



THE FREEHOLDER

SPRING 2001 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

☞ DEADLY
DOSE OF
OYSTER BAY
COOKING

☞ UNIQUE
OYSTER BAY
MERRY-GO-
ROUND...
FOR TRAINS?

☞ TR's
INAUGURAL
CENTENNIAL

☞ ITALIAN
IMMIGRANT
EXPERIENCE
IN
OYSTER BAY



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

While Ed Magnani's article on TR's inauguration rightfully takes center stage in reminding us that 2001 marks the centennial of that auspicious event, we here at *The Freeholder* are quietly celebrating a much humbler anniversary: the end of our fifth year of publication!

We still have a lot of history to cover, so we expect the magazine to be around for a while yet. However,

this being a member-driven vehicle, it will only keep rolling with help from you, our readers. Send in your comments, thoughts, and stories.

I am indebted to the many authors who have furnished the articles that have filled these pages over the years, especially my contributing editors. Special thanks must go to Harry Dickran of Levon Graphics, without whom *The Freeholder* would not be possible.

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THE POST RIDER

Ed. Note: We would like to apologize to Mr. Ed Jones for the fact that his name was inadvertently left off the end of his letter which appeared in this space in the Winter 2001 Freeholder.

To the Editor:

As a long-time avid reader of *The Freeholder* (which I read cover to cover, by the way), I was disappointed that you would stoop to such shenanigans as to place a trick question in the midst of the "Test Your Knowledge" section of the Winter

2001 edition of your magazine. I refer to the terms on the left hand side, namely #3 "cwt" and #4 "hundred weight." Unless I'm mistaken, "cwt" is the abbreviation for "hundredweight!"

I trust that in future you will steer clear of such monkeyshines!

Robert Pomeroy

Dear Mr. Pomeroy:

Would that I could claim that the "trick question" to which you refer was intentional on our part, rather than the lamentable fact that we goofed! Oh my, two gaffes in the same issue; heads are sure to roll among the editorial staff of The Freeholder!

To the Editor:

I just received the Winter issue and as a former member of the Board of the His-

THE FREEHOLDER

of the
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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

Rocco Florio and his son Angelo are shown in the family shoe repair shop on South Street in 1928. Though the rear of the building had originally been built as a dwelling in the 1830s, and the retail shops in front were only added in the early 20th century, the complex was known to generations of Oyster Bay residents as the "Florio Building" until its demise in 1999 (Historical Society Collections).

torical Society of the Massapeguas, I wanted to commend you for letting the readers of *The Freeholder* know about the situation down at the Old Grace Church.

The whole future of the Historical Society would be in jeopardy should the church decide to go forward with their plans to expand the cemetery south of the front of the church. As you know, the Society depends on the money raised at such events as the Strawberry Festival to stay afloat. If the area on which such events are run is taken up by the cemetery, a large portion of the Society's revenues will dry up.

continued on p. 23

by Andrew C. Batten

Aside from Theodore Roosevelt, Oyster Bay's most famous resident was probably his contemporary, Mary Mallon. Unlike the President, Miss Mallon came from a much lower social class - she was a domestic servant. This is one reason for the unfamiliar sound of her name since, like all good servants, she was almost totally invisible to the outside world. In spite of her seeming anonymity, you may be familiar with Mary Mallon under her other, better-known, name: "Typhoid Mary." This young cook, whose nickname became a watchword for all that is dirty and unsanitary, got her start here in Oyster Bay in 1906.

The history of domestic service in Oyster Bay goes back to the town's earliest days. If it was a typical community for the times, perhaps one-third of all immigrants to Oyster Bay arrived as servants. Early town records indicate that Oyster Bay supported a large number of servants, including slaves, part-time domestic workers, and indentured servants. As early as 1722, a census of Oyster Bay village listed forty-one men, twenty-seven women, seventeen boys and twenty-six girls as "Negro and Indian slaves." Records on other categories of servants are more difficult to track, since members of these categories enjoyed much greater mobility and hope for advancement. Still, glimpses of a servant's life occasionally peek through the cracks in the historical record.

Writing in her diary between 1768 and 1773, Mary Cooper recorded that she employed the services of several types of

domestic workers. Neighbors, especially young people, came to the house to assist with various domestic chores. Phebe Weeks spent three days at the Cooper house sewing, and a man named Israel spent a day splitting wood for the fireplaces. What remains unclear is the exact status of these "day laborers." Were they itinerant servants or, more probably, were they simply local people supplementing their income through odd jobs?

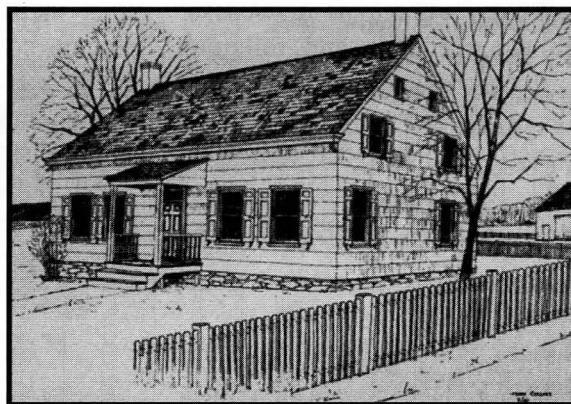
The Cooper family was also known to have owned slaves. Records indicate that, as early as 1755, the Coopers had four slaves (referred to euphemistically as "our people") working their land. In her diary entry of November 18, 1772, Mary Cooper wrote: "I was mighty angry this morning because our people did not bring in the pumpkins and they are all froze and spoiled."

Another local family that relied on slave labor were the Townsends, prosperous merchants who made their home in the center of town. The Townsend family, in addition to their shipping business, owned more than three hundred acres of farmland and pasturage. A crew of five slaves tilled the land and cared for the livestock. This arrangement lasted at least until 1790, when Samuel Townsend died. This was curious in that the Townsends were Quakers, and slavery was very much against church teaching by the 1790s. By this time

many northern Quakers had voluntarily freed their slaves, and some congregations would read slaveholders out of their meetings. It is not clear what sanctions, if any, Samuel Townsend and his family faced for their continued reliance on slaves.

The advent of the 19th century brought a shift in the composition of Oyster Bay's servant population. The abolition of slavery in New York in 1809, the decline of indentured servitude, and a large influx of immigrants all played a part in this change. It was now time for a new type of domestic service to come to the fore. This new trend reached its zenith in the second half of the 19th century, when a seemingly endless supply of cheap foreign labor made domestic servants affordable for many Americans.

Whereas slaves and indentured servants had been an expense beyond the means of most 18th century New Yorkers, domestic servants now became a realistic possibility for the middle class. Books aimed at young homemakers encouraged couples living on at least two thousand dollars per year to engage at least one live-in servant, and more as improving



*The Cooper House in Cove Neck, c. 1770.
Drawing by John Collins*

circumstances allowed.

This new-found affordability was made possible by a severely restricted pay scale. Housemaids, laundresses and other domestics earned between two and three dollars per week in the 1860s, while a skilled cook might demand up to ten dollars in weekly wages. Even when the additional expense of room and board was calculated, a servant could still be had at an annual cost of under two hundred dollars. In Oyster Bay, as in the rest of urban and suburban America, this led to an explosion in the number of domestic servants. By 1870, some estimates indicate that as many as one in four households in the northeastern United States employed servants, and perhaps one in eight nationwide. Domestic servants now composed eight percent of the entire American workforce, and included fifty percent of all women employed outside the home. Servants had become an indispensable part of the American scene.

Many of these new domestic workers came from Ireland. Young, poor and well acquainted with hard work, the Irish became the obvious first choice for the new servant class. This was not, however, without its drawbacks. Ethnic prejudice and religious differences tended to stereotype the Irish servants, and many Americans disparaged their talent and dedication. This showed itself in the fashion for jokes about "Bridgets," that name being emblematic for all servants in many Americans' minds. "Bridgets," it was thought, were ignorant, lazy, and might even perpetrate such things as clandestine baptisms of Protestant

babies.

Here in Oyster Bay, the ethnic composition of the domestic servants certainly seems to have been typical. At Raynham Hall, home to a new generation of the Townsend family in the 1860s, five servants were kept busy maintaining the household. Three young Irish women, Elizabeth Lee, Catherine Moon, and Mary Shannon, worked as cooks and housemaids. Michael Conlin, another Irish immigrant, tended the garden. Confirming their fear of the "Bridget" stereotype, the Townsends' nanny was an American, Sarah Hunt. Together, this team of hardworking domestics cooked, cleaned, did laundry and ironed for the household. They beat the rugs, polished the silver, pruned the hedges and ensured that all twenty-five rooms were neat and well-kept.

The life of a Victorian domestic servant was rigidly bound both by precedent and circumstances. Servants typically worked six and a half days per week, leaving little time for relaxation. Even in their free time, a strict code of conduct was enforced. Servants were not to use the front door or be seen in the garden. Off-duty, they were restricted to sitting either in their bedrooms or the kitchen. Most importantly, female servants were forbidden to have male "followers" upon pain of dismissal.

All of this structure, coupled with hard work and poor wages, meant that most servants did not stay long with any one employer. Disagreements over wages and the lingering effects of ethnic and class differences compelled many servants to move on regularly. The average term for a domestic

servant was no more than two years. After this some married, others took more lucrative work in industry, and still others moved on to another domestic position.

One notable exception to this pattern of discontented servants and difficult employers comes from Oyster Bay's most famous resident, Theodore Roosevelt. Although born and raised in the patrician tradition, Roosevelt and his family seem to have escaped some of the prevailing attitudes of their social class. The Roosevelt home at Sagamore Hill employed a large staff of maids, cooks and groundskeepers, many of them Irish immigrants, yet they defied all expectations in many ways. The staff was singularly devoted, with one cook remaining on staff for more than thirty years, and their devotion was gratefully recognized.

