



THE FREEHOLDER

SUMMER 2002 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

👉 HISTORY
OF OYSTER
BAY'S TRAIN
STATION
REVEALED

👉 A
SCOFFLAW'S
WORST
NIGHTMARE,
PART II

👉 BYGONE
FERRIES:
THE ONLY
WAY OFF
THE ISLAND

👉 SOCIETY'S
FALL 2002
EVENTS WILL
APPEAL TO
ALL AGES!



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome incoming President Susan Peterson and our new trustees William Blatz, Thomas Montalbano, and Barrie Curtis Spies. Thank you all for stepping forward and volunteering your time to serve the Society. I look forward to working with all of you on the many projects we have lined up. Of course the most

pressing one is our fall exhibit, journal, and events on recreation in Oyster Bay.

I urge all of our members to get involved, by attending the events, taking ads in the journal, and telling their friends about the Society's accomplishments. I believe the Society will play a crucial role in Oyster Bay in the coming months and years. We are going to need all the help we can get!

Officers and Trustees of the Oyster Bay Historical Society

Prof. Susan Peterson.....President
Stephen V. Walker.....Vice President
John E. Hammond.....2nd Vice President
Mrs. Matthew Morgan.....Treasurer
Philip Blocklyn.....Recording Secretary
Mrs. Robert E. Pittis.....Membership Secretary

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mrs. Albert E. Amos
Ms. Adelaide Beatty
William Blatz
Fritz Coudert
Michael J. Hambrook
John Karabatos

Mrs. Robert P. Koenig
Maureen Monck, Ph.D.
Thomas Montalbano
Rev. Kenneth W. Nelson
Mrs. Samuel D. Parkinson
Warrick C. Robinson
Edward B. Ryder IV
Barrie Curtis Spies
Mrs. John H.G. Stuurman
Bradford Warner

HONORARY TRUSTEES

Edward F.L. Bruen, Esq.
Miss Dorothy H. McGee

Thomas A. Kuehhas.....Director

CONTENTS

The Sound of Time at the.....3	Uncle Peleg.....10
Oyster Bay Train Station	Currents of the Bay.....11
David D. Morrison	Test Your Knowledge.....15
Memories of the Whittendales, Pt II.....6	The Gathering Place.....16
S. Berliner, III	Blocklyn's Books.....22
Forgotten Ferryboats.....8	Aunt Eek.....23
Walter G. Karppi	Calendar of Upcoming Events.....24

of the South Shore estates that appeared in the Spring 2002 issue.

To the Editor:

Harry Havemeyer wrote and asked us to pass along the following information to our Long Island contacts. Amereon [publisher of both volumes] went out of business rather suddenly. Harry bought out the stock of both books and will be the source for commercial buyers. We'll check with Harry to see how he wants to do orders if there is interest. Please pass on to your readers that individuals can now purchase books at or order with credit card from:

Runaway Bay Books
10 Main Street



THE POST RIDER

The Editor is "shamefaced" and is eating "humble pie" after a reader pointed out to him that in Frank York's piece on Folk Etymology in the Spring issue, "philology" was somehow transformed into "physiology!" Obviously, my computer failed to notice the difference! But it was an especially egregious error in a column on the origin of words!

The following came from Ray Spinzia, who wrote the guest book review on Harry Havemeyer's two-volume history

THE FREEHOLDER

of the

Oyster Bay Historical Society
Vol. 7 No. 1 Summer 2002

Editorial Staff

Editor: Thomas A. Kuehhas
Contributing Editors: Elliot M. Sayward
Richard F. Kappeler
Rick Robinson
John Hammond
Arlene Goodenough

Address Editorial Communications to:

Editor, The Freeholder

P.O. Box 297

Oyster Bay, NY 11771

Email us at OBHistory@aol.com

The Freeholder of the Oyster Bay Historical Society is published quarterly with the generous assistance of private individuals. The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, but of the individual authors.

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.

Copyright 2002 by the
Oyster Bay Historical Society

ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

This photograph from the Historical Society's collections is one of several which show Oyster Bay baseball teams from c. 1905. Baseball is just one of the many Twentieth Century recreational activities which the Society will be focusing on for this fall's exhibition, journal, and events series.

Please see the related story on p. 11 to find out how you can participate!

Sayville, NY, 11782
(631 - 589 - 9212)

To the Editor:

I read with great interest the piece in last issue's [Spring 2002] Uncle Peleg's column on the origin of "Pip-pip" as a means of saying "Good-bye."

The version I learned differed slightly from that taught to Uncle Peleg when a lad. In this version, the first two lines are transposed, the "Engine Driver pulls the little lever," and it ends with "puff- puff, toot-toot, Off we go!"

I wonder if some of your readers have heard other variations on this theme?

Regards,

Charles Richards

THE SOUND OF TIME AT OYSTER BAY TRAIN STATION

by David D. Morrison

Most persons reading this article are probably familiar with the train station at Oyster Bay. How many are familiar with North Creek Train Station located in upstate New York? That station is on the State and National Register of Historic Places, probably due to a single moment in history. It was at North Creek Station, on September 14, 1901, that Vice President Theodore Roosevelt learned of the death of President McKinley. An excellent account of that story appeared in Vol. XXIV, Number 4, 2001, of the Theodore Roosevelt Association *Journal*. As Roosevelt stepped onto the train at North Creek and headed to Buffalo to be sworn in as the 26th President, the North Creek Station entered the history books.

What about the historic status of Oyster Bay Station? That's the station that President Roosevelt used in traveling to and from his Summer White House and Washington, D.C. Whenever Roosevelt arrived or departed Oyster Bay, there were throngs of people at the station to wave him welcome or farewell. Many famous people and foreign dignitaries arrived at the station enroute to visit Roosevelt at Sagamore Hill. Secret Service Agents were often at the station at train time to observe who was arriving in town. Fortunately, there exists a photograph in the Oyster Bay Historical Society archives which shows Roosevelt sitting

in a horse drawn carriage outside the streetside door of the train station. There also exists a vintage postcard showing Roosevelt on the rear end of a train waving goodbye to a crowd that had gathered to bid him farewell.

A significant connection exists between the old train station building and President Roosevelt. But who would know it by looking at the station building? Stand in front of the Bookmark Cafe and you will see a bronze plaque identifying the building as TR's Summer Executive Offices (aka Summer White House). Stand in front of Oyster Bay Station building and you will not see anything linking the building to the President. Shouldn't there be a plaque on the old station building? Shouldn't the building have state and national landmark status?

Let's discuss some of the histo-

ry of train service to Oyster Bay and the station building. Long Island Rail Road train service commenced at Oyster Bay on June 24, 1889, with the arrival of the 11:30 am train which was welcomed by 2,500 persons (*Brooklyn Eagle*, March 19, 1928). An elaborate celebration was held with four brass bands and several local fire departments participating in a parade. Interestingly, in 1989, on the 100th Anniversary of the completion of the Oyster Bay Branch, only a half dozen persons gathered at the station and said a few words to each other to mark the occasion. On the other hand, other communities marked their railroad branch 100th Anniversaries with large ceremonies such as what was held for Greenport in 1994, Montauk in 1995, and Port Washington in 1998.



The 1902 Oyster Bay Train Station as it appears today, on its centennial. Plans are afoot to turn the station over to the Town of Oyster Bay for use as part of the proposed train museum, along with Locomotive #35 and the turntable.

From the author's collection.



The train station as it appeared shortly after its 1889 opening. Notice the ornate porte cochere which covered the entrance to the building.
Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.

The first station building was erected at Oyster Bay in 1889 and served until 1902. Here is where some historical uncertainty occurs. Was the 1889 building renovated in 1902 or was a new structure erected in that year? There is a school of thought which believes that the 1889 structure was renovated to a large extent. Others believe that a new building was erected. According to LIRR historian Ron Ziel, the original building was "nothing more than a nondescript frame structure" (*Victorian Railroad Stations of Long Island*, p. 146). Another LIRR historian, Vincent F. Seyfried, states that "a frame depot served the station at first; a new depot building, 32' by 68', was erected in June and July 1902 (*The Long Island Rail Road - A Comprehensive History*, Vol. 6, p. 278).

