



THE FREEHOLDER

WINTER 2009 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960



☞ THE LADY OF
SAGAMORE HILL

☞ SCANDAL IN
THE THIRD
DEGREE,
PART II

☞ LONG
ISLAND'S DEAD
POET SOCIETY,
PART VII

☞ SOCIETY
OPENS
NEW EXHIBIT

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

I think everyone will find something of interest in this issue!

Frequent contributor Natalie Naylor shines the spotlight on a woman who was perfectly happy staying in the background - Edith K. Roosevelt. Richard A. Winsche concludes his look at the 1930s Nassau County Police scandal, and Robert L. Harrison continues with his look at our Island's poets, concentrating on hon-

orary members.

In addition to these wonderful feature articles, the Gathering Place includes a piece on Knollwood, perhaps best known as King Zog's estate, by new contributor Henry Dircks.

Curator Yvonne Noonan-Cifarelli invites one and all to the Society's upcoming exhibit *Dearest Jane... Love L: Jane Bush de Lamoutte Francke and Her Love Letters From Habana*, opening on Valentine's Day.

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record straight.

I always look forward to receiving *The Freeholder*. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Steve Walker

Thanks very much for your input, Steve. Rick had noticed the error and informed me of it; unfortunately The Freeholder had already gone to press.

At right, the music wing of Oyster Bay High School



THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

Having spent much of my life in the building, both as a student and as a music teacher, I thoroughly enjoyed Rick Robinson's article on the "new" Oyster Bay High School [Summer 2008].

However, as I do work in that area of the school, I wanted to point out a minor error. The music wing was added in 1955, not the 1960s as was stated in the article. Thanks for the opportunity to set the

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

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ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

Theodore and Edith Roosevelt are seen exiting Christ Church in Oyster Bay. Although TR had been baptized in the Dutch Reformed Church and attended the Presbyterian Church as a youth, Edith's influence led him to the Episcopal Church. For more on this amazing woman, see the article on p.3. Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.



EDITH KERMIT ROOSEVELT: THE LADY OF SAGAMORE HILL

by Natalie A. Naylor, Ph.D.

Edith Kermit Roosevelt (EKR) is well known as Theodore Roosevelt's wife and First Lady from 1901-1909. She was also the Lady of Sagamore Hill for more than sixty years, residing on Cove Neck in the Town of Oyster Bay.¹

Born in Connecticut in 1861, Edith Kermit Carow grew up in New York City near the Roosevelt family, and was particularly close to Teedie (as TR was known as a child) and his younger sister Corinne, who was her own age. Although she and TR may have had an understanding about marrying, they apparently quarreled before Theodore left for his junior year at Harvard. He met Alice Hathaway Lee during that year and married her on October 27, 1880. They spent their honeymoon at the Roosevelts' family country home, "Tranquility," in Oyster Bay.²

TR had grown to love the Oyster Bay area where his family had summered since 1874, when he was fifteen years old. He began to purchase land on Cove Neck in 1880. Roosevelt relatives—J. Alfred Roosevelt and Dr. James West Roosevelt—also owned land on Cove Neck. To ensure a Roosevelt compound, TR sold some of the 155 acres he acquired to his aunt, Anna Bullock (Mrs. James) Gracie and his older sister, Anna (called Bamie or Bye) Roosevelt. He commissioned Rich & Lamb, Architects to design his

estate; the first building constructed was a combination stable and lodge in the winter of 1883-1884.

Tragically, Alice Roosevelt died on February 14, 1884, two days after the birth of their daughter Alice. Despite this loss, two weeks later TR signed a contract to build the twenty-two room house at the apex of his Oyster Bay property. After finishing his term in the New York State Assembly that spring, he went west to his ranch in the Dakota Territory, leaving his infant daughter with his sister Bamie, who also oversaw completion of his house in Oyster Bay.

On one of his visits back to New York City, Theodore Roosevelt renewed his relationship with Edith Carow. They were married in December 1886 in

London, where her family had moved. After a three-month honeymoon trip in Europe, they returned to Oyster Bay.

Sagamore Hill was always home, the only one the Roosevelts ever owned in New York, and a sanctuary where the family spent summers during TR's various positions in Washington, D.C. or Albany.³ Edith had five children: Theodore, Jr., born 1887; Kermit, born 1889; Ethel, born 1891; Archie, born 1894; and Quentin, born 1897. She was a devoted mother to them and to her stepdaughter Alice. In many respects, Edith was a traditional wife and mother of her time and class. A nursemaid, as well as other servants, helped her with the children and in the house. Edith particularly valued her privacy; she did not seek publicity,



*A postcard image of the First Family: from left, Quentin; TR; Theodore, Jr.; Archie; Alice; Kermit; Edith; and Ethel.
Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.*

and she stayed out of the public limelight. (In Washington, she delighted in “snooping” in stores incognito.) She successfully shielded herself and her children from publicity even during the years of TR’s presidency, controlling the press by hiring a photographer and providing only photographs she wanted to make public. Another aspect of Edith as a mother is revealed in Kermit’s letter to her from Groton in 1903, when he was thirteen years old. Kermit thanked her for smuggling a water pistol to him, though the school authorities had confiscated the chocolate and jelly in the same package.⁴

Her accomplishments as First Lady in the White House were many, including creating the office of First Lady (she was the first to have a secretary on the federal payroll), renovating the White House, separating the private living quarters from the public rooms, and creating a First Ladies Gallery and official White House china collection. She arranged many musicales including a 1904 Pablo Casals performance in the White House. Perhaps most important, she was a calming influence on her exuberant and impulsive husband, reining him back by a telling look, by tapping her fingers on a table, or by a warning interjection, “Now, Theodore . . .”

As she managed household affairs in the White House, Edith managed the family and the Sagamore Hill estate, supervising servants and handling the financial accounts. Because of TR’s official responsibilities and travels, Edith and the children spent more time at Sagamore Hill than

he did. They would arrive early in May or June and stay later in the summer, often for four full months.