Something of Roosevelt's attitude towards his employees can be glimpsed in their fond recollections of their time in his employ. One servant, James Amos, wrote a moving tribute to his old employer in the book "Theodore Roosevelt: A Hero To His Valet." Noting Roosevelt's unassuming nature toward his employees, Amos recorded an amusing vignette from 1908. James Duthie, a gardener on Roosevelt's estate, was serving as Acting Master of Matinecock Masonic Lodge, of which Roosevelt was a member. As Amos writes:

He [Roosevelt] used to go to meetings occasionally. He enjoyed going there as a simple member and taking a back seat while his gardener sat in the seat of authority and presided



The Thompson House, location of the typhoid outbreak fomented by Mary Mallon in the summer of 1906. The site is now occupied by the Administration Building of the Oyster Bay-East Norwich School District.

[over the meeting].

Moving from Oyster Bay's most famous to most infamous residents, we arrive at the sad case of Mary Mallon. In many ways she conformed exactly to the standards of her time and station. She had been born in Ireland in 1869, immigrating to America as a teenager. She soon found work as a domestic, working her way up gradually to the more desirable position of cook. Like most servants, she moved around quite frequently: 1900, Mamaroneck; 1901, New York City; 1902, Dark Harbor, Maine; 1904, Sands Point; 1906, Oyster Bay.

Mary Mallon came to work in Oyster Bay in the summer of 1906, when a position for cook came open with the Charles Warren family. The Warrens were renting the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Thompson for the season, and they employed Mary as a member of their large domestic staff. Miss Mallon came well recommended, once even earning a bonus from a grateful employer for helping nurse her through a

bout with typhoid. Little had her employer suspected that her nurse had also been the agent of infection, as the Warren family would soon discover.

The first household member became ill in late August, when one of the Warren children contracted typhoid fever. Before summer was over, three of Mary's fellow servants quickly succumbed as well - two maids and a gardener - followed shortly by Mrs. Warren herself. By then, as was her habit, Mary Mallon had moved on to another household, but her days of anonymity were at an end.

The Thompson family, owners of the home in which the Warrens spent their ill-fated summer vacation, commissioned an investigation of the typhoid outbreak. The search was eventually narrowed down to one suspected means of transmission: Mary Mallon. By now working for a family on Park Avenue, Mary Mallon was identified to the authorities as the probable cause of at least twenty-six cases of typhoid. Interestingly,

but not surprisingly, the majority of those stricken had been Mary's fellow servants. Brought together in small, cramped quarters and compelled to work closely for six and a half days per week, it is little wonder that disease might easily be transmitted between servants.

Mary Mallon herself, like most of her class, was quickly lost to history but, as "Typhoid Mary," her legend outlasted her. The author remembers being admonished by his mother to wash his hands before lunch, "Because you are as dirty as Typhoid Mary." Mary Mallon's legend also outlasted the heyday of domestic service here in Oyster Bay. Servants' wages, stagnant for nearly half a century, finally began to increase in the early 20th century. The lure of industrial jobs with higher pay and shorter hours also caused a drain on the reserve of willing servants. These, coupled with improvements in laborsaving devices like washing machines and vacuum-cleaners, eventually led to the decline of the domestic servant. After more than two hundred and fifty years, the age of live-in servants was almost completely over in Oyster Bay.

Today, domestic servants make up only a tiny fraction of the population in our area. Their place has been taken by machines and by outside services, like restaurants and drycleaners. Still, the history they created lives on in historic sites like Sagamore Hill and Raynham Hall and in collective memory and folklore, like the infamous Typhoid Mary.

OYSTER BAY'S HISTORIC TURNTABLE

by Walter Karppi

The Long Island Rail Road's turntable, located east of the now unused station building, has been landmarked as an engineering structure of historic significance. In the days of steam it was but one of many that were on the Island and elsewhere. At the end of every branch of the Long Island Rail Road, and at any intermediate point where runs were usually terminated, a turntable was required to point a locomotive in the right direction. For those unfamiliar with these mechanical devices, rare in today's world but commonplace in years gone by, the following article may be of interest.

Like an automobile, a steam engine can be operated in reverse as well as forward. Again, like an automobile, it runs best and safest, when operated in a forward direction. As always there are exceptions to every rule and certain locomotives were designed to operate equally well in either direction. One example is the tank engine which had reservoirs surrounding the boiler for a supply of water and a bunker for coal behind the cab, thereby eliminating the need for a tender. The tender was a separate, auxiliary vehicle which carrying coal (or oil) and water and was hauled behind the locomotive.

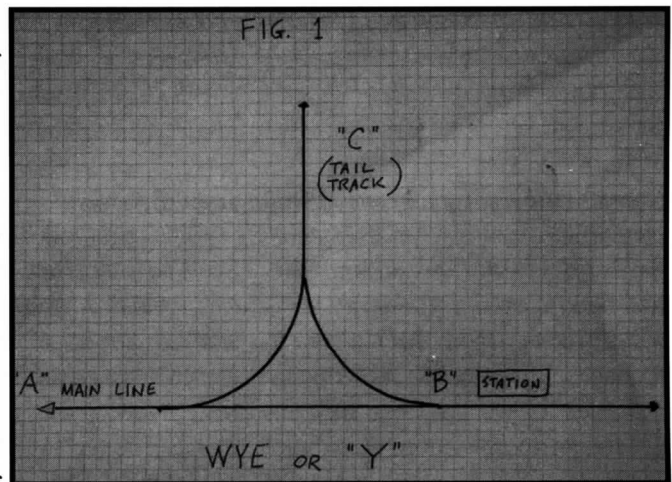
tive.

Another solution was to equip the rear of the tender with a headlight, a pilot (cowcatcher) and classification lights. The tender's coal bunker would usually be offset towards the fireman's side to improve the engineer's line of sight when operating in reverse. Locomotives of these types were capable of operating with equal facility in either direction. These engines were usually designed for specialized services such as hauling commuter trains, local freights and switching (shunting) operations.

The majority of engines, however, were locomotives that carried their coal and water in a separate tender. There had to be some method of turning them so they could operate in the proper, forward direction. The three methods developed were the wye, the loop and the turntable. By far the turntable was the most widely used but the other two deserve a brief men-

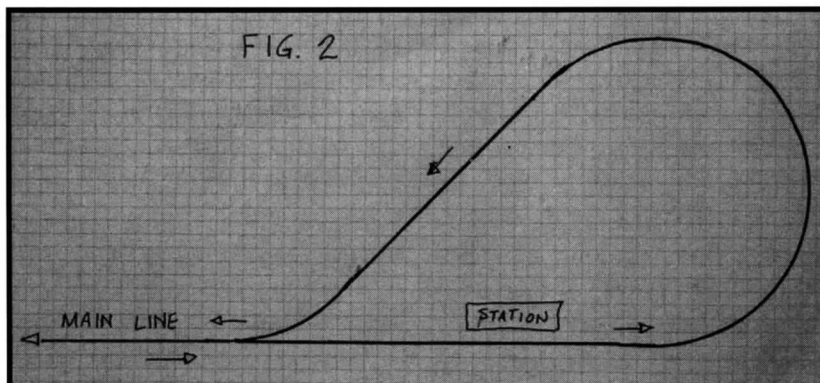
tion.

The wye, or "Y", is illustrated in Fig. 1. The train enters from "A" and proceeds to Station "B". Prior to departure, it would go in reverse up leg "C" and pull out back to "A" headed in the right direction. It would then back up to Station "B" until ready to leave, now headed in the right (forward) direction. There is, or was, an example of a "Y" track layout at the Montauk Point terminal of the LIRR. If it still exists it may or may not still be in use.



Although loops were found mostly on trolley (Light Rail in today's terminology) and rapid transit lines they also existed on railroads. There are two locations in New York City where "loops" exist today and are in daily use. They are located at the Sunnyside Yards in Long Island City and Grand Central Terminal, Manhattan. A typical loop is illustrated in Fig 2.

At Grand Central several of the westernmost tracks, on both the upper and lower levels, do not terminate at the end of the platforms as do the majority of the rest. Certain trains, after unload-



ing their passengers, will board new passengers for their next run. They continue through a tunnel (that curves to the left when facing south) out of sight to most travelers, making a 180 degree turn, thereby reversing their direction, emerging and connecting to the easterly tracks facing north.

The vast Sunnyside, Queens yards are used for the storage and cleaning of both AMTRAK and New Jersey Transit (NJT) passenger trains between runs. The yards are nestled within a large multi-track loop that begins south of the joint AMTRAK/LIRR tracks as they emerge from the East River tunnels. The tracks proceed downgrade to a point just west of "Harold" tower then curve under the LIRR tracks and emerge, facing back towards the East River, to feed into the many yard tracks.

When the Pennsylvania Railroad designed and constructed the East River tunnels, almost a century ago, the loop was an integral part of their scheme. Trains arriving at Penn Station from the south and west, through the tunnels under the Hudson River, would unload their passengers then continue forward to Sunnyside where they would proceed around the loop into the yards. They would be serviced, stored and be facing in the right direction to proceed to Penn Station for their next run. This concept vastly improved the capacity of the station by eliminating the many back up moves that would have been required had the storage facilities been located in New Jersey.

The big advantage of both the

loop and the wye are that it is possible to turn an entire train - not just the locomotive alone. To turn a train on a turntable, meant that each car to be reversed had to be placed on the turntable, rotated 180 degrees and then removed from the table. The disadvantages of loops and wyes are that they occupy a large amount of land and require the maintenance of tracks and switches. A railroad, like the Long Island of yesterday, needed turning facilities at many points.

Turntables preceded railroads by many years as having originally been designed for use in mines and quarries. Stone and coal were transported in small cars, or trams, propelled by hand or animal. Before the development of track switches (turnouts) the turntable allowed these cars to be shifted from one track to another.

