



THE FREEHOLDER

SPRING 2007 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

☞ “DON’T BE
LIKE YOUR
AUNT ROSALIE!”

☞ WANT TO
UNCOVER YOUR
HOUSE’S HISTORY?
FIND OUT HOW!
PART II

☞ LONG ISLAND
DEAD POETS’
SOCIETY



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

I trust our readers are enjoying the weather. As always, time is slipping by much too rapidly!

It is a pleasure to welcome back Judy Spinzia to the pages of The Freeholder with her story on one of the true local "characters," Rosalie Jones, which begins on page 3.

New contributor, Donna Ottusch Kianka, completes her story on how

to ferret out your house's history in this issue, beginning on page 8.

Another new contributor, Robert Harrison, begins a multi-part look at poets from Long Island's past. Read about the first local poets on page 20.

These contributors have done all the work, so you can just lay back in your hammocks with some iced tea and drink it all in!

Next time, it's your turn!

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THE FREEHOLDER

of the

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Purpose: The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 with the express purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Oyster Bay. The Society maintains a museum and research library in the Town-owned c. 1720 Earle-Wightman House, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay
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THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

I found Arlene Goodenough's article on the capture of Major André to be of great interest [Winter 2007]. I knew of two of André's captors, John Paulding and Isaac Van Wart, but didn't know about the third, David Williams.

You see, my wife is a direct descendant of John Paulding, and we have a copy of the medal that was given him by the American people. John's son, Hiram, was

an admiral in the U.S. Navy and was in charge of the Brooklyn Navy Yard when the famous ironclad, the *USS Monitor* was built there. He joined the Navy during the War of 1812 and took part in the Battle of Lake Champlain.

Hiram Paulding bought property in Huntington and built a cider mill on a portion of it. In fact my son lives in what used to be that cider mill.

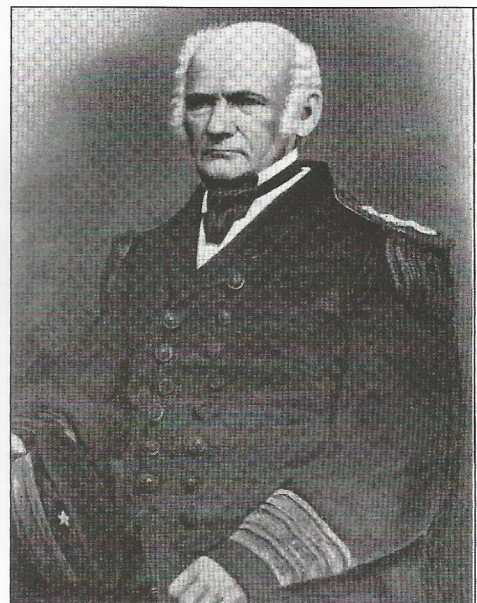
By the way, I had a teacher in school, Miss Van Wart, who was a descendant of Isaac Van Wart.

J. Everett Dodge

Thank you, Everett, for providing us with this interesting postscript to Arlene's story!

ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

This photograph of the front facade of a restored Jones Manor was taken in 2004 by Raymond E. Spinzia. Please see page 3 for a related story on an unforgettable member of this storied family, Rosalie Gardiner Jones.



Rear Admiral Hiram Paulding

**WOMEN OF LONG ISLAND:
MARY ELIZABETH JONES
ROSALIE GARDINER JONES**

by Judith Ader Spinzia

*This will be a "now and again" column in which Judy will try to share tidbits with our readers about the women of the estate families that she and Ray have researched for their books **Long Island's Prominent North Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes – Volumes I and II** (Virtualbookworm.com, 2006) and **Long Island's Prominent South Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes in the Towns of Babylon and Islip** (Virtualbookworm.com, 2007.) Arlene Goodenough will also be contributing to this column.*

Jones Manor in Cold Spring Harbor (now, Laurel Hollow) has been remarkably restored by Vincent and Maria Serrano Polsinelli and it is this phoenix-like rising of this fine old house that called to mind stories of the eccentric family that once lived there.

The original Greek Revival-style house on this site, said to have been the largest mansion on Long Island when it was constructed in 1855, was built by Walter Restored Jones (1793-1855) and named the Manor House. Charles Hewlett Jones inherited the Manor House from his uncle. It was renamed Jones Manor by Charles and his wife, the former Eliza Gracie (Gracy) Gardiner, the daughter of Jonathan Gardiner of Cherry Lawn in Eaton's Neck.¹ Jones Manor was subsequently inherited by their daughter Mary Elizabeth Jones (1854-1918). Mary married her first cousin Oliver Livingston Jones, Sr. (1850-1913), the son of her father's eldest brother. Oliver was a physician, a real estate investor, and the owner of the Laurelton Hotel in Laurel Hollow, the property on

which Louis Comfort Tiffany would build two homes, The Briars and Laurelton Hall. The Joneses raised a large family and divided their time between the Cold Spring Harbor house and their Manhattan home at 116 West 72nd Street.

In 1909 the original Jones Manor burned. Rumors surround its destruction but it is generally believed that the fire was started by the Joneses' eldest son Oliver, who suffered from serious mental instability. In 1911, situating it on the original 1,000-acre parcel, Mary Elizabeth started building the present Georgian Revival-style house, just two years before Dr. Jones committed suicide, supposedly distraught over his inability to treat his troubled son who was eventually institutionalized.²

Mary Elizabeth Jones inherited an estimated \$5 to \$8 million from Dr. Jones at his death but she was already wealthy in her own right, having wisely invested her \$3 million family inheritance. Her very extensive real estate holdings extended from Queens County into Suffolk County. In 1909, it was reported that she owned real estate in every state in the Union. Mary died in October 1918, of complications of influenza in the pandemic known as the Spanish Flu, just nine days before her son Phillip died and seven months after her son Oliver had died.³ Mary's son Arthur Eaton Jones inherited the house, with the proviso that his sister Louise could continue to reside there until her death.⁴ After years of family squabbling and accusations of mismanagement of Mary

Elizabeth's estate, her daughter Rosalie Gardiner Jones was given the house, one hundred acres, and \$65,000 in a court settlement, in return for a promise not to file any more petitions in reference to the management of Mary's estate. Anticipatory of these kinds of problems, Mary had limited her children's access to the proceeds of her estate by placing it, including both the Eaton's Neck and Cold Spring Harbor properties, into a spendthrift trust.⁵

If all the stories about Rosalie Gardiner Jones (1883-1978) are even partially true, this space would certainly be inadequate. Her niece, Mary Gardiner Jones, went so far as to entitle a chapter of her, as yet unpublished, remembrances "Don't be like your Aunt Rosalie."

Rosalie and her mother appear to have been complete opposites, albeit both strong-willed and opinionated. Unlike her mother who was a member of the New York State Anti-Suffrage Association, Rosalie was an active suffragist and Nassau County President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Aligning her thinking and methods with the more militant British suffragettes, the "Pankhursts," she courageously battled for "the vote." Her remarkable march, or pilgrimage as she chose to call it, to Albany in December of 1912, her march to Washington, DC, in February 1913, and her suffrage activity on Long Island have been well-chronicled.⁶

Eccentric in the extreme, Rosalie was, none-the-less, a highly intelligent and an extremely well-

educated woman for her day. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Adelphi College, then located in Brooklyn. One of her masters' degrees was from George Washington University, Washington, DC, and she was the first woman to receive a Doctor of Civil Law degree, from George Washington College of Law, now known as American University Law School, although, as a woman, she was prohibited from practicing law in Washington, DC. Her master's thesis "The Labor Party in England" was written in 1919; her doctoral thesis *The American Standard of Living and World Cooperation* was published in 1923.

In 1925 she protested to Governor Alfred E. Smith, demanding the removal of Robert Moses as president of the Long Island Park Commission and chairman of the State Parks Council because of his appropriation of property without condemnation, a power vigorously assailed by Long Islanders but upheld by Judge A. T. Clearwater, former Supreme

Court Justice of Kingston. Rosalie cited family property that had been appropriated for parks and for which they had not been adequately compensated. Moses accused the family of hiking the value when they found out that the State was interested, making the entry and appropriation provision of the law the only feasible alternative for the acquisition.⁷ The judge's adverse decision was to impact more than just the Joneses.

