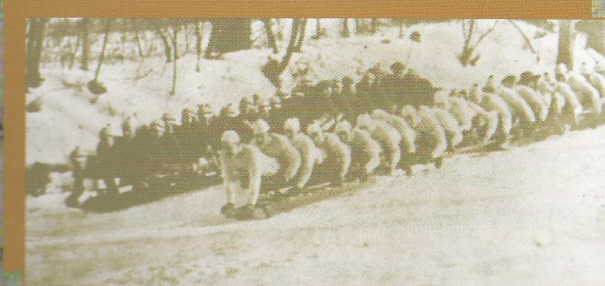
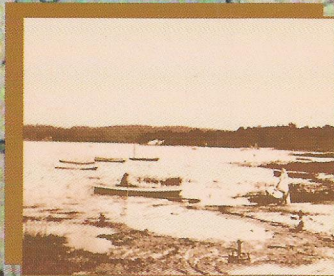
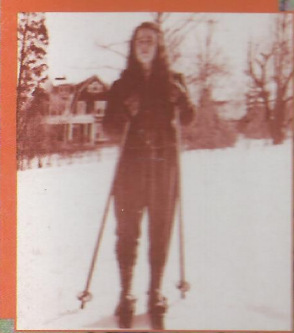
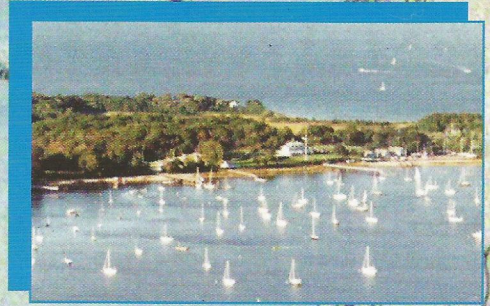


RECREATION DURING THE 20TH CENTURY IN OYSTER BAY: FROM DOING TO VIEWING



THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FALL 2002

The
Waterfront
Center
COMMUNITY EDUCATION & RECREATION

*Celebrating the past and
Excited about the future of
Recreation in Oyster Bay*



Photo by Fritz Coudert

"Sink and Swim" Lesson

*The Waterfront Center
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What if there were no such thing as TV? How would the people of today occupy themselves? The Oyster Bay Historical Society's Fall exhibition "Recreation During the 20th Century in Oyster Bay: From Doing to Viewing," and this accompanying catalogue, document the variety of recreational experiences available in Oyster Bay to generations of its residents during the course of the century. Of course Oyster Bay has also been a popular recreational destination for generations of day-trippers and summer residents. This appeal spread across all socio-economic classes and age ranges, and did so throughout the century.

Over the last few years, the Society has focused on different aspects of 20th century life in Oyster Bay: from the estates of Louis C. Tiffany, to the Italian-American community, to this look at recreation. As we began work on this project, we quickly realized that we would have to set certain parameters as to the activities which we would include. Our definition of recreation, as set forth here, may be broader or more narrow than that of our readers. One area that was not included, which would probably warrant a project of its own, is high school sports.

In preparation for this year's exhibition and journal (similar to last year's on the Italian-Americans), we have interviewed a number of long-time residents of Oyster Bay for their perspective on how recreation and social life has changed in Oyster Bay since the advent of television. According to the people I've spoken to, that change has been drastic!

A short list of activities enjoyed by Oyster Bay residents in the pre-TV era would include sailing, swimming, bowling, roller-skating, movies, skiing, ice-skating, bobsledding, tennis, horseback riding, cycling, pitching horseshoes, bocce, and dancing. All of which could be done right here in the hamlet!

Of course, Oyster Bay is surrounded by great Gold Coast estates, which have their own recreational history. Hunting, polo, yachting, and croquet were some of the activities popular on the estates.

In addition to those just mentioned, other topics covered in the exhibit and catalogue include aviation country clubs, what Depression-era children did for fun, and the various sports leagues which sprang up in Oyster Bay and which were covered in the local papers.

In choosing the title of "From Doing to Viewing" it was possible to chronicle the spectacular changes in science and technology during this period which changed peoples' perceptions of recreational activities. Man went from "horse and buggy days" to the lunar landing in less than a century! This evolution is documented in the Society's exhibition; from bobsledding, yachting, and bowling to Super Bowl parties, and most recently, plans for a cybercafe on East Main Street!

Personal reminiscences and scrapbooks have been crucial to the Society's efforts these past few years. We would like to thank all those who have participated in gathering the information and photographs that make up the exhibition and catalogue. The stories and memories they shared not only made the completion of this project possible, they made the doing that much more enjoyable! We plan on conducting additional taped interviews with local residents. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in sharing their recollections, photos, and related items, please contact the Historical Society.

We hope that you enjoy this look at recreation through the century!

Thomas A. Kuehhas
Director

Maureen Monck, Ph. D.
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Recreation in Oyster Bay During The Twentieth Century

by Maureen Monck, Ph.D.

If you were asked "When you think of recreation, what do you think of?" your answer would probably not be just one word. Your answer actually depends upon such factors as who you are, your age, where you live, your socioeconomic status, ethnicity, ability and interests. If you lived in Oyster Bay in the early decades of the 20th century, how different your answer would be compared to today! Let's take a look at the changes.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Oyster Bay had already achieved national recognition because President Theodore Roosevelt's home, Sagamore Hill was located here. Oyster Bay then had many large estates, and was considered a part of Long Island's North Shore "Gold Coast."

Village development was spurred by the railroad. Some estate owners relocated their principal residence to Oyster Bay and kept a townhouse in the city. Smaller homes were built near the train station for workers on the estates, enabling them to bring their families into the village. Shops and market facilities grew in number and variety as the community expanded. The more successful professionals and businessmen built large homes on



Hamilton Avenue or the Main Streets. Ringing this early downtown were large areas devoted to farming.

About the same time, Oyster Bay was also an area noted for its casinos or summer resorts. "City people" would usually arrive here by steamboat or railroad and stayed at large hotels such as the Townsend Inn (now the Matinecock Masonic Lodge), the Bayville Casino, the Octagon Hotel (later an automobile showroom) and the Laurelton Hotel, which even had its own steamboat landing. The activities hotel guests could choose were varied: bathing or boating in the harbor, vaudeville shows, live theatre



productions or movies at the Lyric theatre (now the site of Town Hall East), and stereopticon or magic lantern shows at Fleets Hall (the site of Nobman's hardware).

The Gold Coast estate owners seldom interacted with the tourists. However, there were occasions when the rights of the public clashed with private interests. Louis Comfort Tiffany bought Laurelton Hall and approximately 600 acres of land, in what is now Laurel Hollow and Oyster Bay Cove. In 1904, he constructed a large estate on the waterfront after demolishing the old hotel. He repaired and expanded his beach, built retaining walls and attempted to restrict the beach for his personal use. After losing the riparian rights battle in court, he is rumored to have blown up the seawalls to decrease the size of the beach, possibly hoping to limit public usage.

While many miles of shorefront continued





The current site of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park was a town dump in the 1920s. Long Island Studies Institute Collections.

to be held privately, Ship's Point Lane was a small, popular, village bathing area, c. 1900. One of the first large public beaches to open in the 1930s, Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park, was created by the Theodore Roosevelt Association by cleaning up a town dump and filling in a marshy area with sand taken from the grading of the athletic fields of the high school and from the Pine Hollow sand pits.

When considering socioeconomic status, recreational preferences were vastly different in the early part of the century. The estate owners, estate workers, the villagers and the farmers seldom shared recreational pursuits. According to local historians, golf at the Oyster Bay Golf Club, located on Berry Hill Road (now a residential area), ice skating at Fleet's or other town ponds and bobsledding are among the few exceptions.

On the large estates, such as Billy Leeds' in Cove Neck, extravagant "dusk until dawn" parties were held regularly. Sport such as fox hunting with the Meadowbrook Hunt, lawn tennis, and English croquet were events held on the grounds.

An officially mandated dress code existed for the various activities and was expected for these exclusionary and privileged events. Other activities were indulged in primarily by the gentlemen, at exclusive private clubs such as yachting at the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club on Centre Island or golf at the Piping Rock Club. Smoke filled men's bars at some clubs did not permit women entry, and families only in the dining room. It was not until the latter part of the 20th century that single women were admitted to equal membership.

Village residents enjoyed bowling at the Seawanhaka Hotel, horse racing at the Driving Park track in East Norwich, and baseball at the Vernon Avenue field or the Townsend Cow Lots on West Main Street.

During the Prohibition era 1920 - 1933, it is said estate owners and towns people alike lined up in their cars, near the Centre Island waterfront, to obtain bootleg liquor, brought in by boat. Both groups also patronized Watson's Bar on Cove Road, which was open for business throughout the period. Watson's Bar, owned by Irish immigrant William Watson, opened c. 1900 primarily to serve estate and farm workers. It also functioned as a polling place and general store.

The demise of the great estates, beginning with the Depression of 1929 and continuing into the second half of the 20th century, resulted in vast tracts of land being available for development. Riding one's horse across open fields, through neighboring properties gave way, often contentiously, to no trespassing orders, fences or restricted access as defined by the new owners. Discharging firearms, even on one's own property, for a weekend pheasant shoot, was now considered dangerous and unlawful.

World War II and its aftermath, c.1938-1945, clearly separates Oyster Bay's development into two epochs during the twentieth century. The war years were quiet, with attention paid to supporting the war effort, especially with the Grumman plant and the Republic aviation field nearby. Enemy plane spotting, a volunteer



"My grandfather Watson had a saloon on the Cove Road. That was in the downstairs and they lived upstairs. It was a three story building... People who worked on Cove Neck and in Oyster Bay Cove, most of them drove a horse and wagon at that time, like the caretakers on the estates, and they'd stop on the way back and forth, and have a drink...whatever they drank at the time, beer, whiskey. He had quite a good business going! You wouldn't hear that today!"

Bob Whaley



Audrey Avenue decorated for the St. Rocco's Feast, c. 1940.

effort by the local citizenry, took place at the old high school located on Anstice Street.

Beginning in the late 1940s the population of Oyster Bay increased due to the availability of GI mortgages for veterans, helping young families to acquire homes in the area. The Long Island Expressway brought work and the cultural activities of New York City closer. "Commuter" and "bedroom community" became popular sobriquets.

The *Oyster Bay Guardian* (a local newspaper since 1899), listed the following activities during 1947: Lyric theatre movies with news; meetings of the Irish American Club held at Reinhardt's in Bayville; St. Rocco's Feast and the Italian American Mutual Aid Society; meetings of the Polish American Club; schedules of polo at the Bethpage field; Pine Island Card Parties; Syosset and Piping Rock horse shows; dances at the Quentin Roosevelt American Legion Hall; bobsled

racing; announcements of the Thanksgiving Day parade on December 5, 1947; the Mineola Fair on August 29, 1947; tame bear week January 24, 1947; and notice of biweekly brides' classes to teach homemaker arts. A major feature article was devoted to the accusation and trial of local hunters trespassing on neighbors' property. The activities of local baseball, bowling and basketball leagues were covered in extensive detail.

In the 1950s such areas as the Horan Farm and the woods along Sugar Tom's Lane in East Norwich were broken up and middle income housing developments were built. More individualized and upper-middle class housing was added in Oyster Bay Cove. After 1970, it was not unusual to see tennis courts on the grounds of these newer Cove homes.

Equality of opportunity versus birthright drove newly arrived families to feel empowered to demand participation in any recreational activity they could imagine, afford or create. Some who wanted to participate and who were denied admission to old clubs, became the driving force for increasing the opportunities for anyone who wanted to be able to enjoy any activities they chose. Sailing clubs such as the Sagamore Yacht Club for boating and racing and new country clubs such as Mill River, Tam O'Shanter, The Muttontown Club and Pine Hollow opened for membership around mid-century.

Ability and interest often are interactive variables when discussing recreational preferences. For instance, if you were a young person, the scion of a wealthy estate-owning family, you were expected to hunt, sail, and play tennis or golf with the same relish and skill displayed by the approved kith and kin. If you wanted to arrange a game the social register might be your usual telephone book.

However, if you were clumsy, not a natural athlete or disliked these activities and truly preferred poetry, theatre, music, art or other creative pursuit, your abilities and interests might clash with prevailing expectations. During the early 20th century perhaps you left Oyster Bay and moved to "the Village," or even further away.

In the second half of the century, a patron of the diverse cultural events would relish seeing Coe's Oyster Bay estate "Planting Fields" or the Phipps family's "Old



An outing at Old Westbury Gardens, c. 1980. The former minister of Oyster Bay's First Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Richard Reifsnnyder, is at right.

Westbury Gardens" as the center of music and drama sponsored by local cultural groups. You would have compatriots, drawn from all social and educational classes, attending gallery openings or poetry readings at the local library. (In 1902, "TR" laid the cornerstone for the public library, built with funds donated by Andrew Carnegie, whose wife's aunt lived in the village).

Some estates became the province of town garden clubs, whose members actually compete with each other in local horticultural shows. Gone were the days when only an estate gardener, working with the best equipment and stock, produced the exhibition specimens for the estate owner to claim the prize.

Recreational pursuits have changed from loosely organized, more active sport or community related activities early in the 20th century, to more sedentary activities now. The increase in scientific knowledge, fostering the development of television in particular, has had an enormous impact on the ways in which people interact. Going from one TV per neighborhood c. 1950 to a TV and VCR in almost every room in 2000, the television has contributed to a decrease in community participation. Watching others play sports like football, basketball or tennis, alone or at specially arranged events such as Super Bowl parties, has contributed to problems of obesity, perhaps increased violence and family stress. How often do you hear someone say "I can't wait to get away from this boring job and stay home on the weekend to relax in front of the TV to watch the..."

An editorial in the *New York Times* on Sept.29, 2002, entitled "Giganotosauruses on the Field" laments the gargantuan, overstuffed size of behemoth, 330 to 410 pound professional football players. It comments further on the rise of the "couch potatoes" who click on their TV sets, sink back into the cushions and prepare to gulp down snack food calories. One outcome of this isolated, sedentary activity has been the current re-emphasis on physical fitness.



Young people's recreational activities evolved in accordance with changes in technology and parental lifestyles. For the first half of the 20th century, during the summer months a kid might be found riding a bike, lazily swimming in one of the many local ponds, alone or with friends if they happened to turn up. In winter young people could go bobsledding at the various runs or ice skate on those same ponds. For a while at mid-century there was even the Oyster Bay Ski Center. Yes there was a ski hill right here in the hamlet!



Beginning in the 1950s, your mom would be transporting you in her wood-embossed station wagon to highly-organized, male-only Little League baseball games. If it were the '90s, she would now be called a "soccer mom" and would be taking you to league organized soccer games, if you made the team. If your team was a winner, you might travel to compete not only in other parts of the U.S. but possibly even in Europe. Is this recreation or work?