Around the year 1714 one of the earliest known turntables was constructed at the Palace of Versailles of King Louis XIV as part of a miniature railway. This was for the entertainment of members of his court who sat in cars pushed by servants. In 1804 they were being used at the London Docks and Plymouth Breakwater Railway in England. They were used to move stone from quarries to construction sites.

The first "modern" railway turntable appeared in 1842 on the Sheffield & Rotherham Railway in England. Power was manual and applied to a crank handle engaging toothed gearing. The early history of turntables in America is not too well known but the first one documented was constructed in 1826 for the horse-drawn Granite Railway in Massa-

chusetts. By 1873 more than thirty patents had been issued for them.

These various designs gradually evolved into three principal types: the cantilever (center-balanced), the articulated (center hinged), and the continuous girder (three point design). All types were used but the continuous girder gradually became the standard design used by all railroads. The feature they all had in common was that they consisted of a pair of rails mounted on a bridge which straddled an excavated pit. Fanning out, from the edges of the pit, were one, or more, tracks which would line up with the rails on the table as it was turned to meet them.

Briefly, the center-balanced type was the earliest developed and required a table greater than the equipment being turned. This extra length was needed to allow the correct positioning of the equipment being turned. It consisted of a bridge mounted on a center pivot with its ends supported by wheels to take the weight of the equipment as it moved on and off. Care had to be taken when positioning an engine and its tender on this type table to insure an equal distribution of weight.

This tipping, as equipment was moved on and off, resulted in stress and wear to both the center pivot and end wheels disrupting the meeting of the bridge and track rails. The articulated design hinged the table at the center pivot point allowing one end of the table to be depressed independently without raising the other end. This relieved stress on the center pivot.

The continuous girder design finally became the standard used by almost all railroads. This consisted of a table made of 2 parallel rigid girders straddling a pit. Supported by a center pivot and, at each end, by a set of powered wheels riding upon a circular track at the bottom of the pit, this design was able to accommodate heavier loads. Pits themselves were initially simply unlined excavations in the ground that were later lined with timber, followed by steel and finally by concrete, which became the standard. While most were in the open some early models, in the Northwest and Canada, had sheds over them to keep them from being buried in snow.

Early models were rotated by animal or manpower, giving a literal meaning to the name "Armstrong" turntable. Some used compressed air supplied by the

geared to wheels at one end.

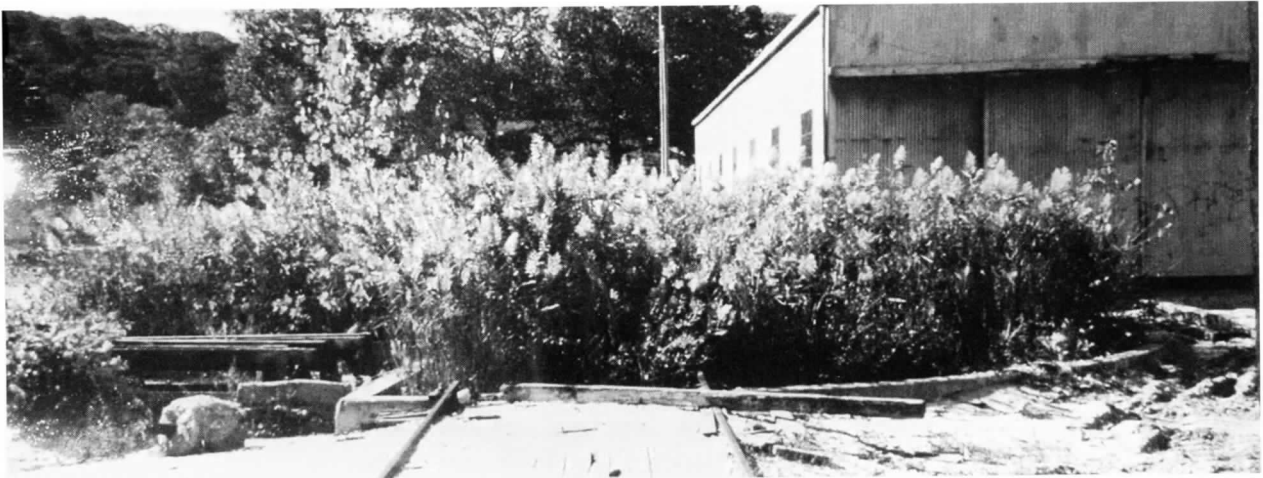
Generally, turntables were accompanied by locomotive servicing facilities. At a minimum there would be a coaling (or fuel oil) facility, a supply of water, an ash pit and a one track shed if overnight storage was required. At the other end of the scale were enormous roundhouses having multiple tracks. There were a few sites where the roundhouse almost completely surrounded the table. Most sites, however, fell somewhere between these two extremes. The Baltimore & Ohio's Mt. Claire facility has the turntable located in the center of the roundhouse. The building is now the B&O Railroad Museum and may be visited in Baltimore, MD.

The largest turntable in this country was used by the Union Pacific Railroad out west and was 135 feet long to accommodate

early, short turntables were lengthened in later years to meet the demand of larger, heavier equipment.

The shortest operating railroad turntable, at least to this writer's knowledge, is in daily use at the Riverside Shops of Boston's "Green Line". Located in Newton, Massachusetts, this modern facility is fully equipped to service and repair all of the light rail vehicles (trolleys) in use. Approximately ten feet in diameter, this turntable is used to remove and replace the power trucks under the units.

When servicing is needed a car is positioned so one of its trucks is on the center of the table. After the car is jacked up and the truck disconnected it can be rolled off in any of three directions. A new, or reconditioned, truck can then be rolled under the car, reconnected to the car, and the car



The small turntable at the former Jakobson's Shipyard; boats would be hauled out of the water along the marine railway and would then be directed via the turntable to one or the other of two repair shops located south of West End Avenue.

locomotive and eventually electrically powered motors were adopted. The Danbury Railroad Museum's turntable is rotated by means of a gasoline engine

their "Big Boy" locomotives. Most turntables were considerably smaller - no larger than the longest locomotive the road expected to own. Many of the

lowered ready to reenter service.

Many shipyards needed turntables as a necessary adjunct to their marine railway operations. An example of one such is still

visible at the former Jakobson's Shipyard. Located just south of West End Avenue, when approaching Beekman Beach, it can be located by following the rails of the defunct marine railway. Illustrated by Fig. 3 it is interesting in that it is only half of a turntable or, to be more precise, a turntable straddling two quadrants.

When a large boat or ship required maintenance a carriage would be run out on the tracks of the marine railway, which continued underwater, where it would be positioned under the vessel. Once secured the vehicle would be hauled out of the water by tractor or winch and positioned on the half turntable. After the table was turned ninety degrees (its maximum rotation) the carriage and the ship it carried could be moved either west or east to one of the two workshop buildings located there.

The City of Danbury (Connecticut) is a pleasant hour and a half journey from Oyster Bay and its Railway Museum is a glimpse

of what Oyster Bay's Rail Museum could look like in the future. There are more similarities than differences between the two. Both are active termini of commuter lines (Metro-North and LIRR) operated under the auspices of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Both have had redundant station buildings, unused turntables, tracks and equipment turned over to them.

Danbury's Museum has indoor exhibits in its station building as well as outdoor on its many display tracks. During the year it plays host to such special events as Easter Bunny Trains, Railfan Weekend, Thomas the Tank Engine Days, Haunted Halloween, Santa Claus, and various rail excursions. Also offered are train, caboose, engine and turntable rides. Having visited the museum several times in the past I can report that the events were well attended by well-behaved individuals and families. Especially enjoyed by both adults and children were the turntable

rides.

Oyster Bay is blessed with two (or at least one and a half) turntables and an attractive, usable station building at the end of an operating seven day a week railroad. These facilities are bounded on the north by the beautiful Teddy Roosevelt Memorial Park along the shores of our exquisite bay. To the south lies the attractive village of Oyster Bay itself with its many fine shops, restaurants and historic sites such as Raynham Hall and the Earle-Wightman House.

At the center of all this is our very own turntable - ready to turn the heads of adult visitors from all parts of the country and all over the world. The younger in age (and spirit) can, hopefully, enjoy a spin on this unusual "Merry-Go-Round." The future of Oyster Bay is to preserve the past which will make the present economically viable.

Reference: *TRAINS* Magazine, July, 1995 "Locomotive Merry Go Round" by James Alexander Jr.



The turntable at the Oyster Bay station.



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

The other day somebody talking about the Congress's consideration of tax cuts said to me, "They should stop fooling around and get down to brass tacks." I enjoyed the small play on words but I couldn't help but wonder what the source of the expression "get down to brass tacks" was. Can you tell me?

Albert Ladore

Not with certainty. There have been a number of suggestions as to the basis of the expression. Here are what I think are the likeliest possibilities. In the mercers' shops of an earlier day the meas-

ure for fabrics was not a tape or a yard stick but a series of tacks in line along the counter on which the materials were displayed to the customer. The bright heads of the tacks were set at the various lengths that might be needed to determine the amount of the dry goods desired by the customer. What our expression meant was, "Let's finish bargaining, cut a deal and measure the material." Possible. But your uncle feels a more likely explanation is that brass tacks was a bit of English rhyming slang and the expression means, "Let's skip the palaver and get down to the facts."

Dear Uncle Peleg,

What is the basic meaning of the term, "Galley West," as in the expression, "It knocked me Galley West?" As you can see, I have a personal stake in finding out its origin!

Carl West

Uncle Peleg draws a blank on this one. Although I've seen several suggestions that Gally West is a corruption of an English dialect phrase "colly-west" none of them

gave the meaning or source of colly-west leaving us not with an explanation but a second puzzle.

Dear Uncle Peleg,
I was challenged the other day to

explain the phrases Occam's Razor, Morton's Fork and Schrodinger's Cat. I couldn't. Was my leg being pulled or do the terms actually mean something?

