



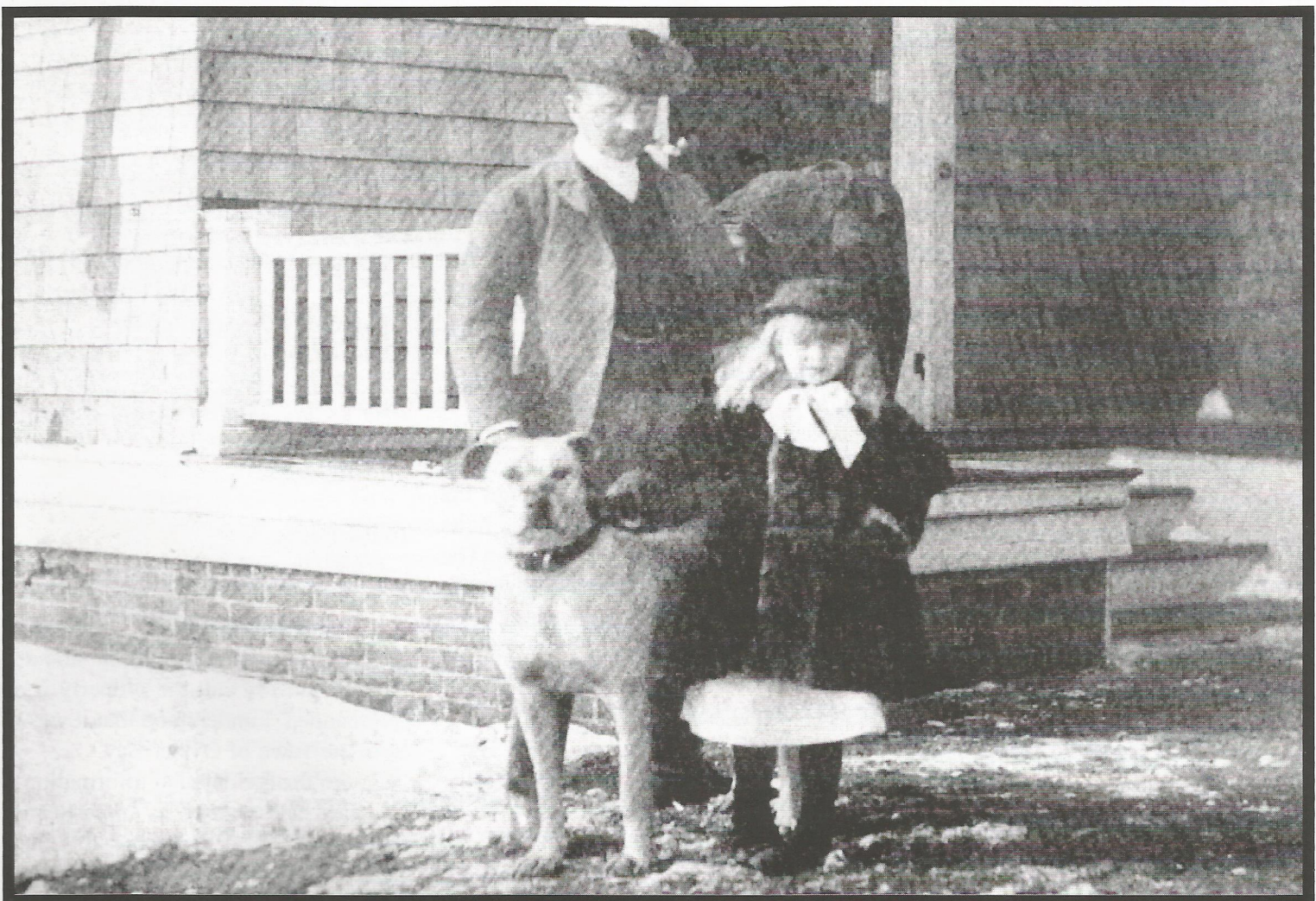
THE FREEHOLDER

FALL 2007 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

☞ THE SHORT,
TRAGIC LIFE OF
TR'S BROTHER

☞ HICKSVILLE
RESIDENT READIES
RAILROAD REPLICA

☞ LONG ISLAND'S
DEAD POET
SOCIETY, PART III



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

Though it is still officially Fall, and will be for a few more weeks as of the time of this writing, the mercury has plummeted to levels unseen since last February!

What better way to keep warm than curling up by the fire with this issue of *The Freeholder*? Frequent contributor Ray Spinzia spins the sad tale of Elliott Roosevelt, father of future

First Lady, Eleanor, while Dave Morrison, our maven on all things rail-related, brings to light the efforts of Hicksville resident Jim Pavone in replicating an historic locomotive.

Robert Harrison is back with his look at our island's erstwhile poets, and please take a look at the Currents of the Bay section to bring yourself up to date with our Society's doings, as well as those of other historical organizations in our area.

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Purpose: The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 with the express purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Oyster Bay. The Society maintains a museum and research library in the Town-owned c. 1720 Earle-Wightman House, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay. Call (516) 922-5032 for more information.

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THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

I maintain the "Syosset Scrapbook" website and I am writing *Images of America: Syosset People and Places* for Arcadia Publishing. I might be including a reference to the Woodward shooting and/or an image of the Woodward Playhouse in my book. The photo on page 18 of the *Freeholder*, Summer 2007, is the Woodward Playhouse where the shooting took place; it is not the indoor tennis

court. Mrs. Woodward rented the glass-enclosed tennis court (I have found no images of it) to Cinerama for tax purposes. The Woodwards had bought the Playhouse and some acres from the heirs of the Woolworth family, c. 1952. The Playhouse had been part of the McCann-Woolworth estate, Sunken Orchard. See the images and captions on my site re. Sunken Orchard and the Playhouse. They are in Part 7, Syosset Area Estates.

I also wish to discuss with you the possible use of the page 18 image for my book, or the use of any "old" photo of the Playhouse.

John Delin

Thank you, Mr. Delin, for pointing out the

ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

Elliott Roosevelt, Sr., and Anna Eleanor Roosevelt with a faithful companion at *Half Way Nirvana*, 1889. See Raymond Spinzia's article on this tragic figure beginning on p. 3.

Photo courtesy of Raymond E. Spinzia.

error in the caption. It was strictly the editor's mistake, not that of the author, Walter Karppi.

To the Editor:

I have been working at the Syosset-Woodbury Community Center for over a year. I asked some other people if they had any written information about the Tinker Mansion and the property it once commanded. I understood that it was gifted to the Town of Oyster Bay.

Is there further detailed information that you may have printed in an earlier issue that I might get a back copy of? Or perhaps is there a website?

continued on p. 19

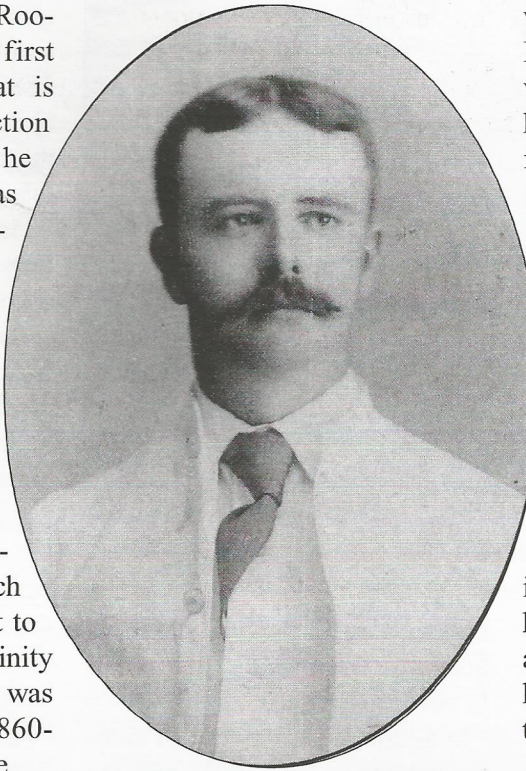
ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT, SR. – A SPIRAL INTO DARKNESS: THE INFLUENCES

by Raymond E. Spinzia

Cornelius Van Schaack Roosevelt I (1794-1871) was the first Roosevelt to settle in what is today the Nassau County section of Long Island.¹ In the 1860s he chose the Oyster Bay area as the seat of his country residence and was quickly followed by other members of the Roosevelt clan. Indeed, by the early 1900s the present-day Village of Cove Neck had become a virtual Roosevelt family compound. While other Roosevelts chose different sections of Long Island in which to reside, the only Roosevelt to build a residence in the vicinity of the Village of Hempstead was Elliott Roosevelt, Sr. (1860-1894), the son of Theodore and Martha Bulloch Roosevelt, Sr., who resided in Manhattan and at *Tranquility* in Oyster Bay Cove.²

Martha's health, in the best of times, was fragile. The stress created by the Civil War took its toll on her health and in turn, perhaps, on that of her children, who seemed to experience one debilitating health event after another. With news of each Confederate defeat, Martha, a Southern patriot, became increasingly despondent and obsessed with neatness and cleanliness. Reclusive, rarely leaving her Manhattan brownstone, she began taking to her bed for weeks at a time with complaints of chest pains.³

In a belated attempt to alleviate Martha's condition, the Roosevelts began renting *Tranquility* in 1874. Its architecture, which was reminiscent of a Southern



*Elliott Roosevelt, Sr.
Courtesy of the author.*

plantation and which somewhat resembled Martha's family seat *Bulloch Hall* in Roswell, Georgia, must have been comforting to Martha's delicate emotional state.⁴ Life at *Tranquility* for the children was a joyful, rough and tumble affair but the illnesses of both mother and children were taking a cumulative toll on the family.

