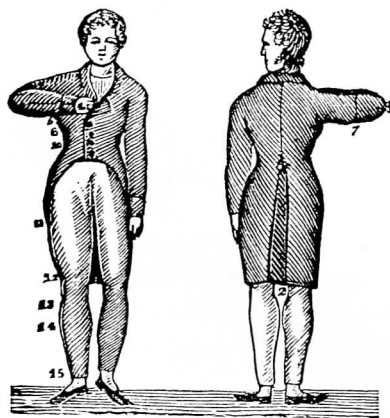
Interested in a map of Oyster Bay in 1833, or a map of the Gold Coast Estates c. 1920? Well, you're in luck! The Oyster Bay Historical Society has what you're looking for! The Oyster Bay map is available for \$5, while the Gold Coast map is \$7.50; shipping is additional.

YESTERDAY IN OYSTER BAY

Alice Delano Weekes



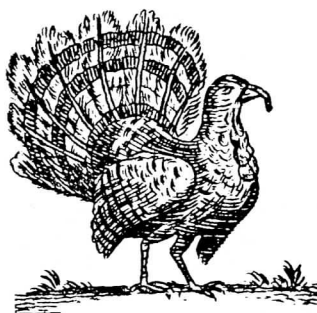
When John Adam first went to school in the old Academy at Oyster Bay, and was asked his name by the other boys, they all declared it impossible that his name could be Adam; all the Adams perished in the Flood, they said. His name must be Noah. So Noah he was called, not only then, but for the rest of his life by those who were his school mates in those old days.



Mr. Edward Weeks was a short man and had often tried to reason with his tailor, to get him to lower his price on account of the small amount of material needed to make his clothes. But to no purpose, "It's not the material we charge for, Mr. Weeks," the tailor would say, "It's the work."

At last Mr. Weeks bethought him of a way to get even. "I'm bringing my nephew here tomorrow," he said one day, "I want you to make him a suit like mine for the same price." The bargain was made to the

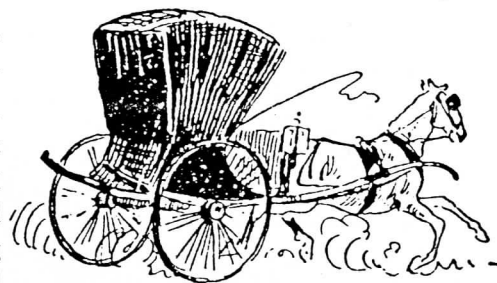
satisfaction of both, but the tailor was much aghast the next day when Mr. Weeks arrived with Charles Coles, a perfect specimen of that giant race, six feet four inches in height, and broad in proportion, appearing even larger beside his small uncle. Remonstrance was in vain. "You always tell me," insisted Mr. Weeks, "that it's the work you charge for, not the material!"



Mr. Benjamin Swan had the generous habit of giving a turkey on Thanksgiving Day to every man employed about his place, or who did work for him. On one occasion, one of these men shortly after brought him a bill for one dollar and fifty cents.

"What's this for, Smith," said Mr. Swan, "I have just paid your bill."

"Wall now Mr. Swan, you recollect that 'ar turkey you give me a spell back? I had to come and fetch it, and I couldn't do nothin' else that day, so I just charged it up to you!"



When telegrams first began to arrive in Oyster Bay they were delivered by small boys on foot for fixed prices for different distances. The Swan price [Cove Neck] was seventy-five cents, and as they had many messages they found it an expensive luxury, so that they arranged that all messages, unless important, were to be placed in their post office box. But though the telegram might not be important, the seventy-five cents was, and the Swans were frequently aware of the telegraph boy dodging behind trees to avoid the family eye, to earn his fee.

Once Mr. Edward Swan, in a benevolent mood, overtook a small boy toiling up what was then the sandy Latten hill.

"Have a ride, Sonny," he called out cheerfully. The boy climbed in, and drove with him as far as his gate. "I'm turning in here," said Mr. Swan, "You'll have to get out."

"Yes, Mr. Swan," said the boy, "Here's a telegram for you, seventy-five cents, please."

Tradition says that Mr. Swan thereupon took the small boy by the slack of his garments, walked across the road, and dropped him in the 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

by Lee Myles

Some of the "Dutch" of this chapter in our continuing exploration of the influences from the Low Countries on England and later, through her colonies, on America, were Flemings. Others were Hollanders. If two quotations offered here are to be depended on, the Low Countries gave us a song that might almost be called our musical signature.