An interesting article appeared in the May 6, 1965, edition of the *Locust Valley Leader*. In the article, it was noted, "Oyster Bay railroad station reveals itself as

rather a local mystery, tantalized by the receipt last week of a photo from the collection of Mrs. Miner Hill. The photo shows what appears to be an entirely different station house than that about to be painted today. There is not only an obvious lack of oyster shells on the old porte-cochered building, but every indication of a different structure." A photo of that "former station building" accompanies this article. It should be noted also, that the older building shows two chimneys (east and west ends), whereas the present structure has only one chimney on the east end. The mystery may never be solved, but the structure there today is considered to be from 1902, be it rebuilt or new construction.

Looking back to a newspaper account of the day, the July 9, 1902, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* bears an account worth repeating verbatim:

NEW RAILROAD STATION
AT OYSTER BAY

Oyster Bay, L.I. July 9 - The new railroad station at this place, now practically ready for opening, is pronounced the finest building of the kind on Long Island, not excepting that at Southampton. The main building is 32 by 68 feet in size, artistic in design and very handsomely finished. A portion of the exterior is of cement, in which oyster shells are embedded. The principal weather shed, on the bay side, is 400 feet in length and the roof is supported by twenty pillars. The interior of the building is very striking a feature being a large fireplace with tiled hearth. There are two large bay windows- one opening to the south, the other to the north. The latter encloses the ticket office. The interior is of the colonial style, the material used being chestnut, finished in a forest green. Two inside arches give the room an imposing appearance. It will be steam heated. The toilet rooms are fitted with plumbing and fixtures of the most improved pattern. Everything about the station is up to date. The cement walk in front is 400 feet long. This will be extended by cinder paths on each end, east and west, making one of the finest promenades in the country, with the picturesque bay in the foreground.

Flowers will be planted in beds depressed in the cement walk fronting the tracks.

Reading the above description of the station, it sounds like a beautiful structure. One can only imagine how impressive the interior must have been. There are no

known photographs of the interior of the building prior to the 1964 renovation. Sadly, this is a common problem with most historic railroad stations. Most photos were taken showing the station exteriors probably due to the fact that flash photography was less widely used years ago. At any rate, if any readers have interior photos of the Oyster Bay Station building, or any other station building for that matter, please make them known to the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

There is a drawing in the Oyster Bay Historical Society archives dated September 20, 1922, which shows that the first floor of the station building consisted entirely of the ticket office, waiting room and two rest rooms. The waiting room was huge, taking up most of the floor. The ticket office was located in the north bay and there was wrap around bench seating in the south bay. The fireplace was between the two restroom doors. A telephone booth was on the north wall, west of the ticket office enclosure.

On the subject of the fireplace, only five other LIRR stations have fireplaces today. Oakdale, Southampton and Garden City Stations have intact (though non-working) fireplaces with beautiful wood mantles. The Glen Cove Station has an elegant fireplace with ornate wooden columns on each side, but that fireplace is hidden behind the west waiting room wall. The LIRR has plans in the works to restore that fireplace and once again expose it to the view of

customers in the waiting room. The other fireplace is at Glen Street Station, which the LIRR has recently rebuilt with a handsome wood mantle that has LIRR keystone emblems engraved into the wood. Hopefully, when the Oyster Bay Station is restored, the fireplace can be rebuilt to enhance the beauty of the building interior and restore some of the historic charm of the building.

Two major building renovations occurred since 1902. In 1941, the station platform canopies were removed. That significantly changed the appearance of the station. One can still see today, the wood trimwork where the canopies used to join the station building.

In 1964, some doors were relocated and the waiting room was completely remodeled and a drop ceiling was installed as well as green wall tiles that gave the waiting room the appearance of the inside of a bathroom. It was at that time that the old fireplace on the east wall was partially dismantled and hidden from view.

The mantel and front portion of the bricks were removed and the remainder of the fireplace was hidden behind a green tile wall. It was in 1998 that the wall was broken open and the remains of the fireplace were exposed. Laying in the dusty bricks was a small piece of rolled up paper. Upon removal of the paper, it was discovered that it was a May 17, 1964, LIRR timetable. Evidently the railroad crew that worked on covering up the fireplace must have thrown the timetable into the bricks as a simple time capsule.

Some noticeable changes occurred in the railroad's operations at Oyster Bay throughout the years. Probably the most significant change was in 1955, when steam locomotives were replaced by diesel locomotives. The Long Island Rail Road held an official "End of Steam Ceremony" on October 8, 1955, at Hicksville Station. Two steam locomotives participated in that ceremony; # 39 which is at the

continued on p. 16



A postcard view of the Oyster Bay train station as it appeared in the 1920s, with the platform sheds which provided passengers with shelter from the elements.

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

One town resident of great note and probity was not so well-behaved in his teens (quite the "scorcher") and Bill chased him for many miles around the estates, only losing him once when the young miscreant cut across through the inter-connected estates from West Shore Road up Seashore Road and then over to Roger Canoe Hollow Road (how about *that* name?) and out onto Horseshoe Road and Cleft Road. He only got away with that once!

Eileen remembered fondly the many times her father would take her with him on his rounds. Bill must have been a devoted father; Eileen early on became subject to violent seizures and he and Elina did everything possible to make her life comfortable.

One thing that working on the estates and cruising them on official police business afforded was the opportunity to pick up all sorts of cast-off tools, equipment, and paraphernalia. Thus it was that when Bill started to build his house in Mill Neck Estates (at 758 Connecticut View Drive), he came up with the most amazing collection of doors and windows. He contracted with a custom builder, Magnus Hansen, a Norwegian from Bayville, and worked for Mr. Hansen, learning and receiving help and advice. They became very good friends.

The absolute pinnacle of Bill's

"collecting" came when he acquired two complete sets of garage doors 35 years *after* the house was finished and had a contractor add a two-car garage floor and wall to the house, whereupon he fitted the two door sets and then erected a huge family room above all that. Tractors, sprayers, gates, and who-knows-

would often tell with great fondness of their long rides (before the superhighways) up to Mt. Holly. Even after Bill's death in 1978, Elina would make the run herself and after her death in 1988, Eileen loved to go up to visit with her aunt, the late Elma Kangas Syria and her many cousins. Elma only passed away this year, at 90.

The Whittendale clan here on Long Island was very active in local Irish-American affairs and the Orange Lodge had big socials at Norway Hall across from the Glen Head railroad station. Up in Vermont, the Finns had their big get-togethers, also. Finns tend to be quite short and reserved and Big Bill Whittendale, all 5' 11" of him, who never mastered a bit of Finnish, loved to barge in in his happy Irish way and clap some hapless little Finn



William "Willy the Whip" Whittendale in his Mill Neck police uniform. Photo taken by the author.

what-else automatically gravitated to that garage. Linda remembers him getting rid of a tremendous amount of stuff, but where did it come from in the first place?

The Whittendale and Kangas families stayed close and Eileen

on the shoulder with a booming "How's your nuppa?" Well, "nuppa" actually means "belly button (navel)" and his victim would usually be a bit nonplussed by this unwonted familiarity but that never slowed Bill down in the least. This was actu-

ally a very serious matter, according to Linda, because Grandma Aiti (Alina) was a midwife.

Bob and Elsie Thompson of Glen Head, neighbors of Whittendale cousin Victor Trimble, were close friends of Bill's and, after Bill's and Bob's death, Elina became fast friends with Elsie. Bill's cousin Jim Whittendale built a house diagonally behind his (on the corner of Soundview and Harborview). Jim was a groundskeeper at Friends' Academy in Locust Valley and was most likely a practicing Quaker. Another cousin Bobbie Whittendale came across from Westport, Connecticut, to visit and there

was never a shortage of family and friends at the house. Elegant, dapper Bobbie faithfully popped in on Eileen now and then until her death.

Elina was an accomplished baker and inordinately proud of her breads and any visitor was always assured of a welcome and a slice of bread. After Bill complained that even he was getting overworked in his duties as a policeman, a fourth man, Bill Tillotson, was added to the force, and he, too, bought a house in the Estates (on Soundview, from Ed and Elsie Parks when they moved to Maryland). This enabled better rotation of shifts and more

vacation time for Bill. The Caseys and Bill Tillotson would often sit in the Whittendale kitchen to plan their days and have some bread. A sad note here was that Eileen developed sprue-celiac disease (gluten intolerance), and her mother never could get the hang of baking without wheat

flour, so many loaves were baked but not eaten.

