THE FREE-HOLDER

SPRING 1999 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

- LOYAL LONG ISLANDERS
- RICKETY ROWBOAT REMINDER
- USS OYSTER BAY
- OLD GRACE CHURCH

USS OYSTER BAY (AGP-6) AT PUGET SOUND NAVY YARD, 1943. SEE STORY ON P. 20

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

It seems like yesterday that I was commenting on the end of the second volume of ***The Freeholder***. Well, here we are at the end of our third volume! It's hard to believe that we've gone to press with twelve issues of the magazine.

So once again, thanks go to all my contributing editors and friends who help me get ***The Freeholder*** into your hands.

I'm sure you will all join me in thanking Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics whose generosity in printing ***The Freeholder*** knows no bounds.

THE FREEHOLDER
of the
Oyster Bay Historical Society
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Editorial Staff
Editor: Thomas A. Kuehhas
Contributing Editors: Elliot M. Sayward
Richard Kappeler
Rick Robinson
John Hammond
Arlene Goodenough
Address Editorial Communications to:
Editor, The Freeholder
P.O. Box 297
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
Email us at OBHistory @aol.com

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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

Dear Editor,

I am the son of Mildred Wicker Jackson, owner of the house shown on page 15 of your Winter '99 issue. Having grown up in the house, I am familiar with what my family had learned about its age during their many years of residence.

Here are the facts and opinions we used to date the house.

The map created by the British when they occupied Oyster Bay during the Revolutionary War showed a house on the site.

The kitchen ell to the house had a very wide, shallow fireplace, like those used for cooking in the pre- Revolutionary days. This section also had low ceilings, another characteristic of mid-to late 18th century architecture. Carpenters working on the place showed my parents numerous construction details which dated back to pre-Revolutionary times.

There is no doubt that the style as we lived in it, was Federal. This suggests that it was remodeled in the 1840s.

I was delighted to read your publication, and wish you the best of luck.

Sincerely,

Fred W. Jackson

Dear Editor:

I saw the excellent article on your website by Lee Myles on Conestoga wagon evolution. I will shortly have an authentic model of a Conestoga in the Wortendyke Barn Museum, 13 Pascack Rd., Park Ridge, NJ. We'll also have a picture of an 18th century Dutch farm wagon for comparison. We're open every Wednesday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m., and by appointment. All OBHS members and friends are cordially invited to visit. The new Conestoga exhibit will be up in June.

Robert Cohen, Curator

Long Island's Loyalists: The Misunderstood Americans

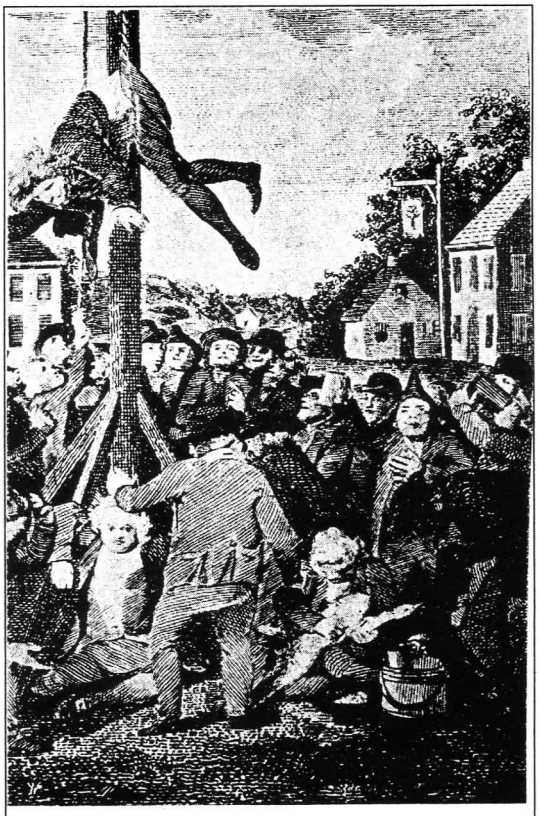
by Andrew C. Batten

The editor would like to welcome Andrew Batten, the Director of Raynham Hall Museum, to the pages of ***The Freeholder****. Andrew was kind enough to fashion this article from the notes for his 20/20 lecture in April. We hope this is the first of many contributions to this publication.*

Late in 1774, the rebellious citizens of Plymouth, Massachusetts decided to appropriate a local landmark as the base for the town's Liberty Pole. Twenty yoke of oxen were hitched up and driven to the beach to claim their trophy: Plymouth Rock. Ropes were passed around the rock, huge jacks were slipped in beneath it, and the signal was given to start forward the ox-teams. The rock was sliding gradually out of the sand when, suddenly and silently, it split into two pieces. One part of the rock was pulled free of the ground while the other part slipped back into the place it had always occupied. Not much notice was taken of this event at the time, but it is hard to find a more perfect symbol of the divide between Rebel and Loyalist in America.

On the eve of war in 1775, little of the turmoil which wracked New England ruffled the calm of Long Island. Long Islanders were largely prosperous, contented, and deeply loyal to the Crown. Life was good for 18th century Long Islanders: American-born colonists were taller, stronger, longer-lived, and better-fed than their British-born cousins. Literacy was high among Americans, perhaps 70 percent of white colonists could read, and taxes were lower than anywhere else in the British Empire. 1775 found Long Island at peace, seemingly a world away from the violent passions being acted out in the streets of Boston.

Here in Oyster Bay, the first storm clouds were gathering in March of 1775. On the 27th of that month Samuel Townsend, Town Clerk, published a notice announcing an election for deputies to be sent to the New York Provincial Convention. This Convention would then elect delegates who would attend the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. As the annual Town Meeting was already set for April 4, it was decided to combine the two meetings into one. On the day appointed, 247 freeholders gathered for the meeting and election. The Town Meeting proceeded smoothly, but the comity dissolved when it came to the vote. "It was objected by many against having anything to do with Deputies or Congresses," read the transcript, and a preliminary vote was called for on the question of whether or not to vote for deputies. The vote was nearly five-to-one against the motion: 42 freeholders came out in favor of electing deputies, while 205 voted to reject the notion entirely. Oyster Bay had spoken with a clear voice, and the message was one of loyalty to Britain.



A Tory strung up on a liberty pole; such incidents were rare on Long Island.

Eight days after the town meeting, a second vote was held on the question of electing deputies to the Provincial Convention. This time, however, the majority of Oyster Bay freeholders were not invited to attend. Instead, only those who favored electing deputies were in attendance, and the result was not surprising. The vote was 43 to 0 in favor of electing Zebulon Williams as Oyster Bay's deputy, and he was immediately dispatched to the Convention in New York City. Here, at the

Exchange Coffee House, Williams took his seat along with the other deputies from Queens County: Col. Jacob Blackwell, Joseph Robinson, and Joseph Talman. The other towns of Queens County were as deeply divided as Oyster Bay, and the Convention recognized this with one of its first votes. Acknowledging that these four men did not reflect the feeling of the majority of their constituents, the Convention resolved on April 20 "that the gentlemen from Queens County...be allowed to be present at its deliberations, and will take into consideration any advice they may offer, but cannot allow them a vote." What no one present at the Convention could have known was that, while they sat in deliberation over such procedural matters, events had already passed them by. The morning before, on Lexington green, the war had begun.

Any hope of reconciliation between the factions on Long Island was shattered by the events of the summer and fall of 1775. Desperate for arms to equip New York's troops, the Provincial Congress ordered the 3rd New York Regiment (under the regrettably named Colonel Lasher) to disarm the people of Queens County, using force if necessary. Lasher's men met with little success, however. One subordinate, William Williams, wrote, "The people concealed all their arms that are of any value; many declare that they know nothing about the Congress, would sooner lose their lives than give up their arms; and that they would blow any man's brains out that should attempt to take them." Not only were the Loyalists of Long Island unwilling to give up their guns, but they were actively soliciting additional weaponry from the British. On November 30, the warship *Asia* landed a large quantity of gunpowder, bullets, small arms, and even a cannon to bolster the Loyalist forces in Queens County.

1776 saw hostilities increase even more between Rebel and Loyalist. The Provincial Congress' attitude toward Queens County became increasingly bitter, causing passage of punitive measures such as the "Black List" and the "Tory Act." Many Long Islanders were now pursued like criminals because of their Loyalist beliefs, and some were compelled to take refuge in the swamps along the South Shore. Then, when the fortunes of Queens County's loyal majority looked almost hopeless, the tide turned. In late August General William Howe's force of 17,000 men met and decisively beat General Washington at the Battle of Long Island. Now it was the Rebels who were pursued, and Long Island became a haven for displaced Loyalists from other colonies. Among the refugees was Filer Diblee of Stamford, Connecticut. He, perhaps better than any other character in the American Revolution, sums up the heartbreak of loyal Americans.

