



# THE FREEHOLDER

SPRING 2002 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

☞ A  
DEATH  
MARCH  
SURVIVOR

☞ A  
SCOFFLAW'S  
WORST  
NIGHTMARE

☞ GEORGE W.:  
THE MAN  
BEHIND THE  
MYTH

☞ GET  
INVOLVED IN  
SOCIETY'S  
FALL PROJECT



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY



## Editorial

This Spring marks several milestones: ten years as the Society's Director and six years of publishing *The Freeholder*, among others. Sadly, it also marks the end of Woody Ryder's term as President.

I owe a great deal to Woody. He was ready with a word of encouragement when one was feeling overwhelmed, or sage advice if needed. Many times

he was able to provide a fresh point of view, or to place things in their proper perspective. How he was able to juggle the demands of family, an exacting job requiring frequent travel, and active involvement in a number of organizations is beyond my ken. But to me, Woody was the perfect nonprofit president: always there when one needed him, never when one didn't!

Thanks Woody!

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### THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

I read the article about the Conestoga wagon [Summer 1997], and if he is still alive, correct the author about this: He said the German settlers were Pennsylvania Dutch. Wrong, wrong, wrong. The Dutch come from Holland, the Germans come from Deutschland [sic]. In English they are called Pennsylvania Germans. The term Pennsylvania Deutch (not Dutch) is a mixture of two languages. It is wrong to say the Germans were Pennsyl-

vania Dutch. How can a German come from Holland? We, here in eastern Pennsylvania, who are descendants of the original German settlers, don't like reading (far too often) that our ancestors were Dutch. They were Deutch [sic].

Larry Beyer

[Ed. note: I forwarded Mr. Beyer's email to Lee Myles, author of the original article, which now appears on the Society's website. What follows is his response.]

I have been wrong about a lot of things in a long lifetime but I was not "wrong, wrong, wrong" in my references to "Dutch" in the Conestoga article. I referred to "German immigrants, called Pennsylvania Dutchmen" which they were and are called. I also made mention

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

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### ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

Arnold A. Bocksel, author and former POW, holds a Japanese sword surrendered to him at war's end. As Ken Gambone states in his article, "Bocksel doesn't write history; he IS history." Please see the story on p. 3 and the Events Calendar on p. 24 for more on Mr. Bocksel.

Photo by Kenneth Gambone

of H.L. Fisher, a Pennsylvanian of German ancestry who, in his poem "Wagoning," spoke of the "plain red (Pennsylvania) Dutch beds" that were driven by the "Militia Men" who were often farmers of German ancestry. I inserted the parentheses to make clear who was being talked about. Thereafter, however, I used the words, Dutchman or Dutch, to indicate the Netherlands, the Dutchmen with whom the "Dutch Next Door" feature is concerned.

I did not again refer to the Pennsylvania Germans until the penultimate paragraph of the article when I called them exactly that.

continued on p. 21



## ARNOLD BOCKSEL, SURVIVOR, BATAAN DEATH MARCH; MEETING THE MAN, READING HIS BOOK

by Kenneth Gambone

### Note 1 - The Greeting

The house had an American flag hanging near the garage. On the front steps it is flanked by an American folk art figure of Uncle Sam. Arnold Bocksel loves antiquities and folk art, sometime making a piece of folk art for his children or his grandchildren. His greeting was warm and gracious, wrapped in the firmness of his handshake. It said, "Welcome." And he meant it. For the next few hours his words were filled with compassion and benevolence. He is an obliging host. He looked back fifty seven years to his release as a prisoner of war, and he never made a complaint. He could have. The Japanese treatment of POW's was anything but cordial in their prison camps. In Bocksel's presence there is a feeling of love and forgiveness. He loves his fellow man. He loves his country. His smile says so. He shifted about in his living room chair and then invited my wife, Joan, and me to follow him to his trophy room on another level.

### Note 2 - Storing Memories, Bocksel's Trophy Room

Old newspapers were tacked to the door. Some announcements were also hanging there. But one wall held his medals (perhaps fifteen or so), certificates, acknowledgments and various handwritten responses from people like Tom Brokaw, NBC News. He bent down to pick up some books on the POW experience: *Blood Brothers* by Colonel Eugene C. Jacobs, *Reprieve From Hell* by Samuel B. Moody, and *Memoirs of a Barbed Wire Surgeon* by Elmer Shabart, M.D., all inscribed to "Boxie" or Arnold A.

Bocksel. "I've always been a voracious reader and one time I might have gone to journalism school. Try these books. They might help you." He sat at his desk, got up in a few minutes, his hand and mind searching for something. His hands touched a loose leaf notebook, his personal scrap book. He wanted to share it, making my visit more complete. It held pictures of Bocksel as a speaker, along with letters from senators and dignitaries, a personal letter here and there, especially one from a Mrs. Gail Seich of East Meadow, who wrote to him October 9, 2000.

I want to personally thank you for the sacrifice you paid for my freedom. Your experi-

ence is an example that I will refer to often when I feel my life is too difficult. Thank you for choosing to write your book, *Rice, Men and Barbed Wire*, to share with your most painful moments. You emerged victorious... not abandoning love for hate. I am proud to have met you! With much respect and gratitude.

GS

Then he found another letter, fingering it gently, the one he was searching for, the one he had written to his mother on September 1, 1945, following his liberation as a Japanese POW at Mukden. He put it in my hands. "Read it. Take it with you. You can bring



Arnold Bocksel holds a piece of his own folk art.  
Kenneth Gambone photo.





*Mr. Bocksel poses in front of the wall holding his medals , certificates, and acknowledgments. (Kenneth Gambone photo)*

it back later." It was a moment of trust. He was helping me just as he had helped his comrades in their diseased moments of captivity.

#### Note 3 - Bocksel's Letter to His Mother, September 1, 1945

... The incapacitated were carried aboard. Everyone was weeping ... nurses, sailors, and prisoners; I should say ex-prisoners. Everyone was embraced as we boarded the vessel ... The nurse who embraced me was weeping as she held me. It was a beautiful moment, also a devastating, emotional return to our country. I said to the nurse, may I hold your hand she replied by holding

me tightly, crying softly as she held me, saying, "My God, what did they do to all of you." Tears just cascaded down my cheeks. There was not a dry eye anywhere. I shall always remember and treasure the love extended to us this day. We were then fed ... steak, potatoes, peas, milk, ice-cream. I thought I had died and gone to heaven.

Mom, I learned that if you want to enjoy the benefits offered in our great country, then you must share the responsibilities. Freedom is not free but it is always worth fighting for. When you see our flag flying in the breeze you just know "It's a grand old flag." And always will be.

I love it and you too, Mom.  
As ever, Arnold

#### Note 4 - A Few Gentlemen

Bocksel respected a gentleman, that rare man in the crowd who would show some kindness through all of the misery and brutality. He found a few.

Lt. Hegecata was a well educated Japanese officer who spoke English. "I will never forget him," said Bocksel. Hegecata was kind, indulgent and mild. Almost sixty years later, Bocksel was kind, indulgent and mild, and tender too. "Come with me," he said and we returned to his trophy room where a sword was mounted on a piece of wood. It belonged to Hegecata. "Some-day," he remarked, "if I can ever find him, I will return his sword." Bocksel's lips moved a little. He looked out the window.

A Japanese soldier named Kawishima was another gentleman Bocksel respected. It was Kawishima who urged Bocksel to keep getting up as he was brutally beaten by Colonel Matsuda, The Bull. He did so until he could rise no more, his face bleeding, teeth dislodged from his jaw, his back and stomach shot through with the pain of being kicked and struck again and again with Matsuda's scabbard - with the sword in it. Kawishima's advice kept him alive.

Bocksel watched an unknown Japanese soldier cradling the dying body of a prisoner. He watched as the soldier made the sign of the cross. The soldier's name is unknown. His act of kindness is carried in Bocksel's heart. The soldier was indeed the Good Samaritan. So was Bocksel, simple in spirit and pure



goodness, a gentleman ready to die for his country.

#### Note 5 - Some Real Heroes, Doctors and Nurses

The doctors practiced their profession every day for three and one half years. They fixed broken bones, shared drugs they might have been saving, washed and cleaned the sick, treated disease. Their healing hands were blessings.

Nurses like Ann Bernatitus, Jean Kennedy, Gwen Henshaw and Lucy Wilson served. Sixty eight were captured by the Japanese and imprisoned for three years. General Wainwright called them "Angels of Bataan." Bocksel knew Lucy Wilson Jopling. She is buried in Fort Houston National Cemetery and in 1945 was awarded the Air Medal, Presidential Citation, American Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign with 7 stars, WWII Victory Medal, Philippine Defense Ribbon with Bronze Star, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 2 stars, Philippine Independence Ribbon and Bronze Star.