Elina was born in Lead, South Dakota, on July 27, 1910, over a gold mine, the Homestead Mines, which is still producing. Her father, David & his brother Matthew were miners during that time, which might have been only a few years. Elina's mother, Aiti, was a midwife. Elina's sister, Elma was born on April 8, 1912, at the farm in Chester, Vermont, and moved to nearby Mt. Holly. She and Elina were always very close. Linda's son ran across 1910 census records from Lead, naming her grandfather as a miner with three children. Black Hills gold is made to showcase the three colors of gold that came from the same mine. Eileen treasured the pieces she had and they were given to cousin Elena's daughter, who also loves them.

Eileen died peaceably in her sleep of a seizure in 1998 (for the numerologists amongst you, note the three dates - 1978, 1988, and 1998). Shortly before that, she had lost her long-time job as payroll programmer for the Division of Data Processing of Nassau County's Department of General Services in Mineola because of her decreasing ability to remember what she had been doing before a seizure. After losing her driver's license, a bitter blow, she walked to the Oyster Bay train station every morning, some three miles, and took the LIRR to Mineola and then walked up to West Street (at Old Country Road). As the seizures worsened, she often ended up in Nassau

continued on p. 18



Elina and Eileen Whittendale

FORGOTTEN FERRYBOATS

by Walter G. Karppi

The Islands named Manhattan and Long, being surrounded by water as are all islands, were once accessible to the mainland only by vessels of some kind. Ranging from rafts and canoes used by the Native American Indians to colonial sailing ships and modern steamboats displacing thousands of tons, these conveyances plied Long Island Sound and the East River carrying passengers and freight through fair weather and foul for years. The bridges and tunnels that are used today merely replaced existing ferries.

Harbinger of the fate that awaited all ferries was Roebling's magnificent Brooklyn Bridge, begun in 1870 and completed in 1883, that rendered redundant the ferry that crossed the East River between downtown Brooklyn's Fulton Street and lower Manhattan. Other ferries succumbed to the Manhattan, Williamsburg, and Queensboro bridges. The last remaining river ferry was that of the Long Island Rail Road between East 34th Street in Manhattan and Long Island City in Queens until that too was defeated by the Pennsylvania Railroad's East River tunnels.

Closer to home, and lasting into the late 1930s, were ferries running between: Whitestone Landing (Queens) and The Bronx, Bayville (Nassau) and Greenwich, CT, and Oyster Bay to Stamford, CT. The Bayville ferry succumbed to the forces of nature in 1930 and the completion of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge in 1939 led to the demise of the Whitestone and Oyster Bay ferries. Ancestor of the latter was the "Horse Boat Ferry" inaugu-



A World War I-era postcard advertises the Oyster Bay (Bayville) - Greenwich ferry. Notice the tariff charged "vehicles & teams," as well as "led animals." Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.

rated by Major Thomas Jones in 1739. This clever vessel used six horses walking on a treadmill, driving paddle wheels, for power rather than relying on sails and the fickleness of the wind. Unfortunately seaworthiness was not one of its virtues and it capsized during a gale in 1739. Major Jones, his helper, three male and six female passengers and the six horses all perished. Once again sailing vessels began providing transportation.

More a shipping line than a ferry was Captain Alexander Studwell's twice weekly service from Oyster Bay to Manhattan by sail in the schooner *J.H. Holden* during the 1880s. In 1889 the sailing vessel was replaced by the steam packet *Portchester* which enabled him to replace his twice weekly schedule with one of three times per week. En route to the city stops were made at the Seawanhaka Yacht Club (Centre Island), Cold Spring Harbor and Lloyd's Neck (Suffolk). Shortly after his acquisition of the ship

the Long Island Rail Road arrived in Oyster Bay and rapidly siphoned off his share of the freight business by offering speed of delivery, albeit at a greater cost.

The short lived ferry instituted by the Long Island Rail Road in 1891 was an attempt to cash in on the lucrative New York City - Boston traffic. The rails were laid to the commercial wharf, at the foot of South Street, which itself was extended 1,000 feet to a floating dock where cars would be loaded onto a ferry destined for Wilson's Point, Connecticut. Locomotives of the Housatonic Railroad would then haul the cars to Boston. The steamer *Cape Charles* was used for this service hauling two trains each day by 1892 but the expected traffic never materialized and the project was soon discontinued.

Frederick Wenck formed the Wenck Marine Corporation in 1917 for the purpose of providing ferry service between Greenwich and Bayville. He named the com-

pany the Greenwich-Oyster Bay Ferry since Bayville, the actual docking location, was not as well nor widely known as Oyster Bay. Teddy Roosevelt's fame insured Oyster Bay's cachet with the public. Service was provided on an hourly basis from 9 AM until 8 PM and prospered until 1926. Competition from the newly inaugurated Stamford-Oyster Bay Ferry caused Wenck to reduce his hourly service and concentrate on excursion traffic to the new "Play land" at Rye Beach.

In August 1930, the dock at Greenwich ceased operations and Wenck was forced to change his terminus to Stamford - sharing it with the Oyster Bay line. In March 1930, a violent storm destroyed the ferry dock and other buildings on the Long Island side. This last blow ended regular ferry service from Bayville.

On July 4, 1926, the Mack Marine Company of Stamford, Connecticut instituted a cross Sound ferry service between Oyster Bay and Stamford using an especially rebuilt 150 foot long steamer named the *Chelsea*. She was a double decked vessel with a maximum capacity of 50 cars and 1,000 passengers capable of making the crossing in one hour and twenty minutes. Equipped with a dining salon and dance pavilion on its upper deck, the *Chelsea* was a luxurious way to make the cross Sound trip. Its draft of eleven and one half feet made dredging of the bay near the dock a necessity. Even so, the narrowness of the dredged channel and tricky cross-currents made precise navigation difficult.

At low tide it was likened to threading a needle.

The company purchased a second boat, the *Tinicum*, in May 1931. Originally constructed in 1905 in Chester, Pennsylvania, as a 140 foot, steel-hulled, single cylinder steam vessel, for use as a Delaware River freighter, she was converted to a ferry in 1931. Having a much lower draft than the *Chelsea* made the *Tinicum* ideal for Oyster Bay harbor's shallow waters. Its success led to the purchase of a third boat, the *Sankaty*, in August 1932, which replaced the troublesome *Chelsea*.

This last ship, launched in 1911, was a large vessel with a length of 195 feet and a beam of 38.5 feet. She served many years with the New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat Company until June 1924, when she caught fire in New Bedford and sank. John Snow purchased the sunken hulk, had it pumped out and refloated. He then had it rebuilt as a car ferry through the addition of a new superstructure. It quickly became the pride of the

small fleet due to its spacious accommodations and the favorite for excursion traffic to Playland at Rye Beach, New York.

The September 1932, timetable shows departures from Stamford from 7:30 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. and from Oyster Bay from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., at mostly 90 minute intervals. The fare was 50 cents for each pedestrian passenger and 25 cents per child. Autos were \$12.00 for the first 12 feet, including driver, and 25 cents for each foot over and each additional passenger.

During the Depression years of the 1930s the vessels of the company provided many welcome jobs for the people of Oyster Bay. The Whitestone, and later Throgs Neck, bridges sealed the fate of this gracious, if slow, way of crossing the sound. These bridges built to relieve congestion and speed traffic were successful - at first. As with so many otherwise well intentioned schemes they were found to generate more traffic than they relieved.

continued on p. 19



The Sankaty



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

At a party I attended a young man was carrying on in a rather crazy fashion and making everyone laugh. Another man said, "You're a regular Tom of Bedlum." That seemed a bit familiar but I couldn't place it. Was it insulting?

Anna Everard

Might have been meant that way but could easily have meant that the speaker was enjoying the other's antics. The expression is usually rendered Tom o' Bedlam and it goes back a long way. Five or six hundred years ago there was a priory in London called St. Mary's of Bethlehem. Got reduced to Bedlam and came into the ownership of the City of London. They made it into a lunatic asylum. Beggars sometimes feigned craziness to stir the giving of alms. They began to be called Tom o' Bedlams and were famous for their mad and often amusing behavior.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

I think the term "galoot" would probably be regarded by most people hearing it today as rather old fashioned if they recognized

it at all. When it startled me in a conversation heard on the golf course the other day I realized that I don't really know what it means except that it refers to a person held in somewhat low estimation by the user. Can you expand on it for me?