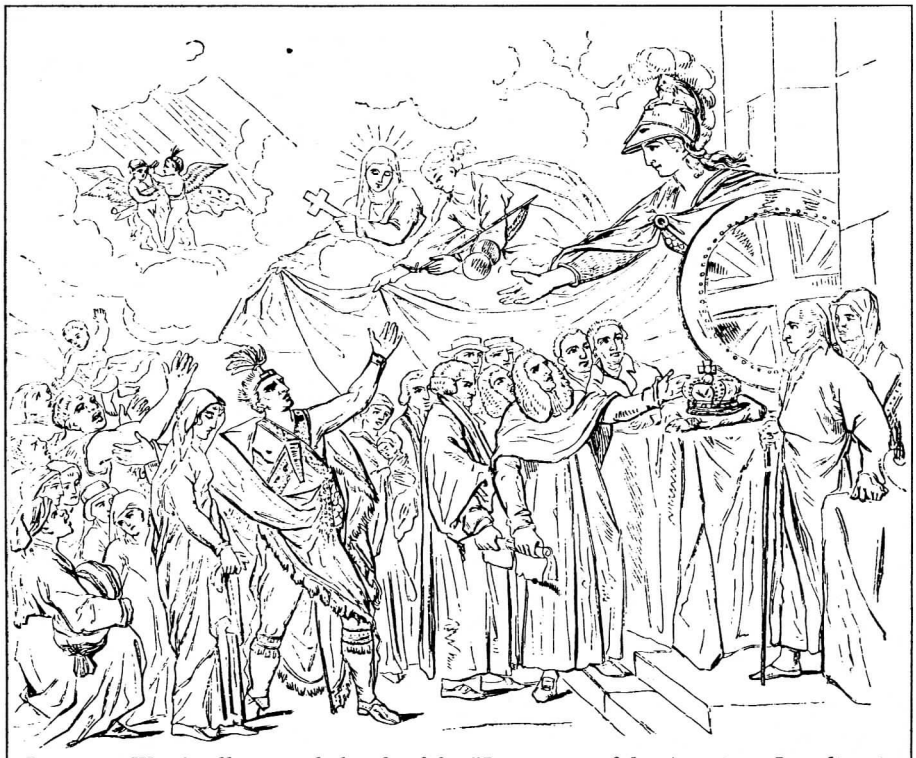
Filer Diblee moved his family to Long Island in August 1776, in the wake of the Battle of Long Island. Here, under the protection of the British garrison in New York City, Diblee hoped that his family could live safely. His dreams were short-lived, however, for he found himself singled out by local Rebels almost at once. His home was attacked in October, the house ransacked and his wife and five children driven "naked into the streets." Diblee moved his family again, this time finding a home in Oyster Bay in early 1777. For more than a year the Diblees found sanctuary in the midst of their Loyalist friends, and Long Island was spared much of the hardship which was visited on the rest of the Mid-Atlantic colonies. Tragedy struck again in 1778, when whaleboat-men from Connecticut looted the family's home, taking Filer Diblee as a hostage with them back across Long Island Sound. Destitute and demoralized, the Diblee family moved once more, this time inland to West Hills. There they waited for the return of Filer Diblee and for the end to their bad fortune. It was not to be.

Loyal Long Islanders were not all passive victims like the Diblee family. Many were actively involved in fighting for the British cause. General Oliver De Lancey was sent to Long Island to recruit three battalions of Loyalist troops. He had no difficulty in meeting his quota, and one entire battalion, commanded by Colonel Gabriel Ludlow, was raised from loyal citizens of Queens County.

Indeed, New York proved to be the British Army's most productive area for recruiting, eventually providing more than 15,000 troops for the cause. Although ranking seventh in total population among the colonies, New York provided more Loyalist solders than the other twelve colonies combined. Some Loyalists, like the garrison at Lloyd's Neck and the Queens Rangers quartered at Oyster Bay, were used as local defense forces across Long Island. Others were dispatched to Virginia and the Carolinas where, even as the war gradually turned against them, they fought valiantly on.

For the Diblee family, each passing year brought renewed agony. Their West Hills home was plundered in 1779 and again in 1780. One bright spot in their travail was the return of Filer Diblee, who was finally freed by the rebels and returned to Long Island. He, like thousands of his Loyalist neighbors, soon came to realize that their cause was lost. Filer Diblee petitioned the British government for restitution and relocation for himself and his family, and in 1783 his request was granted. He was paid $100 and was given passage for his family to New Brunswick, Canada. Diblee and his family were among the perhaps 6,000 Long Islanders who sailed away from Huntington Harbor at the end of the war. The majority of Loyalists on the island, however, did not leave aboard British ships. Most remained in the land of their birth, waiting to see how they would be treated by their victorious Rebel neighbors.

Even with the evacuation of thousands of British sympathizers at war's end, Queens County still had an overwhelmingly Loyalist population. The New York legislature, faced with this unavoidable truth, had to deal somewhat gingerly with Long Islanders. The estates of nine prominent Queens County Loyalists were seized, but this was really nothing more than a gesture of warning to others to toe the line. The property rights of most Loyalists remained unquestioned, although some punitive measures were instituted by the new government. One of these was the Disenfranchisement Act of 1784, which stripped Loyalists of the right to vote. One historian estimates that perhaps 90 percent of Long Island voters lost the franchise with this measure, giving some idea of how Loyalists still formed the vast majority of the population. A second blow fell in the form of a fine of £100,000 levied by the New York State legislature against the people of Long Island. This fine was intended "as compensation to other parts of the state for not having been in a condition to take an active part against the enemy," and was a painful reminder to local residents that they were on the losing side of history.



Benjamin West's allegorical sketch of the "Reception of the American Loyalists in England." In actuality, few Americans received a warm welcome there.

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"OLD PAINT"—MY FAVORITE ROWBOAT

by Bill Payne

Bill Payne moved away from salt-water Long Island to Marble Hill, Georgia some years ago. But he has fond memories of being brought up with his hands curled around a pair of good ash oar handles, and his nose filled with the wild, free scent of salt air. His report here is more anecdotal than historical, and you might find it even a bit philosophical as he fondly reviews some of the pleasures of rowing a working boat, the additional pleasures of reaping harvests from the water, and how he eventually got sophisticated and forgot all that...for a while.

A relative of "Old Paint" idles in Oyster Bay harbor.

Where I was brought up in Amagansett, Long Island, of an extended family of fishermen, rowboats were often called "row sharpies." To a nautical historian, the term "sharpie" is used to describe a different type of working craft—a flat-bottomed sailboat developed in New Haven; a cheap, efficient boat primarily used for oystering.

But "rowboat" will do. Howard Chapelle, in his wonderful book *American Small Sailing Craft,* spends some time on the origin of the flat-bottomed workboat. He traces the original style of construction (bottom cross-planked) to England. I wonder, though, if the Dutch, who spread out across both the South Shore and North Shore of Long Island after being driven out of "New Amsterdam" by the British, might have also influenced the design of the "American" rowboat. The farther east the Dutch went (they reached Amagansett in the late 1600s) the more easily they were amalgamated into the existing cultures, which had been driven to escape from England, and were impudently independent of New York's Crown-derived bureaucracy.

Rowboats, as I remember them from the late '20s and early '30s, were never much more than 14 or 16 foot long. They were usually set up to handle two pairs of oars, and were built by local boatbuilders, and often by the fishermen themselves. They were cheap, sturdy, handy, stable, and capable of carrying a good load of fish, shellfish, or whatever was caught.

On open bay beaches, a rowboat could be hauled up past the tide mark by two men (extra helping hands were always welcomed). The bow was nursed up onto a roller, using the waves washing in astern to help move the boat forward. Rollers were sometimes a smooth, straight section of a log, with a rope loop handle inset at each end. Other types were made of an open framework, a slatted cylinder—my hunch is that these rolled easier, since they could be larger in diameter, and were also lighter. There would be three or four of these. The job of hauling up was too much work for one man, so two men at the least would be needed, one at each side. They would pull the rowboat up the sloping beach.

A small boy could handle the job of retrieving the aft roller, grabbing it by the rope handle as it came out from under the stern,

and racing to the bow with it, positioning it carefully under the bow, so that the boat could be continued to be pulled forward, without losing the momentum the men had established. You had to be quick about it, and careful to lay the roller under squarely, and nimble enough to get out of the way. Otherwise, you might hear some colorful cuss words. Great training for a boy!

Learning to row was also good training. Right now, I can hear a voice from the past, my father's, or a cousin's, saying, "Feather your oars, Billy!" You needed to cut down the windage against the oars. There was no need for gymnastics or exercise salons when everything was done by hand.

In the earlier days, the fishermen kept their gear in a shanty, down near the beach. It was unlocked, of course. I can remember the shanty at Barne's Hole Beach, on Gardiner's Bay. It was near a small spring, where the horses were watered.

But the designs of rowboats changed during the mid-thirties, when outboard motors came in. The boats could be made bigger (a long rope tied to a car could be used to haul the boats up). And the sterns were squared off, to more easily take an outboard motor (as I remember, most were 5-horsepower). Muscles gave way to gasoline. But the new boats were lousy to row. I recall one my father built, to handle an outboard. It would not row. A pull on the oars, and it would move ahead not much further than the length of the oar-stroke. The flat stern lay down in the water, you see, and dragged the water behind it. The boat was a dog. Of course, you see many powerboats today dragging great waves of water behind them. The solution: build bigger engines.

The years rolled along; World War II came and went. I started commuting to a job in New York City from Levittown. My wife and I saved enough money to buy a house on a newly-dug canal on the Great South Bay. (We weren't in the Township of "South Oyster Bay", which extends all the way to Jones Beach, but were right next to it.) Cost of the house: $21,000. Cost today, probably $300-$350,000.

