THE FREEHOLDER

SUMMER 2008 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

Lucky 13! This issue marks the beginning of our thirteenth year of publishing *The Freeholder*. I think everyone will find something of interest in this issue!

Joep de Koning completes his persuasive article which claims Governors Island as the Birthplace of American Tolerance and Liberty. New contributor Richard A. Winsche takes a look at a 1930s scandal that shook the Nassau County Police Department to its foundation. And Robert L. Harrison continues with his look at our Island's poets, this time concentrating on the distaff side.

In addition to these wonderful feature articles, the Gathering Place holds treasures of its own: frequent contributors Natalie Naylor and Rick Robinson focus on Long Island's historic sites and Oyster Bay High School respectively. Enjoy!

THE FREEHOLDER
of the
Oyster Bay Historical Society
Vol. 13 No. 1 Summer 2008

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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.

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ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

In this 1910 painting by Howard Pyle, Governor Peter Stuyvesant is shown surrounded by New Amsterdam's citizens imploring him to surrender to the English, whose ships appear in the distance. Stuyvesant, realizing that the odds were heavily against him, acquiesced. See related article on p. 3. Smithsonian Institution Collections.

THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

I am the coordinator of the Honors Program at Long Island University at C.W Post. Are there any Internship/Volunteer opportunities at the Oyster Bay Historical Society that I can forward to my students? They must complete a certain number of hours of community service and are looking for likely projects.

Best,
Joan Digby

Dear Joan,

The Oyster Bay Historical Society seeks to continue an exhaustive inventory of our archival and photographic collections, in preparation for moving our entire collection to a new library and collections storage center which we are in the process of having built.

As you can imagine, we need a lot of help with this project (we have been collecting for almost fifty years!). We have hosted a number of Palmer School interns in the past, several of whom have subsequently been hired as our Librarian/Archivist. We are seeking interns and/or volunteers to assist with this project, who, in doing so, will gain valuable hands-on work experience which they will be able to utilize in their future employment. The work schedule would be reasonably flexible, but ideally it would include Wednesdays, Thursdays and/or Fridays, to start ASAP.

This project, which was begun last semester with the aid of Palmer School interns, is being coordinated by the Society's Librarian Philip Blocklyn (a Palmer School Graduate himself!) and Curator, Yvonne Noonan-Cifarelli.

In addition to college and graduate students, the Historical Society is looking for volunteers to assist in a number of other areas. Interested? Call Director Tom Kuehhas today at 516-922-5032.

GOVERNORS ISLAND: LIFEBLOOD OF AMERICAN LIBERTY
PART III

by Joep de Koning

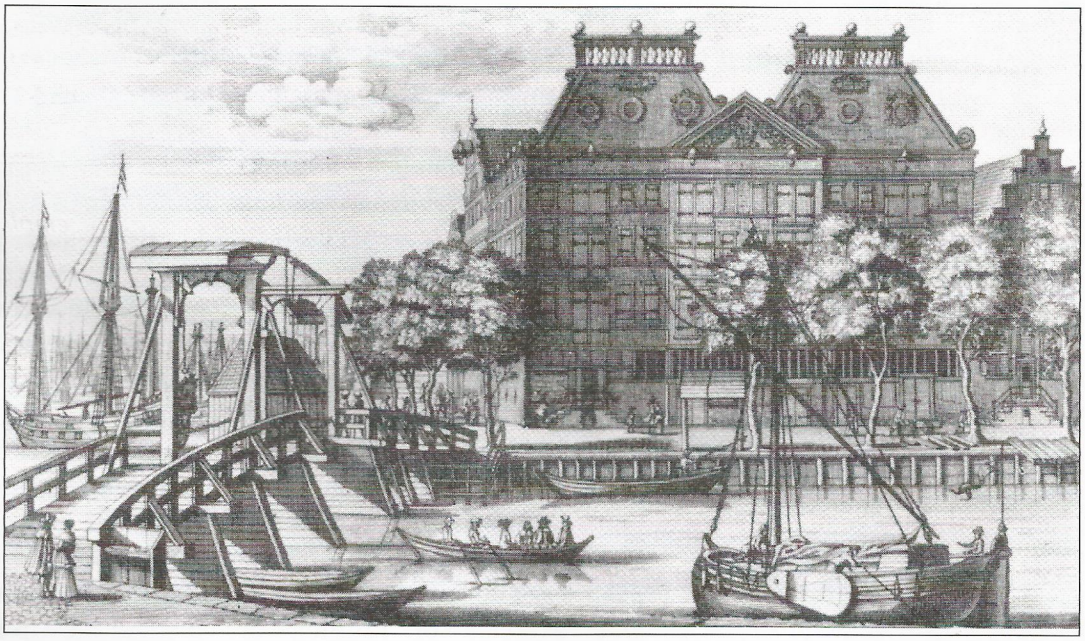
That the States General of the Dutch Republic didn't make such explicit distinctions was already reflected in the 1645 patent for Flushing, now in New York's borough of Queens. It had offered "welcome" in New Netherland to persons of "tender conscience in England and elsewhere oppressed" and provided "the right to have and enjoy liberty of conscience, according to the custom and manner of Holland, without molestation or disturbance from any magistrates, or any other ecclesiastical minister."[26] Therefore, Stuyvesant's 1657 ordinance against Quakers drew the immediate wrath of the townspeople who drew up a "remonstrance" signed by thirty-one townsmen. This "Flushing Remonstrance" demonstrated that religious liberty can never be taken for granted unless one is willing to vigorously defend it through "broad awareness and conscious vigilance." As the remonstrance proved, it had not been enough that the law of love, peace and liberty in the states extends to Jews, Turks (Muslims) and Egyptians (Gypsies) which is the glory of the outward state of Holland...We are bound by the law of God and man to do good to all men, and evil to no man, according to the Patent and Charter of our Towne given unto us in the name of the States General

as the Remonstrance would state.[27]

In a final dispatch, on April 16, 1663, Stuyvesant's superiors admonished him to

> shut your eyes, at least not force people's consciences, but allow every one to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offense to his neighbors and does not oppose the government. As the government of this city (Amsterdam) has always practiced this maxim of moderation and consequently has often had a considerable influx of people, we do not doubt that your Province too would be benefited by it.[28]

One year later, the tables were turned on Stuyvesant when his authority was challenged by another foe—this time not from below but from above. It was now a foreign adversary in possession of overpowering military might that would abridge his command, compelling him, in defense of his quasi-official church, to become an advocate of religious diversity in a pluralist culture. Article VIII, one of 24 articles of provisional transfer (in contradistinction to capitulation) that he and his town council negotiated with the English in September 1664, specifically provided for toleration. They were well aware that earlier, in March 1664, King Charles II (who had not yet guaranteed protection to English Jews) had resolved to annex New Netherland and install an Anglican government.



The West India Company House in Amsterdam, from which the company's directors oversaw their far-flung mercantile outposts.

Frantic appeals by Stuyvesant to his superiors for military help had gone unheeded. Instead, they sent him a letter, written on April 21, 1664, and received one month prior to the arrival of four English frigates, suggesting that liberty ("freedom of conscience in religion") need not be defended but would take care of itself. They reasoned that English colonists in New Netherland, "removed mostly from old England for the causes aforesaid" would

> not give us henceforth so much trouble, but prefer to live free under us at peace with their consciences than to risk getting rid of our authority and then falling again under a government from which they had formerly fled.[29]

A few months later it was all over, but by then cultural pluralism had taken root and protective measures been put into place for its continuance.

Twelve years after the definitive political end of New Netherland, in 1686, Governor Thomas Dongan described New York's religious diversity as,

> Here be not many of the Church of England; few Roman Catholics; abundance of Quakers; preachers, men and women especially; singing Quakers; ranting Quakers; Sabatarians; Antisabatarians; some Anabaptists; some Independents; some Jews; in short of all sorts of opinion there are some, and the most of none at all.[30]

The meaning of the welcome extended the Ashkenazim and Sephardim in New Netherland, that "they shall be allowed to sail and to trade in New Netherland and also be allowed to reside and settle there"[31], when viewed in its historical context, is complex. Their North American presence, and those of many others of diverse religious conscience as reflected in Thomas Dongan's statement, was the result of religious diversity through the dynamic conception of tolerance. This historic notion is New Netherland's inheritance to America. This bequest, in turn, is genealogically connected to New York's birthfather whose lengthy, complicated biography is indispensable in understanding his North American offspring accurately.

A century after Dongan's description of religious diversity in England's latest territorial acquisition, New Netherland's contribution toward religious plurality in the American colonies allowed for a constitutional stipulation that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."[32] Because this said next to nothing about individual rights, New York, amongst other states, insisted on the introduction of amendments to guarantee rights. The Bill of Rights was proposed on March 4, 1789, to the states' legislatures by no less than John Adams as Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate who, from 1780-1784, had been the Congressional envoy and first plenipotentiary minister of the United States at The Hague in the Dutch Republic. The First Amendment, its most important article, stated that "Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion or respecting an establishment of religion."[33] On December 15, 1791, the U.S. Congress ratified this and nine additional articles because by then it had no other choice than to grant religious freedom in the Original Thirteen.