The Roosevelts' daughter Anna was the only one of the children whose health problems were not attributed to what was referred to by doctors then as hysteria. She was required to wear a back brace necessitated by the fact that she had been born with Pott's disease, a form of osteal tuberculosis which resulted in curvature of the spine. Their son Theodore, who

would become the twenty-sixth President of the United States, was undersized, underweight, highly susceptible to colds and fevers, and suffered from headaches, nightmares, nausea, congenital nervous diarrhea, and acute asthma attacks.⁵ Their daughter Corinne suffered from a form of chronic asthma. Their son Elliott's problems began in 1874, the same year in which the Roosevelts had settled at *Tranquility*. The fourteen-year-old Elliott began experiencing fainting spells, blood rushes to the head, blackouts, severe headaches and an inability to concentrate on his studies. He became afraid of the dark or to sleep alone and had fits during which he babbled incoherently.⁶

In 1876, unable to contend with the pressure of attending school, Elliott was sent to Fort McKavett in Texas to recuperate. Life among the "Buffalo Soldiers" and Indian fighters seemed to agree with Elliott. His health had so improved during his stay in the West that, upon returning to New York, he was able to plan and embark on a trip to India in 1880, where he was entertained by local dignitaries and members of the British army serving in India. It was during this trip to India that Elliott participated in big game hunts and learned to play polo, a game that would become his life's passion. He was physically spent after this trip, having contracted a fever and having lost considerable weight. However, as was the case with his trip to Texas, he seemed to be



Oak Terrace, the Hall family estate
Photo courtesy of the author

devoid of the physical maladies that had plagued him at home.

Elliott's illnesses resurfaced shortly after his return to New York in March 1882. At the age of eighteen he had begun to use alcohol as a depressant, hoping to stem his attacks. By 1882, his excessive consumption of alcohol was becoming a major concern to the family as would his later use of laudanum and morphine.⁷

Unable to muster the concentration to write a memoir of his trip to India, he reveled in New York's social scene. It was during this period that the twenty-three-year-old Elliott met and, in 1883, married the socially prominent twenty-year-old Anna Rebecca Livingston Hall (1863-1892), the daughter of Valentine Gill and Mary Livingston Ludlow Hall, Jr., whose estate *Oak Terrace* was located in Tivoli, New York. While the union of the Hall and Roosevelt families on the surface was a social triumph, the predisposition of both families to alco-

holism turned the union into a quagmire from which Elliott really never resurfaced.

In addition to a history of alcohol addiction, the Halls had the reputation for carrying eccentricity and disfunctionalism to new levels. Valentine Gill Hall, Jr. (1834-1880) was an austere, self-absorbed, religious zealot who considered gaiety sinful and rigidly enforced piety while deferring religious questions to his resident theologian. Valentine strictly controlled the education of his children, ruled the family with an iron hand, and, due to inherited wealth, never worked.⁸ His wife Mary and four daughters were not allowed to make decisions. He even forbade them to shop in public, insisting that merchants bring their merchandise to the estate so that he could supervise their purchases. His actions created a wife who had no concept of child-raising, who was incapable of making decisions, and who was thoroughly unac-

quainted with the management of *Oak Terrace*, a task she would quite suddenly be required to assume. After Valentine's death in 1880, Mary basically allowed the children to fend for themselves, thereby further fueling the family's instability.

Mary's sons Edward and Valentine were both alcoholics who spent beyond their means and, subsequently, beyond their inheritances. Edward was a whiney alcoholic while Valentine was a totally out-of-control, irresponsible alcoholic, who took to shooting at people as they passed by the estate.⁹

Of the four surviving Hall daughters, Mary having died at the age of three, only one, Elizabeth, had a truly successful marriage. She married Stanley Mortimer and resided at their estate *Roslyn Hall* in Old Westbury.¹⁰ Elizabeth's sister Edith, who was thought to be the model for Lily Bart in Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, married William Forbes Morgan, Jr. and eventually lost her inheritance when it was poorly invested by financial advisors. Their sister Maude was married twice. Her first husband Lawrence Waterbury, with whom she resided at their estate in Pelham, New York, was a high-spirited sportsman and gambler who frittered away their inheritances and was constantly in debt. Maude would later marry David Gray and resided at *Gray House* in Portland, Maine.

With the marriage of the eldest of the Hall sisters, Anna Rebecca Livingston Hall, to Elliott Roosevelt, Sr., who at the time of their marriage in 1883 was already known as a heavy drinker

with an addiction to laudanum, a tragic scene was set.¹¹ When not under the influence of alcohol or drugs, Elliott was the urbane personification of intelligence and charisma coupled with thoughtful congeniality. As a youth he exhibited leadership abilities, athletic prowess, intellectual potential, poetic introspection, a curious mind, and a generous, compassionate nature with a flexible, non-dogmatic approach to living. He explored the world with confidence and was protective of his elder brother Theodore. His wife Anna, on the other hand, was self-consumed, regal, poorly educated, aloof, overwrought, extravagant, and a failure as a parent, solely interested in fashions, parties, and sports. Elliott's brother Theodore considered her to be utterly frivolous.¹²

Into this environment their first child, Anna Eleanor, was born. In the spring of 1887, Elliott decided to withdraw from his partnership in the Ludlow real estate firm and sail to Europe aboard the *S. S. Britannic* with his wife, her sister Elizabeth, the two-and-a-half-year-old Anna Eleanor, and her nurse. Their trip was interrupted when just one day out of port their ship was rammed by the *S. S. Celtic*, the bow of which pierced a full ten feet into the side of the *S. S. Britannic*, killing several passengers and injuring numerous others. In spite of the bedlam that ensued, all of the members of the Roosevelt party managed to reach the safety of the lifeboats. Undaunted Elliott decided to continue the family's trip to Europe aboard another ocean liner. The terrified Anna

Eleanor refused to go and was left at *Gracewood*, the Cove Neck estate of Elliott's uncle, James King Gracie.¹³

Upon returning to New York, Elliott took a position at the banking and brokerage firm of James King Gracie and at the end of the summer of 1887 began building his country residence *Half Way Nirvana* on ten acres in the present-day hamlet of Salisbury.¹⁴ While it was being built, the Roosevelts rented the Richardson homestead on Front Street in Hempstead so that they could ride-to-the-hounds and Elliott could participate in the polo matches at the nearby Meadow Brook Club.¹⁵ Distressed by Elliott's lifestyle, Theodore wrote to their sister Anna in the spring of 1888 saying, "I do hate his [Elliott's] Hempstead life. I don't know whether he could get along without the excitement now, but it is certainly unhealthy, and leads to nothing."¹⁶

By the spring of 1889, Elliott and Anna had completed the furnishing and decoration of *Half Way Nirvana* and were able to fully participate in the season's activities. Parties at their estate centered on alcohol consumption and discussions of fashions, horses, polo, and riding-to-the-hounds. Elliott's brother Theodore rarely visited *Half Way Nirvana*, blaming Anna for Elliott's aimless lifestyle and increasing dependence upon alcohol.¹⁷ It was during this time that Elliott and his family began moving with the seasons from Manhattan to Long Island to Newport, the expenses for which caused him to begin to invade the principal of his inheritance. By

early 1890, his drinking had begun to threaten the family name. His sisters dreaded having him for dinner. Theodore, who saw his brother as little as possible, wrote to his sister Anna concerning Elliott's lifestyle, "It is a perfect nightmare."¹⁸

After an attempted cure in Michigan in 1890 was unsuccessful, Elliott was finally convinced to commit himself to the Marien Grund Sanctuary in Graz, Austria, for treatment. After a three-month stay in Graz, Elliott, his wife, and sister Anna relocated to Paris where his wife gave birth to their third child, Gracie Hall Roosevelt, while Elliott was having a Parisian affair with an American from Detroit by the name of Mrs. Florence Bagley Sherman.¹⁹ Elliott's post-treatment recovery was further complicated by the birth of his illegitimate son Elliott Roosevelt Mann just three months prior to that of his son Gracie.²⁰ The child's mother Katy Mann, a servant in Elliott's New York household, immediately threatened to initiate a paternity suit if Elliott didn't provide \$10,000 towards his son's support. Elliott, at first, denied that the child was his and refused to pay Mann. After a specialist examined the child and declared it to be a Roosevelt, Elliott's brother-in-law Douglas Robinson, his uncle James King Gracie, and his brother Theodore convinced Elliott that for the sake of the family's reputation it would be best if he paid the child support. Elliott agreed but, to date, the exact sum paid remains in question.²¹

Stunned, Elliott's condition continued to worsen. This coupled

with outbursts of violence began to frighten his wife. In January 1892, Theodore agreed to drop the insanity and commitment proceedings against Elliott, which he had initiated, if Elliott agreed to sign two-thirds of his remaining fortune over to a trust for his wife and children, take a six-month cure at Suresnes followed by a five-week treatment at the Keeley Center in Dwight, Illinois, and finally find gainful employment. It was further agreed that if Elliott met these conditions he would be allowed to resume life with his family some time in 1894.²²

In the spring of 1892, Elliott left the Keeley Center, having fulfilled the agreement to this point. He traveled to Abingdon, Virginia, to the vast tract of land Douglas Robinson had recently acquired. He was to map and develop the property for coal mining and logging operations. Everything seemed to be progressing as planned until Elliott's twenty-nine-year-old wife Anna contracted diphtheria and died on December 7, 1892.

Elliott returned to Manhattan where he resumed drinking and taking drugs. Now plagued with hallucinations, he moved from apartment to apartment under assumed names with a new mistress, Mrs. Evans, while still seeing Mrs. Sherman. His behavior had become so outrageous that his sisters and his brother Theodore began receiving anonymous letters concerning Elliott's activities.²³

Undeterred by the financial losses he incurred in the Panic of 1893, Elliott continued to indulge his addictions. He spiraled fur-



Elliott Roosevelt, Sr., and his children, c. 1892

Photo courtesy of the author

ther into the darkness after his second child and namesake Elliott Roosevelt, Jr. (1889-1893) died of scarlet fever. By 1894 the situation seemed hopeless. Elliott was taking drugs and consuming up to six bottles of anisette, green mint, brandy, or champagne prior to noon. Theodore wrote their sister Anna, "He [Elliott] can't be helped and must simply be let go at his own gait . . . Poor fellow! If only he could have died instead of Anna."²⁴

On August 14, 1894, James King Gracie and Douglas Robinson were summoned to Elliott's apartment. The exact circumstances of Elliott's death are unclear. Some authors state that Elliott, who had contemplated suicide as early as 1890, jumped out of the parlor window of his Manhattan apartment while others claim that, in a state of delirium, he attempted to jump from the window. All historians agree that he died in his apartment bedroom after suffering a convul-

sion, sleeping quietly, and waking with a moment of rationality just prior to his death.²⁵ At Theodore's insistence, Elliott was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn with other members of the Roosevelt family.²⁶ Two years later he was exhumed and buried with his wife Anna, his son Elliott, Jr., and Anna's Hall relatives in the cemetery of St. Paul's and Trinity Parish in Tivoli, New York.