On March 15, 1927, at the age of forty-four, in St. John's Episcopal Church in Cold Spring Harbor, Rosalie married Clarence Cleveland Dill (1884-1978), a United States Senator from the State of Washington, defying tradition by removing "obey" from the marriage vows and by declining "to be given away" since it was obviously a decision of her free will to marry and not a bargain struck by Dill with her family.⁸ While married to Dill, she authored *Matthew Dill Genealogy: A Study of the Dill Family of Dillsburg, York County, Pennsylvania, 1698-1919* and *Matthew*

Dill Genealogy: A Study of the Dill Family of Dillsburg, York County, Pennsylvania, 1698-1935. Their marriage dissolved in 1936, with Dill accusing her of being an abysmal housekeeper and of embarrassing him by her apparel. He complained of her off-handed remarks, her correspondence with his parents about his drinking habits, and her lack of support of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The fact that she was observed "burying dogs and garbage in their [Spokane] yard" was also cited.⁹ After Dill won his petition for divorce, Rosalie ran for congressional office in November 1936, from a district in the State of Washington east of the Cascades on a platform supporting a balanced budget and the building of the Grand Coulee Dam as part of the Columbia Basin Project in the State of Washington, despite the fact that the lake created by the dam was to be named Franklin Delano Roosevelt Lake. Rosalie ran as a Democrat, which in itself was an accommodation to the establishment since she was reported to have been a Socialist.¹⁰

The voters were not impressed enough with her or her platform to elect her. There was little else to do but just go home.

"Miss Rosalie Gardiner Jones" came back home to Long Island and here she stayed, composting her garbage, raising goats, defying traditions, and fighting with her neighbors and relatives using her sharp mind and, when all else failed, English



Jones Manor fire, 1909, Damon Friesocin



Rosalie Jones, Oyster Bay Historical Society

Common Law.

Her idiosyncratic exploits and lawsuits often made the newspapers. The headline "Rosalie's Goat Commits Suicide" appeared when a goat, leashed to a second goat in the second floor ballroom, jumped out a window and hung itself. The goats were the source of much "local news" and amused gossip since she bred them, milked them, delivered their kids, drove them about in her car, and allowed them to graze as they saw fit. When the railway car containing Rosalie's goats, who traveled by train to and from winter pastures in the South, was placed on a siding because of the necessity to move fuel oil north during a critical World War II fuel crisis, Rosalie, quoting the Interstate Commerce Act, informed the authorities that all 150 goats would have to be milked each day that they were delayed in their northward journey. The goats arrived in Cold

Spring Harbor the very next day.¹¹ On another occasion the goats ate a neighbor's dahlia crop. The commercial use of the property as a nursery was in violation of village ordinances but Rosalie chose to defend herself by using English Common Law and the provision, then still in effect on the Island, which required property owners to fence off their property against livestock not for the livestock owner to restrict the grazing of the animals.¹² Another bout with Eaton's Neck neighbors concerning her decision not to promptly bury her dead horse ended with the dead horse down the well which supplied the homes of the complainants.

The use of English Common Law was again used by Rosalie when she defended herself against the village's action brought against her for allowing low income people to build beach houses or "shacks" on the Jones

family beach along Eaton's Neck, from which she then collected rent. Some of those "shacks" could be seen there in the late 1950s on untidy lots that are today desirable, beach-front property. She gained some support from the locals because she had refused to rent to a black family, just as she had refused to allow the "Negro Suffragists" to march with her contingent to Washington, DC, in 1913. But in the end the community was strongly divided and Rosalie charged forward, successfully defending her action in a lengthy court case.

She had also angered Eaton's Neck residents by erecting a gate close to where the firehouse is today. She charged \$1 to park for the day and an extra 50¢ to spend the night on her Eaton's Neck beach property; this, in 1920. When the village lost a "Rosalie"-instigated suit to have the causeway road declared a public road, Rosalie's plans for wetland development of Asharoken property were foiled. Characteristically she responded and built a hot dog stand at the corner of Duck Island Road and Asharoken Avenue to harass the families who had won the suit. The village was victorious in 1948, however, in preventing Rosalie from turning all of the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken holdings managed by her for the Jones family, some 186 acres, into a sand and gravel pit.¹³

Her relationship with her family was one of constant turmoil. In addition to the fact that she had not distributed the money collected from her rentals to the other members of the Jones family, in

whose name she managed the Suffolk properties, she proceeded to sell Eaton's Neck property despite the explicit restriction of Mary Elizabeth's spendthrift trust that provided that nothing was to be disposed of until after Louise's death. She sold and defended in court her sale of one-eighth-acre lots thus destroying the two-acre residential zoning plans of the community.¹⁴

The oil storage tanks at the mouth of Cold Spring Harbor are another "Rosalie." With intent or just by unfortunate oversight by Walter Jennings and the Board of Governors, Rosalie was the only member of the Jones family not invited to join the Cold Spring Harbor Beach Club, established on the spit at the foot of Snake Hill at the site of the Glenada Hotel Casino. Rosalie bought the parcel of land next to the club property in 1927 and sold it for use as an oil depot to Jennings' former partner-turned-competitor Herbert Lee Pratt, Sr., who resided at The Braes in Glen Cove and, then, headed Socony Oil.¹⁵ Jennings, vice-president of Standard Oil Co., lived at Burwood on Shore Road in Lloyd Harbor. His property atop Snake Hill overlooked the harbor. Although he died in 1933 and, consequently, did not have to endure the storage tank landscape long, the rest of us have just had to get used to it.

The Joneses owned properties extending down the hill and out along the harbor in the Nassau County portion of Cold Spring Harbor and around the harbor in the Suffolk County portion of Cold Spring Harbor all the way to West Neck Road (then, West

Neck Avenue) in Huntington. In 1937, Rosalie petitioned the Village of Huntington to change the residential zoning on West Neck Road in order to eliminate the rural environment and allow for the creation of a business district. Her petition called for the commercial development of West Neck Road all the way down to the causeway, to the present site of West Neck Beach, a beach then owned by the Joneses. She claimed a real "city street" would be infinitely more beneficial to the community than a rural road. Her petition, fortunately, was disregarded. In 1946 the beach, then known as Fusaro's Beach, was conveyed by the Joneses to the Village of Huntington in return for forgiveness of unpaid taxes.¹⁶

Courageously defiant of conventions, she lived her life to suit herself; a life that challenged her into her ninety-fifth year during which time she remained aloof from the establishment to which it seems she may really have wanted to belong. In 1978, Rosalie Gardiner Jones' ashes were scattered outside of her mother's crypt, on the cemetery hillside above St. John's Episcopal Church in Cold Spring Harbor.

ENDNOTES

1. Jonathan Gardiner (d. 1833), the son of John Gardiner and his first wife Joanna Gardiner, had large holdings in Eaton's Neck, properties that were eventually inherited by his granddaughter Mary Elizabeth Jones. Jonathan Gardiner is buried with his wives Sally Gelston Gardiner (d. 1803) and Fanny R. Gardiner (d. 1813) in the Gardiner Family Cemetery on Cherry Lawn Lane on Eaton's

Neck.

2. Oliver Livingston Jones, Jr. (1880-1918), known as Ollo, never married and died on March 21, 1918. *The New York Times*, Mar. 22, 1918, p. 13.

3. Philip Livingston Jones married Hélène von Stolz Lucas in 1910. *The New York Times*, Oct. 8, 1910, p. 11. Coincidentally, a Philip Hone Leroy Jones drowned on September 12, 1918. This accidental drowning death in Oyster Bay is often confused with that of Philip Livingston Jones (1890-1918). *The New York Times*, Sept. 14, 1918, p. 7. Philip Livingston Jones died of pneumonia on October 30, 1918. *The New York Times*, Nov. 2, 1918, p. 15. His mother Mary Elizabeth died of hemiplegia nine days before him. *The New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1918, p. 13.

4. Arthur Eaton (b. 1884) married Ethel Josephine Gibney in 1906. He married her sister Mary H. Gibney in 1912, two years after Ethel had died of appendicitis. They resided in New York City. Charles Herbert (1877-1941) married Anna Livingston Short, the daughter of Edward Lyman Short, and resided at an 1873 Jones family house called House on the Hill, later known as Hill House, in Laurel Hollow. Charles and Anna also were cousins. *The New York Times* Apr. 19, 1941, p. 15. The surviving descendants of Charles and Anna decided to sell the house in 1996. *The New York Times*, Mar. 10, 1996. Louise (1875-1952) remained unmarried, living at Jones Manor until her death. At Louise's death, Rosalie and Arthur were the only surviving siblings. *The New York Times*, June 15, 1952, p. 85.

5. According to a family member, Mary Elizabeth's will was drawn up by her attorney Edward Finch, who became a Supreme Court Justice. Theodore B. Klapper, a Mineola lawyer with offices on Liberty Street in Manhattan, was appointed by the court as executor. His signature and approval, along with that of Louise, was required for all transactions. After Louise's death in 1952, Klapper alone made decisions.

6. See Funnell, Walter S. "General Jones, a Real Fighter." *Nassau Daily Review*, Apr. 10, 1936; Matthews, Jane. "General Rosalie Jones, Long Island Suffragist." *The Nassau County Historical Journal* 47 (1992):23-34; Matthews, Jane. "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Suffolk County, New York: 1911-1917; A Case Study of the Tactical Differences Between Two Prominent Long Island Suffragists: Mrs. Ida Bunce Sammis and Miss Rosalie Jones." M. A. thesis, Adelphi University, 1987.