Patty Mulholland

While not likely to pop up in ordinary conversation these expressions are not leg pulls but completely significant terms. "Occam's Razor" is the name of a principle suggested by William of Occam, a 14th Century cleric and logician. Its basic meaning is, more or less, if two theories compete as the explanation of a question, the simpler one is the better.

"Morton's Fork" is a principle propounded by John Morton, Lord Chancellor of England and later Archbishop of Canterbury for the use of the King's tax gatherers. It said in effect that if the hospitality shown the King on a visit was economical it showed the host was saving money and thus could well afford a large tax demand. If the hospitality was generous, that showed that the host was well off and could afford a large tax demand. Nowadays the term is used by bridge players for a stratagem by which an opponent is offered two choices of play, either of which will prove fatal.

"Schrodinger's Cat" is a way of understanding something about Quantum Mechanics. It never occurred to me or the people who educated me that I would need to know anything about Quantum Mechanics and I don't. So I will simply say the term is meaningful and if you want to know more about it you have a clue as to where to start.





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 in **The Freeholder**.*

SOCIETY INVITES ALL TO ATTEND JUNE 15 ANNUAL MEETING

Join your friends at the Oyster Bay Historical Society for the Society's annual meeting on Friday evening, June 15. Featured will be a riveting illustrated program on Cold War-era Nike missile sites in the metropolitan area.

Donald E. Bender, our guest lecturer that evening, is the principal of Cold War Research, a historic preservation consulting firm specializing in former Cold War era military sites. His work involving former Cold War sites on Long Island has been featured in the *New York Times* and *Newsday*, as well as on WNBC-TV and the History Channel. He is also the founder of the Montauk Radar Preservation Group which seeks to restore a massive early warning radar abandoned by the Air Force at its Montauk base and to develop historical materials promoting greater knowledge of its once important role.

The lecture will take place at the Doubleday-Babcock Senior Center, East Main Street, Oyster Bay, and will begin promptly at 8 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be served following the lecture. Join us for an informative and entertaining program that all will enjoy!

HISTORICAL SOCIETY SETS SCHEDULE FOR FALL EXHIBIT, EVENTS

by Madeline Bonasia

The Oyster Bay Historical Society is working on "The Twentieth

Century Heritage Series: The Italian Immigrant Experience in Oyster Bay." To recreate these times, Director Thomas Kuehhas is audiotaping and videotaping interviews with members of Italian-American families who have lived in the Oyster Bay and Glen Cove area for generations. However, he is also interested in speaking to more recent Italian immigrants as well.

These interviews will become the focal point of a multimedia exhibition at the Historical Society's museum at 20 Summit Street in Oyster Bay. Photographs and artifacts would be greatly appreciated as exhibit co-curator Maureen Monck would like to present a detailed and accurate picture of the history and culture of these immigrants.

Along with the exhibition, a series of events has been planned. Included in the series are lec-

tures, roundtable discussions, and performances. Special attention will be given to the daily life of Italians living in the area: where they worked, their homes, their culture, traditions, food, music, religious affiliations and political activities.

The series of events will enable Italian-Americans to relive their heritage. The exhibition will have photos of many family businesses in the hamlet, the connection between the families in the area, and the celebration of religious feasts in the home, church, and community, for example the annual St. Rocco Feast held in Oyster Bay.

A tentative schedule of events has been drawn up and consists of the following:

Sunday, Oct. 7 - Cocktail party at the waterfront home of Marie-Claire Pittis

Sunday, Oct. 21 - Roundtable dis-



Participants in the procession leading to the 1931 St. Rocco Feast gather on Audrey Avenue, near the present-day post office.

cussion on "The Rise of the Italian-American Politician," which will give a greater understanding as to the many Italian surnames in town, county, and state government, followed by the opening of the exhibition and reception at the museum.

Wednesday, Oct. 31 - Exclusive guided tour of the Gold Coast estate house and grounds (with wine-tasting), along with a buffet lunch, at the rarely-seen Banfi headquarters in Old Brookville.

Saturday, Nov. 10 - Abbondanza, a celebration of Italian food, wine and culture which will feature the cuisines of the different regions of Italy, as well as popular music and opera.

Sunday, Nov. 18 - Roundtable discussion at St. Dominic R.C. Church will focus on "The Catholic Church and the Italian Family." A reception in the beautiful Silveri Center will follow.

Take advantage of this opportunity to keep your Italian heritage alive by contacting Mr. Kuehhas and Ms. Monck at (516)922-5032 with your stories, your memories, your photographs and any artifacts representative of those times.

Corporate as well as individual

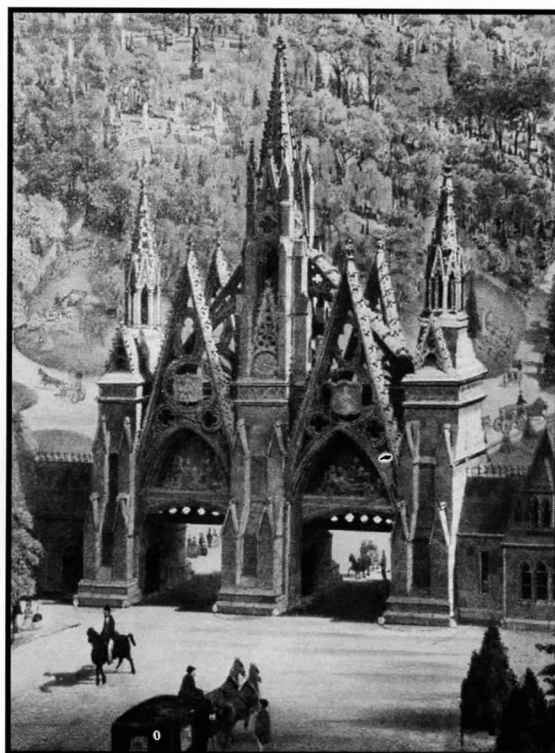
sponsors are needed to fund this ambitious undertaking. For a listing of sponsorship opportunities, call Tom Kuehhas.

SOCIETY TO HOST GARDEN PARTY AND LECTURE

The Oyster Bay Historical Society invites you to join us for a garden party and lecture on the "History of Old Garden Roses," presented by Terry Orzano, lifetime consulting rosarian of the American Rose Society.

The event, scheduled for Wednesday, June 27, 2001, at noon, will be held at Frances Storrs' home in Oyster Bay Cove.

If you would like to attend this timely event, make your check for \$35 per person payable to the Oyster Bay Historical Society and mail it to P.O. Box 297, Oyster Bay, NY 11771. R.S.V.P. by June 20, 2001.



A 19th century view of Green-Wood Cemetery.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY RUNS SUCCESSFUL TOUR OF GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY

On Saturday, May 12, a group from the Historical Society traveled to Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery for a personal tour of some of that venerable boneyard's famous plots, conducted by stellar guide and Green-Wood Cemetery historian extraordinaire, Jeff Richman.

Mr. Richman, author of Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery: New York's Buried Treasure [Ed Note: See book review in "Blocklyn's Books," p. 22.], led the group on a fascinating drive and walk through the 478 acres of trees, meadows, ponds, vistas, and sculpture of one of the world's greatest cemeteries. Green-Wood, founded in 1838, is the final resting place of Leonard Bernstein, Boss Tweed,

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Categories of Membership

Individual	\$ 25	Business	\$ 50
Family	\$ 35	Business Sponsor	\$ 100
Contributing	\$ 50	Business Friend	\$ 300
Sponsor	\$ 100	Business Patron	\$ 500+
Sustaining	\$ 250	Benefactor	\$ 1000+
Patron	\$ 500		

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

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

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

Horace Greeley, Samuel Morse, Lola Montez, Currier and Ives, F.A.O. Schwarz, the Tiffanys, Henry Beecher and about 560,000 others.

Mr. Richman emphasized Oyster Bay's connection to Greenwood with visits to the Tiffany and Roosevelt family plots and spun some fascinating tales about them as well. Thanks to Professor Susan Peterson, the trip's organizer, all went smoothly and a happy, if tired group returned to Oyster Bay.

**CENTRAL PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Their recent activities have included co-sponsorship with the Bethpage Library of a program on the Grumman F-14 Tomcat World War II Navy fighter plane. Guest speaker, John T. Gwynne, addressed a near-capacity audience in the library's auditorium with slides which were especially interesting to the many Grumman Aircraft retirees in attendance. Mr. Gwynne told how the F-14 evolved and what it was like to be a test pilot in the early stages of its development.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Back on May 19th, they co-sponsored a Recognition Ceremony for Korean War Veterans in the Farmingdale-Bethpage community and beyond. The Society also marked its 37th anniversary

with a Founder's Day dinner on April 25th at the Imperial Manor in Bethpage. Their guest speaker was Dr. Natalie A. Naylor, recently retired founding director of the Long Island Studies Institute. Her talk included major events in the history of the original Bethpage Purchase area. "Memories of Main Street School" was another Society program that was well-received after a two-month delay due to a storm. It is considered to be Farmingdale's most famous school and can boast many alumni.

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE MASSAPEQUAS**

The beloved Old Grace church now has a restored roof and trim paint, thanks to a New York State grant, and has also undergone extensive repairs and exterminating work. The latter project was donated by Jim Langford of Imperial Exterminating Co., Inc. and the Society is grateful for his firm's services in "The Battle of the Bugs." Heat has also been installed in the cottage, which will enable the Society to work in the building and conduct tours later in the fall and earlier in the spring. The 70th Anniversary of the Village of Massapequa Park was celebrated on Sunday, October 22, 2000, and included a parade and the unveiling of a marker donated by the Society to designate the former site of the Woodcastle Hotel, which stood on the present site of the Massapequa Fire House on Front Street. The May 21st meeting was devoted to Long Island Lighthouses and speaker Robert Muller, who is the organizer of the L.I. Chapter of the U.S.