In 1946, Baron Joseph Van Der Elst, a Fleming by birth, was in residence in his "second home, the United States of America," where he published an important look at the history of Flemish art, *The Last Flowering of the Middle Ages*. In that fascinating work he made this statement:

In Breugel's day it was customary for bands of Flemish threshers to cross the Channel to work the English harvest. These Flemings took with them one of their old harvest-

ing songs - originally a hymn, which had been sung in Italian churches and later in those of the Low Countries. It had been turned to secular use and was one of the songs sung in the fields of Flanders when the harvesters swung their scythes...In the course of time the Flemings fitted doggerel verses to the tune [which], falling on unaccustomed English ears were re-translated to ... doggerel about a Yankee Doodle Dandy."



We must regret the good Baron did not set down for us the country doggerel. But perhaps someone else did.

Mary Mapes Dodge, for more than a quarter of a century the editor of the much-admired chil-

dren's magazine *St. Nicholas*, is perhaps most famous for having written, in 1865, the children's classic *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates*. In that work she commented on the frequent great differences between things Dutch and things American. And then she said:

In short, almost the only familiar thing we Yankees can meet with in Holland is the harvest-song, which is quite popular there, though no linguist could translate it. We must shut our eyes and listen only to the tune, which I leave you to guess.

Yankee Didee Duddl Down
Didee duddl dawnter:
Yankee viver voover,vown
Botermelk Tawnter!"

Eighty years apart, two writers suggested that our beloved "Yankee Doodle" was a Low Countries harvest song. What do you think?

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Fame is Fleeting

In every age some human beings become famous, or at least well-known. Of these some retain their fame through many generations, while others are more swiftly relegated to the trash-heap of history. Today with help from the press and other media we are introduced during our lifetimes to thousands of the famous, from a span of many centuries. To learn how many of these introductions we remember at any point in our lives, and why, might tell us something about ourselves or might only provide an entertaining session of nostalgia. Here are some names you may remember. How do you rate on recall?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Benjamin Thompson | 6. Allen Pinkerton |
| 2. William Marcy Tweed | 7. Aaron Willard |
| 3. Mary Todd | 8. Frances Perkins |
| 4. Freeman Gosden | 9. Legs Diamond |
| 5. Spangler Arlington Brough | 10. Thelma Todd |

Answers will be found on p. 23

Perhaps you know that in Provence there is a long tradition of Santon-making. The Santons are the little figures with which the area around a crèche or manger scene is populated. Beside the Holy Family, shepherds, and the three kings, Santon makers, using native clay, model a large group of local inhabitants who are shown gazing in wonderment as they approach the manger on every side.

We assume that John Mason Neale (1818-1866) was addressing women as well as men when he wrote:

Good Christian Men, Rejoice
 Good Christian Men, Rejoice
 With heart and soul and voice!
 Now ye hear of endless bliss:
 Joy! Joy!
 Jesus Christ was born for this
 He hath op'd the heavenly door,
 And man is blessed
 forevermore.
 Christ was born for this.

George Wither (1588-1667) had been a captain in Cromwell's army, but that doesn't seem to have soured him on Christmas as witness this verse:

So now is come our
 joyful'st feast,
 Let every man be jolly
 Each room with ivy-
 leaves is dressed,
 And every post with
 holly
 Though some churls at
 our mirth repine
 Round your forehead
 garlands twine,
 Drown sorrow in a cup
 of wine,
 Let us all be merry.

The use of holly, ivy, bay, and other greens of the season for decorating, in celebration of Christmas, was apparently as common in 12th century London as it has been in 20th century New York. According to a letter written at the time, every man's house and all the parish churches were decked with greenery.