She escaped Bataan by submarine and later flew out patients from almost every island: New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Biak, New Guinea, Leyte, Luzon and helped fly out the POW's, the highlight of her life. She married Daniel Jopling, a POW with Bocksel, on December 5, 1945.

#### Note 6 - A Crying Time

Newsday carried him on its front page a few years ago and he commented that, "It has been more than fifty years and I still cry." The POW's cried after their

liberation. The doctors cried when a soldier died in their weary arms; nurses and sailors cried when gaunt, weakened men boarded the ship for home. Bocksel cried in his letter to his mother. He cried again when he was embraced in his father's arms upon returning home. It was the first time he saw his father cry. Happiness brought tears and so did sorrow. Trial and distress inflict pain and the human being cries. Affliction and anguish, injustice and vexation make one mourn with sobs and weeping. The crying still lingers deep in his soul, although the bickering is over, squabbling past and it is time to, as Bocksel writes in his book, "Love one another." And he said the same thing today at our meeting. His small, black rimmed glasses moved a little as he clutched them and put them into place, and perhaps he came close to crying one more time in his life. An internal crying was present because there was in his voice and manner that soft, long look back. In those moments he must have seen his comrades, living and dead, once more as his words became whispers. His book made a difference to him, and that is all it had to do.

#### Note 7 - Today

Bocksel tries to rest today. He gets to talk to school children, veterans organizations, and all kinds of military groups. His feelings are best described in his own words from a speech he delivered to the Nassau/Suffolk Chapter of American Ex-POW, September 10, 1993, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Northport, NY:

When we hear the 'Star Span-

gled Banner,' we are reminded that our National Anthem, symbol of freedom and liberty, was written by a prisoner of war, Francis Scott Key, while imprisoned on a British battleship in the war of 1812 ... The POW experience is like having a serious wound that eventually heals but leaves a permanent ugly scar ... If there were any heroes among us, it is those who perished ... Those who gave up their tomorrows so we could have our todays.

#### Note 8 - Letter to Saint Peter by Elma Dean, p. 153, *Rice, Men and Barbed Wire*

Let them in, Peter, they are very tired.

Give them couches where the Angels sleep.

Let them wake whole again

In new dawns fired

With sun, not war. And may their peace be deep.

Remember where the broken bodies lie,

And give them things they like, let them make noise.

God knows how young they were to die!

Give swing bands, not gold harps, to these our boys.

Let them love, Peter, they have had no time.

Girls sweet as meadow winds with flowing hair.

They should have trees and bird songs, hills to climb,

The taste of summer in a ripened pear. Tell them

How they are missed. Say not to fear.

It's going to be alright

With us down here

*continued on p. 19*



**MEMORIES OF**  
**WILLIAM "WILLY THE WHIP" WHITTENDALE AND HIS FAMILY**  
by S. Berliner III


"Willie-the-Whip" - a dear husband, devoted father, and great friend, a fine craftsman, or a fearsome apparition? To those who knew him well, he was all the former but, to those who chanced to infract the rules on the highways and byways of Mill Neck and got pulled over by him, he was very much the latter, especially in the gloaming.

Bill Whittendale was one of those unsung heroes of everyday life who pass our way and vanish from our ken without a big fuss and more's the pity. The Freeholder, fortunately, remedies that for those of us who live (or lived) in the Town of Oyster Bay. Also known as "Wild Bill" and "Big Bill", Bill Whittendale was an Ulsterman with excellent references, who arrived here on the Aquitania on January 14, 1930, listed variously as a farmer or laborer, and later used his service as a member of the Ulster Constabulary to become the third man on the Mill Neck police force. He had been born on March 4, 1908 in Eniskillen, County Fermanagh, to Robert and Sarah Elizabeth Whittendale, farmers, one of nine children.

The copy of Bill's Certificate of Baptismal Registration, dated October 1927, made for his emigration, shows he was baptized in the Ballyconnell church in Tomregan Parish in County Cavan and lived at the time in Gortmullen.

Bill's early Social Security Card, undated, shows his address

2 188098		IMMIGRANT IDENTIFICATION CARD	
WHITTENDALE		UNITED STATES	
SURNAME		DEPARTMENT OF LABOR	
WILLIAM ROBERT			
GIVEN NAME			
No. Ireland	Mar. 4, 1908		
COUNTRY OF BIRTH	DATE OF BIRTH		
British	BROWN		
NATIONALITY	COLOR OF EYES		
Port of Spain	STEAMSHIP		
14/1/1930	STATUS OF ADMISSION		
DATE ADMITTED			
IMMIGRANT'S SIGNATURE			
ORIGINAL		IMMIGRANT INSPECTOR	



*Bill Whittendale's immigrant ID card.*

as c/o Morning Milk Co. in Stockton, California, and a later issue dated December 19, 1936, shows him at Long Island Ice Corp., West Shore Road, Mill Neck.

He found work as a carpenter (and lodging) in the estates along Nassau County's Gold Coast. It was there that he met a pretty young hair dresser of Finno-American stock who, at the time was a nanny for the Striebert children of Fox Hollow (where Bill Trimble was a gardener and Willy's sister Ila occasionally waited tables. It was also there that they courted and wed on December 12, 1941. Elaine Whittendale was actually born Elina Sigrid Kangas out in the Black Hills of South Dakota in 1909 but her family moved to a farm in Chester, Vermont, when she was little and many of them still live in that area (more on them later).

To ease the distinction, we will call her Elina herein. Only Elina came to live on Long Island. The

Whittendale family grew, with a daughter, Linda, breaking the Kangas tradition of girl's names beginning with "A" or "E" or similar sounds (Elina's mother - called Aiti - Finnish for Mother) was Alina and her sister was Elma and brother Walter married a Finn named Aina). Then a son, David was born. Both of them now live out in Washington state. On December 17, 1946, they had another girl and compromised on her name, Eileen (which starts Finnish and ends Irish). The family lived on the Stanley estate in Mill Neck, before World War II, then in Chester during the war (when Bill was an MP) and then moved back to Mill Neck, living briefly on the Loew's estate inside Horseshoe Road, and then back to the Stanley's until Bill built a house on a piece of land on Connecticut View Drive at the very top of the hill in Mill Neck Estates, immediately south of Bayville above Mill Neck Creek, which he may have bought even before marrying or entering the



service. In those days, one could easily see north across Bayville to Connecticut and east across Oyster Bay to the tower at the seminary in Huntington; the trees have grown in so heavily in the intervening years that it is all one can do just to catch a glimpse of the Creek or the Sound in the summer.

Bill applied to the two-man Mill Neck Police Department; the records show that he was accepted for the Civil Service list in 1937 but apparently did not get his appointment as a Village Patrolman because another record of acceptance is dated 1938. The whole force consisted of two brothers, Joe and John Casey, and, with the burgeoning

population and traffic after the war, they needed help desperately. Once appointed, Bill threw himself into his police work with his characteristic drive and vigor. The three men had their "headquarters" in the Mill Neck railroad station but met in a room in Tilford's garage on the west side of Ludlam Avenue in Bayville, just across the Bayville bridge and an easy walk from Mill Neck Estates to gas up, gas, and swap cars. John Casey was the Sergeant and Joe Casey and then Bill Whittendale (and later Bill Tillotson) were the patrolmen. (There was a third Casey brother, another Bill, who was on the Oyster Bay force.)

Joe and his wife, Bessie, who

was apparently quite a card, lived on Hilltop opposite the Kliperas (who are at 890). Willy's daughter Linda remembers waiting for her Dad at Tilford's and being given a nickel for a Coke; they played a game about whose Coke bottle had come from the farthest away. Linda also recalls playing on the huge Underwood typewriter at the Mill Neck station.

When World

War II rolled over us, Bill was not exempted and served as a Military Policeman, being honorably discharged as a Corporal in the 466th Military Police Escort Guard Company at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, on October 26, 1945, with an address at Chester, Vermont. He had qualified as Rifle Marksman and a Carbine expert, been awarded the Good Conduct Medal and the Asiatic Pacific Theater campaign Ribbon, and had his separation papers recorded a year later in Nassau County by none other than Sea Cliff's redoubtable Charlie (Charles E.) Ransom, then County Clerk. That record shows that he left for the Pacific theater on August 26, 1944, arriving on September 2, and that he left for the States on October 14, 1945, arriving on October 20. Fortunately for Bill, he had two jobs waiting for him, a regular policeman and a moonlighting carpenter.

Bill got his reputation as a "tough cop" from his habit of propping one foot on your running board and giving you a choice of his lecture on the evils of speeding or a ticket. If you happened to be a "city slicker" in no mood for, or with no time for, the lecture, you got the ticket. The author well remembers being pulled over on West Shore Road by an imposingly-tall officer who gave him just such a choice (I can become a very good listener when required, and, believe you me, it WAS required).