Vic Todd

While several suggestions have been offered as to the source and meaning of "galoot," it is one of those words of which we have little or no information as to where it came from or even what it means exactly. Its meaning has apparently been more or less pejorative since it was first recorded. An American slang dictionary says it refers to an "inexperienced seaman" or an "awkward or boorish man" and says it harks back to the middle 1800s. Eric Partridge, the British dictionary maker, offers the same entry date but says the meaning is an "inexperienced marine." A bit farther along he puts back galoot's birthday to 1812 with the meaning of "soldier." He follows that with another try, this one with a question mark, suggesting that galoot may derive from the Dutch "gelubt" a eunuch, or from the Spanish "galeoto," a galley slave. I offer, with a bow to our own Lee Myles, a Dutch word for noise, "geluid" meaning figuratively, an untrained galley slave who hollers a lot.

A very nice lady named Arlene who happens to be a shining light among the flickering bulbs who man (no sexist slur intended) this periodical commented to the Editor about deadlines, a difficulty

from which we all suffer. She then suggested that he ask Uncle Peleg to explain "the underlying meaning" of the term. We have little doubt that she, a person of great erudition, knows more about the matter than we do and was not looking for information but was trying to steer a little business our way. Having missed quite a few deadlines ourself we thought we ought to make a stab at it.

OK, Arlene, here goes. As most of our readers will know, a deadline, in common parlance today, is a date or a time by which a task, often one in the world of publishing, must be completed and delivered to the Boss. ("Boss" is a Dutch word, Myles) To miss a deadline is to suffer the Boss' displeasure in some unpleasant manner. So where did it come from? We think it was born in the military prisons for captured enemy soldiers during the American Civil War. It may hark back to earlier wars. The deadline was a line around a prison space inside the often flimsy walls or barriers erected around a prison or prison camp. Were a prisoner to cross that line he would be summarily shot from the guard towers that command a prison yard. This was suffering the boss' displeasure in a really serious way.

On this magazine the line is crossed only on a clock or calendar but it is rumored that Editor Kuehhas has been seen cleaning his shotgun in the late hours before Freeholder copy is due at the printer.

[Ed. note: There is no truth to this scurrilous rumor! A bayonet is a much more effective prod anyway!]



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**.*



The Society's outgoing and incoming presidents, Edward B. "Woody" Ryder and Susan Peterson, are shown above at the Annual Meeting in June. Please see the enclosed Annual Report for Prof. Peterson's Inaugural Address.

FALL EXHIBIT & EVENTS TO FOCUS ON 20TH CENTURY RECREATION

The Oyster Bay Historical Society's Fall exhibition "Recreation During the 20th Century in Oyster Bay: From Doing to Viewing," will document the variety of recreational experiences available in Oyster Bay to generations of its residents during the course of the century.

In choosing the title of "From Doing to Viewing" it was possible to chronicle the spectacular changes in science and technology during this period which

changed peoples' perceptions of recreational activities. Man went from "horse and buggy days" to the lunar landing in less than a century! This evolution is documented in the Society's exhibition; from bobsled-ding, yacht-racing, and bowling to Super Bowl parties, and most recently, a cyber-cafe on East Main Street!

The following educational and cultural offerings have been designed to provide an educational and interactive

experience for all participants. We hope that you can join us for these events!

A cocktail party featuring traditional lawn games will be held on Sunday, Oct. 6, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Cove Neck Home of Mrs. Robert E. Pittis.

Sit and watch the boats go by from the front lawn of this beautiful Cove Neck home. Join in the fun of period lawn games, such as croquet, badminton, golf and bocce. Enjoy a selection of fine wines and hors d'oeuvres. Meet old friends and make some new ones! (The party will be held rain or shine; lawn games, weather permitting. Sports Dress recom-

mended!)

On Sunday, Oct. 27, at 3 p.m., the Society will host a "Hunt for History in Downtown Oyster Bay." Come alone or come as a team of up to five persons. The starting point will be the Society's Earle-Wightman House headquarters, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay.

The task will be to solve a series of historical riddles that will lead participants to various historic sites in Oyster Bay. Some sites may require a short drive. Once the site is identified, participants must go there to collect a token. The team who collects the most tokens and returns to the Earle-Wightman House by 4:30 will be declared the winners and receive prizes! Cocktails and buffet supper will follow. Those who are unable to participate in the "hunt" are invited to attend the dinner.

The event series will wrap up on Sunday, Nov. 17, at 2 p.m. with a Roundtable Discussion and the opening of the Society's Fall Exhibition.

The roundtable will be held at the Oyster Bay Community Center on Church Street. A panel composed of local historians, authors, and persons familiar with recreational activities popular in Oyster Bay during the twentieth century will give short presentations on various types of recreation, ranging from activities on the great estates and private clubs to the wider variety of activities available to all town residents.

Following these short presenta-

tions, audience participation and reminiscing is encouraged!

The roundtable discussion will be followed by a reception at the Earle-Wightman House and the opening of the exhibition entitled "Recreation During the 20th Century in Oyster Bay: From Doing to Viewing."

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.

SOCIETY SEEKS DONATIONS OF EARLY 20TH CENTURY SCRAPBOOKS

Director Tom Kuehhas seeks the assistance of the local community in locating and preserving scrapbooks depicting life in Oyster Bay during the early part of the 20th century. Such scrapbooks, which usually include newspaper articles and photos, are an invaluable aid in recreating the lifestyle of that period. If you come across anything like this in the course of cleaning out your attic, please contact Director Kuehhas at 922-5032.

SOCIETY TRUSTEE'S NEW BOOK AVAILABLE

Oyster Bay Historical Society trustee John Hammond, author of histories of the Matinecock Masonic Lodge, Oyster Bay's fire companies, and East Norwich, has a new book out which is now available at the Society's Earle-Wightman House headquarters. Entitled *Oyster Bay Remembered*, it is a well-illustrated volume containing a large number of the weekly columns on local history which the author wrote for the *Oyster Bay Guardian*.

The Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library will host a book signing by the author on Thursday, September 19, at 7 p.m. Copies of the book will of course be available for purchase that evening, but if you can't wait, you can pick up your copy at the Historical Society's Earle-Wightman House on Summit Street.

Regardless of where or when you buy your copy the Society will benefit from sales of the book, so support the Historical Society by picking up your copy of *Oyster Bay Remembered* today!



A capacity crowd toured the Harris estate on June 15. Society members "Oohed!" and "Aahed!" at the intricately-designed garden railroad and the restored Victorian Tea House and garden. Followed by a delicious lunch at the exclusive Piping Rock Country Club, the tour was a smashing success!

RAYNHAM HALL PLANS TRIP TO LUCE CENTER AT NEW-YORK HISTORICAL

Raynham Hall Museum will sponsor a trip on Thursday, November 7, 2002, to the Henry Luce III Center, housed in the New-York Historical Society, located at West 77th Street and Central Park West.

The Luce Center encompasses 21,000 square feet and is regarded as a dynamic laboratory and learning resource center, which allows the public a "behind-the-scenes look at a working museum collection." The New-York Historical Soci-

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

ety hopes to chart an important new path in the museum community by presenting its extensive collection in such a format that is at once transparent, adaptable, and accessible. The objects displayed span from the 1600s to the present and include such treasures as Tiffany lamps, American sculpture and paintings including well known 18th century portraits by Trumbull and Peale, the complete original watercolors by John James Audubon for *The Birds of America*, furniture, including George Washington's inaugural chair, antique toys, textiles and more. Visitors will be given a special guided tour, by a Luce Center staff member, who will illuminate the innovations of the Luce Center's methods of displaying and preserving its collection. After the guided tour, all will have the opportunity to dine in one of the area's many restaurants.