The fact remains that the vibrant notion of tolerance, whether religious, ethnic or racial, is no less important today than it was 350 years ago. Yet, there are few among us who understand that at the foundation of American heterogeneity—indeed, of Western Civilization as it is now conceived—lie the dual concepts of tolerance and liberty as equal partners. In a culturally intolerant society, constitutional freedom is meaningless unless actively defended: Tolerance as a basic human right demands reciprocal respect rather than unilateral accommodation. First established in the Americas by the Dutch on Governors Island in 1624, it provided the basis for New York's cultural history and still serves as the lifeblood of American liberty. It was no accident or historical anomaly that the Virginian William Byrd, commenting on his visit to New Amsterdam in 1682, remarked that "they have as many sects of religion there as at Amsterdam."[34]

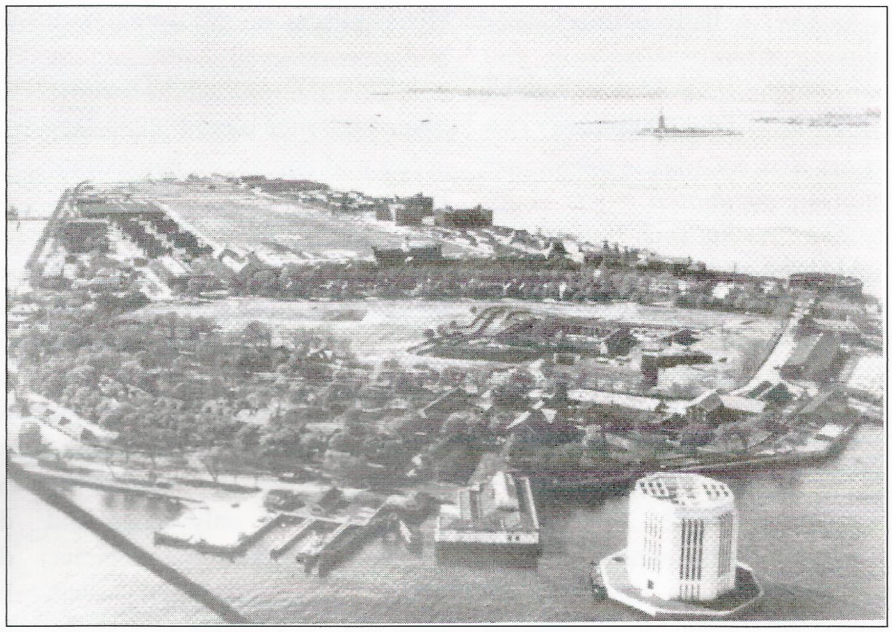
In 1675—one year after New Netherland was ceded to the English for the second time, following a two-year war between the Dutch Republic and the English Kingdom—the grand Portuguese Synagogue was opened in Amsterdam. With more than 1,600 seats, the synagogue remained the largest in Europe for nearly two hundred years. Across from it stood the Great Synagogue of the Ashkenazim, which opened in 1671. By then, there were more

than 2,500 Sephardim in Amsterdam and over 5,000 Ashkenazim,
together constituting four percent of its population. Those two edifices now represent the only tangible symbols of the toleration which the Jews in particular fought for and earned in the 17th century.

In the United States, the only naturally existing historic symbol to represent a fundamental American precept has yet to be popularly recognized: Governors Island in New York harbor, where the foundation of American pluralism through toleration was planted in 1624. In addition, the island was the place of birth of the states of New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Delaware. These historic events were finally acknowledged three hundred seventy-eight years later, in May 2002, through Senate and Assembly Resolutions No. 5476 and No. 2708.

However, to restore the island to its historical integrity with its distinctive message of national substance, the legislature needs to do more. It also needs to preserve America's ultimate virtue and sustain it for future generations by dedicating 30% of the island to the proposed tolerance park Historic New Amsterdam with the envisaged Tolerance Monument as centerpiece. Doing so would compose an island triad in New York harbor of primary American conceptions: Tolerance, Liberty and Welcome.

The sum of this iconic "National Heritage Triangle", with each islet exemplifying its own unique facet of history, would be worth more than its collective parts and would promulgate that tolerance and liberty define the juridical and cultural construct to which American freedom refers - that the dynamic precept of tolerance distinguishes the specifically American notion of freedom from the generic or static.



Governors Island

Only then can New York State's most important landmark, its birthplace, be broadly acknowledged as the nation's earliest fundamental cultural asset with a message of profound national meaning and can serve as a physical reminder to the world that tolerance and liberty are freedom's indispensable partners.

In the way that a house of stone and brick is held together by cement, tolerance is the glue that holds this world together, that enables cultural diversity and mankind to prosper. When the cement fails, so will the house – as in intolerance. As a vibrant precept, tolerance requires ongoing struggle grounded in "broad awareness and conscious vigilance."

When restored to its historical integrity with its distinctive message of national substance, Governors Island would preserve and extol America's ultimate virtue as an ethical force by sustaining it for future generations.

Indifference, complacency, laxity and insipidness are the friends of iniquitous intolerance. Its antidote is the dynamic virtue of tolerance as defender and definer of liberty in an ever-changing society liberty or societal freedom itself.

When thus legislatively accomplished, applicants for U.S. citizenship – in order "to gain a deeper understanding of U.S. history" – may be asked the question on their civics test: "Where in America started the concept of religious diversity first as a natural right and enduring cultural tradition?" The answer would be: "On Governors Island."

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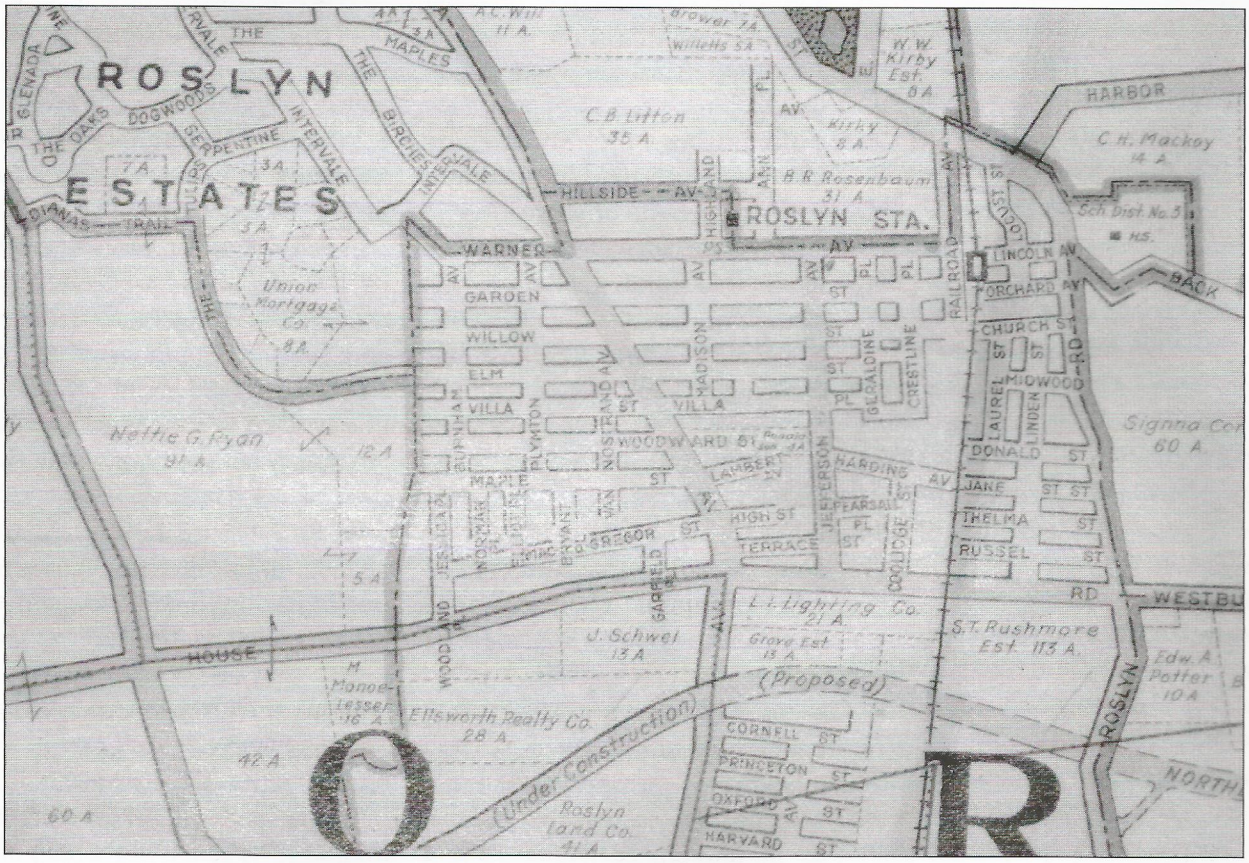
NASSAU'S GREAT POLICE SCANDAL

by Richard A. Winsche

Richard A. Winsche is a former Nassau County Historian and retired employee of the County's Museum Services Division. This is his first (of what we hope are many) contribution to the pages of ***The Freeholder****.*

At about noon on July 15, 1932, a car stopped at a filling station in front of the house of Mrs. Valeria Hizenski, at 58 Power House Road, Roslyn Heights. There were four men in the car, Hyman Stark, 24; Izzy Stein, 19; Alexander Drangel, 23; and Philip Cacala, 17, all of whom had previous criminal records and were from the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Two of the four entered the house, which they proceeded to ransack. Mrs. Hizenski was on the upper floor and came down to investigate the noise. As she reached the landing one of the men aimed a revolver at her and demanded her money. By this time all four of the criminals were in the house and she told them she had put her money in the bread box in the kitchen. When they found no money there one of the thugs held her arms while another beat her on the head with the revolver. When asked again for her money, Mrs. Hizenski could only moan and then was knocked unconscious. The criminals took five dollars from her pocketbook and a ring before fleeing. Mrs. Hizenski managed to reach the doorway and scream, alerting her neighbors. One of them spotted a black Chrysler coupe with four men speed away and called the Sixth Precinct to report the crime before taking her to Nassau Hospital in Mineola.[1]

The police then put out a general alarm which was taken by patrolman John Symanski, who was at the Roslyn police booth. He drove to Northern Boulevard where he encountered a black coupe with four men. After stopping and questioning them, he drew his gun and ordered them to drive to the precinct station house. It was then that the criminals learned they had made a most unfortunate mistake, as the woman they had beaten was the seventy-year-old mother of Nas-



The area of Roslyn Heights where Mrs. Valeria Hizenski lived, opposite the Long Island Lighting Company property. The house no longer stands. Hagstrom's Atlas, 1932. Oyster Bay Historical Society Collection.

sau County police detective Joseph Hizenski. While at the precinct Stein admitted being at the house, but both he and Stark denied having entered the dwelling. Their admission was unnecessary as the ring belonging to Mrs. Hizenski's son had been found in their car. By this time Detective Hizenski had returned from visiting his mother at the hospital and he punched Stark and Stein a few times before they were taken to police headquarters.[2]

Although Mrs. Hizenski later identified them, the police decided to use "third degree" methods to obtain confessions from the four felons. It was felt that if these criminals were to later plead not guilty, their confessions could then be produced and read to the jury. The third degree was frequently used in New York City where a number of methods were used to brutally force admissions of guilt.

