



THE FREEHOLDER

WINTER 2002 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

☞ A
FORGOT-
TEN
AVIATION
PIONEER

☞ CORD-
WAINER: A
CONCEITED
COBBLER S
COGNOMEN?

☞ ITALIAN-
AMERICAN
EXPERIENCE
EXHIBITION
WRAPS UP

☞ THE
SHORT-LIVED
WAR OF
QUENTIN
ROOSEVELT



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

Thanks to all who contributed to the success of our Fall series on the Italian-American Experience. Whether you participated with your reminiscences and artifacts for our exhibition and special **Freeholder**, as a sponsor, or attended one or all of our events, the Society greatly appreciates your support!

Thanks also to those who had kind

words to say about the last **Freeholder**. Several have stated that they have read it cover to cover several times!

But the highest accolade I received was from a member who participated in the project, but now lives in Poughkeepsie. She brought a copy of **The Freeholder** to her Italian-American heritage group and claimed that it inspired them to attempt to do the same in their town. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery!

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THE POST RIDER

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Dan Pfanmiller who served as the editor of the newsletter of the USS Oyster Bay Association. Dan acted as the ambassador for the surviving crew members and was always there with information when needed. The following is taken from the November 2001, issue of the newsletter, written by Bill Robertson:

I received a call from Don Pfanmiller last spring shortly before he published his last newsletter. Don told me it was time

he stepped down and would I be willing to share the responsibilities, newsletter, finances, etc., with Al Wilson. He knew he was very ill, although I did not pick it up in his voice, and wanted to be sure that everything was in good order. For 15 years he made sure every detail was taken care of when it was related to his shipmates on the Oyster Bay.

I first met Don in July 1943, at Packard Motor Car Co. in Detroit. Don, I and the rest of the Packard group worked in the engine shop until July 1945. Over the years we visited several times and in 1985 we had lunch together in Kansas City. We talked Oyster Bay times. Standing in the parking lot after lunch Don said that we should try to locate some of the shipmates

ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

In this 1917 photograph, Quentin Roosevelt, TR's youngest son, is shown in the biplane he flew as an aviation instructor. Many historians believe that Quentin's death in July 1918 was a contributing factor leading to the elder Roosevelt's own death just six months later in January 1919. For more on Quentin's military career, turn to p. 18. Sagamore Hill National Historic Site collections

for a get-together. I went home and gave the conversation little or no thought. Don went home and went to work locating the troops. By 1986 Don had located only six who were interested or able to attend a gathering -- Frank Lyon, Ken Lipe, Don MacGibbon, Ed Guidry, Pat Patterson and myself. In October 1986, at Ken and Virginia Lipes RV Park in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, we held our first meeting. The rest is history.

In addition to all the other details that Don had a finger on, his list of shipmates has expanded to include 205 men and 35 widows. This list also contains the names of 357 that have passed on. This list was

continued on p. 23

THE FREEHOLDER

of the

Oyster Bay Historical Society
Vol. 6 No. 3 Winter 2002

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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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ITALO BALBO - AVIATION PIONEER

by Walter Karppi

The editor would like to thank Mr. Karppi for bringing Italo Balbi's exploits to his attention and trusts that it provides our readers with a fitting postscript to our Italian-American exhibition and series of events.

Italo Balbo, born June 5, 1896, in the northern Italian town of Ferrara, to schoolteacher parents, died June 28, 1940, near the eastern Libyan city of Tobruk, the victim of "friendly fire." A few minutes earlier on that fateful day nine British bombers, flying from bases in Egypt, had attacked the airfield. Balbo, accompanied by another plane, approached the field shortly after the departure of the British planes. Italian gunners, inexperienced during these early days of the war, thinking they were coming under a second attack, fired at the approaching planes, scoring a direct hit. Cheers arose from the gun crews, not realizing they had killed one of their own. Former Air Marshall, and current Governor of Libya, Italo Balbo had crammed several lifetimes of adventure in his brief forty-four year existence.

His name is forgotten by all but a few, including many Italians. This was due to the desire to expunge the dark days of fascism and destruction visited upon Italy during the war. The Blackshirts, Mussolini, and the alliance with Hitler's Germany were held primarily responsible for these ills, justifiably so. The sin of his early involvement with the movement has rendered Balbo a "non person" and overshadowed his

achievements.

Volunteering to serve in the Italian Army, during the First World War, he was accepted as a reserve officer candidate in November 1916, and, after training, posted to the 8th Alpine Regiment as a Second Lieutenant. Serving with



*Italo Balbi in the cockpit.
(Caproni Museum Archive)*

honor and courage Balbo, by the end of the war, had earned a bronze and two silver medals for distinguished military service.

Due to his opposition to the Bolshevik and Marxist movements that were sweeping Europe and threatening Italy during the 1920s, he joined the Blackshirt, fascist movement. Through dedication, hard work, education, and his war record he rose rapidly through the ranks, becoming secretary of the party in Ferrara.

Mussolini's fascist regime was brutal and repressive but, unlike Germany and Russia, never murderous and bloodthirsty. Also, in Italy the wholesale arrest and execution of the Jewish population did not occur, as it had in

other Axis states.

His career advanced in the party until 1926, at which time he was appointed undersecretary of the Regia Aeronautica (Aviation Authority), a position he held until 1929, when he was made Minister of the Aeronautica. This transformed him from a provincial Blackshirt to an international celebrity. He joined the pantheon of the great pioneers of aviation's "golden age," the late 1920s and early 1930s. Among those were Charles Lindbergh, Wiley Post, Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Amelia Earhart, Umberto Nobile and others.

Balbo was responsible for all phases of aviation - civil as well as military. There was no independent air service at that time and an aviation

career as an officer was considered less desirable than one in the army or navy, which were the senior services. Balbo set about to change that. He realized that the major obstacle was personnel. Stating "The problem in aviation is above all the problem of personnel. It is infinitely more difficult to create a pilot than to build an airplane," he sought to recruit promising young men to join both the enlisted and commissioned ranks of the fledgling air service.

Accused, with some truth, by his critics of being more a showman than an aviator, Balbo did not obtain his pilot's license until 1927. However he had always been "air-minded" and wanted

Italy to develop as an air power, even as a youngster. It must also be remembered that during the '20s and '30s aviation was not as accepted as it is today. Similar to the early days of the automobile, flying was considered a plaything for daredevils and the rich. Balbo saw his mission as one of promoting aviation, both civil and military, to the government as well as civilians.

In order to gain public acceptance, support and enthusiasm for Italy's emergence as an air power, he developed a two pronged approach. The first was to attract the best available personnel to the air force. Applicants, whether transferring from one of the other armed services or entering from civilian life, had to take a competitive examination. Officer or enlisted man, all came in at the lowest rank and promotion was based upon ability and performance. This had a positive effect on morale.

The second prong was the publicizing of aviation through such means as air shows and exhibitions, air races, endurance flights and long distance air cruises. As a practical matter these competitions pushed forward the boundaries of aviation. Racing stimulated new developments in technology such as airframes, engines and fuels. Long distance flights pioneered routes, demanded sophisticated navigational techniques and instruments, and inspired designers to create comfortable cabins for crew and passenger. Commercial aviation especially benefited from these innovations.

Seaplanes, or flying boats, were popular in aviation's early

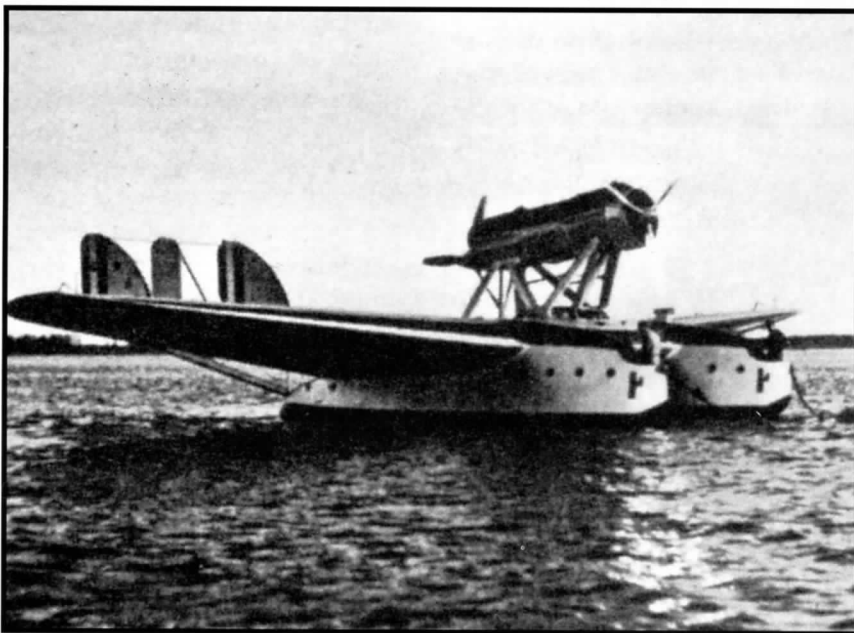
days for two reasons. One was that retractable landing gear had not yet been developed. All land-based aircraft had to depend upon fixed undercarriages which were prone to collapse and breakage when landing on the rough airfields (and they were literally fields) of the day. Secondly, since so much of the earth is covered by water, the lack of developed landing fields would not limit a seaplane since most great cities are built on, or near, a lake, river or ocean.