My next-door neighbor at Levittown visited us, and we decided to buy a rowboat. He supplied the money, and I provided the mooring at my bulkhead. Off we went to a fishing station in Babylon, to buy a second-hand rowboat. By this time, all of the rowboats were of the flat-transom style, to hold the outboard motors which could also be rented at the station. Nobody rowed anymore. Money being scarce at that time, we finally settled on a rough-looking rowboat, hauled up in the weeds; "Old Paint" we called it. Cost--$ 10.

We rowed her around to my canal, only a mile or so away. I rowed, my neighbor bailed. She leaked pretty bad, where the side strakes had opened up.

"Old Paint" had been designed for rowing, not for use with an outboard, so she was of no further value. The rowboat was probably 35 or so years old when we bought her, which put her design back in the "muscle-power" days. She was probably 15 or 16 feet long, and maybe four or five feet wide (couldn't have been any wider or it would have been hard to handle the oars).

"Old Paint" was the best rowing boat I ever was in. One pull on the oars and she would drift for yards. What made her so great for rowing was the stern, which was raised out of the water, so there was no drag. The stern swept up to a shallow, slanted transom. But she was very stable. It was a perfect bay boat. You could go clamming with it and stand right up on the gunwale and she would not spill you out.

The seats were positioned precisely right; the ribs were just right, to brace your feet against when rowing. She was made of white pine, I believe, and had a wide, flat inner keel with an outside one to match. At this time, right after the war, most supplies for boats came from the local hardware store—there were no fancy yachting supply stores then, because only rich people had yachts. And the hardware stores in the towns along the bays carried good, solid, workboat types of hardware. If you bought galvanized nails, they

were the best.

We got some good-sized copper nails in Babylon, 2 ½ or 3" long. I had been told that you could use these to tighten up the seams in the strakes. Earlier, some donkey had used tar to caulk the seams, but it did not work.

We hammered the nails in, but they did not tighten—then someone told us that after you had driven them through, you clinched the point over 180 degrees until it became a staple—then, using another backing hammer, you hammered away, and the clinching effect would pull the strakes together. It worked—and "Old Paint" became relatively water-tight. A coat or two of house paint, and we were ready to row. The rowboat had a 3"-4" hole in the forward thwart, evidently to take a mast, so she could be sailed. Below it was a mast step. It had a cutout rounded notch in the transom—I'm sure to hold an oar, when sailing, to use as a rudder. And perhaps for sculling. And I enjoyed sculling "Old Paint" up and down the canal many times, although I did not have enough sense at that time to rig her up for sailing. I do not recall ever seeing any Gardiner's Bay rowboats with mast step or transom notch (although they might have had them but I was too little to notice).

"Old Paint" was a great boat for kids to have fun in, and there were plenty of them, mostly ranging from 6 to 10 years old, who learned to row in her. She would hold seven or eight, or more, and they took great delight in adventuring around, rowing up and down the canal, some trailing toy boats, some dragging hands in the water. Both boys and girls would be in the crew. They were in control— no adult supervision, no "soccer moms" screeching from the shore. Everybody had to wear a lifejacket—and that was it.

I also enjoyed rowing boatloads of kids out into the bay (they were not allowed outside the jetty), adventuring along the shore. Beachcombing is one of the greatest of all delights. I dug many a "mess" of clams out of that rowboat, using a pair of long-handled tongs I bought from some old blacksmith, in Oyster Bay, I believe, who had made them by hand. And I also bought two eel-spears from him. One was a "winter spear", used to get eels out of the mud. It had upward-turned spines, to hook the eels on the upstroke. The technique was to wait until the little natural inlets, where the streams that are all along the South Shore meet the bay, froze over. The eels like to go up there to get into the mud. When the ice is strong enough to walk on (a tricky thing, because salt water will freeze erratically) you go out, chop a hole in the ice, and poke around for the eels.

The next step is to get them smoked. An ancient bayman, who had a smokehouse, would do this on "halvies"—he kept half, you kept half. The smokehouse had about two inches of lovely-smelling eel-fat covering the floor...but that's another story.

Crabbing was another great adventure which we used "Old Paint" for. We would rig up a light forward, sticking out over with water, shielded so the light shone forward. Go out at night, cruise along slowly; the crabs would swim upwards, drawn to the light. Two people at the bow, one on each side, would be equipped with scoop nets. One quick, adroit "scoop" and you would have him, and dump him in the bottom. But you had to be fast. Some crabs would be so big that, with the legs spread out, they could straddle the mouth of the net. We quickly learned to go trolling for crabs down where the bridge, which had just been built, goes over to Jones Beach/Fire Island. The lights from the bridge would bring the crabs up at night. This was a sport for both men and women to enjoy; catching them, then bringing a bushel or so into the kitchen, and steaming them up on the spot, shucking and eating them, was about as much fun as anyone could have.

But those first days of bountiful crabbing did not last. DDT came in as a way to control mosquitos. Trucks would roll through the neighborhood, spraying dense clouds of DDT-laden smoke everywhere. This was another sport the children enjoyed - running in and out of these

clouds. Of course, the residue from the DDT washed into the Bay. Each year, crabs became fewer and fewer, until there were none left. Crabs, and crabbing, were finished.

One time I left that rowboat in the water over the winter, and almost ruined it because the canal froze over early, and I couldn't get it out. One day, I went out to look at it, and I noticed that the gunwale on the side next to the bulkhead had sort of "straightened out." What had happened was this: the sun, as it shone on the west-facing side of the bulkhead, heated up the dark, creosoted wood, which then melted the ice along the edge. And the ice from the other side, toward the middle of the canal, was steadily pushing the boat toward the bulkhead. It was getting sprung out of shape.

Next step: Get an axe, jump down in the boat, to chop the ice away from the "pushing" side. Great, and I had to do it or she would have busted, but when I stepped down into the boat, I heard a loud "crack." The caulking had frozen, and when I stepped in, I broke it away from the edges, and water started to seep in. So from then on, until the canal thawed, I had to not only chop the ice away from the side, but I also had to sprinkle rock salt into the bilge to melt the frozen water that seeped in, and then bail it out. I learned a hard lesson and never let any boats freeze in the ice again. Of course, this was before "bubble systems" were invented.

Another time, salt ice—"skim ice"—almost ruined the boat, in a different way. It was in December and the canal was just starting to freeze over, weeks before the bay would freeze. I wanted to go out and get a mess of clams for chowder, and by then, had inherited an ancient Evinrude one-lunger, went out into the bay and tonged up what I wanted. (By the way, there are very few clams left in Great South Bay today.) On the way out, I had to break through skim ice. And then again, when I came in, the ice had refrozen in the path I had broken, and I had to re-break through it.

In a couple of days, I hauled the rowboat out with a crane I had made, and then noticed that the skim ice had sawed through the side planking, as I moved through the water, nearly a quarter inch deep. The ice was jagged and sharp enough to cut a groove right through the wood. Another trip and I could have sawed her through. So now you know why the old-time clamming boats on the Great South Bay were copper- sheathed up forward, back to the widest part. My cousin Milton told me about a

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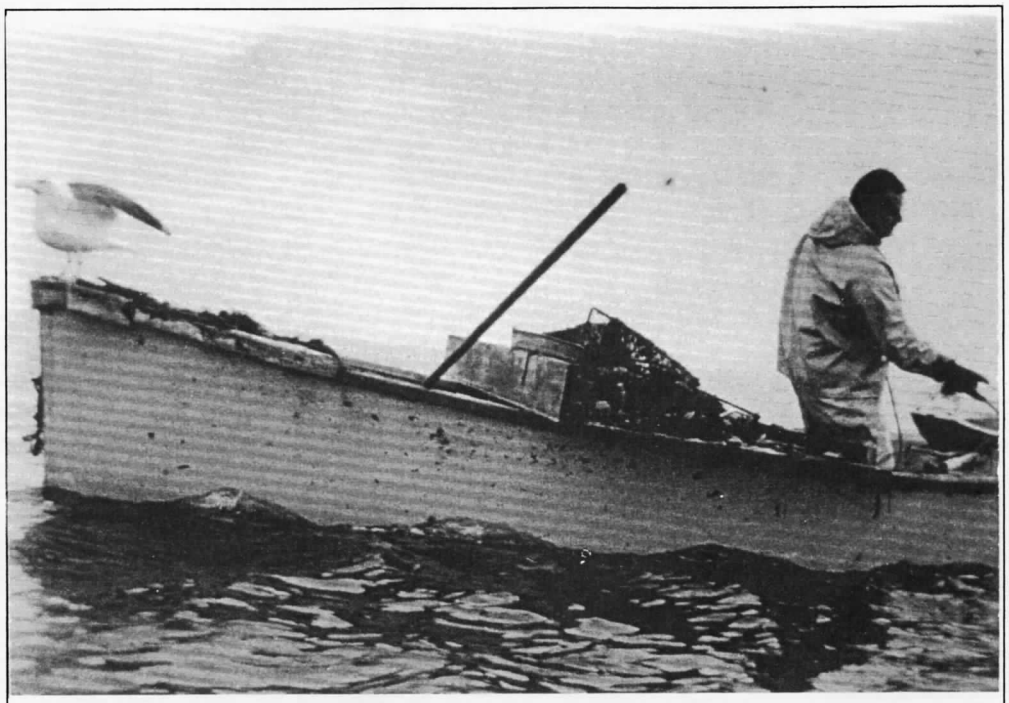


Sharpies are still used by fishermen out on the eastern end of the Island—and for all I know, in Oyster Bay and South Oyster Bay also. Pictured here is a big one— might be nearly 20-ft. long. My cousin Milton is scalloping; the scallops are piled up on the "cull board" and he is hauling in another scallop dredge. Notice the lookout on the stem.

ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

A recent advertisement used the words "acid-free" to describe the paper in a fine book. I thought acid was generally liquid in form so I can't see why any one dry book should be any more acid- free than another dry book. Seriously, I'd like to know what is behind the term "acid-free."

Luella Watson

Next time you have a chance, pick up an eighteenth century book or document. You will see that the paper is still strong, without brittle crumbling. Such papers were made of linen rags. When in the later nineteenth century, use of wood pulp for paper became common, it was treated with strong baths of corrosive liquid to free the fibrous materials in the wood. The result was a paper with an acid content which would eventually begin to break down its structure. "Acid-free" paper offered today does not have this built-in, self-destruction feature.

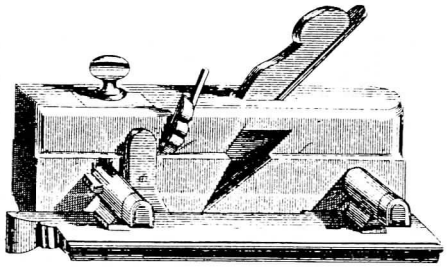
Dear Uncle Peleg:

I have been reading seventeenth and eighteenth century inventories from various sources and in one, amongst a list of carpenters' tools the names of which I recognized, I found the following. They may not be tools at all, given the scrambled nature of a lot of inventories, but I'd like to know what they are, as well as what they were used for: fore loper, coppers horse, and filester.

Jon Folk

The names do represent tools, but two are more commonly assigned to the joiner than the carpenter. The third belongs to the barrel maker.

The owner of the tools must have been in an area of Dutch influence, for the "fore loper" is what the English speaker would normally call a fore plane. Fore loper is a rendition by the ear rather than the spelling book of "voorloper," a plane used to remove a considerable shaving before the worker resorts to his smoothing plane.

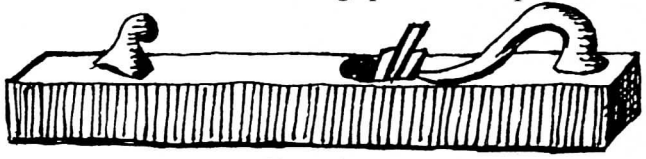


Fillister plane

We would spell "filester," fillister. It is a plane used to make rabbets, shelf-like sinkings at the edge of a piece of wood. A fillister differs from a simple rabbet plane in that it is equipped with a guide fence.

A 16th c. cooper working on his "horse."

"Coppers horse" is first a spelling error on the part of the maker of the inventory or his transcriber. It should be "cooper's horse" and it is a bench with a foot-operated vise-like feature with which the cooper grips the work piece.



Fore plane

CURRENTS OF THE BAY

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

MAGIC LANTERN SHOW AT HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL MEETING

Tired of all the hype surrounding the end of the twentieth century? Wouldn't it be nice, for a change, to hear the hype surrounding the end of some *other* century? A magic lantern show "taking place" in 1899 will be the featured entertainment at a meeting of the Oyster Bay Historical Society on Friday, June 11th, at 8:00 p.m. at the Masonic Lodge on West Main Street.

The magic lantern was the forerunner of the modern slide projector. It projected glass hand-tinted transparencies for audiences throughout the nineteenth century, until cinema killed it as an entertainment in the early days of the twentieth.

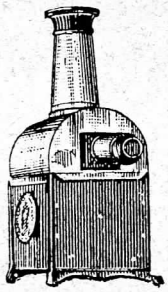
The magic lantern show at the Historical Society's meeting, entitled "The Century Ends," will be presented by "Professor" Henry Clark using a magic lantern made in 1873. "That's only 26 years ago," says Clark, who, at least for the purposes of his show, is firmly convinced this is the year 1899. "Since we are on the eve of the twentieth century, I thought a lantern show looking back over the high points of the nineteenth might be interesting."

Professor Clark is a member of the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada.

Clark's show includes over 45 hand-colored antique slides. The show ranges from 1801, and the discovery of a mastodon skeleton in Newburgh, New York, to 1898, and the Spanish- American War. Along the way, it touches upon the Battle of New Orleans, the 1835 appearance of Halley's Comet, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the roller-skating mania that gripped the country in the 1870s, and the Johnstown Flood.

"Some of the images on the slides are quite moving," says Clark, "and some of the images actually move, thanks to mechanisms built into the slides that enable them to be animated. When I talk about roller skating, a man roller skates across the screen. He also falls down, but I don't want to give too many of the surprises away."

Looking for a refreshing change from millennial madness? Step back a hundred years for Professor Clark's magic lantern show at the Oyster Bay Historical Society's annual meeting at 8 p.m. on June 11.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY WORKS ON NEW EXHIBIT

Society Director Tom Kuehhas, Curator Richard Kappeler, and volunteer Maureen Monck are working diligently on the preparations for the new summer exhibit at the Earle-Wightman House. Kuehhas explained, "The past two years we've concentrated on tools (1997's Reichman Tool Exhibit) and tradesmen (1998's Shipbuilding exhibit) in our exhibitions. I thought that the time was right for something a little more upscale that would appeal to a new set of potential visitors."

The basis of the exhibit was provided by a recent donation of a large set of eighteenth century plates done as a commemorative set after Hogarth's death which were collected by a couple over the course of many years. The wife, Margaret Rasmussen was moving to Arizona and wanted to leave them to an institution that would put them to good use. Said Kuehhas, "I knew we could use them for study in our research library and that an exhibit would eventually come out of it. Fortunately, in addition to Curator Kappeler, a new volunteer, Maureen Monck, stepped forward to assist with the project."

Dr. Monck (she's a psychologist) lined up a Hogarth scholar, Dr. Elinor Richter, to speak at the exhibit's opening on Sunday, August 8th. At this time it appears that the lecture will take place at the Doubleday-Babcock Senior Center on East Main St., to be followed with an opportunity to view the exhibit at the Earle-Wightman House and then out to the garden for refreshments. Stay tuned for further announcements!

One of the plates to be exhibited in the new summer exhibit at the Earle- Wightman House. This particular plate is one of eight which comprise Hogarth's famous "Rake's Progress."

SOCIETY PLANS SPECIAL REVOLUTIONARY WAR ENCAMPMENT

In commemoration of the 220th anniversary of the end of the occupation of Oyster Bay by the Queens Rangers Regiment during the Revolutionary War, the Society will be hosting a special encampment on Sunday, July 11, which will feature a reenactment group of Queens Rangers, as well as other local reenactment groups.

Join us at the Society's headquarters, the Earle-Wightman House on Summit Street, for an afternoon of 18th century martial music, drills, camp life, and musketry demonstrations. See authentically dressed soldiers and civilians explain the role of the soldier during the Revolution.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOSTS VISIT TO BOTANICAL GARDEN

On May 14th, a gorgeous spring morning, a group of Oyster Bay Historical Society members visited the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx. None of us realized how spectacular this tour would be. From the moment our guide greeted us at the entrance, we were treated like VIPs. We toured the two and one half acre Rock Garden, saw thousands of plants from all over the world, as well as a meadow with picturesque waterfall. Following an exclusive box lunch held in an elegant white tent we toured the new Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. Recently rebuilt at a cost of millions of dollars, it is probably the most beautiful conservatory in the world.

Must-sees for those interested in visiting on their own are the Forest (forty acres), the Children's Garden, the Herb Garden, and of course the Enid Haupt Conservatory. If there is a tour you would like the Historical

Visit the Oyster Bay Historical Society's website! http://members.aol.com/OBHistory

NY Botanical Garden's Waterfall

Society to consider, please let us know!

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Amityville Historical Society is currently celebrating its 30th birthday. Following several meetings of the Amityville Activities Council, the Historical Society were formally organized on June 4th, 1969. A meeting of approximately thirty people at the Village Hall helped get things underway three decades ago. This year's Amityville Heritage Fair on June 5th helped celebrate our anniversary. Recently the Society received a grant of $1,000 from the Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation. This was made possible through the sponsorship of David Bishop, County Legislator for District 14. As a result of the grant, the Society now has a combination TV and VCR, plus a camcorder, tripod and supply of tapes. This equipment will enable the Society to develop historical programs for visitors and the public at large.

Visit the Society's Lauder Museum. Hours are Tuesday, Friday and Sunday, 2 to 4 P.M. For more information, call (516) 598-1486.

CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society plans to participate in celebrating the 30th anniversary of the first landing on the Moon this coming July. To commemorate the event, they will join with the Bethpage Public Library in preparing events and exhibits -- including a display of Grumman lunar memorabilia in the glass case in the History Room of the Library. In early June, Arthur F. Sniffen, an expert in genealogical research, presented a program at the library on how and why to collect information for a written and oral family history (plus photographs).

FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Another Society that recently celebrated its birthday, the Founders' Day Dinner on April 14th marked the 35th anniversary of this historical organization on April 12th, 1964. Edward J. Smits, Nassau County Historian, presented an overview of the County's history in this centennial year in his after-dinner message. A community observance of the centennial of Charles M. ("Mile-A-Minute") Murphy's famous 60 mile per hour bicycle ride behind a locomotive is scheduled for 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 26th at the Farmingdale Railroad Station. The U.S. Postal Service will issue a commemorative cancellation for the event.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS

In April and May, the European American Bank (EAB) allowed the Society to set up an interesting exhibit for the Massapequa community that focused

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Categories of Membership

Individual	$ 20	Business	$ 50
Family	$ 30	Business Sponsor	$ 100
Contributing	$ 50	Business Friend	$ 300
Sponsor	$ 100	Business Patron	$ 500+
Sustaining	$ 250	Benefactor	$ 1000+
Patron	$ 500		

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

OUR WARMEST WELCOME TO THESE NEW MEMBERS

Ms France Badia
Ms Adelaide L. Beatty
M/M Robert D. Becherer
Ms Robyn Bellospirito
Ms Eve Califano
Mr. Alan D. Carey
Mr. Leon R. Cheesbrough
Mrs. Susan W. Crosby
Mr. Bill Davis
The Delaney Family
Francis P. DeVine Funeral Home
Ms Frances Ferriss
Ms Judith Field
Ms Angela J. Fountas
Mrs. Carole Freysz-Guttierrez
Mrs. Carol Giannattasio
M/M Roy Glaser
M/M Peter Golon
M/M Gordon Graham
Mr. Brian Greaney
M/M Henry Hettinger
Frank & Ann Marie Holdgruen
Mrs. Betty Hubbs-Taylor
Ms Kallie Jennings
M/M John Karabatos
Ms Victoria Kalemaris
Mr. Raymond P. Kenny
Mr. George Kirchmann
Ms Linda L. Korka
Ms Justine A. Krug
Laurel Environmental Associates
Mrs. Joseph Lippert
M/M Shawn McKinley
Mrs. Edith Mead
Dr. Maureen F. Monck
M/M Henry J. Morgenthaler
Ms Constance M. Nelson
Ms Cheryl Oestreich
Oyster Babies
Ms Kate Reardon
Mr. Thomas Regan
St. Dominic Church
Sands-Hill Restoration
M/M Stuart Sheedy
Mrs. Richard Sherman
Mr. Robert Smith
M/M Donald F. Timmons
Harry Whaley & Son

Join the Oyster Bay Historical Society in honoring Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics Corp. for his efforts on the Society's behalf at our annual meeting, 8 p.m., June 11 at the Masonic Lodge, W. Main St., Oyster Bay. For details on this year's annual meeting see our Calendar of Events on the back page & the story on page 11.

on the 1920s. They are completing the grounds renovation at their headquarters and everything should be in good shape by the time of the Strawberry Festival on June 19th. They are also in the process of having a sign erected next to Merrick Road designating "The Historical Society of the Massapequas." It will be illuminated with ground lighting and be visible in both directions to pedestrians and motorists.

BAYVILLE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The museum is open Sunday and Tuesday from 1 to 3 p.m. For appointments call 628-1439. Closed holidays.

SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

As reported in the last issue of ***The Freeholder***, the museum opened a new exhibit on April 10th entitled: Open Spaces...Private Places - A Focus on the Parks and Gardens of Sea Cliff. Call 671-0090 for hours and more information.

ROCK HALL MUSEUM

This Town of Hempstead Museum in Lawrence opened a new exhibit in April entitled "Doctors, Disease, and Death: The Healing Arts in the 18th & 19th Centuries." The exhibit focuses on how the care of the sick evolved over the course of that two hundred year period. Numerous period artifacts and authentic reproductions are on exhibit from trepanning instruments used to bore holes in the skull, to knives, scalpels and glass cups for bleeding, as well as saws for amputation. The exhibit will run through November. Call 239-1157 for hours and more information.

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The March 24th meeting was a "Roadshow Night" at the Hempstead Public Library and Dick Kappeler, a trustee of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, led a team of experts who evaluated antiques and collectibles. Mr. Kappeler is employed as chief conservator for Nassau County Museums and is also a noted collector himself.

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

THE GATHERING PLACE

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

The Dutch Next Door:
How and Why
by Lee Myles

A reader wrote to ask what is the reason that the English absorbed so many improvements from the Dutch. Another wished to know how long has this business of the Dutch next door influencing first England and then her American colonies been going on. We have said before that when we speak of the "Dutch" the reader should understand Dutch, Flemish, Frisians, in fact all inhabitants of the Low Countries.

Over many centuries, whenever England recognized that in some department of commerce, industry, or learning she was inferior to her continental neighbors, she made overtures to Dutch citizens to bring their crafts, their skills, and their knowledge to the English realm.

Thomas Fuller said in his *Church History of Britain*, "Happy was the yeoman's house into which one of these Dutchmen did enter, bringing industry and wealth along with them. Such who came in strangers within their doors soon after went out bridegrooms and returned sons-in-law, having married the daughters of their landlords..." The landlord father-in-law, who was likely to acquire wealth and honors in the process himself, approved highly of his rapidly Anglicized son-in-law. The English artisan did not, for the Dutchman was a successful competitor. There was born a deep dislike of the Low Country invaders and the improvements they brought, a dislike that lasted for centuries. And of course the new immigrant fathered a family of true-born Englishmen who quickly picked up the prejudices of their contemporaries.

Each new invasion, and there were many - the Low Countries are just across the North Sea from England - brought wonderful improvements to the overall English economy but also injured many Englishmen who could not or would not accept new methods.

Dutchmen can be said to have brought the art of painting to England; they also brought new concepts in architecture. Music, engraving, printing and publishing, agriculture, fine metal work, horology, and many other pursuits were either introduced to Englishmen or improved by Dutch influence.

Those contemporaries who looked at the situation without prejudice believed that the Dutchman worked harder than other nationals, that he was thriftier, more enterprising, and far, far ahead of his English counterpart in skill.

The Englishmen who settled at Oyster Bay and at all other locations near New Netherland left us no testimonials to the value of Dutch influence. They must have responded to it however and they must have gained enormously by the example of such an ingenious and productive people.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Many of our words are composed of two or more elements, each of which is a word in itself. Sometimes these elements are fused, sometimes hyphenated, and sometimes separate but together. Those in common speech are easily understood, but those from our grandparents' time or before are often puzzling. Find out whether you can correctly define those that follow:

1. case knife
2. case-bottle
3. linen press
4. eyestone
5. quicksilver
6. shale oil
7. coal oil
8. sperm oil
9. cap sheaf
10. fountain pen

Answers will be found on p. 23

When "Old Grace" Was New

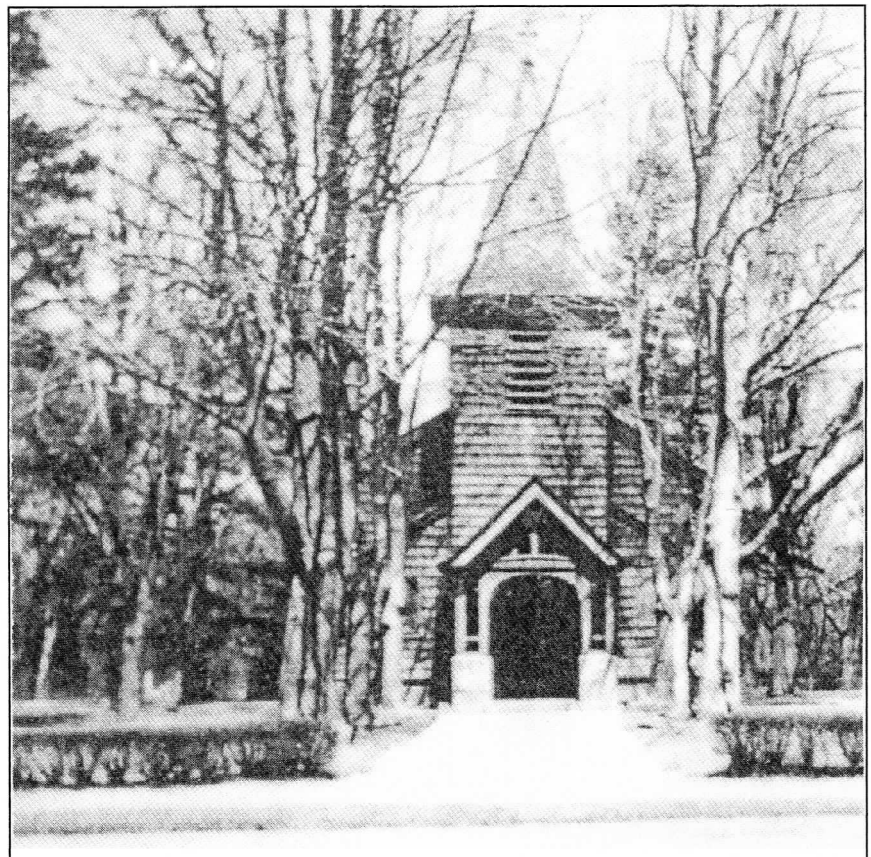
by George Kirchmann

Old Grace Church is the crown jewel of the Massapequa Historical Complex. It stands on Merrick Road, across from Cedar Shore Drive and is surrounded by a cemetery that contains the remains of the Jones family, who settled along the South Shore in 1696 and were prominent in the life of the area for more than two centuries. The church was founded in 1844, when Long Island was so different from today that it is almost impossible to conceive how people lived and worked at that time. Investigation of early Grace Church records provides remarkable insights into life in this area a century and a half ago.