Mary Elizabeth was outspokenly against Rosalie's trek to Albany in December 1912, saying at one

point that "her daughter is not going to do it." *The New York Times*, Dec. 11, 1912. Ostensibly out of concern for Rosalie's health, she sent a male nurse to stop the march, attend to Rosalie's foot sores, and bring her home. Rosalie told her mother's messenger, "I am carrying a message to Garcia—beg pardon—Sulzer [Governor-elect of New York State]. You may go right home and tell mother so." *The New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1912, p. 11. The suffragists continued on to Albany fortified by shelled peanuts, chocolate, and jelly sandwiches, the apple jelly for which, reportedly, had been canned by Mary Elizabeth from apples grown at Jones Manor. *The New York Times*, Dec. 13, 1912, p. 9 and Dec. 16, 1912, p. 8.

7. *The New York Times*, February 27, 1925, p. 2.

8. *The New York Times*, Mar. 16, 1927, p. 25.

9. *The New York Times*, July 10, 1936, p. 21.

Dill was not required by the courts to return the \$40,000 that

he had obtained from Rosalie. Having served two terms in the House of Representatives and two terms in the United States Senate, he decided not to run for the Senate again. Rosalie had tirelessly urged him to run again, calling him a "coward" for not doing so. *The New York Times*, July 10, 1936, p. 21. Dill subsequently married Mabel Dickson, who had taught in college and worked in Washington, DC, as a home economics specialist. *The New York Times*, May 14, 1939, p. 10. Dill practiced law in the District of Columbia after launching unsuccessful runs for governor of Washington and for a return to Congress. Rosalie, who died on January 12, 1978, preceded Dill in death by two days.

10. *The New York Times*, March 31, 1936, p. 14.

11. Mary Gardiner Jones, unpublished autobiography, chapter 2.

12. Federal Trade Commission, Oral History Interview: Mary Gardiner Jones, October 9, 2003.

13. Carr, Edward A. T., Michael W. and Kari-Ann. *Faded Laurels: The History of Eaton's Neck and Asharoken*. Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1994, pp. 66-72; 81; and 195-198.

14. Carr, p. 70.

15. "Walter Jennings, 'Burwood' and the Feisty Rosalie Jones" in *Tales of Old Lloyd Harbor* by George P. Hunt. Village of Lloyd Harbor, 2001, pp. 79-84.

16. Alexander, Irene K. *A History of the Incorporated Village of Lloyd Harbor 1926-1976*. Village of Lloyd Harbor, NY, 1976, pp. 36-39.



Jones Manor, rear facade, 2004, Raymond E. Spinzia

THE GENEALOGY OF YOUR HOUSE, PART II

by Donna I. Ottusch Kianka

Another worthwhile piece of information can be gleaned when looking at the addresses of all parties on a deed. One should check the addresses and see if either are different from the property address that is listed for both sides of the transaction. This typically means the property was rented and the owner held it as an investment. It was not uncommon, especially for women, to hold property as a means of income. It was probably one of the few acceptable ways for middle class women to earn money and remain dignified.

Using the grantee/grantor indexes to find out who had the same last name in a community can be invaluable. Now this does not mean all parties are related but these could be potential cousins and uncles. This provides for potential players in the family tree puzzle.

Maps can also be an aid in looking for family patterns. For example, the Walling 1859, Hyde 1873 and other late nineteenth and early twentieth century maps, detail the locations of houses as well as corresponding names.

The utilization of deeds to form a skeletal framework will provide the basis for other information to be searched. With the title chain in hand, other data sources such as census can now be researched and the framework fleshed out. Also by finding out who lived in your home you can now begin to interview senior members of the community who may have more information. Since the owners of my house have been uncovered, I have interviewed the elder members of the community and uncovered a very lively picture of

the former occupants. I have even obtained a picture of the patriarch by simply inquiring of anyone who crossed my path whether he or she had any information on the Pirie family. I still ask older members in the area who might remember something of this family, which has no living direct descendants.

The history of a house is of great importance when documenting the history for purposes of placement on the National Register. Inclusion into the Register is based not only on the architectural merit, but also the history of the building. The date of construction as well as subsequent modifications to the building are also important to the application.

Accessing the Documents:

In Nassau and Suffolk Counties, the County Clerk not only has the deeds, as carefully copied by the historical clerks, but also the indexes which provide order and a method to accessing these documents. In Nassau County, the method of access moves from

computer to yellow cards to film to a different film. These changes in media are confusing and make the process complicated. Nassau is further complicated in that this county was born in 1899 and prior to that was a part of Queens. So do not be surprised if research takes one back to the source. The terminus of any journey typically ends in the Town Records for each Township and these books are available in most specialty or historical libraries.

The deeds themselves provide valuable information as discussed and sometimes a survey or a small map of the area is included. In dissecting a deed the purchase amount, the location of where the grantor/ grantee lives, the recorded date, the actual date, as well as the description of the property should all be extracted and noted. Occasionally if one is lucky a small private map may be included. Often genealogy is read into the deed to satisfy some issue regarding transference of the parcel within the family. Some deeds disclose who has a



A detail of the 1859 Walling map, showing the village of Oyster Bay.

guardian and where this person might be receiving care, be it a nursing home or an insane asylum.

The Assessors Card:

The assessor's card will provide data on architectural changes, usually with a date. The card will also provide a date when the assessor thought the structure was built. This is typically done as "years old" at the time the assessor visited the property circa 1938. This may be accurate, dramatically wrong or merely serve as a rough estimate. This suggested construction date in the assessor's card should be verified by maps, deeds and the architectural evidence for confirmation.

The assessor's card can also provide a string of previous owners. This mini title shows the series of owners each time the property transferred. While this is by no means a search or title chain, it is helpful if your research is stuck in the 20th Century.

This card will provide a sketch of the house, pool and outbuildings in addition to records of demolished buildings (if done after 1938). There is a detailed description of the house including original construction materials. The house I currently live in was reported in the 1930s to have a line of chicken coups adjacent to the garage. This chicken house has since been converted to a carport. The County had an interest in recording all of this information, as the construction cost and improvements were the basis for taxation.

Deeds

Begin with the most recent deed

to the property (if this instrument is available). It will have the dimensions of the property as well as the seller (or grantor). With this section, block and lot or the legal designation, you can begin to trace the history back through the years.

The deeds themselves can be obtained in Nassau and Suffolk Counties at the County Clerk's office. Deeds are housed on the County level and not the Town. In addition to the deeds, one can find mortgage documents, maps and any assessment information at the Clerk's office.

The deeds vary widely in the quality of reproduction. The later the instrument typically the clearer the copy. In Nassau County, the deeds change from computer to fiche to paper to film, depending on the century. Each municipality organizes itself differently, and sometimes the learning curve competes with the actual project.

Census Records:

This can now be found on the computer through various web sites (Heritage Quest, Genealogy.com and Ancestry, for example) but also are still accessible through local specialty libraries and the Suffolk County Government Documents room, the latter entails ordering the documents through a local library. Additionally, the local Church of Latter Day Saints (also known as the Mormons) in Plainview can also provide these documents. Census records will provide the personal information that these other documents typically do not. So once it has been ascertained who lived in your house the next step is to find out

about them.

Probate Records:

If a will is submitted to probate then there is a bevy of documents available for study, depending on the complexity and extent of a person's estate. The amount of information available is also dependent on the time period. Late 19th Century and 20th Century probate records provide a rich source of information. An inventory of assets, a schedule of real estate as well as a list of relatives are often detailed in the accountings.

The schedule of real estate will detail all holdings, a brief description as well as the value at the date of death. Sometimes there is information as to what properties are rented and the amount a holding will generate. The primary residence is typically identified.

Maps:

The early maps provide the early settlement patterns in a community. A cluster of commercial and retail buildings suggests an early commercial zone. In order to understand what was being offered the census records should be checked in order to obtain an understanding of occupation. Early census records do not provide occupations, so deeds may need to be combed for mention of a tin or blacksmith shop, etc. The Town Records can also be consulted. By using this technique you can reconstruct what types of services were being offered. By methodically checking throughout time you can document the evolution of the com-

continued on p. 16



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

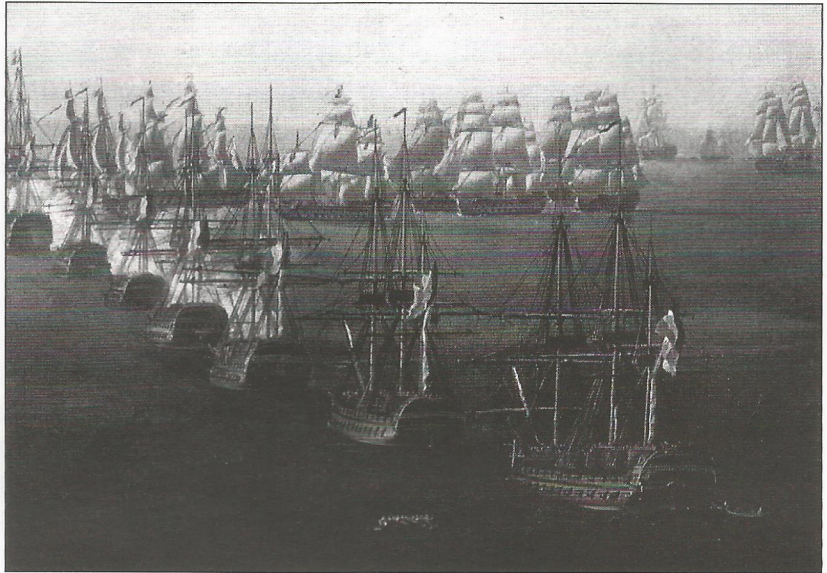
As someone who often questions where many of our everyday expressions come from, I enjoy your column very much.