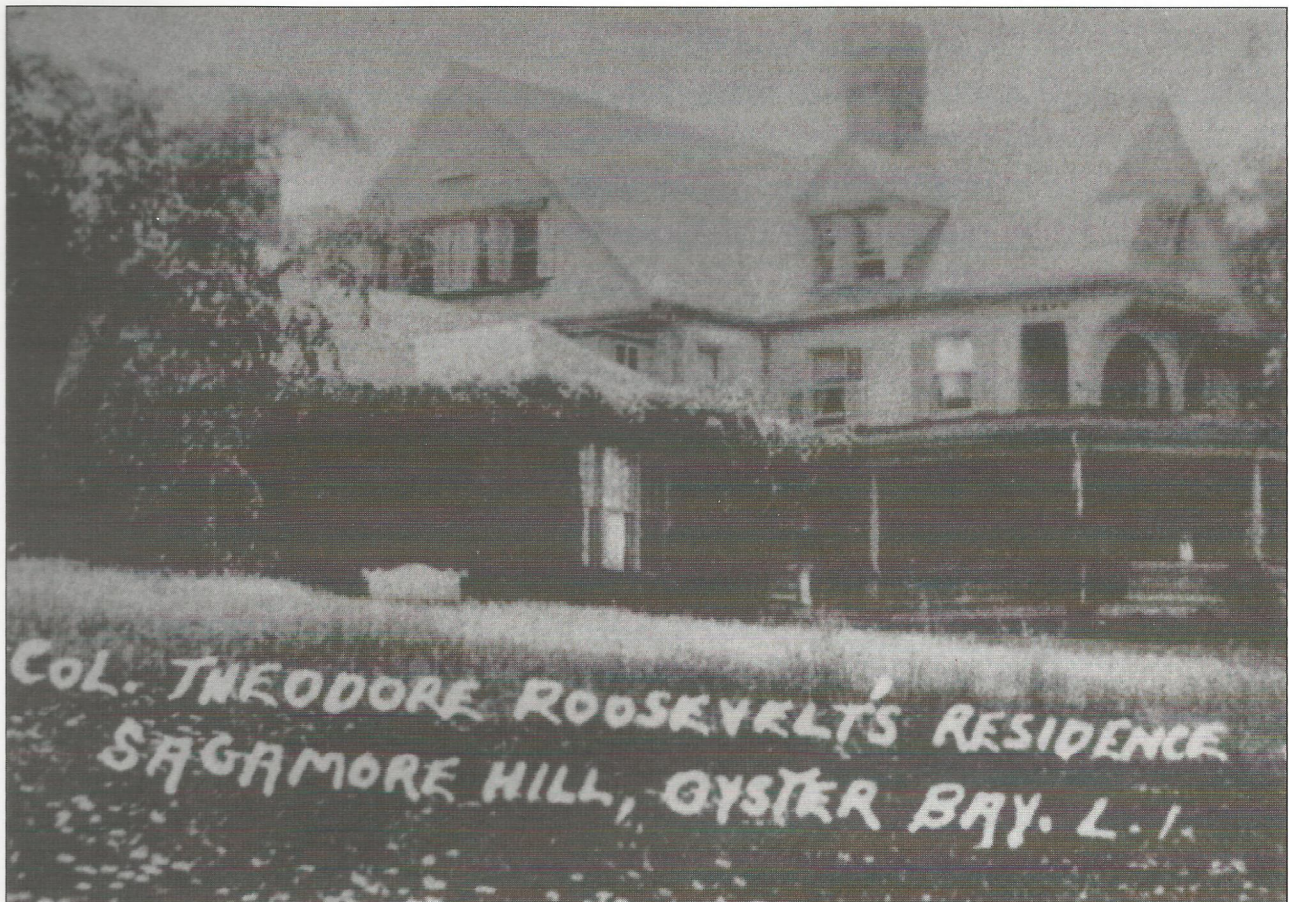
At Sagamore Hill, Edith’s interests included horseback riding, swimming, walking, gardening, and reading, as well as rides in a small boat, which TR rowed in the waters of Oyster Bay. She enjoyed attending concerts, plays, and the ballet, and visiting museums and galleries in New York City. In Oyster Bay she was involved with the Red Cross, Cove School, girls 4-H club, and other local philanthropies.

Theodore Roosevelt died on January 6, 1919 at the age of sixty. Thereafter, Edith wore the mourning colors, black or, in the summer, white. During her nearly thirty years of widowhood, Sagamore Hill remained Edith’s home, although she traveled extensively in the 1920s and spent some time in a home she purchased in 1927 in Brooklyn, Connecticut where her Tyler ancestors had lived.

Edith was a devoted grandmother to her seventeen grandchildren, most of whom lived nearby, as well as to many Roosevelt grandnieces and nephews on Cove Neck. Her daughter Ethel (Mrs. Richard Derby) lived in Oyster Bay throughout her long life. (The Derby house is the centerpiece of today’s townhouse condominium Landmark Colony on Derby Court, off Lexington Avenue in Oyster Bay.) Sons Archie, Ted, and Kermit also lived in the Oyster Bay-Cold Spring Harbor area at various times. Archibald’s daughter, Nancy Roosevelt Jackson, wrote a brief memoir of her grandmoth-

er, with whom she spent considerable time when she was growing up. She recalled Edith’s love of reading and the outdoors, her extensive correspondence, her frugality, propriety, and femininity, but also that she possessed an “indomitable will” and ruled her family and servants with authority. When Edith called her father, Nancy Jackson wrote, it was “like a royal command which he was incapable of disobeying,” even when he was forty years old.⁵ The eldest son, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., had expected to inherit Sagamore Hill, but in 1938 after many years of renting houses, his mother gave him four acres of the Sagamore Hill property, where he built Old Orchard. This is now part of the Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, housing a museum, administrative offices, and staff apartments.

Edith was a faithful member of Christ (Episcopal) Church in Oyster Bay and active in its St. Hilda Society sewing guild, which sewed for charity and the annual church fair. She was also involved with its Parish Aid. She enjoyed embroidery, crocheting, knitting, and all kinds of needlework and often embroidered or knitted at the meetings of cabinet wives. She even mentioned in her correspondence mending stockings. Her favorite charity was the Needlework Guild. Despite the name, it was not “fancy needlework,” but practical sewing of clothes, which were given to those in need with the assistance of welfare workers. EKR was the honorary president of the Needlework Guild’s national organization, and was active on Long Island in organizing chapters and



It may have been known as "Colonel Roosevelt's Residence," but even the Colonel knew who was in charge at Sagamore Hill!

speaking at branch meetings. She also made gifts to individuals and opened her home to charities.⁶

Edith kept up an extensive correspondence and frequently entertained visitors, especially during TR's life. After his death, she sustained TR's memory and reputation, often greeting at Sagamore Hill those on pilgrimage to his grave on his birthday or the anniversary of his death, whether public officials, veterans, Boy Scouts, or local school children. She unveiled the equestrian statue of TR as a Rough Rider at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City in 1940, and was involved in other activities memorializing TR.

EKR maintained her interest in

politics, remaining a staunch Republican, though she still shunned publicity and public appearances. She was Honorary President and hosted some meetings of the Edith Kermit Roosevelt Women's Republican Club of Oyster Bay. She supported her Nassau County friend and neighbor, F. Trubee Davison as honorary chair of the committee in his bid to become New York Governor (he ran unsuccessfully as Lt. Governor in 1932). After receiving hundreds of congratulatory messages in 1932 from people who confused the Oyster Bay and the Hyde Park Roosevelts, she took a more active role supporting President Herbert Hoover in his campaign against

Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Edith hosted a luncheon celebrating Hoover's birthday at Sagamore Hill in August 1932 for the Oyster Bay Women's Republican Club, which more than three hundred women attended. The next day she flew to Washington to attend a garden party reception at the White House where she was the "centre of interest," standing by the Hoovers. She sat on the stage that evening for the president's acceptance of the Republican nomination. She declined to make a formal statement, however, responding to the newspapermen, "I haven't talked for the press, not in seventy-one years, and it's too late to begin now."

continued on p. 16

NASSAU'S GREAT POLICE SCANDAL, PART II

by Richard A. Winsche

[Ed. Note: We would like to apologize to the author, Mr. Winsche, for an editorial blunder on our part which appeared in the first part of this article, Summer 2008. We incorrectly asserted that Oyster Bay Town Supervisor Harry Tappen and Deputy Chief Frank J. Tappen were not related. Mr. Winsche had correctly stated that they were cousins. Our apologies to Mr. Winsche. We shall strive to do a better job of fact-checking in the future!]