Skipping ahead to the end of the century, teens might be engaged in more solitary pursuits such as listening to loud music on either their boom box or walkman, or just hanging out with others at home, especially if their parents were away. For some the use of "recreational drugs" and "experi-

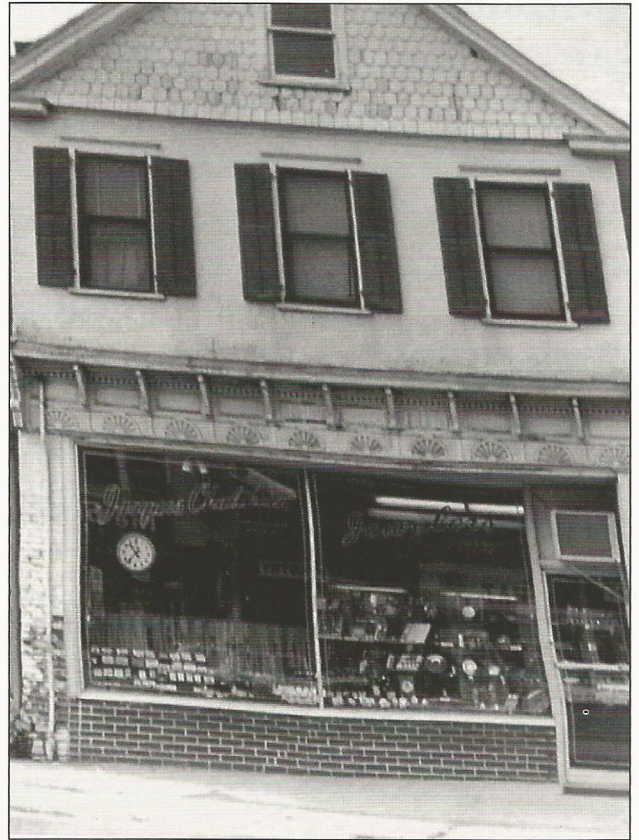
mental sex" during any season represents a major departure from the early part of the century. Imagine a parent c.1910 having to consider "abortion on demand?"

Circa 2000, "solitary togetherness" is represented by computer chats and now cyber cafes, even here on Main Street. In this oxymoronic world, one can reinvent the self very easily in virtual reality. No need to be embarrassed for not making the team ever again or fear being a wall flower at the "sock hop."

Women usually carried on the planning of family activities. Earlier, church suppers and picnics in the park were attended by multi- generations. Sunday family dinners at Mama's were de rigeur, especially for families of Italian origin. Upward mobility and relocation, especially after World War II, changed these familial patterns. Children who were raised as the first post war generation moved away, and returned "home" for the holidays, if that. New families again moved into Oyster Bay, but neighborliness changed from close associations to simply knowing someone did in fact live on your block.

Ethnicity impacts upon recreational activities both in defining what is expected and what is traditional. For example, bocce, a ball game brought over by Italian immigrants in the beginning of the 20th century, was played by fathers and sons, often at a fraternal lodge such as the Italian American Club. Men emigrating from the same village could interact and reminisce about what they left behind. The women were expected to prepare traditional food and serve family style to this expanded definition of family. A desire for Italian food in the community catalyzed the opening of Italian restaurants such as Joe Dee's (later Uwe's) and Charlie's Inferno (now the Book Mark Café).

In keeping with the theme of this exhibition, "From Doing to Viewing," one can trace the recreational activities in Oyster Bay during the 20th century from earlier active participation outside the home, to an increase in less physically active, more socially restricted, home viewing. The following excerpts from interviews with local residents enliven the text and broaden the scope of the story.



The future site of "OBIE's" cyber cafe on East Main Street as it looked in the 1960s.



"Mr. Florio, Sr., had a bocce court in his back yard and he used to have a party every Memorial Day...and we would play bocce. We used to call him 'The Godfather.'"

John DeBellis

“Swimming was Number 1.”

Swimming was Number 1. We would swim at Beekman Beach, which was only for the people of the village. We had nice beaches down at the foot of Ships Point Lane and Harbor Rd.

Gloria (Rothmann) O'Rourke

The harbor was here. That was our main thing. We'd leave here in our bathing suits on, and by July, we could go barefoot from here, down the RR tracks. They had those cinders there, but your feet were like leather after a while. We'd spend days down there, with a little rowboat and fishing, it was great. But there was no organized activities or sports like they have today. We did our own thing. *Bob Whaley*



“We would go swimming at Ship Point and also at the beach by the oyster dock, where Captain Cucci had his rowboats. That was a nice beach. We would go swimming and when it got to be low tide, we would go clamming.” Grace (Micco) Tedesco



I used to play around on the piano and I was playing a song when Pop Van Sise came around. He said, "How about going swimming?" "Oh fine!" I said. "Well I'll get all the kids," he said. He got five or six kids and took us all in his car to go swimming. Well in the trunk of his car, he had a whole mess of bags with ropes around them. We went down to Ship's Point and the tide was out. "The tide is gonna come in," he said. "You go get some clams." So we'd go out and get some clams and when the tide came in we went swimming. He had enough clams pretty quickly with five or six kids treading for them. So he drove us back home, dropping each of us off at his own house and he said, "I want to see you at noontime tomorrow." He turned around and made clam chowder, with a table all set, and bread, crackers, everything. All the kids who had treaded those clams were there. That's the kind of guy he was! I'll never forget him.

Norman Youngs

“...There was always boats there, and we had oars, just take the oars down, and you could use any of those boats, as long as you put them back, you could row around, do anything you want with them, and nobody ever said “Boo!” It was just amazing. When I think about it now, you could never do that, but we did. We used to row all over the place. All over the bay. All the way to Cooper's Bluff.”

Beverly Baker Mohlenhoff

An impromptu picnic on the Laurel Hollow Beach, c.1940

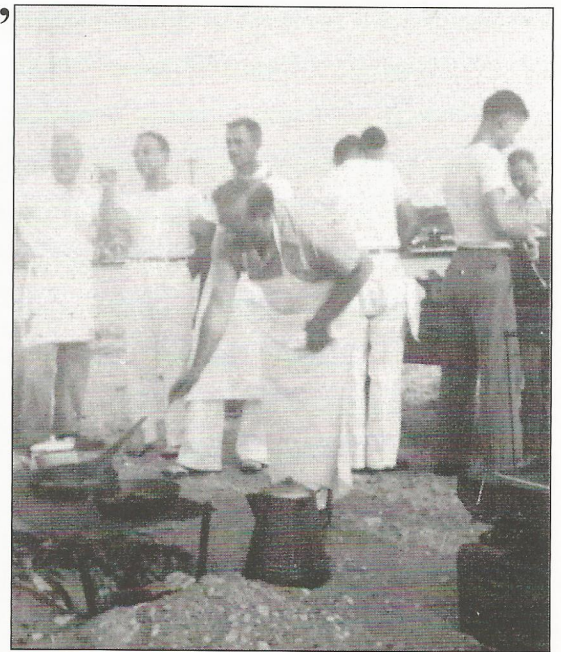


“We used to picnic down here on the beach.”



“We would go for big family picnics to Syosset, in the woods. There are three families here. Uncles, aunts, little grandchildren. They would bring their home-made wine, make their own dishes, have an open fire. Syosset was so undeveloped then!”

Rose LoBianco Murphy



“We would tread up a mess of clams at low tide in the afternoon, someone would acquire some corn from Schiff's field , and we'd go over to Centre Island and light a big fire on the beach. We'd mess up the clams and the corn, the girls would have some blankets, and we'd have a real good time!” Dave Layton

We used to picnic down here on the beach. We went out in a row-boat and my brother, who was only two or three at the time, jumped out of the rowboat and into the water. My brother thought he could walk on the water! Thankfully Bev was right there and plucked him out.

Mimi Albro



“The Republican Party would have 5,000 people up there on a Saturday afternoon in September. The members of the club would go up there on Friday afternoon and start on the clams, oysters, and corn, 2,000 pounds of roast beef. Miss Rheingold would be there. But when they left on Saturday night, the field was immaculate. There wouldn't be a scrap of paper on it! This went on for many years until the late '60s, when a lack of participation ended it.”

John McQuade

“We didn't have a clubhouse...or a yacht club.”

“The Sunfish Fleet grew and grew. Everybody that Oscar Summers ran into had to sail his Sunfish. He wanted them to learn to sail and join the Sunfish Fleet....We'd run the races every Sunday afternoon, all summer long from the first Sunday in June to the beginning of November. We'd usually have three five-week series. One week we'd have a Fall Regatta, called the 'Race-off.' We did things a bit differently. We didn't have a clubhouse...or a yacht club. We have nothing except our Sunfish. At one time there were thirty Sunfish at the starting line. We usually launched our boats from Ships Point Lane. Nowadays we're lucky to get eight boats out there!”

Norton & Jane Hutchinson



Norton Hutchinson in his Sunfish.

The nice thing about the Sunfish is that you can capsize and you can right it and sail away. You don't have to wait for help. It's much safer than a lot of other boats. *Norton Hutchinson*

“Later on we had a boat. In 1938 a hurricane came along, and that was the end of the boat. It washed it up on shore, and it crashed it...up by the road.”

Beverly Baker Mohlenhoff

The Roosevelt Park canal is shown after a hurricane in 1944.



“There was always something going on at the park.”

We all went down to the park to play, because you could swim there, fish, and there was no place else to go. The swings were down there. We'd play badminton. We'd set up our own makeshift nets, a rope or piece of netting. Later on I found an old croquet set, and we set it up in our yard and played croquet in the back yard. Our parents couldn't afford any equipment. We didn't play tennis until later on, in high school.

Mickey Minicozzi Hawxhurst

“We would go down to the park, where the wall is. There was nobody there in those days. The water fountain was there. We would dive from there. We knew exactly where the rocks were, so we marked it. We would dive into the water and we would swim. We would be there all day. Then we would go back to the fountain and cool off. Then we would go to Chink's and have lemon ice, maybe a hot dog. Nobody had much money then.” *John DeBellis*





"In the summertime, it was the park. There was always something going on at the park. For the real young kids they had the seesaws, the swings, they had a little merry-go-round...the kind you had to turn manually. We used to listen to bands at the bandstand."

Rose LoBianco Murphy

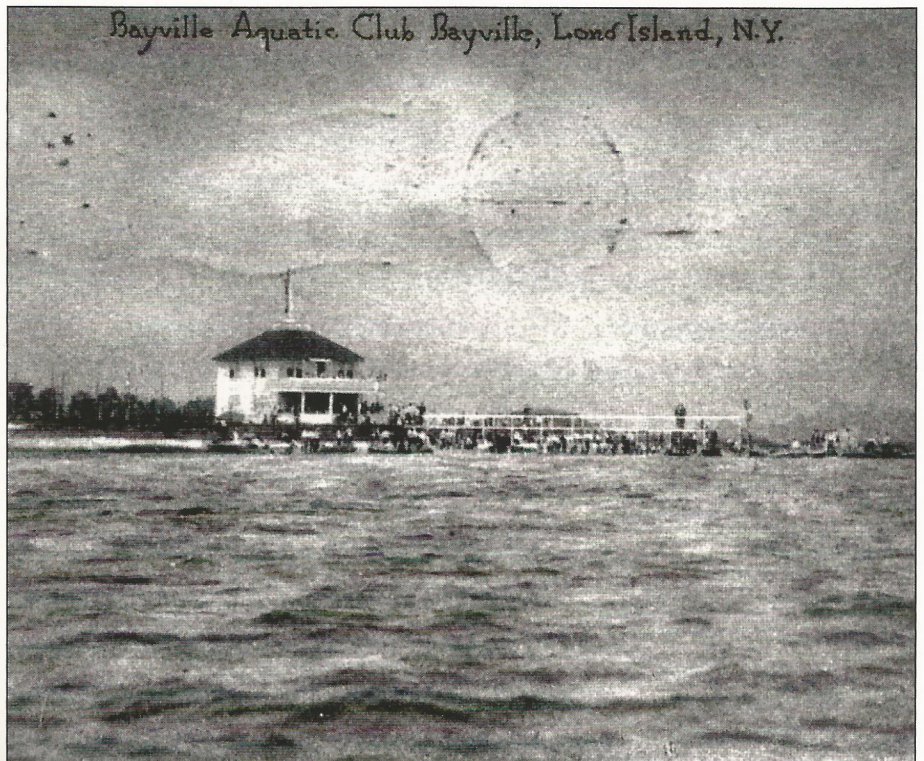
Above, a 1944 scene at Roosevelt Park beach, shortly after they greatly expanded the beach area.

Swimming was a great pastime in Oyster Bay. Teddy Roosevelt Park was just a delight for swimming! There were basically four areas in the park where you did things; nowadays you couldn't do any of them! By the flagpole, when the tide was high, the water there was about eight feet deep and everyone would dive off the wall into the water. That wasn't too daring. A more daring thing was to go by the old bandstand, on the west end of the beach. They had propped a lot of big rocks up against the wall there to bolster it. There was a spot about six feet wide between the rock piles. The bolder guys would dive off the wall into this narrow opening in front of the bandstand. The other place we did a lot of diving was into the boat canal. That was always interesting, both at high tide and low tide. When you dove in at high tide the challenge was to go all the way down to the bottom and bring up a handful of mud. That was maybe eight or ten feet deep. At low tide, when the water was only about three feet deep, the answer was to dive from about eight feet above the water surface into that three foot water without getting your head stuck in the mud! Over on the west end of the park was the area we called the "Creek." It was the outflow from the big pond near the parking lot, which was tidal. When the tide would start out, they had it coming out from a culvert under the road, and you would swim over in the creek and it was like swimming in a flume! The simple stuff was swimming at the beach. That was hardly any fun at all compared to this stuff!

Dave Layton

"The Town would host an annual swim meet at Roosevelt Park in August, from the late '40s until the mid-'50s. Teams would come from Bayville, the Glen Cove "Y", Syosset, Oyster Bay, and they would run this swim meet in the canal. Emil Bulck and his wife were the organizers of the Oyster Bay team. Both of his kids, Karen and Billy, were excellent swimmers. A part of the Town's swim meet was a two mile swim from Seawanhaka to the canal. Billy Bulck used to dominate the event, but another local who won a couple of times was "General" Bobby Valentine from Bayville. The secret to that was not so much how fast you swam, but where, and what the tidal flow was." Dave Layton

Bayville Aquatic Club swimmers were a force to be reckoned with in area swim meets during the '20s and '30s.



"We always found something to do!"

We would all play hide and seek. Each of us had a great big long flashlight. We'd play punchball until it got dark and then we'd play hide and seek with our flashlights. This would be on Ivy St. We were all from the hill and we'd just play in that area. *Gloria Bayles Tucker*

We'd play paper chase on Berry Hill Rd. We'd start on Kellogg St. and we'd make somebody, three or four fellows who would be the "dogs." The other three fellows would go off and tear paper off and drag it behind them as they went through the woods. That was a big deal, going through the woods, then we'd circle around and go down Berry Hill Rd. again. The "dogs" would give the boys with the paper a ten or fifteen minute head start, then they would start tracking them and would try to run them down. That's what we did for entertainment when we were eight, nine, ten years old. *Norman Youngs*

I never remember saying, "I'm bored!" We always found something to do! I think we had more to do in those days than they do today. All they do is sit in front of the tube! They can't amuse themselves at all. Everything is very structured today. *Mimi Albro*



Mothers would make blackberry slump. We'd pick the blackberries, and you'd cook them down into a sauce, and then you'd make dumplings and you'd put the blackberries together with the dumplings and you'd put this hard sauce on top of that. You'd do this in August, when blackberries were in season. It was always 98° outside! You'd have to get up at 6 to beat the bees, otherwise the bees were terrible! We'd come home with gallons of berries.

Beverly Baker Mohlenhoff

"We would get an orange crate, and we'd take the wheels off a pair of old roller skates that someone had thrown out, and put them on a piece of 2 x 6, and we'd make a scooter out of that. The kids all had them in those days." *Gene Abbate*

Skateboards were just as ubiquitous a few decades later!