Elliott and Anna's surviving children Gracie Hall and Anna Eleanor were raised at *Oak Terrace* by their Hall grandmother, who did her best to keep the children separated from Elliott's brother Theodore, whom she disliked.

Gracie Hall Roosevelt (1891-1941) attended Groton, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in college, and received a master's degree in engineering from Harvard. Like his father Elliott he was brilliant, charming, and drank and partied too much. At

the age of twenty-one Gracie married Margaret Richardson (1892-1941), with whom he fathered three children prior to their divorce in 1925. He subsequently married Dorothy Kemp (1898-1985) and had three additional children before they divorced in 1937. Ever restless, Gracie was initially employed in the railroad industry and later as the controller of the City of Detroit. An alcoholic by 1937, Gracie's consumption of alcohol had increased to the point that he was unable to work and spent the last years of his life residing in a small cottage on President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Hyde Park, New York, estate which was located just twenty miles from the Hall's *Oak Terrace* estate where Gracie had been raised.²⁷

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962), known as Eleanor, would marry her fifth cousin (once removed) President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and lead a long and distinguished life in public service. She instituted the concept of an activist First Lady and would eventually be known as "The First Lady of the World."²⁸

ENDNOTES

1. John Allen Gable, ed. "The Roosevelt Family in America: A Genealogy" Part 1 Theodore Roosevelt Association *Journal* Winter, 1990, p. 27.
2. Oliver Wolcott Roosevelt, Sr., who resided in the Village of Hewlett Neck, also had a residence in the Town of Hempstead. For the social history of the Roosevelts who resided in other areas of Long Island see: Harry W. Havemeyer, *East on the Great*

South Bay: Sayville and Bayport 1860-1960 (Mattituck, NY: Amereon House, 2001); Natalie A. Naylor, Douglas Brinkley, and John Allen Gable, eds., *Theodore Roosevelt: Many Sided American* (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1992); Raymond E. Spinzia, "Those Other Roosevelts: The Fortescues" *The Freeholder* 11 (Summer, 2006) [available online at the Oyster Bay Historical Society website]; Raymond E. and Judith A. Spinzia, *Long Island's Prominent North Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes* vols I and II (College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com Publishing, Inc., 2006) and *Long Island's Prominent South Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes in the Towns of Babylon and Islip* (College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com Publishing, Inc., 2007).

3. Martha's brother James was an officer in the Confederate navy. Her brother Irvine was a midshipman, who served aboard the Confederate ship *Alabama*. After the war they were forced to live in exile in Liverpool, England. Two other brothers were killed while serving in the Confederate army. James King Gracie, who had married Martha's sister Anna and resided at *Gracewood* in Cove Neck, was a Southerner whose brother General Archibald Gracie was killed while serving in the Confederate army at the Battle of Petersburg. Martha's ties to and sympathies for the Southern cause were so strong that she is reputed to have displayed a Confederate flag at the Roosevelts' Manhattan brownstone in cele-

bration of Southern victories. Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt* Volume One 1884-1933 (New York: Viking, 1992), pp. 28-30 and John S. Wise, *Recollections of Thirteen Presidents* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), p. 243.

4. Bulloch Hall is currently owned by the City of Roswell. It was restored in 1978 and is open to the public.

5. Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Coward, McCann, & Geoghegan, Inc., 1979), p. 40. It may well have been that some of the children's illnesses were exacerbated by Martha's harrowing and fanciful stories of life in the South.

6. Latter day members of the Roosevelt family refer to Elliott's condition as epilepsy in spite of it having been diagnosed by his doctors as being induced by hysteria. There was no history of epilepsy in the family, Elliott did not have the classic symptoms of epilepsy, and the family, at the time, never referred to Elliott's condition as caused by epilepsy. David McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2001), pp. 144-46.

7. Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Roosevelts: An American Saga* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 80 and Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, pp. 428-30 and 811.

8. Nathan Miller, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Life* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1992), p. 131 and McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, p. 248. The Hall fortune was derived from the

continued on p. 15

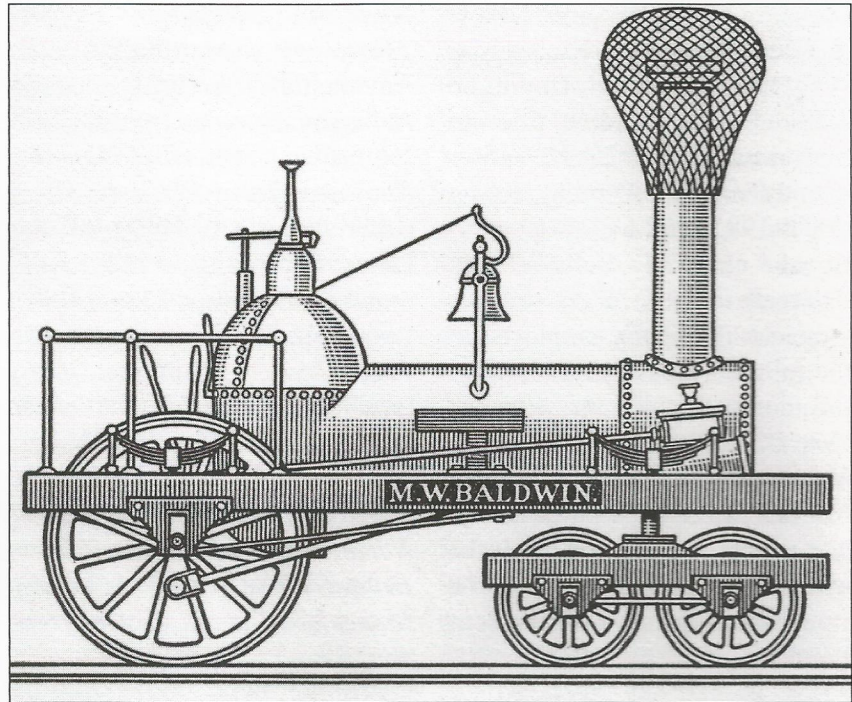
A STEAM LOCOMOTIVE FOR HICKSVILLE AND THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

by David D. Morrison

In the late 1990s, the Hicksville Chamber of Commerce was looking for a logo to place on signs and banners to welcome people to the town. When Pat Conway approached me with the idea of a train, I suggested that the LIRR's first locomotive, *Ariel*, be the image for the logos. I supplied Pat with an image of the *Ariel* that I obtained from Mildred Smith's book *Early History of the Long Island Rail Road – 1834 to 1900*, published by Salisbury Printers of Uniondale in 1958. The manufacturer's name, "M.W. Baldwin," appears on the side of the *Ariel*.

Hicksville has been a railroad centered town since the LIRR arrived in March 1837. Some rather significant railroad historical events have occurred in Hicksville. The end of the age of steam locomotives on the Long Island Rail Road was officially commemorated on October 8, 1955, at Hicksville Station. A large stone eagle statue from the demolished Penn Station was placed in the Hicksville railroad station plaza and dedicated by the Hicksville High School Latin Club on May 15, 1965. Hicksville was obviously proud of the fact that a lot of railroad history took place in town. The image of the *Ariel* on the town welcome signs and banners would be an outward symbol of the town's pride in its connection with the railroad.

Now, another chapter is being written in Hicksville railroad history. Jim Pavone, who assumed the presidency of the Hicksville Chamber of Commerce in 2005, needed a project to mark his term as president. He figured that if



The Ariel locomotive

Freeport had its Nautical Mile and Manhasset had its Miracle Mile, Hicksville needed an icon. Being that Valentine Hicks was the founder of the community and was also the second president of the Long Island Rail Road (between 1837 and 1838), Jim thought that a locomotive would make a perfect icon for the community.

The *Ariel* image on the community signs and banners was first thought to be the locomotive of choice. Upon careful consideration though, Jim decided that a more appropriate image would be one that more closely resembled people's expectations of a steam locomotive, i.e. a cowcatcher on the front and a cab on the rear. In studying locomotives of the early 1830s, Jim decided that the *John Bull* appeared to fulfill common expectations.

Jim decided to build a 27 foot long, full-size replica of the *John*

Bull for static display in a community public park. The locomotive would be built with close attention to detail, albeit non-operating. With the help of close friend Dave Kean, Jim embarked on the project which would consume over 1,000 hours of their time.

Jim received \$15,000 from the Hicksville Chamber of Commerce to commence the project. Ten individuals donated \$1,000 each and some funding came through a New York State economic development grant. State Senator Carl Marcellino secured two grants totaling \$20,000 for the project.

The project is nearing completion and caught the attention of *Newsday* reporter Bill Bleyer, who wrote an article about the project for the October 7, 2007, edition of the newspaper under the title, "Hicksville Train – A special engine of pride." Bill

subtitled his article, "A steam locomotive replica, created by volunteers, will be a community icon." Bill noted in his article, "What makes Pavone's unusual project more so is that it is coming together in the backyard of his metals supply business office, which is surrounded by residences. Pavone said that the neighbors, particularly children, stop by frequently."

The project should be completed by the end of the year and the Town of Oyster Bay has agreed to accept the locomotive as a gift and have it permanently placed in John F. Kennedy Memorial Park in early spring. The day that the *John Bull* replica is dedicated in Kennedy Park should be an exciting day for Hicksville, the Town of Oyster Bay and for the Long Island railfan community.