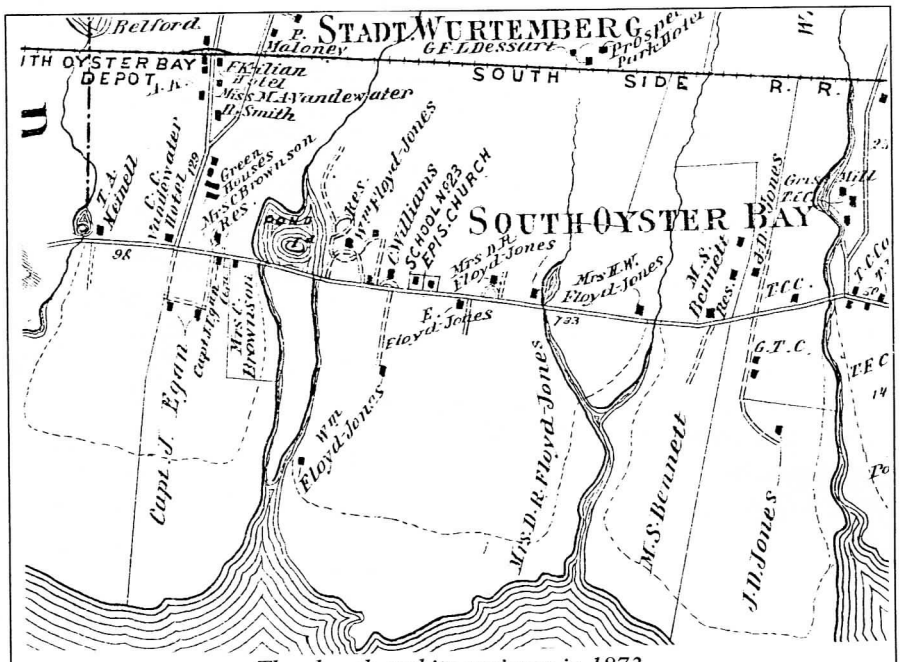
The idea for a church in what is now the Massapequas (and was then known as South Oyster Bay) came from Elbert Floyd-Jones. Upon returning from a service at St. George's Church in Hempstead, he asked his father, Thomas, if a church could be constructed nearby to avoid the long and tedious commute. That attitude gives us an insight into the transportation situation at the time. The Long Island Railroad main line was completed in 1845 and there was no branch to the South Shore until the 1850s , so travel was either by horseback or wagon. Roads were not paved and were especially inconvenient in inclement weather, which means the fifteen-mile trip to Hempstead probably took several hours. Church attendance became an all day affair, and was especially uncomfortable if the weather was bad.

Elbert Floyd-Jones's father agreed the idea of a local church was a good one and encouraged his son to take the necessary first steps. Elbert went to several fellow Episcopalians and secured pledges of money for construction and related expenses. He also visited nearby churches in Babylon and Islip, and requested support from churches in Hempstead, Jamaica, Brooklyn and New York City. His efforts resulted in a fund of $1300, which he used to pay for drawings, land clearing, materials and construction.

It need scarcely be mentioned that $1300 would not go very far today toward the building of a church. In 1844 it covered construction of a box-like structure made of wood, on a hard brick foundation, measuring twenty-four feet wide by thirty-six feet in length. In addition to the altar and seating section, there was a vestry room and a front porch. A wooden tower capped the structure. The property belonged to the Jones family, who had recently relocated the graves of their ancestors from land near the



A late 19th century view of Old Grace Church.



The church and its environs in 1873.

water to higher ground. The church was built in front of the Jones family plot.

While construction continued, Elbert called together other worshippers and formed an organizational structure to govern the church. Church leaders, meeting on August 12, 1844, resolved to name it Grace Church. Henry Floyd-Jones was named Chair and was directed to take legal steps to incorporate the church. Thomas Lawrence and Thomas Floyd-Jones were named Wardens and the following men were appointed Vestrymen: James Meinell, also designated Treasurer, Henry Hone, Henry Floyd-Jones, Treadwell Carman, Thomas Jones, Jacob Jones, Samuel Jones and Elbert Floyd-Jones. It is easy to see the church was the Jones family's church, and they dominated its life well into the 20th century.

The building was completed by the middle of 1845. It was formally consecrated in April 1847, but religious services were held soon after its completion. Sadly, the first recorded event was a funeral, of Eliza Kortright in July 1845. Ms. Kortright was 21 and was by no means the only young person to be buried from Old Grace. Six other members were buried in the next four years, including Thomas Floyd-Jones, Elbert's father. He was 63 and one of the older congregants. Others were 75 years, 28 years, 20 months and 3 months, so Grace Church records illustrate the idea that people died at a much younger age in those times.

Marriages were not held in the church during its first years, but were rather conducted in private houses. The first recorded marriage was in December 1849 and was one of only four held in church between 1846 and 1861. The other eleven recorded were conducted in private homes, a custom that reflects prevailing practices. It also hints at the wealth of church members, because the Jones family owned most of the surrounding land and doubtless associated with other wealthy landowners, who had the space and wealth to accommodate weddings and receptions in their homes.

There were ten baptisms between 1846 and 1849 and two confirmations. These latter were held in New York City, because of the difficulty in securing the services of Bishop DeLancey to such a distant place as Old Grace Church in South Oyster Bay.

Finances were much simpler in the 1840s. The following collections were recorded in the *Parochial Record of Grace Church:*

$2.62 1/2 on Sept. 20, 1845
$5.16 July 1846
$3.25 August 13, 1846
$2.50 July 1847
$2.16 for Christmas 1847

One may wonder how these amounts could sustain a church, but it is worth noting the first pastor, Reverend William Curtis, received $300 salary when called in 1846. The church's finances may have factored into the reduction of his salary to $175 in 1847. It's little wonder that he resigned in 1849!

Transportation, life spans and expenses were very different 150 years ago, and Old Grace Church records spell out those differences for Massapequans. They also show the church as a

symbol of stability, serving as focal point for worship, baptisms, funerals, and occasionally, marriages. It stands today as a reminder of how significantly some things have changed, while others have remained the same.

The author wishes to thank the Rev. Robert Hutchings, former Interim Pastor of Grace Church and Office Administrator Cheryl McDermott for graciously allowing access to the church records.

High School Archives and Oyster Bay Guardian Yield Information on World War II Casualty

by Rick Robinson

In late April of this year, the Oyster Bay Historical Society received a request from Mrs. Florence M. Ross of Acton, Massachusetts, for assistance in gathering biographical information on the late Wallace S. Schwartz, a 1942 graduate of Oyster Bay High School. During an earlier visit to the high school's Alumni Gallery, which provides composite class pictures from 1935 to 1961, Mrs. Ross located the senior photo of her old school friend, Wally Schwartz.

Wallace S. Schwartz

Following his graduation from OBHS in June, 1942, Schwartz enlisted in the Radio Section of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. His unit was eventually sent to the European Theater and Schwartz was killed in action on French soil in September 1944. As Mrs. Ross writes: "Last year I visited his grave in the Lorraine American Cemetery, St. Avold, France. The cross on his grave states September 8, 1944 (no religious affiliation is indicated on any papers) 90th Division, 90th Recon. Troop.. They have assigned this date, as other papers indicated estimated date of death to be Sept. 12 or 13 in Metz, France."

She continues: "That was probably the Market Garden battle, one of the severest battles of the war and more so, because our troops were short of ammunition and gasoline to run their tanks and to bring supplies to the front. The 90th Division landed at Utah Beach on June 10, 1944 and were in combat for 308 days and suffered 18,460 battle casualties -- greater than those of any other division."

All requests to examine alumni files at Oyster Bay High School must be submitted in writing to Dr. George Chesterton, Superintendent of Schools, and if approved, the search must be conducted by someone authorized by Dr. Chesterton.

The file for Wally Schwartz revealed that he had attended only the 12th grade at OBHS and his homeroom teacher (as recorded on the front of his report card) was Miss Robinson, who later became Mrs. Lillian Wanser and taught several generations of local students. Although Wally's "habits and attitude" ratings on his senior-year report card were all A's, his academic record was fairly ordinary, until the final marking period for 1943-44 when he earned four B's and a C. His health record indicates, "Has been wearing glasses for 8 years." Also, sadly, at some later date his student census card was marked "deceased." As was the custom in those days, a small copy of Wally's senior yearbook photo was attached to his student file.

An obituary appeared on the front page of the *Oyster Bay Guardian* on September 22, 1944: "Wallace Schwartz, who made his home with his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Chester E. Sidway, was reported as being killed in action in France. The notice came to the Sidway's on Thursday morning.

"Schwartz, who was a graduate of Oyster Bay High School, was 21 years old. Following his graduation in June, 1942, he enlisted in the Radio Section of the Signal Corps. He is the son of Mrs. Dorothy Schwartz of Scarsdale, sister of Chester and Kenneth Sidway of the Sidway Lumber Company.