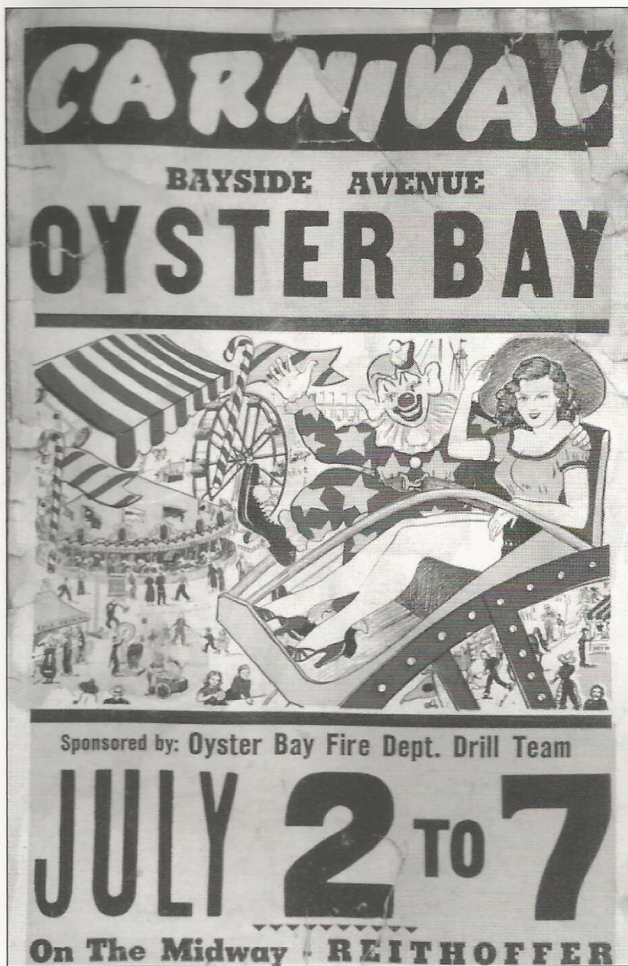
"There was a great big sandbank back there which was a challenge to climb up. But it was even more of a challenge to run down it without falling and rolling down the hill and killing yourself! The same way TR went down the sandbank at Cooper's Bluff." *Dave Layton*

We played marbles. You don't see kids playing marbles today. I have marbles made out of clay. That game is gone! *Norman Youngs*

"I grew up in Bayville, and with Bayville being a summer community, we always looked forward to the city kids coming out to rent the houses around us. There were very few people there in the winter. We had the stands in the summer and the merry-go-round...which was where Stehli's Beach is. You would get the [brass] ring and you'd get a free ride. You didn't go down there until you were almost 16 years old, because [your parents] wouldn't let you!" *Mimi Albro*

The Bayville carousel, c. 1944, is shown at left.





"The firemen ran a carnival every year, in the area where the Post Office is now, that was an open field, then. We would go with my parents. Then we would go home, fill empty cans with sand, and have our own carnival games!" Grace Micco Tedesco

Later, after the post office occupied that site, the carnivals were moved to Bayside Ave., on what is referred to as the "Capone Property."

Rollerskating was big and we'd do that in front of the Town Hall, because it had a long incline. We would wind up in the street, but it didn't matter because there weren't that many cars around!

Mickey Minicozzi Hawxhurst

Everybody always had a bicycle. We would think nothing of getting on our bicycles and going up to Sagamore Hill.

Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke

"We would set up croquet on the front lawn, and would put a beach umbrella up if it was raining. We tried to be careful, but every so often one of us would get a little overzealous and knock somebody's ball and it went down over the bank and down to the foot of Anstice St.! It would go down to East Main St. with someone running after it! If it was raining we would stand under the beach umbrella until it was our turn. If we weren't an even number, my mother would come out and make it even."

Gloria Bayles Tucker

There used to be a ferry at the foot of South St. that went over to Stamford, Ct. The fare was 50¢ for adults and 25¢ for children. In the summers, on Sunday afternoons I remember my family would go on the ferry and we'd take a ride to Connecticut and back, and [again], and we'd spend the whole afternoon on the boat. There was no air-conditioning, we didn't have any fans, and this was a way of being comfortable in the heat. They had someone who would play the banjo, or the ukulele. The ice cream cones cost 5¢. On Saturday night, maybe two or three times during the year, they would have a moonlight sail. *Grace Micco Tedesco*



"On East Main St., where Nobman's is, they used to have horse racing every Friday or Saturday night. My father rode the horse and my Uncle Fred took the bets. My father was younger and lighter. They would run from Atlantic Steamer down to where the bandstand is; that's where they ended the races. My grandmother used to use this horse with a buggy. My father and uncle would race the horse in the field and clock it." Norman Youngs

Above, a horse and buggy drive along East Main Street, past a "wheel" (the photographer's?) leaning against the embankment.



“...Before you get home, I'll know about it!”

There was a guy named Christos Karajanis; he was a little Greek and he walked bowlegged. He had a fruit and vegetable store on South St. At nighttime, he would have his fruit and everything outside. Some of the older guys would walk along and take a piece of fruit, just to antagonize him. He would come out running after them, but he couldn't run being bowlegged! I saw this a couple of times. This was about 8 o'clock, but I was young. I wasn't even supposed to be out at 8 o'clock! This must have been sixty years ago. *John DeBellis*

We had a group of kids from the neighborhood, and we called ourselves the "Ivy Street Gang." We used to go out after dinner, and we'd wait until the cherries got ripe, the corn,... anything that grew. Not that we needed it, but it was just a sport, to see if we could get away with it! But we didn't destroy anything; we were careful not to break anything when we were "borrowing." *Gene Abbate*

I had a lot of friends who lived up on Ivy Street and my father used to say to me, "If you go up to Ivy Street and get in trouble, before you get home, I'll know about it!" *Dave Layton*

Well, Mrs. Hoppen had cherry trees, but they used to go in there when she wasn't looking, and Mrs. Hoppen would find them, and she'd call the cops, and ...the cop would come, sirens blasting, telling the kids [it was] time to get out of the tree. That's so they could get away. That was funny. There was only one cop, Bill Hurley. He would blow the siren from far off, and that would mean, "Take off!" He knew everybody and he didn't want the kids to get in trouble. *Beverly Baker Mohlenhoff*

We would grab fruit off Viney Wright's tree. Viney Wright lived on Kellogg St, next to Quack Warren. Viney had a grape vine and a pear tree. Jimmy Marsh had a Model T Ford and we were sitting there in front of the Wrights' house. Well, we figured we'd have some fun with Jimmy. So we got a rope, fastened it to Jimmy's bumper, and tied it around the outhouse up on the top, and Mr. Viney Wright got into it. We didn't know that. So he was doing his duty and Jimmy Marsh drove away, and the house came down! We used to feel sorry for him [Mr. Wright] because she would never let him use the bathtub or go up to the john. She had it for herself and he used to have to go out to the outhouse and he used to have a tub in the cellar where he would take a bath. He was a carpenter. We'd all watch him through the window taking a bath and we got a big kick out of that. We were kids! But we didn't do any damage. Boy when we pulled that house down...that was it. He had to go upstairs to the john from then on! *Norman Youngs*

“They had a couple of pool rooms in Oyster Bay and we used to go in these pool rooms. My father told me, don't you dare go in the pool room, because that's where the action was, gambling. That's what they were known for, years ago. In fact there were a couple of bars in Oyster Bay that had bookies operating, as well as the pool rooms. And my father knew who they were and what they were. They weren't gangsters, but they were manipulating money, and my father couldn't understand why someone would work like he# for their money and then go and gamble it away! But anyway, I learned how to shoot pool, and I was pretty good. There was one pool room on Audrey Ave and one on South St, where Kehler's Fish Market used to be. Well I got caught once by my father, and he said don't you do it again, and he gave me a shellacking. But that didn't stop me!”*

Gene Abbate

Frank LoBianco and Carmelo Testa owned the poolroom on Audrey Avenue next door to the Lyric Theater in 1920.



“Scouting was a big deal.”

Because we were so war-oriented, scouting was a big deal. We spent a lot of time camping out. The requirements for a camping merit badge were that you had to spend a minimum of forty nights out under the stars. Only ten days of that could be summer camp. You had to do a lot of camping on your own. Five or six of us would go up on the Tower Lots and build a semi-permanent campsite up there. We had managed to buy a lot of second-hand World War II tents, mountaineer tents... We left them up all summer. When you were finished for the day with whatever work you were doing, you'd go home, raid the icebox...and head up into the woods and sit around the fire, cook your dinner.

Dave Layton



A 1917 Boy Scout camp is shown above. The rear of the Oyster Bay Inn (the current Masonic Lodge) is in the background, while Raynham Hall is to the right.

Photo: Raynham Hall Museum



“I remember when I was in the Scouts in 1938 down at Teddy Roosevelt's grave, on the hill. Dan Beard, the head of the Boy Scouts of America was there and over 500 Scouts walked up there from Oyster Bay. It was an awesome day.”

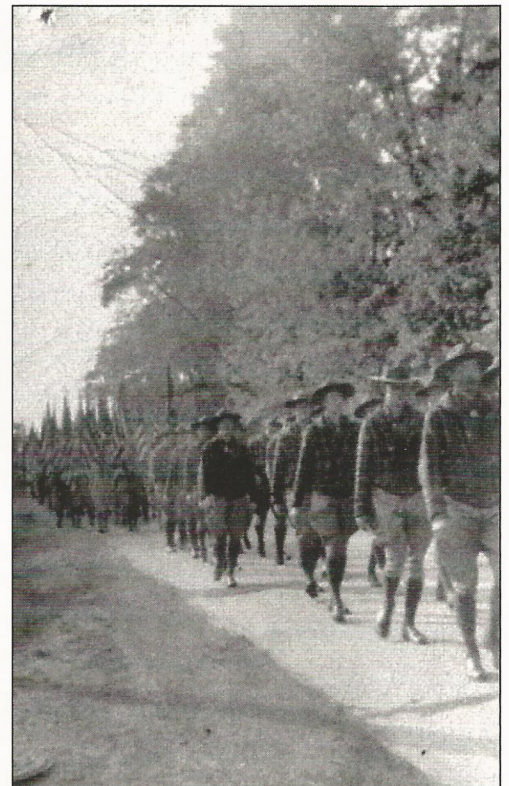
John McQuade

Dan Beard is at center in above photo.

We started a second Boy Scout troop during World War II. There was Troop 39 and it was getting too large so we started a second one, #232 and we operated out of the old Methodist Church. We went around and collected scrap metal for the war effort... all Oyster Bay guys.

John DeBellis

“Every October they had the Boy Scout Parade, always around the 27th [Theodore Roosevelt's birthday.] They would have a big service up there and all the Boy Scouts would file into that field, on the hill. Then they would all march back to town. They came from all over. Daniel Beard [head of the Boy Scouts of America] was there. That happened every year up until the war. That was a big parade. Took a long time for them all to pass.” Beverly Baker Mohlenhoff





"The Oyster Bay Nine became quite a good team. The East Norwich Surprise stopped playing sometime around the turn of the century and they combined their best players with the Oyster Bay Nine and formed quite a formidable team. They played teams from all over...Connecticut, the Bronx, Brooklyn. In fact, one of the teams they played was what became the Brooklyn Dodgers. They were the Trolley Dodgers at that time. They came out here and they got beat pretty badly by the Oyster Bay team. Some of the local teams refused to play the Oyster Bay Nine unless they could pick the Oyster Bay lineup because they were so powerful!"

John Hammond

The Oyster Bay Nine is shown at left c. 1904.

"Most of the neighborhoods had 'teams.'"

Most of the neighborhoods had "teams." You played a lot of your games in the street. One of the annual spring rites was there always managed to be a fire up in the Tower Lots up on the top of the hill. There was an open field there where every April all of the last year's grass and trash were burned. The next thing you knew guys would be pushing lawn mowers, trying to make it into a ballfield. If anyone had thrown away old coil springs, you'd get a half-dozen of those and put those behind home plate, and that was your backstop. You'd put some lime lines down and you could play baseball. You'd get a group coming up from Pine Hollow and another group from Mill River Rd., or Capitol Heights, and they'd play ball up there, with [a repaired] broken bat and a baseball covered

with tape to keep it together! *Dave Layton*



"Dinky Petroccia formed a women's softball team. He recruited most of the women from Maxwell and Shore Avenues [the Italian section of town]. Practice and home games were held at the park at twilight. The team was called the 'Parkettes.' We played other North Shore teams from Syosset, Sea Cliff, Glen Cove...and enjoyed quite a following. But when the war ended, so did the Parkettes."

Rose LoBianco Murphy

"One of the few things that was organized was the Oyster Bay Bombers, which was a black baseball team that used to be headquartered here in the former NAPA auto parts store. They would play on Sunday afternoons on the field behind the high school. They were an excellent team!"

Dave Layton

Below: This unidentified baseball team may be the Glen Cove Sox. Photo: Long Island Studies Institute





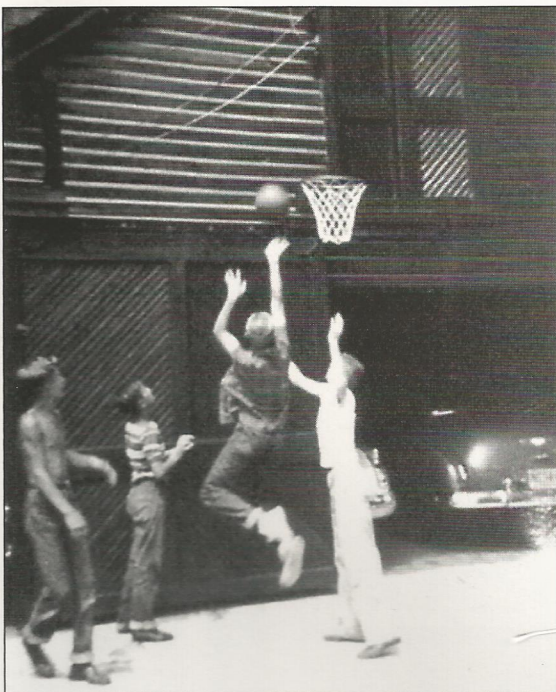
Formed little more than a decade after the game was invented, the Sagamore Stars was Oyster Bay's first basketball team. The Stars played their home games on the second floor of Fleet's Hall.

The team was assembled and coached by Dr. James S. Hall, shown in the center of this 1906 team photograph, and included team captain W. Mahon (standing, upper left), G. Hefner (upper right), F. Mahon (seated to left of Dr. Hall), J. O'Connor (seated to the right), W. Herbert (to left of boy), and J. Reynolds (reclining). The team mascot, F. Merrill, is holding the ball adorned with the team's logo and the year '04-'05.

"We used to play a lot of games up on Schiff's field. Everyone has fences around everything now! We'd play football there, tackle football, with no equipment except the football. It was adventurous at times, because that was the same field that they would graze the horses in. Sometimes you would get tackled and come up with a little bit of a surprise!"

John Hammond

A "team" from the Cove poses on a makeshift gridiron.



"There was no formal, organized recreation for kids. There was some for the older guys like softball leagues, bowling leagues, but for little kids there was no Pop Warner football or Little League baseball, no Boys & Girls Club. There weren't the facilities we take for granted today. No public basketball courts or tennis courts. If you wanted to play basketball, Doc Jackson had a big house up there on South St. and in the backyard he had a three car garage in the back and a big courtyard with a pebble driveway. That was one of the few places in town with a real good backboard and a formal basketball hoop. Usually the places we played basketball your hoop was the hoop off a barrel. Doc Jackson's family was not only wealthy enough but nice enough to leave a basketball out on the back porch. Not everybody could afford a basketball in those days. You didn't have access to the school courts. Once in a while, on a Sunday afternoon, you could get into St. Dom's but it would always be so crowded that you could hardly ever get in there."