Here's something I've always wondered about: why do we call leading ladies and gentlemen in movies, as well as sports figures, "stars?"

Can you enlighten me?

Janice

Good question, Janice! It seems



Admiral Horatio Nelson's British fleet (in column at top of painting) sails around the flank of the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile, 1798.

to have started with that titan of the British stage, David Garrick, because according to the **OED**, he was the first actor whose brilliance was compared to that celestial body. For over a century it seems to have been a term strictly used to refer to the leading lights of the theatrical world. It wasn't until the early twentieth

century that references were made to "stars" in the world of sports.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

What is the meaning of the term, "to trade broadsides?"

Phil

When ships during the Age of Sail fought battles at sea, they would deploy in line of battle, opposite to the ships of the enemy. They would then proceed to slug it out with the enemy, and often would discharge all the cannon on the side of the ship facing the enemy at once, which was called a broadside.

What made Horatio, Lord Nelson, so successful was that he revolutionized these outdated tactics by breaking the enemy line of battle and defeating the enemy ships piecemeal, rather than simply staying in line and "trading broadsides."



"David Garrick as Richard III," 1745, by William Hogarth.



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**.*

OB HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS "HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS" IN FLORENCE PARK

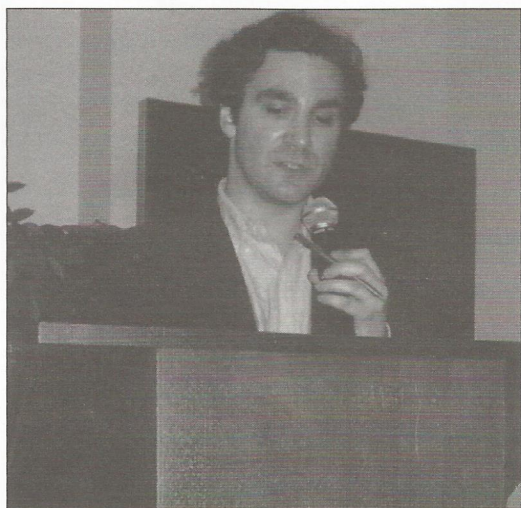
The sweltering heat didn't diminish the enthusiasm from neighbors, friends and dignitaries as the Oyster Bay Historical Society honored three families in the historic Florence Park section of Oyster Bay.

This unique enclave has, perhaps, the highest concentration of authentic Victorian houses in the entire town. Through the years, several haven't weathered as well as they might, so it's tremendously encouraging to see how these three homes have been restored to virtually their original condition by their young, spirited owners.

In 2005, the Society conducted a candlelight house tour of Florence Park, but these three homes



The photo above was taken in front of the Meyer residence and shows: NYS Assemblyman Chuck Lavine, Town of Oyster Bay Historian John Hammond, Mrs. Reilly, Mrs. Corwin, Maureen Monck, President of the Oyster Bay Historical Society; Mr & Mrs. Meyer, Tom Kuehhas, OBHS Director, Town Councilwoman Beth Faughnan; Senator Carl Marcellino and several trustees of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.



*Alex Rose, author of **Washington's Spies**, addressed a capacity crowd at the Oyster Bay Historical Society's Annual Meeting on June 21, which was also a joint meeting with the Nassau County Historical Society.*

weren't quite ready to participate. Now, they're as elegant and authentic as their neighbors, and a symbol of the pride of the entire neighborhood.

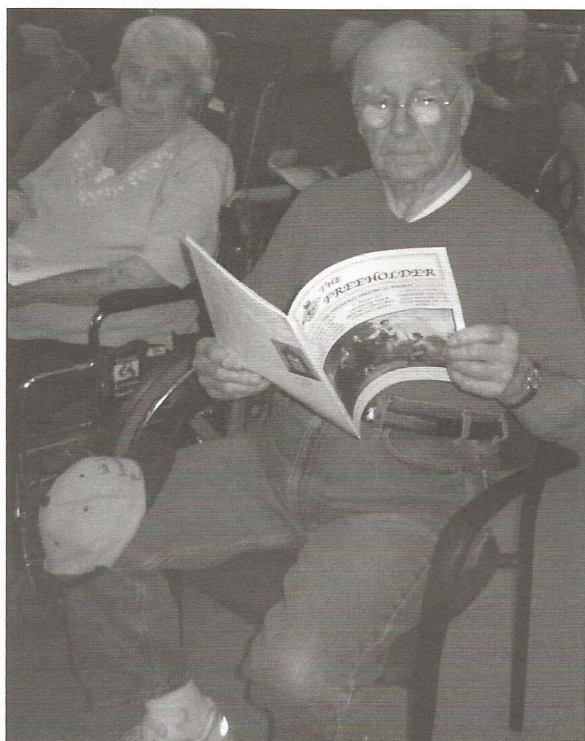
President Maureen Monck began the proceedings by stating that the credo of the Oyster Bay Historical Society was "preserving our past and protecting our future," and noted that these homeowners reflected the essence of that goal.

Presentations were then made by Senator Carl

Marcellino, Assemblyman Chuck Lavine, Town Board Member Beth Faughnan and Tom Kuehhas, Director of the Society. All stressed the great importance of preserving these historic neighborhoods for future generations, and commended the families for their enormous efforts.

Following the presentations, the homeowners answered dozens of questions about the restorations, and graciously served the entire crowd champagne and delectables.

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



Oyster Bay Historical Society Director Tom Kuehhas recently gave a program on the Revolutionary War soldier to an audience who could really appreciate the difficulties of a soldier's life- the residents of the Veterans' Hospital at Stony Brook.

Utilizing reproductions of the weapons, equipment and uniforms that the soldiers of that period wore and carried, Kuehhas explained to his attentive audience how the war was fought and how it differed from 20th century warfare. From showing how an 18th century musket was loaded and fired, to the manner in which the all-season woolen uniform could be slightly adapted for winter and summer wear; Kuehhas not only related the facts about life as a Revolutionary War soldier; he also passed the reproductions around to the members of his audience, so that they could actually touch them and experience them up close and personal.

When time came for the question and answer period at the end of the program, it was Kuehhas' turn to be enlightened! "Several of the veterans related their own experiences as soldiers during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, which showed that the combat experience is universal. The firearms and the tactics might be different, but the experience was very much the same!"

RAYNHAM HALL MUSEUM

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Walter G. Ritchie, Jr., who has assumed the position of Director of Raynham Hall Museum. Walter earned a bachelor's degree from Carnegie-Mellon University and a master's degree in the History of Decorative Arts from Cooper-Hewitt/Parsons School of Design. Most recently he served as executive director of the Germantown Historical Society.

We wish him the best of luck in his new position and look forward to working with him and the rest of the staff at Raynham Hall.

Do you have stories to tell about your experiences in the armed forces? Tom Kuehhas would like to hear them and record them for future generations. Contact him at the Oyster Bay Historical Society at 922-5032.

give Sagamore Hill an opportunity to create a vigorous program of events educating the public about his achievements and legacy.

SAGAMORE HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Next year, 2008, will mark the 150th Anniversary, or sesquicentennial, of TR's birth. This will

STONY BROOK PLANS FALL REV. WAR CONFERENCE

Stony Brook University announced plans for a conference on Friday, October 5, entitled "From Captivity to Freedom: Long Island and the American Revolution."

Tentative speakers include Edwin Burrows, Natalie Naylor, Alan Singer, John Staudt and Gerard Sztabnik.

The conference, sponsored by Stony Brook University Libraries and the *Long Island Historical Journal*, will take place in the Charles B. Wang Center at Stony Brook University.

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Categories of Membership

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

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

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

Details will be announced at:
www.stonybrook.edu/libspecial.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

April 17th was the occasion of their Founder's Day Dinner at the Ambrosia Restaurant, which was enlivened by a program of "Old Time Baseball" presented by Gary Monti, Tom Fesolowich and Ed Miklich. The Society participated in the Memorial Day Parade held Monday, May 28. The Strawberry Festival Meeting was held Sunday, June 10th at the Jones Beach East Bathhouse.