Let's take a look at a bit of the history of the original *John Bull* locomotive. In 1831, Robert Stephenson built a locomotive in England for the Camden and Amboy Railroad in New Jersey. The locomotive was disassembled and transported across the Atlantic by boat, arriving at a Philadelphia wharf. From there it was transported by river schooner to Bordentown, NJ, where it was reassembled by Isaac Dripps and on November 12th it pulled cars on a test run on the not-yet-finished Camden and Amboy Railroad. Two years later, the locomotive began regular passenger service after having been fitted with a lead truck equipped with pilot wheels and a cowcatcher, the first time these devices were used in America.

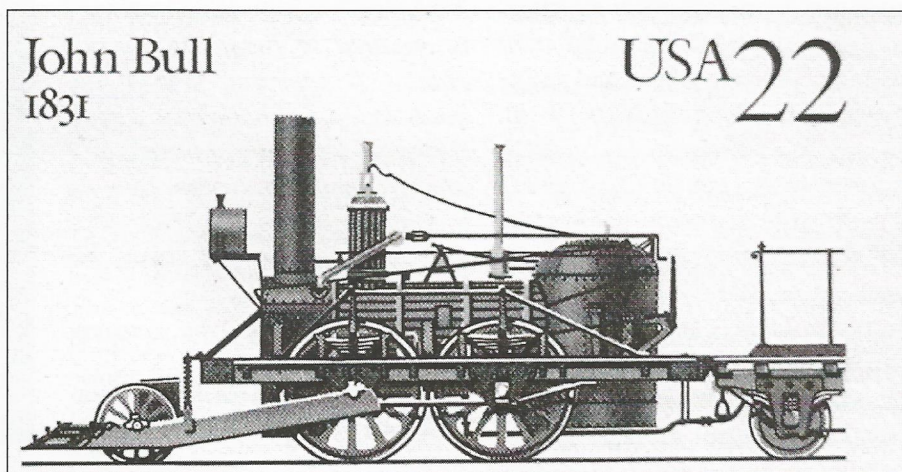
The *John Bull* performed well for the C&A RR for several decades before being relegated to yard service and was eventually retired in 1866. Fortunately, the railroad decided not to scrap the locomotive but instead placed it in storage at Bordentown. That action was probably one of the earliest acts of railroad historical preservation in the country. The Pennsylvania Railroad took over the C&A RR in 1871 and the *John Bull* thus became its oldest locomotive. The PRR took great pride in the *John Bull* and in 1883 sent it to the National Railway Appliance Exposition in Chicago. In 1884 the PRR donated the *John Bull* to the Smithsonian Institution, making the locomotive the first large engineering artifact acquired by the Institution.

Throughout the years, the Smithsonian loaned the *John Bull* to the PRR so that it could make appearances at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the 1927 Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Fair of the Iron Horse, the 1932 Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago and finally the 1939/40 New York World's Fair. Due to

the fragile condition of the *John Bull*, it could only be placed on static display during the first year of the Fair. PRR officials decided that an operating locomotive would be best for the public to see, so during the winter of '39 - '40 they had an operating replica constructed at the Pennsylvania Railroad's Altoona Shops and had it ready for the 1940 Fair season. People could once again enjoy the view of an operating *John Bull* locomotive.

The original *John Bull* was sent back to the Smithsonian and the replica was stored by the PRR throughout World War II. After the war, the replica was operated during a film shoot for a PRR promotional film, *Clear Tracks Ahead*. In 1948 it appeared at the Chicago Railroad Fair. After that Fair, it was stored at the roundhouse facility in Northumberland, PA. Later, other retired PRR steam locomotives were stored at that facility and that collection of locomotives eventually became known as the Pennsylvania Railroad Historical Collection. That collection led to the formation of the Railroad

continued on p. 17



The John Bull was commemorated on a 22 cent postage stamp.



ASK UNCLE PELEG

In the issue of Winter 2006 we printed a letter from an observant reader who commented on the representation of laughter that is often assigned to St. Nicholas. That is, "Ho! Ho! Ho!" Having no information about the three Ho! exclamation here we talked to a lot of people and found a lot of people also have no information. No one we questioned was familiar with the origin or age of the (can I call it a phrase?) but everyone had either seen it in print or heard it...or both. All recognized it as referring to St. Nick, even if his name wasn't quoted. All strongly made the point that it belonged to the lovable gent in the red suit but none could produce a copy of the birth certificate. While no one could offer any sort of dating of the expression (?), there was a general feeling that it must be of respectable age.

HO got a lot of attention among the small circle I frequent. The suggestion of ancestors like P.G. Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster, with his frequent greeting to his valet, "What-ho, Jeeves!" as the founder of HO! HO! HO! was hardly useful. Louis Nye's "Hi-ho

Stevarino" from the old Steve Allen show was amusing but not enlightening, though it came with a torrent of phoney scholarship.

I dipped into Christmas history whenever opportunity offered, but nothing suggestive of the original three-Ho met my eye. I learned a mass of trivia, like which president displayed the first Christmas tree at the White House, or the identity of Grampus, or the name of Clement Moore's New York estate, but no HO threesome rewarded me. And then one day while idling in a book store, I was struck by one of those minor lightning bolts which surprise us all from time to time. I picked up a picturebook for children, or maybe it was for childish adults. It offered a couple of Christmas songs, very pleasantly illustrated, with a short but very interesting comment on what was known about them. "Whoopee!" said your uncle. But I'm getting a little previous.

Both songs I remembered, though vaguely, from my own childhood. They were "Up on the Housetop" and "Jolly Old St. Nicholas." "Up on the Housetop" is credited to Benjamin Russell Hanby. It appeared first in the book so, rather naturally, I read it first. It has three stanzas and I almost immediately ran into an unfamiliar instance of HO! HO! HO! Here is the first stanza for your consideration:

Up on the housetop reindeer pause,
Out jumps good old Santa Claus;
Down through the chimney with lots of toys,
All for the little ones' Christmas

joys!
Ho! Ho! Ho! Who wouldn't go?
Ho! Ho! Ho! Who wouldn't go?
Up on the house top,
Click! Click! Click!
Down through the chimney with good St. Nick!

Enough HO! HO! HO! to fill Santa's bottomless sack and then some in the three stanzas of "Housetop." Methinks enough to plant the phrase firmly in the minds of the Christmas song-singing public.

The date of the composition of "Up on the Housetop" is not known. It is believed to have been in the 1860s. Hanby died on March 16th, 1867. If it had been written in that period there would have been only a scant 44 years for an earlier imagination to have introduced that particular sound of laughter as characteristic of St. Nick to become a catch-

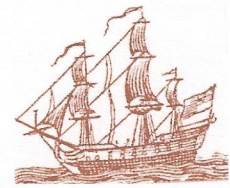
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"A Visit from St. Nicholas"
by Thomas Nast



CURRENTS OF THE BAY



*This section focuses on the doings of local historical societies, museums, and communities in the Town of Oyster Bay and its neighbors. Upcoming special events, exhibits, lectures and tours are featured, so send your submissions to the Editor if you would like to see your events covered in **The Freeholder**.*

HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS "HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD" IN BROOKVILLE

Although the classic North Shore manor house was empty, with a little imagination, one could hear the sounds of laughter, sophisticated conversation and the "pop" of champagne corks throughout its many elegant rooms. The stately white brick Colonial known as "Stone's Throw," has been attributed to the famous country house architect, Bradley Delahanty, and has been restored to its former glory by a sensitive and caring builder.

At a time when most builders are bulldozing these wonderful old North Shore estates in order to divide their acreage and build multiple "McMansions," Andrew Woodstock and his partners had the courage and foresight to keep the house intact and preserve its original acreage. And this was the reason that the Oyster Bay Historical Society decided that "Stones Throw" was, indeed, worthy of their coveted "Historic Preservation Award."

At the award presentation, Society President Maureen Monck commented: "Historic preservation doesn't necessarily require a building or structure to be historically significant in the way that the Earle-Wightman House or Raynham Hall is. The restoration of 'Stone's Throw' is a superb example of the Oyster Bay Historical Society's credo of preserving our past and protecting our future. We've seen far too many



Oyster Bay Historical Society Board members Brad Warner, Yvonne Cifarelli, President Maureen Monck, Preservation Award recipient Andrew Woodstock, and Society Director Tom Kuehhas stand in front of a restored "Stone's Throw."

important Oyster Bay buildings sacrificed to the wrecking ball, and it's very rewarding to know that the Society's message is being heard." When asked about the Society's position regarding future development, President Monck stated: "The Society is in no way 'anti-development.' We'll always cooperate with community changes when those changes are the outgrowth of thoughtful, overall community planning."

Tom Kuehhas, Director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, then presented Andrew Woodstock with the Society's "Historic Preservation Award" and stressed the importance of preserving structures like this one for future

generations. Mr. Woodstock, in turn commented: "It's an honor to receive this award, and I'm very grateful to the Oyster Bay Historical Society for recognizing the tremendous effort we've put into this estate. We're really hoping that the next family to own "Stone's Throw" will treat it with the respect it deserves."

For further information, visit the Oyster Bay Historical Society at 20 Summit Street, or go to www.oysterbayhistory.org.

SOCIETY RESCHEDULES REV. WAR EXHIBITION

The Society's new exhibition on Oyster Bay's and Long Island's



The historic Youngs Homestead is threatened

role in the Revolutionary War, originally slated to open in November, has been rescheduled to open in March. Director Tom Kuehhas explained that certain crucial elements, such as signage and specially designed exhibition cases would not be ready in time, so rather than open an incomplete exhibit, he felt the opening date should be postponed.

Call 922-5032 for more information.

SOCIETY LEADS CHARGE TO SAVE YOUNGS HOMESTEAD

The Society has learned that the current owners of the Youngs Homestead in Cove Neck have put the home up for sale. This irreplaceable cultural resource was built circa 1660 by Thomas Youngs, one of Oyster Bay's first settlers. It was the center of a vast farm of hundreds of acres in present-day Cove Neck and Oyster Bay Cove. Owned by nine gen-

erations of Thomas Youngs' descendants until well into the twentieth century, it sits on the last four remaining acres of that farm. The original, west wing of the building sheltered George Washington for one of the few nights he spent on Long Island during his 1790 tour.