Dave Layton

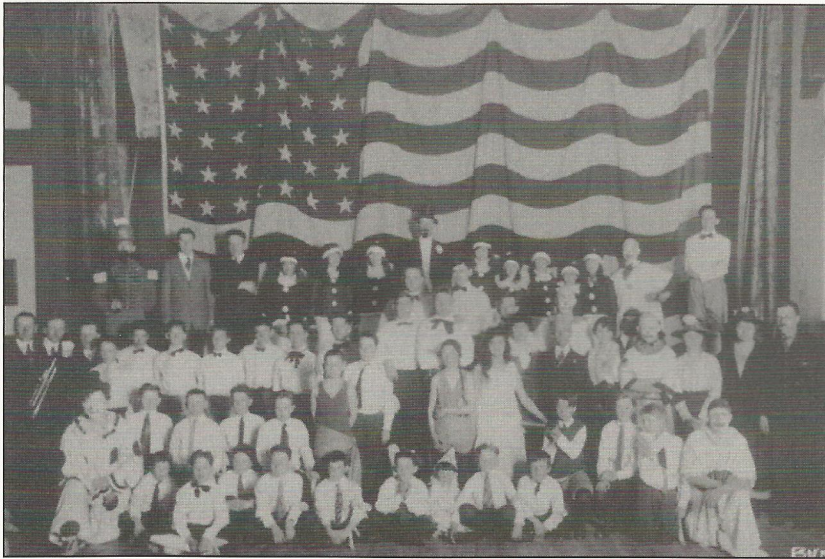
A pick-up basketball game, c. 1948.

“The entire village was at the races...”

“On the day of the [1906 Vanderbilt Cup Race] the stores in Oyster Bay were all closed; the entire village was at the races...The crowd along the entire race route was estimated at 400,000...One of the cars went out of control coming through the East Norwich and plowed into the crowd, killing a man and badly injuring [a boy from Connecticut.] The public outcry was intense against continuing the races the following year.” John Hammond

The Vanderbilt Cup Race, 1906.

Photo: Raynham Hall Museum



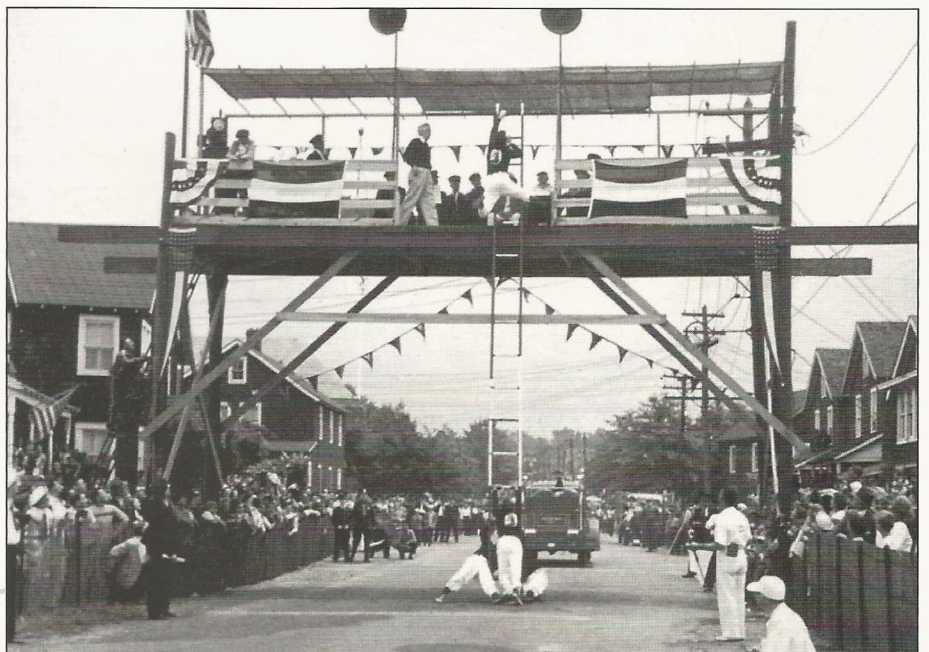
“The Matinecock Lodge would run a minstrel show. It was all local people in this show. They had theirs at the Lyric Theatre. The American Legion Auxiliary would also host a show [more of a talent show]; ours was at the Oyster Bay High School.”

Grace Micco Tedesco

The cast of a play or musical poses at left in this unidentified photograph, c. 1915, from the Historical Society's collection.

“In those days, we didn't have television, so going to watch the fire tournaments was a big deal. Especially when they happened to have one of the tournaments locally. There would be hundreds and hundreds of people watching. Even to watch the teams practice. Company #1 would practice down at Ships Point Lane. There was a tournament tower on Shore Rd. and the Steamers used to practice down there. When #1 wanted to practice the tower events they had to go to Shore Rd. In the late '40s and early '50s the Atlantic Steamers' Rough Riders tournament team was State Champion every year. We would get a big kick out of going to watch them.” John Hammond

The tournament tower is utilized in this drill during a fire tournament, c. 1950.





"On Saturday night they had vaudeville acts. Someone would play the piano. The weekend matinee lines would form from the front of the theatre and would stretch all the way to South Street." *Grace Micco Tedesco*

The Lyric is shown above c. 1910.

On a Saturday night at the Lyric you could watch a western, a short, and a detective story and we'd also have a lottery. The lights would come on, and we'd listen as they called out numbers. If you got a certain number, you'd run up and they'd give you an envelope and there would be \$15 or \$20 in it. It was a lot of fun. Everyone loved it. That was called "Lucky." At the end they would have the big one, that would be the \$50 one. Someone would go up thinking they had won and the host would say, "No, sorry." Everyone would boo and laugh, but it was a happy thing and then someone would really win and they'd come up and bow and they'd get that envelope. It was nice. I won once, in all those years. You had to go up on stage. Everyone was there and the crowd was yelling and laughing. It was a nice time...a friendly thing...everyone appreciated it...there was a closeness. *Nick LaBella*

"Every kid in Oyster Bay was in that theatre..."

We went to the movies a lot. I was friendly with the Hutchinson family who owned the [Lyric] theatre. They had a main picture on Sundays and Mondays; Tuesdays and Wednesdays was a double-feature, nothing too much; Thursdays and Fridays, another good picture came out; and Saturdays was a horrible old cowboy picture and a type of Bingo on Saturday nights. Every kid in Oyster Bay was in that theatre on Sunday afternoons; our parents sure knew what to do when they wanted some peace and quiet! *Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke*

OYSTER BAY'S LYRIC Theatre		PHONE 598
MATINEE DAILY		ALWAYS A GOOD SHOW
SUNDAY and MONDAY, JUNE 6th and 7th JEANETTE MacDonald - NELSON EDDY with JOHN BARRYMORE "MAYTIME" CARTOON NEWS	SATURDAY, JUNE 5th DOUBLE FEATURE PROGRAM EDWARD EVERETT HORTON ... In ... "LET'S MAKE A MILLION" And ANN DVORAK JOHN LITEL ... In ... "MIDNIGHT COURT" PLAY LUCKY TONITE Tuesday and Wednesday, June 8th and 9th DOUBLE FEATURE PROGRAM ANTON WALBROOK ELIZABETH ALLEN ... In ... "SOLDIER AND THE LADY" And ROBERT YOUNG ANN SOTHERN ... In ... "DANGEROUS NUMBER"	
	THURSDAY and FRIDAY, JUNE 10th and 11th PAUL MUNI - MIRIAM HOPKINS "THE WOMAN I LOVE" NORMA SHEARER - LESLIE HOWARD	

This 1937 ad for the Lyric appeared in the Oyster Bay Guardian; "Lucky" is prominently advertised.



"This little Dutchman named Pete was the enforcer... Miss Ball was the ticket lady. Some guys would sneak in through the side door. One guy would pay to go in and open the door into the alley to let his friends in when Pete was up collecting tickets. A half dozen guys would run in and find seats. Pete would see the light from the door being open and would run down to try to find who was sneaking in. He never did!"

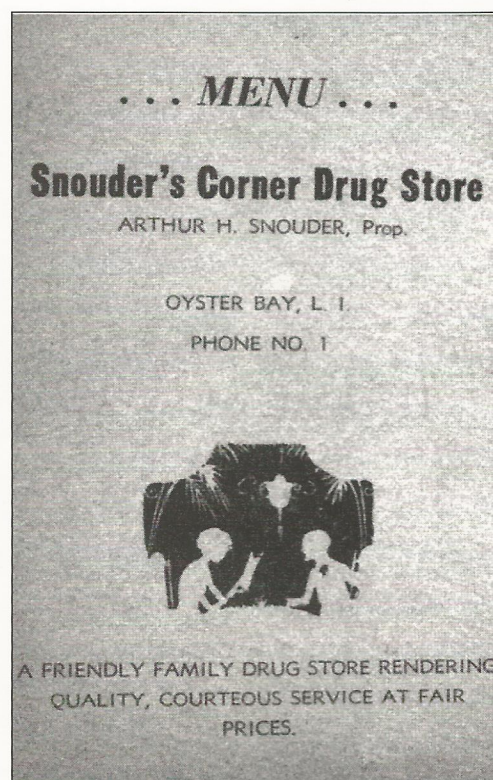
John Hammond

The alley is shown at left, c. 1915.

“It was a nice friendly place to meet.”

But, once I went to high school, we'd stay after school for sports and things, and then we'd walk to town, to Snouder's Corner, and get an ice cream or a Coke, and fool around down there, and then walk home. Lots of times people would give us rides. You know, people who lived on estates here, or friends' fathers, they'd be going back to town, and they'd pick us up and drop us off. *Beverly Baker Mohlenhoff*

When my children were growing up I didn't want them hanging around the corner of Snouder's ...when my boys were teenagers. That was the time when drugs were coming around, and drinking. The kids hanging out there were rowdy, getting into trouble.... so it was off-limits. When I was growing up, it was a place to go and sit at a booth. We didn't hang out outside. We sat at the fountain and would have our ice creams and talk. If we got a little too loud, Mr. Snouder would say, very gently, "Tone it down, now." We would go after school, a few times a week. There might be a dozen kids or so, never more than that. You would have your nickel drink and you could sit. *Rose LoBianco Murphy*



Above: A c. 1940 menu from Snouder's, when sundaes cost 15¢ and a soda cost a nickel!

Snouder's... they had good ice cream there. A Mr. Oakley would be behind the soda fountain. He was so nice to all the kids! We'd go in and get our ice cream after school or after skating, sleigh riding.

Gloria Bayles Tucker

Left: The Scutakes family owned the "Sweet Shop," another popular hangout, from 1947 to 1995. Lilla Keith and Margaret Ritchie share a menu, c. 1957.

"The young people of the time would meet at Snouder's Drug Store. They had a soda fountain in there. Afternoons, after school, sometimes in the evening, people would meet there on the corner. There was no Boys & Girls Club or anything like that. It was a nice friendly place to meet. Mr. [Arthur] Snouder was always very nice. He ran that business for quite a few years."

Bob Whaley

Elaine Hammond, Melanie Schwanbeck, Dale Nathan, Dick Downing, and James Davis are served by Annabell Seaman at Snouder's soda fountain, c. 1957.

"We would dance all night long!"

A big dance, a ball, was held every year in St. Dom's auditorium. We got all dressed up in evening clothes, with the gloves that went up to our elbows, and they'd have a band from Broadway come to play. The American Legion hosted a ball every Veteran's Day, that was another big deal. We had the flags draped all over...it was really a big event. That was where Herman Bernstein met Natalie...she came from Detroit originally.

Grace Micco Tedesco

A lot of us used to go down to the pavilion down at the park. They had a jukebox outside there and we would dance. That was our recreation. We were maybe 15 years old. We'd dance in our bare feet and bathing suits. This had to be around 1951. It was also a way for us to meet boys. Our parents were so strict that we couldn't meet boys anywhere else.

Mickey Minicozzi Hawxhurst

There would be two or three square dances in the fall. One time they had a block party and closed off Spring Street between West Main and Audrey and they had square dancing there. I remember a square dance up at Schiff's field.

Dave Layton

As we got into our teens, mother would let us have a big group in the house, and we'd roll back the dining room rug and the hall rug, and we'd dance to the music on the radio.

Gloria Bayles Tucker



"This is at the Italian-American Club, where we got married on Oct. 1, 1949." Gene & Fran Abbate



"We all went to dances held at the school. Every couple of months they would have a dance. The American Legion had a dance every Saturday night. Kids from all over would come, Glen Cove, Bayville. They would have music, punch and cookies. The girls really looked forward to that; they'd get all dressed up. We would dance all night long. The Lindy was popular. I used to dance with a fellow at school who was a great dancer. We would do a combination of a waltz and a foxtrot, the rumba; the cha-cha wasn't til later. It cost us maybe a quarter or so to go."

Mickey Minicozzi Hawxhurst



“...All anyone did around here was bowl!”

We used to go bowling at St. Dominic High School. They had three or four lanes in the basement. My brother was a pin setter up at the Trio bowling alleys. I started bowling when I was seventeen or eighteen and continued for about twenty-five years.

Mickey Minicozzi Hawxhurst

Congressman Len Hall, who lived right there[on Anstice Street], would go bowling at the bowling alleys at St. Dom's. He loved going down there!

Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke

“Old Russ Ebbets, the constable [shown at right], was a great bowler. He had a perfect score hanging up in the dining room.”

Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke



“The bowling alley up in Pine Hollow was only the last of many here in Oyster Bay. There were numerous other bowling alleys here. The first one was in the Seawanhaka Hotel, which was bought by one of the Weekes' in 1900 and he put bowling alleys in there. That burned down in 1901. The next one I know of was built on South St., where Village Camera is. A man from Port Washington named DeMartino opened up a bowling alley there in the 1920s, about the same time that the Trio opened on the corner of South and Adam. That survived up until about 1960. St. Dom's High School had three lanes in the basement. I used to set pins in that alley. All of these places had big, regular leagues. It was amazing! You look through some of the old Guardians you see all of the leagues that went on. You get the impression that all anyone did around here was bowl! The one in Pine Hollow opened up around 1955. That became the meeting spot in town. It had an extremely popular cocktail lounge and very active leagues.”

John Hammond

“We used to go down to the Trio. That's Dot DeVine, Vince Murphy (my husband's brother) and me. The bowling alleys were in the back. We had gone bowling and were chatting at one of the tables.”

Rose LoBianco Murphy

The Pine Hollow skating rink lasted for just a few years in the early '70s after its conversion from a bowling alley.



“... Your imagination was a big part of life.”

Indoor games included dominoes, checkers, Chinese checkers, and cards. My aunt and uncle, my sister and I had a regular Parcheesi game going, every couple of nights. We'd play for a dime in the middle. Boy would we fight! It was a lot of fun!

Beverly Baker Mohlenhoff

In winter we would play board games like checkers, card games like Old Maid, Go Fish, Parcheesi. *Mickey Minicozzi Hawxhurst*

Growing up here in Oyster Bay, there was never a lack of things to do. Of course there was no TV, but we were great radio listeners. Everybody had a radio.

Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke



A live radio broadcast. Do any of our readers have any information on this photograph from the Society's collection or station WKBS?