\$26.00 per person will cover the cost of the guided tour and transportation, but does not include lunch. Space is limited, so to ensure your spot on this trip, please call (516)922-6808 to make a reservation.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

A village walk back in May drew approximately twenty-five people and in late June a near-capacity busload of society mem-

bers and friends traveled to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

The nation's oldest service academy, West Point is currently observing the bicentennial of its founding in 1802. Two new exhibit cases, commissioned by the society, are being readied for use in the gallery area on the lower floor of the Farmingdale Public Library. Society trustee Eric Goldschrafe, a skilled cabinetmaker, is hand-crafting the cases.

**HUNTINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Once a month up to October 10th, the society is again sponsoring a boat excursion and tour of the historic Van Wyck-Lefferts tide mill located in Huntington Harbor. For further information, call 631-427-7045. The weekday tour takes approximately two hours.

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE MASSAPEQUAS**

Grace Episcopal Church Cemetery is expanding its interments near the society's headquarters in the Old Grace Church. Visitors are asked to respect these new burial areas when visiting the building. A reminder that the nearby Cradle of Aviation Museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m to 5 p.m. There is ample free parking, a cafe (The



Honorary Chairpersons Natalie Grace Dejoux Brinkerhoff and Mrs. Charles G. Meyer, Jr. enjoy a light moment at the luncheon following the tour of the Harris estate at the Piping Rock Club, Locust Valley.

The Society gratefully acknowledges their support!

Red Planet), research library, and, of course, dozens of fascinating exhibits pertaining to the history of flight. For information call 516-572-4111 or contact the museum's website at www.cradleofaviation.com.

**CENTRAL PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

As many readers know, Bethpage hosted the men's U.S. Open Golf Tournament this year and several of society members "worked" the historic event. In other news, the society is preparing to print its second set of postcards covering the period 1936 to 1960 in the Bethpage community. Again, residents have been

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

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

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

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

encouraged to provide old photographs that are copied and promptly returned. These pictures are also indexed and added to the society's archives.

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The refurbishment of the Lauder Museum continues and we have already been at work for more than a year and a half. The interior rearrangement has been completed and the fencing and parking lot paving are well underway. The new Victorian



Guest speaker Arnold Bocksel, World War II veteran, survivor of Japanese POW camps, and author of *Rice, Men, and Barbed Wire* expounds on a point to an enthralled audience including Society trustee John Karabatos (at upper left) at the Society's Annual Meeting on June 14.

wrought iron fencing is all but completed and the exterior work is out for bid. This extensive third phase will involve repairs to the roof, removing old paint, and pointing of the brickwork, new exterior lighting, restoring the original lamp posts to the museum's front steps, restoring our signs and repainting the trim.



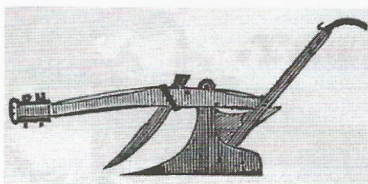
This past June 26 saw the return of ex-LIRR caboose #12 to Long Island. The Friends of Locomotive #35 raised the necessary funding to bring this valuable piece home to Long Island from the Shore Line Trolley Museum in Connecticut. It is slated to be a part of the proposed Railroad Museum at Oyster Bay. The group raised over \$11,000 for the purchase and relocation of the caboose. It is shown above at the Town of Oyster Bay DPW facility, where it will be stored until the Railroad Museum is ready to receive it.



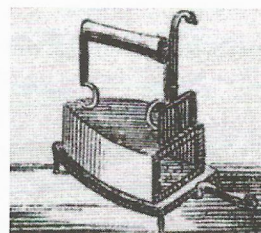
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



Were you to amuse yourself by reading old wills and probate inventories from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries you might find a number of articles listed that you don't recognize. Many such have gone out of use and, of course, people spelled very eccentrically in the early part of that time span. We have selected a round number of these from the sources mentioned that may be obsolete but mostly don't give trouble spellingwise. All we ask you to do is define them to your own satisfaction and then compare your definitions with ours.



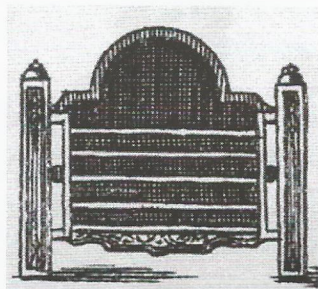
- A. Temple
- B. Fireback
- C. Lap stone
- D. Pod auger



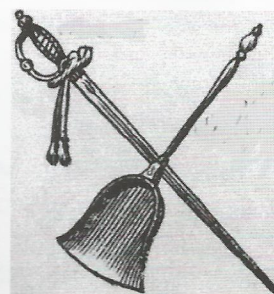
- E. Fid
- F. Pair of cards
- G. Back sword
- H. Close stool
- I. Plough irons



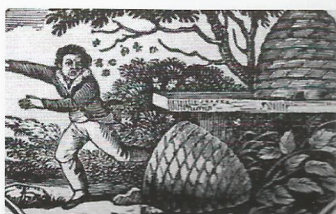
- J. Fire shovel
- K. Box iron and heater



- L. Case bottle
- M. Bed wrench
- N. Bee skep
- O. Black jack
- P. Clock jack



- Q. Goloe shoes
- R. Clock reel
- S. Filister
- T. Beetle rings



Answers will be found 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

Dutch Lingo

Crept In Everywhere

A Glossary of the Terms, Words and Expressions Used by American Mountain Men is to be found on the internet. Compiled by Walt Hayward and Brad McDade, the work offers much of interest even to those who are not deeply concerned with the way the Mountain Men talked. It is mentioned here because it contains an entry I was astonished to find in the vocabularies of those who ranged the Rockies and other western mountains. The astonishment arises from the fact that the entry is pure Dutch and must have entered the lingo in the days of the Dutch fur trade along the Hudson and Mohawk rivers and remained with a substantial number of speakers as the fur trade moved across this country to the West Coast. Perhaps it went with John Jacob Astor's men to Oregon. The term is Boschloper or Bosloper. Defined by usage as a trapper or hunter, the words mean woods runner in Dutch just as *coureur de bois* does in French. The tracks of John Cheese are found in strange places.

Shiv Shift at Sheffield

Sheffield was known for its arrowhead makers as early as the thirteenth century and for the famous "Sheffield thwytel" at the end of the 14th century. However, it took the Duke of Alva



Illustration of a 16th c. cutler, taken from Jost Amman's Staendebuch.

in 1570 or thereabouts to begin the elevation of Sheffield to its position as a world center of the manufacture of hardware and tools. Flemish metal workers who were refugees from the religious intolerance of Alva their Spanish overlord, including scythe makers and other cutlers, settled in Sheffield causing the old town to become a large producer of scythes and sickles. From the Middle Ages or earlier their home in the Low Countries had been famous for the manufacture of steel and iron goods. What is now Belgium was particularly productive in the making of knives. It is believed, though based on tradition rather than records, that the clasp knife with a spring-locked blade was invented there by a cutler called Jacques de Liege. Robert Burns speaks of a folding knife called a

"jockteleg" said to be a corruption of that inventor's name. If the story isn't true it ought to be. It is certainly true that the folk of Flanders have been producers of knives in quantity as well as scythe and sickles and other edge tools. William Harrison tells us about eighty years later that Flemish workers introduced the manufacture of clasp knives to England.

Antique Humor

A hundred years ago readers thought this anecdote was funny. From the vantage point of a century's additional sophistication, what's your opinion?

A man arrested for murder bribed a jurymen with a hundred dollars to hold out for a verdict of manslaughter. The jury was out for a very long time but finally came in with the hoped for manslaughter verdict. The relieved defendant rushed over to the bribed juror and said, "I'm obliged to you, my friend. Did you have a hard time?" "Yes" said the juror, "A hell of a hard time. The other eleven wanted to acquit you!"

Oyster Bay Train Station

continued from p. 5

Railroad Museum of Long Island in Riverhead and # 35 which was moved to Oyster Bay on August 2, 2001, and now rests in pieces near the turntable pending restoration by the Friends of Locomotive # 35. October 8th did not actually end steam on

Long Island. There was a steam fan trip the following week on the Port Jefferson Branch but in between, on October 10, two steam locomotives departed Oyster Bay, where they had been laid up over the weekend. That move ended regular steam locomotive service on the railroad. So, it was at Oyster Bay that steam locomotive service on the Long Island Rail Road came to an end.