While District Attorney Elvin N. Edwards was praised in the local newspapers for the manner in which he had carried out his duties, it soon became apparent that public opinion favored the indicted police officers. The Nassau County American Legion passed a resolution giving them their support and a special fund was created to provide legal aid for their defense in the approaching trial. Millionaire candy manufacturer George W. Loft, of Baldwin, was named chairman of that committee. Loft came out strongly in favor of the policemen and said in part that



George Morton Levy

there was a reasonable feeling of security here because of the fact that New York gangsters are warned to stay out of Nassau County, not because of a possible jail sentence, but because of the shellacking they will receive from our excellent policemen.¹⁴

A goal of \$25,000 was set for their defense and lawyers George Morton Levy, former District Attorney Charles R. Weeks, George Mulry, and A. Holly Patterson were hired and Edward R. Edstram was supplied by the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. A number of programs were then instituted to raise this money, including an air show at Curtiss Field which was attended by 3,000 people and raised \$5,000. The success of these affairs, moreover, enabled the committee to pay the full salary of all the suspended policemen. So active was this committee that its chairman, George W. Loft, began to receive death threats in the mail from its opponents.¹⁵

Following the selection of a jury, the trial of the indicted policemen began on August 24, 1932. During the first day of testimony it became apparent that the prosecution was attempting to spare Assistant District Attorney Littleton of responsibility for what had happened to Hyman Stark. Defense counsel Charles R. Weeks, however, declared that Littleton was in command of the investigation and therefore was responsible. Most of the testimony followed that given in the John Doe inquiry, with the defense attempting to show the good character and fine records of the officers.¹⁶

Edwards now realized that he

had not proven his case against Lieutenant Jesse Mayforth and Detective Charles Wesser and was given approval to dismiss the indictments against them. This left Deputy Chief Tappen and Detectives Harry Zander and Leslie Pearsall still on trial for manslaughter, with the others to be tried for second degree assault. As the trial progressed Edwards became upset during his questioning of Tappen, who stated that he "had heard rumors that third degree methods were sometimes used in Edwards' office." He then agreed with the District Attorney that Edwards used psychology rather than the third degree.¹⁷

Following five days of testimony the case went to the jury. After deliberating for nineteen hours the jury reported that they were hopelessly deadlocked and the trial came to an end. According to reports the jury stood eight to four for acquittal of manslaughter, but at one point voted eight to four to convict on third degree assault as a compromise. A disappointed Edwards stated that

the propaganda put forth by the Defense Committee and the Anti-Crime Society . . . made it very difficult for us to get a jury uninfluenced by that propaganda.

Edwards then announced that he intended to re-try Tappen, Pearsall, and Zander.¹⁸

The second trial began on September 6, 1932, with Justice John B. Johnston again presiding. In questioning the prospective jurors Edwards asked each if they had read articles prepared by the Anti-Crime Society or the Police Defense Committee. Then

defense counsel George Morton Levy told them that dereliction of duty was no grounds for a manslaughter verdict.¹⁹

This trial proceeded much more rapidly than the first, with almost the same witnesses being called. Three days later testimony ended and Justice Johnston instructed the jury,

If you find Stark was murdered in police headquarters and you cannot find that these men were the authors of the fatal wound — you must acquit them. There is not one law for police officers and another for private citizens but when policemen are charged with crime they must get the same fair trial as anyone else.

The trial then went to the jury and after eight hours of deliberation,

at 4:10 a.m., they returned with a verdict of not guilty for all three defendants. While District Attorney Edwards had nothing to say regarding this verdict, he did deny that he intended to move for a dismissal of the assault charges against the remaining police officers.²⁰ It was also noted that Assistant District Attorney Martin W. Littleton, Jr., and Deputy Police Chief Frank J. Tappen had both denied reports that they intended to resign.²¹

Elvin Edwards now decided to use new tactics in trying the officers charged with assault. He requested that the Board of Supervisors hire Kenneth M. Spence as a special attorney to assist in prosecuting those individuals in the Garden City police

court. Edwards made this request at a time he knew Supervisor J. Russel Sprague would be absent and it was approved. Had Sprague been present it is doubtful that this would have happened. Spence was a Democrat who had been designated as a special attorney to investigate Nassau County in 1924, when Governor Al Smith was attempting to break the Nassau Republican machine. Edwards was also preparing new charges against Frank Tappen for neglect of duty and Police Chief Skidmore requested that the Board of Supervisors remove Tappen from his position.²²

Defense Counsel George Morton Levy then appeared before Judge Cortland A. Johnson to



The scene of the crime: the site of the house of Mrs. Valeria Hizenski, 58 Power House Road, Roslyn Heights.

argue that the remaining charges should not be heard in a lower court. At his request the case was then referred back to the Grand Jury.²³ That group met on September 29th, and Spence reviewed the assault charges against the police officers. The Grand Jury, however, then exonerated all the defendants and thus ended all future prosecution.²⁴

During that week Frank J. Tappen was reinstated to his position as Deputy Chief by Chief Skidmore at ten o'clock on September 26, 1932. Forty-five minutes later the Board of Supervisors, acting on a motion made by Supervisor Sprague, passed a resolution abolishing the position of Deputy Chief. This was done on the recommendation of Chief Skidmore. He had stated,

I am of the opinion that the duties of the deputy chief can be exercised by me without impairing the efficiency of the department thereby saving the salary and expense incidental to that position.²⁵

This saved the Republican Party from the embarrassment of firing their own appointee.

In the aftermath of this case a number of police officers were demoted and or transferred to other positions. Surprisingly, Edwards later requested and received the transfers of former Captain and now Lieutenant Emil Morse and Detective Harry Zander to the office of the District Attorney.²⁶

Knowing that he had to work closely with the police department, Edwards then held a meeting with county detectives. In his peace-making talk Edwards told them to "scare the stuffing out of

the crooks." He urged them to forget the Stark case and "keep the record for the best county in the state for its administration of criminal law." Edwards had learned that

detectives have assumed unnecessary risks in handling of prisoners for fear of being charged with third degree tactics. If a prisoner makes any attempt to assault you, knock him down before he can do it to you. . . . The Stark case was a disgrace and a shame on the department and I have no apologies to offer you men for the vigorous prosecution I entered into against those who were involved, but that is over.