We spent a lot of time listening to the radio...the Shadow, the Lone Ranger...which would take me out of where I was living, especially on top of the store...because you couldn't move up there, because there was a business going on downstairs and customers. *Nick LaBella*

There was a different kind of socializing back then. When I was a teenager I know my mother would go to see friends and maybe I'd make the fourth for bridge. She'd have friends in and have them for dessert and tea, coffee. It wasn't the way we seem to feel we have to entertain today. *Gloria Bayles Tucker*

Radio was great because you always had these programs where your imagination was a big part of life. It was very stimulating mentally. You would envision all these things that you heard going on on the radio. Your imagination of what Capt. Don Winslow looked like was different from what mine would be. *Dave Layton*

We'd play various card games...Hearts, Seven and a Half...Parcheesi was another great game. We'd get a four-some together. One summer night, it was beastly hot, so my mother called the minister's wife and invited her and her daughter up to play Parcheesi. We played Parcheesi all night long and we had breakfast of all sorts of things out of the icebox. Then they went home before it got daylight. *Gloria Bayles Tucker*



We used to play pinochle games on Thursday or Friday night with people on Summit St. and there would be nine or ten guys around a table. They would have five or six packs of cards. And that went on for thirty years. *Norman Youngs*

“My father would go to a club where they'd play cards, penny ante...he'd also play bocce there...on Friday night, Saturday afternoon and night, and half a day Sunday. We used to play cards in the Lyric Theatre on Saturday. A lot of us would go there and clean up and then they would let us play on the rug.” Nick LaBella
A backyard card game among friends, c. 1935.

"We don't have the winters we had back then..."

Boys played hockey on the pond behind where Roosevelt School is now. It was only about three feet deep. It was a crime that that was filled in! It should have been fenced in and left so that people could really ice skate. Now the children have no place to go! We don't have the winters we had back then either. There's no sense in buying skates or sleds or anything!

Gloria Bayles Tucker

Sometimes one of the captains of the oyster boats would take a group of us out. The bay would freeze over and he'd let us go over the side and we'd skate back to shore. But that ice was very rough. Salt water doesn't freeze smooth. But it was fun ...something different!

Gloria Bayles Tucker



"Behind where Roosevelt School is now, there was a little pond and that would freeze in November, starting around Thanksgiving, we'd have ice on the pond. It was rather shallow so it would freeze before anywhere else. There was an old house where the school is now and behind it was the pond. As long as everyone behaved themselves, they let us use the pond. Once in a while some guys got to doing things they shouldn't have been, and we had to get after them or else we would all have lost our skating privileges!" Bob Whaley

Photo: Raynham Hall Museum



"We would have to push the snow off to make a hockey rink. We formed a little team of our own in Oyster Bay here. That was about 1937, '38. We would play a team from Oyster Bay Cove. They had a little pond that they used to play on, opposite Moore's Hill Rd." Bob Whaley

out of school and go skating until 6 o'clock and then went home to eat and do your homework, and then go skating until 9.

Norman Youngs

"In the winter, someone always had a party. The girls would bake the cookies, we'd all get together. If the party happened to be in Bayville, the parents would load up a car with kids, or maybe one of the older guys would have a car and you'd all load in. Sleigh-riding parties were popular. There was also a lot of night-time skating over at Beaver Dam. There would be hundreds of people over there."

Dave Layton

But even the Mill Pond froze over in winter because it was cold! And then you'd get snow and they didn't use the salt on the roads in those days, so you'd have maybe five or six inches of packed down snow on the roads, almost like ice. I would put my skates on here [on Larrabee Ave.] and go up the road around to the Mill Pond. You could go right on the road without damaging your skates. You started with warm feet anyway!

Bob Whaley

We would walk down to the Mill Pond for skating. We'd skate until 9 o'clock when everyone had to go home. You had to do your homework before you went down there. Beaver Lake was good skating if you had a car. They had big fires by the Mill Pond. You would
g e t





I remember the crystal clear ice on Beaver Dam this thick! Somebody would have an airplane on skis land on there...this would have been the late '30s. We had ice boat races on Mill Neck Creek, full-size iceboats would race all the way up the Creek. Zeb Wilson was the King of the ice boaters. As a kid I used to make small ice boats, models. But the seasons have changed so much, we don't have winters like we used to. I used to put my skates on in the kitchen and put rubber guards on. I would go out and skate on the clear ice. At that time the Beaver Dam Winter Sports Club was there, right on the lake. I started working there when I was thirteen, right after school. I'd irritate Capt. Seaman, who was a retired sea captain and he was a very imposing, tall figure, always wore his uniform. Well I would irritate him by going over first thing in the morning over the fresh ice and skating around. Well he would come down that steep staircase, take one look and he'd say, "That d@*# kid again!"

John McQuade

Not too close, girls! A local skating scene, c. 1980.

Mary Ebbets and I were about 11 or 12, and she was down here visiting me one day. There were no houses there then [north side of Melbourne St.] except the Hutchinsons'. Everything else was a big open field. She and I went down to the water to go walking on the ice. We were by the Commander Oil dock, in our big heavy snow suits. We were tiptoeing along when all of a sudden, she ...went in. We were over the channel where the tankers come in. She went in first and I followed her in. Every time we tried to get out the ice would crack. We finally made it out on top of the ice again, where the ice was stronger. We were crying, and all wet. We came running up the big lot, falling into the snow.... Your foot would go down, and you'd sink in. By the time we got back up here, we were in some state, crying. My mother was so wonderful, I can't believe it. She made us hot chocolate, got us out of those wet clothes, and said how lucky we were. We were both told by her and the Ebbets family never to go there again! *Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke*

In the winter, we could bring our sleds to school, on Mountain Avenue, and during the lunch hour the teachers would take us across the street to Godfrey's and we would sleigh ride. She would stand at the top of the hill and we would go down one side and come back up the other. *Mimi Albro*

We would sleigh ride up on Moore's Hill, where the Chelsea Center is now. It's full of trees now. A few years back, we were passing by [on 25A] and I said to



*Two winter scenes from a Weekes family photo album.
Raynham Hall Museum*



my cousin, "Vivian, see that hill? That's where we used to go sleigh riding." She said, "What did you do about the trees?" I said, "The trees weren't there then!"

Betty Martling Farnsworth

For those of us who lived off Ivy Street, Schiff's field was the place. When you got a good snow storm, that was a decent hill for sleigh riding. Some people tried skiing but it was usually sledding that was carried on there. In the middle of the hill we would build up the snow and make a jump for the sleds to go off. I can still remember the impact when you came down! If it was really icy, you'd have a problem trying to stop at the bottom because there was a split rail fence down there. When you got really daring, you'd go up in Schiff's woods to what we called "Dead Man's Hill." *John Hammond*



"We would go sleigh riding on Burtis Ave., Weekes Ave. That would be the place. My father had [saw] horses and we'd put lanterns on them. Nobody would go up there. We would sleigh ride until 9 o'clock when everyone went home. We never got hurt and we would go right on down to South St. Some people would leave their cars on the side streets so that we could sleigh ride there. You can't do that today with the plows and the sanding!" *Norman Youngs*

*Above: A smaller bobsled zooms down Weekes Ave.
Photo: John Hammond.*



Dr. Richard Derby straps on skis, c. 1915

My parents bought me a set of skis for my twelfth birthday, so even before Oscar Summers opened the Oyster Bay Ski Center, we would go up there, in what was Rennie Smith's cow pasture, which was a very good place for skiing and sledding. It must have had a sixty foot vertical drop, which was monumental to a five foot tall kid! When Oscar Summers opened the Ski Center, it must have been around 1947, he would open it at night. You could ski for 25¢ but you had to be careful in shallow snow, because sometimes you would hit obstacles like cow "plop" and you would stop very quickly! You slalomed out of necessity! *Dave Layton*

I tried skiing at Schiff's field once. I knew how to stand up on skis from water skiing, so I was able to keep my balance as I went down the hill. But nobody had told me how to turn or stop. I got down the hill fine, but all of a sudden, there's the fence. I didn't know what to do, so I just sat down! Fortunately, the rail there was high enough that I was able to go under! *John Hammond*

We were always sleigh riding...down at Weekes Ave., they would close it off, Slade's property off Berry Hill Rd. Outside making snowmen and such. Now in the wintertime, you look out...you don't see one child!

Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke

*A local man carries his skis up a ski run, c. 1900.
Photo: Raynham Hall Museum*



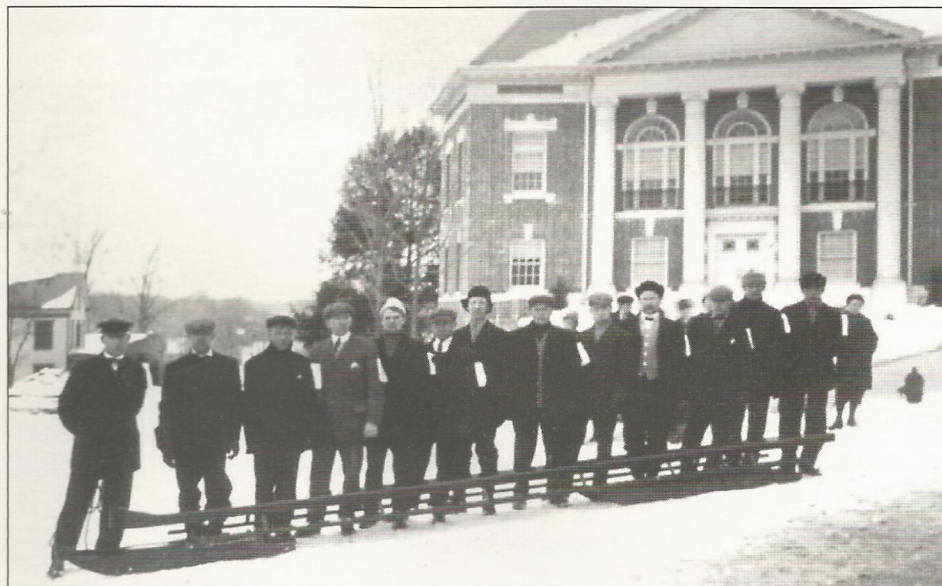


With the horse-drawn sled filled to capacity, those on smaller sleds hang on for a free ride! Photo: Raynham Hall Museum

“THE event of the Season...”

The bobsleds would race on 25A from the top of the hill where the police booth is now and they would end at Rothmann's corner. My family would go to Rothmann's corner in a horse-drawn sleigh. My father would put straw in the bottom, and we'd be all bundled up, my mother and father would sit in front, me and my three brothers would sit in the back. *Grace Micco Tedesco*

One of the most famous North Shore bobsleds was Locust Valley's "1911." Built originally by Henry Dudgeon, and modified by "Ketch" Weeks (shown at right in the bowler), the 1911 ruled bobsledding in the late Teens, when teams came to the North Shore from Connecticut and even Canada to race for sizeable purses and trophies. The "bob" is shown on Huntington's Lawrence Hill, "the 'Indianapolis' of bobsledding" and a prime racing location.



A man we called "Tom Mix" owned a sawmill and plowed the roads. They left the plow by Schiff's. He would pull it with two white horses and he always wore a cowboy hat. He would plow the roads and we would sit on the back for a ride. He didn't mind at all. Eight or nine kids was added weight which helped him. *Norman Youngs*

We would go down to Ship's Point where the ice would be floating around. Why some fellas didn't get drowned, I don't know! We would go out there with the ice and float on those cakes of ice in the middle of the bay. We'd jump from one to the other to get back. It's a miracle that someone didn't fall in! The ice would be broken up by the oyster boats and by the Coast Guard. The ice would be about a foot thick. We'd check them first and then we'd go floating around on them. *Norman Youngs*

Oyster Bay had a number of famous bobsleds, including the "Henrietta," the "Question [Mark]," "Flash" and the "Yankee," shown in Huntington, c. 1912. Originally built in Locust Valley by Townsend "Ketch" Weeks, it was sold to Charles Townsend of Oyster Bay. A second "Yankee" was built during World War I by Len Wright of Oyster Bay. The Yankee, referred to as "old reliable" in newspaper clippings of the day, always finished high in the standings, but rarely bested the famous 1911, which was "long looked upon as unbeatable," according to the East Norwich Enterprise.

The race between the 1911 and the Man O' War was "THE event of the Season" on the North Shore according to the Oyster Bay Guardian.

"They [crew of the Man O' War] said we have to go on a straighter hill so they went over to East Norwich on Northern Blvd by Rothmann's. The Bayville crew was on the 1911...The first time down the 1911 upset right by Rothmann's. They tried to get her into harder ground and when they jumped the front sled, over they went. So they went down again. The Man O' War had gone first and she went right by Mill River Rd. and up that incline on Northern Blvd. there; about half way up she stopped. They thought the 1911 would never go that far. Well the 1911 went that far, pulled over, went by the Man O' War about a half a bobsled's length and broke through onto the concrete. Well...Roy Seaman [1911's captain] circled the earth a few times and when he come down...there was some chin music going on! Big chin music! That's the last time the two sleds met. The Man O' War never raced again." Zeb Wilson

The 1911 (left) and Man O' War in Locust Valley, 1922.



"There was a great rivalry between the Man O' War and the 1911. Len and Al Wright had a blacksmith shop on Orchard St. They had built the ...second Yankee there. They started to build the Man O' War, and my father and I went over there to watch the construction. She was a big bob and beautifully made...she was all white enamel and gold leaf on to it, gold leaf fancy work in the front of the sled. They had a canvas cover made to go over it. She was all white, it said 'Man O' War, Oyster Bay Quentin Roosevelt Post' onto it all in gold leaf." Zeb Wilson
Built in 1921 at a cost approximated at \$700, the Man O' War was a disappointment in its East Norwich debut in a race sponsored by the Legion. In fact it "made the poorest run of any of the entries." It would be another year before Man O' War claimed victory, in its famous race with the 1911. According to the East Norwich Enterprise, "There was great rejoicing when the Man-O'-War was declared the winner, especially among the Oyster Bay Legion boys."

Left: The Wright family blacksmith shop, Orchard Street.



"They ran a Winter Carnival on Beaver Dam in 1916. Here's the ice boats all lined up. [They had] skating races, a hockey game, Irving Brokaw did the fancy skating with his daughter Mimi. They danced to music from a hurdy-gurdy." Zeb Wilson

As noted in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, "Over 3,000 persons gathered...to witness the ice carnival...arranged by the Matinecock Neighborhood Association....Barbara [Brokaw] and her father danced a little to the tunes played by a hand piano... These lively tunes, with the accompaniment of the whistle of a peanut wagon, and cries of 'hot dog' men, gave the scene a carnival spirit." The article concluded with a listing of the "society people" who were present.





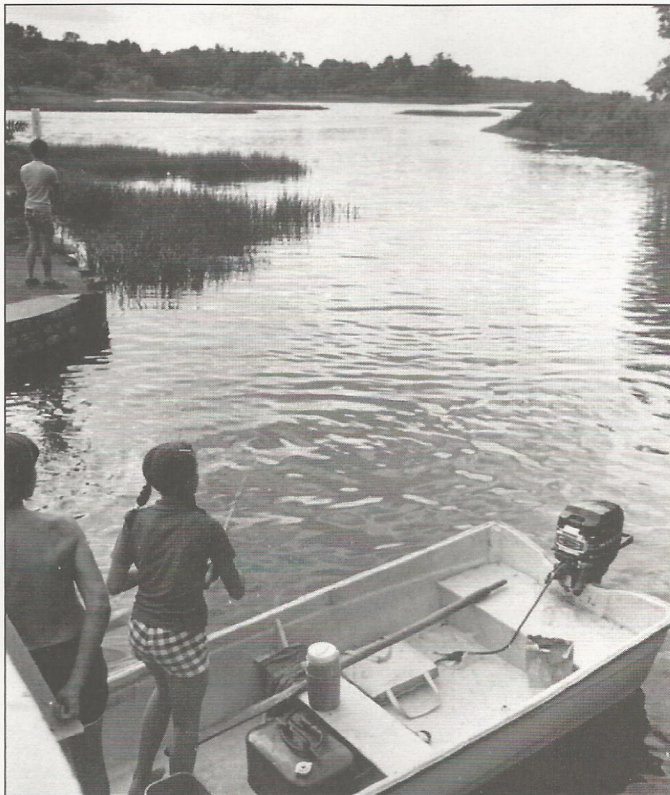
“We'd come home with a whole bucket full of snappers.”