**TO BE CONTINUED  
IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF  
THE FREEHOLDER**



*The Mill Neck Police Force in the early '70s. L. to r.: Chief Arthur Kahler, Sgt. William Whittendale, and Patrolman Willard Tillotson. Ed Hanaski photo.*



## GEORGE WASHINGTON: THE MAN

By Lory Lamy

*Lory Lamy is a senior at Kellenberg Memorial High in Uniondale, Long Island. Her affinity for historical figures inspired her to write this essay.*

We've imprinted his likeness on both the dollar and quarter, we've named countless monuments, schools, our capital, and even a state after him. His eulogy has fixed him in the minds of every citizen as "First in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen." And how do we celebrate his achievements? As Comedian Robert Klein says, "With a mattress sale on Presidents Day!" We dress some actor in a white wig, stick a hatchet in his hand, and make him say, "That's right folks I'm chopping down those prices." Despite these honors and dubious praises, the question still remains, who was George Washington?

If you were to ask most educat-

ed Americans who Washington was or what his life and achievements mean to them, the common response would probably be, "He was our first president, the hero of the American Revolutionary War, the father of our country, and the man who would not tell a lie." It is easy to think only of his great deeds and the mythology that surrounds him, but is it all there was to this man? Have we ever looked beyond his accomplishments to see what the essence of his spirit really means to America?

An intellectual experience that left a lasting impression on me was when I entered the History Channel Founding Father Essay Contest. The contest asked for high school students to write an original essay on a founding father whose contributions the student valued most highly. Out of all the founding fathers, I

chose George Washington. Naively, I thought writing an essay on him would have been easy because he was a great man who accomplished many deeds and he was a legend in his own

time. Soon I realized, however, our other founding fathers such as Thomas Jefferson, along with many influential leaders in history, had also achieved many great feats. Yet, I wanted to know what set Washington apart from them. What did this Virginian planter possess that made him more astonishing than any other figure in American history? This question led me on an intellectual quest. If I was going to find the answer, I had to go beyond my preconceived thoughts about George Washington and unravel the intriguing spirit and character that was behind all his great deeds.

After writing numerous drafts, it became clear to me that it was not his deeds alone that earned him a permanent rank in our history. Peerless leadership abilities made the man more than the sum of his achievements. It was these qualities that shaped the destiny of our country.

It was Washington's remarkable genius that helped him perceive the significance of geographical factors that his opponents General Howe and Cornwallis could never understand. For example, in the Battle of Long Island, Washington faced the danger of having his army surrounded in an area where retreat was thought impossible. Yet he devised an ingenious plan, building bonfires as a diversion, while leading his men across the East River undetected by the British.

Washington's perseverance and persistence played a huge role in winning the Revolutionary War. With the enlistments of his collapsing army nearly up and the morale of the patriots crushed by



*An idealized 19th century engraving of Washington accepting command of the Continental Army outside Boston. In reality, there was little fanfare on the occasion.*



a series of defeats beginning with the Battle of Long Island, Washington and his 2400 troops crossed the icy Delaware River and lead a surprise attack on Trenton, New Jersey, capturing 900 Hessian soldiers. In both defeat and -victory, Washington shows a determination and ingenuity that revived his army's spirit and saved the cause. A cause that has not failed after 225 years.

Another example of Washington's brilliance was his relinquishing of his military power after the war. This action proved that his main concern was to see the republic established upon the principles of civil authority. As a hero to the country, many people admired Washington so highly that a group of officers plotted a conspiracy at Newburgh, NY to proclaim him as king of America. This position was handed to him on a silver platter. And what did he do? Washington humbly rejected it. He believed in the principles of liberty and republicanism for which he and his soldiers struggled for in the Revolution and did not let the allure of power divert his beliefs. Just as he was called to serve our country in war, Washington was called again to serve it as president. Washington's character and virtues established important traditions for the presidency and guided our nation toward a future of stability. But what makes Washington really astounding was the sincerity of his beliefs. Washington believed that slavery was inconsistent with Republican ideals. As a result, he was the only founding father to free his slaves. This belief has grounded our nation on the permanent pre-

cept that all men are created free and equal.

Recently, *The Washington Times* published an article titled "No Founding Fathers? That's our new history." This controversial article discussed how the New Jersey Board of Education was excluding the names of our founding fathers especially George Washington out of their revised history standards. It is bad enough that this senseless "political correctness" is marginalizing the very man whose shoulders our nation was born upon, but this absurd measure will rob students of the knowledge of this great leader! In my opinion, this is a heinous act towards our future leaders and disgrace to our American heritage!

In Mary Antin's book, *The Promised Land*, Antin vividly describes her horrid experiences as a Jewish exile living in Czarist Russia. She only knew a life of abject poverty, oppression, and shame. Upon coming to America, Antin embraces her new country as a place where one can discover one's true self. Antin regales her readers with her sixth grade experience in delving into the history of the American revolution and the life of George Washington. As she read how the patriots planned the Revolution and how the people strived for liberty and defied their oppressor, it dawned on her what it really meant to be apart of this country. Washington's unfailing valiance and virtues intrigued Antin the most. She quotes that "... George Washington was as inimitable as he was irreproachable. . . " However, she discovered that in Amer-

ica, whether you are great as George Washington or a simple immigrant girl, everyone is considered an equal citizen. This gave Antin a sense of dignity that she had never felt before. The principles that Washington exemplifies inspired her to write a poignant poem. Antin concludes her poem with this moving message:

There we, weary Hebrew  
children, at last found rest  
In the land reigned Freedom,  
and like a nest  
To homeless birds, your land  
proved to us,  
And therefore will we grate-  
fully sing your praise ever-  
more. . . .

These last lines of her poem show the indelible impact that Washington has left in her life and in the lives of her generation. In Mary Antin's eyes, George Washington symbolizes the freedom and hope that America stood for. This is Washington's true legacy. A universal impact that has forever changed and influenced not only the lives of Americans, but the entire world.

Washington was neither a philosopher nor the most brilliant thinker of his time. He was something else, much more remarkable. Washington was a man whose persistence, genius, and virtues transcended national boundaries. When we look at Washington's countless contributions as a father, hero, and first president, let us always remember him as the man who embodies all the highest ideals that we all should strive for as individuals and as citizens of a free nation.





### ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

What is the actuality behind the figurative expression, "sticky wicket?" Is it something to do with the game, cricket? Or does it refer to the little gate or grilled window called a wicket that used to be found in front of cashiers in railroad stations, theater ticket booths, banks, post offices and the like? Some of these were hinged for opening to permit the passage of items larger than the grill would allow.

Edwin Anders

*You have a long memory. I'll bet a lot of readers of the Freeholder won't be familiar with the cashiers' wicket you mention. However your first guess is the right one. The target of the bowler in a cricket match is the wicket, a temporary structure of three stumps and two bails. By extension the cricket pitch in front of the batter is also called the wicket. When it rains this area naturally gets wet and that results in a stickiness causing the ball to jump in unexpected directions, a difficulty for the batter. Passing into more general language, the sticky wicket became a*

*colorful synonym for a difficulty whatever the sort.*

Dear Uncle Peleg:

In an English novel I read recently one character said farewell to another with the phrase, "Pip-pip". How did that rather ridiculous expression get into the language?

Astrid Onderdonk

*Eric Partridge postulates a relationship to the sound of the bicycle horn when the expression was used, apparently derisively by those watching the passing of a cyclist in "striking bicycle costume" but does not offer this as the idea behind the use of "Pip-pip" as a synonym for "Good-bye." The latter usage he infers from a passage in W.E. Collinson but he does not explain. Your Uncle thinks, without any authority at all, that the good-bye usage was established in an old song, perhaps from the English music halls of the 19th century, that went something like the following which I heard when quite young*

*and never saw in print. I'm reasonably sure my memory of what I heard is fairly accurate for I was taught to sing these lines, as well as others suitable to my age, by a very demanding lady who "helped" in my parents' household.*

Early in the morning  
Down by the Station  
See the little Puffabillies  
All in a row.  
See the Engine Driver  
Twist his little handle,  
Pippety-pip,  
Choo-choo  
Off we go!

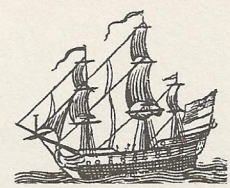
*As we all know, Choo-choo is the sound of a railroad engine. Pippety-pip is intended to suggest the train whistle signifying departure. If so, when adopted into speech, the Pippety-pip was soon abbreviated to Pip-pip where it functioned as a slangy good-bye. Puffabilly, by the by, is a nursery pronunciation of Puffing Billy, the name of an early English locomotive engine.*







## 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**.*

### A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT

As June 2002, comes upon us, so too does the conclusion of my third consecutive one year term as President of the Oyster Bay Historical Society. It has been a privilege to serve as President, just as it has been to serve on the Board of Trustees in the years prior.