He concluded his remarks by stating "the district attorney cannot do his job without the support of the police."²⁷

On January 5, 1933, Hyman Stark's three companions were brought to trial on the charge of committing assault upon Mrs. Valeria Hizenski. All three pleaded guilty to the charge of second degree assault. Judge Cortland A. Johnson then sentenced Alex Drangel and Philip Cacala to serve terms of two and a half to five years in Sing Sing prison, while Alex Feldman, alias Izzy Stein, was sentenced to five years. This brought to a conclusion the sensational "third degree" case.²⁸

In the summer of 1934, Elvin N. Edwards was seeking the Republican Party nomination to again run for the office of District Attorney. Nearing the end of his third term in that office he was never even considered for the party's candidacy, despite the fact he had been a most able prosecu-

tor. The Nassau Republican leaders, however, felt he had defied them by selecting Kenneth Spence as a special prosecutor. They apparently wanted someone whom they could control.

Edwards continued to seek re-nomination and sent a telegram to the Republican Party Executive Committee stating

I am emphatically a candidate for District Attorney. My petitions are in the hands of the printer and will go to members of my committee.

He also made an announcement regarding his candidacy on Freeport radio station WGBB.²⁹

In that radio address Edwards stated that he had been urged to withdraw in the interests of party harmony.

It was because of the solicitation of the steering committee that I agreed in the event that my assistant Martin W. Littleton, Jr., was named by the county committee for district attorney, that I would withdraw in his favor.³⁰

The Republican Party then named Littleton and he went on to win in the November election. Littleton was to serve only one three year term as District Attorney. In May 1937, he made the startling announcement that he had had enough of that job. He stated that

to hold his office he would be forced to demean himself and to suffer grief and anxiety. . . . I want no more of this political business.³¹

Ironically, Elvin N. Edwards and later Martin W. Littleton, Jr., were both to become law partners of George Morton Levy, who had defended the police in the third

degree case. Frank J. Tappen, however, was never again to hold public office and died of a heart attack on August 8, 1937, at the age of forty-six years. Although many felt he was responsible for Stark's death, his obituary never even mentioned the police scandal.³²

Notes

14. *Nassau Daily Star*, July 25, 1932; July 27, 1932; July 28, 1932.

15. *Nassau Daily Star*, July 29, 1932; August 8, 1932; August 18, 1932; September 3, 1932.

16. *Nassau Daily Star*, August 26, 1932; August 27, 1932.

17. *Nassau Daily Star*, August 27, 1932.

18. *Nassau Daily Star*, August 29, 1932.

19. *Nassau Daily Review*, September 6, 1932.

20. *Nassau Daily Review*, September 9, 1932.

21. *Nassau Daily Star*, September 8, 1932; *Nassau Daily Review*, September 9, 1932.

22. *Nassau Daily Review*, September 12, 1932; *Nassau Daily Star*, September 13, 1932.

23. *Nassau Daily Star*, September 21, 1932.

24. *Nassau Daily Review*, September 30, 1932.

25. *Nassau Daily Review*, Sep-

tember 26, 1932.

26. *Nassau Daily Review*, July 21, 1932.

27. *Nassau Daily Review*, October 11, 1932; *Nassau Daily Star*, October 11, 1932.

28. *Nassau Daily Star*, January 6, 1933; *Nassau Daily Review*, January 6, 1933.

29. *The Gateway*, July 26, 1934; *Nassau Daily Review*, August 3, 1934.

30. *Nassau Daily Review*, August 3, 1934.

31. *Nassau Daily Review-Star*, May 20, 1937.

32. *Oyster Bay Guardian*, August 13, 1937.



*The Moore Building, seen here during a 1925 parade, served as the headquarters of the Nassau County Police Department's Second Precinct at the time.
Oyster Bay Historical Society Collections.*

FROM THE COLLECTIONS...

In this new column we will be highlighting artifacts and archival materials from our collection to familiarize our readers with its breadth and importance. In this issue, Philip Blocklyn pays special attention to a unique item from the Society's Charles Reichman Collection.

THE ARCHIVIST'S ANGLE

by Philip Blocklyn

Elizabeth Harris, the renowned expert on small printing presses, defines the "small press" as anything bigger than an office stamp and smaller than the common platen jobber. Take my word for it, such presses are indeed small and have survived, according to Ms. Harris, "not because they were important but because they were, and are, small and rather cute."

Such a survivor resides in the Oyster Bay Historical Society's Charles Reichman Collection of Nineteenth Century American Tools. It's a Baumgarten's Baltimore No. 11 press, with a 2 1/2 x 4 inch platen and two ink rollers. The Baumgarten Company of 45 East Fayette Street in Baltimore, Maryland, began business life in the engraving trade before moving, during the 1890s, into office supplies and small printing presses. The company produced a line of at least a dozen little presses, most of whose designs appear to have been "borrowed" from the Baltimorean line of presses produced by J.F.W. Dorman, also of Baltimore.

What were such little presses

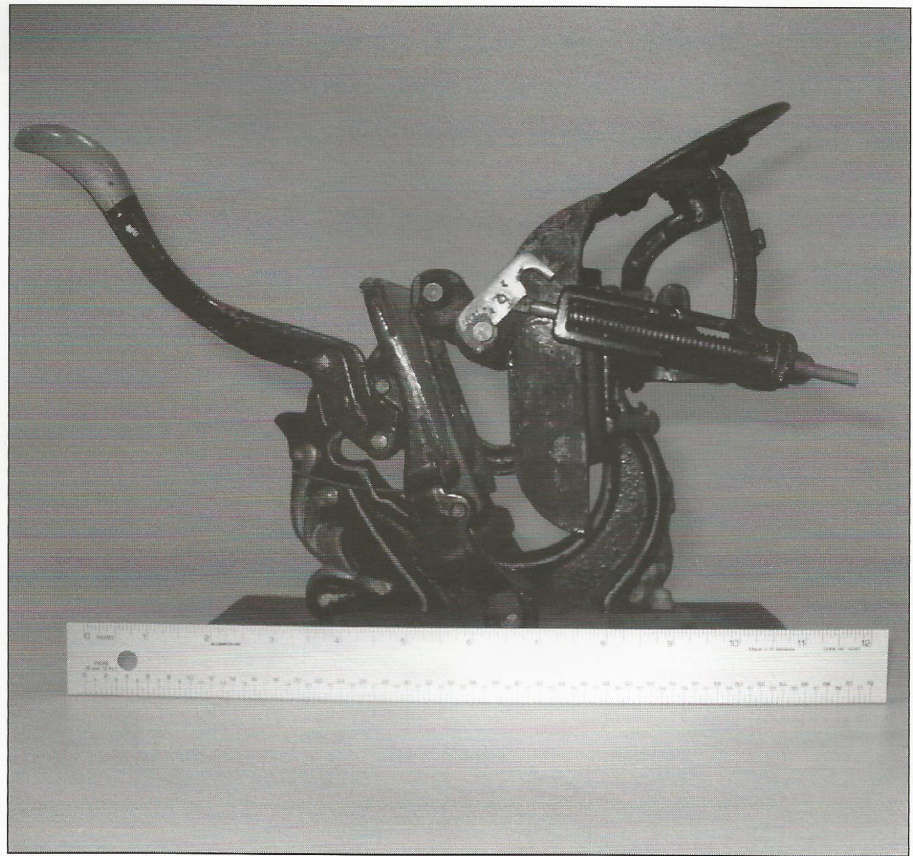
actually used for? Our Baltimore No. 11's 2 1/2 x 4 inch platen [the plate which produces an inked impression on paper] would have limited the press's output to nothing much bigger than a trade card. Even so, it very likely would still have appealed to a professional printer who wished to reserve his bigger presses for larger formats.