The oyster dock was a good place to go snapper fishing. We'd sit on the boats and fish. Nobody bothered us. The best spot was the Roosevelt breakwater, up off of Cove Neck Rd. , because of the large amount of bait fish around there. We used to go crabbing down at the "Muddy Pond" at Roosevelt Park. This was where the fresh water drainage that came off Lexington Ave. and through the field where Roosevelt School is now, through where Firemens' Field is now, accumulated in this fresh water pond. There is still a sump down there which is all that's left of the pond. It was only three or four feet deep, but it was loaded with blue claw crabs. You could scoop up a bushel of crabs quite easily. *John Hammond*

“At the outflow of the Mill Pond, there was a little pond there with sunfish. No matter how hot it was everywhere else, it was always cool down there, because it was shaded by a canopy of trees that overhang there and with the water coming down the falls, it was always cool. Didn't matter if it was 110 degrees out, it was always so comfortable down there. We used to fish down there with a snapper pole with a little ball of bread dough. You'd just catch them for the fun of it, unhook them and throw them back in.”

John Hammond

Left: The falls are in the background of this c. 1910 postcard view.



My brothers loved to fish. We would fish off the pier at the park. They would catch snappers and my mother would cook them. *Mickey Minicozzi Hawxhurst*

We used to catch a lot of snappers and eat them, whenever the tide was high. It was too much work dragging a boat down over the mud flats. We'd come home with a whole bucket full of snappers. *Norton Hutchinson*

Out in the bay there was all manner of great fishing. Snappers, weakfish were common in those days. You never hear of them anymore! Tommy cods, small codfish are another fish you don't hear about anymore. Striped bass and bluefish, flounder and porgies, and there were a lot of great spots too!

John Hammond



“...People who have lived here all their lives can't get at it!”

I used to trap raccoons, catch snakes, frogs. Muskrat were in several places...by Beaver Dam, Francis Pond. I would sell raccoon pelts to Sears, Roebuck over in Glen Cove. Off of Ships Point Lane was a swampy area that had a lot of snakes and frogs. We'd catch them and bring them up to Jimmy Callaghan at the Bird Sanctuary and he would give us a quarter or so for a snake. What he ever did with them I don't know! There were a lot of little ponds around where you could catch turtles. We'd take a small boat over to Beaver Dam and catch snapping turtles. We would hunt pheasant a lot, sometimes even with bows and arrows. *John Hammond*



The Scioto Gun Club bound for a target shoot on the Moyses Farm near Sandy Hill Rd., 1898. Photo: John Hammond.



Bradford Weekes is shown above shooting at what appears to be the area of Weekes Pond, the site of the Roosevelt Elementary School, c. 1900.

Photo: Raynham Hall Museum

I was raised on Beaver Dam, right on the lake. You would have duck hunters come in at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning. They'd shoot the geese, too. What they didn't realize was these birds' habitat was Mill Neck Creek, which was nothing but a mire of mud. Believe me, when you started to eat one of those...yuck! It had a salt water taste to the meat. Their hunting was in vain.

John McQuade

A lot of guys ran trap lines, trapping muskrats down where Teddy Roosevelt School is now. That was swamp all the way down to the railroad tracks and there was a pond back there called Weekes Pond. The Stillwell brothers and Pete Fechter, Bobby Harnoski, all ran trap lines all through there, to Francis Pond. We did a lot of fishing. You could walk over to Beaver Dam and sit on the bank and fish. Of course nowadays you can't do that because it has now become exclusive and people who have lived here all their lives can't get at it!

Dave Layton

The people who lived on the estates didn't have much to do with the village. They were off at camp or at the country clubs.

Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke

Well, of course, [we went into town] to the movies, which of course is the present town hall, but [other than that] we entertained ourselves pretty well. There were a lot of us all together. *Elizabeth Roosevelt*

East Norwich resident Alvah Martling, John Hammond's grandfather, is shown at right with the spoils of the day, c. 1915.

Photo: John Hammond



“They weren't used to people running across their property.”

One day the hunt came down Wheatley Road, and turned into a new development road where they were digging a big drywell for that road. They came around the corner going lickety-split and the first guy around the corner fell into the hole with the horse. The next one fell in also and the next one tried to jump it and the horse that fell was kicking up and cut his throat, this was Mrs. Fox's horse. There was all kinds of commotion! Hughie Gormley jumped off his horse and with a gold pin held the neck together and bound it with horsehair. Somehow they saved that horse! They picked people up off the ground. My mother was involved. She fell over a horse, too. But she got back up on her's. The drywell of course was not marked.

Barbara Hewlett Conolly



A Meet of the Meadow Brook Hunt was held at Sagamore Hill, Theodore Roosevelt's home, in 1886.

Photo: Long Island Studies Institute



The Meadow Brook Hunt is shown above running west on 25A, in front of the Henry Uterhart house, at the corner of Route 106.

When the King of Sweden came to visit, they put him up on an old grey horse of Mr. Gibbs' called "The Ghost." They laid a drag so that they could be sure to go in the proper places but something went wrong. Either they jumped a fresh fox on the drag or they did not follow the hounds directly. They went down a path in Jones' Woods where there was a lot of grapevines, and didn't they hang the King of Sweden up on a grapevine! *Barbara Hewlett Conolly*

The foxhounds went out Wednesdays and Saturdays and the Beagles major meet was on Sunday, so they wouldn't overrun where the foxhounds were. We shared the same country, which was roughly ten miles wide and twenty miles long. Our country actually extended to Smithtown, but we never went that far.

Dr. Joseph Conolly

“My mother [Mrs. J.J. MacDonald] was Master of the Foxhounds in the Meadow Brook Hunt from about 1948 to 1958. During the war she took over temporarily because the men were busy doing other things! But she wasn't officially considered the master because the Meadowbrook Club always had the master as a member, and they didn't have women members. Then finally they made an exception and they incorporated her as a member but she never used the club. It was sort of agreed that she wouldn't.”

Barbara Hewlett Conolly

Mrs. MacDonald is shown in the painting at right with her favorite hounds, Alarm and Alert among them.





"This is the horn that the huntsman carried. He would blow it at the beginning of the meet when they'd move off, if the hare got up and the hounds went after him, in order to get everybody's attention; he would blow it to change directions. The hounds would get accustomed to hand signals, so you could get them to turn that way. If they went off on a cottontail, or somebody's dog, you could stop them with [the horn]. You'd blow this to have them gather around. There were special calls when they moved off and at the end of day, when they finished hunting." Dr. Joseph Conolly

Above: Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Conolly enjoy a light moment.

We had hunts that lasted for three, four hours. I can remember a couple of times with John Baker, Brinckerhoff and myself that we were out almost five hours! This was on one hare! We picked him up at Hickox [Old Westbury]...and ran him all the way to the Jericho golf course, which was Burrill's estate then. Dr. Joseph Conolly

There were no houses then. C.V. Whitney rented a lot of property that abutted his and he had a beef herd in there. He had a man to keep people from shooting in there. When he moved out we lost that piece. The Meadowbrook Club came along and put in a golf course eventually. We kept losing pieces that would cut it up. We also gained Marshall Field's [Caumsett] which was a wonderful place. People who moved out from New York...if you got near their property they'd raise hell! They weren't used to people running across their property. Dr. Joseph Conolly

"Gone Away"

November 1956 Hickox's

Photo: Dr. Joseph Conolly

Twenty to thirty people would participate in an average hunt, but the Thanksgiving Day meet always had eighty or ninety. People would come in horse and buggies. People would be all over the map! We also had Children's Day and the kids drew lots to see who would be the "Master" and it was absolute mayhem! Children would be falling off all over the place and ponies running loose...and everybody careening around! It was a lot of fun!

Barbara Hewlett Conolly

Fox hunting had to have people with money. They needed a lot the way they fox hunted... They decided to close it when they did because one of the ladies who was in charge told me they wanted it to go out looking good. They just thought it was best to end it. And I think they were right. They used to be able to fox hunt from the middle of the Island all the way to Bayville. You can't do that anymore. You can't do that today and you couldn't do it twenty years ago. So that's what really killed it. But the fox hunting was all the time.

Edith Hay Wykoff

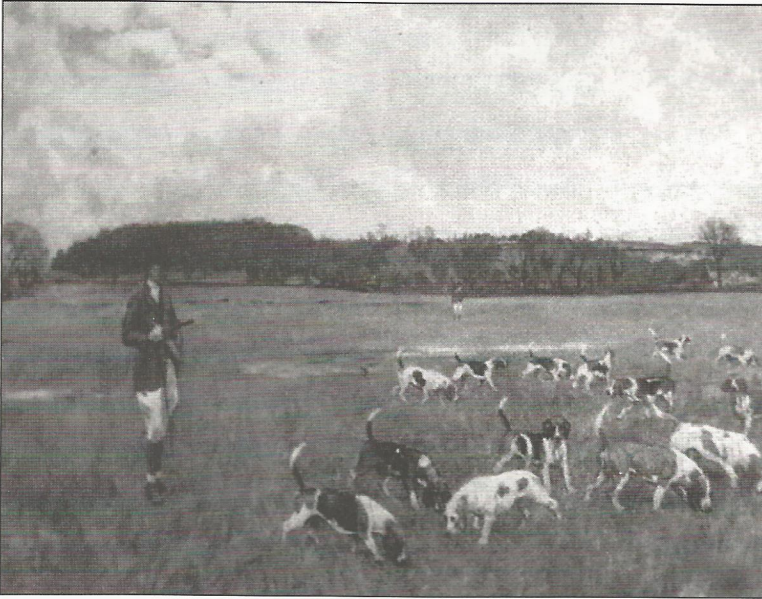


"Jumping" a hare.



We jumped a hare and we were running in a big loop around the Old Kennel and it began to snow. We hadn't expected snow. My feet nearly froze in sneakers. It snowed heavily. This plane kept zooming over our heads. We knew it was low and it was circling. We all prayed for this guy because we knew he was trying to put down. He did put down successfully off Split Rock Road, in a farm over there. The hounds took off and ran the hare all the way to Jericho Turnpike. We finally ended the hunt up there. It was not a kill. I think we just lost, finally. Ike Cox, Thank God, had gotten back in the hound van and was able to give people rides back. *Barbara Hewlett Conolly*

We had some wonderful hunts at Marshall Fields'. That was a big piece of property and they'd go til dark. It was the only time we ever had a hare swim to try to get away from the hounds. We went down to the Sound and he went out in the Sound and fortunately he swam parallel to the beach and then came out, went up a steep bank and got away. There was absolutely no scent where the hare had gotten out. That salty hare didn't leave an ounce of scent! *Dr. Joseph Conolly*



We would send out a fixture card that said where the hunt would be, what time. Wednesday and Sunday would be down on the card. Usually they'd just try to get a little exercise on Saturday. Hickox's, Squire Campbell's, Fields', C.V Whitney's, Old Kennels, Senff's Gate, H.P. Davison's, and Underhill's in Jericho were some of the fixtures. The Underhill property was our last good hare-hunting place because they watched it and kept trespassers off. The land remained intact but then we got hemmed in and lost a lot of property and the foxhounds did too. We both quit about the same time. They quit in 1970 and our last year was 1972 or '73. *Dr. Joseph Conolly*

"End of Day" for the Buckram Beagles.



"Moving off" on the servants' drive of the Winthrop Estate, Old Westbury; Dr. Conolly in the lead.

Sometimes the best part of hunting is the hot bath afterwards or the hot fire and the drink of port, trading the stories of what happened during the day!

Barbara Hewlett Conolly

"The role of a whipper-in was to keep the hounds back that might sneak off or stray and get off on a second hare. You wanted to keep them all together. The whippers-in would know all the hounds by name. There would be two of them usually." *Dr. Joseph Conolly*

A "whip" keeps the hounds in line in the painting at left.





"We had a point to point at the end of every year. Six miles for the men, three miles for the women. We had a walking race and a kids' race. They would tell you where to meet but they wouldn't tell you what the course was going to be, so that you wouldn't plan it ahead of time. But you had to know your country because you had to pick up chips here and here and back again." Dr. Joseph Conolly

Left: Members of the Buckram Beagles scale a fence while competing in the annual point to point race.

subscribed and we were given the use of a stable at Christy Bell's place. We used three stalls to keep the hounds in. We would pay the man to keep them clean and fed. Part of the expense was the trailer and for Mr. Piskatowski, who would come and pump out the drains. He was the cesspool man. Other packs were private packs. They were usually smaller than ours. *Dr. Joseph Conolly*

Of course, there was a long time when fox hunting went on, and I was a whipper-in for the Beagles for a long time.... That's what we used to do in the wintertime. Every Sunday there would be a meet at somebody's property. The hounds would come, the people would come, and then we'd chase jackrabbits across [the fields]. I got involved in the early '50s, and stayed with it 'til it disintegrated. Then it became the Weezers...Thirty or forty people would get together. And we'd have a big tea afterwards, with sandwiches at someone's house. You know, English style tea... That would go from... about the end of October... because all that area over by C.W. Post was cabbage fields, and chase things through the cabbage fields after the cabbage had been pretty much harvested.

Elizabeth Roosevelt

Beagling. That's gone. Did you ever see beaglers? I always thought it was a little bit like doing a hunt on foot. I went out beagling once. I didn't see why anybody wanted to do all that.

Edith Hay Wykoff

I used to have pheasant shoots up [at Schiff's] three times a year. I'd raise 1500 pheasant a year...and the tower was just east of Berry Hill Road. We had fourteen shooting positions and we'd release the birds and the game warden would be parked on Berry Hill Road, because the birds would overfly, depending on the wind, they'd fly to the west, and these guys would be out in the woods there plugging away. And the game warden would be waiting there and would give them tickets. I warned the guys, saying that there were going to be so many runners around, wait until he leaves and then blast away, and that's what a lot of them did.

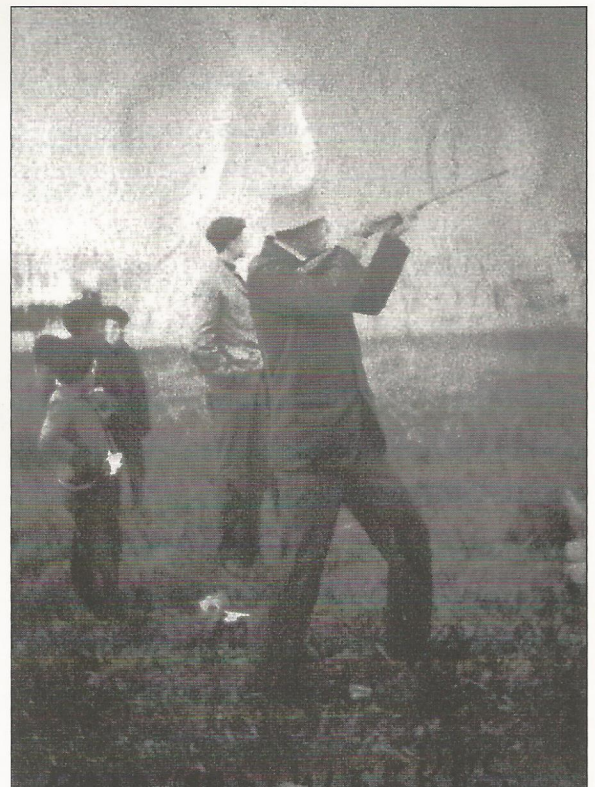
John McQuade

Bradford Weekes blasts away at an unidentified target, while a crowd gathers, 1900.