Bring 'Em Back Alive

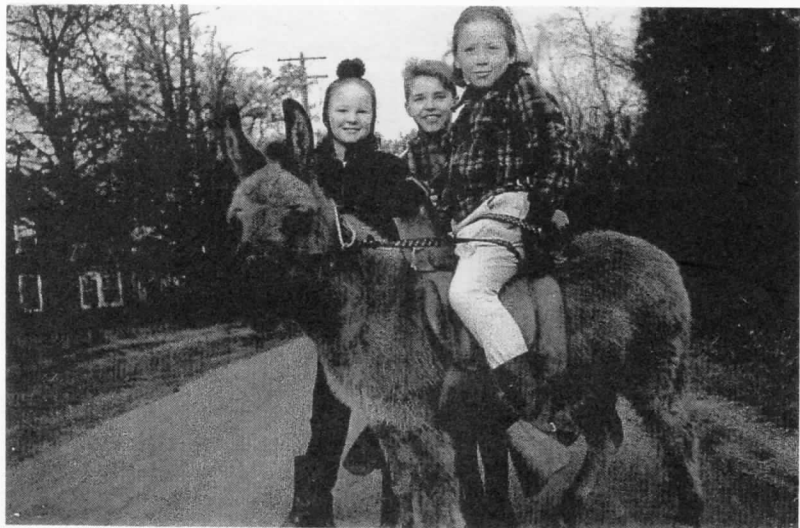
by Lillian Rumfield Bryson

Riding an African pygmy donkey was slow going, especially since I had to take turns with my brother and my cousin. The trail went from my grandparents' house on Front Street in Massapequa Park, over the railroad tracks at Unqua crossing, and down Sunrise Highway to the entrance of Frank Buck's Jungle Camp. His motto was "Bring Em Back Alive", and on that Spring day in 1942, when I was 12 years old, that's just what we were doing.

Built on twenty wooded acres, the zoo came to Massapequa in 1934. To the east was Carman Mill Road, Unqua Road (or Strikers Lane/Road as it was

called) was its western line, and the land bordered on estates to the south. Along Sunrise Highway were two long stone and cement buildings with tile roofs. They housed elephants, lions, tigers and other wild animals. Inside the elephant house, tethered giants swayed from side to side reaching their trunks to gently pick peanuts from outstretched hands. Caged lions and tigers shared their house with the hyenas, and we kids knew that the best place to stand at feeding time was in front of the hyena cage. The scent of raw meat turned their pacing to frenzy, their call to high-pitched laughter, and we would join in the laughter with great glee!

My father had lassoed the African pygmy donkey in a neighbor's yard as it brayed its dismay, or perhaps its pleasure at having escaped from the zoo. What excitement! Tied to a pole in my grandpa's barn, it brayed all night. In the morning we called the zoo. The memory of that adventure ranks high with the tale of the wiry gray monkey who wreaked havoc inside my Aunt Trudy's car when she tried to



The author astride the Zoo's burro.

drive it back to the zoo, and the charming chimp who sat in the rocker on grandma's porch, dropping banana peels and spitting apple cores. He and I held hands as we walked up Second Avenue, where he ventured inside our house to sit on Mama's ironing board. The reward for returning one of the zoo's inhabitants was a handful of free passes. We rarely paid admission.

On nice days, some of the outside cages held colorful birds, others held colorful lion-tamers snapping red handled whips, like those sold at the concession. I wondered what the sad looking orangutan was thinking about as he stood alone and solemn in a circular cage; ancient looking face pressed to the bars, dark eyes watching us...watching him. Away from the highway, the big monkey mountain, with all of its hiding places, was home to chattering, comical, big-eyed little creatures who often behaved as people did. It was surrounded by a moat that held mostly peanut shells, and a cement wall where we could lean and watch away the best part of a Sunday afternoon.

The elephants were named Maude, Cutie, Trixie, Dolly, Luna and Hank. My favorite was the smallest of them; was her name Daisy? At the outside ring, with a green wooden bottle held high in her trunk, she would stagger the circle to the strains of "Three O'Clock in the Morning." On summer days, when the breeze was right, the loudspeakers wafted the strains of that music over the roar of the lions and through the open windows of our house on Second Avenue. Strapped high on the back of a huge lumbering elephant, a

wicker basket-like seat called a howdah held six people. Led by a uniformed trainer with a long stick that prodded the great beast behind its big ears, the elephant waited while we climbed the steps to the platform. There we were handed into the basket by a white faced clown, and holding on for dear life, we jostled along as the howdah creaked and tipped with each giant step. We could see the refreshment stand from up there, but we had no money, and only the smells of hot dogs and popcorn were free.

Bright flags on the tall entrance flagpole could be seen from a distance. It was built like the mast on a ship, and monkeys sometimes escaped from the mountain to climb high on the cross arm looking for freedom. Massapequa was well wooded then, but often, before they could pick a tree, the local volunteer firemen would be called to raise their ladders and help them back to captivity. On the days when we saw Frank Buck, he was usually surrounded by grownups. He wore a pith helmet and jungle pants with high leather boots, and I think he had a mustache. We were in awe of him. He was handsome I thought, but didn't appear more ready, in my mind, to bring them back alive than my father or Aunt Trudy.