It was also felt that a seaplane was inherently safer than a land-based plane when flying over water. Should a seaplane be forced down over water a landing could easily be made without danger. This would not be true in the case of a fixed undercarriage plane. In an emergency a seaplane could even come down on land with safety to its passengers, although it might suffer considerable hull damage, depending on the terrain.

Under Balbo's ministry the Aeronautica's standard bomber

and reconnaissance seaplane was the odd-looking, twin-hulled flying boat known as the Savoia Marchetti SM.55. Dubbed "The Flying Catamaran," this unusual craft became one of the most famous and well publicized airplanes of its day. Its ruggedness and dependability made it Balbo's favorite and he used it for three of his aerial cruises.

Prior to his reign all record breaking speed, distance and endurance flights had been individual accomplishments. Balbo set out to prove that such flights could be made not just by a few exceptional individuals, but by collective cruises of many squadrons carrying numerous crew members. This was the origin of his four justly famous air cruises - all spanning oceans, each successive one more difficult than the last. The first, in 1928, covered the western Mediterranean; the second, in 1929, the eastern reaches of that sea. In 1931 he flew the South Atlantic from his home port of Orbetello, Italy, to Rio de



The SM.55X was chosen to propel Balbi and his crews across the Atlantic.

Janeiro, Brazil.

1933 saw the completion of his grandest exploit. A massed flight across the North Atlantic to Chicago and back - a double crossing unheard of up to that time! The seeds of this daring event were planted during a first time visit to the United States in December 1928. Invited to give a paper at an international civil aviation conference in Washington, D.C., he first proceeded to Chicago to visit an aeronautical exposition. Marveling at the enormous power, wealth and size of America, he was also impressed by the millions of Italian-Americans making new lives for themselves so far from their homeland. Returning home on the liner "Comte Grande" Balbo began planning for his great journey - the 1933 "Decennial Air Cruise."

In July 1933, Balbo led an aerial armada of twenty-five aircraft and one hundred men in a double crossing of the Atlantic, a dis-

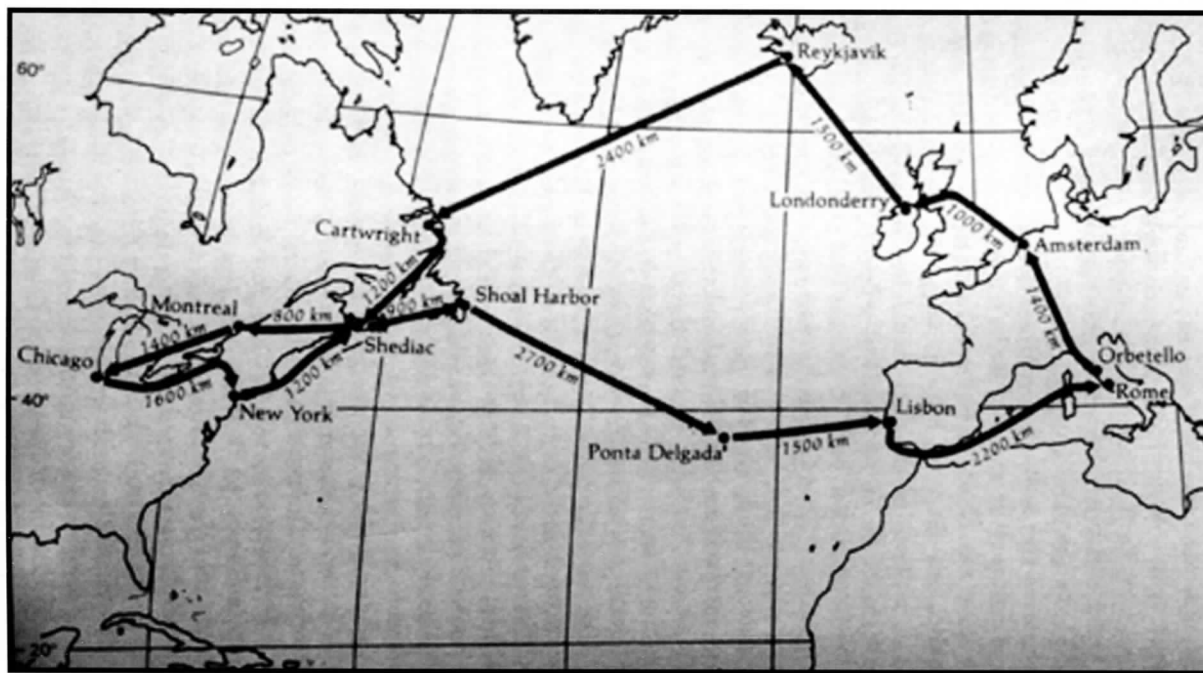
tance of 19,000 kilometers (11,400 miles). On this long and difficult journey only two aircraft and two crewmen were lost. Up to that time there had been forty-seven attempts at the crossing, all solo flights, with only fifteen succeeding. Sometime after 7:00 on the evening of July 19, twenty-four silvery airplanes passed in review above Manhattan, circled over the Statue of Liberty and gracefully landed one by one at the Floyd Bennet Seaplane base. Celebrating the first decade of the Aeronautica, it was known in Italian as the "Crociera del Decennale."

1933 was a banner year for Italian triumphs. In addition to Balbo's epoch-making flight this was the year that Primo Carnera won the world heavyweight title, the ocean liner *Rex* won the blue ribbon for its record Atlantic crossing, and Francesco Agello took the world seaplane speed record at over 400 miles per hour.

Selecting the tough, durable

and proven Savoia Marchetti SM55, Balbo had upgraded engines, instrumentation and made other improvements while beginning a rigorous training program for the crews, two years prior to the actual flight. Besides "hands on" piloting the men had to know navigation, mathematics, physics, English and sailing. This last skill was necessary as once their seaplanes were on the water they behaved like boats - unwieldy ones at that! Taxiing up to buoys and then tying up, transferring men and materials at sea, the movements of winds and waves, the fundamentals of small boat handling and seamanship were all skills vital to the success of the mission.

At last all was ready and early on the morning of July 1, 1933, the first of the twenty-five aircraft took off from Orbetello. The fleet was made up of seven flights of three aircraft each, with the eighth flight having four aircraft, the fourth plane being con-



Balbi's route from Italy to America in 1933.

sidered a reserve unit. Soaring over the Alps the formation landed in Amsterdam, Holland, after a seven hour flight. Here, unfortunately, the first fatal accident occurred when one of the pilots of overshot his landing mark and flipped over. Three crewmen and a passenger were saved but a fourth crewman perished.

On Sunday, July 2nd, they landed in Londonderry, Ireland, after a five and a half hour flight, where they were delayed for three days due to howling winds. Finally, on July 5th the weather cleared sufficiently for the armada to fly to Reykjavik, Iceland. There they remained for the next six days preparing for the most difficult leg of the flight to Cartwright, Labrador, and waiting for weather ships along the route to report favorable weather conditions. Conditions improved by July 12th and the group proceeded to make the twelve hour flight.

The next day they flew from Cartwright to Shediac, Newfoundland, and on the 14th to Montreal, Quebec. On Saturday, July 15, at 5:45 P.M., crowds waiting on the shores of Lake Michigan saw the fleet appearing, in neat groups of three, through the haze. The crowds went wild with joy - especially the Italians among them. The elapsed flying time had been forty-eight hours and forty-seven minutes, at an average speed of 124.6 mph for a distance of 6,065 miles! Overhead the forty-three plane escort of American fighter planes formed the word "ITALY."