My gratitude not only is unending to the members of the Society, but also to my colleagues on the Board of Trustees and of course, to the salaried and volunteer staff of the Society.

The efforts undertaken by Tom Kuehhas and staff over the past years deserve recognition. Through Kuehhas and his daily direction, the Society has succeeded not only in increasing its profile in our community, but of also simultaneously heightening our credibility as a viable and valued organization not only in Oyster Bay, but also throughout the United States. The multi-faceted talents brought to his position by Tom Kuehhas, by the bounty of his knowledge -combined with the force of his personality and the caring nature of a conservator of history and his personal sensitivity have been the substantial building blocks upon which the recent successes of the Society have been built.

Singling out people for thanks is always dangerous. More so from the perspective of omission rather than inclusion. However, I must thank the late Frances Roo-

sevelt, former Trustee Lorraine Whittlesey, and "my Right Honourable Friend" Angela Koenig. I thank these gracious ladies for their kindness initially in having invited me to become involved with the Society, as well as their support over the years of my involvement, in a community that has a lovely and unique character, just as is true with the aforementioned ladies.

The future of Oyster Bay, which is facing the challenges of development, must see the Society and similarly engaged philanthropies continue to aggressively fulfill their mission to preserve and protect the historical legacies of our treasured communities. The roads taken to do so will, of necessity, vary. The Society and similarly inclined organizations will, I am certain, endeavor to logically balance the needs of preservation with the only true historic constant; change.

The on-going underwriting of the mission of the Society, through their voluntary monetary support and emotional and per-

sonal contributions from our supporters, will continue to be necessary so that the Society's legacy of service to Oyster Bay may continue.

In alliance with other organizations in Oyster Bay, but standing at times apart from them -when it is in the best interests of the Society not to become eclipsed by other historically significant events or organizations is an important caveat that should govern the future operations of our Society, as I am certain it will.

I thank all of you not only for your support of the Society over the past three years and prior, but I encourage you to recommit to support the Society in the future. Thank you for the opportunity to have served as President, and for the opportunity to continue my service in the distinguished group of my predecessors and our colleagues who continue to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

Sincerely,

Edward B. (Woody) Ryder

*Mildred DeRiggi, Ph.D., of the Long Island Studies Institute, gave a scintillating presentation on the Gold Coast estates of Dana and Morgan at the final 20/20 Lecture, which took place in a fitting venue, Coe Hall at Planting Fields. This year marked the first time that the Planting Fields Foundation participated in the 20/20 Lecture Series.*





## FALL EXHIBIT TO FOCUS ON 20TH CENTURY RECREATION

The 20th century was the golden age of recreation here on Long Island. More people had more leisure time at their disposal than ever before in history.

How they filled that time will be the subject of the Society's Fall exhibition. Polo, golf, trail-riding, fox hunting, swimming, yachting, and bowling are perhaps the activities that most readily come to mind (depending on one's social class!) However there were a number of more obscure recreational activities which enjoyed varying degrees and periods of popularity. We would like to cover as many of these activities as possible.

If you have some memories, photographs, and/or artifacts or clothing associated with these leisure pursuits which you would be willing to share with us, please contact Director Tom Kuehhas at (516) 922-5032.

## SPRING GARDEN TOUR FOR RAILROAD BUFFS

The Oyster Bay Historical Society cordially invites our members to an exciting garden tour of the

grounds of Mr. Henry U. Harris, Brookville, on Saturday, June 15, 2002, at 10 a.m. Featuring a moving display of indoor and outdoor toy trains and a restored Victorian Tea House and garden, this tour has something for everyone! The garden tour will be followed by lunch at the Piping Rock Club, Locust Valley. The Society gratefully acknowledges the sponsorship of this unique event by our Honorary Chairpersons Natalie Grace Dejoux Brinckerhoff and Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Meyer, Jr.

Cost of the tour is \$60 per person with lunch, \$35 per person without lunch. Please RSVP by June 8, 2002. Space is extremely limited. For more information or to reserve a spot on the tour, please call (516) 922-5032.

## VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

The Oyster Bay Historical Society, under the direction of Tom Kuehhas, has joined the Veterans History Project, Library of Congress.

VHP encompasses veterans of World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars. It will include all veterans,

men and women, those who served in war and in support of combat operations, all ranks in all branches of service - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Merchant marine, and Coast Guard.

The goals of VHP include engaging military and history groups as partners to identify, interview and collect documents from war veterans and those who served in support of them and identifying a comprehensive, searchable national catalog of all oral and written histories collected. It is to be preserved in the collected materials to the public, through the Library of Congress's exhibitions, publications, public programs and web site. The project is national in scope and it was created by a unanimous vote in Congress, October 27, 2000, through Public Law 106-380. Any veteran willing to submit materials may call Tom Kuehhas at 922-5032. Interviews will be established through the Oyster Bay Historical Society, and the Society will provide all necessary forms for participation.

## FRIENDS OF LOCOMOTIVE NO. 35

A group of seven volunteers from the Friends of Locomotive #35 Inc. drove to East Haven, Connecticut to work on one of the crown jewels of the soon-to-be railroad museum at Oyster Bay.

Caboose #12, a 1914-built wood-bodied caboose, was declared surplus by the Long Island Rail Road in the early 1960s at which time it was sold to the Shore Line Trolley Museum, then the Branford Electric

## OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Categories of Membership

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

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



**Visit the Oyster Bay  
Historical Society's  
NEW website!  
[www.oysterbayhistory.org](http://www.oysterbayhistory.org)**

Railway. The museum cared for the caboose ever since while it served as a bunkhouse for visiting volunteers. However, years of exposure to the elements can take their toll on a wooden caboose, so it was decided that a work session was needed prior to its relocation.

The Locomotive #35 volunteers showed up at the museum around 10am and quickly realized that things were a bit worse than expected. A few holes had developed and many of the window frames had suffered significant deterioration. In other areas, so much paint had flaked off that the wood merely soaked up the fresh paint. Much of the necessary

repairs were made by Shore Line volunteer and trustee Bill Wall. Bill, who also arranged the sale of the caboose to the group, spent numerous hours fabricating and replacing boards on the sides and around the windows. Meanwhile the members of #35 toiled away with scraping, priming and painting the sides, caulking the windows and tarring cracks and seams in the roof. A final coat of dark red paint was applied to the body and black to the frame and railings, much as it wore during its early years of service on the LIRR. At 6pm when all was said and done, the caboose looked almost as good as new.

Once trucked back to Long Island later this year, Caboose #12 will become an integral part of the collection. This caboose, along with the Friends' other two (#2 and #50), will represent the many changes railroading has seen through the last century as

each will depict a dramatically different lifestyle on the railroad. The fact that each was an actual LIRR caboose only enhances their importance to the collection.

Anyone wishing to view this piece prior to its relocation is encouraged to visit the Shore Line Trolley Museum over the summer. For information, call (203) 467-6927. The group's other two cabooses, as well as their passenger coaches are currently located on a siding off of Commercial Avenue in Garden City, and may be visited through special arrangements with the Friends of Locomotive #35 Inc. For information on these, call (516) 887-4294.

#### **FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Back in March, Joy Jorgensen moderated a panel of longtime residents who looked back fifty years as they discussed "Farmingdale in '52." The panel included Don Snyder, former football coach at Farmingdale and a legend in his own time, plus five other citizens. The program attracted over seventy members and friends, who were captivated by the recollections of Farmingdale as it was in the early 1950s.

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 worksite is a beehive of activity as volunteers swarm over Caboose #12 replacing rotted lumber, priming and painting the body, and repairing the roof and windows.*



## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS

As summer nears, Old Grace Church, headquarters of the Society, is once again open on Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. There is always a Society member on hand to answer questions and assist you in any way. There are also photo albums to enjoy and many pictures of old Massapequa adorn the walls. The Society's membership is now close to 800, with more than 60 out-of-town and nationwide participants. They are currently planning for their annual Strawberry Festival on Saturday, June 15th (rain date, Sunday, June 16th).

## SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

The current exhibit, "All About Old Glory," available through June, has drawn an extraordinary number of visitors since it opened in mid-October. Enhancing the flag display are uniforms, pic-

tures and equipment representing the many military branches that have protected the flag and our nation from the Civil War through Desert Storm. Curator Dan Trachtenberg has also put together several different take-home packets detailing the evolution, history, traditions and etiquette concerning our flag.

## CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In May 1997, the Society and the Bethpage Library presented a program to introduce the local community to the Empire State Carousel. This famous carousel is much more than just a merry-go-round. It is New York State history in motion and a "museum" you can ride on! A recent demonstration gave attendees a chance to experience this wonderful device, which is looking for a permanent home -- hopefully right here on Long Island.

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

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

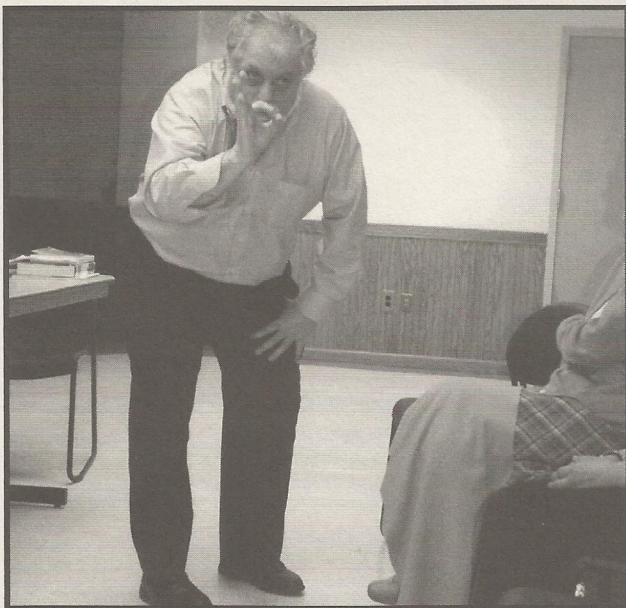
such as this to help maintain their four National Register properties and various educational programs. Recently, Chris Hansen delivered a slide lecture on 18th and 19th century American clock making. He has been an antique clock enthusiast for thirty-five years and has written articles for *Horology Americana*, *Huntington In Our Time*, and the *Huntington Historical Society Quarterly*.

## AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society's showing of vintage movies were a great success and they will continue to show them this year. All of these events serve as fundraisers for the restoration of the Lauder Museum's exterior. In other matters, Amityville's history can only be preserved by its citizens. Therefore, the Society is encouraging each and every family in and around the village to start a family tree or formal genealogy which will be kept on file in the Lauder Museum. If enough members respond to this request, the Society will consider setting up formal classes and discussions.

## HUNTINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 20th marked the 30th anniversary of the Society's Spring Antiques Show at Heckscher Park in Huntington. More than fifty quality dealers from Long Island and the New York City area participated in the event. The society depends on fund-raisers



Panelist Salvatore Primeggia makes a point at the Oyster Bay Historical Society's roundtable discussion on the role of the Church in Italian-American life.





## YE OLDE SCHOOLHOUSE



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

*The Editor would like to thank Stephen Terrasi, Mrs. Rabin's Fifth Grade Class at McKenna Elementary School, Massapequa Park. Thanks to all our student contributors!*

### JOURNAL ENTRIES

#### Day 1

Today was my first day as an apprentice. I want to learn a lot to become a master blacksmith. I am ten years old which is when most apprentices start. I woke up early. My master Bruno got me to work right away. He taught me to work with iron and to shape it into tools. He helped me make a shoe for a horse. It was the first thing I ever made. Even though I knew Bruno helped me make most of it, I was still excited. It would not go on sale. He told me I could keep it or he would use it. I decided he could have it. I pumped the bellows to make the fire hotter. I tried to make a hammer for Bruno. You need to heat the iron to shape it. I made the iron too cool so it cracked. Bruno showed me how to get it just right. Then I made it too hot so it wouldn't stay in the right shape. I finally got it. Bruno was very happy and said he would use it. Bruno then made orders for customers. It was the apprentice's job to pump the bellows. Later Bruno closed the shop. I cleaned the forge while Bruno studied the book of orders. He said today was a bad day because we only made 2,000 nails and a good blacksmith makes 3,000 a day. Then Bruno told me to go to sleep.

#### Day 2

I woke up to a lot of pounding. Bruno said I'd better get used to getting up early. Today he let me sleep. We sleep in a room next to the shop. Its very cold in here but the fire keeps us warm. First we made orders from the books. Next we made nails. When we made about 100 nails, a man came in. He needed hinges for a door. Bruno said that would be one of the hardest jobs. Another customer came in. He needed an axle for his wagon. When we finished making the hinges and were in the middle of making the axle, a grumpy man came in. He ordered us to make shoes for his horse. He said we should stop what we were working on and start on his shoes right away. When we finished making his shoes, Bruno didn't bother putting them on the horse. I thought this was strange, but Bruno got his farrier named Ben. A farrier is a man who puts shoes on horses and oxen. The grumpy man didn't even pay the whole price. He left and said this was the worst blacksmith he had ever gone to because we were slow. We stayed up late to finish making nails. I cleaned the forge and went to bed.

#### Day 3

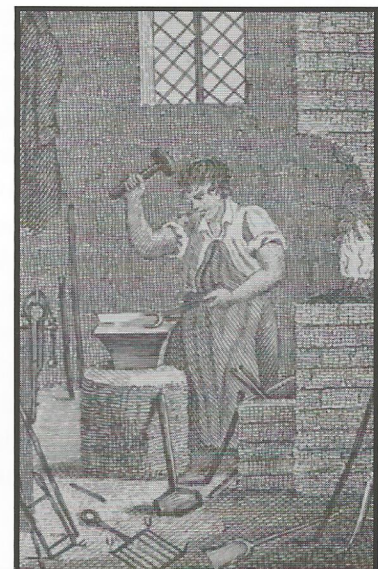
I woke up exhausted from yesterday. Bruno was staring at me and he was angry. He said if I wake up late again he would make me put all the shoes on the horses. We went to work on nails right away. It was a slow day. We almost finished all 3000 nails when we got our first customer. He had 3 horses and an ox. They

all needed new shoes. When we finished Bruno said he would put the shoes on because it was a slow day. He gave me a break while he put the shoes on. When he returned, he saw his friend Sal waiting in the shop. He needed a weather vane for the top of his barn. I helped him make it. It was a strange shape. Sal thanked him and gave him a tip. Sal had a letter for Bruno. Bruno opened it. It was an order from a sailor. He needed a new anchor. He said we would not do the whole thing today. In the morning we would finish it. He used the hammer I made the first day. He said it was one of his best hammers. Then he told me to clean up the forge and go to bed.

#### Day 4

I woke up nice and early today. I decided to get things ready before Bruno got up. I got the forge going and pumped the forge to make it hot. Bruno woke up quite surprised. We went to work right

*continued on p. 19*







## 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

#### Magic Lanterns

The history of the magic lantern is far from clear but at least one school of thought believes it was first used in the Netherlands. Be that as it may the earliest example of the machine that remains to us is in the Museum Boerhaave in Leiden. It can enlarge and project a picture from a semi-transparent glass slide on a vertical blank surface. The screen that originally supplied this surface no longer

exists but many of its slides still accompany the lantern. Made about 1720 by Jan van Musschenbroek, it originally belonged to Willem Jacobszoon Gravesande who was professor of physics at the University of Leiden until his death in 1742. About 250 other items of Gravesande's laboratory equipment are also to be found at the Museum.

Jan van Musschenbroek was an important Dutch instrument maker and the son of Jan Joosten who followed the profession

before him. Van Musschenbroek, Pieter, became a professor of physics and succeeded to Gravesande's chair at the University of Leyden. He is known for his scientific inventions which included the Leyden jar.

Whether you regard Hollywood and its most famous product as a bane or a boon, you owe these Dutch gentlemen credit for the science that led to the movie industry.

If you think of the spirituous

### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Long Island's ties to Washington have been many. Can you match the correct Secretary of State with the administration in which he served and his (or her) Long Island home? The two left-hand columns are in their correct order, while the names of the Secretaries of State are jumbled. Thanks to Ray & Judy Spinzia for drawing this test up!

#### Presidential Administration

#### Long Island Home Village

#### Secretary of State

Theodore Roosevelt

Southampton

Madeleine Korbelt Albright

Theodore Roosevelt  
and

Taft

Old Westbury

Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.

Wilson

Muttontown

Henry Lewis Stimson

Hoover

West Hills

Cyrus Vance

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Lattingtown

Robert Bacon

Truman

Lattingtown

Frank Lyon Polk, Sr.

Eisenhower

Lloyd Harbor

Colin Powell

Eisenhower

East Hampton

Elihu Root, Sr.

Carter

Flushing

Robert Abercrombie Lovett

Clinton

Upper Brookville

Christian A. Herter

George W. Bush

Hollis

John Foster Dulles

*Answers will be found on p. 23.*



contribution of the Dutch to the English and Americans only in terms of the introduction of hops and beer, thus providing a beverage worthy to drink at ball games, think again. A recent book by Andre Domine, *Wine*, Koene-man, 2001, goes a little further in explaining the services rendered by the Lowlanders to the drinking class.