By 1944 elephants were no longer being exercised on Unqua Road. Sunrise Highway had become a secondary road, and due to the war, gas rationing meant that "people couldn't drive out to see us anymore," said T.A. Loveland, business partner to Frank Buck. Besides that, food rationing made it "tough to get bananas for the monkeys." And so, Frank Buck's Jungle Camp was no more. Today, behind a

modern facade building on Sunrise Highway (Lucille Roberts/Kids 'R Us) are the memorable remains of stone and cement. And still, on days when the breeze is right, if I listen hard, I can almost hear the strains of "Three O'Clock in the Morning."



Edward Payton Weston
America's Greatest Walker
Spent A Lifetime On Foot!

by Rick Robinson

Beginning in 1867, Edward Payton Weston quickly established himself as America's premier pedestrian. In that year, at the age of 28, he made a wager that he could walk from Portland, Maine to Chicago, Illinois -- a distance of 1,326 miles -- in twenty-six days.

With six "judges" and a flock of reporters accompanying him in horse-drawn carriages, Weston reached his destination two hours ahead of the allotted time. He quickly became the nation's most celebrated pedestrian, or

"ped," as competitive walkers were generally known.

Competitive walking for men and women became extremely popular in the late 1870s, when indoor contests were all the rage. A female ped from England by the name of Madame Anderson participated in a series of indoor events against other women walkers here in the United States. These lengthy walks -- staged on oval wooden tracks -- drew overflow crowds and betting was rampant among the spectators.

In 1876, Edward Weston went to England to walk against the British champion, known only as Perkins. The two met in a 24-hour race for a winner's purse of \$25,000. After sixteen hours the Englishman dropped out, leaving Weston to complete the grueling event and take the prize.

Competitive pedestrians in those days walked rapidly, but did not use the exaggerated heel-and-toe technique of today's race walkers. Weston and others wore rather heavy leather high-top boots, plus knickers and other clothing appropriate for taking a long walk. In 1909, Weston walked from New York City to San Francisco -- a distance of 3,895 miles -- in 104 days. Then, to demonstrate that he was still King of the Peds, he set out from Los Angeles and reached New York (3,600 miles) in 76 days. This final long-distance trek of 7,495 miles was achieved when Weston was 70 years old!

Late in his career, Weston paid a visit to Oyster Bay, where he delivered a lecture at the Masonic Temple and spent his spare time strolling through the village

chatting with its inhabitants. He continued to walk informally and deliver lectures until his late 80s, when he was struck by an automobile in Manhattan and seriously injured.

The oldest active long-distance walker was probably British-born James Hocking of Teaneck, New Jersey. In 1952, on his 95th birthday, Hocking covered a course from his home to Suffern, New York in 11 hours and 45 minutes. Earlier in his career, at the young age of 68 in 1923, he bested Edward Weston's New York to San Francisco mark by making the trip in 75 days.

The Post Rider

continued from p.2

which large metal containers were submerged holding water that froze into 300 lb. "cakes" of ice. These containers were lifted out of the tank by an overhead traveling crane and the 300 lb. "cakes" were emptied into a large insulated storage room, where the delivery men came to fill up their trucks (In the early days there were only wagons.).

Around 1930, my father and a group of ice plant owners from Nassau and Suffolk counties decided to join together, and

formed the Long Island Ice Co., which is still operating out of Riverhead and deals mainly in fuel oil, as far as I know. My father retired shortly thereafter.

I've contacted my older brother and my sister to see if they had any old pictures or information other than I have related here, but unfortunately they weren't able to contribute anything further.

There is a person who might add to my recollections. She was employed by my father for a number of years as the office manager and I know that my father thought very highly of her. Her name is Grace Tedesco and she lives in Oyster Bay. Her father, Jim Micco, [pictured below] also worked for my father for years and was one of his most faithful employees. When my father merged his business into L.I. Ice Co. he stipulated that the Bayville ice route should be given to Jim Micco in perpetuity and, as I recall, Jim operated the route as long as he was able.

I hope that this will be of some help to you. Sorry it doesn't cover many details, but we were quite young during the period in question and our recollections are somewhat limited.

Geo. Dean



A WALKING TOUR OF OYSTER BAY VILLAGE, CIRCA 1830

by Michael J. Hanophy, Ph.D.