"It was the wish of the young man that if anything happen to him, Chester Sidway should be notified. It was therefore

necessary for Mrs. Chester Sidway and Mrs. Kenneth Sidway to leave immediately for Scarsdale to inform the mother of her son's death."

Needless to say, the *Guardian* carried obituaries during World War II for high school alumni and residents of Oyster Bay who made the supreme sacrifice.

In her recent computer e-mail correspondence with the Oyster Bay Historical Society, Florence Ross adds: "Since my visit to Wally's grave and hereafter, I will be sending flowers to his grave site for Memorial Day, the anniversary of his death, and at Christmas. This is all handled through the American Battle Commission and the American Embassy."

She closes: "I guess I've always wanted to find out more about Wally's life, and, most importantly, why did his mother not have him buried here?" And finally: "My sister and I often speculate what our lives would have been like if Wally had returned."

Long Island's Loyalists

continued from p. 5

Some local Loyalists found themselves pursued not by the government, but by their former friends and neighbors. John Luister of Oyster Bay brought suit against a neighbor, Squire Van Wyck, for assisting the British in the theft of his horse and wagon some years before. Another Oyster Bay man, Robert Townsend, pursued Loyalists in court as well. He sued his former business partner, Francis Bryce, for non-payment of debts. Bryce fled New York for North Carolina, another state with a sizable population of Loyalists, and finally the West Indies, joining the world-wide diaspora of displaced New York Loyalists. Francis Bryce disappears from history at this point, but another refugee brings this sad tale of Long Island's Loyalists to a close. In his new home in New Brunswick, Filer Diblee rose from the table where his family was having tea. "Seemingly much composed," he quietly took a razor, lay down on the bed, and cut his throat. In a way, Filer Diblee was the last casualty of the American Revolution.

By 1790 the Disenfranchisement Act had been repealed, and with it went the last legal stigma attached to former Loyalists. What remained, however, was a far more lasting and dramatic punishment: the Loyalists were made to disappear. What force of arms and the fortunes of war could not erase, textbooks and historians have accomplished. Every Long Islander has heard of Nathan Hale, but how many know Filer Diblee? We remember and commemorate the lives and deeds of Long Island's rebels, yet we pointedly ignore the ninety percent of the population who remained loyal to King and Country. Long Island's Loyalist majority fought and died for a cause they believed in-- they fought for their homeland, and they fought for the government of their choice. Their only crime was failing to choose the winning side.

Historian William Nelson in his book *The American Tory,* perfectly summed up the tragic fate of Long Island's Loyalists. "The Loyalists in the American Revolution suffered a most abject kind of political failure, losing not only their argument, their war, and their place in American society, but even their proper place in history." They, like the bottom half of Plymouth Rock, refused to be moved from the place they felt was rightfully theirs. The Loyalists remained, submerged, hidden, and ignored, beneath the surface of America's history. Perhaps it is finally time that we set aside our differences and acknowledge these countless thousands of forgotten, misunderstood Americans.

1793 view of Queenston, Upper Canada; it was settled by the Queens Rangers, who recruited heavily on Long Island.

USS OYSTER BAY (AGP-6)

by Edward Magnani

General Douglas MacArthur's famous return to the Philippines was through the Bismarck Barrier formed by the large island of New Guinea on the south and the Solomons-New Britain- Admiralties complex on the north. Beyond this barrier lay the islands of Morotai and Peleliu which acted as stepping stones for his final assault on the Philippine Islands. His campaign began with the taking of Guadalcanal and the eviction of the Japanese from northeast New Guinea. MacArthur was then compelled to mark time while Allied strength was concentrated in the Mediterranean. It was not until February 1944 that the Bismarck Barrier was finally breached when cavalry (dismounted) assaulted the Admiralties and bypassed the Japanese stronghold on Rabaul. In early 1944 MacArthur was poised to take the final steps toward his objective. In this effort, he would be aided by daring squadrons of PT boats and their mother ships. The first of this class of mother ships was the *USS Oyster Bay.* According to the *Dictionary of Naval Fighting Ships* she was named after "Oyster Bay --- An inlet on the northern side of Long Island, N.Y."

USS Oyster Bay

Type: Motor Torpedo Boat Tender
Displacement: 2,400 tons (full)
Length: 311 feet
Beam: 41 feet
Draft: 14 feet
Speed: 18 knots (max);
13.5 knots (econ)
Armament: 4 - 5 inch
Complement: 215 men (as AV-28)
Commissioned: Nov. 17, 1943
Battle Stars: 5

The *USS Oyster Bay* was laid down in the Lake Washington Shipyard in Houghton, Washington as a seaplane tender (AVP28) of the *Barnegat* class. Sponsored by Mrs. William K. Harrill, the ship was launched on September 7, 1942. Reclassified as a Motor Torpedo Boat Tender (Oyster Bay Class) in May of 1943, the *USS Oyster Bay* was commissioned on November 17, 1943 with Lt. Commander W. W. Holroyd, USNR, in command.

After a shakedown at San Diego, the *Oyster Bay* steamed to Brisbane, Australia en route to Milne Bay, New Guinea for tender operations. In March 1944, she got underway escorting 15 PT boats to Seeadler Harbor, in the Admiralty Islands. On March 14, she bombarded the enemy shore installations on Pityilu Island for the Army. On the 20th she left for New Guinea, evacuating 42 wounded soldiers. After returning to Seeadler Harbor on the 31st, she bombarded Ndrilo Island to the east, preparatory to the landing by Army ground forces.

After action in New Guinea at Aitape in April, Hollandia in May and Wadke Island in June, the ship reported to Brisbane for availability in July. While there, an R.A.F. plane accidentally struck the top of the ship's mast but hasty repairs permitted the *Oyster Bay* to depart. The tender then steamed on to

Lt. Commander Edgar D. Holland of PT Squadron 8 arrived on March 8 on Malamaui Island 12 miles south of Zamboanga, the principal town of southwestern Mindanao. He relates:

"We had planned to put a PT base ashore seven miles east of the Army landing at Zamboanga ... Lt. Robert Williamson and I were chatting and leaning over the rail of the *Oyster Bay.* There were about 40 SeaBees ashore preparing to build the base. Four PT boats were nested on each side of the tender.

Suddenly the entire area was taken under fire by 75 mm guns and heavy mortars... We each took a boat and headed ashore to rescue the SeaBees...The entire rescue did not take more than 10 minutes... I still wonder how a senior planner of my beloved Navy could have approved putting ashore an undefended PT base..., while the enemy still held the territory."

Naval History, *"PT Boats Raid Bongao Island",* Lt. Cmdr. Edgar D. Hoagland, USNR, US Naval Institute, Annapolis, MD

Philippines campaign. With the beaches under assault in October, *Oyster Bay* set out for Leyte Gulf where enemy planes let loose but U.S. Navy planes and antiaircraft fire took a heavy toll.

In November, the *Oyster Bay* went to general quarters 221 times. After arriving at the San Juanico Straits, between the islands of Leyte and Samar, the ship, while taking on gas, was attacked by two Kate[1] torpedo bombers which were driven off by heavy AA fire. Later that month, two Zeke fighters dove on the ship, but intense anti-aircraft fire splashed both.

In January 1945, *Oyster Bay* returned to Hollandia but soon steamed back to the Phillipines in February for tender operations in the Leyte Gulf. Departing for the invasion of Zamboanga (see inset) in March she arrived two days before D-day and remained with the bombardment group until the landings. *Oyster Bay* next rendezvoused with PT boats in Mindoro on April 24 and supported them during night raids against the Japanese positions in Davao Gulf. In May, *Oyster Bay* reported back to Leyte Gulf, and then to Samar. She departed in May for Tawi Tawi, off Borneo, where she continued tender operations until she returned on August 6 to Guinan Harbor on Samar.

The ship turned for home on November 10, 1945 and steamed to San Francisco Bay. Decommissioned on March 26, 1946, the ship was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on April 12, 1946 and then transferred to the Maritime Commission. The ship was rereactivated by the Navy on January 3, 1949 and re-designated AVP-28, on March 16,1949. She remained in the Pacific Reserve Fleet until 1957 when she was transferred to the Government of Italy on October 23, 1957 as Pietro Cauezzale (A-530 1). The *USS Oyster Bay* received 5 battle stars for World War II service.

1 Code names were used by US forces to quickly identify Japanese aircraft. Usually a female name was used for bombers, and a male name for fighters. The Kate was the Nakajima B5N1 torpedo bomber so deadly at Pearl Harbor and the Zeke was the famous Mitsubsihi A6M5 fighter also known as the "Zero."

"Old Paint"

continued from p. 9

fisherman who did the same thing to his boat, in Three-Mile Harbor (which is a lot longer trip to the dock than the canal.) He ruined his boat, and only by running full speed could he make it to the dock, where she quickly sank. Sawed right through the planking. Watch out for skim ice if you row in the early winter!

I graduated up to sailing; purchased the "Raven" for $1 (she had been smashed up in a storm) and spent one spring fixing her up. "Old Paint" was back where she had been when we bought her, stuck away in a weedy corner of the yard. After a couple of years of non-use, the boat got wore out. The bottom planking dried out and opened up, from not being in the water. So I gave her a farewell voyage. Spring tide came by, the traditional time for a goodbye ceremony.

I rowed her out into the bay, up along the meadows, and hauled her out. The last trip.