Recognition by John Cheese and Company of the potential for profit in global trade persuaded them quite early to amass financing and to establish a world-wide network of colonies. To serve these and other places where saleable merchandise could be found they very quickly developed a trading fleet "several times larger than that of France and England put together." In the pursuit of business they poked their noses in everywhere.

The next time you pour yourself a glass of port, reflect that it was the Dutch who began the international commerce in that splendid tippie by loading their ships with port at the port of Oporto in Portugal. They established the distillation of wine into brandy in the areas of Cognac and Armagnac and they drained the marshes of the Medoc, permitting the establishment of new vineyards. We won't go deeply into the contribution of gin to those who honor the cocktail now regarded by many as the world's greatest, the Martini.

Suffice it that we close with thanks to the Dutch for their "improvements" to the world of the thirsty.

As late as the end of the 18th century, stationers in London



*A 17th century engraving of a contemporary Dutch merchant vessel by illustrator/author Jan Luyken of Amsterdam.*

were offering "Amsterdam Ink" as a superior product appropriate for important papers and legal documents because of its non-fade quality which distinguished it from other inks of the period. We have no history of Amsterdam Ink and can only assume that it is another of those products of the innovative Dutch, found or invented by them and passed on to the world of commerce. Based on a few bits of information and what we think is reasonable conjecture we can offer a hopefully plausible picture of a bit of the English life of Amsterdam Ink.

At some time probably before the beginning of the 18th century, a man named Harding who was to operate a stationery and book-seller's business in London acquired the recipe for a superior black ink used in Amsterdam. Perhaps he bought it, perhaps he observed its manufacture and noted the details. He may well have bought many products for his business from Dutch suppliers, especially during the early

years of operation. At any rate, during his years in business he apparently manufactured the ink and sold it in both the retail and wholesale markets. We know that his business passed to his son, Samuel Harding in 1724. Samuel advertised during the next thirty years. One of the products he dealt in was Amsterdam Ink.

Samuel sold out to a stationer named James Mark(e)s in 1754. Marks dealt during his tenure in a range of stationery products, including Amsterdam ink, which he manufactured in Cold Harbor, Clerkenwell. The ink was still among the products offered at his shop by his widow E. Marks and was listed on a trade card of about 1798, the last record found of the enterprise.

We can postulate that the Dutch contribution, insofar as Amsterdam Ink is concerned, remained viable for perhaps 100 years plus, hardly an insignificant period at a time when the world of commerce and industry was producing new products and processes faster and more frequently than ever before.

### **Folk Etymology**

by Frank York

Ed. Note: *Recently there came from member Lou Bruno an idea and materials for an article on the non-professional explanations about curious words or*



*phrases that are offered by laymen who lack the training or resources to trace the words back to their actual beginnings. Both Lee Myles and Uncle Peleg thought the subject matter suited their departments and there was an unseemly argument about who should have it. Employing the wisdom of Solomon the editor solved this problem by assigning the idea to a recent visitor to the museum who had been so impressed with OBHS as to volunteer his services.*

What are frequently called folk etymologies, that is, explanations of the sources and meanings of words or phrases based on fancied similarities between the words in question, often foreign or archaic, and current English words having superficial resemblances to them, turn up frequently. The difficulty about these fancied resemblances is that those who offer them do not take into consideration the disciplines of physiology, etymology or simple research. Were the would-be definers to employ appropriate techniques in the search for evidence of the jumped-to conclusion it would often be found that such evidence does not exist.

Lou began his list with a Dutch phrase because the *Freeholder* feature, "The Dutch Next Door" frequently looks at Dutch words like cruller, stoop or yacht that have been adopted into the English language. Those three came with their meanings more or less intact but others have arrived with false papers.

The first false etymology suggested is based on the Dutch "verloren hoop" literally "the lost

troop" or the vanguard of an advance into battle, a unit that could expect heavy casualties. In English the words were rendered as "forlorn hope" and came to mean a hope against hope, a very faint hope or an enterprise with little hope of success. The phrase was Englished in the 16th century and received the cachet of use in one of the letters of the first Queen Elizabeth.

Lou points out a perennial entry in the false etymology list, "humble pie" which is said to be the diet of one who must apologize for error or admit failure after bragging of expected success. The original first word of the expression which experienced unauthorized abbreviation was numbles which are the entrails of animals such as the King's deer. Said to be delicious, they were served to the lord's professional huntsmen baked in a pie after a successful chase. Altered to umble, the word picked up the Uriah Heep sense and was never the same thereafter.

Another interesting word that came to us by false etymology, as Lou points out, is "shamefaced" which in its beginning had nothing to do with wearing an expression of shame on the countenance. Originally spelled shamefast, the word meant overly modest. From shame plus fast in the now naval sense of made fast, unlikely to let go.

### **That Looks Too Good To Be True!**

by Gus Stahl

If it looks too good to be true it usually is. The very operative word "usually" is what gets us in trouble. I've lost track of the num-

ber of times I looked with glee at a certain treasure only to be told (after deciding that this was the best I had ever seen), that it was a fake.

Right there, as I sat with this wonderful piece of chalkware or this magnificent Winchester or this fabulous chair in my hands, my heart dropped. Not so much for what it wasn't but for what I was... fooled. After all, I have spent my life around these things. I've studied them, I've owned them, repaired them, measured and drawn them, and oh yes, I've reproduced them too. How could such a smart person be fooled so easily? Well, the simple answer is of course that I'm not so smart and usually I'm not fooled, because usually fakes are easy to spot.... usually. I've also been advised by the wise that I should believe only half of what I see and none of what I hear. I think this is good advice, but then, I have more than two senses, don't I? Sure I do, I can feel that surface and sense if it is smooth where it ought to be smooth and rough where the feet of a thousand sitters rolled their shoe heel against it. I can smell the surface to detect any recent chemistry and I can listen to myself when it is too good to be true. But then, from time to time we are all guilty of believing what we want to believe because it doesn't rattle our world and because it's safe to stay where it's populated... with the experts.

Some thirty years ago, an expert curator, who was too good to be real decided to chide a visitor at his world famous museum for espousing unpopular or contrary opinions about this or that



in the ear shot of other visitors. He was made to feel very small and he was encouraged to leave. That visitor just happened to be an unusually real artisan and not a fake. He went home and decided to shrink the experts, and he did so unusually well. He did his research, and found something too good to be true, a certain well-documented unusual chair that was said to have been one of a set of three and had never been found. So the artisan decided that he would help the experts find that famous missing chair. He would cut down a tree on his back woods and make a calculated copy of that chair. He used the right glue and broke and repaired it and sprayed ancient dust in the cracks and crevices and painted and stripped it twenty times and more. He would make no claims to it, just throw it in the heap of junk on a local antique dealer's porch one unusually foggy night. Some years later, and with the scrutiny of many eyes and ears, it was discovered in the usual way, by the experts. The famous chair became a thing of great wonder in the antiques world and ultimately found its way to fame. It set a world record at auction and became the centerpiece of the collection of a very important world famous museum. It took a few years and a lot of experts to get it there but, there it was, the centerpiece on the cover of a major publication describing the early furniture of the museums collection. Not long after, the artisan came forward with his very unusual story about this wondrous chair. He said he had made it in his shop and provided the details to the experts includ-

ing photos and formulas and even a sign hidden beneath the surface. Reluctantly, the experts had to agree the chair was a fake. How could a thing like this happen? How could the whole world of experts be fooled by one backwoods type woodworker? We know the answer, don't we? Because it was too good to be true, or more exactly too good not to be true.

And herein we reach the bone. All of us are guilty, every day, of believing what we see or more exactly what we want to see. Those experts wanted to find that chair and our chairsmith gave them what their eyes wanted to see and what their egos wanted to devour.

The moral of course seems obvious. But how do we know for sure if this or that is real or fake? How can we really tell if it is a lie or the truth, after all we are all only human aren't we? Yes, we are all just human and we all make mistakes and we all climb pretty high on our judgmental horses from time to time. But we do have to rely on our senses and our knowledge and combine them into our decision making process because that is what we have in this world, and sometimes we will make mistakes.

I for one have learned not to be so sure about anything anymore, and I am very careful not to judge lest I be judged. I am not a chair or a Winchester. I am a man, and I usually remember that I make mistakes.

#### **Ye Olde Schoolhouse**

*continued from p. 15*

away on the anchor. The sailor

came in right before we finished. He paid us and then left. I was surprised at all the different things Bruno makes. He has made pots, pans, knives, forks, fences, gates, nails, railings, latches, hooks, lamps, candlesticks and anchors. He also makes rims for wagon wheels and weather vanes for barns. Every night after he closes the shop, Bruno oils his tools to keep them from rusting. I am learning a lot from Bruno. I hope to become a master blacksmith some day.