After visiting the "Century of Progress" Fair the expedition continued on to Soldier's Field

where an audience of 100,000 awaited them. Mayor Edward Kelly welcomed them announcing that Balbo had transported more men by air than Columbus had by sea. In tribute the mayor declared that day to be known as "Italo Balbo Day" and Chicago's Seventh Street was renamed Balbo Avenue - a name which it still bears today. Among many highlights Balbo was most impressed by a 5,000 plate banquet at the Stevens Hotel.

Balbo was feted to a luncheon at the White House with President Franklin D. Roosevelt that was followed by a ticker-tape parade down Broadway when he returned to New York. A banquet for 4,000 at the Hotel Commodore was followed by a reception and dance at the Waldorf-Astoria. During a visit to the composing room of the New York Times, Balbo was delighted to find many Italians working there. Wiley Post, the world famous aviator who had just completed a seven day round the world flight, congratulated Balbo after a Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral.

Balbo's return journey began on July 25th. The weather, worse on the return leg, caused alterations in the flight plans. A decision to bypass Ireland in favor of the Azores was made, again due to weather conditions. When leaving Ponta Delgada on August 9th the second fatality occurred. One of the pilots, Lieutenant Enrico Squaglia, died of injuries incurred when his plane over-turned during take-off.

Balbo's subsequent career, although prestigious and honorable, was almost anticlimactic

compared to his feats of airmanship. Possibly to reward him, or fearing his popularity, Mussolini appointed Balbo Governor of the (at that time) Italian province of Libya, North Africa. He served well as an administrator and head of the province, but his accomplishments as an aviation pioneer is what he is most remembered for.

The day after Balbo's death, June 29, 1940, the following unusual event occurred. A British plane crossed the Italian lines in Libya and dropped a beribboned box containing the following message:

The British Royal Air Force expresses its sympathy in the death of General Balbo - a great leader and gallant aviator, personally known to me, whom fate has placed on the other side.

Arthur Longmore

Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief

British R.A.F., Middle East

Thus ended the all too brief career of a soldier, airman and statesman who, due to his affiliation with a discredited dictator and his regime, is all but forgotten today.

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ARTISANS OF OYSTER BAY: THE SHOEMAKER

by Elliot M. Sayward

One of the original proprietors of the Town of Oyster Bay was Robert Williams whose name is found in the Proprietor's List of 1653 but who is thought to have been settled five years earlier in Jericho (then Lusum) on a large grant of land received from the Indians. It has been suggested that this and other Williams property purchases in the records were land speculations rather than an effort to develop a settlement. Whatever his motive in dealing with the Indians he was helped by the fact that he had already learned their language.

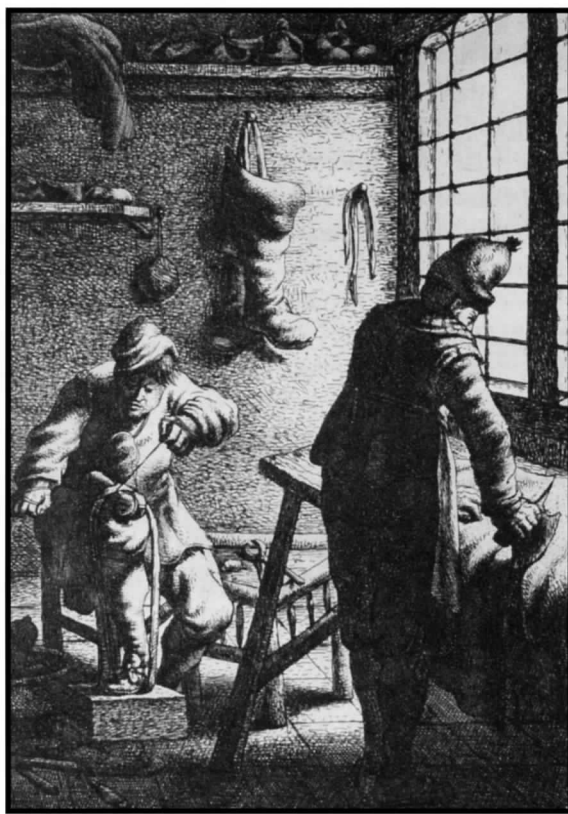
Williams has been thought by some to be a connection of Roger Williams of Rhode Island but this has not been established. However, we know he did have a family consisting of his wife Sarah, and children named John, Hope, Mary and Esther. Their ages are not known. Williams died sometime before March 1683, when his wife is spoken of as a widow. The date is unknown.

For the purposes of this article the most important thing we know about Williams is that he was a shoemaker and probably the first shoemaker in the area. After him, shoemaking was a popular trade over the early years of Oyster Bay's settlement. We know the names of many who followed the trade in the 17th and 18th centuries although we know little about most of them. Robert Williams stands as a representative of all the Oyster Bay shoemakers in those early years in our discussion of what it meant to be a shoemaker at the time of our beginnings.

We can believe that Robert Williams was a working shoe-

maker in those early times despite his land speculation activities. He was more than once called a shoemaker in the records. He appears as a complainant in a court case over two hides, the most important working materials of the shoemaker, that he was supposed to have received but didn't. He won the case. The acquisition of materials for shoemaking certainly bespeaks activity in that field. Further, his son John appears in the town records as a shoemaker. His father could not have taught him as an apprentice had he not been actively at work himself.

Our first question about his shoemaking is: What would his working place have looked like? Space for his work and gear would have required at least a portion of a room if, as is likely, he worked in his house. He might, of course, have had a whole room but probably not in the beginning. Pictures of shoemakers on the other side of the Atlantic at about the same time often show them working in the family kitchen, the most important room in most houses. Williams' space would have been near a window in order to have plenty of light to work by. Stitching up a shoe is fine and delicate work and the shoemaker must be



A shoemaker is shown cutting out leather with his special knife, while a journeyman employs a stirrup in this early 17th century print by Jan van Vliet.

able to see what he is doing. The window light was so important that often a platform was built beneath it to raise the work table and the bench nearer the light source.

The worktable was chiefly for cutting the sides of leather into the parts of shoes, by eye or by pattern. This was done standing up using a moon knife, a half round knife somewhat similar to the knife used in kitchen chopping bowls. Even if there were employees in the shop, the master normally cut the leather himself or assigned the job to a skillful and responsible foreman. Waste of leather could render a piece of work unprofitable.

Williams' space would have been near the door so that his

patrons did not intrude too far into the domestic area. If he were lucky there would be enough room for a chair or two so that his congenial customers might sit down and converse with him during their visit. Shoemakers were gregarious and were notorious as the newspapers of the neighborhood. Often they were well read, intelligent men who had views to pass along to those they talked to.

There might have been a bird cage hanging near the window in Williams' shop. Shoemakers are famous for keeping pet birds and the interest must have been frequently passed down from master to apprentice for it is found in many eras.

On the wall there was a rack in which was kept the shop's supply of the article the shoemaker in the proverb is said to have thrown at his wife, the last. This was a wooden form whittled out to the dimensions and shape of the customer's foot. On it the shoe was built, tacking or otherwise attaching the various parts of the shoe

until they were sewn together. These had been around for hundreds of years before Williams' time. In the small towns and back country places they were made by the shoemaker himself. In cities would be found specialists who could supply the shop with a whole range of sizes. Although lasts didn't wear out they eventually became riddled with tack holes.

Were Williams to have hoped to attract passersby to his shop, he may have hung a sign over his door. Have I told you that folk regarded shoemakers as humorous men? One from New England at about the same time Williams was active is said to have erected a sign that read, "At short notice and at low prices, soles renewed without benefit of clergy."

The bench on which the shoemaker sat when he was putting a shoe together was long and low and might have had a drawer beneath it. At the end on which he sat the worker usually

scooped out a round depression about twelve or fourteen inches across, filled it with waste wool or some other form of stuffing and, over that, tacked down a circle of leather. This provided him with a soft seat on a cushion that never fell on the floor. The other end of his bench served as a table for the tools and materials in use.

In the shop, besides the articles already described, were one or more small tubs of water in which were kept the two sorts of wax ball the shoemaker used in his work. One of these, the heel ball, was compounded of wax and lamp black and was used to shine the sole edges and heels of new or repaired boots and shoes. The other wax ball the shoemaker employed to wax his thread preparatory to use. It was made by boiling together tallow, pitch and roz'n, then pouring the mixture into water. When cooled to a putty-like consistency, it was worked by pulling as taffy is and then shaped into balls. Beeswax, if available, might have replaced the tallow.