The turntable was taken out of service in the 1970s but prior to that, the railroad used to allow groups of school children to go to the turntable and view locomotives being turned. Along these lines, an August 3, 1965, LIRR Tour Department Notice to employees reads in pertinent part:

OYSTER BAY
TURNABLE * Agent will meet group (of 120 children and 24 adults) and conduct a tour of Oyster Bay facilities where they will witness the turning of Engine # 516. Crew should be advised to delay the turning of Engine a few minutes to allow the group to get down to the turntable. 120 containers of milk at 10 cents each. PLEASE PAY ON ARRIVAL.

In 1996, the LIRR closed over thirty ticket offices and replaced the ticket sales operation by ticket vending machines. Oyster Bay was one of the ticket offices closed. Thus for the first time since 1889, Oyster Bay Station was without a manned ticket office.

In 1998, the Oyster Bay yard was totally rebuilt for the use of the new dual-mode, bilevel trains. A high level platform was



*A group of students views the turntable in action, c. 1955.
From the collection of Arthur Huneke.*

installed west of the station and the old station building was closed to public use. An unnoticed but significant historical event occurred at Oyster Bay Station on September 30, 1998. It was on that morning that the crew of Train # 513 was to perform an operation that was to end a chapter in the railroad's history book. Engineer John Zarzicki, Conductor Robert Blair and Assistant Conductor Jim Scimone operated their train out of Oyster Bay from the low-level platform in front of the station building. After that departure, the new high-level platform was placed into public use and the old station platform was closed. Seemingly of little consequence, but in thinking about it, from running its first train in 1836, 162 years of Long Island Rail Road low-level platform usage came to an end at Oyster Bay Station. This took place at the same location that Teddy Roosevelt used to get on

and off of trains.

Oyster Bay Station is unique in a number of ways. The building features are unique with its dual bay windows, inlaid oyster shells, leaded glass windows, large roof brackets and the roof dormer on the street-side of the building. The building location is unique with its trackside view of the gorgeous bay. And of course it is unique in history, being a station that was frequently used by one of this country's most famous presidents.

Oyster Bay Station holds a lot of beauty and history but one thing that it holds more than anything is "the sound of time." Thomas Wolfe said, "Few buildings are vast enough to hold the sound of time, and... there was a superb fitness in the fact that the one which held it better than all others should be a railroad station." Besides a former president, dignitaries, secret service agents of the Roosevelt era, think of all of

the other human experiences that occurred inside the station building and on its platforms. How many sad farewells and cheerful reunions took place at the old station? How many telegrams were sent from the station and how many tickets were sold? How many people waited for a train on a cold winter day in the waiting room in front of a fire in the tile hearthed fireplace? How many recollections do you have of the old station?

The station building deserves a plaque and I am sure that it will soon come. The building also deserves to be on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and I hope that the day for that will come. Meanwhile, the people of Oyster Bay have a jewel between the charming town and the gorgeous waterfront - the Oyster Bay Train Station. That jewel is a bit tarnished now, but plans are in the works to restore the building to its original grandeur and establish a railroad museum inside the facility. Trains and the train station at Oyster Bay played an important part in the Town's history and that railroad heritage should be preserved for posterity.

Willy the Whip

continued from p. 7

(Winthrop) Hospital, once being released prematurely and walking right off the station platform into the path of an oncoming westbound train; the engineer was able to stop in time and onlookers got her back up to the platform. Eileen more than once ended up under a car seat during a seizure and the conductors were most helpful but once in a while

she woke up in the Oyster Bay train yard and one time she woke up locked in a car there! She also had the unfortunate habit of walking home in the dark and when the State or County put up the guard rail along the east (bay) side of West Shore Road, they did away with the walking path (no sidewalk there). This meant that Eileen had to walk facing away from traffic on the side of that narrow road in the dark! It is amazing that she was never injured or killed.

[As an odd side note, the very first time the author took Eileen to her Glen Cove G.P. for an exam, the doctor, Michael Dubin, turned out to have been a schoolmate one year junior to the author at Lawrence High School!]

Jimmy's Bayville Luncheonette, Bill Coster's Bayville Restaurant, and the Twin Harbors Restaurant were favorites of Eileen's and she occasionally would go into a convulsion and slide majestically to the floor, disrupting the whole place and often ending up with an unnecessary ambulance trip to Glen Cove Hospital, where she would awake in fine fettle. Perhaps the most memorable was an aborted dinner at Seafood Cove in Glen Head when Eileen not only hit the floor but locked herself around the table base and it took the combined efforts of the entire EMT crew to pry her loose in the middle of a crowded restaurant!

Unfortunately, though, her combined Irish temper and Finnish mulishness combined on occasion to cause total havoc. Awakening in Glen Cove Hospital one time, she demanded to be released at once and the staff

refused; the brannigan that ensued ended with a Glen Cove policeman being called in and it took a lot of this author's skills to smooth *that* one over. Oyster Bay establishments which had the dubious honor of having Eileen collapse with a seizure were Snouder's Drug Store, Taby's, Canterbury Ales, and the Old Homestead restaurants, and Verelli's Market, where she managed to collapse more than once amid a most-impressive shower of canned goods.

Next-door neighbors John and Ellen Minet (she of horticultural fame) were unfailingly caring of Eileen, especially after her mother died. Local activist Eileen McFettridge was another guardian angel and arranged for Eileen to help out at Pastor Ascelius Isaac's Tuesday evening reading enrichment program at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Roosevelt; and Eileen McF., a long-time family friend who knew how to deal with Eileen W.'s seizures, kept a close watch on her. Long before she programmed Nassau's payroll, Eileen had worked as an aide at the A. Holly Patterson facility in Hempstead and she loved working with children.

In the wintertime, Bill took his children to Ski Hill in Oyster Bay village, where there was an actual ski lift! The ski run is gone now, but it is still commemorated by Ski Lane, off Lake Avenue. Our Society's Museum has the ski run sign in its collection, where it will figure prominently in this Fall's exhibition on recreation in Oyster Bay.

While Elina Whittendale may have been a quiet figure in our

town, Bill was a flamboyant fixture and Eileen definitely an unforgettable character. As it says in obituaries, they are missed.

Forgotten Ferryboats

continued from p. 9

Today one must travel east to Suffolk County to sample a truly elegant way of travel. The Port Jefferson to Bridgeport and Orient Point to New London ferries are in daily operation connecting the two Long Island towns with their Connecticut terminals. Judging from the volume of passengers and cars carried aboard on each trip they should remain in business for years to come unless, of course, they're replaced by a bridge!

I would like to acknowledge and thank John Hammond, noted Oyster Bay historian, for allowing me to use data from his "Village Views" columns which had been formerly published in the

Oyster Bay Guardian. More details on the ferries and many other topics of interest will be found in his forthcoming book "Oyster Bay Remembered," which will be available for sale at the Oyster Bay Historical Society, when published shortly.

Bibliography:

Oyster Bay Guardian
Village Views by John Hammond

Mar. 10, 1995 "The Railroad Comes to Oyster Bay"

Aug. 25, 1995 "The Steamer Portchester"

Jun. 20, 1997 "New York to Boston via Oyster Bay"

May 29, 1998 "The Greenwich - Oyster Bay Ferry"

Jun. 5, 1998 "The Stamford - Oyster Bay Ferry"

Jun. 29, 1998 "The Sankaty is Reborn"

Apr. 30, 1999 "The Horse Boat Ferry"

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.15

a. temple: a stretcher to hold newly-woven cloth to its proper dimensions

b. fireback: usually of cast iron and quite often decorated with relief work, the fireback was placed against the brick or stonework at the back of the fireplace to protect it from the great heat

c. lapstone: a fairsized stone that could be held in the lap while the shoemaker pounded his sole leather to compact it with flexibility

d. pod auger: an auger with a channel that ran several inches above its cutting edge permitting the escape of the shavings from the hole

e. fid: a pointed wooden tool which the sailmaker used to open up a hole in canvas or a rope

f. pair of cards: brushlike instruments composed of a handle and a flat rectangular wooden plate in which are embedded steel wires like the bristles in a brush used to comb out wool so that it might be spun

g. backsword: a sword with a single edge and no point used in contests for prizes or a stick with basket handle used in a type of fencing

h. close stool: a potty chair, not necessarily child size

i. plough irons: We know there were two of these as the inventory said so. That makes them the coulter and share of the farmer's wooden plow. Others were a kind of plane iron (the cutting edge in a woodworking plane).

j. fire shovel: most commonly a flat iron shovel used to clean out

continued on p. 23



A young Marie Ferrera enjoys a ferry ride to Connecticut with her father, doll, and relatives.