On the other hand, our little press may have served a more amateur role in its working lifetime. The Daisy Printing Press, as advertised in *Thomas W. Starr & Son's Catalogue of Rubber Stamps, Stencil Seals, Type, Presses, &c* [ca 1885], was actively marketed for the male youth of America at a price of \$2.00:

EDUCATE YOUR BOYS [the advertisement reads]. *GIVE THEM A PRINTING PRESS. The moral, mental and physical development of the boys should be the study of all who love their country and desire to perpetuate its institutions. In no way can this be more effectually aided than by the use of one of these presses.*

CR 97.295. Baumgarten's Baltimore No. 11 press, with 2 1/2 x 4 inch platen and two ink rollers. Charles Reichman Collection, OBHS.

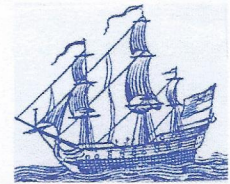
Source: Harris, Elizabeth M. *Personal Impressions: The Small Printing Press in Nineteenth-Century America*. Boston: David R. Godine, 2004.



Baumgarten's Baltimore No. 11 press



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 MOURNS PASSING OF FRITZ COUDERT

The Officers, Trustees, and staff of the Oyster Bay Historical Society were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of our friend and colleague, Fritz Coudert, on Friday, December 5, 2008.

Fritz was an integral member of the Board for the past ten years, who gave generously of his time, talents, and resources in furthering the goals of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

Society Director Tom Kuehhas, stated, "Fritz was a rare individual...a creative person who had the time, talents and treasure to make his vision a reality. I first worked with him on a video history of the local oystering industry, which he entitled 'The Oyster in Oyster Bay.' As executive producer of the project, he put together a whole team, from writers, to videographers to post-production, and he had input in each step of the process. He almost singlehandedly brought the Society into the 21st century with new Mac computers, digital cameras, and software, and he was the lead donor for the Oyster Bay Historical Society's Building Fund, named after his great friend, Angela Koenig. In fact it was Angela who got Fritz involved in the Society in the first place, and Fritz was fond of saying that only Angela could have convinced him to do so!"

"Like a perfect oyster, Fritz Coudert was as close to a flawless colleague and human being

as I've ever been privileged to know. The highlight of my tenure as president of the Society was when Fritz joined the Board. It afforded me the opportunity to get to know him and to learn from him on all sorts of levels; about the law, electronic communications, philanthropy, and life. Every encounter I have had with Fritz Coudert made my life better, which is something that he was also able to do through the strength of his personality and character for so many others, on so many levels, and in so many places," noted Edward B. (Woody) Ryder, past president of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.

Our condolences go out to Fritz's family, including his wife, Marge, and daughters Cynthia and Sandra.

THE CURATOR'S CORNER

by Yvonne Noonan-Cifarelli, Curator

In 2003, the Oyster Bay Historical Society obtained a significant collection of letters from Luis Francke to Jane Bush de Lamoutte documenting their courtship from 1907 until their marriage in London in 1911. These letters help introduce the lives of a far-from-garden-variety family from Long Island's Gold Coast and form the basis of the Society's winter exhibition, opening February 7, 2009: *Dearest Jane... Love L: Jane Bush de Lamoutte Francke and her love letters from Habana.*

Interviews with Jane Francke's grand-daughter Ellen Curtis, the letters' donor, provided the Society with valuable background information. Jane Bush was a



Fritz Coudert is shown at his keyboard regaling the audience with Christmas carols at the Society's Candlelight Opening in 2002.

Photo courtesy of the Oyster Bay Enterprise-Pilot.



Luis Francke and Jane Bush de Lamoutte

rural Indiana girl educated in Paris and married, at the age of 18, to Alexander de Lamoutte in her sister's apartment on West 39th Street in New York. Sometime after the birth of her second child, she separated from Mr. de Lamoutte and soon began her courtship by mail with Luis Francke, whose family served in Sweden's Embassy in Havana and who operated a sugar plantation and refinery in Matanzas. After their wedding, the Franckes established a home on their Long Island estate Glenby in Upper Brookville, where she maintained a magnificent garden and could indulge her love of ornithology. On her husband's death in 1938, she moved across her estate to Fernwood, a cottage where she made her home until her death in 1953. During these years, she became extensively involved with the Garden Club of America and with the early development of the American conservation movement, traveling with Louis Bromfield and Henry Wallace to promote conservation activities under the aegis of the US Department of the Interior. Today, volunteers at the Jane Francke Bird Sanctuary, on the grounds of her former estate, maintain the legacy of her commitment to open space throughout the country and on Long Island.

Please join us for a reception planned for Valentine's Day, February 14, to celebrate the opening of this unusual look at an important family in Oyster Bay history.

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Categories of Membership

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

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

**Visit the Oyster Bay
Historical Society's
NEW website!**

www.oysterbayhistory.org

**SAGAMORE HILL
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

Noted TR impersonator, James Foote, received a nice write-up in the Sunday edition of the *New York Times*. Theodore Roosevelt's 150th Birthday was celebrated at Sagamore Hill with many special activities and programs. The events included traditional music and story telling; children's crafts and activities; demonstrations and exhibits, pony rides, and a flag-raising ceremony. There was a wreath laying ceremony at Young's Cemetery on Monday, October 27th.

The schedule for the 2009 John A. Gable Lecture Series is as follows:

March 25 Charles Markis,
Chief of Interpretation.

April 28 Dr. Hendricks,
TR and the US Navy.

May 12 Franklin H. Perrell,
Curator of the Nassau County
Museum of Art.

**NASSAU COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society hosted a lecture by *Newsday's* John Hanc on Sunday, January 11. Hanc, co-author of *Jones Beach: An Illustrated History*, spoke about the history of the beach, so dear to the hearts of Long Islanders. The Society's next lecture will take place on Sunday, February 22, and will feature Jenna Coplin speaking on "Exploring African-American Culture and Community at Lloyd

Manor."

Long-time Editor of the Society's annual *Journal*, and recently-elected President, Dr. Natalie Naylor [her article on Edith Kermit Roosevelt appears on p. 3] sent us an advance copy of the *Journal*, which has much of interest to those interested in local history, including articles on America's First Blackout [in Farmingdale!], the Mackay Estate, Edith and Hal Fullerton, and Oyster Bay's own Octagon Hotel by *Freeholder* contributor Richard A. Winsche [his article on the "Third-Degree" Scandal concludes on p. 6 in this issue].

Our congratulations to outgoing President, Denward W. Collins, Jr., on his eighteen years of stellar service in that position.

**FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Welcome to newly installed president Mildred Johnston. An F-BHS member since 1965, Ms. Johnston has previously served as Executive Board member, Membership Chair, Vice President and President. She replaces Larry Jorgensen, who completed six years of service as President. The Society's 45th Annual Installation Dinner was held Tuesday, October 21, 2008, at the Virona Ristorante in Farmingdale.

The 90th Anniversary of the inauguration of Air Mail Service was celebrated on September 10, 2008, by having three vintage aircraft leave Republic Airport for San Francisco, replicating the original flight.

A capacity crowd attended Howard Kroplick's lecture about "The Vanderbilt Cup Races" that

was presented on Sunday, November 16, 2008 at the Farmingdale Public Library.

The Winter 2009 lecture series will be held at 2 PM on the following dates at the Bethpage Public Library: February 15 – "William Floyd, Signer of the Declaration" by Gene Horton; March 8 – "New York State in the Civil War" with Robert W. Arnold.

**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.

The Society's 2009 Annual Reunion will take place on 28-30 August in historic Deerfield, Massachusetts. Go to <http://www.underhillsociety.org> for details.

**CENTRAL PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

An historical marker, donated by the Schiavetta Family, will be

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.

placed in the vicinity of the Powell Avenue School.

An F-14 "Tomcat" has been returned home and is now on display

at the Northrup-Grumman Headquarters on Grumman Road West, Bethpage. This is the 711th model of a total of 712 that had been built.

On Sunday, January 11, 2009, Bethpage Public Library Director Lois Lovisolo presented a program on the Grumman Corporation. Ms. Lovisolo was formerly the Historian and Archivist for Grumman and told the story of this firm which was founded in 1929.

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 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.



It was standing room only in the ballroom of Mrs. Richard Storrs' Cove Neck home on Sunday, November 16, as Nassau County Museum of Art Chief Curator Franklin Hill Perrell spoke on "TR and the Arts: Art In The Time Of Theodore Roosevelt."

Above, Society Trustee Elizabeth Roosevelt, Director Tom Kuehhas, and Curator Yvonne Noonan-Cifarelli present Mr. Perrell with a framed photograph (taken by Ms. Roosevelt) of the sculpture at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary.

The Society wishes to thank Mrs. Storrs as well for graciously allowing the Society to use her home for this event, which raised over \$7,500 for the Society's Building Fund, all of which is eligible for the Dolan Matching Grant.

Photo courtesy of the Oyster Bay Guardian.



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.

Knollwood: The Estate and Its Owners

by Henry Dircks

King Zog of the Albanians gets way too much credit and press for having owned the Knollwood Estate, the ruins of which are located at Muttontown Preserve in East Norwich. Zog bought the estate in 1951 to establish a kingdom-in-exile for himself, his family and 120 members of his royal entourage. Legend has it that the king bought the estate for a "bucket of diamonds and rubies." But the fact is that Zog never set foot on the estate, and caused disdain among his Long Island neighbors by refusing to pay property taxes.

The Knollwood Estate was owned by a number of interesting personalities, not the least of whom was its original owner, Charles I. Hudson. A stockbroker of the Gilded Age, Hudson decided to build a country home on Long Island, like many of his wealthy contemporaries. The result was a 60-room mansion of Italian Renaissance design, terraced gardens and a dairy farm to satisfy his passion for raising Jersey cattle. Hudson was successful and well-respected; he was elected to two terms as governor of the New York Stock Exchange. His tenure as head of C.I. Hudson & Company was not without its difficulties; the

company was once sued by the brother of John D. Rockefeller and Hudson himself had his exchange seat suspended for a month following the assault of an exchange telephone operator.

Following Hudson's death in 1921, Knollwood was sold to Gustavia Senff, widow of Charles H. Senff, director of the American Sugar Refining Company (later Domino Sugar). Mrs. Senff continued the philanthropy of her late husband, donating land in Connecticut's Litchfield Hills for Mount Tom State Park and erecting Senff Gate at the University of Virginia (she was a native Virginian).

Charles Senff McVeigh, an attorney and co-founder of the New York law firm of Morris and

McVeigh, inherited Knollwood as trustee following the death of his aunt in 1927. Besides his law practice and philanthropic causes, McVeigh was an avid sportsman. He helped to establish the American Wildlife Institute which, in part, aired radio programs about land and wildlife conservation. McVeigh sold Knollwood to King Zog in 1951.

The estate's final owner, Lansdell Christie, had a hand in many enterprises before World War II. Christie attended West Point and began his own marine transportation business. As a transportation officer in North Africa during the war, he learned about extensive iron ore deposits in Liberia. Following the war, he secured concessions to mine ore in the



*Garden facade, Knollwood;
Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects, 1860 - 1940, SPLIA, 1997*

region, seeing to it that Liberia benefited from the development as well. Progressive in terms of racial views, he befriended Liberia's president William Tubman and helped to found the Afro-American Institute. Christie was also involved in Democratic politics. He was the largest single Democratic donor for the 1956

Stevenson campaign, and a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt.

By the time Lansdell Christie purchased Knollwood in 1955, the estate had suffered from years of neglect and vandalism. It's said that vandals ravaged walls in the mansion searching for gems hidden by King Zog. The terraced gardens were overgrown;

the farm buildings were in disrepair. Christie decided to have the mansion demolished in 1956, leaving only the great house's foundation, columned pavilions and a walled garden to pique a hiker's interest in the people who once resided there.