When a length of thread was needed for a task the shoemaker might make it on the spot. He took several strands of hemp or flax and waxed them. He then rolled them on his leather apron across his knee and a thread as effective as if spun was produced. If the thread were to be used in "double stitching", hog bristles would be waxed on to each end of it. More on that later. The bristles were used rather like needles but lacking points they did not make their own holes in the leather. This was done with an awl. The hog bristle, called a "waxed end", was stiff enough to



A shoemaker contemporary of Williams is shown plying his waxed ends.

guide the thread through the opened hole without buckling.

Although Williams was, as a shoemaker, a maker of shoes, there can be little doubt that in Oyster Bay he would have had to take any leather work that came his way. Repairing shoes and resoling them would have provided



A shoemaker's leather apron.

a substantial part of his income. The most common repair to shoes is replacing their worn out soles and run-over heels. The pieces of leather for new soles he would have called taps. He would slosh a tap in his water tub to make the stiff, dried leather flexible again. Then he would hammer it on his lapstone, an improvised anvil perhaps originally resident in a brook. The hammering compressed the leather and increased its impenetrability to moisture.

This is not a how-to essay so I won't discuss the full re-soling operation. Suffice it to say that after ripping off the old sole he would sew the new one to the shoe's bottom edges, trim the tap to match the shape of the shoe and treat its raw edges with his

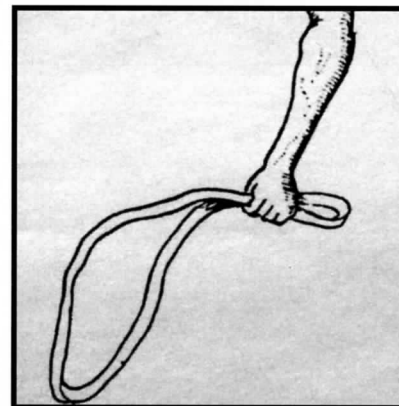
heelball. Like the phoenix from its ashes, the shoe would rise anew to its function of providing its owner's foot with a covering and a surface to walk upon.

In his play, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, Thomas Dekker, the English playwright who was probably of Dutch descent, gives us an inventory of the shoemaker's tools of about 1600. He has a Dutchman, applying for work in an English shop, questioned thus, "Have you all your tools, a good rubbing-pin, a good stopper, a good dresser, four sorts of awls, your two balls of wax, your paring knife, your hand and thumb leathers, and good St. Hugh's bones to smooth up your work?" The applicant might have owned other necessary things such as a leather apron, a pair of nippers or pincers for stretching a piece of leather over a last, a stirrup (a loop of leather stretched between the workman's foot and his knee that held the workpiece so he had his hands free), a whetstone for sharpening his knife, and very probably a hammer. That final, almost ubiquitous tool, is not, however, listed by Dekker or in Thomas Deloney's *Gentle Craft*. Perhaps the place of the hammer in the two inventories was taken by the lasting pincers which the workman traditionally uses to drive in the lasting tacks.

Robert Williams doubtless had his hide transformed into leather by local tanyards if such were available. Presumably he would have bought or traded for the raw hides from nearby livestock raisers who slaughtered their animals for beef. His findings, the miscellaneous small articles he could not produce himself or find local-

ly, shoe buckles, tacks and the like, would have come across the water from New York or New Amsteram, whichever name it was using at the moment. Thread was made from flax or hemp perhaps raised on his own land or nearby. Some of his thread would have been spun domestically. Some would have been made in the shop as needed. All would have required waxing whether with beeswax or tallow mixed with other ingredients. Waxed thread was often called lingel in old accounts and records.

Another needed material was starch paste which was probably made from ingredients at hand. It was needed when the insole had been attached to the uppers. Then it was smeared on both the down-side of the insole and the adjacent



A stirrup

side of the sole so they would not shift when temporarily tacked down for sewing in place. The paste was usually kept in a cow's horn.

Hog bristles for making waxed ends would have been supplied by local hogs. Much of the shoemaker's sewing used a length of thread equipped with the two hogs bristles already mentioned.

continued on p. 20



ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

A friend who had just been in England said he had seen a pub sign with the pub name on it reading "Bag o' Nails." I said there must be a story behind that but he didn't know it. I've often heard the expression, "Let's go down to the [Whatever] Bar for a keg of nails," but nobody ever said bag. Do you know why the sign said "Bag?"

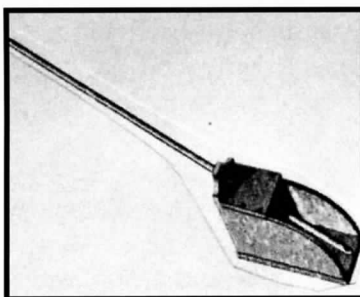
Donald Fagan

I can't swear to the truth of it but a story explaining it has been around for a long time. There was an English pub long ago that was called "The Bacchanals." That meant worshippers of Bacchus or drunken carousers. Painted on the sign was a faun, a minor Roman deity with horns, the body of a man and the legs of a goat and a couple of nymphs reveling. Illiterate guzzlers to whom "Bacchanals" sounded like "Bag o' Nails" called the place "The Devil and the Bag o' Nails" because the faun's hooves and horns suggested the Devil to them. In those days, Devil was a swear word and its casual use

was discouraged so that part went away but succeeding pub-keepers thought the name should be what the customers thought it was and the new name was painted on the signs and has been ever since. Good story and perhaps true.

Uncle Peleg,

I bought a small box of old paper items at a tag sale. In it was a clipping, perhaps from a magazine "Letters" page which asked what the item pictured was.



I had no idea and the clipping made no suggestions. Can you identify the strange looking object that I am guessing was a tool?

Ed Hall

The honest answer is: No. However I have a nagging but probably erroneous notion that it had to do in some way with cleaning out an old fashioned residential coal furnace. Perhaps a reader will be able to give us accurate scoop.

*From a school that receives **The Freeholder** we had this query from a student.*

Dear Uncle Peleg:

What is a waterman? I read that London's watermen had banded

together to protest the introduction of coaches on London's streets. Why did they do this?

Brian Iatesta

The Thames, London's river, was rather like a great highway. On it the watermen in their rowing boats were like the taxis we find today in the cities and big towns. They would carry passengers for a fee up and down the river or across it between London proper and the Bankside, a suburb that was probably indistinguishable from London except that it was not run by London's rules and was the location of the theatres and other places of entertainment. Early London had no four wheeled vehicles. To get around you had to walk, ride a horse or be carried in a sedan chair. If you wanted wheels you'd have had to ride in a two-wheeled delivery cart or in a wheelbarrow. Neither would have been very comfortable. All of a sudden carriages, four wheelers, were introduced. The first ones were private and did little harm except to stir up the mud of the streets. Then came the hackney coaches for hire. We still call taxis hacks in many of our cities. I'll let John Taylor, called the "Water Poet" because he was also a waterman, tell the rest of the story:

*Carrouches, coaches, jades
and Flanders mares
Do rob us of our shares, our
wares our fares.
Against the ground we stand
and knock our heels
Whilst all our profit runs
away on wheels.*



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**.*

ITALIAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE A SMASHING SUCCESS!

By all accounts, the Oyster Bay Historical Society's "The Twentieth Century Heritage Series: The Italian Immigrant Experience in Oyster Bay," was an unqualified success. The events, journal, and sponsorships netted almost \$35,000 for the Society's Building Fund. Quite apart from the financial rewards, the events and the exhibition garnered support from new friends of the society, over three hundred of whom attended the various events.

The exhibition seemed to strike an emotional chord with many. One gentleman was so overwhelmed upon viewing the exhibit that he came up to Director Tom Kuehhas, thanked him profusely for all the work that went into it, and proceeded to embrace him and kiss him on both cheeks!

Kuehhas relates the following story as well, "A 70 year-old woman came to view the exhibit and tears were streaming down her face by the time she had finished walking through. I asked her if something was wrong; hadn't she liked the exhibit? Oh yes, she said, it brought back so many memories! Then why are you crying, I asked. She responded that her parents, when they emigrated here, vowed to become Americans. To them, that meant severing all ties with Italy, including any reminders of the Old Country. Everything they had brought with them was dis-



Festival Coordinator Mrs. Frederick Mortati and Italian-American Experience Co-Chair Dr. Maureen Monck are shown in front of the "groaning board" that was the antipasti at the Festival dell'Autunno on Nov. 10, 2001

carded. When this lady saw some of the objects in the exhibit that other families had managed to save, she was overcome with the memories of what her family had thrown out, in striving to be more American."