Unfortunately, Nassau's two principal law enforcement officials, Police Chief Abram W. Skidmore and District Attorney Elvin N. Edwards, were both away on vacation. Had they been there to handle the situation, things would probably never have progressed as they did. In their place were Deputy Police Chief Frank J. Tappen and Assistant District Attorney Martin W. Littleton, Jr. Tappen had only held the position of Deputy Chief since the beginning of the year and had no previous police experience. That post had become vacant following the death of William R. Strohson and had been temporarily filled by Inspector Frank E. McCahill. Chief Skidmore had wanted McCahill retained in that post but the Board of Supervisors appointed Tappen. He had been the leader of the Oyster Bay Republican Party for the previous decade. During that time Tappen had made many enemies and it was felt that if he remained as leader a Democrat would be elected as Supervisor of the Town of Oyster Bay. To get Tappen to resign, the Republicans agreed to make him Deputy Police Chief and nominate Harry Tappen [no relation] to run for Oyster Bay Town Supervisor.[3] Littleton had been an Assistant District Attorney under Edwards for four years and was being groomed for higher office by his father, former Congressman Martin W. Littleton, Sr.

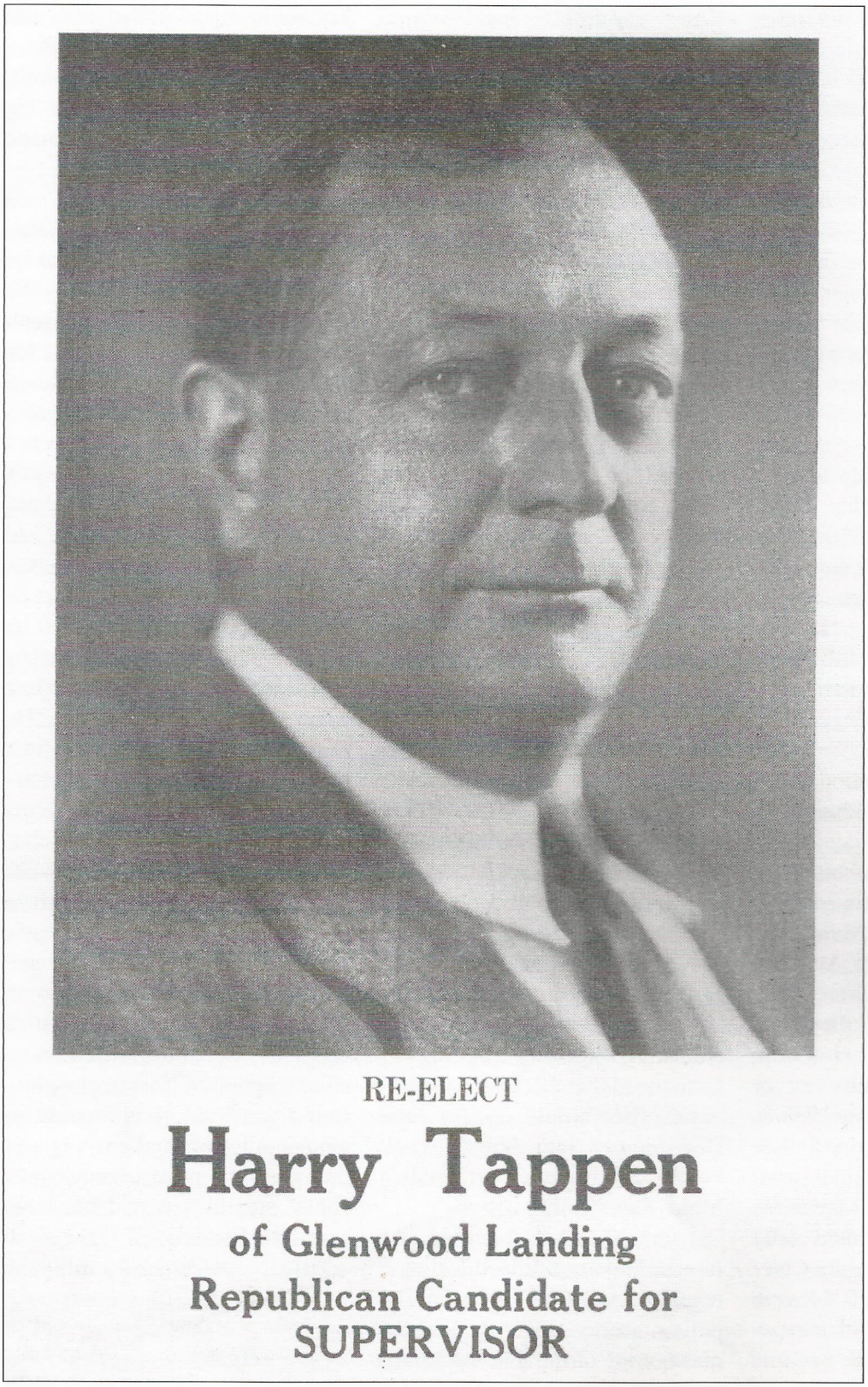
On July 16th it was reported that Hyman Stark had died in Nassau Hospital "reputedly from the effects of an all-night grilling given him by police." Inspector Frank McCahill acknowledged this and referred all inquiries to the District Attorney's office. McCahill noted that Stark was a former inmate of Elmira State Penitentiary and was a narcotic addict. At the same time it was announced that the District Attorney's office would open a John Doe inquiry into Stark's death before Supreme Court Justice Meier Steinbrink.[4]

By this time Edwards had returned and questioned Littleton regarding what had transpired at police headquarters during the questioning of the four criminals. He must have been amazed to learn that Littleton knew of the beatings and had done nothing to stop them. Not only did he not act, but he even left the scene and went home to take a bath where he was informed of Stark's death. Edwards, out of loyalty to his assistant or to protect the image of his office, then absolved Littleton of all blame.

At the start of the inquiry Justice Steinbrink announced that he had evidence of a plot among the police to have Detective Joseph Hizenski "take the rap" for Stark's death. He questioned patrolman John Symanski, who denied any knowledge of such a plan. District Attorney Edwards then questioned his assistant, Martin W. Littleton, Jr., who had handled the preliminary investigation. Littleton stated that he told Deputy Chief Tappen that he realized the seriousness of the situation and warned him against using any third degree tactics. He said he also told Inspector McCahill and Captain Emil Morse the same thing.[5]

Dr. Otto Schultze, who conducted the autopsy on Stark, stated that he had succumbed to injuries suffered when his larynx had been forced against the spine. He also noted that he found some thirty-seven welts all over Stark's body. Dr. Benjamin W. Seaman, chief surgeon of Nassau Hospital, stated that Stark was brought in almost pulseless and gasping and that even the most urgent emergency measures would not have saved his life.[6]

> District Attorney Edwards said the autopsy left no room for doubt that Stark was beaten to death by police. . . . I told the police time and time again about this sort of treatment and that I would not stand for it. The case will be prosecuted to a finish. I



A 1933 campaign poster for Harry Tappen, Oyster Bay Town Supervisor for over twenty years. Though he was not related to Deputy Chief Frank Tappen, the name association dogged him for years. Courtesy of Town Historian John E. Hammond.

will leave no stone unturned in order to fix the responsibility.[7]

In speaking to reporters, Samuel S. Leibowitz, attorney for Philip Cacala, stated that the other prisoners were also brutally beaten. He said they were shown Stark's unconscious body on the floor as an example of what they would get if they didn't confess. He noted that Cacala's ear was torn, his eyes were blackened, and black and blue marks were all over his body. This was caused by being punched and kicked, beaten with a rubber hose, and pulled along a corridor by the hair. It was also noted that reporters outside the building could hear the prisoners' screams.[8]

The next day Littleton asked to be recalled to the stand. Upon being questioned by Edwards he was asked if he had talked to Tappen on the afternoon Stark died. He stated that Tappen came into Inspector King's office and said, "that's the toughest son-of-a ___ I ever saw. I put one foot

on his stomach and one on his throat and it didn't phase him a bit." Littleton added, "at the time it appeared so ridiculous I figured it was banter." Tappen was then called and denied making the statement. He claimed, "I have no recollection of it."[9]

Then all the police officers who had been present at the questioning of the prisoners were called to the stand. In answer to almost all questions put to them, each replied, "I don't recall." This led to an angry rebuke by Justice Steinbrink who was extremely upset by their acute loss of memory. At the close of proceedings for the day, a line-up of the involved officers was spread across the courtroom. The prisoners then pointed out the men who had beaten them. They identified eleven officers and later included Tappen and Detective George Hutchinson, who were not in the line-up.[10]

Following the close of the John Doe inquiry, Edwards requested that warrants be issued against thirteen members of the Nassau County Police Department. Justice Steinbrink issued these warrants ranging from murder in the second degree, down to felonious assault and bail was set in amounts from $1,500 to $10,000. They were saved from confinement in the county jail by the Patrolman's Benevolent Association supplying bail bonds.[11]

At this time District Attorney Elvin Edwards issued a ruling stating that in the future when an arrest was made in a murder, robbery, or any serious felony case, the prisoner would be taken immediately to the District Attorney's office to secure statements. He stated that he knew this would make more work for his staff, but that

> they were willing to undertake the extra duties to prevent another incident such as the killing of a prisoner while in police custody.

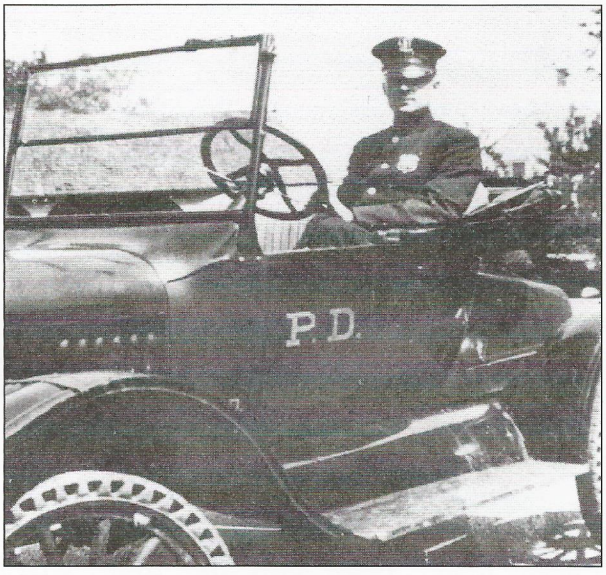
Edwards also noted that at his request Lieutenant McGarey and four state troopers had been assigned to assist him by the State Police. This step had been taken after a conference with Chief Skidmore where it was decided that members of the Nassau County police department "might be sympathetic toward their fellow officers and would therefore fail to give their fullest cooperation."[12]

For the next two days Edwards presented testimony before the Grand Jury. Indictments against all charged were handed up by that panel, which closely followed the recommendations made by Justice Steinbrink in issuing the arrest warrants. The indictments ranged from first degree manslaughter to accessory to a felony for the death of one prisoner and the beating of three others. Those charged with manslaughter were Deputy Chief Frank J. Tappen, Lieutenant Jesse C. Mayforth, and Detectives Harry Zander, Charles Wesser, and Leslie Pearsall. Supreme Court Justice John B. Johnston was assigned by the Appellate Division to preside at the trial.[13]

Notes

1. *Nassau Daily Star,* July 16, 1932.
2. Ibid.
3. *Nassau Daily Star,* July 30, 1931; January 12, 1932; January 13, 1932.
4. *Nassau Daily Star,* July 16, 1932.
5. *Nassau Daily Star,* July 18, 1932.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. *Nassau Daily Star,* July 19, 1932.
10. Ibid.
11. *Nassau Daily Star,* July 20, 1932.
12. Ibid; *Nassau Daily Star,* July 21, 1932.
13. *Nassau Daily Star,* July 23, 1932; July 25, 1932.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE FREEHOLDER



Nassau County police car, c. 1925

In this new column we will be highlighting artifacts and archival materials from our collection to familiarize our readers with its breadth and importance. This volume in our rare books section gives a travelogue for the 19th century visitor to our area and showcases some of its sites.