#### **Arnold Bocksel, Survivor**

*continued from p. 5*

*Rice, Men and Barbed Wire* by Arnold A. Bocksel, Michael Glass Associates: Hauppauge, NY, 1991. Photos by permission of the National Archives.

Available from Arnold A. Bocksel, 78 Miller Blvd., Syosset, NY 11791-3513, \$18.95

Bocksel doesn't write history; he IS history. He writes his book without footnotes, no bibliography, no fly leaf hype or parenthetical commentary. Talking to you a few pages at a time, he keeps an even tempo through forty four short chapters.

Ed. Note: *Arnold A. Bocksel will be our featured speaker at the Society's annual meeting which will be held at 8 p.m., June 14, at the Doubleday-Babcock Senior Center, East Main St., Oyster Bay. All are welcome to attend. Admission is free and refreshments will be served following Mr. Bocksel's talk. Please see the Calendar of Events on p. 24.*



## THE YOUNG TEDDY ROOSEVELT AND OYSTER BAY

by Arlene Goodenough

Teddy Roosevelt was born into a wealthy family which enjoyed many advantages. The family consisted of Theodore the father, Martha, (called Mittie) the mother, the oldest child, Anna (nick-named Bamie), Young Teddy (who was called Teedie, pronounced T.D.), Elliot, and youngest sister, Corinne.

In 1869, when Teddy was ten years old, the family, along with a nursemaid, embarked on a grand tour of England and Europe, spending an entire year taking in all the sights. In the summer of 1871, the family spent months enjoying the beauties of the Adirondacks of New York and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Teddy, a budding naturalist, thoroughly enjoyed this time in the outdoors. Next came what was probably the most exciting holiday of all, a trip to Egypt in October 1872, which culminated in a cruise up and down the Nile on a great houseboat known as a dahabeah. Every comfort was available to the Roosevelts, provided by a crew of thirteen men. The sail took two months.

The year 1873 found them once again in Europe, when a very serious financial panic occurred, but the family's income was not affected. It is interesting to note that after years of tasting the delights of all that foreign travel had to offer, they settled down for all their subsequent summers in the modest hamlet of Oyster Bay, Long Island. The glamour and excitement of far away lands was traded for the peaceful rolling country on the shores of Long Island Sound.

Teddy's father rented a spacious white frame house on Cove Road

with columns on the front porch and plenty of room for comfortable rocking chairs. They were only twenty- seven miles from New York City. The family named the house "Tranquillity" and a frequent visitor, Fannie Smith, said that that name was "wonderfully inappropriate." And so it probably was, as the family was full of energy and something was always going on. Everyone had their own horse or pony and there were frequent rides through the beautiful woods. All manner of games were played, tennis being very popular. There was a fine bathing beach just across the road. Plenty of rowboats were available, in addition to a sailboat. Hunting was very popular, especially with Teddy, who often stuffed and mounted his prey.

Many Roosevelt relations and friends lived nearby. In the evenings, plays were put on and the children were called on at the dinner table to give impromptu speeches. All in all, "Vitality"

would seem to have been more appropriate than "Tranquillity" as a name for the house.

In 1876, Teddy entered Harvard University. In his junior year, when he was nineteen years old, he was introduced by a classmate to Alice Lee of Chestnut Hill, not far from Harvard. Alice was only seventeen years old. Her family background was similar to his. She came from a large, wealthy, active family. Her father, George Lee, was a Boston banker. She was an athletic, high spirited girl, full of life. Teddy met her in October and by Thanksgiving, he knew he wanted to marry her. He courted Alice until January of 1880, when they became engaged.

Teddy graduated from Harvard in June, and they were married in October, on Teddy's twenty-second birthday, October 27, 1880. It was a very good match. They went to live with Teddy's mother in the palatial family home at Six West Fifty-Seventh Street. The



*"Tranquility" as it appeared in the early years of the 20th century.  
Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.*



newlyweds had the means to honeymoon just about anywhere in the world they might choose, but they spent two weeks by themselves, with two servants and a cook, at rustic Tranquillity. If a house had feelings, Tranquillity would have felt very flattered! They spent their time in quiet pursuits. Breakfast at ten, dinner at two, tea at seven. They played with the collie dog, Dare, took walks and rides in the family buggy and played tennis. In the evenings they read aloud from Keats and Sir Walter Scott. Teddy wrote in his diary, "There is hardly an hour in the 24 that we are not together. I am living in a dreamland, how I wish it could last forever!" Teddy did interrupt this idyll for a little while on November 2, when he was driven to East Norwich to vote. He cast his ballot for Republicans James A. Garfield and Chester Arthur, who of course went on to win the election.

Life was very pleasant and very busy for the young couple. Their first summer together they took a long trip abroad. Then Teddy ran for the New York State Assembly and won by fifteen hundred votes. His first session in Albany was in December of 1881. He also finished a definitive study of the naval War of 1812. Alice and Teddy eventually moved to a home of their own on West Forty-Fifth Street. They also bought more than a hundred acres on Cooper's Bluff in Oyster Bay. They kept ninety-five acres for themselves and sold small parcels to sister Bamie and Aunt Anna Gracie so they could have homes nearby. They devoted a lot of time to picking out the exact site for

the house, with mother Mittie, Bamie and Aunt Anna giving their opinions. The architectural firm of Lamb and Rich was chosen. They had definite ideas about what features they wanted. There was to be a spacious piazza, a library with a bay window looking south, eight large fireplaces and a big parlor. There would be ten bedrooms in addition to rooms for the servants. The foundation was to be two feet thick. While there would be twenty-two rooms in the house all together, it was not in any way ostentatious. The woodwork, plasterwork, windows, etc. were generally made of fairly ordinary materials. The total cost would come to under \$17,000. Teddy planned to name it Leeholm.

In one terrible day, all the happy plans turned to dust. On Tuesday, the 12th of February, 1884, Alice gave birth to a daughter, also named Alice. In hours the elder Alice's health deteriorated. At the same time, Teddy's beloved mother was stricken with a fatal case of typhoid fever. Teddy returned from Albany and his duties in the State Assembly in a miserable snowstorm on February 13th. His mother died at three o'clock in the morning. Alice, who was suffering from Bright's Disease, lingered in Teddy's arms until 2 p.m. The double funeral was held at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Burial was at Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, where Teddy's adored father had been buried six years before.

His life in shambles, Teddy sold the Forty-Fifth Street house and asked his sister Bamie to oversee the construction of the new place at Oyster Bay. In time, the simple

pleasures of Oyster Bay would serve to help Teddy cope with his terrible loss. As he had once described it, "Oyster Bay is the perfection of a place for fellows. I wonder if anyone could have a happier time than I..."

## The Post Rider

*continued from p. 2*

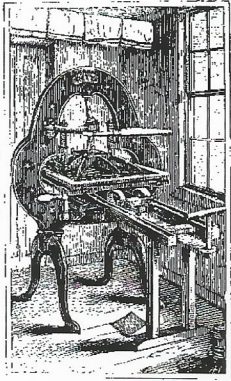
*Seems to me Mr. Beyer's point is a foolish one. The German immigrants from the Palatine and their progeny who became Americans but retained some of the features of their ancestors' culture have been called Pennsylvania Dutch in three centuries at least. Many of their descendants refer to themselves as Pennsylvania Dutchmen as did my college roommate. Both usages, that is Holland Dutch and Pennsylvania Dutch, derive from the same roots. There certainly is no pejorative flavor whichever application is considered. I think Mr Beyer should stop worrying about what kind of ex-Teuton he is and be content to be a plain American.*

To the Editor:

Can you tell me what happened to the historical marker in Massapequa that commemorated the 17th century massacre of local Native Americans by Captain John Underhill? I looked up a site at [www.lihistory.com](http://www.lihistory.com) and found this statement: "A historical marker noting the site of the slaughter stood on the corner of Merrick Road and Cedar Shore Road. It was evidently stolen in the early 1990s and never replaced." *continued on p.24*



## Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

**Havemeyer, Harry W. *Along the Great South Bay From Oakdale to Babylon, the Story of a Summer Spa, 1840 to 1940.* Mattituck, NY: Amereon House, 1996. 493 pp., illus. \$29.95**

***East on the Great South Bay: Sayville and Bayport, 1860-1960.* Mattituck, NY: Amereon House, 2002. 303 pp., illus. \$29.95**

Guest Review

by Raymond Spinzia

Since the prominent families from both Long Island's North and South Shores are so closely interwoven, both of Havemeyer's books are absolute "must haves" for anyone interested in Long Island's estate era.