Photo courtesy of Marie Knight.

A PRESIDENT'S FURRY NAMESAKE

by Arlene Goodenough

A minor incident in the life of an extremely popular American president led to the creation of a tremendously successful stuffed animal, the teddy bear.

In November 1902, Clifford K. Berryman was a cartoonist traveling with Theodore Roosevelt's entourage in the deep south. TR was invited by some local hunters to go on a bear hunt. Throughout a long day, no prey was found. Finally some of the men managed to track down a bear and chase him until he was totally exhausted. Then they tied the poor creature to a tree and urged TR to shoot him! He replied that he would not commit such an "unsporting deed." He asked that the animal be put out of its misery.

Berryman quickly drew a cartoon of the incident and labeled it, "Drawing the Line in Mississippi." The cartoon was an immediate success when it appeared in the Washington Post. In fact it made such a hit, Berryman included a bear drawing in all subsequent cartoons featuring President Roosevelt.

The cartoon was seen by a Russian immigrant couple named Rose and Morris Michtom. They owned a stationery store in Brooklyn, New York. Rose set to work and made a soft sitting stuffed bear. They put a sign in the store's window that said

"Teddy's Bear" with the bear and a copy of the cartoon. It made an immediate sensation and they sold all the bears they could make. The original bear had eyes made out of shoe buttons, which were extremely common at the time.

Morris claimed that he had sent a bear to the President and asked permission to use his name, but this was never substantiated. The name very quickly passed into common usage and appeared in dictionaries by 1907.

The Michtoms moved to larger

premises and founded the Ideal toy and Novelty Company, which lasted until 1984. They had major competition from German manufacturers, but so widespread was the popularity of the teddy bear that there was plenty of business for all. It was the first mass produced item made for children that sold in the millions and was beloved by all kinds of people. Strangely enough, TR's daughter, Alice, never cared for the bears! TR himself was quick to realize that the identification in the public's mind of TR with the

adorable little bear did him no harm and may have been beneficial to his campaign for election in 1904. He never disclaimed any of the stories that circulated, such as the one about real bears prowling the White House grounds. Wealthy women took to carrying teddy bears around dressed in fantastic outfits and hats. Some were dressed like grannies, some wore white tie and tails, chef hats and aprons, motoring costumes, to name just a few. The craze led to teddy bear dishes and cutlery

and teddies made of chocolate. Teddy images adorned jewelry and cigarette lighters, muffs and purses. Artists were quick to use them as models for greeting cards. They even appeared on the radiator grilles of the new automobiles.

Teddies were the heroes of many children's books and songs. Between 1907 and 1911 400 such songs were copy-

righted! A song still loved today is "The Teddy Bears Picnic," which was written in 1907 by John Bratton with lyrics added in 1930 by Jimmy Kennedy.

Over in Giengen, Germany, there lived a woman named Appolonia Margarete Steiff. A victim of polio, her legs were paralyzed and her right arm was affected. Her family bought her a sewing machine and she became an expert sewer. Eventually she owned her own felt-working business. With leftover felt scraps



Teddy Bears from the collection of Betty Slaight, Montrose, NY.

she made some little stuffed elephants which proved popular with the public. Lots of other animals followed.

By a strange coincidence, Steiff introduced a stuffed bear to the line at the same time that the Michtoms' bear was sweeping the country. Their bear was imported to America and sold well, but it was more expensive than the American bears which many people, in addition to the Michtoms, were putting on the market. Steiff, whose company employed many of her family members, came up with the idea of putting a special button in the ear of its teddies to show that they were genuine Steiffs. Another big German company was the Max Hermann Company. Their bears had plush fur in different shades of gold. Every bear had a large colorful bow around its neck.

In England, King Edward VII was on the throne. His nickname was Teddy! He happened to be very fond of koala bears (which of course are not really bears at all). Soon the English public was associating their king with the popular stuffed toys.

A teddy bear appeared in one of the very first movies ever made. It was made by the Edison Studio in 1905, and was named "The Night Before Christmas." A teddy had a role in a Shirley Temple movie in 1934, and the bear Aloysius went to Oxford with his owner in the TV movie "Brideshead Revisited" in 1982, just for a few examples. Pandas, which belong to the raccoon family, made very attractive animals and got lumped in as bears.

If you know what an arctophile is, you probably are one, a collec-

tor of teddy bears, that is. The hobby of collecting the cuddly, charming creatures started very early in the United States. Clubs were formed, magazines published, special stores opened. Teddy bears have sold at auction for very high prices. In 1989 a Steiff bear from the 1920s went for close to \$90,000. A Texas banker owns 1,317 of the rascals from 135 different countries at last count. Very valuable today is Heinrich, a bear that could shake his head "no", or nod "yes." There are teddy web sites and chat rooms, museums and conventions. Japan is home to no less than three museums, founded by a gentleman named Yoshihiro. His lavish collection is displayed in many whimsical settings.

If there were a Teddy Bear Hall of Fame it would surely include such big ursine names as Winnie the Pooh. He was an actual stuffed animal from Harrod's Department Store in London, bought by A.A. Milne for his little son, Christopher Robin. Timeless poems and stories followed. They were illustrated by E.H. Shepard who used his own son's Steiff bear as a model. Disney put out Winnie The Pooh cartoons in the 1960s adding a red T-shirt to Winnie's attire. He was a hit in 22 languages. Currently, two very big bears in Great Britain are Paddington and Rupert.

Theodore Roosevelt would surely have approved of that very American bear, Smokey. He made a particularly appealing bear with his denim jeans, ranger belt, yellow hat and trustworthy expression. All Smokey merchandise is licensed by the U.S. Dept. of State Foresters, proceeds

of which go to forest fire prevention.

TR would have been glad to know that there are several organizations that distribute bears when people are in need of comfort. Since 1969, members of Good Bears of the World have been giving out bears to orphanages, shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, and to accident victims and victims of natural disasters. Tens of thousands are given out every year. The families of those killed in the World Trade Center received bears from the City of New York. Mental health experts recognized early on the special role teddies play as friend and confidant to the lonely or ill.

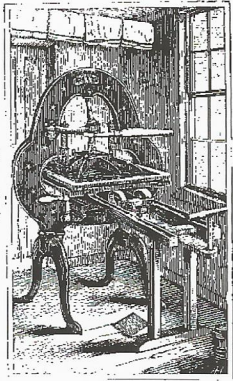
A special bear named Sir Koff-A-Lot is presented to adults and children following open heart surgery. Coughing and deep breathing are essential to recovery, and hugging a soft teddy eases the discomfort.

There are many stories involving teddies. In 1912 a man named Gaspere Gatti signed on to the ship Titanic as a catering manager. Alas, he did not survive the sinking. However, his six inch teddy bear was completely unharmed, and was found among his belongings. It was preserved in London where it had another close shave during World War II when it narrowly escaped being bombed.

In 1908 the Grand Duke of Russia had a special mohair bear made for his daughter Xenia. She brought the bear with her in 1914 when she went to stay with her royal relatives in Buckingham Palace.

continued on p. 24

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Theodore Roosevelt Jr. The Life Of A War Hero. By H. Paul Jeffers. Presidio Press, 2002. 282 pp. B&W illustration. Notes And Sources, Bibliography, and Index. \$27.95.

At the age of ten, Ted Roosevelt was given a gun of his own, a Flaubert rifle presented one evening by his father as TR was dressing for dinner. As Ted remembered, "I wanted to see if it fired to make sure it was a real rifle, but Father was not dressed to go outside at the moment." As the story continued:

Picking up the rifle and slipping a cartridge into the chamber, TR whispered, "You must promise not to tell Mother." Ted gave his word and TR shot the bullet into the ceiling.