We have all had the experience of walking down the streets of our hometowns and remembering the way they used to be. We can name the families that occupied old homes, describe the houses and businesses now gone, and tell when the newer buildings were constructed, thus providing our listeners with verbal snapshots of neighborhoods as they were ten or twenty or fifty years in the past. Unfortunately, such snapshots are rarely preserved. When photographs or maps of an area do exist, we still may find that long periods of time are unaccounted

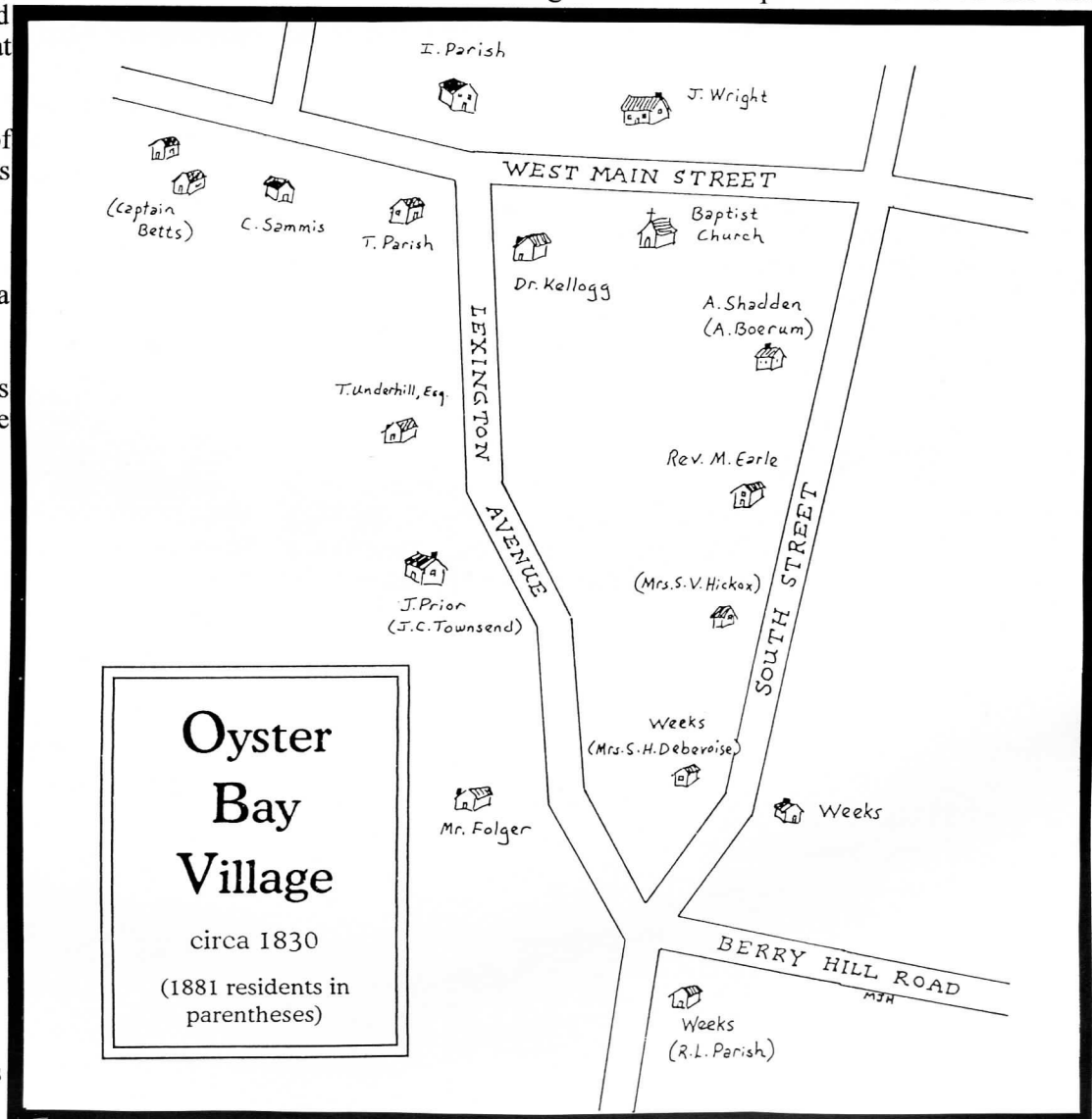
for and that the changing faces of communities go unrecorded. Sometimes, however, a verbal snapshot does find its way into the written record.

In the August 27, 1881, edition of the *East Norwich Enterprise*, the editor printed a description of a trip around a block in Oyster Bay village as it had been fifty years before. The newspaper's 1830 tour

started at the home of a dressmaker, Miss or Mrs. Abby Shadden (actually spelled Chadeayne), on the west side of South Street, occupied in 1881 by stagecoach proprietor Amos Boerum. The editor noted that this house "no doubt [had] been rebuilt more than once in those 50 years." To the north from Shadden's, there were no other buildings listed on the west side of South Street or around the corner on the south side of West Main Street, until one reached the Baptist Church. Across the street from the church was the house of Mr. John Wright and

immediately to the west was the home of Isaac Parish, "father of Richard." There were "one or two" houses opposite the Parish homestead on the south side of West Main. In 1881, Captain Betts was living on that site. Charlie Sammis' place was right nearby, unchanged from 1830 to 1881.