There is virtually no more important building in private hands still standing, certainly in Oyster Bay and, perhaps, in all of Long Island. This historic home is located within the incorporated Village of Cove Neck, so it is not eligible for Town of Oyster Bay Landmark status. Unprotected as it is, this historic house could be demolished and replaced with a new McMansion.

To think of its demise and its replacement with a new home would be nothing less than a tragedy. It would be an irreparable loss for all future genera-

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY **Categories of Membership**

Individual	\$ 35	Business	\$ 75
Family	\$ 45	Business Sponsor	\$ 100
Contributing	\$ 75	Business Friend	\$ 300
Sponsor	\$ 100	Business Patron	\$ 500+
Sustaining	\$ 250	Benefactor	\$ 1000+
Patron	\$ 500		

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

**Visit the Oyster Bay
Historical Society's
NEW website!
www.oysterbayhistory.org**

tions of Oyster Bay residents if this magnificent house were torn down.

The South Shore has lots of historic markers informing current residents of what HAD been on that site. Is that all that future residents of the North Shore will have to tell them of the "old grey house", the Youngs Homestead?

You can help prevent that from happening. Get involved! Write letters of support to the Oyster Bay Historical Society. If you are a resident of Cove Neck, write Mayor Zoller and tell him you support the adoption of a village landmark ordinance. Act now!

**SAGAMORE HILL
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

Superintendent Greg Marshall recently left Sagamore Hill to become the new superintendent of the Edison National Historic Site in Edison, NJ, where Thomas A. Edison's home and laboratory are located. During his two year tenure Mr. Marshall accomplished much and had a positive influence. His replacement is Thomas E. Ross, who joins us from the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in Rhode Island.

**HUNTINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society celebrated the beginning of the Holiday Season with a tour "Five Centuries of Huntington Homes" on Sunday

December 2. Featured on the tour were homes from the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Each home was chosen for its unique design and historic details.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Over 80 people attended the "Jack Gifford Memorial Walk" on Sunday, October 14. This was the first event co-sponsored by the FBHS and the Central Park Historical Society.

Visit the Society's exhibit, "Dolls of the World" in the lower level of the Farmingdale Public Library. The dolls are a fascinating display from almost every country in the world.

The following dates are for the Society's Winter Meetings scheduled for 2008. All are held at the Farmingdale Public Library on Sundays at 2:00 pm:

Jan. 20 "Theodore Roosevelt and His Love of Trains"

Dave Morrison

Feb. 10 "Washington Crossing the Delaware" (Painting)

Elizabeth K Kaplan

Mar. 2 "Surviving the Ordeal: Long Island Women During the American Revolution"

Dr. Natalie Naylor

Mar. 30 "Remembering Republic Aviation" Roy Douglas

**OYSTER BAY
RAILROAD MUSEUM**

Long-time Oyster Bay resident and Museum member John Specce assumed the position of President, replacing Steven Torborg who had held that post for many years. Active in community affairs, Mr. Specce has worked on

the OB-EN School Board, Chamber of Commerce and the Main Street Association. He owns the John Specce State Farm Insurance Agency in Oyster Bay. Thanks to Mr. Torborg for his leadership and guidance from 1990 to the present. He will continue to serve the Museum as a Trustee.

The Museum would like to welcome on board their new Director of Development, Liz Irwin.

Heartfelt thanks to Ray Hornofsky Sr. and Mel Warren for their donations of railroad artifacts and paraphernalia. Their fathers, "Pete" Hornofsky and F. W. "Quack" Warren, had collected these items while serving for many years as LIRR engineers.

Sincere thanks to Mrs. Jane Minerd for her donation of her later husband, Roy "Penn" Minerd's large "N" gauge model railroad layout with over 80 cars and locomotives, many model structures and three hand-built ships. Look for this excellent display at the museum in the former LIRR Oyster Bay station building.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The inaugural issue of the Society's *Newsletter*, to be published on a quarterly basis, recently came out. Founded in 1886,

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

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

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

Also available are an 1833 map of Oyster Bay (\$5) and a map of Gold Coast estates c. 1920 (\$12.50). Shipping is additional.

shortly after the Civil War, by a group of forward-looking county residents, the Society's first home was a glass case in the office of Surrogate Judge James H. Tuthill.

Growing ever larger over the years, the Society's collection of over 20,000 artifacts is currently housed in its own building located at 300 West Main St. in Riverhead, the county seat.

Kathryn M. Curran has joined the SCHS as their new Public Programs & Exhibition Development Coordinator. In her new position Ms. Curran hopes to promote awareness of Suffolk's rich local history.

SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

Henry Otto Korten Keeps Long Island Memories Alive

by Robin Hanke-Hager

Born to German émigrés, Henry Otto Korten was often referred to as the "Long Island Postcard Photographer," and now his works (donated by one of his sons, Elmer) are on display at the Sea Cliff Village Museum.

His work at the turn of the century is captured forever via the process of printing a picture from a glass plate negative, allowing the memories of the places and people of Long Island to last forever. Through photographs we can magically transform ourselves from the present, to the Sea Cliff when the village served as a meeting place for Methodist revivalists. The Metropolitan Campground Association encouraged trips to Sea Cliff for recreation. It was a time when industrialization made leisure time more abundant and people traveled to this magical place, to escape the pressures of urban life.

People could come by train, trolley, steamer and even automobile. New-found pleasures such as swimming, boating, hiking, and baseball were offered here and hardworking folks could come for the fun or just to

relax. What better way to capture this gaiety than to bring home a postcard?

No one knew that "postcards" would also serve as a record of people, houses, transportation and recreation for generations to come. We could reference and remember how this town was in the 20th century with familiar pictures frozen in time. Korten captured the faces and places people could relate to and look upon fondly.

This exquisite exhibit, detailing both pictures and cameras, allows you to leave the hustle and bustle of our hectic time behind and enter into an atmosphere of gaiety and fun. I often caught myself smiling, looking at all of the happy faces on vacation.

Korten also sold the "postcards" taken at the regal estates of Long Island to their eager owners, who would then take them abroad, boasting of where they resided. These cards could easily replace any grandiose verbal description.

Korten exhibited the zeal of the immigrant and wanted to make his concepts of photography more widespread. He introduced the colors of sepia, light green or blue delft on a thinner, sleeker card while using the different processes of Autochrome and Photocolor. He originally sold

the cards to the Illustrated Picture and Novelty Co. and eventually went into business for himself.

If you love Long Island and all its splendor, you will truly enjoy this exhibit, which was crafted with care and passion by Curator Sara Reres. The museum, located behind the Sea Cliff Library, is open Saturdays and Sundays from 2-5 p.m. Contact them at 516-671-0090.



An image from the Korten exhibit at the Sea Cliff Village Museum.



THE GATHERING PLACE



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

The Dutch Next Door

by Lee Myles

Notions from Santa's

Bottomless Bag

Perhaps the Dutch first introduced St. Nicholas for a permanent stay in this country, but we must remember that other nationalities came here early and probably brought him with them for at least an early visit, and perhaps a permanent residence. Whether he came in his role as a gift-giver at those times or merely as a well-loved saint probably will never be known to us. What we can believe is that, following the Dutch settlement, he came to this land with many immigrant groups, often under an alias. A common such alias was Belshnickel. Note the "Nick" fragment hidden in the second syllable. When New Yorkers, who had been New Amsterdammers, began to speak publicly of Santa Claus and to pen material of a fabulous nature about Nicholas they used the names St. Nick and Santa Claus interchangeably. The rest of the country began to join in. It would seem that in many cultural matters they have been following New Yorkers, state and city, ever since.

How did the name Santa Claus move into other parts of the United States? It has been implied that elements of the Dutch holiday season, including this one, were spread by the Clement Moore poem, "A Visit from St Nicholas." Or, even more important, that the "American" holiday

season was established by him. Of course, Moore never mentioned the name Santa Claus. He was writing for American children, not Dutch. Surely, "A Visit" helped to move the date of Santa's visit from December 6th, the eve of his birthday, to the night before the birthday of someone more important. Thereby was removed part of Nicholas's personal saintly character. That would also be damaged by Moore's reference to him as an elf.

Nick's costume, "all in fur" was very likely a borrowing from the fur-dressed Pelznichol (Belshnickel), suggesting that Moore had other sources of inspiration than the commonly mentioned *Knickerbocker History* of Washington Irving. As far as New Amsterdam, later to become New York, is concerned, Dutch folklore found there provided an outline for the wonderful "Visit" that was virtually all Moore, and Irving before him, had to work with, except their imaginations. They both did pretty well.

Elliott Roosevelt, Sr.

continued from p. 7

extensive Livingston land holdings and the mercantile firm of Tannele and Hall in which Valentine's father had been a partner. The Roosevelt fortune stemmed from extensive Manhattan real estate holdings and the firm of Roosevelt and Sons, which began after the Revolution as a hardware store, evolving into an



Though the box that he's popping out of says, "Santa Claus," this version shares much in common with his predecessor, Pelznichol.

importing company having a virtual monopoly on imported pane glass and finally into a private investment banking firm. Indeed, the Roosevelt family's business interests were so lucrative that Elliott's grandfather Cornelius Van Schaack Roosevelt I was listed as one of the five richest men in New York State. Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1971), p. xvii. Both Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were opposed to the inheritance of large fortunes and proposed to Congress a graduated tax on inheritance. Nelson W.

Aldrich, Jr., *Old Money: The Mythology of America's Upper Class* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), pp. 234-35 and Gustavus Myers, *The Ending of Hereditary American Fortunes* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1939), pp. 223 and 370-71.