**OYSTER BAY
RAILROAD MUSEUM**

On May 22 the Oyster Bay Town Board voted unanimously to designate the Oyster Bay Railroad Museum as managers of the railroad-related museum properties on their behalf. This includes the historic train station and the turntable area, which is leased from the MTA. Part of the agreement includes funding for a Director of Development to oversee, promote and develop museum operations.

**LONG BEACH ISLAND
LANDMARKS ASSN.**

The Association's Historic Christmas Dinner was held at the famous home of the Ross family located on West Penn Street. The home is on the National Reg-

ister of Historic Places and was beautifully decorated for the occasion. Their third annual meeting was held on Saturday, February 17, at the Long Beach Public Library. Future events scheduled are: Sept. 20 Bus tour Hudson Valley or Connecticut; Oct. 27 Roaring '20s or Haunting Party and Dec. 9 Holiday Candlelight Tour.

**BOWNE HOUSE
CELEBRATES
350TH ANNIVERSARY
OF FLUSHING
REMONSTRANCE**

In honor of the 350th anniversary of the Flushing Remonstrance, The Bowne House Historical Society, along with the Queens Borough President's Office, is organizing a major event to commemorate the importance of the document to the Constitution of the United States.

On December 27, 1657, thirty townspeople of Flushing, Queens, signed a "remonstrance" addressed to Peter Stuyvesant, the director general of the Dutch colony of New Netherland. The two-page letter, set down by a local cleric, protested Stuyvesant's ban on the rights of Quakers to assemble and worship in the colony. Significantly, it further demanded that all people - regardless of religion or ethnic background - be given "free egress and regress unto our Town, and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences."

The men who signed the Remonstrance (including John & Henry Townsend), and John Bowne, risked their lives and their livelihoods by challenging



The Oyster Bay Historical Society once again sponsored the appearance of Jim Foote as "TR" at the annual July 4th Parade.

Stuyvesant. The Flushing Remonstrance, which resides in the New York State Archives, is widely acknowledged as the foundation for the principles codified in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, which guarantees religious and political freedom to all citizens.

For more information, contact the Bowne House Historical Society, 37-01 Bowne Street, Flushing, NY, 11354 or by email at dcartelli@bownehouse.org.

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

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

The Society now has available a "1900 View of Oyster Bay," which shows every building in existence at that time and includes a list of businesses and prominent residences. Eminently suitable for framing, this print is a great bargain at \$25 plus shipping. Contact the Society at (516) 922-5032 to order yours today!

Also available are an 1833 map of Oyster Bay (\$10) and a map of Gold Coast estates c. 1920 (\$17). Shipping is additional.

SPINZIAS PUBLISH VOLUME ON SOUTH SHORE FAMILIES AND THEIR ESTATES

Raymond E. and Judith A. Spinzia recently published *Long Island's Prominent South Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes in the Towns of Babylon and Islip*.

This companion book to the Spinzias' critically acclaimed two-volume work on the North Shore estates, documents 456 Long Island South Shore estate owners in a modified "Who's Who" format. Included are 290 photographs of the estates, biographical data on the estate owners and their families, location of estates using current street references and village designations, estate names, architects, architectural styles, dates of construction, landscape architects, subsequent owners, location of archival photographs of the estates, and information as to whether these country homes are still extant and, if not, the dates of demolition.

Cross-referenced in the second-section appendices are estate names, village locations of estates, as well as architectural

and landscape commissions. The civic activity and occupation appendices document the contribution of Long Islanders, including statesmen, intelligence agents, financiers, writers, and inventors. Maiden names, rehabilitative secondary uses of estates, including golf courses, which were formerly private estates, a general bibliography of the "Gilded Age," and a bibliography specific to individual estate owners, with the location of personal papers, have also been included.

The book may be ordered (\$24.99, plus shipping) directly from the publisher at spinzialongislandestates.com, at amazon.com and [barnes & noble.com](http://barnes&noble.com), or from your local book store.

Sample pages are available at spinzialongislandestates.com

SEA CLIFF VILLAGE MUSEUM

"The Past Revisited, Henry Otto Korten, Long Island Photographer" will open at the Sea Cliff

Village Museum on September 23. The museum received a grant from New York State to digitally restore the 100 year old glass plate negatives of Sea Cliff scenes, donated by the Korten family. The restored negatives yield astonishing results. Details and enlargements reveal old gadgets and instruments, clothing and utensils that were common a century ago. Also included in the exhibit are Korten family artifacts, in addition to vintage cameras. A reception will be held on the day of the opening, September 23, at 2 PM in the Sea Cliff Village Hall. The public is invited.

Spend an afternoon studying these photos and you will gain a greater understanding of the history of Sea Cliff and perhaps feel that you are a time traveler looking over the shoulders of those who came before us.

The museum is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 2 to 5 pm. For further information call 516-671-0090.



This Korten view shows the steamer *Sagamore* leaving port in 1912.
Sea Cliff Village Museum Collection



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



In honor of Fourth of July fireworks, here are some famous explosions from the pages of history. All you need to do is match the year in which the explosion occurred with its description. Check your answers on p. 22.

1. After several unsuccessful attempts, a member of the People's Will, a terrorist organization, assassinated Tsar Alexander II with a hand-thrown bomb. _____ a. 1916
2. The Nanaimo Mine explosion, in Nanaimo, British Columbia, killed 150 coal miners, many of them Chinese, and was the largest man-made explosion in history up to that time. _____ b. 1687
3. Union forces blew up a Confederate fort defending Petersburg, Virginia. Union soldiers gaped at the destruction instead of pressing the attack and were gunned down milling around within the "Crater" formed by the explosion. _____ c. 1844
4. The battleship *USS Maine* blew up in Havana Harbor, killing over two hundred sailors and leading to war with Spain. _____ d. 1881
5. A twelve inch cannon, nicknamed "The Peacemaker," blew up on the *USS Princeton*, killing six people, including two members of President John Tyler's cabinet and the father of his fiancée, Julia Gardiner of Long Island. _____ e. 1898
6. The island volcano Krakatoa erupted in Indonesia, killing tens of thousands of people and generating the loudest sound in recorded history, which was heard 3,000 miles away. _____ f. 1917
7. A Venetian-led European army besieging Turkish-occupied Athens bombarded the Acropolis for eight days. One of their mortar rounds landed squarely on the Parthenon, which was being used as a gunpowder magazine by the Turks. The resulting explosion caused the damage to the sides of the iconic temple still visible today. _____ g. 1861
8. The Halifax Explosion, which destroyed over 1600 homes and killed over 1900 people, occurred when two ships, one crammed with explosives, collided while leaving the Nova Scotia harbor. It was the largest man-made explosion until the atom bomb. _____ h. 1887
9. Though no one was killed in the actual bombardment of Fort Sumter, one of the fort's cannon did blow up during a salute after the surrender, killing the gun's crew. _____ i. 1864
10. The Black Tom Island explosion rocked Jersey City when two million pounds of ammunition stored on and near the island was detonated by fires set by German agents intent on preventing the munitions from reaching Britain. The explosion was heard over 90 miles away. _____ j. 1883

Genealogy of Your House

continued from p. 9

munity hub as it grew and developed. It also provides a good indication of what services were in demand. This of course is not a comprehensive list, as it is commonly known that many services were provided out the back door of many a farm.

Basics:

In order to search through wills and deeds it is advantageous to become familiar with the terminology. Some important brief definitions with which you should become familiar include:

Grantor: seller

Grantee: buyer

Mortgagor: the potential homeowner requesting financing

Mortgagee: The bank or person who makes the loan

Liber: Book

Section, Block and Lot: The numerical code as established by the municipality that designated your parcel.

Legal Description: The description of a specific parcel of land

Probate: The process of submitting a will before the Surrogates Court

Executor or Executrix: An administrator of an estate as designated by a will

Administrator: A court appointed administrator. Typically in this case there is no will.

Intestate: When one dies without a valid will

Letter of Administration: The paperwork that enables the Administrator to function in such a capacity.

Letters Testamentary: The paperwork that enables the Executor to function in that capacity.

You have now mastered the basic terminology and are ready to implement your plan of action.

It is important to copy everything that is even mildly relevant. You never know where your research will take you and there is no reason to keep returning to these places.

It is of paramount importance to persevere. Keep asking questions and keep searching. It is also important to learn the historical maps for your area. In Nassau County there is an 1838 USGS Coast Survey Map, an 1859 Walling, an 1873 Beers and upwards to the Hagstrom, which we are all familiar with today. The County Clerk also holds small surveys and subdivision maps as well as maps made for road modifications. These are typically indexed according to location, but earlier maps may be referenced to names only. Again, the deeds provide the names, which is the tool you will use to unlock this data source.