Lighthouse Society. He has studied and written extensively on lighthouses and developed educational materials for all (school) grade levels, plus a comprehensive computer website.

**AMITYVILLE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society has been hosting a series called "Movies at the Museum" each month with free popcorn and certain discounts from restaurants in the village. The uncut, projected films are provided by guest curator Billy Lozowski, and the first feature was "The Maltese Falcon" starring Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor and Sidney Greenstreet. Mr. Lozowski has also created a new exhibit entitled "Amityville Photographs -- Yesterday and Today." He returned to the exact location where each old photo was taken and photographed the site as it appears today.

**SEA CLIFF
VILLAGE MUSEUM**

The museum opened its fall season in mid-October with an exhibit titled "Gaslight and Gingerbread, Revisited." The display is based on an earlier book of text and photographs that the Society is hoping to reprint. They are located at 95 10th Avenue in Sea

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!

Cliff. Please contact Helen Davis at (516) 671-0090 for more information.

ROSLYN LANDMARK SOCIETY

June 2nd marked their 41st Annual House Tour, which has aided the Landmark Society in the noble cause of Roslyn's historic preservation since 1960. Twenty homes were on this year's tour and the guide book was dedicated to Mrs. Peggy Gerry, one of the founders of the Society and the Roslyn Preservation Corporation as well, and also to Millard Prisant, past president of both organizations and staunch supporter of historical preservation until his untimely passing earlier this year.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT INAUGURAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The centennial of Theodore Roosevelt's inauguration as the nation's 26th president will be celebrated on September 14, 2001, at the Ansley Wilcox House in Buffalo, New York, now a National Historic Site. The centennial weekend of Sept. 14-16 will include a symposium on T.R.'s presidency and also serve as the annual meeting of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, whose Executive Director is former Oyster Bay Historical Society trustee, Dr. John Gable. (Ed. Note : See related story on page 20.) As a longtime parishioner of Christ Episcopal Church in Oyster Bay, Dr. Gable is currently at work on a history of that parish for its upcoming 300th anniversary. For many years, President Roosevelt and his family wor-

shipped at Christ Church and their original pew is still in place.

SAGAMORE HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Historian and author Edward J. Renehan Jr. presented a free lecture at Sagamore Hill on Saturday, May 19, which focused on Theodore Roosevelt and his family, the theme of Renehan's recent book *The Lion's Pride: Theodore Roosevelt and His Family in Peace and War* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

Currently a resident of Rhode Island, Renehan hails originally from Nassau County, where he spent his childhood. In addition to *The Lion's Pride*, he is also the author of several other books on American historical figures. He is currently at work on *The Kennedys at War*, which Doubleday will publish in 2002.

Renehan's free presentation was part of the Sunday afternoon lecture series which took place in the Old Orchard Museum at the Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, 20 Sagamore Hill Road Oyster Bay, NY 11771. Other talks in the series featured Andrew Batten of Raynham Hall Museum on "TR and the Boy Scouts" and Kathleen Dalton, author of *The Strenuous Life: A Biography of Theodore Roosevelt*, on "Famous Visitors to Sagamore Hill." This series was underwritten by the Friends of Sagamore Hill and a grant from the New York State Office of Parks and Historic Preservation.

Sagamore Hill will also be hosting two "Iced Tea Sundays" on June 10 and June 24 at 2 p.m. These free special events will

feature "The Proper Ladies" performing songs of Victorian America on June 10 and "The Paul Ebron Quartet" will perform jazz music on June 24. The events will take place on the front porch of the Theodore Roosevelt home at 2 p.m. Iced tea will be provided. The public is invited to picnic on the grounds and is encouraged to bring folding chairs for the concerts. Regularly scheduled tours of TR's home will take place on a "first come-first served" basis. For more information telephone (516) 922-4788.

RAYNHAM HALL MUSEUM

Raynham Hall Museum will be hosting their 20th annual Summer Workshops for children ages five to seven years old. Two sessions will be offered, July 9-20 and July 23-August 3. The workshops run Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., and offer a host of activities, such as crafts, games, storytelling, local field trips, baking, and much more.

The fee is \$100 per session, per child (\$175 for both sessions). Call 922-6808 for more information or to register.

The Society now has available a "1900 View of Oyster Bay," which shows every building in existence at that time and includes a list of businesses and prominent residences. Eminently suitable for framing, this print is a great bargain at \$20 plus shipping. Contact the Society at (516) 922-5032 to order yours today!

Also available are an 1833 map of Oyster Bay (\$5) and a map of Gold Coast estates c. 1920 (\$7.50). Shipping is additional.



YE OLDE SCHOOLHOUSE



*This feature consists of the submissions of students from schools throughout the Town of Oyster Bay. If you would like your school's students to participate, please contact the Editor of **The Freeholder** for guidance as to subject matter and deadlines for future issues.*

The Editor would like to thank the fourth grade students of Ms Betty Anne Natke's class at McKenna Elementary School, Massapequa Park. Thanks to young "reporters" Nick Russo and Joseph Waterhouse for this innovative treatment of Theodore Roosevelt. Thanks also to artist Tommy Marzec for his work on the illustration which accompanies the article.

A Chat with President Roosevelt

Reporters: Nick Russo and
Joseph Waterhouse

Reporter: Mr. Roosevelt may we ask you a few questions about yourself?

T.R.: Sure, okay.

Reporter: How did asthma affect you as a child?

T.R.: It affected me a lot as a child. I could not run around with other kids as much. I mostly sat around reading books and observing nature.

Reporter: Why did you decide to learn to box and exercise to become strong?

T.R.: I decided that I had to get stronger if I wanted to run and play. When I was 11 was riding in a stagecoach and two boys were pushing me around. That incident inspired me to exercise so that would never happen again.

Reporter: Why were you so interested in hunting?

T.R.: I was so interested because I wanted different specimens for my museum of natural history when I was young. Also I enjoyed hunting just for the for the fun of it.

Reporter: Who were your role models and why?

T.R.: My role models were George Washington and Abraham Lincoln because they both wanted to make the country stronger.

Reporter: Where did you spend some of your happiest years?

T.R.: I spent some of my happiest years in the North Dakota Badlands where I could hunt buffalo and talk cattle. I also had a partnership with Merrifield and Ferris in owning a ranch there.

Reporter: What jobs have you held in your career?

T.R.: I had a lot of jobs! I was a New York State Assemblyman, a rancher, a New York City Police Board President, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, a

New York, Vice President, and President.

Reporter: What were some of your most important accomplishments as President?

T.R.: I fought for workers' rights, for example in the 1902 coal miners' strike. I put an end to the Russo-Japanese War. I won the Nobel Peace Prize because I put an end to that war. I also worked to have the Panama Canal built. I was big on conservation. I increased the acreage of national forests from 43 million to 194 million acres. I created five national parks and eighteen national monuments. I also created four big-game refuges and fifty-one bird sanctuaries. I also started the first national and international conferences on the need for conservation. Finally, I doubled the size of the Navy.

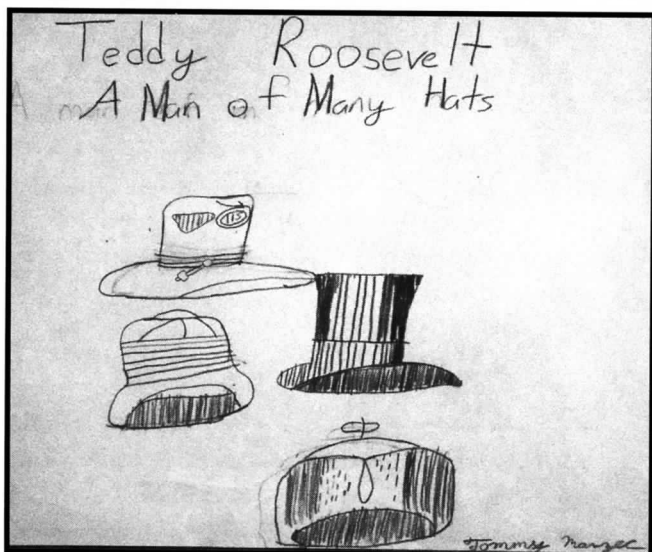
Reporter: What was your role during the Spanish-American War?

T.R.: I was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy and formed a volunteer regiment. We trained in Texas. Every day we drilled on horses. We were nicknamed the "Rough Riders." Then we went to San Juan Hill and took it in one day. Soon the Spanish surrendered. In 1905, at my inaugural parade, the Rough Riders rode up Pennsylvania Avenue shooting their pistols in the air and roping spectators. It was great fun!

Reporter: Well it was nice chatting with you, President Roosevelt. Thank you for your time.

T.R.: It was a pleasure but I have to go. Good-bye.

Rough Rider,
Governor of





THE GATHERING PLACE



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

The Dutch Next Door

by Lee Myles

Some Bits and Pieces

Over the years this feature has been running we have made an effort to give credit to the people of the Low Countries for their contributions to our welfare.

Here's one that's been hidden under another nationality's name, French fried potatoes. It turns out that a Belgian named Rodolphe de Warsage, who, about a hundred years ago, was returning to his hometown, Liege, after a short trip. Feeling hungry, he stopped at an obscure bakery where he bought a packet of fried, thinly-sliced potatoes, a new delicacy he had never seen before. Nibbling on them as he made his way home he found them so delicious that he arranged to have them especially made for him on a regular basis by a local cookery. Their popularity immediately began to spread and before long were to be found in the north of France. They kept going and when they passed beyond French borders they took the appellation "French" by which they have been known ever since, depriving the real land of their origin of credit for a tasty side dish now enjoyed around the world.

Did you know that in 1554 a Dutch botanist named Carolus Clusius imported tulip bulbs from Constantinople, introducing the plant to Holland and eventually to Europe at large and laying the ground for the famous Dutch "tulipomania?" This wild, 17th

century speculation in tulip bulbs shook Holland's economy so severely that the Dutch government had to step in. No matter, if you had tulips in your gardens or among your table flowers this spring you owe them to Clusius's enterprise.