Edith Kermit Roosevelt

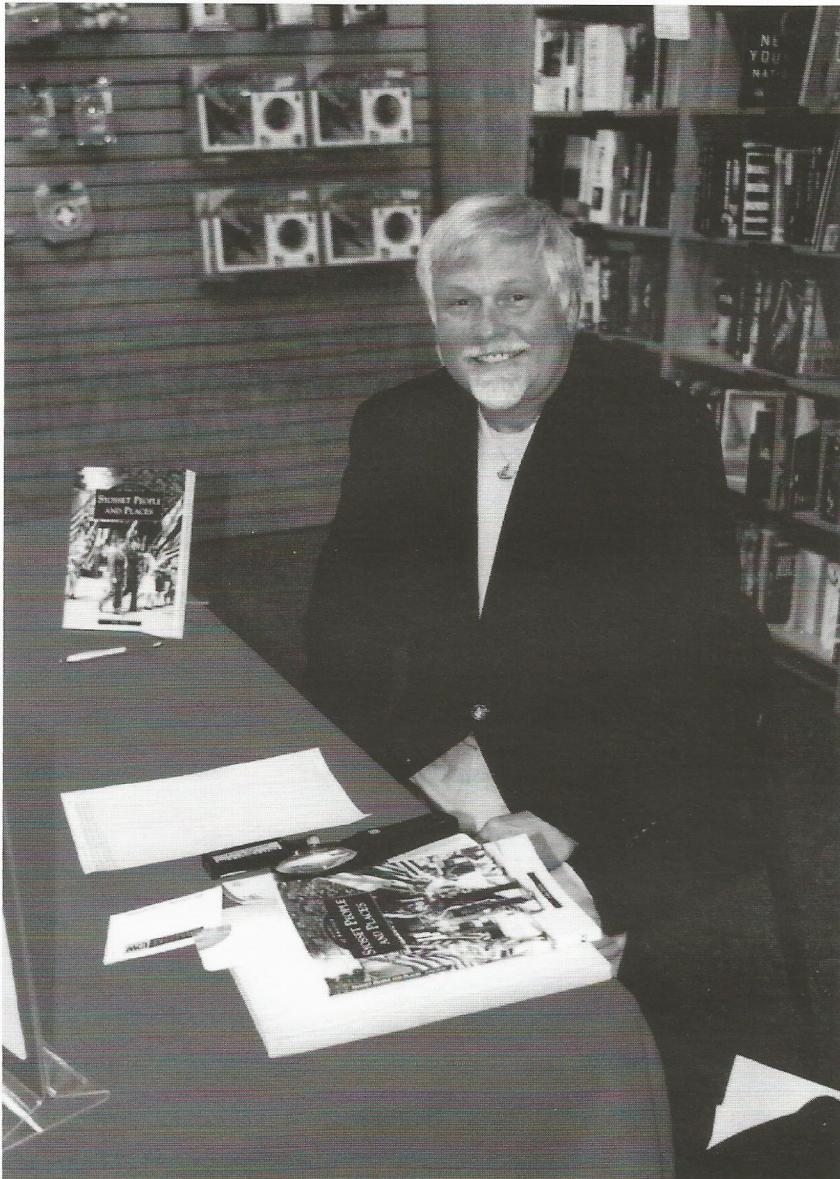
continued from p. 5

Nonetheless, she did deliver the keynote speech in 1935 to a meeting of the National Conference of Republican Women, which was broadcast on the radio.⁷

On her eightieth birthday in 1941, a *New York Times* editorial described her as having "a well-stored mind, a gracious presence and nature, kindness as well as dignity are hers." Her sense of humor, it continued, was "sometimes exercised pleasantly at the expense" of her husband. The editorial concluded, "This is a great as well as a beloved woman."⁸

When Stefan Lorant visited Edith Roosevelt in the 1940s for his *Life and Times* biography of Theodore Roosevelt, her mind was still sharp. She identified the now-famous picture of Teedie and his brother Elliott watching the Lincoln funeral procession. Lorant, who was in his mid-forties, was enchanted with Edith's charm. He told her, "Mrs. Roosevelt, if I were ten years older, I would propose to you." Edith quickly responded, "And Mr. Lorant, if I were ten years younger, I would accept."⁹

After breaking her hip in 1935, EKR slowed down and the infirmities of age began to tell in her eighties. She was bedridden dur-



*John Delin, a 1960 Syosset High School graduate, is seen here at his book signing at Borders Books & Music in Syosset. His book, **Syosset People and Places**, was just published by Arcadia Publishing and features many never before seen photographs and stories about this community.*

Photo by Robert L. Harrison.

ing much of 1947 and 1948. Edith Roosevelt died at Sagamore Hill on September 30, 1948, at the age of 87, with her daughter Ethel at her bedside. Ethel listed EKR's occupation on her death certificate as "Lady." In its obituary, the *New York Times* referred to the "former First Lady of the Land" who had presided at the White House with distinction. It characterized her personality as "all grace, finesse, and diplomacy" and noted that she was an "excellent conversationalist." The *Times* also stated that years before EKR had mentioned at her church sewing group that she would like her epitaph on her tombstone to be, "Everything she did was for the happiness of others."¹⁰ Her simple gravestone at Youngs Memorial Cemetery, shared with TR, identifies her as "his wife" and has only her name, birth and death dates. Her life, however, is testimony that everything the Lady of Sagamore Hill did was for the happiness of others—family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances.

Notes

1. The only full-length biography to date is by Sylvia Morris, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980). Betty Caroli has written on EKR in *First Ladies*, Expanded Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and *The Roosevelt Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1998). She is also included in books on the First Ladies by Carl Sferrazza Anthony, Robert P. Wilson, and other authors. The National First Ladies Library and Museum in Canton, Ohio has an excellent

web site (www.firstladies.org) with a biography and extensive bibliography (including descriptions of manuscripts in various collections). Harvard University has EKR's diaries; selections were published in "The Edith Kermit Roosevelt Diaries," ed. A. Richard Boera, *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* 12 (Spring-Summer 1986): 2-11.

2. Tranquility was located on the north side of East Main Street, between Landing and Sandy Hill Roads; the house was torn down in the 1930s. See Robert B. MacKay, "Turmoil Begat 'Tranquility,'" in *Theodore Roosevelt: Many-Sided American*, ed. Natalie A. Naylor, Douglas Brinkley, and John Allen Gable (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1992), pp. 35-53.

3. Roosevelt was U.S. Civil Service Commissioner (1889-1895), Police Commissioner of New York City (1895-1897), Assistant Secretary of the Navy (1897-1898), Governor of New York (1898-1900), Vice President (1901), and President of the United States (1901-1909). TR wrote four books published in 1887-1888 and a total of more than three dozen in his lifetime, plus numerous articles, speeches, and letters.

4. Dwight Young

and Margaret Johnson, *Dear First Lady* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2008), pp. 72-73.

5. Nancy Roosevelt Jackson, "A Sense of Style: Remembering Edith Kermit Roosevelt," *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* 23, no. 3 (1999): 2-4. Insight into EKR's literary interests is revealed in her correspondence with Marion Morrison (Mrs. Frederick Gore) King, Assistant Librarian of the New York Society Library, 1907-1954. See published selections in Alice Gore King, "The Letters of Edith Kermit Roosevelt to Marion King," *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 4-12.

6. In the Sagamore Hill curatorial files: EKR letters to Emily Carow, no date (re mending



Edith is shown reading a book with two of her sons, Archie (left) and Quentin (right).

stockings) and February 13, 1896, (re embroidering napkins), and various letters (including January 2, 1918, and January 8, 1940) re the Needlework Guild; Isabella Hagner James (EKR's secretary during the White House years), "Chieftess of the Roosevelt Clan," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 30, 1932.

7. Morris, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt*, pp. 476-79, 489; *New York Times*, July 22, August 11, and 12 (p. 1 and p. 5), 1932; Stacy A. Cordery, *Alice: Alice Roosevelt Longworth, from White House Princess to Washington Power Broker* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2007), pp. 366-68.

8. Letter from Louise Drab Hanson, August 16, 1993 (re 4-H), Eleanor Culver memoir (typescript), written July 14, 1993 (describing how EKR procured a Girl Scout leader), both in Sagamore Hill curatorial files; Jackson, "A Sense of Style," p. 4;

Morris, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt*, pp. 470-71; *New York Times*, August 6, 1941.