As one goes back in time peeling away layers of occupancy, the lot size will probably change, getting bigger and bigger until the property merges into a farm. Then the farm will merge into some sort of block purchase, perhaps a patent, and ultimately to the purchase from the Indians. Not all deeds have been filed and often the earlier deeds are contained not at the County but in the Town Records. Fortunately the town records survive for all three townships in Nassau County. As one goes back in time, the property will shed the section, block and lot designation and go by owner's name. As the boundaries shift and redefine it is important

to note the neighbor's names or landmarks. It is critical to refer to the maps on a consistent basis. The study area maps should be copied and carried as part of the field notes.

All municipalities house their records differently and often this learning experience is the most time consuming part of the process. It is helpful to know a thumbnail sketch of the history of the county. A fine example of this is Nassau County, which was a part of Queens until 1899. Now it is a common misconception that one has to travel into Queens in order to research any documents prior to 1899 for Nassau County. This is only partly true, as wills prior to 1899 are located in the courthouse on Sutphin Blvd. All deeds were filmed in the mid-fifties and a copy is housed at the County Clerk in Mineola, and a second set is available at the Long Island Studies Room at Hofstra University. The 20th Century must be searched at the County building. Suffolk has all records in Riverhead, which makes researching this county convenient.

All municipalities changed the method of record keeping according to the technology at hand. Today in Nassau all deeds are on computer and prior to that fiche, then paper. Some of the paper has been microfilmed. All Queens' libers and indexes are on film. So it is important to understand how to use each tool in order to obtain the information needed.

Surrogates Court:

All entries are on the computer, which is fast and convenient if

you know the full name of the person you are looking for. If you wish to research all "Klees" for example, go to the cabinets lined against the wall and locate the name. All entries are on the computer and no longer indexed on hard copy, therefore you need the full name of the recently departed. The old files are only pulled twice a day at 11 in the morning and then again at 2 in the afternoon. Surrogates' is relatively easy to navigate, however these are legal documents and the typical researcher may have some initial difficulty wading through the language. Copy everything and sort them out later. It is important to come armed with rolls of quarters for copying purposes.

The Surrogate index records in Jamaica (Nassau was a part of Queens until 1899) are kept in file cabinets and then you get to ferret through larger binders for the actual copies of wills for the older documents. The rest are kept behind a desk and the clerks immediately take the opportunity to discuss their lunch hour and will limit your requests. I was also told that quite a few of the older libers were dumped into a dumpster and they will not even try and find them for you. I do not know if this is true but the last time I was there most of the books were indeed missing.

Assessor's Room:

In Nassau County one can obtain the original mid-1930s card on a property. All that is needed is the section, block and lot. A clerk will ferret out the card and copy it for you but it is important to ask for the original

card, not the recent card used by the assessor. This card may provide information as to the date of the home, outbuildings and the rough date of demolition, alterations, renovations and even prior owners. I have learned my property in the mid-1930s had chicken coops in the rear of the property. I suspect this provided the basic framing for my carport. This is a rich source of data and is very rarely utilized. Suffolk does not seem to have the same detailed construction information as Nassau, but will provide some basic information.

Libraries:

This is also a relatively easy part of the process, as hopefully the librarian will guide you in finding the resources that you need. Those libraries that have specialized historical collections are the best sources of historical information, but do not ignore the library which may only have a

few files on the history of the local area. Start by calling your local library for an idea as to the resources and work your way to a neighboring library, as often there is overlap in collections. Hofstra University's Long Island History Room collects fairly broadly and provides maps, photographs, and original collections as well as great books. In addition one of their most valuable resources are the Queens deeds as well as the grantor/grantee indexes. This is available on microfilm.

Once your research is completed at the County Clerk, the switch can be made to Hofstra where the parking is easier and the atmosphere pleasant.

Reconstructing house histories can be a satisfying course of research, which will enable you to move forward in genealogy, community history or any other applicable research query. The applications range from National

BRIEF DESCRIPTION		FAIR MARKET VALUE AT TIME OF DECEDENT'S DEATH
<p>SCHEDULE B. REAL ESTATE OF DECEASED.</p> <p>(Insert a brief description of each parcel of real estate, sufficient to identify the same by reference to the records of the Clerk's office of the proper County, or otherwise. Mortgage or other lien thereon to be stated and deducted.)</p>		
1 Parcel of land with small house and greenhouse, at corner of Glen & Carpenter Avenues in the village of Sea Cliff, one acre,	✓	\$ 8,800 00 ✓
2 Parcel of land situate on Glen Avenue between Carpenter and Sea Cliff Avenues, Sea Cliff,	✓	2,800 00 ✓
Parcel of one-fourth acre on Sea Cliff Avenue between Carpenter and Dubois Avenues,	✓	1,000 00 ✓
Parcel of one acre on northeast corner of Glen and Carpenter Avenues,	✓	2,500 00 ✓
Parcel of one acre on northeast corner of Carpenter and Franklin Avenues,	✓	2,000 00 ✓
Parcel on northwest corner of Franklin and Dubois Avenues, having thereon greenhouses and frames,	✓	1,150 00 ✓

An example of a probate document providing a description and the value for real estate owned at the time of death.

Register nominations to reconstructing land change and community development. It would be an impressive task for a community to begin to acquire the early deeds and reconstruct the history as detailed in the deeds themselves. This information should then be married to other sources such as; maps, tax records and census. The result would be a comprehensive overview of a community's historical evolution and development.

Often the historical annals can focus on a few individuals who stole the spotlight and continue to this day to hog it. We, who feel a mandate to guard the past and insist on the information being available in the future, need to recognize that the majority of change rested on the obscure farmer rather than the one or two big players in a town. This type of research approach will flush out the common man as well as the ancestors.

The decision to do the research may also be a personal one, fueled by a need to satisfy medical questions, superstitious beliefs or one's curiosity about who lived in your home and why some of those decisions which you are still living with today were made. I often think that living in an older home is akin to wearing someone else's overcoat with mints and tissues in the pockets and the smell of cologne on the collar. It is never quite yours, as you are always faced with some trinket stuffed in the wall, the button that fell through the floorboards and the earring in the garden. Those families, now long gone, lived their lives facing the same fears, joys and boredom

that we do today.

It is occasionally amazing what can be gleaned from the records. A house researched on the North Shore listed the occupation of a single owner as "landlady." Further research revealed she only owned one property. It is from this data that it is apparent she was running the neighborhood boarding house. The number of bedrooms in the house exceeded five, so it appears likely she was renting out rooms as a means of generating income. This information not only provides a little local color but also explains why this mid-sized home has an atypical number of bedrooms, rather than a more common room pattern.

The application of the data retrieved is almost endless. Early deeds will often provide clues as to the early vegetation or tree types as this was used as a benchmark for site terminations. I have even seen early house colors discussed in early 18th century deeds, which talked about the "yellow house" as a border reference. Deeds are now providing clues as to early paint color choices as well as the natural environment. One could research a specific topic and then pore through the deeds looking for the answers. The deed references can also tell you the types of industry in an area. While searching through deeds in Cold Spring Harbor, I came across the reference to a tin shop, which was not on the early maps.

Deeds however are uneven in the information they do provide and some are awfully sterile. Deeds from the 1960s on rarely give any useful historical infor-

mation but rather are a combination of boilerplate and legal description. Earlier deeds were intended to communicate relevant information be it landmarks, land use or family structure, depending on the purpose the information served. From time to time I have even located lost survey maps included in the deeds, which will show the original lot along with all buildings. One such map in Oyster Bay Cove showed by dashed line the joining of two smaller homes to create one house.

A house's current configuration and appearance is based on the sum total of decisions and choices that were made by the previous owners of the property. This methodology can also be applied when analyzing the current pattern of a community as the sum total of a set of decisions of the collective owners. While we cannot excavate thoughts or motivations we can capture glimpses of the changes made and potentially the motivations behind the decisions and behavior.

Start thinking of the evolution of not only your home on a micro level but also the community on the macro level. Researching the history of a house can provide comforting information regarding past land use, interesting data on previous owners or can even be used in your family history analysis. And the next step is moving up to analyzing this information in relationship to the history of your neighborhood or community.

Instead of solving crossword puzzles as a brainteaser, take on the puzzle you live in, known as your home.