In 1830, homes stood on each corner of the intersection of Lexington Avenue and West Main Street. Townsend Parish, brother of Richard ("we believe"), lived on the west corner, while Dr. Kellogg occupied the home on the east



corner, later commonly referred to as the Thomas Smith place. To the south on Lexington, the home of Townsend Underhill, Esq. stood on the right. The house had undergone many "tasteful improvements" between 1830 and 1881. Just down the road was James Prior's house, owned by James C. Townsend in the 1880s. Further along, a Mr. Folger resided in what later became known as the Adam place.

At the intersection of Lexington Avenue and South Street were three large homes owned by different members of the Weeks family. By 1881, the Weekses were gone but two of the houses remained: the "commodious mansion" of R. L. Parish on the southeast corner of Berry Hill Road and South Street, and the "beautiful property" of Mrs. S. H. Debevoise on the west side of South Street. (The third Weeks home, across the road from Mrs. Debevoise, had been removed to make way for a barn.)

Our 1830 tour proceeded along the west side of South Street to a house just north of the Weeks-Debevoise place. This was the site of the 1881 home of Mrs. Samuel V. Hickox. A few rods north was the residence of the Baptist minister, Marmaduke Earle, "a very excellent man and universally beloved by all those who loved the Lord and His cause better than dry creeds or senseless forms." Today that same building, located on a different site, is the home of the Oyster Bay Historical Society. It is currently known as the Earle-Wightman House after the two Baptist ministers who lived there during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The editor then concluded

the tour just where he had begun it. He promised descriptions of the other districts of the village "when more time is afforded us," but apparently never got around to writing them. However, we are left with one of those wonderful snapshots, a picture of a place and time before photographs and for which no detailed map exists. How prophetic of the *Enterprise* editor, who claimed that he wrote the article "to record it for the curious who may come after us."

A Clergy Family's Life

continued from p. 9

families that lived north of Jerusalem Avenue, in the area of Hicksville Road. It was a small congregation, but still had to be visited and a service held every Sunday.

The Reverend Wiley concerned himself with a (rare) poor family that lived down near the waterfront, probably on what is nowadays very expensive property. He apparently felt that two babies born to the mother might have died of neglect. He visited the home and explained to the woman that he would be taking an interest in the progress of her latest infant and would return the following week and baptize him. The day came and the Reverend Wiley said the words, "Name this child." The mother replied, "William Wiley!"

In 1898 the Spanish-American War broke out. In a display of patriotism, the Reverend Wiley bought a very straight cedar tree from which he made a flag pole. His son, Bert, being 18 years old, wanted to fight for his country. He joined an artillery battery which John

Jacob Astor paid for out of his own pocket. When the war was over, Astor sent all the men on a sightseeing trip around the world. Bert was considered quite the hero when he returned to his hometown.

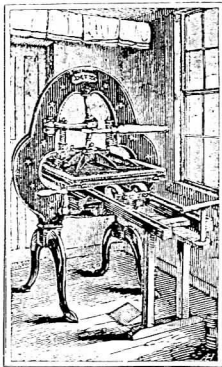
All in all, Ralph and his siblings had a very pleasant childhood. In the warm months Massapequa must have been a real paradise for the children. They lived scarcely a mile away from the Great South Bay with all its recreational possibilities, and they were surrounded by lovely woods. There was even the remains of a Marsapeague Indian fort to explore. And their father had no problems with commuting to work; the church was right across Merrick Road.

The Reverend Wiley is buried in the Grace Church Cemetery right near the side door of the old church, which he must have entered so many times. He lived to be 83 years old. Buried at his side is the faithful and much beloved Mrs. Wiley, who lived to attend the 100th Anniversary of the church in 1944. She was 88 when she died, proving the old adage that hard work never killed anybody.

Chiseled into the Reverend Wiley's stone are the following words, "William Wiley - Rector of this church for 36 happy years." Not a bad epitaph, is it?

Thanks are due to Kenneth Noelsch of the DeLancey Floyd-Jones Free Library for his assistance, and to the Secretary of the Historical Society of the Massapequas, Barbara Fisher, for the photograph of the Rectory.