9. Shooting at passersby was not exclusive to the Hall family. While a sophomore at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornelius Van Schaack Roosevelt II, the son of Theodore and Eleanor Butler Alexander Roosevelt, Jr. [III], who resided at Old Orchard in Cove Neck, and grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt, was indicted for allegedly "peppering" two policemen and a Boston newspaper man with pellets fired from an air pistol. *The New York Times*, January 11, 1936, p. 32 and January 14, 1936, p. 23. Cornelius would eventually become the Chief of Technical Services in the Central Intelligence Agency. It was during his tenure as its head that the Technical Services section devised several bizarrely unique methods for assassinating Fidel Castro.

10. For a discussion of Mortimer's Long Island estate see Spinzia, *Long Island's Prominent North Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes*, vol. I, p. 553.

11. Laudanum is an opium tincture sometimes sweetened with sugar. It is also known as "wine of opium." Ironically, the Delano side of Elliott's godson President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's family made their fortune in the China trade and, later, in the opium trade.

12. Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt* Volume One 1884-1933, p. 38 and

Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 429.

13. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin, The Story of Their Relationship Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers*, p. 29. The incident aboard the *S.S. Britannic* so affected Anna Eleanor that she never lost her fear of the sea. David B. Roosevelt, *Grandmère: A Personal History of Eleanor Roosevelt* (New York: Warner Books, 2002), pp. 54-55.

14. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin, The Story of Their Relationship Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers*, pp. 30 and 32. The hamlet of Salisbury was referred to by newspapers of the time as Hempstead and, occasionally, as Westbury. On January 9, 1941, Henry Hicks delivered a speech, celebrating the seventy-seventh anniversary of slave emancipation, for the local Zion Church in Westbury's Firemen's Hall. In his speech Hicks stated that Charles Levi "owned a 45 acre farm on Newbridge Road, next north of the residence of Mr. Eliot [sic] Roosevelt, father of Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, whose husband is now President. Mr. Eliot [sic] Roosevelt was brother of President Theodore Roosevelt." The Newbridge Road, which at one time had also been called School Street, to which Hicks referred is the modern-day street of Salisbury Park Drive in the hamlet of Salisbury and should not be confused with the Newbridge Road [Route 106] of today which is located further to the east. Roosevelt's estate was on the east side of Salisbury Park Drive in the vicinity of Valentines Road. See Map of Long Island, Hyde & Co., 2nd edition, July

1897. Both the 1897 map and a copy of Hicks' speech are in the collection of the Westbury Memorial Public Library. For a discussion of the Hempstead Plains in 1891 see Henry Hicks (with Foreword by Judith A. Spinzia and Afterword by Natalie A. Naylor), "The Hempstead Plains and its Flora, 1891" *The Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 58 (2003):30-40.

15. *Hempstead Sentinel*, October 7, 1943, n.p. and James Brough, *Princess Alice: A Biography of Alice Roosevelt Longworth* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1975), p. 72.

16. Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt* Volume One 1894-1933, p. 50.

17. Theodore blamed Anna for not providing Elliott with a stabilizing environment and condemned her for her "thoroughly Chinese moral and mental perspective." Theodore wrote, Anna's "totally frivolous life has, as was inevitable, eaten into her character like an acid." H. W. Brands, *T. R. The Last Romantic* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), p. 245. In spite of his opposition to excessive alcohol consumption and the turmoil it was creating in the Roosevelt family, in 1884 Theodore cast the deciding vote in the New York State Assembly thereby preventing the passage of a state prohibition law stating, "It is idle to hope for the enforcement of a law where nineteen-twentieths of the people do not believe in the justice of its provisions." Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 497.

18. Brands, *T. R. The Last Romantic*, p. 245.

19. Betty Boyd Caroli, *The Roosevelt Women* (New York: Basic

Books, 1998), pp. 92-93 and Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt* Volume One 1894-1933, p. 63.

20. In 1921 Elliott Roosevelt Mann (1891-1941) married Lena Wilhelmina Prigge, the daughter of William and Meta Steen Prigge. John Allen Gable, ed. "The Roosevelt Family in America: A Genealogy" Part 2, Theodore Roosevelt Association *Journal* Spring, 1990, pp. 52 and 75. Elliott Roosevelt, Sr., was not the only Roosevelt to have an illegitimate child. For a discussion of the illegitimate family of his uncle Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, Sr., who resided at Lotos Lake in Bayport, see: Havemeyer, *East on the Great South Bay: Sayville and Bayport 1860-1960*; Spinzia, "Those Other Roosevelts: The Fortescues;" and Spinzia, *Long Island's Prominent South Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes in the Towns of Babylon and Islip*.

21. The Mann family claimed that the money was "stolen" by attorneys in legal fees.

22. Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, pp. 445-46.

23. Caroli, *The Roosevelt*

Women, p. 243.

24. Sylvia Jukes Morris, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt* (New York: Coward, McCann, & Geoghegan, 1980), pp. 142-43 and Brands, *T. R. The Last Romantic*, p. 259.

25. Morris, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt*, p. 143 and Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt* Volume One 1894-1933, p. 88. To settle Elliott's debts to Mrs. Evans the Roosevelt family turned to Freddy [Frank] Weeks, members of whose family were long time Oyster Bay residents. While discussing the matter with Mrs. Evans in her apartment, her husband burst in and threatened Weeks with a revolver. Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt* Volume One 1894-1933, p. 513.

26. When Elliott's mother-in-law suggested that Elliott be buried with his wife in Tivoli, New York, his brother Theodore refused the proposal, writing, "I promptly vetoed the hideous plan." Brands, *T. R. The Last Romantic*, p. 260.

27. Gracie Hall Roosevelt is buried with his parents in Tivoli, New York.

28. President Franklin Delano and Mrs. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Roosevelt's son Franklin Delano

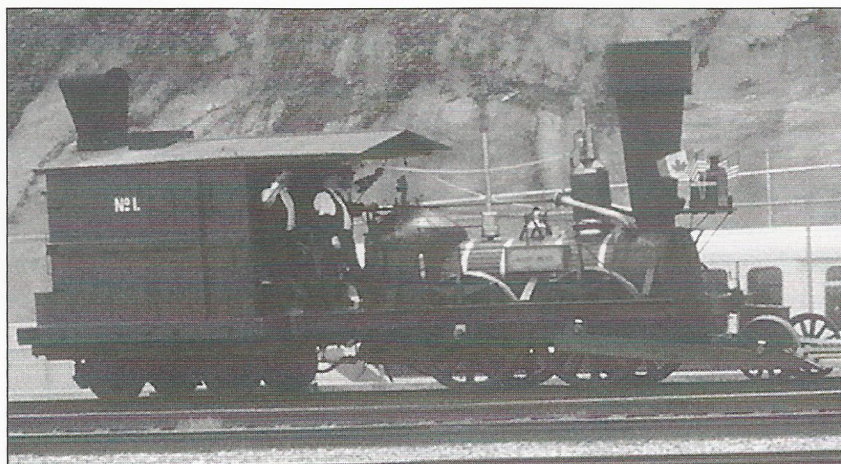
Roosevelt, Jr. is the only member of the Hyde Park branch of the family to live on Long Island with residences first in Woodbury and later in Upper Brookville. Franklin Delano and Ethel du Pont Roosevelt, Jr.'s son Christopher married Rosalind Havemeyer, the daughter of Horace and Rosalind Everdell Havemeyer, Jr., who resided in Islip and, later, Dix Hills. Spinzia, *Long Island's Prominent South Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes in the Towns of Babylon and Islip*, p. 103 and Spinzia, *Long Island's Prominent North Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes*, vol. I, p. 358.

Steam Locomotive

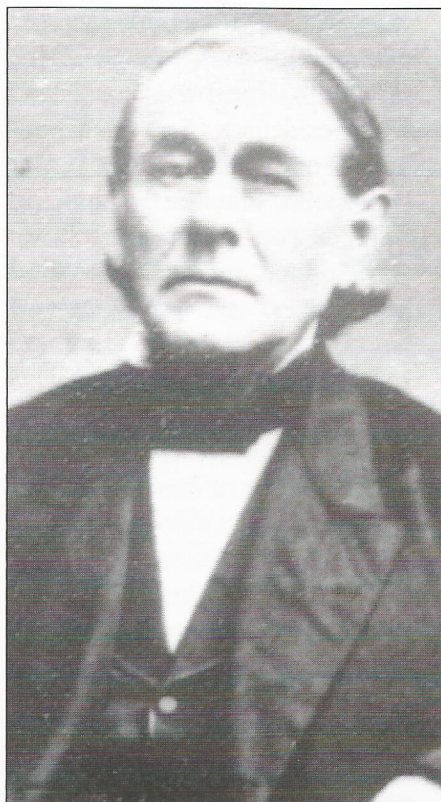
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Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg.

During the 1980s, the Smithsonian restored the original *John Bull* to operation and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania restored the replica to operation. Both locomotives were operated at different times, the most notable of which was the appearance of the replica at Expo86 in Vancouver, British Columbia. During the Expo, the replica was on display at the SteamExpo area, which was billed as the largest gathering of operating steam locomotives since the end of the age of steam. The replica operated under a full head of steam during the Expo's Grand Parade of Steam which was held on May 23, 1986. The *John Bull* was fifth in the parade, preceded by *Royal Hudson* #2860, the *Rocket*, the *Best Friend of Charleston*,



The John Bull replica at Expo86. Photo by author.



Charles Sexton
Collection of Dr. Robert Sisler

and the *Tom Thumb*. Twelve other locomotives participated in the Grand Parade, making it a truly marvelous event.

In 1987, the *John Bull* appeared on a 22 cent US postage stamp, part of a five stamp series that included the *Gowan & Marx*, the *Brother Jonathan*, the *Best Friend of Charleston* and the *Stourbridge Lion*.

Getting back to Jim Pavone's *John Bull*, when I first saw the replica this past August, I was most impressed. Seeing the attention that Jim paid to detail was, to me, astonishing. When completed, this locomotive replica will be a masterpiece. Jim's project inspired me to perform my research into the history of the *John Bull*.