Long Island And Where To Go!!
A Descriptive Work Compiled for the Long Island R.R. Co. published in New York, 1877.

SYOSSET.
Twenty-nine miles from Long Island City.
Number of trains daily, 5 East 6 West; Single fare, $0.75; Excursion, $1.35.

Fertile farms lie east and west of the railroad. A stage line connects at this depot for OYSTER BAY, distant about four miles, and easily reached by commodious stages. The attraction of this celebrated watering place is in its bay, which, sheltered on the north and south by well wooded hills and rocky cliffs, and the gentle declivities of Centre Island, is much sought after by those who seek beauty or amusement in the advantages it offers.

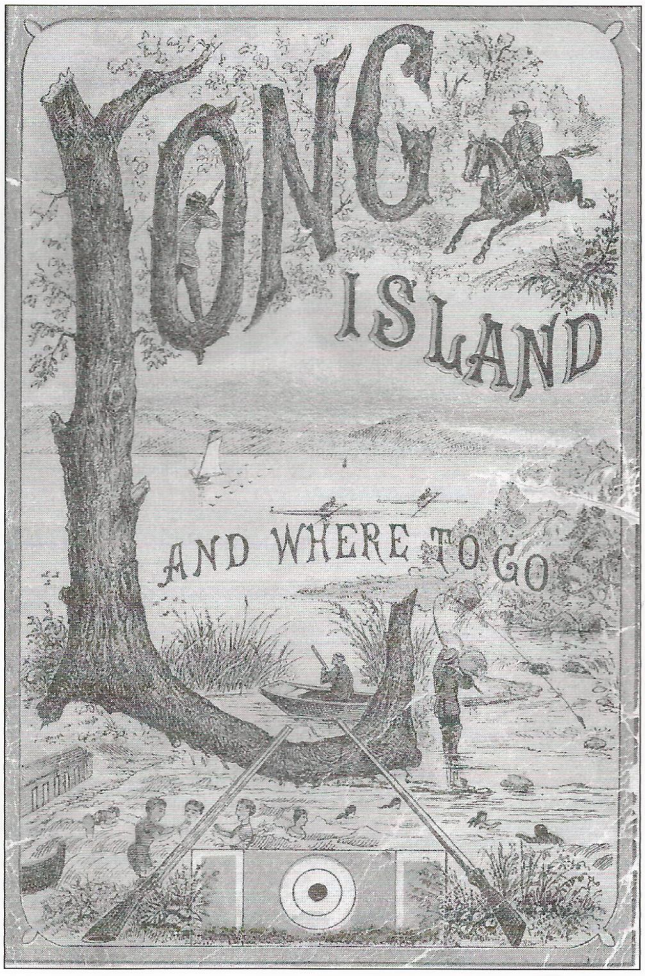
The Seawanhaka Yacht Club make it their headquarters, and are instrumental in adding much to the vitality of the summer season, by their regattas, rowing races &c.

Excellent rowing boats may be hired by the hour or by the day; also sailing boats for fishing parties and clam bake excursions to Lloyd's Neck, Jones's Dock, or Central Island. These boats are also fitted out specially for the accommodation of sportsmen, during the fowling season, for trips to Thimble Island where splendid wild fowl shooting may be had. With such advantages for sailing and fishing, it need scarcely be added that the Bathing is unsurpassed, and at various points on the shelving sandy beach bathing houses have been erected. The drives, are numerous and delightful, as the visitor may judge from the glimpses of beautiful scenery he obtains in the drive, from Syosset or Locust Valley depots to Oyster Bay.

The Nassau House is at present the only hotel in the village, and can accommodate about sixty guests. Board may be found at the following houses: R. Valentine, Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Gibson, Miss Waters, Mrs. Bayles, and numerous others, who can take one or two families. The churches are Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Episcopal—and among the handsome residences and country houses are those of James Beckman, Edward and Benjamin Swan, John A. Weeks, William Trotter, Thomas F. Young, Daniel R. Young, William R. Webster, and Edward Coles.

Steamboat communication with New York is opened during the summer months.

COLD SPRING HARBOR, which a half a century ago promised to be one of the most prosperous harbors on the island, is now surrendered almost entirely to summer visitors, who, appreciating the beauty of the harbor and the surrounding scenery, throng here annually in 1arge numbers. Ample facilities are offered by the various hotels and boarding houses—prominent among which is Laurelton Hall—a magnificently situated hotel, and replete with all the appointments and conveniences of a city house.



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.***

SOCIETY PLANS FALL EVENTS

Join us for the opening of the much-anticipated "The Roosevelts...It Wasn't All Politics" exhibition on Saturday, October 25, from 1 - 5 p.m. at the Society's Earle-Wightman House headquarters in conjunction with the celebration of Theodore Roosevelt's 150th birthday.

This first, historic exhibit will feature Oyster Bay Roosevelts' artwork from past and present generations. Ms. Elizabeth Roosevelt, a professional photographer, will be exhibiting her work along with that of the rest of the Roosevelt family. The exhibit will feature works in oil, lithographs, photography, jewelry designs by Elizabeth's mother, Elise Roosevelt, and metal and silver work.

This exhibit will allow a glimpse into the intimate side of this historic and powerful family.

A companion exhibition, featuring works by living Roosevelt family artists, will open on Friday, October 24, from 3-5 p.m. at the Theodore Roosevelt Association office at 20 Audrey Avenue, Oyster Bay. Refreshments will be served.

THE CURATOR'S CORNER

by Yvonne Noonan-Cifarelli, Curator

Our members may not realize the extensive collection the Oyster Bay Historical Society maintains. To enlighten the community about our wonderful collection we have decided to exhibit items solely from our collection at least once a year. This year the exhibit will feature a series of love letters donated by Mrs. Helen Curtis from her grandparents, the Franckes. These provocative and wonderful letters are from Luis J. Francke, Sr (1861-1938) to Jane Bush Francke (1880-1953). The Franckes built the Glenby mansion in 1910 on their 133 acre property in Brookville. Mr. Francke was a Cuban sugar exporter and his wife Jane managed the house while her husband traveled extensively. Jane's fondness for birds became evident when a portion of their original property was designated for the Jane Bush Francke Bird Sanctuary (the house and sanctuary are still in existence). The letters are an intimate glimpse of their love and furnish insight into daily life on the North Shore of Long Island during the early 1900s. The Oyster Bay Historical Society is proud to present "Love Letters" in February, just in time for Valentine's Day.

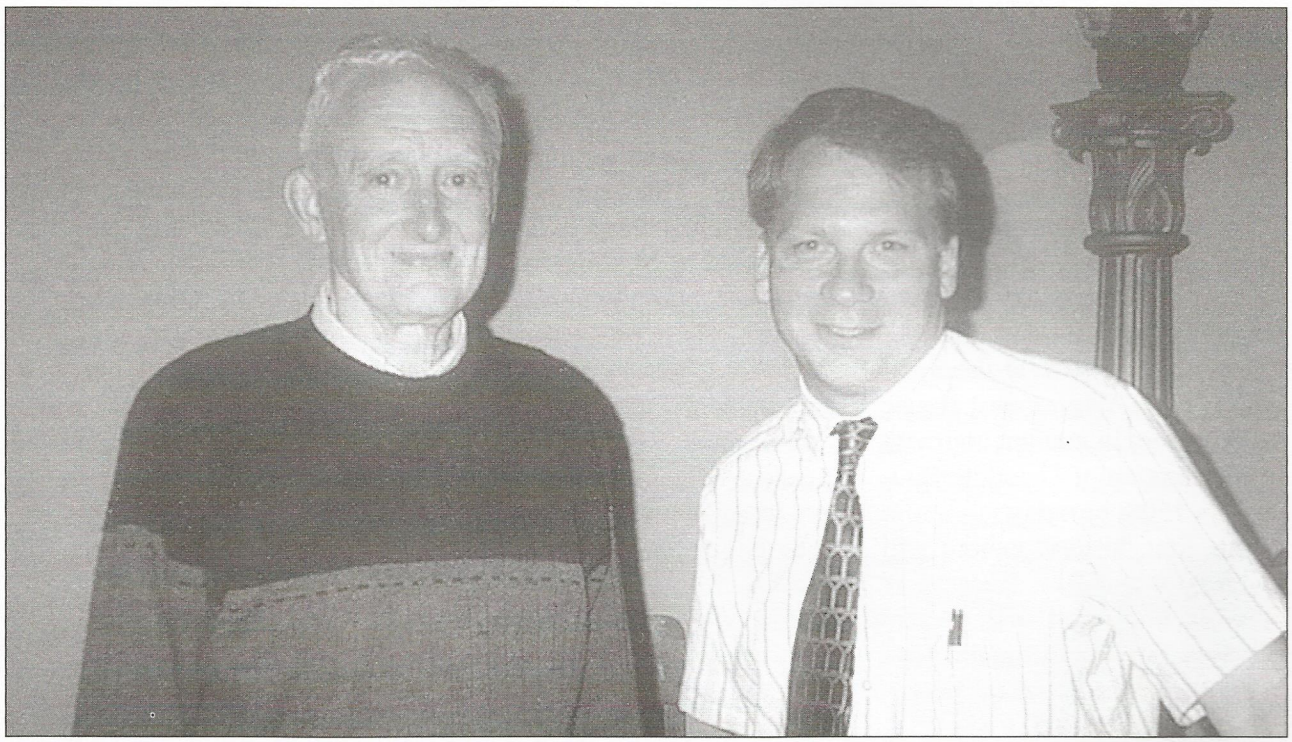
Some of our exhibits feature artifacts on loan from other historical organizations or members of our community who loan their precious photographs, artifacts, books and documents. We encourage the participation of our members and feel it is important to create connections with other organizations whose same mission is to preserve and protect our history. The Oyster Bay Historical Society is pleased to serve as the repository for these unique materials utilized by researchers, genealogists and scholars. In our own collection we have countless "one of a kind" and rare irreplaceable artifacts and documents related to Oyster Bay. We encourage you to look for upcoming exhibits on our website or send us your e-mail address to tk@oysterbayhistory.org so we may alert you to our exhibits, lectures, workshops and galas.