The Society would like to thank all those who helped in any way with the exhibit, the journal, and the Fall series of events. The efforts of three people in particular who were instrumental in the success of these ventures must be acknowledged: Senator Marcellino, who procured the funding for the exhibition, Harry Dickran of Levon Graphics, who made the journal possible, and Maureen Monck, without whose efforts this project simply would not have been possible.

ANTIQUÉ TOOL CATALOG NOW AVAILABLE

Tom Kuehhas, Director, Oyster Bay Historical Society, announced recently that the Charles Reichman Tool Collection has been completely cataloged and is presently available to the public.

The paperback's sub title is "A Catalog and Source Book." Historical Society volunteer, former trustee, and OBHS *Candlelight* editor Kenneth Gambone painstakingly measured, researched, and recorded each object in this extensive collection, a project which took two years to complete. Assembling the data for publication required an additional two years. The catalog also contains the obituary on

Charles Reichman written by Elliot M. Sayward and there is a checklist for the Web with seventeen entries as well as annotated bibliographies.

Kuehhas notes that one of the important things about the Reichman Collection is that it included two hundred fifty books. They are also cataloged in this publication and are available for historical research at the Earle- Wightman House on Summit Street, Oyster Bay. Many of the books are out of print so this collection is a prime source of information on antique tools and books.

An interesting feature lists "Permanent Tool Exhibits on Long Island," which includes phone numbers and descriptions. Tom says, "Ken did an enormous amount of work in compiling this information. This has never been done and it should be useful for future reference."

Written by Kenneth Gambone, it is available for \$12 from The Oyster Bay Historical Society, Attn. Thomas Kuehhas, Director, 20 Summit St., Oyster Bay, NY 11771.

Checks should be made out to The Oyster Bay Historical Society.



It was all treats, no tricks at the Halloween luncheon, tour and wine-tasting held at Banfi in Old Brookville. The tour of their Gold Coast manor, excellent wines, and seemingly endless courses of food from Buongustaio Caterers resulted in a day full of memories to be savored!

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EXHIBIT OPENS

The integral roles played by the people and locales of Long Island and Queens in the abolition of slavery is the topic of "Angels of Deliverance: The Struggle Against Slavery in Queens and Long Island," a special exhibit being showcased at the SUNY

College at Old Westbury Library from Feb. 6 through May 12.

Comprised of nearly 100 photographs, illustrations, documents and models, "Angels of Deliverance" delves into the history of the Underground Railroad in the region and offers insight into an era when the borders of Queens extended well into what is now known as Long Island.

"The history of the Underground Railroad is all around us," said Kathleen Velsor, an assistant professor of education at the college who is serving as curator of the exhibition along with Senior Assistant Librarian Rebecca Perez. "From the Maine Maid Inn in Jericho to the Epenetus Smith Tavern in Smithtown, the communities of Long Island and Queens are home to a great number of historic sites and stories that helped

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

bring to an end the era of slavery. The exhibit will help show those of us who live here today the impact our ancestors had not only on our own communities, but the nation as a whole."

A special opening reception was held on Feb. 6 at 4:30 p.m. and featured remarks by James Driscoll, vice president for history of the Queens Historical Society.

Along with viewing the pieces within the exhibit, visitors to "Angels of Deliverance" will be given a complimentary copy of "A Map to Long Island's Past," a brochure which outlines those locations within Nassau and Suffolk Counties that either served as stops on the Underground Railroad or held other significance within slavery's abolition-

ist movement.

Admission to the exhibit is free and it will be open during the campus library's regular operating hours: Monday-Thursday, from 8:30 a.m.- 11 p.m.; Fridays from 8:30 a.m.- 6 p.m.; Saturdays from 11 a.m.- 5 p.m.; and Sundays from noon - 10 p.m.

The SUNY College at Old Westbury Library is located in the Campus Center and can be reached through the college's main entrance on Route 107, Exit 41 North off the Long Island Expressway. For more information on "Angels of Deliverance," call 876-2895.

Funding to support "Angels of Deliverance" has been provided by the SUNY College at Old Westbury Foundation, Inc.; the Old Westbury Alumni Association, and the College's Student Government Association.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The January program, presented by Gene Horton, dealt with

well-known individuals whose graves are located in Suffolk County. Back in November, David Morrison, founding president of the Long Island Rail Road Historical Society, presented a comprehensive survey of railroad preservation activity on the Island. His remarks included the efforts of the Town of Oyster Bay and the Oyster Bay Historical Society. A steam locomotive has been delivered to Oyster Bay and will be reassembled in the near future. The original railroad station will also be converted into a museum.

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE MASSAPEQUAS**

The Society will be hosting its annual Antique Show in the cafeteria of the Berner Middle School, Carmans Mill Road, Massapequa on Sunday, April 7 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please come out and support the Society!

**HUNTINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Huntington Historical Society is pleased to present a fascinating lecture entitled "Why We Collect Costumes - Stories Told By Items From The Huntington Historical Society Costume Collection," by Dr. Phyllis Tortora,



The Oyster Bay Community Band provided the entertainment during the cocktail hour at the Festival, playing a number of Italian standards.

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!

former CUNY Professor and author whose works include *Understanding Textiles* (6 editions) and *Survey of Historic Costume* (3 editions). Dr. Tortora will select a variety of rarely seen objects from the Huntington Historical Society costume collection and discuss what we can learn from an individual item of costume. We will see what they tell us about the dress of the period, the individuals who used them, and the technology available to consumers and industry at the time.

Dr. Tortora is currently writing in the areas of textiles and apparel and is working on a revision of *Fairchild's Dictionary of Fashion*, and the development of an encyclopedia of accessories.

The lecture will take place on Thursday, March 21, 2002 at the David Conklin Farmhouse Museum, corner of High Street and New York Avenue (Rte 110), Huntington Village.

Refreshments served at 1:00 PM; lecture begins at 1:30 PM. Admission is free for HHS members, non-members \$5.00.

For reservations and/or further information, please phone (631) 427-7045.

TEXAS RANGERS AT PLANTING FIELDS

Robert Utley, noted historian and commentator will speak at Coe Hall, Planting Fields, Oyster Bay, on April 14, 2002 at 3 P.M. Mr. Utley is currently Beinecke Senior Research Fellow in Western and Frontier History at Yale University.

We all know of Teddy Roosevelt's western interests but few in Oyster Bay realize the Bei-

necke Library owes its beginnings to William Robertson Coe, builder and long-time resident of Planting Fields, Oyster Bay. Mr. Coe donated his collection of Western Americana to Yale. The Coe collection formed the basis for what is now one of our country's prime manuscript collections. Many noted historians, such as Howard Lamar and Mr. Utley who first tapped the collection in 1965, have made use of its wealth of information, which includes handwritten portions of William Clark's (of Lewis and Clark) notes, documents, maps and correspondence from the early days of westward expansion.

Mr. Utley has authored nine selections of the History Book Club and seven of the Book of the Month Club. He is the recipient of many awards. He has served as National Park Service Chief Historian and a Director of

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.

the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. He helped launch the *Western Historical Quarterly* and has served on its editorial board. His most popular book is *The Lance and the Shield - The Life and Times of Sitting Bull*. His next release is *Texas Rangers in History and Legend*.

The lecture at Coe Hall is open to all: Members \$6, Non-members \$10.



Panel members Dr. Sal LaGumina, Sen. Carl Marcellino, and former Town Supervisor and Assemblyman Lew Yevoli share a moment of levity during the roundtable discussion on "The Rise of the Italian-American Politician" preceding the exhibition opening on Oct. 21. Audience and panel participation ensured a lively discussion at the well-attended program.

**OYSTER BAY
HISTORICAL
LOANS
T.R. PORTRAIT
TO HIGH SCHOOL**

A large portrait of President Theodore Roosevelt now hangs in the library of Oyster Bay High School courtesy of the Oyster Bay Historical Society. The oil painting, measuring five feet by six feet, hung originally in the Williamsburg (Brooklyn) branch of the Roosevelt Savings Bank prior to its merger with the Roslyn Savings Bank. The latter bank presented the portrait to the Society.