Upon being reminded that the *John Bull* ran on the Camden and

Amboy Railroad, I vaguely recalled that one of my ancestors worked for a railroad in New Jersey. I contacted Rob Sisler, who is historian for the Village of Port Jefferson and one of my distant cousins. Rob had done extensive work on our family tree and he provided me with some quite fascinating information. I learned from Rob that my great-great-great grandfather was Charles Sexton, the tenth mayor of Camden, New Jersey, serving between 1849 and 1851.

Born in 1799, Charles Sexton moved to Camden in 1824, and obtained a job as a stage coach trimmer (carpenter), working for Isaac Cole. After the Camden and Amboy Railroad was formed, he obtained a job trimming railroad coaches. In those early days, railroad coaches were nothing more than stage coach bodies placed upon railroad wheels.

From Rob's research, I learned that I have an ancestor who worked on the Camden and Amboy railroad at the time that the *John Bull* was operating on that railroad. Now I know how railroading got into my blood (I retired from the LIRR after 25 years of service and I've always been interested in railroad history). Thus, Jim Pavone's project is exciting to me, not only for its impressive contribution to railroad history on Long Island, but also for its connection to my roots.

Hicksville will indeed be honored to have the *John Bull* replica as part of its heritage for future generations to enjoy. The locomotive is scheduled to be placed

on public display next year and in two years, the Long Island Rail Road will be celebrating 175 years of service (chartered in 1834). The LIRR is the oldest railroad in the country still operating under its original name. How fitting it will be to have a locomotive replica on display that dates from the time of the railroad's birth.

Anyone desiring to see more photos of the *John Bull* may see them on my webshots.com album <http://rides.webshots.com/album/560642831sJIQSF>

An excellent children's book on the *John Bull* has recently been published: Weitzman, David. *The John Bull – A British Locomotive Comes to America*. New York: Farbar, Straus Giroux, 2004.

Two excellent sources on the *John Bull* locomotive are: White, John H., Jr. *A History of The American Locomotive – Its Development: 1830-1880*. New York: Dover Publications, 1968; White, John H., Jr. *The John Bull – 150 Years a Locomotive*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981. The original *John Bull* is at the Smithsonian but the building in which it is housed is closed for renovation until September 2008. The Pennsylvania Railroad-built *John Bull* replica may be seen at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg, Pa.

The *John Bull* locomotive was part of the infancy of American railroading. The original locomotive or its replica has appeared throughout the decades at exhibitions and fairs. An image of the locomotive graces a US postage stamp. Surely, the *John Bull* locomotive is an American icon

and will soon be an icon for Hicksville and the Town of Oyster Bay. In honor of Valentine Hicks, Jim Pavone is calling his locomotive "Valentine's Dream," but surely Hicksville's *John Bull* replica could be referred to as "Pavone's Dream."

Ask Uncle Peleg

continued from p. 10

word for the future. An earlier instance that perhaps inspired Hanby is worth looking for but does not seem likely. Let us recapitulate a little.

The common and widespread use of "Ho! Ho! Ho!" in our period suggests that it has strong roots in the past; but not the distant past, for there was no Santa Claus or St. Nick to laugh that particular laugh before Clement Moore had launched "The Visit of St. Nicholas" across the midnight air of New York City only a few score years earlier. Some strong and lasting influence must have been planted across a wide slice of the American population to introduce the Ho catch words that are still with us and to renew them if they faltered. It must have been something like a book or a song and it is unlikely to have appeared before the middle (or later) of the 19th century when Santa Claus was consolidating his authority over the wide range of immigrant holiday figures who, like himself, had brought gift giving and other year-end customs to America.

It is quite reasonable to impute such an influence to "Up on the Housetop." The song was apparently popular from its beginning. It has had a long life and is still being re-published about a cen-



James Pavone is at right in above photo by author, September 2007

tury and a half later. Clearly the song owes something to Clement Moore's great groundbreaker, but Hanby has taken little and he makes a rollicking bit of fun out of that little. The catchy 3 HOs that he repeated three times retain their popularity even when sounded with a supercilious, oral smirk in our own time.

It must be that only our own little chunk of America has been unable to put HO! HO! HO! and Hanby together. "Up on the Rooftop" has been available in many collections and apparently gets a good workout every Christmas. Perhaps informed Long Islanders have been ignoring us because of our ignorance. If so, Oh, Woe. But enough, as far as our own effort is concerned, we think we may assign the first HO! HO! HO! to Hanby and consider the "Vixen"'s question answered.

And, just to wrap things up, while we are speaking of assignments to Hanby we should mention that some scholarly students of popular Christmas music have assigned the authorship of "Jolly Old St Nicholas" to him on the

basis of similarities in the music and the wording to "Up on the Rooftop." In his short life he wrote many songs, both secular and sacred. "Jolly Old St Nicholas" would have been quite within his abilities. I won't list his output but one of them was "Darling Nellie Gray," the tearjerker of the Civil War era.

The Post Rider

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I appreciate whatever information you could direct me to.

Jim Lomenzo

*I can suggest two sources for information: Raymond E. and Judith A. Spinzia, *Long Island's Prominent North Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes* vols I and II (College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com Publishing, Inc., 2006); and Robert B. MacKay, Anthony K. Baker, and Carol A. Traynor, eds. *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects, 1860-1940*. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co. and SPLIA, 1997.*

Both are in the Historical Society's library and should be in yours!

Part III

by Robert L. Harrison

The Class of 1791

In 1791, there was one less star in the sky over Long Island, for the poet Benjamin Prime, from Huntington, had put down his pen for the last time. But a new constellation had appeared in the heavens consisting of the orange-yellow flames of the poets Sigourney, Gardiner and Payne.

Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865) was the longest lasting star of the three, being born in Norwich, Connecticut, and living some 74 years. Sigourney grew up to be "the most famous female bard of the 19th century."¹ Sigourney was educated in Norwich and Hartford and was in charge of a private young ladies school in both places. Her first book, *Moral Pieces in Prose and Verse*, was published in 1815, when she was just 19 years old. Four years later, Lydia married Charles Sigourney and continued to write anonymously in her "leisure" time.² Later on Sigourney would use her talent at prose and poetry writing to support her aging parents and her husband's failing merchant business, and would be one of the first female writers to make a living by her own endeavors.

Sigourney, during the next forty five years, used her own name on all of her publications and became one of the most prolific woman writers of her time.³ She became well known in the literary world and corresponded frequently with other writers. Edgar Allen Poe requested poems from her when he was editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*.⁴

Sigourney's relations to Long Island were amplified by her many trips to the various parts of

the Island throughout her life. Her prose pieces and poems about Long Island were published and her descriptions of the East End towns were poetic in nature. Sigourney also was friends with William Cullen Bryant and they traded poems and books as presents.⁵

Although most of her writing has been forgotten, Sigourney, in her time, inspired many Long Island women to write poetry and she supported her family while many others in the literary world were unable to do so.

The second star in this poets' constellation was Mary Gardiner (1791-1860). Mary was the daughter of Samuel and Sally L'Hommedieu and grew up in the whaling community of Sag Harbor. During her lifetime, Gardiner wrote sentimental and personal verse about her observations and friends. At the age of twenty, Gardiner married Nathan Cook, who died soon afterwards. Gardiner's second marriage was to the Rev. John D. Gardiner of the Presbyterian Church of Sag Harbor.⁶

Although burdened with ill health most of her life, Gardiner traveled across Long Island and wrote poems about what she felt and saw. While visiting the home of Joseph Moulton, in Roslyn, Gardiner wrote one of her best remembered poems, called "Hempstead Harbor." The Moulton house was later sold to the poet William Cullen Bryant and the views that Gardiner described in her poem over one hundred and seventy years ago are still possible to make out

today.⁷

Hempstead Harbor
Delightful spot! glory of all the earth,
Bright miniature of Eden's blissful bowers;
Beauteous, as when in the primitive birth,
Thou stood'st array'd in shrubs and blooming flowers.
Before the blight of sin faded thy bloom,
Unbounded nature knew no fairer spot;
And when creation felt her withering doom,
Amid her works thou surely wert forgot.
Thy hills and streams, and each pellucid pool,
Reflecting soft the silvery orbs of even;
Thy purling brooks and limpid waters cool,
sweetly resemble faith's bright view of heaven.
Hill after hill meets enraptur'd eye,
In one unbroken, undulating reef;
Stretching along beneath the blue-arch'd sky,



John Howard Payne

'Till all appear in striking bold relief!

From Moulton's heights, how beautiful the scene,

Varied and bold, magnificent and grand;

Lakes, vales and streams, mingle the hills between,
And the blue sound laving the solid land.

I stand delighted 'mid the tangled wood,

I gaze enraptur'd from lofty dome;

I look around, and wish my pencil could

Portray the beauties of his pleasant house.

Oh, I could gaze upon this heavenly spot,

And feast my soul upon its magic charms;

Till time itself, amid the scene forgot,

Should steal like friendship from my folded arms.

Not only trees, and shrubs, and wooded hill,

Lakes, ponds- the bay, and the blue rippling sound

Attracts and please, but manners soft distill,

And show a genial influence all around.

In 1843, Gardiner, then fifty-two years old, published her book *Collections from the Prose and Poetical Writings*. She lived another seventeen years on the Island she loved.⁸

The last star poet of 1791 was John Howard Payne (1791-1852). Payne was born in New York City but frequently visited his family house in East Hampton.⁹ Payne, during his lifetime, was a poet, songwriter, actor, playwright and diplomat. Payne's father was a schoolmaster who taught diction to him at a young age and it is thought that this is why Payne later turned to acting as a career.

Payne, the first American actor to play Hamlet, moved to England in 1813 and is thought to be the first American actor to perform in Britain.¹⁰

In 1823, at the age of 32, Payne's opera "Clari or The Maid of Milan" was performed at Covent Garden. In this opera, Payne's most famous song "Home Sweet Home" was introduced and became a huge success, sung by many and cried over forever afterwards. The song was said to be based upon his childhood memories of the Payne family cottage in East Hampton. Payne continued to act and write (he produced more than sixty plays during his lifetime), but none would garner world acclaim like his lyrics in "Home Sweet Home."¹¹

Nine years later Payne moved back to America to pursue other goals. He left his show business career behind him, being appointed Consul to Tunis in 1846.