THE ARCHIVIST'S ANGLE

by Philip Blocklyn

Those of us whose friends don't consider us worthy of an actual gift on their return from vacation will usually have to settle for a postcard, bearing a gaudy image of one tourist trap or another on its face, and at best an exaggeration (Having a Wonderful Time!) or at worst an outright lie (Having a Wonderful Time! Wish You Were Here!) on its back.

The Oyster Bay Historical Society has a fine collection of postcards bearing Oyster Bay scenes extending back to the last decade of the 1800s. Such early cards mercifully allowed no space at all for messages, insincere or otherwise, unless the sender chose to scrawl something directly over the face of the card's image or squeeze a few words into a small blank strip inadequate for even the briefest greeting. After 1907, senders were at last authorized to include a message on the card's back, to the left of the address. And so began a literary tradition of clichés, half-truths, bad jokes, and indecipherable blottings.



OBHS Director Tom Kuehhas is shown with guest speaker John Taylor at the Society's Annual Meeting held on Friday, June 20, at the new Matinecock Lodge. Mr. Taylor spoke about life on his family's farm on Cold Spring Road in Syosset. Known as Homestead Farm, it remained in the family for much of the 20th century. We extend our thanks to Mr. Taylor for a most interesting lecture. (Photo by Heidi Dieterle - courtesy of the ***Oyster Bay Guardian.****)*

Some folks, of course, actually used cards to convey information: when to expect their arrival home, say, or whether to anticipate some "delightful surprise." Such data is these days conveyed by furious texters texting furiously via their intelligent digital devices. One hundred years ago, the leisurely postcard did the trick.

For the most part, however, postcard writers leave a written record that could just as well be left unwritten, if not for the pleasure their jottings give us today. For instance, many senders claim to have "just had lunch with Teddy" or to have "just left a meeting with the President." Such claims seem doubtful. Sagamore Hill was hardly an open house, and unannounced visitors could, if particularly unlucky, expect the reception given Mary French, whose attempt to see President Roosevelt ended in her appearance before a Mineola judge for psychiatric evaluation.

NOTE: The Oyster Bay Historical Society is working to make a selection of its postcard collections available, on a rotating basis, via the Society's website, beginning in 2009.

SOURCES:
Kenneth Summers Collection 97.010. OBHS
Howard Kraft Collection 374.kr88. OBHS
North Carolina Collection, Uni-

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

versity of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. "How To Date Postcards." http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc_post/about.php . Accessed 10 August 2008

SAGAMORE HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Approximately 1,500 visitors came to enjoy the Independence Day celebration on Friday, July 4th. Troop Commander Bill Uhlinger led the "Rough Rider" re-enactors in a demonstration of their riding and saber skills. James Foote, as President Theodore Roosevelt, delivered the Presidential message and Steven Walker directed the Sagamore Hill Band.

The date of TR's Sesquicentennial (150th year) Birthday is October 28, 2008. Gifts and articles celebrating the occasion, for both young and old, will be available for sale, including T-shirts, mugs, coins and books.

NASSAU COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On Sunday, April 20, guests were treated to "A Sense of Place: Long Island History and Heritage" an overview presented by Dr. Natalie Naylor. The slide show covered the period from the Native American Indians to the suburban metropolis of today.

CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

All who live and/or work in the Bethpage community are encouraged to submit their life story to their "Walk Back in Time" program. This will be added to their encyclopedia and, with the author's permission, be published in their *Newsletter*. This history of village life will be lost unless it is documented now.

May's Program, featuring Frank DeCicco, told the story of the three Butchorn brothers who served in World War II. Joseph and Charles died in combat but Hank Butchorn survived and still lives, with his wife Loretta, in Bethpage.

John Albertson presented "The Legacy of Yankee Stadium" an NBC special he co-produced. Known far and wide as "The House that Babe Ruth Built" it is being replaced by a new stadium.

FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Their Annual Meeting/Strawberry Festival was held on the Farmingdale Village Green on Sunday, June 8th. The Officers and Trustees of the Society wish to thank JoAnne Bihary and the committee, the Village Board, Department of Public Works and Fire Department for making the program successful.

An art exhibition, "Art in the Park" will be held at the Village Green from 11am to 4pm on the weekend of September 13-14.

UNDERHILL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Underhill Society of America is actively seeking contributors to the *News & Views* newsletter and annual *Bulletin*. Those with news, recollections, or historical insights regarding Captain John Underhill and his descendants should contact the Society at 1underhill1@optonline.net. Please include a mailing address, email address, and telephone number.

SUFFOLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The SCHS is pleased to announce that a new exhibition, "Full Freedom and Joyous Exhilaration: Early Bicycling On Long Island," will be on display at the Society through September 15. The exhibition features period bicycles, photographs, memorabilia, and archival material from both public and private collections.

A bicycling craze swept the nation in the 1890s. This national phenomenon was considered by some to be the greatest engine for change in the nineteenth century and was the forerunner to an increase in the speed of daily life. Beyond the obvious health and recreational effects, bicycling influenced the structure of communities, made massive changes in both manufacturing and marketing, opened travel options to the masses and led to greater gender equality.

In connection with the new bicycling exhibit, the SCHS will

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.

sponsor the 50-mile, round trip "Let's Make History" bicycle ride from Riverhead to Greenport, on Sunday, September 14, from 8:30 am- 2:30 pm. Proceeds from the ride go towards building restoration and renovation. Registration is $25 per person; $30 the day of the event.

For ride details, sponsorship opportunities, and to volunteer, please contact Kathryn Curran at 631-727-2881, or curranschs@optonline.net.

For a link to register, visit the SCHS web site: www.suffolkcountyhistoricalsociety.org or go directly to: www.active.com, and type in "Let's Make History: Half Century Bicycle Ride" in the search bar.

WW II VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

In preparation for a June 2009 exhibition scheduled to coincide with the 65th anniversary of D-Day, the Oyster Bay Historical Society is seeking World War II veterans (and veterans of the "Home Front" during the war!) who would be willing to share their experiences.

The Society's focus will include all veterans, men and women, those who served in the war and in support of combat operations, all ranks in all branches of service - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Merchant Marine, and Coast Guard.

The Society seeks to engage military and history groups as partners to identify war veterans, and those who served in support of them, to interview. Photographs, documents, and artifacts are also of primary importance in mounting the exhibit and originals will be returned, if desired. According to Director Tom Kuehhas, "We have already interviewed about a half dozen veterans, some who saw combat and others who did not. They all had fascinating stories to tell and I can't wait to share their stories with visitors to the exhibition! We need to record their experiences now...before it's too late!"

Any veteran willing to submit materials may call Tom Kuehhas at 922-5032. Interviews will be scheduled through the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

Members of the North Country Garden Club, led by coordinator Arnhild Buelte (center), perform their annual Spring cleanup of the Colonial Garden behind the Society's Earle-Wightman House. Thank you, ladies!

"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.

Long Island

by Natalie A. Naylor, Professor Emerita, Hofstra University

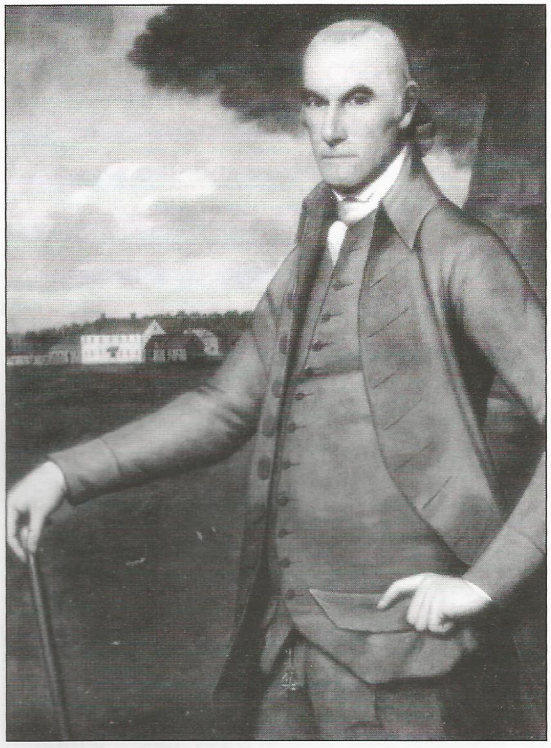
This brief overview of Long Island history and attractions was prepared for the Organization of American Historians (OAH) and originally appeared in the "2008 OAH Annual Meeting Supplement" in OAH Newsletter 36 (February 2008): A2, A9. Copyright © Organization of American Historians. Reprinted with permission. It has been updated and slightly expanded for publication in ***The Freeholder.***

Long Island stretches 118 miles east of Manhattan island with its North and South "Forks" terminating at Orient and Montauk Points, respectively. Brooklyn and Queens are part of geographical Long Island, but joined New York City in 1898. Conventional usage today is to refer to only the counties of Nassau and Suffolk as Long Island. The three eastern towns of Queens created Nassau County in 1899 after New York City annexed the western towns. Today, the population of Nassau is more than 1.3 million and Suffolk (which has more than three times as much area), 1.5 million.

The Native American Indians on the island were Algonquian-speaking groups. In the 17th century, disease carried by Europeans, land "sales," and migration drastically reduced the numbers, but two state-recognized reservations are in eastern Suffolk County: Shinnecock, which has a museum, and Poosepatuck. Garvies Point Museum also interprets the history of the original inhabitants. New Englanders first came across Long Island Sound in 1640 to settle Southold and Southampton on the eastern forks [after a brief stay in Oyster Bay]. Within a few years, other English settled Hempstead with permission of the Dutch, who claimed western Long Island until 1664, when England took control.