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

***TR's Summer White House, Oyster Bay.* By Sherwin Gluck. Sherwin Gluck, Publisher, 1999.**

395 pp. Illustrations and index. \$34.95.

***Spies And Tories.* By Rita Cleary. Sunstone Press, 1999. 380 pp. \$26.95**

Our two books under review lie at opposite ends of history's technical scale. Sherwin Gluck's examination of Oyster Bay as the United States' first summer White House is a raw collection of newspaper reports, letters, and telegrams, strung together with very little commentary on Mr. Gluck's part. Rita Cleary, on the other hand, is writing history as a novel-- or a novel as history. You can take your pick. In either case, hers is a highly romantic and romanticized portrait of Robert and Sally Townsend of Raynham Hall.

For those who like their history done in the narrative style, Mr. Gluck's book can be disconcerting. Events are arranged in strict chronology, with story lines picked up each summer and put down each fall, literally in the

middle of things. The effect is that all events take on an eerily equal weight: the Portsmouth Peace Conference standing shoulder to shoulder with a family picnic at Cooper's Bluff. In fact, what stands out summer after summer at Oyster Bay is not the day's great event but the roster of quirky characters lurking in history's shadow. The Woman In Blue, the Mysterious Mrs. Asi L. Esac, Miss Nadaga Doree (author of *Jesus's Christianity, By A Jewess*), Henry Weilbrenner of Syosset (loaded revolver in hand), and J.E. Reeves (messenger from Heaven) all spent some time during these summers seeking an audience with the President at Sagamore Hill. Those considered dangerous were hauled off to Mineola for psychiatric examination. The rest were referred to the Executive Offices in Oyster Bay's Moore Building, where appointments were dispensed.

The opening chapters on the Moore Building's history and architecture are informative. Of less service is the book's index. Simply listing the thirty-five page citations for *Russia*, say, is not all that helpful without more specific subcategories. But this is hardly a serious flaw in a book which proves finally to be a rich overview of TR's White House on the Bay.

Ms. Cleary's *Spies and Tories*, like all historical novels, begs the question: Did any of this really happen? It's probably better not to ask. Those who look for history in a novel do disservice to fiction, which is a genre of exaggeration, metaphor and romance. Questions of historical accuracy are better left to history

itself, where determining what *really* happened is hard enough. In the case of the Townsends, subjects of myth and misinformation for years, the only truth we may actually be sure of is that Edmund Morris wasn't there.

What historical fiction like Ms. Cleary's can do, however, is to bring the interior, emotional truth of history to light. Such a moment comes as Robert Townsend reflects on the coming sacrifice of Lloyd Manor to the British war effort. The despair he feels is genuine, and his simple statement of regret echoes in today's Oyster Bay:

"I dislike seeing what is dear to me disappear. I suppose I regret the changes that are inevitable."

***The Great Experiment: George Washington And the American Republic.* On exhibit at the Morgan Library until January 9.**

This exhibition of manuscripts, letters, and other artifacts from the Morgan and Huntington (CA) libraries marks the two-hundredth anniversary of Washington's death. Highlights include a first printed draft of the U.S. Constitution, a Members' Copy of the Constitution signed by Benjamin Franklin, GW's first Thanksgiving Day proclamation (one of five surviving copies), and Lincoln's 1862 letter recommending February 22 as a national holiday. This is a small but important exhibition devoted to our nation's first George W.

[Ed. Note: See Noelle O'Connor's review of another exhibit on the First President in *Currents of the Bay*.]

AUNT EEEK



Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt EEEK.

I need some help cleaning an old brass American clock works. It is filthy black with dirt. There must be a quick clean method. How about it?

Marc. R
Uniondale NY

Dear Marc,

We hesitate to answer this kind of broad technical question in this column, but have taken some flak for avoiding complicated issues veiled in simple terms. The trouble develops when we fail to address the consequence of providing partial instruction.

Cleaning the dirt off is just the first step in a process which has many complications, some of which require experienced judgmental decisions.

We will try this one and see where it leads, maybe just to satisfy the critics. Perhaps Old Aunt EEEK will learn something.