THE LONG ISLAND DEAD POETS' SOCIETY

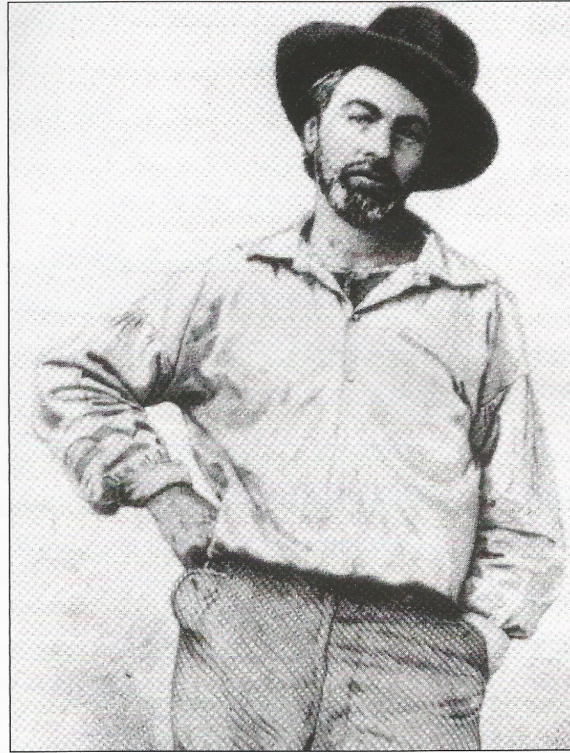
by Robert L. Harrison

The following is the first of a series of articles which form a link to a select group that I call "The Long Island Dead Poets' Society." These bards are made up of those deceased poets who were either born or died here, those who taught here, lived here for a while or had an impact on the other poets on the Island. Most of the word-smiths presented here are from Nassau and Suffolk Counties, with the exception of a few bards from Brooklyn and Queens who have an interesting story to tell.¹ Some of these Long Island poets are well known, such as Walt Whitman and William Cullen Bryant, while others are at best, obscure. All have added to the richness and different styles of poetry that are part of Long Island's heritage.²

Not all of Long Island's deceased poets are represented here, for that would take a few volumes. Poetic verse has been published here in broadsides, newspapers and books for over three centuries and many a splendid verse has been lost to the mists of time.

These poets have had many occupations: some were ministers, teachers, newspaper editors, lawyers and doctors, while others were also talented painters, artists, playwrights and writers. One was the first published African-American in the New World and was a slave on Long

Island. Another was a lumberjack and another poet a ticket master for the Long Island Railroad.



Walt Whitman

The members of the Long Island Dead Poets' Society have garnered many awards for their poetic endeavors. Beside the Pulitzer, Bollingen Prize and other prestigious poetry awards, one poet who resided here was a recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature. The Island poets also have been bestowed with many titles, such as the Bard of Huntington, the Long Island Poet Laureate, the Farmer Poet, the Bard of Babylon, the Long Island Railroad Poet, the Poet Czarina, the Poet of Bay Street, the Poet Lariat, Poet Laureate of Sea Cliff, Poet of the Revolution, Bethpage Poet, Poet of the Rod and Gun,

the Good Gray Poet and the Mad Poet.

These Long Island poets are an interesting group who communicated their thoughts into the written word about the Island and the world they lived in. The poet and Garden City resident Anna Ruth Ediger Baehr summed up our feelings towards these bards when, in the hospital and unable to speak to her physician, she wrote to her son "Get me a poet."³

NOTES

1. Nassau was part of Queens County until 1899.
2. Two excellent books on this subject are Berbrich, Joan D. *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Poetry of Long Island*. Port Washington, NY, 1970. I. J. Friedman and Krieg, Joann P. *Long Island and Literature*. Long Island Studies Institute, Heart of the Lakes Publishing, Interlaken, NY, 1989.
3. Obituary, *Newsday*. Anna Ruth Ediger Baehr, 06/29/98.

The First Voices

When Henry Hudson's ship, the *Half Moon*, passed by Long Island waters in 1609, Captain Hudson should have named it Poet's Island. For more than three centuries after that historic voyage, Long Island has been a center of poetry writing and publication, far more than any other area that Hudson laid claim to. It is a curious fact that the first New Netherlands poet (later New York

State) was discovered by the Honorable Henry C. Murphy while translating old Dutch publications into English at the Hague. In 1860, Murphy came across the published poems of Jacob Steendam (1616-1672), whose poem "The Complaint of New Amsterdam to Her Mother," was written in 1659 and published in Holland that same year.¹

Steendam, born in northern Holland, came to New Netherlands and settled first at Amersfoort (Flatlands) and later bought property at Pearl Street in New Amsterdam. Employed by the Dutch West India Company, Steendam was later described as a "Clerk by day and a poet at night."² Murphy also transcribed Steendam's second published poem "The Praise of New Netherland," published in 1661. This poem points out the bounty to be had in the Dutch colony and was also published in Holland.³ Some lines of praise were

The ocean waves secure the outer shore,
Which, like a dyke is raised your fields before;
And streams like arteries, all

veined over,
The woods refreshing
The lamprey, eel and sunfish, and the white
And yellow perch which grease your cover delight;
And shad and striped bass, not scarce, but quite
Innumerable.
Crabs, lobsters, mussels, oyster too there be
So large, that one does overshadow thee
Of those in Europe, and in quality.

In 1665, Steendam "saw the sight of a ship preparing to sail to Holland and that so overcame him that within an hour he had packed and bid farewell and sailed with her."⁴ Our first New York State bard lived another seven years and died in Batavia where he became superintendent of an orphan home. There were other Dutch poets at this time but Murphy's discovery and translation of Steendam's poems made him stand out historically above the rest.⁵ In this period of the seventeenth century the English were settling the east end of Long Island in competition with the Dutch and two of their poets are

worth mentioning. The first was Abraham Pierson (1609-1678), who was born in England and became the first minister to the settlement of Southampton in 1640. Pierson also wrote poetry and later moved to Connecticut with his family in 1647, where he wrote a poem on the death of Governor Eaton.⁶

In all the changes of his life, he held

The Orthodox truth, the Heterodox he quelled,

He had a quick passage to heaven,

Was well, and sick, and dead in hours eleven.

The other bard was Richard Steere (1643-1721). Steere also was born in England and came to Southold from New London in 1695. Before residing on Long Island's North Fork, Steere had published a slim volume of poetry called *A Monumental Memorial of Marine Mercy* in 1683. Nearly thirty years later Steere published "The Daniel Catcher," in which he portrayed the life of Daniel in a poem. This second book included the poem "Earth Felicities," a poem written in blank verse. Steere is one of the earliest Island poets to be buried here (Southold) and he is often called the first Long Island poet.⁷

NOTES

1. "A Local Poet Rescued From Oblivion," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. 05/01/1861 p. 1.

2. "Bead Street," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 08/09/1902.

3. Steendam's first poem was about the threat of the English and Indians to the people of New Amsterdam and how they were abandoned to these forces. In his



The Joseph Lloyd Manor house, where Jupiter Hammon was a slave.

second poem Steendam does a complete turnaround and lavishes praise on the air, water and wildlife of the Long Island area. What Steendam wrote about most likely was true but it also is a fine propaganda piece in the selling of the New World.

4. "Bead Street," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 08/09/1902.

5. "The Father of New York Poets," *New York Times*, 06/12/1897 P RBA 1.

6. Pierson's poetry was not of the same quality as the Dutch poet Jacob Steendam. His son by the same name was born in Southampton and also became a minister and later, in 1701, the first President of Yale University.

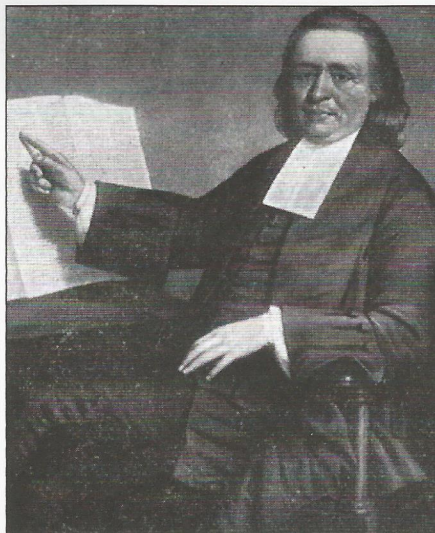
7. Ball, Marie E. "Island Poets of the Past," *Long Island Forum*, September 1939.

The Preaching Poets

Both Abraham Pierson and Richard Steere wrote poetry of a religious nature. Joining them would be the poets Jupiter Hammon and Samson Occum. Jupiter would become the first African-American to publish poetry in America and Occum the first Native American to publish a book in English.¹ Both were preachers to their respective races and both lived in the same time period.² Jupiter Hammon (1711-1806?) was born a slave to the Lloyd family in Lloyd Neck when Oyster Bay Township still had political control of this peninsula.³ Hammon received his education along with the Lloyd children on the Lloyd estate and served three generations of the Lloyd family as a messenger, bookkeeper

and in various other duties. Hammon's deep religious beliefs led him to purchase a Bible at the age of 22 in 1733, and he later acquired another Bible in 1745.⁴ Hammon was said to be a preacher to all those who would come to listen to him. On Christmas Day in 1760, Hammon wrote his first published religious verse called "An Evening Thought- Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries."⁵ Because this poem was published years before the Boston slave Phillis Wheatly published her poems, Hammon is thought to be the first black writer to have been published in America. In 1778 Hammon's poem (sermon) "An address to Miss Phillis Wheatly," was published, being written in Hartford, CT. after the Lloyd family fled from the British troops on Long Island. Some lines of advice to Miss Wheatly are

Come you, Phillis, now aspire,
And seek the living God,
So step by step thou mayst go
higher,
Till perfect in the word.
and



Samson Occum

When thousands muse with
earthly toys,
And range about the street,
Dear Phillis, seek for heaven's
joys,

Where we do hope to meet.