In his first volume, *Along the Great South Bay From Oakdale to Babylon, the Story of a Summer Spa, 1840 to 1940*, Havemeyer discusses a South Shore Gold Coast area that began in the 1840s, predating the North Shore Estate Era by some sixty years. It extended from Babylon to Oakdale and from the Great South Bay to the present site of Sunrise Highway. These estates began as relatively small vacation homes.

Their owners were content with hunting, fishing, horse breeding, and yachting, afforded by the South Shore's topography and proximity to the Atlantic Ocean.

By 1900, just as the North Shore Era was beginning, the South Shore estates had evolved into the large stone structures associated with the North Shore. The South Shore estate owners were predominately sugar and distilling barons, merchants, financiers, and railroad magnates, whose families intermarried and whose business affairs intertwined. Their estates were at their peak from 1870 to 1920, beginning a rapid decline after 1920 with the deaths of the Old Guard and the departing from the area of their children. By the Depression of the 1930s, this section of the South Shore had ceased to be a major estate area.

Ironically this region's estate era lasted for eighty years (1840-1920) while the North Shore Estate Era lasted for only forty-five years (1900-1945), yet few people know of the existence of these estates let alone the details of the complex social history of the area.

Written from the perspective of an insider, Havemeyer has woven the hitherto-unknown, tapestry of South Shore society into a detailed and fascinating social history. Readers unfamiliar with the South Shore will be stunned by the families associated with its history. Discussed are such prominent South Shore families as Arnold (Arnold and Constable Department Stores), Blum (Abraham and Straus Department Stores), Gulden (mustard), and Pinkerton (detective agency). It

also includes such familiar North Shore families as Adams (chewing gum), Hutton (stockbroker), Astor (real estate), Havemeyer (sugar), Vanderbilt (railroads), Cutting (railroads), Bourne (Singer Sewing Machine Co.), Livingston (stockbroker), Redmond (merchant), and Belmont (stockbroker), all of whom had relatives who resided on the South Shore.

Havemeyer's second volume, *East on the Great South Bay: Sayville and Bayport, 1860 - 1960*, continues his splendid social history of the South Shore chronicling such families as Liebmann (Reingold Beer), Stoppani (grain future speculator, known as the "Noodle King"), Jones (Grand Union Supermarkets), and Bohack (supermarkets).

As with his first volume, Havemeyer's sequel includes such familiar North Shore families with South Shore connections as Dick (investment banker), Melville (shoe manufacturer), Betts (stockbroker), Baruch (stock market speculator), Childs ("Bon Ami King"), and, of course, the notorious Roosevelt-Fortescue connection. This scandal involved a South Shore Roosevelt, his mistress, their illegitimate children named Fortescue, and the murder trial of a Fortescue that achieved national attention. It would eventually involve the sitting vice president, the United States Senate, the territorial governor of Hawaii, Clarence Darrow, and the fear of racial riots.

With the publication of these two volumes on the South Shore  
*continued on p. 23*



## AUNT EEK



### Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eek:

I purchased a painting last month at a well-known and reputable local antique auction and I now find that it is a modern painting of an old topic. When I had the painting reframed the technician told me that he found a label with the name of a company in Portugal who supplied the painting to a local importer last year. I contacted the importer and he told me that he sells these paintings by the hundreds and that they are very popular. I paid a little more than he would have expected me to pay but luckily not much more. I fell in love with the cow that is pictured at the pasture edge, and find it so peaceful but I am considering returning it to the auctioneer and demanding a refund. I have read the literature provided by the auction company and I see that they make no promises about age or authenticity but I feel I was misled. What do you think?

Fred Arthur

Dear Fred,

*I think you took a walk in a forest and didn't see the trees. I*

*agree with you that you might expect an auction house that is selling antiques to offer objects that have an age, but we have seen these paintings and have found them so well done that they are hard to figure. Perhaps it fooled the professionals as well, or maybe they just received it as part of a larger consignment and were compelled to add your painting. Nevertheless the word "reputable" sticks in my mind and from it we get an impression that the company who is reputable would be glad not to deceive and will return your money. But then what?*

*What stands out here is that you have a painting that you love and you paid about what it might be worth. Where is the loss? In the future, when you bid at auction, do your homework, and for goodness sake don't hesitate to ask the auctioneer what he may know BEFORE you bid. Although you failed to describe condition we would bet that the surface is near perfect with vivid colors and not a scratch on the surface. This may have been your first clue toward ascertaining age. The competition at auctions is what helps determine the real value of what you buy. If you were bidding on an authentic relic you may have expected a good deal of activity among the crowd and a price that might have scared you away. We think that you might be wise to enjoy your "Bovine Beauty" in spite of its provenance.*

Dear Aunt Eek,

Now that we have computers everywhere can I expect to see the price of old typewriters go up? My son saw one in our base-

ment when we cleaned up and he did not know what it was. Should I save it? Maybe my son can buy a new computer with the proceeds when he grows up.

John Spells

Dear John,

Depending on age and condition certain of these machines have already established themselves in the collectibles market. With some exceptions, the older they are, the more collectable they are. A group has been formed to trade, and books on the subject are in print. I have seen a value and identification guide to typewriters and office machines by Daryl Rehr and found it to be quite well organized. You may also find information online at [www.drudP-emm.com/LtVewriters](http://www.drudP-emm.com/LtVewriters). A small piece of irony in there somewhere eh?

### Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

1. Elihu Root, Sr.
2. Robert Bacon
3. Frank Lyon Polk, Sr.
4. Henry L. Stimson
5. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.
6. Robert A. Lovett
7. John Foster Dulles
8. Christian A. Herter
9. Cyrus Vance
10. Madeleine K. Albright
11. Colin Powell

### Blocklyn's Books

*continued from p. 22*

estates, Havemeyer has established himself as the pre-eminent historian of the area's prominent families and their estates. I strongly recommend both books to anyone interested in Long

*continued on p.24*



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

### Blocklyn's Books, cont'd

Island's South Shore estate era. They are the only comprehensive histories of its prominent families and the first books to which one should turn for accurate information on the subject.

### The Post Rider

*continued from p. 21*

My personal interest in this marker stems from when I taught at Grace Episcopal Day School in the early 1970s. I had heard about the massacre and all these years have wondered why no remembrance was ever placed at the site for the Native Indians who lost their lives during the battle. I have been living in Southern-California the past 24 years and studied this summer at the New York Historical Society through their teacher institute. My interest about the marker was once again sparked. Please let me know what you find out about replacing the marker. I am most interested. Thanks!

Lorraine Passero

*There was such a sign referring to Underhill in connection with the local Marsapeague Indians. It is long gone, probably lost when Merrick Road was widened. It was just as well, as*

### JUNE

Friday, June 14, 8 p.m.

#### Annual Meeting/Lecture

Arnold A. Bocksel will be our featured speaker at the Society's annual meeting which will be held at the Doubleday-Babcock Senior Center, East Main St., Oyster Bay. All are welcome to attend. Admission is free and refreshments will be served following Mr. Bocksel's talk

Saturday, June 15, 10 a.m.

#### Tour/Luncheon

Members and friends are invited to an exciting garden tour of the grounds of Mr. Henry U. Harris, featuring a moving display of indoor/outdoor model trains

and a restored Victorian Tea House and garden. Lunch will follow at the Piping Rock Club, Locust Valley. Space is extremely limited. Reserve now by calling 922-5032.

### JULY

Tuesday, July 30, 6-8 p.m.

#### Neighborhood Night

Bring the family and a picnic dinner and join your neighbors in the Society's beautiful gardens for a sing-along program led by trustee Steve Walker. Tours of the museum, hands-on activities, and period children's games are all on tap. Join us!

*many scholars today doubt that Underhill was ever in Massapequa. He did fight Long Island Indians, but it was probably closer to present day Queens County. However, a sign has been erected by the Town Of Oyster Bay on the site of the Marsapeague Fort south of Merrick Road. Fortunately, it was not all built over. The wording was selected by Miss Dorothy McGee [Town Historian] and members of the Historical Society of the Massapeguas.*

Arlene Goodenough

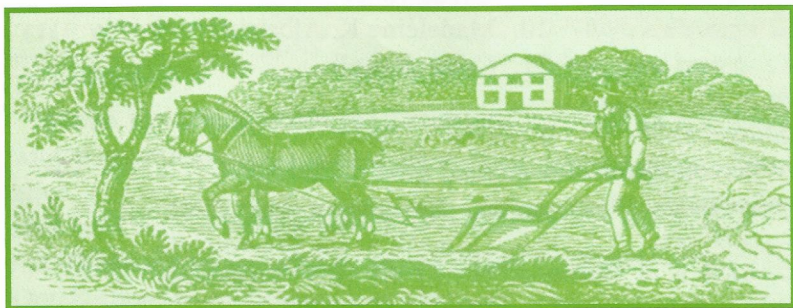
### THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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