In the portrait, the 26th President is seated at a desk looking directly at the viewer. The portrait was rendered in 1921 by Adrienne Martin DeGroot two years after Theodore Roosevelt's death at age 60, and was probably painted from a popular photograph.

After necessary restoration, the portrait is now on long-term loan to the school library, where it is displayed high on the wall over the circulation desk. The library is a newstate-of-the-art facility housed in what had been the gymnasium from 1929 to 2000.

The main entrance to the library is reached by passing through the lower lobby of the new gymnasium, accessible from within the school or from McCoun's Lane. The TR portrait is on the right as one enters the library.



The DeGroot portrait of Theodore Roosevelt in its new home in the Oyster Bay High School Library. The students can literally and figuratively look up to TR as they research his fascinating life.

The library's media specialists (administrators), Christine Fountaine and Matthew Erickson, have expressed their appreciation of the portrait and noted its historical significance for the Oyster Bay community.

During the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Board of Education meeting in the library on January 15, 2002, Thomas Kuehhas, director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, and Rick Robinson, a Society trustee and alumnus of the high school, received the thanks of Dr. George Chesterton, superintendent of schools, and those of the entire board,

presided over by Mrs. Beverly Zembko.

The portrait is especially appropriate for the OB-EN School District because at least two of President Roosevelt's children attended the Cove School, a public elementary school in Oyster Bay Cove. The school has long since ceased to operate, but the altered building is now a private home on Cove Road, east of Youngs Cemetery and the TR grave site. For several years, Mr. Roosevelt would make an annual Christmas visit to the Cove School to greet students and distribute gifts.



YE OLDE SCHOOLHOUSE



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

The Editor would like to thank the fourth grade students of Ms. Betty Anne Natke's class and Ms. Gaffney's class at McKenna Elementary School, Massapequa Park. Thanks to all our student contributors!

A Life As A Pilgrim

by Samantha Pollicino
writing as Ellen Moore

Good day my name is Ellen Moore. My friendly dog wakes me up every morning. She starts to bark and lick me. I get dressed I put on my petticoat, stockings, garters, waistcoat, coif, apron, pocket and shoes. I roll my bedding up into the corner. I help make breakfast, then I eat. I do my chores like feed the chickens and milk the goats. Then I play with my friend Remember Allerton. I have a knicker box we play with, we also play a game called Odds and Evens. Then I plant food to eat and do more chores. I like crushing spices. I made corn bread with my brother Henry. I like drawing vinegar to polish the brass too. I practice my letters and pray too. My brother Henry is pleased with me and my work. Then I eat dinner and say good night to Henry. Then I get into my bed and go to sleep.

A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Child

by Jack Dunn
writing as John Cooke

Good day my name is John Cooke. The rooster wakes me up every morning. I put on my stockings, garters, breeches, doublet, points and hat. It is my beginning to show my father I

can harvest. I can't wait. In the morning I serve the samp. Now it's time to harvest. First we get our neighbor, Mr. Billington, he's a nice man. We're finally at the rye. I'm not allowed to use a sickle, it could swipe a man's arm off. A sickle is a very sharp hook shaped blade. Father is teaching me how to tie the grain together. Some of the grain is in my breeches and it itches. Now the sun is setting and I am very tired. I'm not doing as good a job as I was before. Father goes home. I stay with Mr. Billington and we go to the boat for some eels. We pass some friends and say "Good evening." I lag behind Mr. Billington, he calls to me and says I did better than his boys, they only get into mischief.

Along the way home I stop. I am too tired to go any more, but I have to get home. I still have to eat supper. Finally I am home. I am so hungry. I serve the eels. After I eat I go to bed.

A Fight For Freedom

by John McLaughlin

Hi, my name is George. I am 20 years old. I live in Massachusetts in the year of 1775. My family is

full of Loyalists. King George said that my family should go to the colonies and try to make peace with the colonists.

When I got to the colonies people were screaming and chanting things like "No Taxation Without Representation." I also saw colonists tarring Loyalists. I went to a bush to hide so I would not get tarred. Almost everyday I heard of a battle called The Battle Of Lexington and Concord. It was said that the patriot minutemen were storing weapons in an old Sugar House. I think it is stupid to fight about a tax.

I am doing everything I can to make peace and stop the fighting. I tried to talk to many colonists but they did not listen. Then I

continued on p.19



Thanks to Longfellow, Paul Revere's ride was rescued from obscurity, but he wasn't the only rider that night.



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

Beginning in the seventeenth century and continuously through the eighteenth and nineteenth there were published a multitude of little cards and booklets printed with the "Cries" of various street sellers whose loud offerings of goods and services filled the streets and alleys of towns and cities with what is often called redundantly, a cacophony of sound. These printings may have originally been directed to



adults but they found a great welcome by children for whom there was little published in early times

and they soon became a staple of the juvenile market.

A page from one of these little books presenting *The Cries of London* shows a woman trundling a wheel barrow of chunky material and calling out, "Flanders Bricks---Penny a Lump." Flanders Brick, which are thought to have been introduced into England by the Flemings, are molded of calcareous earth more or less in the form of building bricks. They are used to clean and polish metal and are

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

From William I (The Conqueror) through Elizabeth II there have been forty English monarchies and forty-one monarchs. William III and Mary II shared the throne. There have been five ruling queens and thirty-five kings. We have selected fifteen of these as your challenge. All you have to do is place their names in the proper order running from the earliest one to the latest. To make that easier for you and to give you a start we have placed five of them in their proper slots in the list. The whole list is worth thirty points. Including your gifts you will earn two points for each one correctly placed. If a name is in the proper slot it earns its points even if the names on both sides of it are wrong. The list on the right is probably totally in the wrong order. Using the test list, why don't you straighten it out?

Test Form

- 1 William I
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 Edward II
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 Elizabeth
- 9 _____
- 10 _____
- 11 _____
- 12 Victoria
- 13 _____
- 14 _____
- 15 Elizabeth II

- Henry VIII
- George III
- Stephen
- George VI
- Elizabeth II
- Elizabeth I
- Richard III
- Charles II
- Victoria
- Edward VIII
- William III
- Edward II
- Richard I
- William I
- Edward VI

Answers will be found on p. 23.

also called Bath brick because their chief place of manufacture in England was near the city of Bath. The important component of calcareous earth is chalk or lime.

The fabled cleanliness of the Low Landers came to England in the form of cleaning materials as well as by example it would seem.



Another "Cry" is by an artist who worked in France and perhaps in England. A group of "Cries" from his pen was apparently first published in Paris and then in London. His name was Marcel Laroos (The surname has a Dutchy flavor to it.). The Cry to which I refer is voiced by a young woman who calls out, "Buy my Dutch Biskets." The French caption calls them Biscuits d' Holland. I believe we would call them Holland Rusks. The Dutch are still exporting rusks, a double-baked bread, to the world at large. I recently saw a Dutch advertisement for what is now a delicacy but originally was made because of the biscuit's ability to remain edible on a sea

voyage. The Dutch nowadays call the product anything the customer wants to call it, Crispbakes, beschuits, Holland Toast, Toast Hollandais, biscottes or rusks. Rusk, incidentally, is thought to derive from a Spanish word, rosca meaning a twisted roll. Perhaps it is a souvenir of Holland's long spell under Spanish domination. Whatever the etymology of rusk may be, it is clear that the crisp treat is another present the Dutch gave to the English and Americans.

Lou Bruno, one of our thoughtful readers, sent the Editor a very interesting comment on folk etymology which among other examples speaks of a Dutch phrase that came into English with a different meaning than it was born with. Unfortunately the Editor showed it both to the writer and to Uncle Peleg and a battle is now raging as to who is to use it. I think this department will emerge victorious and I thank Lou for his help. You'll know who wins when you read the next issue.

Quentin Roosevelt in World War One

by Franklin R. McElwain

The chief source of information for this article is Mrs. Roosevelt's scrapbook of clippings on Quentin, which is in the archives of Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, Oyster Bay.

All of Theodore Roosevelt's four sons saw active combat in World War I. The youngest, Quentin, was rejected for officer training because of his bad eyes (His father's eyes always were a problem). The boy was so eager

to fight that he considered joining the Canadian army. This is in sharp contrast to the draft resisters in more recent times who fled to Canada to avoid being drafted to fight in Vietnam.