Hammon proceeded to publish (with help from others) "An Essay on the Ten Virgins," in 1779, "A Winter's Piece," in 1782, and "An Evenings Improvement," in 1783 and 1806. He is thought to have other broadsides of his poetry in print but they have not been found. As a poet Hammon's work is not considered among Long Island's greatest because of the narrow focus of his poems (religious), and the amount published. But Hammon will always be remembered as one of the first poets who were inspired to write here. When Hammon died little was remembered about him until the 1970s, when an interest in black history and American poetry were rekindled.⁶

Samson Occum (1723-1792), was a Mohegan Indian who was born near New London, Connecticut, in 1723. Occum accepted Christian beliefs early in his life, becoming a Presbyterian minister; he arrived on Long Island in 1749 to serve the Montauk Indians as a pastor and schoolmaster. During this period Occum traveled as far as England to raise money for the education of the American Indians and was well known throughout the colonies for his efforts in this area.⁷ While on Long Island Occum married Mary Fowler, a Montauk tribe member. Occum had written several books during his lifetime and his autobiogra-

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HIRAM CHEEPE

Dear Hiram,

I picked up this interesting lamp at an auction and hope you can shed some light on it. The auctioneer told me it was Italian and fairly old but beyond that I can find no information on it.

Sincerely,
David S.

Dear David,

The auctioneer was quite correct in assigning a Mediterranean provenance to your lamp as you have what is essentially an Italian 4 wick olive oil lamp, the particular style illustrated being variously known as a Lucerna, Roman Candle or simply enough, an "oil lamp." This style of lamp was very popular in southern Europe from the middle ages until the mid 19th Century, and is the lineal descendant of the humble Roman clay lamp, of which countless thousands have been unearthed through the years. The wealthier citizens had bronze lamps as well, some highly figured, but few have survived since it is human nature to recycle so useful a material.

While many reproductions were made in the last sixty years or so in this once popular style, they are aesthetically sterile, with very heavy, poorly proportioned columns and bases. Your example appears stylistically to date from the late 18th century, if we are to judge from the well proportioned turnings and the distinctive, fairly thin dished base. The 18th century was the Lucerna's "golden age." Many were made, chiefly of cast brass but some fine silver versions are extant as well, the really elaborate ones having an adjustable shade which was generally shaped like a heraldic shield, and many were equipped with a wick trimmer and pick, both being suspended by chains hung from the handle. However, many of these were all too easily lost over the

years. Unfortunately there is a dearth of accurate information on these lovely treasures, so auction catalogues and older, out of print works on antiques are a valuable, and sometimes sole, resource. Olive oil has been the lifeblood of the Mediterranean world from ancient times to the present and had many uses including culinary, medical, illumination, soaps and other purposes not fit to mention here.

Congratulations from 'Ol Hiram on a very nice acquisition!

Long Island Dead Poets

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phy "A Short Narrative of My Life," published in 1768, is considered to be the first English book written by a Native American.⁸ Occum joined the ranks of the Long Island Dead Poets'

Society in 1772, when he published his sermon poem "A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul." Occum passed away in New Stockbridge, New York, in 1792. During his years on Long Island Occum was known as a preacher, an advocate of Indian rights and a poet.

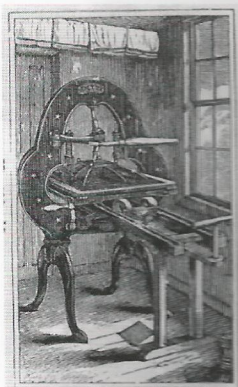
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Answers to Test Your Knowledge, from p.15

1. d. 1881
2. h. 1887
3. i. 1864
4. e. 1898
5. c. 1844
6. j. 1883
7. b. 1687
8. f. 1917
9. g. 1861
10. a. 1916

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Digital History: A Guide To Gathering, Preserving, And Presenting The Past On The Web. By Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. 316 pp. B&W figures, appendix, notes, and index.

The World Wide Web has made it more possible than ever before that the person crushed against you on the morning Seventh-Avenue local will be a historian. This is not to say that the traditional route to historianship - the long march of schooling, research, dissertations, oral exams, internships, editorial boards, and all the other Odyssean challenges - has closed. The rigor of training still applies, only now the rise of personal digital technology has given voice and image to a wider pool of people who "do" history - not just the usual corps of scholars, academics, and museum curators/administrators but also the filmmakers, classroom teachers, students, and amateurs as well. All of them share more than a love of history. Now they can all have a website.

Cohen and Rosenzweig outline all the well-known advantages of web technology as a platform for disseminating information: the expanded capacity and accessibility of the web, the manipulation of text and image, the interaction between user and creator, the democratization and diversity of a true public voice. They also roll out the decided drawbacks, on which we must dwell.

Questions of authority, for instance. Do we discredit the nonprofessional out of hand, while subscribing to every last datum of the Library of Congress's American Memory site? Or questions of durability, even more troubling. The digital record is notoriously fragile, as websites come and go. Who's preserving all this information? Worst of all, how accessible will the new digital world remain in the face of private storehouses and what the authors call the "scandalous" Sonny Bono Copyright Extension Act of 1998? "Will access to the best historical resources," the authors ask, "be open or closed?" Good question, no answer.

Fortunately, many readers won't have to let their heads spin over all this gloomy theory. They just want to know how to build their family history sites, and the authors are ready to tell them how - not at the level of nuts and bolts but clearly and serenely above the fray of bytes and codes. Here readers will learn how to prepare materials for their sites, how to design pages, build audiences, and collect history. There is a long and dreadfully necessary chapter on the Scylla and Charybdis of copyright and

fair use, as well as a close and vigorous treatment of digital preservation. Even those who have no intention of digitizing history, theirs or others, will find something useful here.

Cohen and Rosenzweig treat with some humor the darker side of our unavoidably digital age. They let you know that Thompson Gale, the multinational database giant, considers itself the owner of the 18th century. They remind you that "even modest interest in your history website is not a given." They suggest that a link between your site and the Library of Congress's will surely outperform a link with your cousin's. They indicate that sponsored links to historians' sites cost less on average (\$.22) than those to sites selling sex (\$.45) or flowers (\$3.13). They warn you that interactive "respondents" can "push the boundaries of civility." They alert you to "be prepared to be depressed by the large number of visitors who depart from your site in less than one minute." They insist that "you should always remember to treat [your contributors] with humanity and respect." They admit that "authors sometimes mistakenly assume that publishers share their same interests." They marvel that media Cyclopes like the *Atlantic Monthly* are hardly above trying to lay copyright claim to The Gettysburg Address. All in all, much of their wisdom can be distilled to a single dictum: "We can't guarantee reasonable behavior."

Actually, in the current flux of digital technology, no one can guarantee anything. Still, Cohen

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Long Island Dead Poets

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NOTES

1. New York State Literary Tree. Jupiter Hammon. www.nyslittree.org
2. Hammon's first published poem was in 1760 and Occum's autobiography *A Short Narrative of my Life* was published in 1768.
3. Lloyd Neck became part of Huntington Town in the 1880s.
4. "Curious Old Hymn Book," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 09/16/1888 P2. The bible depicted in this newspaper article was first owned by Obium Roe, another slave of the Lloyd family, raised on Shelter Island. In this Bible Jupiter signs his name "Jupiter Lloyd," which indicates his closeness to the Lloyd family.
5. Krieg, Joan D. *Long Island and Literature*, 1989. Long Island Studies Institute, Heart of the Lakes Publishing, Interlaken, NY P 18.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

AUGUST

Tuesdays, 6-8 p.m.

Neighborhood Night

The Neighborhood Nights are FREE events for the entire family to enjoy at some of the most enchanting places in town.

All events will run from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets, a picnic supper and their family and friends. Take this opportunity to sit back and enjoy the historic and natural jewels of your

community. The evenings will include crafts, games and activities for the children, and entertainment.

Enjoy your community while visiting the places of interest in your "own backyard."

6. Because there is no gravesite for Jupiter Hammon his year of death is disputed with some saying he died in the 1790s while others put it as late as 1806. According to the article "Curious Old Hymn Book," Hammon is buried in a plot in Queens' Village, (Lloyd Neck) between the Manor House and the family vault.

7. Occum was very successful in raising money to help educate the American Indians and raised more than \$40,000 dollars in this endeavor. Unfortunately these funds went to establish Dartmouth, a white college in New Hampshire instead.

8. New York State Literary Tree. Samson Occum. www.nyslittree.org

TO BE CONTINUED

Blocklyn's Books

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and Rosenzweig remain hopeful about digital history, as long as we focus on their "larger message that all historians can use the web to make the past more richly documented, more accessible, more diverse, more responsive to future researchers, and above all more democratic."

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Join us for Neighborhood Night,
Tuesday, August 28th.

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