This story, with its mix of the common (You must promise not to tell Mother) and the extraordinary (rifle shots through Sagamore Hill ceilings), points out how hard it must have been growing up as Theodore Roosevelt's son. Even that most prosaic of paternal duties- the letter of advice to a son- becomes remarkable under TR's pen. 'Did you ever read Pliny's letter to

Trajan?" asks TR in a letter to 16-year-old Ted at Groton. Even in that more literate age, it is unlikely that many Groton students received such classical advice. Unlikely too was a letter from Father which brother Kermit shared with Ted regarding their father's White House exercises. "I am wrestling with two Japanese wrestlers three times a week," TR wrote in passing. How do you measure up to such a father?

With some difficulty, at first. It was soon after the Flaubert rifle test that Ted began suffering from headaches and nervousness. The diagnosis- that Ted was overwrought trying to measure up to his father's expectations- brought TR to remark that "the little fellow, who is particularly dear to me, has bidden fair to be all things I would like to have been and wasn't, and it has been a great temptation to push him."

That Ted eventually thrived under pressure, parental and otherwise, may very well follow from his success in becoming what his father "would like to have been and wasn't." As A.J. Liebling pointed out at the time of Ted's death, TR had been a dilltante soldier and first-class politician, while Ted had been the reverse: "a dabbler in the electoral process, [he] had been a peerless warrior."

Peerless is right. At Cantigny in the First World War, he was cited for "high courage and leadership." Gassed in the lungs and eyes, he refused evacuation and remained in command of his unit, later receiving the Silver Star and French Croix de Guerre. A month later at Ploisy, under machine-gun fire, he took wounds to his

right thigh, prompting him to complain that, "if only I could have got hold of a horse, I could have gone through the day at least." Three months passed, and he was back in battle, hobbling on a cane through the final weeks of the war. As for the Second World War, Ted served in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, winning the Bronze Star (with Oak Leaf Cluster) and a second Croix de Guerre. Then came Normandy, where he was the oldest American (fifty-seven) and only general officer landing with the first troops on Utah Beach. Coming on shore over a mile from the designated landing site didn't deter him. "We'll start the war," he apparently said, "from right here." Whether Ted actually said this or not seems less important than Jeffers' troubling rationale for claiming the line as Ted's: "When in doubt as to what is true and what is legend, print the legend." Jeffers insists that this is a "time-honored maxim of journalism." Ah, so that 's what they're teaching in "J" school.

By way of explaining why his book has no footnotes, Jeffers cites TR's famous remark to an author that "I was delighted that you did not use footnotes, I believe they distract from the narrative." Go ahead. Call me a wet blanket. But give me footnotes, please. Their absence is particularly annoying early in the book when Jeffers refers twice to William H. Harbaugh as the author of *The Roosevelt Family Of Sagamore Hill* (the author is actually Hermann Hagedorn).

Further reading: *Day Before Yesterday* by Eleanor A. Roosevelt.

AUNT EEK



Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eek:

My mother gave us a small wooden box with a hinged lid which she says belonged to her mother. The box itself is made from an unremarkable wood but the lid of the box is covered with a brown decorated applique', which is glued to the wooden top. This applique' looks like plastic but my mother assures us that the top is original to the box which she insists dates to just after the Civil War. The decoration which appears to be molded into the panel depicts farm tools such as a plow and rake, a blacksmith's anvil, hammer and tongs, and corn and wheat plants. We think that this decoration is consistent with my mother's story but the plastic composition of the panel just does not add up. Is mother's memory failing or are we missing something?

P.S. Either way we love your magazine and especially you!

H. Zirkel

Lindenhurst, L.I.

Dear H.:

We love you too. You are the life

blood of the column. No questions... no Aunt Eek. But mothers are always right, aren't they?

I would suspect that the box and lid as you describe it is indeed Grandmother's treasure, complete with plastic top. That word plastic is really an adjective and as such is frequently misunderstood. We think of plastic as a Twentieth Century synthetic compound concocted in the laboratory and rarely use the word as in the Latin as an adjective, to specify or describe a thing. Webster's gives that plastic is "the power to give form or fashion to a mass of matter." In that the top you describe is molded into a form, it is plastic by definition. it is probably not synthetic but rather comes from nature by way of a Maylasian pertja tree. Harvested in the form of a milky substance, this stuff, known as gutta percha, (a noun) is really plastic by definition. It has been around longer than Aunt Eek's candle, which is burning at both ends tonight.

The decoration you describe fits the period that Grandmother described and I would not be surprised if the box trembled to the roar of cannon and rifle fire in the War Between the States. Gutta percha and its cousin caoutchouc (more flexible and resistant to liquids than gutta percha) were used in much the same way as synthetic molded plastics are used today, and can be seen as many forms of decorative appliances in the centuries gone by. Keep it dry and away from solvents and oils, don't drop or shock it, and it will probably be around for your grandchildren to ponder. So Grandmother is right, Mother is right (as always)

and you are kind of right too. A happy ending at last.

As Ever, from the rocking chair,
Aunt Eek

[Ed. note: Those among our readers who are partial to the sport of golf were perhaps already aware of another use for gutta percha at the turn of last century...golf balls were made from it!]

Answers to Test Your Knowledge,

continued from p.19

the coals and ashes in the oven of an early fireplace

k. box iron & heater: an iron for laundry with a hollow body (the box), and a heavy iron slug to place therein when heated

l. case bottle: a bottle square in section intended to fit with others like it into a partitioned wooden case

m. bed wrench: a tool for installing or removing the bolts and screws of an old-fashioned bed

n. bee skep: a beehive of coiled and woven straw of conical shape

o. black jack: a leather drinking vessel

p. clock jack: a clockwork mechanism which turns a spit in a fireplace

q. goloe shoes: try galloshes; an overshoe worn in Colonial days

r. clock reel: a reel for winding and measuring coils of spun thread, it had a mechanism for sounding a signal every time a revolution occurred

s. filister: a form of joiner's woodworking plane

t. beetle rings: the heavy wooden mauls that once did duty as sledge hammers had one of these around each end of the head to keep it from splitting

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

OCTOBER

Sunday, Oct. 6, 4-6 p.m.

Cocktail Party & Lawn Games (weather permitting)

Home of Mrs. Robert Pittis, Cove Neck
(Directions provided to registrants.)

Sit and watch the boats go by from the front lawn of this beautiful Cove Neck home. Join in the fun of period lawn games, such as croquet, badminton, golf and bocce. Enjoy a selection of fine wines and hors d'oeuvres. Meet old friends and make some new ones!
(Sports Dress recommended!)

Sunday, Oct. 27, 3 p.m.

Hunt for History in Downtown Oyster Bay

Meet at Earle-Wightman House
20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay.

Come alone or come as a team of up to five persons. The task will be to solve a series of historical riddles that will lead participants to various historic sites in Oyster Bay. (Some sites may require a short drive.) Once the site is identified, participants must go there to collect a token. The team who collects the most tokens and returns to the Earle-Wightman House by 4:30 will be declared the winners and receive prizes! Cocktails and buffet supper will follow. Those who are unable to participate in the "hunt" are invited to attend the dinner.

NOVEMBER

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2 p.m.

Roundtable Discussion and Exhibit Opening

Oyster Bay Community Center &

Earle-Wightman House Museum
20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay

A panel composed of local historians, authors, and persons familiar with recreational activities popular in Oyster Bay during the twentieth century will give short presentations on various types of recreation, ranging from activities on the great estates and private clubs to the wider variety of activities available to all town residents.

Following these short presentations, audience participation and reminiscing is encouraged!

The roundtable discussion will be followed by a reception and the opening of the exhibition entitled "Recreation During the 20th Century in Oyster Bay: From Doing to Viewing."

Teddy Bears

continued from p. 21

The First World War broke out and she was unable to return home where she very likely would have been assassinated during the Russian Revolution. She treasured the bear as it remind-

ed her of her father and her homeland. In modern times it was sold for \$20,000.

Now teddy bears are a hundred years old and going strong. Hold on to your own beloved friend, he might be worth a fortune...as if you could part with him!

THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
20 SUMMIT STREET, P.O. BOX 297
OYSTER BAY, N.Y. 11771-0297

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OYSTER BAY, NY 11771
PERMIT NO. 14



**Join the Society's "Hunt For History" on Oct. 27!
Details inside!**