William Floyd of Mastic was one of New York's four signers of the Declaration of Independence (his home is now a National Park Site, open seasonally). After the Battle of Long Island in Brooklyn in August 1776, British and Hessian soldiers occupied the island for the duration of the Revolutionary War. Many patriots left the island and became refugees in Connecticut. Several Long Islanders were members of the Culper Spy Ring, which brought intelligence from occupied New York City via Long Island to General Washington on the mainland. Throughout the war, raiders came across the Sound to attack British forts and encampments and sometimes plundered residents. At the end of the war, many Long Island loyalists left America for Canada and other British possessions.

For many years Long Island was predominantly rural. Farming and fishing (oysters, clams, scallops, and fin fish) provided a livelihood. When water was the most efficient means of transportation, coastal trade was important and cord wood was a cash crop for many years. As transportation improved with the railroad (after the mid-1830s), farmers supplied food for New York City and Brooklyn. They raised fruits, potatoes, cauliflower, and other vegetables as well as cattle, sheep, and pigs. Blue Point oysters became world famous in the late 19th century and Long Island ducks in the 20th century. (The iconic Big Duck in Flanders, built in the early 1930s to sell ducks, is now a museum.) Old Bethpage Village Restoration and



William Floyd

the Long Island Maritime Museum interpret 19th-century Long Island life.

Whaling was an important activity for Sag Harbor and several smaller ports including Cold Spring Harbor, peaking in the 1840s. (Whaling museums in these communities preserve this history.) Shipbuilding and other maritime trades were important in North Shore ports in the 19th century. Ferries and steamboats connected the island to the mainland and New York City.

The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) was initially built to be a short cut to Boston (1834-1844). To serve Long Island, it developed and extended branch lines and absorbed competing railroads. The LIRR promoted farming, settlement, and tourism. In 1910, a tunnel under the East River enabled direct rail access to Manhattan, which shortened commuting time to New York City. The result was a suburban boom in Nassau County (the county's population more than tripled from 1910 to 1930). Although the LIRR is still the busiest commuting rail line in the country, most Long Island residents today work in Nassau or Suffolk Counties rather than in New York City.

America's foremost genre painter, William Sidney Mount (1807-1868), was born in Setauket and studied in New York City. He did most of his painting in Stony Brook and depicted life in rural Long Island. The Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages in Stony Brook owns most of his paintings and always has some on exhibit. One of its current exhibitions (to October 26), is "Eye on the Storm: Long Island's Dangerous Coast" which includes the 1938 hurricane.

Long Island attracted many artists in the late 19th century, beginning with excursions of the Tile Club in the late 1870s. William Merritt Chase conducted the Shinnecock School of Art in Southampton from 1891-1902. Among the many other artists who lived and painted on the East End are Irving Wiles, Thomas and Mary Moran, Childe Hassam, Willem de Kooning, Fairfield Porter, Jackson Pollock, and Lee Krasner. The Pollock-Krasner House is now a museum. Exhibits in other art museums (including the Heckscher in Huntington, the Parrish in Southampton, and Guild Hall in East Hampton) also often feature Long Island artists.

Large hotels and boarding houses near the ocean on the South Shore or Long Island Sound on the North Shore attracted summer visitors. Long Island became popular for country homes for the wealthy in the late 19th century. Most built their mansions near the water, whether on the Sound or the Great South Bay. William K. Vanderbilt, J. P. Morgan, Louis Comfort Tiffany, F. W. Woolworth, Walter P. Chrysler, and Charles Pratt were among the millionaires on the North Shore Gold Coast. Besides the water, the attractions were sport hunting, fishing, yachting, and, by the end of the century, polo, and golf. The leading architectural firm for country houses was McKim, Mead & White, which had some forty commissions on Long Island (Stanford White had a country home in St. James). Although many of the largest mansions no longer survive, a few are preserved as historic house museums, including Falaise in Sands Point, Coe Hall at Planting Fields in Oyster Bay, Westbury House at Old Westbury Gardens, and the Vanderbilt Musem in Centerport. Some mansions are still private residences. Other estates have become state parks, colleges, schools, country clubs, religious institutions, or other adaptive reuse.

When he was young, Theodore Roosevelt's family summered in Oyster Bay. In the 1880s, TR bought land nearby on Cove Neck and built Sagamore Hill. Now a National Park Site, more than 95 percent of the furnishings in the house are original. Exhibits are in his son's home, Old Orchard Museum, on the property.

The flat, treeless Hempstead Plains in the middle of today's Nassau County was a training area for militia and military units from colonial times, including Camp Winfield Scott (1861), Camp Black (1898), and Camp Mills (1917). The Rough Riders and other returning troops from Cuba in 1898 came to Camp Wikoff in Montauk. During World War I, several airfields on the Plains trained army aviators, including Hazelhurst (renamed Roosevelt) and Mitchel Fields. Camp Upton in Yaphank was a large training and embarkation camp in 1917. In World War II, Camp Upton was reactivated and Mitchel Field was an Army Air Corps base.

Long Island was the Cradle of

Aviation in the early 20th century with many pioneering flights occurring on the Hempstead Plains, beginning in 1909. Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field on his historic solo, nonstop flight to Paris in 1927. Many flying schools on the Plains trained civilian aviators. By the early 1930s, Roosevelt Field was the largest and busiest civilian airfield in the country. From the early 20th century, and especially during World War II, the island had a booming aviation industry. Grumman Aircraft (for many years the largest employer on the island) produced planes for the Navy; Republic Aircraft, planes for the Army; and Sperry Gyroscope, navigation instruments. Many smaller firms were also involved in the defense industry. Grumman built the lunar module that landed on the moon in 1969. The Cradle of Aviation Museum on Mitchel Field preserves this aviation history.

Robert Moses

Under the presidency of Robert Moses, the Long Island State Park Commission built thirteen parks on Long Island in the 1920s, as well as parkways to reach the parks. By the end of Moses' tenure in 1963, Long Island had nineteen state parks and ten parkways; today there are twenty-five state parks and historic sites. Jones Beach, Moses' preeminent state park, has an exhibition on the history of these parks "Castles in the Sand," in its East Bathhouse (open year-round; off-season, weekends only). The parkways are now major commuting roads.

After World War II, Levittown became the prototypical postwar suburb with the Levitts constructing more than 17,000 houses in the late 1940s. Other developers built smaller subdivisions, making Nassau the fastest growing county in the nation. Nassau's population more than tripled from 1940 to 1960 and peaked in 1970. Now a "mature suburb," it has limited land for development. Suburbanization spread to western Suffolk in the post-WWII years and in recent decades has proceeded further east. Suffolk's population quadrupled from 1950 to 1970. Suffolk County is still the number one agricultural county in the state in terms of the value of its products, thanks to vineyards on the east end, horticulture, and fisheries, as well as truck farming. The Environmental Defense Fund was organized in Suffolk in 1967 and led to Suffolk being the first county to ban DDT. Suffolk has taken a lead in land preservation and purchasing development rights to preserve its farm land.

Famous Long Islanders include several poets. Jupiter Hammon (1712-1800), the first published African-American poet, was enslaved by the Lloyd family on Lloyd Neck. The Joseph Lloyd Manor House interprets Hammon as well as the Lloyd family. Poet and newspaper editor William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) had a country home in Roslyn ("Cedarmere"), which is now a Nassau County museum. Walt Whitman (1819-1892), was born in West Hills (now Huntington Station); his birthplace is now a State Historic Site and Interpretive Center.

Two other Long Islanders deserve mention. F. Scott Fitzgerald started writing his novel *The Great Gatsby* when he lived in Great Neck (1922-1924), he immortalized an image of Long Island's North Shore in the 1920s. Barbara McClintock (1902-1992) worked at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory for fifty years and won the Nobel Prize in 1983 for her work on genetic elements ("jumping genes"). A building at the Laboratory now bears her name. (Tours of the Lab's grounds are offered Saturday mornings seasonally.)

Long Island's many historic house museums date from the 17th to 20th century. Several lighthouses, windmills, and other early mills are also museums. Some of the museums are open seasonally during the warmer months. For additional information on museums mentioned and many others, visit discoverlongisland.com., ExploreLl.com. or

the individual museum.

Museums and Historic Sites in the Town of Oyster Bay and City of Glen Cove (all telephone numbers are in the 516 area code) :

Earle-Wightman House, Oyster Bay Historical Society, 20 Summit St., Oyster Bay; 922-5032, oysterbayhistory.org. Open Tues.-Fri. 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Sun. 1-4 p.m. The ca. 1720 house has period rooms and changing exhibits. Donation.

Bayville Historical Museum, 34 School Street, Bayville ; 628-1720. Open Tues. and Fri., 1-3 pm; closed in the summer.

Coe Hall in Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park and new Visitor's Center, Planting Fields Road, Oyster Bay; 922-9210, plantingfields.org;. Open daily, 12-3:30 p.m. April-September; Visitor Center with interpretive exhibits open year-round, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Parking fee and additional fee for house tour.

Hicksville Gregory Museum(rocks, minerals, and other natural history collections, 1915 jail), 1 Heitz Place, Hicksville;; 822-7505, gregory-museum.org. Open 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tues.-Fri., 1-5 p.m. weekends. Fee.

Historical Society of the Massapequas, Old Grace Church and ca. 1870 Floyd-Jones cottage, 4755 Merrick Rd., Massapequa; 799-2023. Open 2-4 p.m. Sundays, May-September.

Old Bethpage Village Restoration, Round Swamp Road, Old Bethpage; 572-8400, www.nassaucountyny.gov. Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Wed.-Sun. (to 5 pm weekends through Oct. 31); closed in January and February. Fee.

Raynham Hall, 20 W. Main St., Oyster Bay; 922-6808, raynhamhallmuseum.org;. Open Tues.-Sun. 1-5 p.m. (from noon in the summer). Fee.

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site (home of Theodore Roosevelt), Sagamore Hill Road, Cove Neck; 922-4788, nps.gov/sahi. Open daily to Labor Day, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sept.-May, Wed.-Sun., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fee for tour of house; Old Orchard Museum, with exhibits and films on TR, is free.

Sea Cliff Village Museum, 95 10th Ave., Sea Cliff; 671-0090. Open 2-5 p.m. Sat. and Sun. Donation.

Garvies Point Museum (geology, American Indian history, and prehistoric archaeology) and Preserve, 50 Barry Drive, Glen Cove; 571-8010, garviespoint-museum.com. Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Sun. Fee.

Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County, Welwyn Preserve, 100 Crescent Beach Rd., Glen Cove; 571-8040, holocaust-nassau.org. Open 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.,11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun. Free.

Many other museums and historic sites are nearby in the towns of North Hempstead, Hempstead, Huntington, and Babylon, as well as further east in Suffolk County.