The answer to Quentin's problem lay on the doorstep of his home, Sagamore Hill. Much of Long Island was a prairie and in 1917 there were few buildings. This was an ideal situation for a series of airplane training fields. The U. S Army Air Service changed its mind and put Quentin into flight training at Mineola. One cannot but wonder about the possible influence in this change in Quentin's orders of General John J. Pershing, Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in France. Years before, Roosevelt as president jump promoted Pershing from captain to brigadier general, over the heads of dozens of senior officers (1906.)

Quentin proved to be an outstanding pilot. His instructors were very proud of his stunt flying, which would help him in aerial combat. The following news clipping revealed to his proud father just how good his youngest son was:

One day, just after his brothers, Theodore and Archie, had gone to France, and his father was entertaining about a thousand visitors at a patriotic rally at Sagamore Hill, an Army airplane came looping the loop over the Bay. The airman did various "stunts" that thrilled the throng, and his father did not know until days afterward that the entertaining aviator was Quentin.



Quentin is shown at Mitchel Field where he was a flight instructor. (Sagamore Hill NHS)

Quentin finished his flight training and got his commission. Much to his chagrin, he was made a flight training officer at Mineola. At last he was sent to France where he once again was assigned to training new pilots.

Finally he was assigned to a reconnaissance squadron in the battle area of Chateau Thierry. Several weeks later, he was escorting a reconnaissance flight when he became separated from his squadron. A more experienced German pilot managed to outmaneuver him. Quentin was fatally shot and crashed behind the German trench lines. The Germans buried him with full military honors.

Former President Roosevelt

gave the press the following statement about his son:

Quentin's mother and I are very glad that he got to the front and had the chance to render some service to his country and to show the stuff there was in him before his fate befell him.

General Pershing cabled the following condolence:

Quentin died as he had lived and served nobly and unselfishly, in the full strength and vigor of his youth, fighting the enemy in clean combat. You may well be proud of your gift to the nation in his supreme sacrifice.

1. Gene Smith, *Until the Last Trumpet Sounds* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998) p. 92.

Ye Olde Schoolhouse

continued from p. 16

heard that General Washington of the Patriots wanted more soldiers. I think this is a sign of war. If a war breaks out I will fight as a British soldier.

A Fight For Freedom

by Kerrin

My name is Sarah. I am fifteen years old. I was born in 1760. I live in the New York colony. I live with my mom, dad, and Sister Sam. I live in a big town that is usually crowded. My dad is a blacksmith and my mom takes care of the house. I see the Patriots point of view. I am on the

Patriots side because I do not think that the king's taxes and laws are fair.

The people living in the colonies are being charged high taxes. They do not have a say in the laws. We do not have any representation. The patriots are against this.

I have heard that in late December 1773, Patriots dressed up as Indians. They boarded onto the ships carrying tea and threw all the tea over board. The King thought that the Patriots were taking things too far. Me, being a Patriot, I thought that this wasn't a bad thing to do. They were just trying to show how angry they were, and hoped the king would lower the taxes.

Besides the high taxes on tea, other things are being taxed making the Patriots angry. There are taxes on goods, on the colonists. At one point you had to have a special stamp on items you bought to show that a tax had been paid.

Everyday when I go on my morning walk I hear people talking about the British laws. Mostly I hear people complaining about the taxes and laws the king of England has imposed on us. Every once and a while, I will hear people agreeing with the king.

My dad told me that just recently the Continental Congress was putting together a plan to help stop the unfair British laws. He told me that they decided to boycott goods from Britain. They would also no longer obey British laws when they took away their liberty as citizens.

Now the Patriots are trying to get colonial rights and independ-

ence from England. They are also trying to create selfgovernment. If the Patriots do not get what they want there will be a war. I think that a war is coming soon.

A Fight For Freedom

by Robert Houde

Hi! My name is Christopher and I am 27 years old. I live in North Carolina. I am in the militia. I represent the colonists. I believe that the colonists should have the freedom to govern themselves.

I do not think we should be controlled by the British. We should not be unfairly taxed on all our goods. I think we should stand up to the British.

We have already told the King of England how we feel, but he disagrees. We have to pay taxes and a lot of people are in debt. We need to buy food, but most of the food has such high taxes on it that we cannot afford to purchase it.

I think that if the British keep this up we will have to boycott all of their goods. If the British then raise the prices I think we might go to war. The merchants in town can't make a profit due to high taxes. My neighbors are very upset because the British soldiers are quartering in their homes. Something is going to happen. I believe we will go to war very soon.



The Shoemaker

continued from p. 9

The bristles are simultaneously entered at each end of the awl hole in the join being sewed and drawn tight each time. One hand is protected from thread cuts by the hand leather, the other by taking a turn of thread around the awl handle. The awl is thus kept in the hand to make the successive holes for the thread.

As I've suggested this is not a course outlining all the complicated operations the shoemaker performs. Hopefully you'll get to understand what Robert Williams was doing as Oyster Bay's shoemaker. Doing it yourself these days would not be feasible. We might note that shoemakers were quite proud of their skill and liked to refer to themselves in the most complimentary terms. It would never do, for instance, that they should be called cobblers (who were mere repairers of shoes). Rather, in Williams' time and later, they liked to call themselves cordwainers. This was a reference to the top of the trade shoemaking shops where expensive and delicate Spanish leather, today called cordovan, was used. The leather came from the Spanish town of Cordoba and it is doubtful that much of it was used in Oyster Bay in the early years but the records are full of the term "cordwainer" as a trade name for local shoemakers.

Someone might ask why Dekker spoke of "four awls" in his list of tools. Many more than four varieties of awl have been used by shoemakers over the years. They were of different

The skirmish at Lexington resulted in eight deaths, all American.

designs and purposes but to a large degree they were interchangeable in a pinch. Some of the names might give you an idea of the variety of use and design of those available to Williams. There were pegging awls and lasting awls and stabbing awls and stitching awls and sewing awls and closing awls and lots more. Of course, some of the names in a complete list might refer to the same awls. We really can't be sure which ones Dekker meant. And a shoemaker in a new settlement like Williams might have made do with a single awl. It should not be inferred that because he had only a small kit any shoemaker did inferior work.

At one point when the hardware manufacturers were engaged in contriving a tool design for every tiny task that shoemakers performed, one shoemaker, disgusted with the idea that the proliferation of tools was more important than his skill said, "Given the materials and a sharpening stone, a real shoemaker could make an acceptable pair of shoes with no more tools than a knife and fork from the dining table." Williams, perhaps had a limited kit but we can assume that he could make both stout, comfortable shoes and handsome, fashionable ones with what he had.

A major problem with the shoe-making business for Williams could have been the lack of enough local customers to make his shop profitable. He might have solved that by "whipping the cat" an expression that meant packing up his tools and some leather and with these on his back hiking out along a route that took him to the outlying settlers. To

them he could offer his services which they would be likely to need if the demanding work of clearing a farm had postponed visits to a settlement with a store and tradesmen. From such a customer Williams would probably have received part or all his pay in farm goods but if he was careful about what he accepted and in the absence of the leather he'd brought with him he'd have been able to carry a backload of profitable farm goods home with him. Hopefully his customers might be in large families, for each member of which he could make or repair shoes. In such an instance the farmer would keep him and feed him for as long as the work lasted so that while he had virtually no expenses, he had an interesting visit and enough work to have made the expedition worthwhile.

We can believe that in Oyster Bay Williams made stout if plain shoes for those whose work required physical effort and stylish ones for those whose livelihoods were of a different sort. Among his customers would have been seamen and fishermen who would buy flat heeled boots

and horsemen whose riding boots had pronounced heels. And there would have been many children who would require at least a yearly pair of shoes even if they only wore them to go to church. Along with the shoes there were probably occasional little jobs in leather, as belts and purses, knife sheaths and military gear. If there were no harness maker or saddler he would also have been asked to make or repair items in those lines as well. We can assume that Robert Williams did well at his trade and liked it. The fact that he trained his son to the same trade makes that even more sure.

It is time to pull out my heel tap which Captain Francis Grose told us in his *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* a century after Robert Williams worked is: "a peg in the heel of a shoe taken out when it is finished." By then the expression had come to mean the last swallow in a glass of liquor.

I'll close with the punning words of Nathaniel Ward who wrote them in his book *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam*, an American work of 1649, "This is my Last and All and a Shomaker's End."