Photo: Raynham Hall Museum

"It goes without saying that everybody in this section of Long Island rides to the hounds."

Quote from "About Society" column by Helen Worden, 1931.



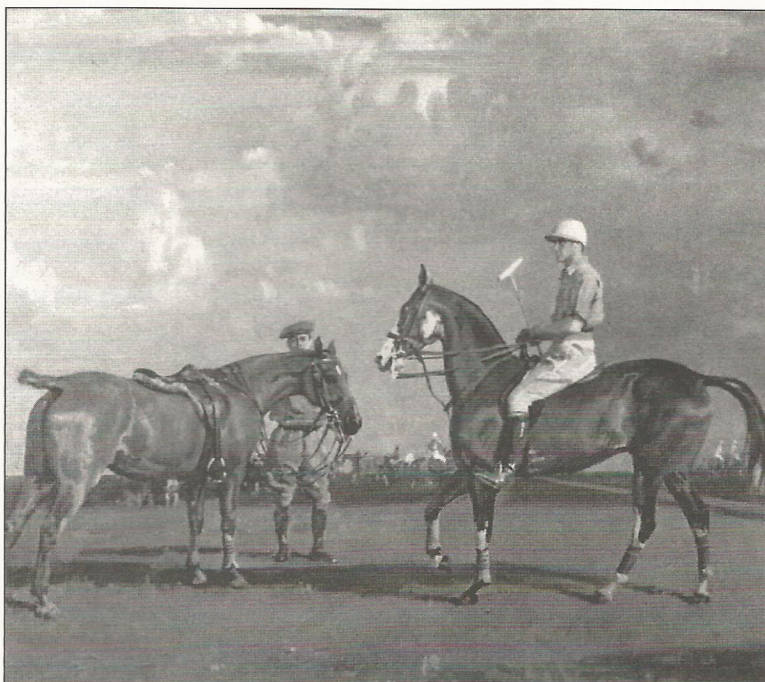
“Meadowbrook...was the be-all and end-all of everything!”

I was taken down to meet the Prince of Wales when he was here, but I was too young to remember anything about him! Back then Meadowbrook was *the* club for polo. It was the be-all and end-all of everything! *Pat Grace Corey*

“There was a grand entrance before the game, just like a circus. The ponies were led past the stands, all saddled and bridled, their legs all swathed in bandages...”

Damon Runyon

Right: The entrance for a game played during the Prince of Wales' visit in 1931.



“This is a print of Dev Milburn, Sr., back in the '30s and his son, Dev, who died a year or two ago.” Jane S. Greenleaf

The range now is two or three or four-goal. A four-goal player is pretty good. There aren't many ten-goal players around. Long Island used to have several: Mike Phipps, Winston Guest, Tommy Hitchcock...

Dr. Joseph Conolly

I was taken to a couple of polo games when I was little. Didn't mean an awful lot to me, because the ponies are so far away. When you're a kid you don't know what's going on. You were allowed to go out and push down the divots at the intermission. That was the big thing for kids.

Barbara Hewlett Conolly

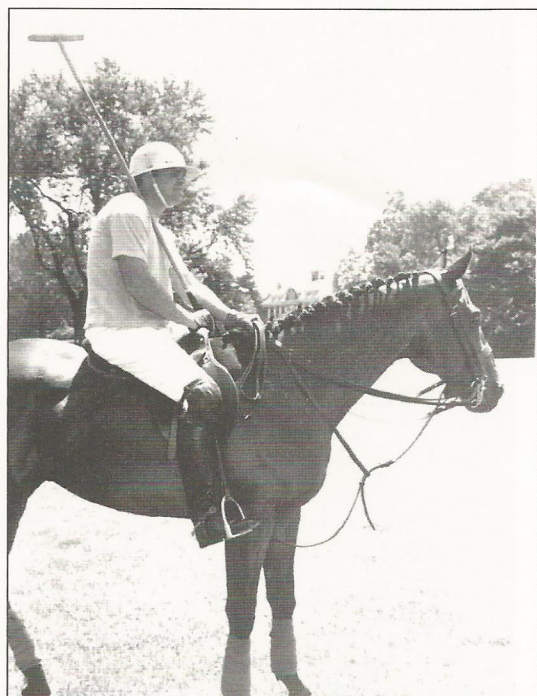
Mortimer Schiff owned a field down in Roslyn where he played polo prior to building his home in Oyster Bay in 1910.

When he moved over here it

was natural to put in another polo field. During World War II, English sailors would come into New York harbor aboard their ships. Mrs. H. T. Davidson of Lattingtown was running the local Red Cross efforts and somebody asked her what these poor sailors were doing on the weekends. Mrs. John M. Schiff said, "Why don't they come out and play cricket in our polo field on the weekends?" So they bussed them out from New York and some stayed in local homes and would play cricket on Saturday and Sunday. *John McQuade*

“Polo is still very popular. It's a different bunch of names, but it's still very popular. They play out east a lot... up in Mill Brook. The game hasn't changed much. You need a string of ponies, a place to play.”

Jane Stebbins Greenleaf



“Long Island used to be a very horsey place.”



Right: “That’s mother and her horse, Laddie. She dearly loved him. Notice the riding habit? She was just crazy about him.”

Adelaide Beatty

Jane Stebbins Greenleaf is at center in this photograph from the Piping Rock Horse Show, at left.



Long Island used to be a very horsey place. Experts think that of all the areas in the U.S., Long Island had the most sporting origins. We had more racetracks for one thing.

Barbara Hewlett Conolly

And then of course, I took up horseback riding, which I used to do up at the White Oak Tree in Syosset. After awhile I had a horse, eventually over time I had three different horses. The horses got better and better after time and I didn’t.

Elizabeth Roosevelt

My mother had a horse-oriented career. She showed all kinds of horses: saddle horses, hunters, jumpers....She played women's international polo; she drove trotters professionally on the track. *Barbara Hewlett Conolly*

The riding paths were available a pretty long time, well into the '60s I guess. What happened of course, is people began to buy property, and shut out the riding paths.

Elizabeth Roosevelt



Photo by Freudy
MRS. JAMES A. HEWLETT, OF JERICHO, L. I., WITH HER DAUGHTER BARBARA, ON HER PONY “MISS WISS,” CH.M.
Third in the class for pony to be ridden by a child, shown on lead line at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Club Horse Show.

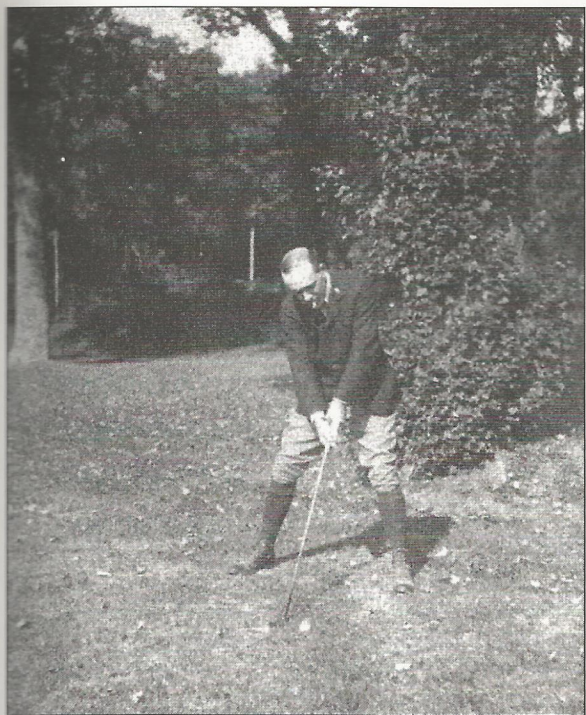


The Piping Rock Horse Show was part of a circuit. Mother ran her "Helping Hand" Horse Show in conjunction with Piping Rock and the one in Stony Brook, so that people from Virginia could bring their horses up and go from one to the next, to the next. *Barbara Hewlett Conolly*

“Piping Rock was pretty fancy. It had a grandstand, which was something very special. Not too many shows around here had grandstands. They had permanent stabling there. When that started to deteriorate, they put up tents, which were better.”

Barbara Hewlett Conolly

Barney, owned by Mrs. L.K. Christie, won the horse drawn turnout class at the Piping Rock Horse Show of 1941.



A golfer, c. 1900, calmly puffs a cigarette while lining up a shot.

The Long Island Aviation Country Club of Hicksville was founded around 1929. My father... bought his first airplane in 1928 and kept it at Roosevelt Field. He went over to the Aviation Country Club, because he figured his airplane would be safer. It was a very nice clubhouse with a swimming pool and a tennis court. It had a few overnight rooms for people. It was one of several aviation country clubs in the East, so if you were a member of the one here on Long Island, you could fly your plane down to somewhere outside of Philadelphia, spend the night there, and they would honor your membership. There was one big hangar and it was very busy. I remember as a child sitting in the dining room and looking over at the Lindberghs having lunch and my parents warning me, "Don't look at them; they don't like to be looked at!" My brother and I would try not to look at them! There were other people like the Guggenheims, DuPonts. *Bette Smith-Johannsen*

"The club closed when they bought the land and built Levittown. It was phased out when they started building airports, and commercial aviation really picked up. It wasn't a sport anymore. It had become a business!"

Bette Smith-Johannsen

Right: The Long Island Aviation Country Club, c. 1935

"The club became much more of an all-around sports-oriented place."

My Uncle Eddie Fisher was a big golfer and he was a member at Brookville Country Club. He took me out golfing with him one day and on the third hole I picked up a divot on the green! He went around like a wild man...ran in circles, stomping on this piece of dirt. Finally he said to me, "Run!" We got back to the clubhouse and he whispered to me, "Do you know it costs thousands of dollars to keep those greens nice and smooth?" That was it; he never took me out golfing again! *Gloria Rothmann O'Rourke*

Piping Rock used to be a very "horsey" club. It started out as a racing club. They had steeple chase races on the the north side. There was a lot of horse activity...racing, polo, and they had the horse show. The horse show grounds were on the back road. So they had three horsey phases but then the Horse Show stopped at the time of the war. The club became much more of an all-around sports-oriented place. Tennis and golf took over. The young people coming along didn't go in for the horses, which needed big country and big bucks to support it. *Barbara Hewlett Conolly*



Piping Rock, 1944. In recent years the club has gone from a sports club to a family-oriented one and runs more events aimed at attracting the younger set.

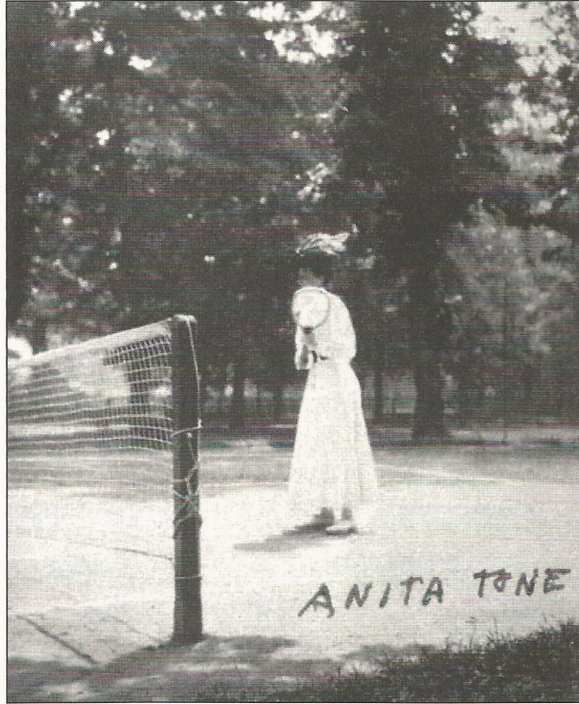


“Of course, we all learned to play tennis...”

Of course, we all learned to play tennis although we didn't care for it much. The Cove Neck Tennis Club went through very hard times through the Second World War, because there was nobody to play, so nobody could take time with it. So a number of ladies got together and made sure their children went to take tennis lessons. And Fritz Coudert and my brother Peter, and my two first cousins up the hill, we all went and played tennis, and Fritz

was very good, and the rest of us weren't very good. My mother liked to play tennis, and therefore she felt that it was important that we learn to play tennis, because she said it was a game that you could continue to do all your life. Well, I wouldn't play tennis now if I could help it!

Elizabeth Roosevelt



*Proper tennis dress, 1900.
Photo:Raynham Hall Museum*

of people in Cove Neck enjoyed playing tennis with each other, and they all used the tennis court. And then of course, after the war, a lot of other people came along and really enjoyed playing tennis, and they enjoyed playing it in the evening under the lights and all that stuff, so you find that now I believe the tennis court would be very hard to join, because they have a lot of people. *Elizabeth Roosevelt*



*A tennis match at
Nassau Country
Club, 1915.*



“The third from the left [center] is my mother Adelaide Jackson Cozzens. She was born in 1889, so this must be around 1910.”

Adelaide Beatty



“It was on Mr. Merle-Smith’s property that they built the tennis court. And I think that my grandfather and I’m not sure who else were the founding members of the tennis club, and they all enjoyed playing tennis.”

Elizabeth Roosevelt

The Cove Neck Tennis Club, c. 1976.



"Here's... the boathouse, which was [really] a bath house, where my family would go, located on the Bayville Beach, and there were many parties and picnics there." Adelaide Beatty

"They entertained a great deal there in the summer..."

They went down there in the winter when it was warm enough for the beach. It was a big do. And I think there were so many pictures because it was such a production. Oh I can remember my father's famous words..., "All right let's all gather wood." So we would go off looking for wood to start the fire on the beach and he'd stay behind and not do a thing. So we caught onto that one pretty fast. He was a character if there was ever one. We had lots of picnics on the beach too. It was much easier to get the food and the supplies to the beach because we were right on the water. And all we had to [do was] load up the car that's how that got down there... George had a lobster boat and he would go out and get us some lobsters, so that was fun. Cooked down at the beach. Corn, lobsters, potato salads and desserts came from the house. We had lots of steaks... If there wasn't much going on somebody always said, "Let's go to the beach!"

Adelaide Beatty

"This was a wagon that would be brought down from the house. The house was in Lattingtown and there was a hired man named George and George... would get the wagon all packed with food and with all the picnic supplies and they would go down to the beach. It was a long ride, in this day and age, because they lived in Lattingtown, Lattingtown Road, Shore Road to Bayville. So it took a day. Well, they entertained a great deal there in the summer and they swam." Adelaide Beatty



"That's how they entertained themselves."



"I know they did theatrical productions... They got all dressed up. That's the theatre, here are the plays. That's how they entertained themselves"

Adelaide Beatty

Left: A Red Cross pageant, 1917.

Right: An amateur play from the same period.





"I think [this yacht] is an old America's Cup, used in the trials. The owner of the boat [is on the left.] They're on an outing, around World War I. This is off Glen Cove, could almost be around Oyster Bay. That's a hired man at the helm." A. Beatty



"I was a sailing instructor for a number of years when I was just out of Virginia. In those days we used to take the boats to Seawanhaka launch, and go up to the dock in town and pick a large number of people off the train, and then go around the docks in the harbor and collect the rest of the kids, and then we'd spend the rest of the day sailing, and then we'd take the return trip afterwards." Elizabeth Roosevelt
Seawanhaka's busy dock as it appeared around the turn of the century.