It is said that Rhode Island, which is only across a short stretch of water from our island, received its name from one of the islands in the state's Narragansett Bay that the Dutch explorer Adriaen Block named "Roodt Eylandt" because of its red soil, roodt being the Dutch word for red. Another island, a bit closer to our Long Island (which, by the way, was also named by the Dutch) is Block Island, named for the same Adriaen Block.

According to records belonging to the Brookville Reformed Church, compiled by Henry A. Stoutenburgh, Dutch was the language of its services until the mid 19th century. Originally called the Protestant Dutch Congregation, the Church was founded in 1732. Dutch was spoken in many families of western Long Island well into the 19th century.

The Long Island Estate Worker

Who Became A Movie Legend by Rick Robinson

Among the thousands of Italian immigrants who arrived in New York City during the winter of 1913-14 was an eighteen year old who spoke no English and had almost no money as he embarked on his American adventure. Initially, he stayed with family friends in the Italian Quarter, working at a variety of menial jobs. After six months, he obtained a position as an undergardener at "Oak Hill," the Wheatley Hills estate of Cornelius N. Bliss, Jr.

The Harvard-educated Bliss was son of the former Secretary of Interior under President McKinley. The elder Bliss had also served as treasurer of the
continued on page 18



*Rudolph Valentino in 1915,
shortly after he arrived in America.*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

In the early middle years of the 19th Century something new hit the American literary scene. At a time when there were few books of fiction published for juvenile readers, and those few had their characters and stories contained in single volumes, there suddenly appeared in 1834 the first of the Rollo books, to be followed in close order by many more. The series dealt with continuing events in the life of young Rollo Holiday and were part instruction in manners and morals and part entertainment. An immediate success, the series went on for many years and was followed by dozens of other series of similar nature but gradually less concerned with instruction. The work of a New England divine and teacher, Jacob Abbott, the Rollo books and other series from his pen set the conventions which were to shape juvenile series up to this century. Some of those writers who followed as the 19th century progressed were Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and her daughter of the same name, the Rev. Elijah Kellogg, William T. Adams who wrote as Oliver Optic, Horatio Alger, and Edward Stratemeyer, who was to become the king of children's series.

Stratemeyer, a tremendously prolific writer, worked on both sides of 1900. It is said that he used sixty-five pseudonyms, created the plots of more than one thousand books, fathered one hundred fifty series and had a total distribution of individual books of more than two hundred million. To accomplish this he hired a group of ghost writers, how many will never be known, to flesh out the plots he produced but could not keep up with himself. Because no one is completely certain how many series books belong to Stratemeyer and his ghosts and how many belong to other writers, we will only be concerned in this issue's "Test Your Knowledge" with the authors' names appearing on the title pages of the series, both boys' and girls', that we ask you to identify. Put the number listed before each author in the space after that author's series. Then check your answers against the list on page 23.

If you get as many as ten right answers you should regard yourself as exceptionally well informed.

Authors

1. Clarence Buddington Kelland
2. Caroline Keene
3. Victor Appleton
4. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps
5. Leo Edwards
6. Edward Stratemeyer
7. May Mannering
8. Louise M. Thurston
9. Oliver Optic
10. Laura Lee Hope
11. Jacob Abbott
12. Elijah Kellogg
13. Horatio Alger
14. Arthur S. Winfield
15. Alice Dale Hardy
16. Franklin W. Dixon
17. Everett T. Tomlinson
18. Allen Chapman
19. James Cody Ferris
20. Elmer A. Dawson

Series

- A. Garry Grayson Football Stories.....
- B. X Bar X Stories.....
- C. The Radio Boys Series.....
- D. Rags to Riches Series.....
- E. The War of 1812 Series.....
- F. Elm Island Stories.....
- G. The Hardy Boys Series.....
- H. The Lucy Books.....
- I. The Riddle Club Books....
- J. Putnam Hall Series....
- K. Helping Hand Series....
- L. The Ship and Shore Series.....
- M. The Bobbsey Twins Stories.....
- N. Jerry Todd Books.....
- O. Army and Navy Stories....
- P. Gypsy Breyton Series.....
- Q. Charley Roberts Series
- R. Tom Swift Series.....
- S. Nancy Drew Mysteries.....
- T. Mark Tidd Series

The Gathering Place

continued from page 16

Republican National committee during President Theodore Roosevelt's campaign for re-election. The younger Bliss entered his father's dry-goods wholesale firm in 1898 and later became chairman of the board.

As for the young under-gardner, Rodolpho, he was fascinated by the lifestyle he observed among the Bliss family and their friends. Unfortunately, he spent too much of his time watching, rather than working, and was soon fired. His biographer Irving Shulman explains:

Spring brought pleasant weather and in June 1914, Rodolpho found employment as a subgardener on the Long Island estate of Cornelius Bliss. He had sworn never to live off the soil, but this was somehow different, for on the Bliss estate Rodolpho found his true purpose in coming to America.

He observed secretly and later in the privacy of his room, practiced. Then one day he was discovered by the superintendent imitating the activities on the tennis court from behind a grove of trees, and he was discharged.

Rodolpho returned to the city, where he worked briefly for the Parks Department, before quitting to accept employment as a gardener on an estate in New Jersey. After saving a little money, he left the estate job and rented a two-dollar-a-week tenement room near the Williamsburg Bridge. Rodolpho's natural talents as a dancing partner led to employment at the cheap dance halls and cabarets in Manhattan, and eventually he became a star attraction at Maxim's. After a

year-long involvement with a married woman, which ended in scandal when she shot her husband, Rodolpho headed for California.

A small part in a Hollywood film, "Alimony," led to a leading role with silent movie star Mae Murray. By now, Rodolpho had shortened his customarily long Italian name to Rudolph Valentino, and the rest is history.

Valentino survived two disastrous marriages during his brief career and became a household name in America and throughout the world. His life ended abruptly in New York City on August 23, 1926, when he died from complications brought on by acute appendicitis. He was thirty-one years old.

The former under-gardener lay in state at Campbell's Funeral Home in Manhattan, where each day a huge mob of mourners waited hours for a brief view of "The Great Lover." After many funeral services and stops along the way, Valentino was finally laid to rest in Hollywood Memorial Park.

In contemporary newsreels of the time, he can be seen as a reserved, courteous and elegant young man. His voice is preserved on a single phonograph recording where he can be heard singing in Italian. This, of course, leads us to the question - had Valentino lived, could he have survived the sudden transition to talking films?

The Lady Schooners

by Mary Walker

The sailing sloops flying mast-heads from distant ports of call majestically lay at anchor off the

coast at Sand City in the early years of the twentieth century as Cove Neck's barons proudly displayed their view of the picturesque harbor. But it is the hard working schooners who plied their slow and heavy burden from Brooklyn to the estates and back again that I have become most interested in. Indeed it is the work of the *Sarah Quinn*, the *Ella B. Simpson* and similar craft which made the life of the landed gentry as enviable and luxurious as it was in the 1910s and '20s.

These broad-of-beam working schooners were two-masted affairs, approximately seventy feet in length, with plenty of room above decks to contain enough coal, bricks, sand or manure to carry an estate like that of Colonel Howard C. Smith or Mr. E. F. Whitney through the fall or spring months. Manure, incidentally, was a much valued item at that time and not enough could be obtained locally despite the horse and cattle population of Long Island. Now, Brooklyn, that was another matter. Brooklyn had too much manure from its endless horse barns all up and down Montague Street. It was a profitable business indeed for a captain to load up the *Louise* with the forerunner of Agrico and take it out to the Colonel's estate, Shoreedge, providing winds and tides were cooperative.

One can speculate on the restlessness of that crew of three or four men aboard the *Louise* as they sometimes lagged along in calm waters, tacking back and forth with her pungent freight past Hell Gate, Bowery Bay, out along the East River, past City Island and Hart Island in the

Sound and on out to Oyster Bay Harbor. The trip would last all day.

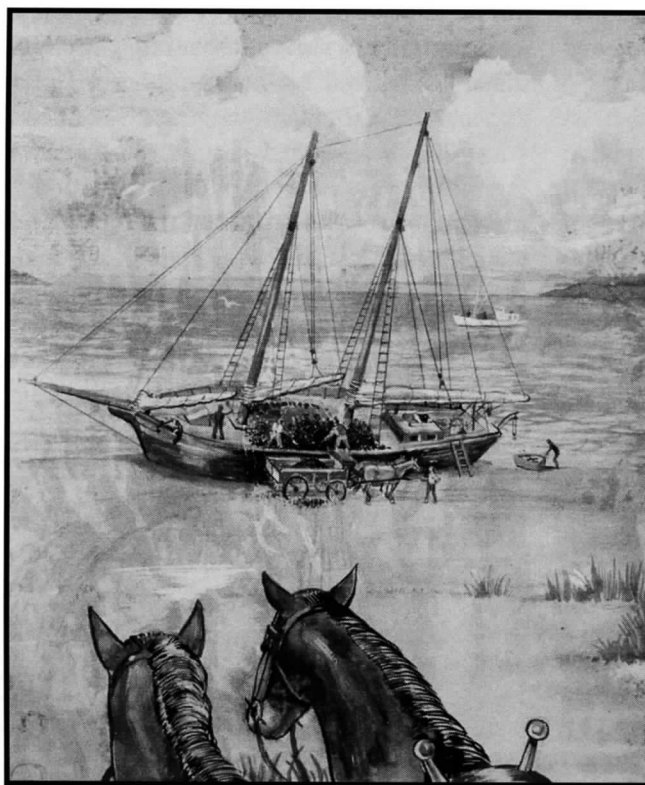
Upon arrival at Oyster Bay, the captain would raise the center-board and then maneuver his way up onto the beach as far as the high tide would float him. These schooners had a tough, rounded bottom which adapted nicely to being deposited up on the beach. Then after anchor was dropped, they awaited the coming of the ebb tide so their cargo could be unloaded.