Payne was reappointed Consul in 1851 and died in Morocco the following year. The first stanza of Payne's finest achievement is reprinted here along with its famous refrain:

'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam

Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home!

A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,

(Like the love of a mother surpassing all other),

Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.

There's a spell in the shade

Where our infancy play'd,

Even stronger than Time, and more deep than despair!

Refrain-

Home, home, sweet, sweet home!

There's no place like home!

There's no place like home! ¹²

The Lesser Lights

John Howard Payne was not the only Long Islander to write operas during this time period. There was the painter William Sidney Mount's uncle Micah



The cover of a song sheet from the collections of the Historical Society

Hawkins (1777-1825), who was born in Head of the Harbor. Hawkins also was a poet and playwright and moved to New York City in 1798. Hawkins is credited with writing the first opera by an American composer on an American theme. This opera "The Saw-Mill or A Yankee Trick" played in New York City in 1824.¹³

Long Island poets always had a tough time in publishing their poems and in the 19th century fewer outlets for their masterpieces of verse were available. One person who made it easier was Selleck Osborne (1782-1826), who was born in Connecticut and came to Sag Harbor for seven months to edit *The Suffolk County Herald*.

As the editor, Osborne freely published local bards before joining another paper, *The Witness* in Litchfield, Connecticut. Osborne was a writer of light verse himself and had a poet's column in every paper he edited.

The man called "The Neglected Poet," by John Howard Payne is one of the more interesting poets during the latter part of the 18th century.¹⁴ This Island bard, William Martin Johnson (1771-1797), was a poet of many talents. Johnson was born in New England and was bound out at a young age to a Captain Albee who taught him to read and write. Johnson turned out to be a prodigy and qualified for college at the age of 12. In 1787, Johnson was employed in Boston with a storekeeper, where his talent for poetry first emerged with the following lines-

"As northern lights dance over the evening sky and strike like

transient charms the admiring eye."

In 1790, Johnson wandered down to Bridgehampton and became the head of a small school. Now 19 years old, he acquired other skills, becoming a violinist, architect, and carpenter as well as adoring the local females. Moving on to East Hampton, Johnson came under the instruction of the physician Sage who found a teaching position for him in Smithtown. Returning to East Hampton in the spring, Johnson became a cabinet maker and added physics, foreign languages and music theory to his growing knowledge.

Growing bored with country life, Johnson moved on to New York City and later to Savannah, Georgia. Due to his constant money problems, the phrase "Starving Poet" could now be applied to him. Johnson left the humid south in 1797, and was greeted by his Long Island friends in Jamaica, where he passed away at the young age of 26.

John Orville Terry (1796-1869) was born in Orient to one of Long Island's oldest families. During his lifetime Terry was known as "J.O.T." and loved the history and lore of the North Fork. Terry based many of his poems on stories of the American Revolution and his observations on the Island during the War of 1812. Terry also loved nature and the ocean and once signed on to a whaling ship that sailed out of Greenport.

In 1850, at the age of 54, Terry published 179 of his poems under the title *The Poems of J.O.T.*¹⁵

Phineas Robinson (1798-1871) was one of those rare poets raised

in the middle of Long Island, having been born in Manorville. Robinson graduated from Hamilton College in 1821 and received his M.A. from Princeton Theological Seminary three years later. Robinson became a minister, serving in upstate New York and at Oysterponds on the North Fork from 1828-1833. Robinson's one work of poetry, a verse book consisting of ten long cantos called *Immortality*, was published in 1846. The book was four hundred and eleven pages long, quite large for a minor poet, and was printed in New York by Leavitt, Trow & Company.

During this time (1845-1855) he was associated with the Chester Academy in Orange County. Robinson, in his later years, lived on Long Island and died near his birthplace.¹⁶

NOTES

1. Berbrich, Joan D. *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Poetry of Long Island*. Publisher: Ira Friedman, Port Washington, NY, 1970, p. 29.

2. Many women writers used a pen name during this time period. www.Victorianweb.org/authors/Sigourney/bio.html

3. Sigourney's output included nearly 300 periodicals and more than 50 books.

4. *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, p. 29.

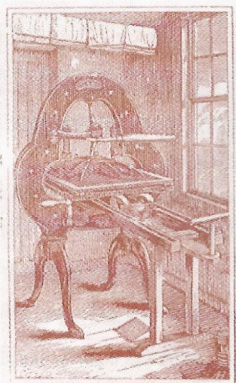
5. Still in Bryant's study at Cedarmere, Sigourney inscribed one of her books in 1860 to Bryant in thanks for his sending her twenty-five of his poems.

6. *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, p. 19.

7. According to Harrison Hunt, the site director of Bryant's

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Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn
The Big Oyster. History on the Half Shell By Mark Kurlansky. New York, Ballantine Books, 2006. 307 pp. B&W illustration, bibliography, and index. \$23.95.

A quick look at the index of *The Big Oyster* will lead readers to only a couple of references to Oyster Bay, and passing ones at that. Don't be disappointed. Kurlansky's worthy mission is to examine the oyster trade as it developed specifically in New York City, and especially during the Gilded Age, when oysters, like wealth, were consumed as if there were no tomorrow. And for the oyster beds of New York City's waters, after 1927 there was no tomorrow.

European settlers of New York Harbor began to exploit the Lower Hudson's 350 square miles of oyster beds early and often. Adriaen van der Donck considered any overharvest of the region's natural resources "an unnecessary anxiety," and he had at the time a point, since the harbor contained by some estimates one half of the world's oysters. There were so many oysters, all so easily harvested, that commercialization of the trade faltered

before prices so low that no one found it profitable to sell oysters in New Amsterdam. Such bargain prices and overabundance helped New Yorkers by the mid-18th century to lead all American cities in oyster consumption, complementing its supremacy in alcohol consumption, prostitution, and (next to Charleston, South Carolina) the ownership of slaves. The connection between slavery and the oyster trade was more than coincidental. Although fresh oysters remained cheap through the colonial era, New York merchants developed a brisk business selling pickled oysters to British West Indies slave plantations.

Thanks to steam power and the Erie Canal in the time of the New Republic, New York businesses developed an oyster trade extending from upstate to the Great Lakes and western Europe, while learning, as the French had always done, to train their oysters to keep their shells shut whenever out of water. Don't ask how this was done. Later, oysters rode the rails to Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, even Springfield, Illinois, where aspiring politico Abraham Lincoln put on great oyster eating parties. Railroads became so important to the New York trade that by the beginning of the 20th century, the Long Island Express Company was running four express oyster trains a day (9 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m., and 5 p.m.) between the Great South Bay and the New York market.

By the 1870s, New York represented one third of the \$25 million national trade in oysters. And apparently New Yorkers did their

best to eat every available oyster before any could be shipped away. James Buchanan "Diamond Jim" Brady and his consort, the actress Lillian Russell, represented the merest upper range of a population determined to devour oysters in quantities that would have shocked even James Fenimore Cooper, who forty years before had already deemed Americans "the grossest feeders of any civilized nation known." Brady often may have begun his meals with as many as six dozen oysters before moving on to "crabs, turtles, steaks, maybe a partridge, and perhaps a twelve-egg souffle for dessert." Russell started out with a paltry dozen, but followed with "soup, fish, a roast, two vegetables, sherbert, game, salad, ice cream, cake, and coffee. All accompanied by vintage wines." Now what wines could conceivably go with all that? Of course, it's unlikely that anyone could possibly eat so much. And anyway, Brady and Russell soon took up bicycling to keep fit and trim and were spotted by celebrity gawkers as they pedaled (furiously, one would think) through Central Park.

It now seems inevitable that the New York oyster trade was headed for a decline, and a precipitous one, too, given such overindulgences. Yet the fact that by 1902 the waters of the Passaic River emitted fumes strong enough to blister the paint off houses along its banks may have played a part as well. The combination of overconsumption and absolutely unregulated environmental pollution was too much even for such civic do-gooders as the 15th

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Dead Poets

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home, Cedarmere, Bryant later wrote more than forty-four poems there and thus it rates as one of the most poetic places on Long Island.

8. The 1850 United States Census lists Gardiner as living in Southampton Town.

9. His family's East Hampton cottage is at 14 James Lane and is known as "Home Sweet Home." It has been a museum since 1928 in tribute to one of Long Island's favorite word-smiths.

10. Blair, Cynthia. "It Happened on Long Island," *Newsday*, Oct 2007.

11. Song writers have become a Long Island legacy since then, with such notables as Oscar Hammerstein II, Ervin Drake, George M. Cohan, Harry Chapin and the living rockers from

Blocklyn's Books

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Ward Smelling Committee, who took it upon themselves literally to sniff out polluters of Newtown Creek, once a prime source of oysters. Sadly, in 1927, the last Raritan Bay bed was closed to shellfishers, and the great New York City oyster trade was finished. Vanished. 0 Vanitas.

Oyster Bay, Billy Joel (Hicksville) and Eddie Money (Island Trees).

12. *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, p. 11. Payne was also one of the few Long Island poets to have his biography published in the 19th century: Harrison, Gabriel, *The Life and Writings of John Howard Payne*, Joel Munsell, Albany, 1875.

13. Ball, Marie E. "Island Poets of the Past," *Long Island Forum*, September 1939.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

Sunday, March 23, 2:30 p.m.

Exhibition Opening

The Society's Spring 2008 exhibition on Oyster Bay's role in the Revolutionary War will include rare artifacts and documents as well as an opportunity to try on a reproduction uniform and equipment.

Please call the Society at 922-5032 for more information.

14. Based upon "Long Island's Neglected Poet" a *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* newspaper clipping found in the Hofstra/Long Island Studies archives by Natalie Naylor.

15. His book can still be found in some of Long Island's finest libraries.

16. Osborne, Chester G.. "The Rev. Phinehas Robinson," *Long Island Forum*, 1969.

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