Ed note: Visitors to the Society's Earle-Wightman House museum can see how a period shoemaker would have set up shop in his home.

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Making Physics: A Biography Of Brookhaven National Laboratory, 1946-1972. By Robert P. Crease. University Of Chicago Press, 19". 434 pp. B&W illustration. Appendices, Notes, Bibliography, and Index. \$38.

Brookhaven National Laboratory officially opened on January 6, 1947, when Donald Mallory, superintendent of buildings and grounds, fired up the coal-burning heating plant, sending aloft a long plume of black smoke which almost immediately prompted a nearby resident to threaten a lawsuit on the grounds that she had been exposed to radiation. May this auspicious start serve as an emblem of the Lab's relations with its often nervous, sometimes hostile Long Island neighbors.

Science historian Robert P. Crease devotes a full chapter to Brookhaven Lab's community relations, and even those readers not primarily drawn to atomic physics will find much of interest here, as Lab officials struggled from the start with public fear. Some of the fears were downright bizarre: "...pilots who worried about becoming sterile by flying

over the laboratory, a woman who feared the radiation would make her pregnant, farmers who thought the lab had made their ducks radioactive, a man who viciously condemned scientists at the lab for tampering with God's creation." And all this before Brookhaven had any real radioactive material lying around the shop. To Brookhaven's credit, spokespeople tried hard to allay community concerns, learning quickly that purely scientific evidence of safety does little to mitigate legitimate public anxiety. When one Lab physicist assured local oystermen that radiation levels on Long Island were far lower than in, say, the Rocky Mountains, one oysterman pointed out in turn that there "ain't no oysters in the Rockies."

The local press of the day did little to make Brookhaven's job any easier. As Crease relates, "one complication was the tendency of the media to sensationalize, and then" [stop me if you've heard this one before] "fail to correct faulty information, which exacerbated fears of an already dreaded hazard." The death of Lab physicist John Gibson serves as a case in point. After a truck carrying spent reactor fuel struck Gibson's car, killing him instantly, the New York Times reported the accident under the headline: "ATOMIC SCIENTIST KILLED BY RADIOACTIVE WASTES."

In the meantime, serious work was going on at the Lab, where many "firsts" in physics research took place. The Graphite Research Reactor, completed in 1950, was the country's first reactor designed in peacetime specif-

ically for civilian research. In 1986, long after its decommission, it became a designated nuclear historic landmark. A later reactor, the Medical Research Reactor, was the first designed explicitly for medical research. The Lab's early accelerator, named the Cosmotron (this was 1952, after all), was the first in history to reach energies of one billion electron volts, inspiring physicist John Blewett to rhapsodize: "Well I'll be damned. A billion volts."

But perhaps the most far-reaching accomplishment of all occurred during the Lab's October 1958 Visitor's Day, part of a series of annual open houses aimed at general public education. On this day, Instrumentation Chairperson Willy Higinbotham rigged up an analog computer and oscilloscope that displayed a simulated side-view tennis court, complete with simulated bouncing ball. By manipulating knobs and buttons, visitors could "hit" the ball back and forth across the screen. Crowds, apparently, flocked around the display. It is yet another testament to history's cruel humor that Higinbotham, a cofounder of the Federation of Atomic Scientists who remained proudest of his work in arms control, would be better remembered for his contributions toward the development of Pong, the early, if not earliest, video game.

Further reading: *The Second Creation: Makers of the Revolution in Twentieth-Century Physics* (Robert P. Crease and Charles C. Mann, co-authors).

AUNT EEK



Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Many people, perhaps most, hate to throw anything away. That is fortunate for artifact museums because attics can accumulate all sorts of wonderful items when they are the repositories of the stuff that's not good enough to use but too good to throw away of many generation of "keepers." Eventually the wonderful stuff outgrows the space available or descends to a non-keeper. At that point it occurs to the owner that the stuff might be attractive to a museum. Museums would like to have this fact recognized because the most important growth of their collections comes from gifts and many gifts have importance beyond any growth they produce in the collections. But museums are created for specific purposes and taking the strain off the joists that support your attic floor is not one of them.

The first thing you should do if you want to make a gift to a museum for whatever reason is telephone or visit the one of your choice and speak to an appropriate person. If you don't know who that is just tell the operator or

receptionist you want to talk to someone who can speak for the museum about a possible gift. You may be questioned in a general manner so that it can be determined whom you should see.

You will learn when you reach the "appropriate person" that museums as a rule do not accept materials that do not match up with the museum's statement of mission unless you are contributing them to their annual jumble sale or other fund raising event. Further your items have to be of a size that they can store or exhibit. It's a lot easier to place a depression glass pitcher than a 1924 school bus although the latter might be the more important artifact. Of course, if the museum already has 312 Lydia Pinkham bottles they won't want sixteen more. On the plus side of these limitations is the fact that the average curator will help you find a proper place for your gift with advice and phone calls to his connections.

The condition of your would be gift makes a big difference. Except for study collections or like uses, museums don't want badly beat up articles. But understand, a beat up Roman gladiator's trident is way ahead of a seriously damaged 1910 eel spear. That doesn't mean some museum might not want the eel-spear for reasons you and I might not even think of.

The museum is probably going to accept most gifts only with your authority to dispose of them should it become desirable. And, don't let it be a blow to your ego if they refuse to commit to exhibiting the item under your name or to accept any conditions

you might want to make. However see how fast that will change if you offer them a Gutenberg bible or a Vincent Van Gogh painting.

Don't be discouraged. The appropriate museum will want your appropriate gifts. Try the Oyster Bay Historical Society first. Aunt Eek believes they are appropriate out of measure.

Happy Giving!

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

- 1 William I
- 2 Stephen
- 3 Richard I
- 4 Edward II
- 5 Richard III
- 6 Henry VIII
- 7 Edward VI
- 8 Elizabeth I
- 9 Charles II
- 10 William III
- 11 George III
- 12 Victoria
- 13 Edward VIII
- 14 George VI
- 15 Elizabeth II

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continued from p. 2
constantly being updated.

Bill Robertson

[Ed. note: We received several verbal slaps on the wrist for including Placido Domingo in the Fall **Freeholder's** "Test Your Knowledge" quiz on famous Italians. They all pointed out the fact that Senor Domingo is not, in fact, Italian. In our defense, we figured that he was such a good singer, he must be Italian!]

To the Editor:

I wanted to make one small

continued on p.24

MARK YOUR CALENDER FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

MARCH

Sunday, March 3, 2 p.m.

Roundtable Discussion

St. Dominic Church

Anstice Street, Oyster Bay

A panel including Salvatore Primeggi, Ph.D., Mary Brown, Ph.D., and Monsignor Charles Ribaud, will discuss the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the settlement of early Italian immigrants, the influence of the Church on the Italian-American family structure, and the role of mysticism in traditional Italian culture. The discussion will be followed by a reception in the Silveri Center featuring Italian desserts. This is the final event in our Italian-American Experience series. [This event was originally scheduled for November.]

Tuesday, March 12, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Horticultural Center

Planting Fields Arboretum, Oyster Bay

At press time, the program had not yet been determined. Please call 922-5032 or 922-6808 for more information. Also check your mailbox for flier with lecture listings.

APRIL

Tuesday, April 16, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Horticultural Center,

Planting Fields Arboretum, Oyster Bay

At press time, the program had not yet been determined. Please call 922-5032 or 922-6808 for more information. Also check your mailbox for flier with lecture listings.

MAY

Tuesday, May 14, 8 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Coe Hall

Planting Fields Arboretum, Oyster Bay

Mildred DeRiggi, Ph.D., Historian at the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University's West Campus, will present a slide lecture detailing the history of the Morgan and Dana estates in Glen Cove.

Those attending the lecture are sure to enjoy Dr. DeRiggi's armchair tour of these fascinating Gold Coast-era mansions and the stories behind their stately facades.

Admission is free and refreshments will be served following the lecture

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correction to some information contained in your outstanding issue of The Freeholder on the Italian-Americans. Regarding Italian businesses in town, I believe the name Belle Santora was

looking for was Faraci, not Fiami. His uncle, Mr. Seminara ran a shoemaker's shop on West Main next to Snouders. Also in the photo of the Republican Club, Jimmy Cardinale is next to the Abbates, with his nephew Carmine Cattaliotti on his right.

Stephen Disbrow

THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Beat cabin fever, come to the 20/20 Lectures!