In the meantime preparations had been made on shore to help disburden the vessel. The Colonel had hired a local contractor with three or four teams of horses and farm carts to accomplish this. Depending on the slope of the beach and the tide, the unloading could be accomplished in two hours on the ebb tide and two hours on the flood tide. Horses could still perform their job in water up to their knees. It was no easy task to pull the heavy loads up out of the water, through the grinding sand and up to the barns. Later the manure had to be carefully placed on each square foot of the asparagus beds as well as the spacious lawn which ran from the big house to the beach. To this day the lawn shows the special nutritive diet it has historically received.

Most of the coal that was brought out to Oyster Bay was loaded on at Perth Amboy, New

Jersey. On the return trip, Captain Jeremiah Lynch might carry a load of gravel on the *Sarah Quinn*. Another loading point was Lloyd's Neck where such cargoes as bricks from W. K. Hammond were important. The *Messenger*, captained by Charlie Van Dyke, set sail from Lloyd's Neck and headed for West Farms. Captain Jack Connell, who later piloted the Baylis' oyster boats for over fifty years, got his first experiences as a sailor of fifteen on the *Messenger*. The captain and crew had to be good sailors

Walker often saw the colorful schooners arrive and depart. They climbed aboard the old vessels and saw the crew at work and at play. They watched Frank Faraco's teams of horses pull their heavy loads of coal over the sand and up to the barns. Then after the tide had lifted the hulk of the *Mary Buckley*, she would ease away from the shore toward the horizon. The water washed away the deep ruts the wagons had made. The only reminders of the whole incident were a few pieces of coal high up on the beach.



The era of the sailing, working schooner gave way to the steam, gasoline and later diesel powered vessels. But one enjoys reflecting on those colorful "sea horses" of the early twentieth century with their maidenly names - the *Emma Sutherland*, the *Margaret Anne*, and the *Fanny Fowler*. They were famous long before it became fashionable to name hurricanes after the ladies.

*The Editor would like to thank Society trustee Stephen Walker for bringing this article, written by his mother circa 1970, to his attention. The accompanying illustration was done by Alfred J. Walker (see the Winter 1999 issue of **The Freeholder** for Stephen Walker's article on his Uncle Alfred.). The names of the schooners and their itineraries were authenticated by Captain Jack Connell.*

to make the long and tedious trips back and forth to Brooklyn. It helped too if you could play a good hand of pinochle.

Life aboard the schooners was completely absorbing to young boys whose fathers were employed on the estates of Cove Neck. Living on Howard C. Smith's estate, Dan and Alfred

On September 6, 1901, while visiting the Pan American Expo-

PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT: THE CENTENNIAL OF HIS INAUGURATION

by Edward Magnani

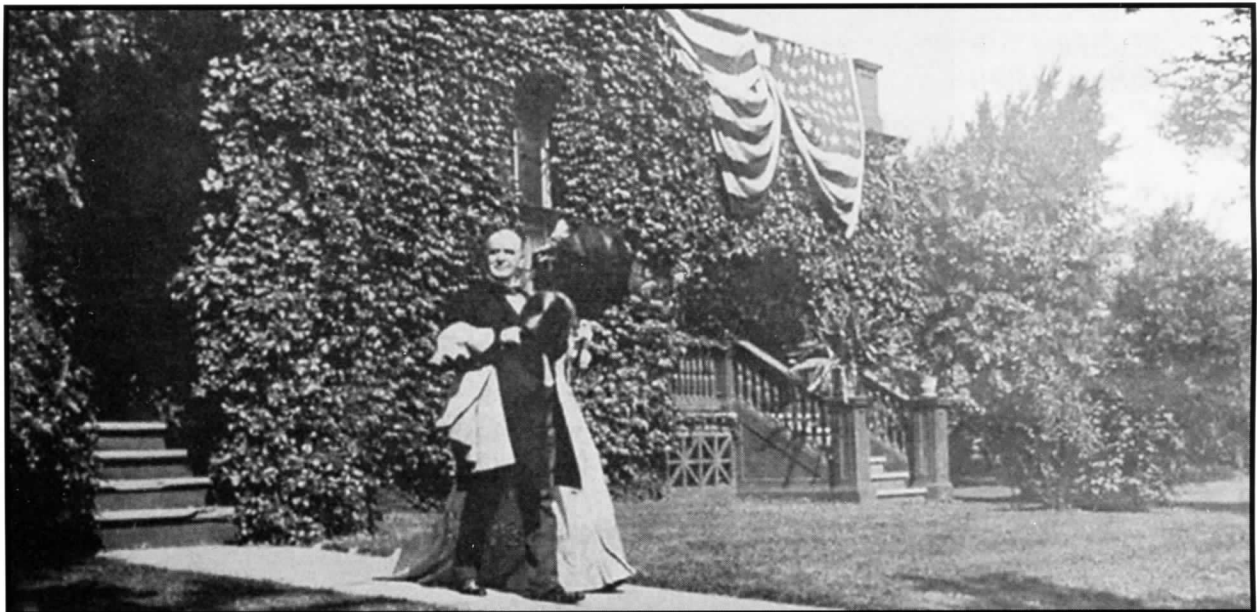
sition in Buffalo, President William McKinley was shot and wounded by anarchist Leon Czolgosz. Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt arrived in Buffalo the next day. After four days, with McKinley's condition improving and a full recovery expected, Roosevelt left Buffalo and joined his family in the Adirondacks. After spending a few days in the mountains, Roosevelt received an urgent message to return to Buffalo. McKinley's condition had worsened and he was not expected to live through the night. Traveling by train he arrived in Buffalo, September 14, 1901, eleven hours after McKinley's death. After paying his respects to Mrs. McKinley, Roosevelt was sworn in as the twenty-sixth president in the home of friend Ansley Wilcox. The vigorous forty-two year-old Progressive, Theodore Roosevelt, was now the leader of the country. The nineteenth century was over and the modern era had begun. Old Guard party boss

Mark Hanna complained to a colleague, "Now look! That damned cowboy is president of the United States!"

After winning fame in the Spanish American war as a Colonel of "Rough Riders," Teddy Roosevelt returned from Cuba a popular hero. In 1898, Roosevelt ran for governor in his home state of New York State and won by a small margin. Republican "Boss" Thomas C. Platt had supported him in his candidacy but later regretted it. The two clashed when Roosevelt imposed taxes on public utility franchises. It was at least partially to shelve Roosevelt that Platt backed his nomination as Vice President in 1900. Others, with less selfish motives, also thought it was a wonderful idea and applied pressure to both President McKinley and Roosevelt. Neither one was thrilled about the idea. McKinley, who preferred Elihu Root for the position had no particular interest in Roosevelt, and Roosevelt's active

nature revolted at the thought of having a ceremonial and impotent political position. In the end they both relented and Roosevelt accepted the vice-presidential nomination. The McKinley-Roosevelt slate won the 1900 election, but Roosevelt served as Vice President for only a short time.

Following his inauguration in 1901, McKinley left Washington for a tour of the western states, to be concluded with a speech at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. Vice President Theodore Roosevelt opened the exposition in the spring of 1901. President McKinley had been scheduled to officiate, but had canceled because of his wife's illness. The McKinleys did come to the exposition in September of that year. McKinley was immensely popular and more than fifty thousand admirers attended his exposition speech. On the next day, September 6, 1901, while McKinley was shaking hands with a crowd of well-wishers at the exposition,



"The Last Photograph of the President and Mrs. McKinley." Taken from the "McKinley Extra" of Leslie's Weekly, September 9, 1901. Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.

Leon Czolgosz, an anarchist, fired two shots into the president's chest and abdomen. The bullets entered the president's body and sliced through to his back. Stunned, McKinley felt his torso and his hand emerged sticky with blood. He begged Secretary George Cortelyou not to disturb his wife Ida, a lifelong invalid, and beseeched the police not to hurt his assailant. The wound, however, wasn't immediately life threatening. A local gynecologist, Dr. Matthew Mann, took the president to his home where he operated on him. Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt arrived in Buffalo the next day. After four days, with McKinley's condition supposedly improving and a full recovery expected, Roosevelt left Buffalo and joined his family in the Adirondacks. Lacking medical technology and perhaps skill, Mann failed to remove one of the two bullets from McKinley and neglected to properly clean the wound. McKinley came down with fever from the infected wound and died of gangrene of the intestine on September 14. The speech that apparently moved Czolgosz to action was an address by anarchist leader Emma Goldman. Czolgosz's last weeks alive were brutal ones. After a beating by McKinley's military escort and nearly being killed by the Secret Service, he faced execution. To avoid a lynching in Buffalo the assassin was eventually moved to Auburn prison. In transit, he was dragged through a gathering of three hundred people, many of whom beat him as he passed until he was unable to walk. He was executed on October 29, 1901, in

the electric chair. Emma Goldman was also arrested in connection with McKinley's murder, and reportedly tortured while in prison. She was eventually released for lack of evidence.