Notes From An Old Grad

by Rick Robinson

Oyster Bay High School is perhaps the most distinctive and imposing structure in our village. Located just two blocks from the center of town on East Main Street, it has been an architectural centerpiece in Oyster Bay since February 1929. Early in that month, students from the original 1901 high school and 1908 primary school, both located "up the hill" where St. Dominic's Church now stands, carried their books and other belongings down to the new school, which was designed to house kindergarten through grade 12.

The new "central school" was usually referred to simply as the high school and during this writer's years at OBHS the kindergarten and elementary children were located in the east side of the building. The architecture of the high school can best be described as art deco with a touch of the gothic. Readers should note that the current expansion of the science wing on the west end of the school is in keeping with the architecture of the main building. Unfortunately this was not the case for the music wing which was added to the east end of the school in the 1960s.

It is interesting to note that east and west end doors of the main building display a gothic "B" and "G" above to indicate the entrances for boys and girls.

This is a tradition that was observed at the earlier high school, but was not practiced at the current building. Several eagle gargoyles are also to be seen along the roofline of the front façade. The cost of the school in 1929 was less than $650,000! That figure included a 220-yard running track behind the school and an upper field that was used for gym classes, soccer, baseball and, later, football.

The building was originally equipped with a central vacuuming system, a classroom audio system, a library, a third-floor

cafeteria, a spacious auditorium with balcony and projection booth, and a modern gymnasium. The latter area now serves as a state-of-the-art library for OBHS. Also, the school had two enclosed courtyards, one of which was available only to seniors. That courtyard space is now the school cafeteria. Unlike today's students at OBHS, the lunch hour was scheduled from noon to one for many decades. Today, the high school houses grades 7-12 and also has a modern athletic wing that includes an impressive gymnasium. The auditorium recently underwent a complete restoration and update, and is now rightly called the Performing Arts Center.

Our public high school has served the community well and is a tribute to the fine workmanship of its builders and to a farsighted community that did not seek short-term solutions for its educational needs. We should add that both the Roosevelt Elementary School and the Vernon Middle School have in recent years undergone significant expansion and improvements.

Oyster Bay High School is among thirty-one properties described in *A Walking Tour of Oyster Bay*, an illustrated booklet available from the Oyster Bay Historical Society at 20 Summit Street or by calling (516) 922-5032. The cost is $3.95.

Governors Island

continued from p. 5

It would be the historically correct answer and beyond dispute: It is Governors Island's national legacy; New York's identity; and the Lifeblood of American liberty.

Notes:

26. Haynes Trebor, *The Flushing Remonstrance (The Origin of Religious Freedom in America)*, (New York, Bowne House, 1957), 12
27. The Flushing Remonstrance, December 27, 1657.
28. W.I.C. directors to Stuyvesant, April 16, 1663, *Ecc. Rec.*, 1, 530.
29. J. Franklin Jameson, *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609-1664*, (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York), 461.
30. *Col. Doc.*, 2, 415
31. *New York Colonial Manuscripts*, Dr. Charles Gehring, trans., (1977), 12:18.
32. 1787 Constitution of the United States, Article VI.
33. First Amendment of the Bill of Rights.
34. William Byrd to Bro. Dan'l per Ruds, March 8, 1685/86, *Virginia Historical Register and Literary Companion*, 2 (1849), 208 (misprinted 108).

The "new" Oyster Bay High School on East Main Street, shortly after its completion in 1929. Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.

Part VI

by Robert L. Harrison

During the nineteenth century, Long Island's poetry kingpins were led by Bryant, DeKay, McLellan, Saxe and Whitman. The rise of women poets as equal shareholders of poetic verse was forthcoming. The Island's sirens were being heard in increasing numbers. Out of approximately thirty-eight books of verse published here during that century, about forty percent were written by the Island's women.

The poems of Long Island now echoed with the voices and words of Bogart, Smith, Huntington, Lewis and others. They wrote about what they felt and saw, adding a woman's perspective to their verse. Some were creative with their subjects like Mary Gardiner, who used news stories for inspiration in her poems, while others were involved in the Women's Suffrage movement. Most of these sirens married and raised families; some even got divorced. Their verses represented the entire Island, from Brooklyn to the East End.

Elizabeth Bogart (1795-1879), was born in New York City and moved to Southampton three years later when her father, the minister David S. Bogart, officiated at the Presbyterian Church there. At the age of eighteen, Bogart again moved with her family, this time to Hempstead Harbor, where her father served two churches.[1] Bogart's Long Island experiences were divided between Southampton (1798-1813) and the Roslyn-Hempstead Harbor area (1813-1826).

Bogart was thirty years old before her first published poem, "Stanza" appeared in the *Long Island Star*. During her lifetime Bogart's poetry was widely read in the magazines and newspapers of the day. Of independent means due to monies left her from her father's estate, Bogart never married. It was not until Bogart was 71 years old in 1866, that her first and only book of verse was published, *Draftings From the Stream of Life: A Collection of Fugitive Poems.*

Long Island themes abounded in Bogart's poetry. Her poem "Southampton" brings back some of her youthful memories about our Island.

Its first lines are:

> I'm here again in my early home
> By the broad Atlantic's shore;
> Again through familiar paths I roam
> Still dear as in days of yore.
> Again on the waves of memory cast,
> I forgot that my youth is flown;
> Though the hand of change has slowly passed
> O'er the face of this ancient town.[2]

Her poem shares the universal theme of going back to places where we were raised and Long Island, just like in her poem, is forever changing. In Bogart's poem, "He Came Too Late," her subject matter shifts dramatically, giving a woman's perspective on a failed romance. The last lines are:

> He came too late! – Her countless dreams
> Of hope had long since flown;
> No charms dwelt in his chosen themes,
> Nor in his whispered tone.
> And when, with word and smile, he tried
> Affection still to prove,
> She nerved her heart with woman's pride,
> And spurned his fickle love.

When "He Came Too Late" was published, Edgar Allan Poe admired it and said her poetry "had verve, dignity and finish."[3] The poem should be read in its entirety and can be found on many web sites. When Bogart died in 1879 at the age of 84 she left a legacy as one of the brightest of the sirens.

Cornelia Huntington (1803-1890) was a life-long Long Islander who is considered the foremost woman writer of East Hampton.[4] Huntington spent some 87 years on the East End and kept a diary of her daily activities. Huntington's notes were amusing and detailed. Her friends urged her to publish them, which she did in 1857 under the title, *Sea Spray: A Long Island Village*.

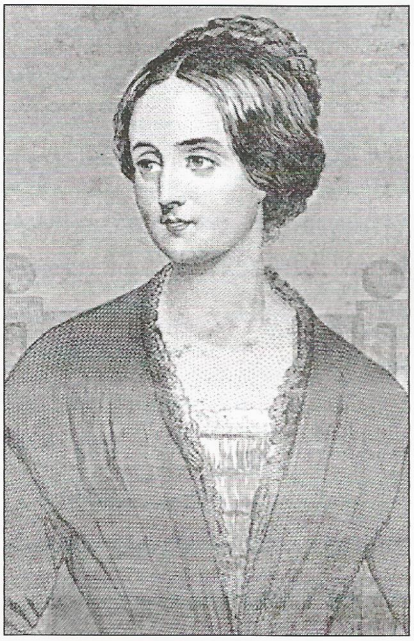
Huntington was a magnet to her fellow writers and visitors to the Hamptons area. She is thought of as the first hostess of literary gatherings, which became a tradition. Huntington wrote poetry for many official occasions, as well as to her friends, throughout her lifetime. These poems were gathered together and published posthumously a year after she died in 1891.[5]

South Shore Sirens

Elizabeth (Prince) Oakes-Smith (1806-1893), was born near North Yarmouth, Maine, and lived a whirlwind of a life. At a young age, Smith lost her father at sea and would later be shipwrecked herself. Smith was married at the age of sixteen to the Portland, Maine, journalist, Seba Smith,[6] and had six children with

him. Smith wrote articles for her husband's papers/magazines and later branched out to writing poetry and children's stories.

Smith's first poetry book, *The Sinless Child*, was published in 1843, while she was living in Brooklyn, followed by *The Complete Poetical Writings*, in 1851. During the 1850s Smith became "the first woman to join a public lecture tour and spoke on prison reform, abolition and women's rights."[7] In 1859 the Smiths bought a large house and property in Patchogue and named it "The Willows."[8]



Elizabeth Oakes-Smith

Smith wrote 18 books during her lifetime and was well known beyond Long Island. By 1868 she had sold or donated most of her and her husband's writings and library in order to raise money to live on.[9] Smith's later years were spent at Patchogue and with one of her sons in Blue Point. By the time Smith died in North Carolina at the age of 87, she had been more or less forgotten by the reading public.

Betsy Ann Smith Roberts (1828-1897), was a native Long Islander who was born in Patchogue. Roberts' husband was a well known physician and she became recognized for her charity work around the South Shore. Roberts also was a women's rights leader and focused on that and the temperance movement on Long Island. These lines from one of Roberts's poems reflect her viewpoint on these subjects:

> When women are franchised and allowed to vote
> At the polls,
> A period will be put to brewing and rum holes.[10]

Robert's only book of verse, *Original Poems*, was published locally in the 1890s and she passed away three years later.

The third South Shore siren, Martha Smith, (no relation to any previous Smiths mentioned) lived in Bay Shore during the mid nineteenth century. Smith wrote about her childhood in her poetry and was nostalgic about a Long Island past which was always tugging at her memories. Smith's only poetry book, called *Lost at Sea Poems*, came out in print in 1892.

Young Flowers

Two of our sirens passed from this life early and were remembered by the poetry community and newspapers as promises not kept. They were anchors of the feminine poetic spirit from either end of the Island, Brooklyn and Sag Harbor. Each had their only book of verse published right before or soon after their voices went silent.

Lucy Hooper (1816-1841), was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1816. Soon after her father's death the Hooper family moved to Brooklyn. Hooper's poetic talent blossomed in the then suburbs of Manhattan. Hooper's poems were published in the *Long Island Star* and some of them were later printed in the anthology *Domestic Happiness* in 1840.

During her short lifetime, Hooper was well known in poetry circles and even the poet John Greenleaf Whittier used to visit her at her Brooklyn home.[11] Hooper's health had always been delicate and Hooper passed on from heart disease in 1841, at the age of 25. Hooper's first book of verse, *The Lady's Book of Poetry and Flowers* was published two years later, followed in 1848 by *Complete Poetical Works*.