I dwell at some length on this boat, because any fisherman who has used a boat to fish with, a boat which has been his partner, develops a great affection for it. The boat takes on a profound meaning to him. Owners of boats (probably wooden boats more than fiberglass) get the same attachment, whether it be a sailboat or a power boat.

There is great enjoyment in learning a productive craft, a physical craft, such as rowing. The skills of hands, arms, muscles, oars, stay with you. And then, the skills of learning how to "reap the harvests" of the ocean or bay, are also enjoyable. These are free gifts, and the fisherman of an earlier day, although he wasn't particularly religious in the church-going sense, realized that his catches were not purchased, but had been given to him. All he needed was knowledge, most of it traditional or hard-won, and the willingness to work, and he could enjoy his life. He would share some of his catch with others, particularly older people. And there are some young fishermen that will do this, even today.

Fifty years ago, licenses were unheard of. Today, an ordinary bayman, who usually must shift catching from one type of sea-

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Blocklyn's Books

Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

***The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology In Colonial New York And Massachusetts.* By Janice Potter. Harvard University Press, 1983. 238 pp. Notes and index. $36.50.**

What makes American Loyalists so annoying? The average Loyalists certainly draw our sympathy as victims of abuses ranging from demeaning harassment to brutal terrorism. But the Loyalist ideologues, the subjects of Janice Potter's book, are entirely another story.

Potter's thesis, opening as a specific comparison between Loyalist thinking in New York and Massachusetts, quickly develops into a general apologia of the Loyalist alternative. It's a clear alternative. Americans loyal to the Crown saw British rule not as a threat to liberty but as a check on liberty itself, without which America would degenerate into an assorted cabal of licentious, money-grubbing, self-interested factions. "The Americans love liberty; 'tis their grand, their darling object," wrote Westchester Loyalist Isaac Wilkins. "But that love of liberty, if not carefully watched and attended to, will prove a dreadful source of misfortunes to us, if not of ruin."

So why are Loyalists annoying? It's probably because they are still among us. Wilkins' issue was hardly settled by the American Revolution. Whether government's primary function is to keep us free from our own worst instincts or to set us free to act on our better natures is an issue still, and one we aren't likely to hash out any time soon. It all depends on the particular liberty we seek. In fact, one might ask, if inclined (I'm not): What makes the American Patriots so annoying?

[*See Andrew Batten's article on p.3 of this issue. Ed.*]

***Along The Great South Bay: From Oakdale To Babylon, The Story Of A Summer Spa, 1840-1940.* By Harry W. Havemeyer. Amereon House, 1996. 493 pp. B&W photography. Notes, bibliography, and index. $29.95.**

Horace Havemeyer called the Great South Bay "the most favored spot in the world," and for a moment in New York's Gilded Age, the South Shore summer resorts ranked on a par with Saratoga and the Adirondack Great Camps. The list of those who built their great country houses along this shore--Vanderbilt, Cutting, Lorillard, Havemeyer, Hyde--reads like a roster of New York's social and business elite.

The charm of Harry Havemeyer's social history lies not in these great personages but in their engaging eccentricities. Henry Havemeyer, who didn't need the money, developed a business of gathering iron by magnet from the sands of Quogue Beach (it didn't work). George Campbell Taylor commissioned a 92-foot houseboat with *25* staterooms, dining hall, drawing room, smoking room, and galley. Taylor, however, was a determined recluse who would see and speak with no one, including, after a time, his own family.

Some peculiarities were less pleasing. Austin Corbin of the Long Island Railroad, who did much to develop the South Shore resort community, was quite clear on his hotel's policies: "We do not like Jews as a class. There are some well behaved people among them, but as a rule they make themselves offensive...and we should be better off without than with their custom."

The endpaper map reproductions are helpful but difficult to read. A Beers Atlas or the like will prove a handy reference to the reader.

Austin Corbin

AUNT EEEK

Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eeek,

I have a lot of old brass around the house that needs cleaning. Every time I polish it seems to get worse in no time and the residue of my polish gets into small cracks and crevices and turns white. Have you got a solution to my problem? I'm getting tired of scrubbing and polishing!

Amelia
Great Neck N.Y.

Dear Amelia,

Assuming always that we are talking about brass and not some other compound of copper (like bronze), your dilemma is an age-old one that has always caused problems.

Brass almost always wants to be polished. It is a metal which is used to accentuate with its brightness. The real trouble comes when someone tries to polish ornamentation which has a patination, like bronze. In the case of bronze the "discoloration" is an oxidation which is meant to be admired, and actually forms a protective barrier against certain airborne contaminants. The greenish brown patina of a bronze statue is part of its beauty and should almost never be disturbed. Certain artists actually use chemical treatments to create a "Faux Patina," or false finish to emulate the beauty of time.

Back to your brass: your doorknobs and switch plates and fireplace accessories look just marvelous when they sparkle, the problem being, as you described, the rapid oxidization post polish. Unhappily you have limited options. You may clean the brass with ammonia, soaking the object in a mildly diluted mix of water and ammonia for a short time, scrubbing the cracks and crevices with a stiff fiber brush. Rinse thoroughly with warm water, and then polish away with one of the available compounds such as Brasso, Noxon or (most recently on the market) Flitz, which contain cleaning agents such as ammonia and a mild abrasive compound such as Tripoli (which leaves the residue you mentioned). Or you might try one of the non-abrasive cleaners such as Miracle Wad, which comes on a saturated cotton wad in a tightly sealed can. After polishing you may seal the surface temporarily with a good grade of clear wax such as Johnson's Floor Wax. This wax will help to retard the browning effect of exposure to the elements (which begin immediately), for a short period.

The best solution to your problems would be a trip to a professional polisher who will power buff the objects to their brightest luster and then seal them with a specially compounded lacquer sealer so that you may never (or almost never), have to polish again.

One word of caution about sealers. They do slightly discolor the surface and they do break down more quickly with exposure to heat, light and extreme elements in the air such as salts.

We have received many inquiries on the topic of polishing brass, thus the somewhat lengthy answer. In all, if you have any questions about polishing an object, do bring it to an expert to be assured that you are not destroying an important part of the beauty of the thing. Some one at the Oyster Bay Historical Society will help you. Good Luck!

Old Paint

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food to another, can wind up needing to buy eight, or more, different licenses. Bureacracy has gaffed him.

But back to "Old Paint!" Maybe I'll get to build a copy of her. I believe I could lay out the lines (or better yet, build her "by eye," as the old-timers did). After having written this, I feel the need to go rowing.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

1. A case knife is one carried on the person in a sheath or scabbard.
2. A case bottle is one intended to be carried or kept with others in a wooden case. Such bottles are often square in section and fitted to the partitions of the case.
3. A linen press is an interesting combination of a piece of furniture and a machine. It is designed to keep stored, pressed linen flat and smooth until ready for use. The folded linen is placed between the bed plate or lower platen and the upper platen which is controlled by a large wooden screw and is screwed down tightly on the linen pile to keep it wrinkle free.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

JUNE
Fri., June 11, 8 p.m.
Annual Meeting
All are welcome to attend the Society's annual meeting, which will take place at the Masonic Lodge on West Main Street. Our evening's entertainment will be provided by Prof. Henry Clark, who will present a turn-of-the-century "magic lantern" show. For those who have yet to experience one of Prof. Clark's dazzling epics, don't miss this chance! Of course if the speaker doesn't grab you, there is always the lure of free refreshments and the opportunity to catch up with fellow Society members! [*See story on p. 11.*]

JULY
Sun., July 11, 1-4 p.m.
Revolutionary War Encampment
Enlist at the Society's headquarters, the Earle-Wightman House on Summit Street for an afternoon of 18th century martial music, drills, camp life, and musketry demonstrations. See authentically dressed soldiers and civilians explain the role of the soldier during the Revolution. [*See story on p. 12.*]

AUGUST
Sun., Aug. 8, 4 p.m.
Exhibit Opening/Lecture
Join us for an informative lecture by Hunter College Professor Elinor M. Richter, PhD, for the opening of the summer exhibit on William Hogarth. The lecture will take place at the Doubleday-Babcock Center on E. Main St, followed by a chance to view the exhibit and refreshments in our garden. [*See story on p. 11.*]
Tues., Aug. 10, 6-8 p.m.
Neighborhood Night
Bring the family and a picnic dinner to our garden for an open house with entertainment, tours & period games.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge

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4. An eyestone is a tiny and very smooth and clean stone which, put into the eye at its corner, will work its way to the opposite corner, taking with it any painful invader, such as a cinder. Don't try it!

5. In this compound, "quick" means "lifelike" and "silver" means "resembling silver," the precious metal which quicksilver is not. Quicksilver is mercury. The ancients may have believed when they named it that it was alive and a form of real silver. Our term, which also appears in several European languages, comes from the Latin *argentum vivum.*

6. Shale oil is the oil product of destructive ditillation of bituminous shale, a rock found overlying a coal bed. Napth is procured by the same process and from the same source.

7. Coal oil nowadays is more frequently called kerosine.

8. Sperm oil is obtained from the blubber of the sperm whale. Certain Long Island towns were deeply concerned in the sperm whale fishery. The oil was used for lighting and other purposes.

9. The capsheaf was the top sheaf of a shock or pile of sheaves of grain.

10. No need for an answer here. Everybody knows what a fountain pen is!

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