Okay Marc, for a quick clean, get ye a container big enough to hold your "works" (hereafter Movement), and fill it with sudsy Ammonia. Immerse your filthy brass clock movement therein. Let it soak for a couple of hours, agitate it and let it soak some

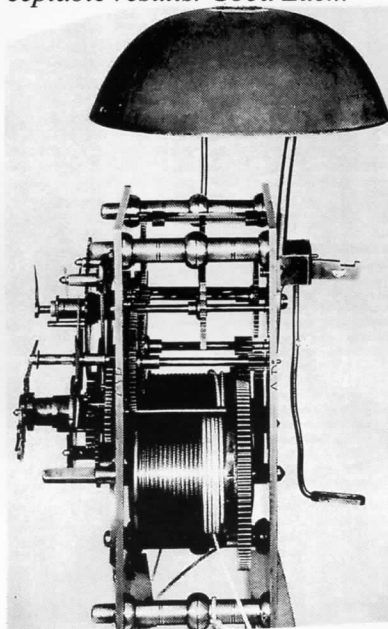
more.

Remove and get ye another similar container, filled with denatured alcohol. Rinse your now clean movement with hot running water and then place it in the alcohol. Agitate briskly once more, let it soak a bit and remove. Use a hair drier to force dry hidden moisture.

Now comes the fun.

If you want to know what to do next you need to ask more questions. If you stop now you will wind up with a clean old brass American clock movement with rusted ferrous parts. Dealing with the rust usually means disassembly of the movement which is too complicated to deal with here. Don't try this on a movement with closed spring barrels, and you should certainly let the springs down on any clock before you try immersion cleaning.

The correct method for cleaning any clock requires complete disassembly and polishing. There are several clock repair courses available in the evening at which you might learn the correct methods and thereby achieve acceptable results. Good Luck!



An 18th c. brass clock movement

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

1. Benjamin Thompson, perhaps better known as Count Rumford, was a scientist, inventor, and administrator, as well as an expatriate American who fled to England because of his Tory leanings. He is rarely given the credit he deserves as one of the finer scientific minds of the 18th century.

2. William Marcy "Boss" Tweed ran Tammany Hall and New York City politics for several decades in the late 19th century. He finished his career in an upstate prison.

3. Mary Todd became Mrs. Abraham Lincoln.

4. Freeman Gosden was one half of the radio team of Amos 'N Andy. If you're so smart as to know that, tell us his partner's real name!

5. Spangler Arlington Brough was the real name of Metro Goldwyn Mayer Studios' leading man, Robert Taylor.

6. Allen Pinkerton, an undercover agent during the Civil War, founded a famous detective agency whose symbol was a staring eye. That symbol is supposed to have given us the expression "private eye."

7. Aaron Willard. Two early American clockmakers, father and son, bore this name. If you own one of their clocks, lock it in a vault somewhere!

8. Frances Perkins, referred to as "that woman in labor" was Secretary of Labor in the Franklin Roosevelt administration.

9. Legs Diamond was a gangster bootlegger of the 1920s and '30s. Diamond was

continued on p. 24

DECEMBER

Sat., Dec. 11, 4-6 p.m.

Annual Candlelight Evening and Holiday Party

Be part of an old-fashioned candlelit, holiday celebration at the Earle-Wightman House, which will be decorated in period fashion. Refreshments and music, provided by Board member Fritz Coudert, will provide just the right mood to ring in the holidays.

See old friends and make some new ones at this annual party for the Society's members. This is your last chance to see the William Hogarth exhibit and your first to acquire a copy of the new, updated edition of *The Walls Have Tongues*, a perfect holiday gift (see p. 11 & flier)!



THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Answers to Test Your Knowledge,

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assassinated in a barber chair by the competition.

10. Thelma Todd, a promising Hollywood starlet in the late 1920s and early '30s, finished her career making short subject comedies with actors such as Patsy Kelly and Laurel and Hardy.

She was not related to Mary Todd!



New Evidence

continued from p. 8

17. Lockwood, Estelle D., "The Lady Known as '355'", *L.I. Forum*, Winter 1993, pp. 10-15.

18. Townsend, Dr. C. *A Christmas Reminder: Being the Names of About 8,000 Persons Confined on Board the Prison Ship Jersey* (Sarasota, Fla.: Aceto Bookman) republished 1995

(A partial list of female names: Ellen Lewis, Sharon Moslander, Mary Moblyn, Mary Noblet, Gale Baptist, Laurie Aujet, Antonia Tarbour, Jean Thomas).

19. Record Books of Robert and Samuel Townsend, L.I. Archives, East Hampton Library.

20. *ibid.*; Letter from Robert Townsend, ref. #KR17 L.I. Collection, East Hampton Library

21. Anna Strong *Newsday* article, L.I. History Collection, Roslyn Library

22. O'Brien, Michael J., *Confidential Correspondent of General Washington -- Hercules Mulligan* (New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons) 1937

23. Pennypacker, Woodhull letter re. Townsend grieving and refusing to spy.

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