Hooper's fame as a poet went beyond Long Island's shores. Eight days after her death the Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper, *The Southern Patriot*, wrote "She was known to be capable of much more than she had accomplished, but proffered to sing occasionally a spontaneous song, and scatter flowers by the wayside."[12]

Brooklyn Sirens

Estelle Anna (Robinson) Lewis (1824-1880), was one of the most enthusiastic sirens of this group. Lewis was born in Baltimore, Maryland, into a wealthy family. At the age of twenty, she came out with her first book of verse, *Records of the Heart*,[14] published while she was attending Emma Willard's Female Seminary in

Estelle Anna Lewis

Troy, New York. Soon after, she married the lawyer Sydney Lewis and moved to Brooklyn, where she continued her writing. In Brooklyn they hosted one of the few literary salons in the city and became friends with the poet/critic Edgar Allan Poe.[15] Lewis' work was printed in the leading periodicals of the day and at the age of twenty-four, her second book, *Child of the Sea, and other Poems*, was published by Appleton.

Lewis's poetry gained popularity during mid-century, but following the death of her friend and mentor Poe, her marriage failed and the Lewis' divorced by 1858. Lewis went to Paris and then on to England, where again fame was bestowed upon her.

While in England, Lewis wrote a play, *Sappho of Lesbos*, which was produced there in 1868, and later throughout Europe. Lewis died in London at the age of fifty-six and for a few brief years was considered one of the best of the American female poets.[16]

Three more sirens raised their poetic voices from Brooklyn at the end of the century. The first, Anna Hempstead Branch (1875-1937), was born at Hempstead House in New London, Connecticut. Branch is considered, like Lydia Sigourney, to be a Connecticut poet but she did have some Brooklyn based roots in her youth.[17] She attended the Froebel Academy and later went to the prestigious Adelphi Academy in Brooklyn before attending Smith College.

During her lifetime Branch wrote three books of verse: *The Heart of the Road* (1901), *The Shoes that Dance* (1905), and *Rose of the Wind* (1910).

Anna Olcott Commelin (1844-1919?), was born in Brooklyn and attended Brooklyn Heights Seminary. Commelin's first book, *Poems*, was published in a limited run by A.D.F. Randolph and Company of New York in 1888.

Other poetry books published during her lifetime were *The Kaaterskill Fairies* (1892), *Of Such is the Kingdom and Other Poems* (1894), and *A Song of Christmas*, (1907).

The last of the Brooklyn Bards (found so far) was Mary Ainge DeVere (1844-1920). DeVere wrote under the pen name "Madeline Bridges" and was a life long resident of Brooklyn. During the latter part of the 19th century, DeVere's work was published in all the major periodicals of the day. DeVerne's first book of verse, entitled *Love Songs and Other Poems*, appeared in 1880 when she was thirty-six. It was not until 1890 that her second and last book, called simply *Poems*, was published.[18]

From her poem "The Spinner"

> The spinner looked at the falling sun:
> "Is it time to rest?
> My hands are weary- My work is done,
> I have wrought my best;
> I have spun and woven with patient eyes
> And with fingers fleet.
> And Lo! Where the toil of lifetime lies
> In a winding-sheet!"

This is only a part of the chorus line of sirens that wrote poetry during the century. Some made a huge impact as poets while most are forgotten voices now. It was the newspapers and growing periodicals of the day that published most of their poems.[19] They wrote to an audience that took their poetic endeavors very seriously. In the next century new sirens would come and claim an even bigger role in Long Island's poetry history.

Notes

1. According to the Bryant Library local history collection, David Bogart was a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church in Success (Lake Success?) and in Manhasset. In 1820, David purchased a house in what was later Roslyn. Letter of 01/17/1820.
2. *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, p 61.
3. Ball, Marie C. "Island Poets of the Past," *Long Island Forum*, September 1939.
4. Denne, Constance A. "Cornelia Huntington: A Woman of Letters," *The East Hampton Star*, 11/12/1998.
5. Huntington never married and is found living with her sister and physician husband in the 1880 East Hampton Federal Census.

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Blocklyn's Books

Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Tearing Down Walls: A Woman's Triumph. By Mary Gardiner Jones. Lanham (MD), Hamilton Books, 2008. 213 pp. Notes and illustrations. $35.

Mary Gardiner Jones is a woman of accomplishment in public affairs. Beginning in 1944, with her service in Wild Bill Donovan's Office of Strategic Services, Jones has gone on to forge a career in corporate law, antitrust litigation, consumer advocacy, education, and corporate board-sitting, before taking on, in her retirement, a new career as an advocate for children's mental health care. Her term on the Federal Trade Commission, where she served as one of Lyndon Johnson's Republican commissioners, represents the highlight of her public service. In most of what she undertook she faced determined and hateful opposition as a woman looking to enter any one of several "men-only" worlds of mid-twentieth-century America. This is not to mention the more open political resistance she overcame as an advocate for consumer protection at a time when corporations routinely dismissed the health and safety of their customers. However, it was her own family—the Jones family— that ultimately proved to be her greatest barrier to success.

You would think otherwise. "I was raised in a family of privilege and social standing that dated its ancestry to before the American Revolution," she begins, before quickly admitting that her mother considered her birth an accident that "would never happen again." The Jones Manor house, all fifty rooms of it, sat on a 125-acre estate in Cold Spring Harbor. Hardship for such a family entailed, in 1933, moving from a 14-room apartment on Park Avenue to a 7-room pied-à-terre on Fifth. Jones herself, raised by a governess known formidably as Fraulein (Anne M Elbs), attended the Nightingale Bamford School and Wellesley College. You would think such a family might manage to live happily, but you would be wrong.

Her parents' life was "a marriage of convenience entered into between two well-connected families to produce children." Her father's deafness and alcoholism isolated him from his own children and contributed to his depression and physical violence. He died young. His wife lived on, by and for herself alone, perversely expecting her daughter Mary to become a wife and mother herself, if in name only. She became neither. Opposing such an icy, loveless mother proved for Jones a source of both personal incentive and self-doubt, a conflict which took years of analysis to sort out.

In the emotional absence of her mother, Jones more readily assumed the role of family maverick previously held by her Aunt Rosalie, to whom she devotes a full chapter. Between 1911 and 1913, Rosalie Jones labored in the National American Women's Suffrage Association, leading marches on Long Island and in Ohio, the Hudson Valley, and Washington, DC. In Washington, she managed to join Woodrow Wilson's inaugural parade as a decidedly unwelcome participant. Wilson, naturally, refused to receive her delegation. Such activities hardly endeared her to the sniffy Joneses, and she remained an outsider in her own family, even after death. Her tombstone in the family cemetery behind St John's Church in Cold Spring Harbor casts its shadow just outside the Jones Mausoleum.

No wonder, then, that Mary Gardiner Jones can say of her own independent life that "I didn't feel like a pioneer, I felt like a stranger….I am the last of the Joneses to bear the family name and when I die the name disappears with me."

Reviewer's Note: Mary Gardiner Jones has scheduled a Meet-the-Author event at the Cold Spring Harbor Library on September 7, 2008.

Further Reading:

Spinzia, Judith Ader. "Women of Long Island: Mary Elizabeth Jones and Rosalie Gardiner Jones." ***Freeholder*** *(Spring 2007): 3-7.*

Naylor, Natalie A. "General Rosalie Jones (1883-1978): Oyster Bay's Maverick Suffragist." ***Freeholder*** *(Summer 2007) 3-7, 19.*

Dead Poets

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6. Seba Smith graduated from Bowdoin College in 1818 and pursued a literary career. Smith was the editor of the *Portland Argus* and later was the author of *The Life and Writings of Major Downing*, a popular collection of his satire articles.

7. *Portraits of American Women Writers.* www.library.org/woman/portrait

8. The "Willows" was later demolished and the site became a cemetery where Elizabeth and Seba Smith are buried. Smith's headstone is inscribed with the words "Lecturer, Reformer and Poetess" and "She was a woman of vision and courage." Per Barbara Russell, Historian, Brookhaven Township, letter of 11/14/05.

9. The Bowdoin College archives affirmed that the college received 49 volumes from Mrs. Seba Smith from 1864-69. E-mail of 06/03/08

10. *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, p 105.

11. It has been suggested that there may have been a romance between the two. After Hooper's death, Whittier wrote the long poem "Lucy Hooper" in her memory.

12. "Death of Miss Lucy Hooper," *Southern Patriot*, 08/09/1841

13. *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, p 57.

14. Lewis dedicated her book to William Cullen Bryant.

15. Poe worked behind the scenes for many aspiring women poets at this time. It has been said that Sydney Lewis paid Poe to promote his wife's poetry. Poe also is said to have based his poem "Annabelle Lee" upon the beauty of Lewis. After Poe died his mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, lived with the Lewis family until they divorced.

16. "Authors," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 11/23/1885

17. "A Brooklyn Poet," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 11/07/1901

18.http://www.lehigh.edu/dek7/ssaww/writ19cendeve.htm

19. Even the *New York Times* published poetry up to a few years ago.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

OCTOBER

Saturday, Oct. 25, 1 p.m.

Exhibition Opening

Earle-Wightman House

Join us for the opening of the much-anticipated "The Roosevelts...It Wasn't All Politics" exhibition at the Society's headquarters in conjunction with Theodore Roosevelt's 150th birthday.

This first, historic exhibit will feature Oyster Bay Roosevelts' artwork from past and present generations. Ms. Elizabeth Roosevelt, a professional photographer, will be exhibiting her work along with that of the rest of the Roosevelt family. The exhibit will feature works in oil, lithographs, photography, jewelry designs by Elizabeth's mother, Elise Roosevelt, and metal and silver work.

This exhibit will allow a glimpse into the intimate side of this historic and powerful family. A companion exhibition, featuring works by living Roosevelt family artists, will open on Friday, Oct. 24, from 3-5 PM at the Theodore Roosevelt Association office at 20 Audrey Avenue, Oyster Bay.

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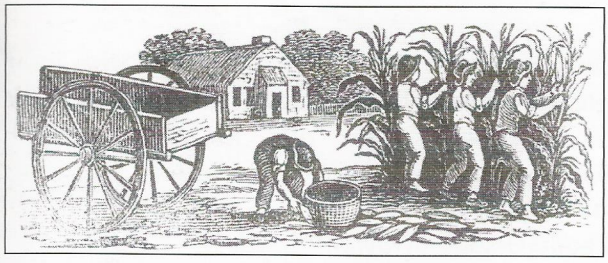

Many Hands Make Light Work!
Join the Society as a Volunteer!