When Theodore Roosevelt and his guides left for a hunting expedition on September 13, 1901, the Vice-President fully believed that President McKinley was entirely out of danger and on the road to recovery. The hunting party moved in the direction of Mt. Marcy (a.k.a. Tahawus), the highest Adirondack peak and the highest in New York State. About three hours after they departed a mounted courier arrived with messages to the Vice-President, stating that President McKinley had suddenly taken a turn for the worse and was in critical condition. Extra guides and runners were at once sent to find the Vice-President as soon as possible. When Roosevelt was reached and informed of the critical condition of the President he immediately started back to the hunting lodge. The Adirondack stage line placed at his disposal relays of horses to cover the thirty-five miles from the lodge to the town of North Creek, the northern terminus of the Adirondack Railway. His secretary, William Loeb, and Superintendent C.D. Hammond of the Delaware and Hudson Railway were awaiting his arrival with a special train. After traveling all night, TR arrived at North Creek at 5:22 A.M. He was informed that President McKinley had passed away in Buffalo at 2:15 AM. He immediately boarded the special train which at once pulled out of the station in the direction of Buffalo, via Saratoga

and Albany. Roosevelt arrived in Buffalo shortly after 1 PM. His friend Ansley Wilcox, with whom he had stayed while in the city a few days before, met him at the station. It was agreed that it would be better for Col. Roosevelt to go through the Exchange Street Station and on to the Terrace Station. A great crowd had assembled in the vicinity of the Exchange Street Station to greet him as the President of the United States. To forestall a possible demonstration that, under the circumstances, would have been distasteful to Roosevelt, Wilcox suggested his going through to the Terrace Station. On arrival, he went to the Wilcox home followed by a platoon of police and secret service men. He ate and then went immediately to the Milburn house to pay his respects as a friend to Mrs. McKinley. He ordered that the secret service and police be discharged from further escort duty, but, did agree to an escort of two mounted police and local detectives. Arriving at the Milburn house, he inquired for Mrs. McKinley, but did not see her. Neither did he see any of the relatives within the house, or the remains of the deceased President. He paid his respects, returned to his carriage and retired to the Wilcox residence.

When the Vice-President, Cabinet members, and other political dignitaries arrived at the Wilcox house, they decided on the procedures for the swearing-in.

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Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery: New York's Buried Treasure. By Jeffrey I. Richman. **The Green-Wood Cemetery, 1998. 242 pp. Photography by the author. Bibliography and index. \$60.**

Cemeteries are for the living, but the dead have, ultimately, something to contribute, too. Along with their mortal remains, the residents of Green-Wood Cemetery lend a celebrity unmatched in any other American graveyard. It is one of the many pleasures of Jeffrey Richman's book to stroll the grounds of Green-Wood and visit its monuments to the famous and nefarious, the deranged, the rich and the ruined, the ruthless, the sainted and despised. Little wonder that as early as 1866, the New York Times decided that "it is the ambition of the New Yorker to live upon Fifth Avenue, to take his airings in the [Central] Park, and to sleep with his fathers in Green-Wood."

Green-Wood is in many ways the Central Park of cemeteries. Slowly, nineteenth-century Americans, even New Yorkers,

began to view nature not just as blasted wilderness but as a milder, benevolent force. American attitudes to death were similarly softening, as the Grim One, betrayer of all human wishes, was evolving into the Angel of Peace, bringing rest to the weary. The result is Green-Wood, where both the quick and the dead could go for repose in the sylvan country charms of Brooklyn. As Richman writes:

A visit to Green-Wood would be a sojourn with an idealized maternal nature, a return to Mother Earth, a meeting with a benign God. Green-Wood would be a place where the picturesque landscape's hope and resurrection replaced the churchyard's Calvinist doom and terror.

Meanwhile, there were bills to pay. Founded in 1838, the cemetery struggled to recruit the right kind of bodies for which it would later become so renowned. The first and greatest marketing triumph involved luring De Witt Clinton's remains from exile in Albany to Green-Wood for reinterment in 1853. By 1860, Green-Wood was getting all the good bodies, while drawing 500,000 (living) visitors a year, making it a tourist rival of Niagara Falls. Richman records one tourist's complaint that the constant funerals "got in the way and spoiled the festive mood."

Among Green-Wood's notables we find many who were bedeviled by spiritualism. John Anderson relied on Mary Roger's spirit for his stock market tips. Rumors arose that his house was haunted, either by ghosts or, as the less credulous believed, by his credi-

tors. The relations of Louis Bonard, in working to overturn his will, claimed that he believed his departed soul would enter the body of an animal. Since his money was going to the ASPCA, this could be construed as trying to take it with you, after all. John Mackay, Silver King of the Comstock Lode, may not have had outright spiritualist beliefs, but he did equip his Green-Wood tomb with heat and electrical lighting, because there's no telling, is there? Political supporters of John McKane (Czar of Coney Island) canvassed Green-Wood for prospective voters, whose ballots were invariably cast for the Czar's candidates. This is spiritualism of a rankly practical sort, but then this is New York.

But if one can be allowed a favorite member of Green-Wood, perhaps it should be Eberhard Faber. Although there are pretenders to the honor (one of whom is also buried in Green-Wood), Faber is unquestionably the true inventor of the eraser-tipped pencil. Laugh if you like, but the pencil-eraser is a milestone in human achievement and represents a particular duality that only the nineteenth century can fully appreciate. Consider the pencil: As failing is inevitable, so too must be its correction. Yet beneath that correction, the faint ghost of the original error remains, rub at it though you will. Then consider our day, subject as we are to the remorseless finality of the delete key. Perhaps we still right wrongs. But now we can deny they ever existed.

Ah Eberhard! Ah humanity!



AUNT EEEK

Olde Things: Advice on the
Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt EEEK,

We inherited a beautiful antique tile-top, wood-framed side table used in the pool area of my grandmother's estate home. The table was left outdoors this winter and water collected under flower pots left on the tile tops. We think that the frozen water trapped between the pots and the surface of the tiles pulled the surface of these very old and beautiful ceramic tiles away from the softer body.

Now we have scars over thirty percent of the surface where the glaze and decoration has been pulled away. Can these be repaired? The tiles are eight inches square with freehand color decoration. We know that the tiles will never be perfect but can we effect some repair that might restore the look?

Thank you, and keep on writing your column; we love it!

Alicia Paxton

Dear Mrs. Paxton,

How fortunate that you recog-

nized the value of this piece. These fired ceramic tiles are a beautiful addition to any decor and are largely overlooked in the antique collectors' world. Obviously the options are as wide as your pocketbook. You may spend lavishly having these tiles professionally restored or even refired, but a home repair, which will work nicely for show, can be attempted.

Clean the area with a toothbrush, removing any dirt or loose fragments of material. Purchase a small container of spackle from your local hardware store. Fill in the cavities in successive coats to within about one-sixteenth of an inch of the surrounding glazed surface. Take your time and allow these coats to dry before adding more material. Don't be too fussy about smoothing the plaster out; try to maintain the surface contour of the adjacent glazed surfaces. When you have your surface just below the glazed surround, begin successive coats of enamel in the matching color of the basic background color of the tile. Your hardware store can help you match the color. Be patient and apply as many coats as necessary to fill to the surface. Now match the colors for your design and paint these areas to blend. Finally, a coat of exterior polyurethane to seal.

The finished piece may be shown, but not used, as the surface is not fired hard and will suffer if scraped or weathered. Good luck and remember that this process is completely reversible. If at first you don't succeed, try again.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.17

- 1 - T
- 2 - S
- 3 - R
- 4 - P
- 5 - N
- 6 - L
- 7 - K
- 8 - Q
- 9 - O
- 10 - M
- 11 - H
- 12 - F
- 13 - D
- 14 - J
- 15 - I
- 16 - G
- 17 - E
- 18 - C
- 19 - B
- 20 - A

The Post Rider

continued from page 2

I enjoyed very much the children's article on Major Thomas Jones. However, I do believe that Freelove's father was named Thomas, not John. Be that as it may, I still think the whole concept is delightful!

Arlene Goodenough

Well, Arlene, since you are our resident expert on Major Thomas Jones, I will defer to you on Freelove's father's name! (See Arlene's article on the Major in the Summer 1998 issue of *The Freeholder*.)

Stephen Disbrow visited the Society recently with a correction to Rebecca Rhodes-Weinreich's article on Oyster Bay in World War II in the Summer 2000 issue. Mr. Disbrow informed us that Jack Stevens ran Oyster Bay Lumber, not Sidway Lumber as appeared in the article.

Centennial of TR's Inauguration

continued from page 21

Ironically, McKinley's first choice for Vice President, Secretary of War Elihu Root, began proceedings with the following statement: "I have been requested by all members of the Cabinet of the late President who are present in the City of Buffalo, all except two, to request that for reasons of weight affecting the administration of the Government, you should proceed to take the constitutional office of President of the United States." Taking a step toward Root, the Vice-President replied: "I shall take the oath of office in accord with the request of you members of the cabinet, and in this hour of our deep and terrible national bereavement I wish to state that it shall be my aim to continue absolutely unbroken the policy of President McKinley for the peace, prosperity and the honor of our beloved country." The Vice-President then stepped back toward Federal District Court Judge John R. Hazel who read the oath that Col. Roosevelt repeated after him: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully exe-

JUNE

Fri, June 15, 8 p.m.

Annual Meeting

The Society's annual meeting will feature a riveting illustrated program on Cold War-era Nike missile sites in the metropolitan area by historian Donald E. Bender [See related story on p. 11.]

The lecture will take place at the Doubleday-Babcock Senior Center,

East Main Street, Oyster Bay, and will begin at 8 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be served following the lecture.

Wed., June 27, Noon

Garden Lecture and Tour

Join your Society friends for a garden party and lecture on the "History of Old Garden Roses," pre-

sented by Terry Orzano, lifetime consulting rosarian of the American Rose Society. The lecture begins at noon and will be held at Frances Storrs' Oyster Bay Cove home. The cost of this exclusive event is \$35 per person, payable by check to the Oyster Bay Historical Society. Call (516) 922-5032 for more information.

cute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

After briefing the members of the Cabinet, Roosevelt turned to Secretary Root and said, "Let us take a little walk; it will do us both good." Secretary Root agreed, and they walked out on to the porch. His host, Mr. Ansley Wilcox, said, "Mr. President, shan't I go along with you?" He

said, "No, I am going to take a short walk up the street with Secretary Root and will return again."

With that short walk, one hundred years ago, Theodore Roosevelt began a journey that brought the United States of America into the twentieth century. For better or for worse, under his leadership, America began its transformation from an emerging nation into the world power that it is today.

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