Well, of course, no one used to shuttle their children around the way they do now, especially during the war years, when it was prohibited to get gasoline, so we chartered a Seabird, we didn't own it, we chartered it, but it had a mooring right out here, and my brother and I used to go out to the boat, put the sails on, and sail over to Seawanhaka and then use it all day and sail it back. Or, sometimes we rowed over. It's a mile from here to the club, and my father had [a boat] yard in Glen Cove build him a very fine rowing boat, which was made out of molded plywood, and two people could row it, and if you had a third person, they could steer... Well, we used to row that together, and row over to the club, and if it was a nice day... it was easy to do, but if there was a southernly breeze, it was a lot of work. So sometimes sailing was better. And then of course, if it

"We had all the good guys."

...The boatman liked to fish, so we would go out with him fishing, when we were very little. You know, little children don't have the concentration for sailing. When we got a little bigger we had a small centerboard sailboat, and we used to go get in it in the morning when there wasn't a lot of breeze, and fight with each other about how things should be done. *Elizabeth Roosevelt*

My oldest brother was the chairman of the race committee at Seawanhaka, and in 1948 (it was the first time after the war that people could get things together again), we ran the Scandinavian Gold cup. We had won the cup in Scandinavia before the war, and after the war, there were challenges for it. We had team[s] from Finland,...England, Norway and Sweden, and they all came and sailed for that cup in September 1948. That was the return of yachting. Because during the war years, all that had stopped, or pretty much came to a standstill because first of all, we had all kinds of shipping in the Sound, and all the people that were old enough to sail and race were away in the military. There was a little sailing, but you couldn't really go anywhere in the Sound because you'd get down into New London and they'd have submarines coming up all over the place. *Elizabeth Roosevelt*



"This is a proper 6-Meter boat. We had all the good guys. Paul Cayard was an America's Cup skipper."

Adelaide Beatty



The SCYC crew of the 1948 Olympic champion yacht Llanoria: (from left) James H. Weeks, M.M. Mooney, J.H. Smith, A.L. Loomis, Jr., and H.F. Whiton, Captain.

looked like it might go flat, you took your lunch with you, in the sailboat. If you got becalmed you were starving to death. But we did that for years, rowing back and forth, until of course, people got to the age where they could drive. *Elizabeth Roosevelt*

The Cold Spring Harbor people had the Atlantics, and we had the Seabirds, and we used to get into water fights. All these boats had to have pumps because when it rained, they would fill up, so you would use your pump and just squeeze the hose, or if you got close enough or had a bucket, you could dump it on them. The Seabird doesn't draw as much as an Atlantic, so that if you sailed very close to the beach, you could get out of range. And then we used to attempt to steal the other yacht club's burgee, things like that. It was mostly the sort of thing that nowadays would be classed as juvenile delinquency and get you in a lot of trouble!

Elizabeth Roosevelt

"If it's not here, it's not anywhere!"

The saddest thing to me was when I had an insurance guy come out from New York and he had gone down to the field where we had the horses turned out and he said, "John, I rode by here earlier and there were a couple of kids pulling a horse's tail." I said, "Well that's not a good move, is it?" He said, "No it's not. It's a dangerous move. I don't see any signs that say 'No Trespassing.'" I said, "Well we let the children ski, sleigh ride here during the winter, and walk through the fields." "Yes," he said, "but that's an invitation, and insurance-wise, you're liable. I want you to put a 'No Trespassing' sign up." I said, "That doesn't seem fair." He said, "If anything happens, you're liable." So I had to put the signs up. You can't believe the abuse I got down in the village! I tried to explain to people the reason for it, but they didn't want to listen. *John McQuade*

We did a lot of camping up on the Merle-Smith property up in Cove Neck, the Teddy Roosevelt property up around Old Orchard. At that time people were not afraid to have kids on their property. We were not a litigious society then! People trusted you and kids were looked at a little differently then.

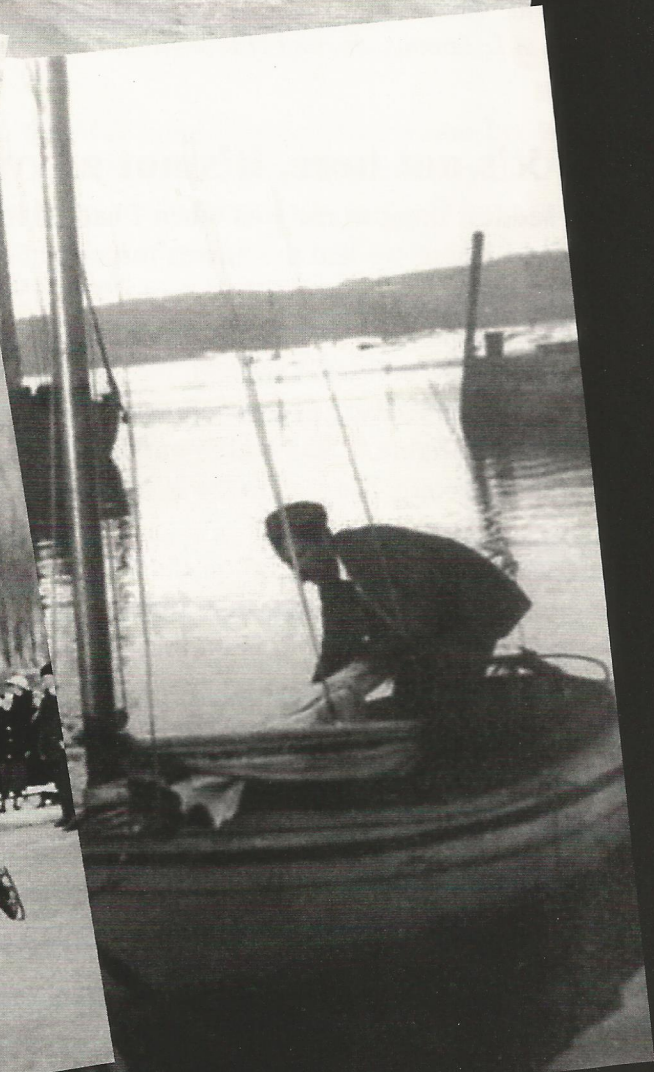
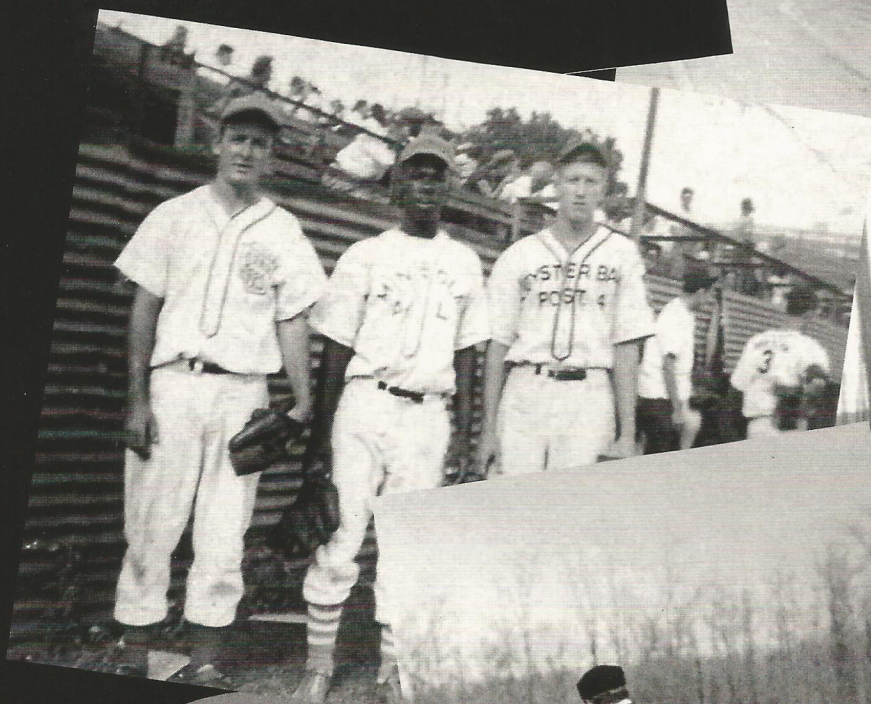
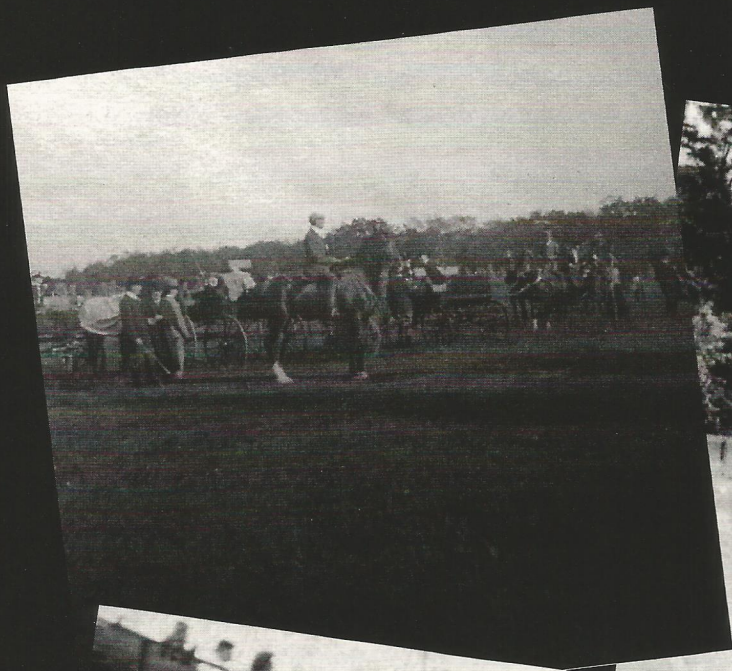
Dave Layton

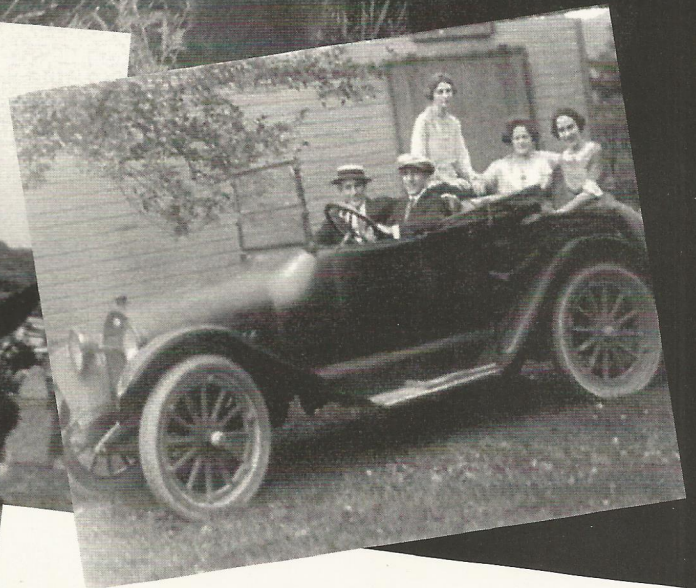
Country clubs have always been that way. Piping Rock's got 1000 members; they can't be exclusive. Impossible. And there is no more society, no such thing, it's gone. It may come back sometime, but it's not around here. If it's not here, it's not anywhere!

Edith Hay Wykoff

The Schiff estate, 1944.









Henry DeF. Weekes at the helm, c. 1900
Photo: Raynham Hall Museum

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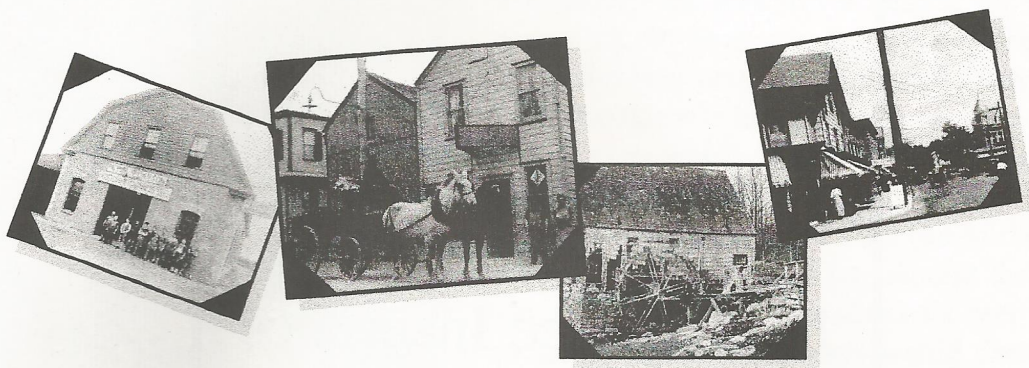


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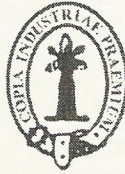


The Atlantic Steamers' tournament team, the "Rough Riders," returns victorious from a 1950 tournament. The team enjoyed great success in that period.

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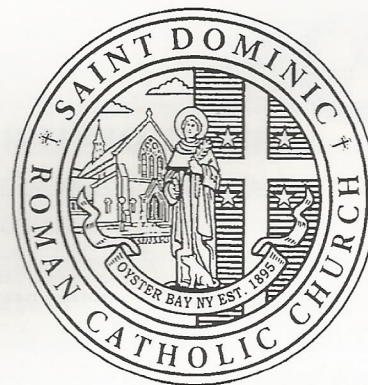
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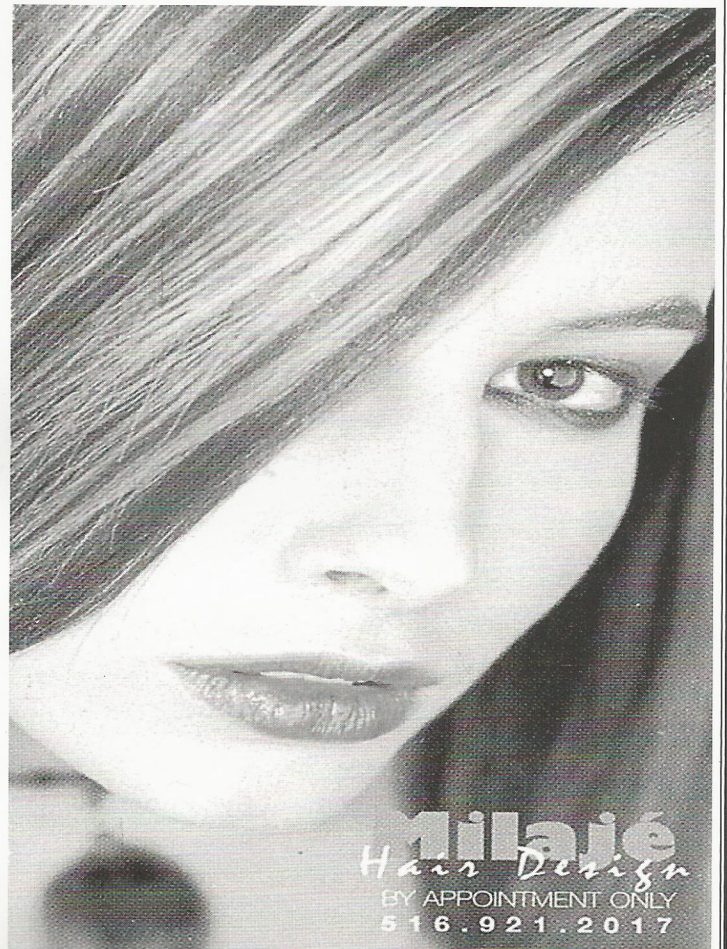


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