9. Morris, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt*, p. 515.

10. Obituary, *New York Times*, October 1, 1948. EKR death certificate in Sagamore Hill curatorial files.

Anecdotes of Old Oyster Bay

by Alice Delano Weekes

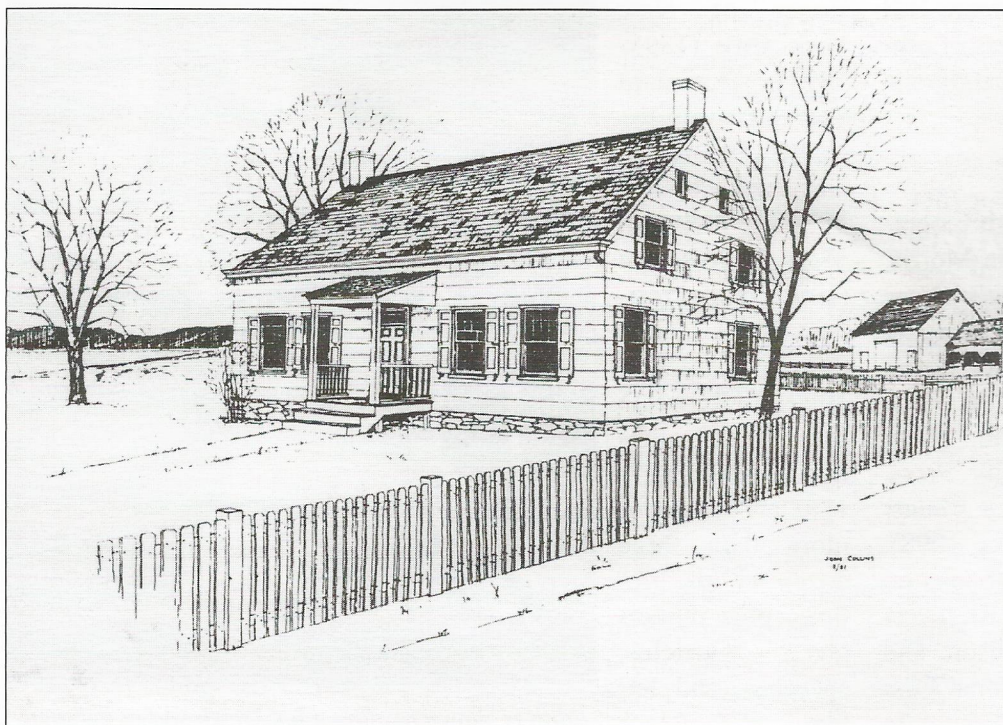
During the Revolutionary War, the Nathaniel Coles of that day, living on the hill above Dosoris, heard that a marauding band. was on its way over from the Connecticut shore for one of those raids so common at the time. The clock was buried, the silver thrown down the well, and all the womenfolk sent off to a place of safety. The marauders came, and in their fury at finding no booty, hung Mr. Coles from a staple over a door in his own house, and went off, leaving him for dead.

But they had not reckoned on the Coles inches, for Nathaniel, like all his race, was a man over six feet in height, and quite too tall to be thoroughly hung on a staple over any door. Help came in time and he was revived. The clock was dug up again, and is still keeping time for Nathaniel Coles' descendants in the fifth generation, and every time the well is cleaned, even to this day, it yields up another piece of family silver.

The lonely Cooper homestead at the end of Cove Neck was raided about the same time, and the helpless family could only look on at the looting and destruction of their property. When a couple of fierce looking marauders came up the cellar stairs, with hands and faces dyed with gory stains, there were shrieks of horror from the terror stricken women, who thought their turn to be murdered

would come next, but as it proved, the men had only been thoroughly sampling some of Mrs. Cooper's damson preserves!

[It's a shame that Mary Cooper's diary, which is in the collections of the Oyster Bay Historical Society and has been published by the Society, only covers the period 1768 to 1773. One would like to have heard this story through Mary's own "voice!"]



The Cooper Homestead, Cove Neck

The Long Island Dead Poets' Society does include members that were not born here and have not written any poetry at all. A few of these honorary members have not even lived on Long Island. The reason for their inclusion in this select society is that they have either contributed to the cause of poetry while living here or have influenced our poets to some degree. These five honorary members range from the very rich to the poorest of bohemian poets. They include one of the most famous women in the 19th century and a forgotten bard whose verses about Long Island have been recorded on a modern day CD.

McDonald Clarke

The first honorary member is McDonald Clarke (1798-1842). Clarke was born in Bath, Maine, and at the age of twenty-one wandered down to Manhattan, where he would spend the rest of his short life.



McDonald Clarke

The stories about Clarke are legend. It is said that before reaching New York City he slept many nights at the headstone of Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia. While in New York he slept in City Hall Park only when a nearby nicely decorated hearse was not available. Clarke loved young women and promptly married a 19 year old actress. Her mother opposed this union and soon separated them. Clarke would spend his time wandering up and down Broadway turning thoughts into verses on the people he met. Clarke's first slim book of verse, *A Review of the Eve of Eternity*, published in 1820, was followed by seven more books ending with *A Cross and a Coronet*, in 1841.¹ Clarke was a free soul,² who dubbed himself the "Mad Poet of Broadway." Clarke's only source of income was his poetry and frequently his female friends would supply him with money or gifts so he could avoid complete poverty. Clarke courted the rich and famous of New York City and supplied them with verse, including rhymes on John Jacob Astor.

Clarke admired the poet Lord Byron and dressed in a vagabond style with an open collar. He wrote verse on Byron, on temperance and on his lady friends, including some semi-erotic verse. Clarke's most celebrated couplet was often used as a quotation

Now twilight lets her curtain down,

And pins it with a star.

Clarke used known rhyme schemes in most of his verse, such as in the ending to his poem "In the Graveyard,"

The sun had sunk, and the summer skies
Were dotted with specks of light,
That melted soon, in the deep moon-rise,
That flowed over Croton Height.
For the evening, in her robe of white,
Smiled o'er sea and land, with pensive eyes,
Saddening the heart, like the first fair night
After a loved one dies.

Clarke suffered from mental problems during his later years and once was caught stalking a woman with whom he had fallen in love. Yet Clarke constantly wrote verse about his lovers (real and supposed) in lines that gave details to his passions-

And then her pretty, pouting lips-
Twin roses on a potent stem-
How many sad and secret trips,
Will memory take to visit them.³

Clarke's reign as the mad poet ended at the age of forty-four, when he was found by the police in a demented condition on a city street. Clarke was taken to Blackwell's Island to the Asylum for the Insane but unfortunately a leaking water faucet caused him to drown in his cell. During his lifetime, Clarke was well known by his fellow poets and Manhattan citizens alike.⁴ Clarke was buried in the fashionable Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, where his small granite monu-

ment and plot was paid for by John Jacob Astor.

Clarke had previously written his own epitaph, which read-

Sacred
In the Memory
of
Poor McDonald Clarke

In silence gaze, but curse not his grave.

By friendship's willing hand erected,
By genius, taste, and art adorned,
But now in death sincerely mourned.
But what are human plaudits now?
He never dreamed them worth his care,

Yet death has twined around his brow

The wealth he was too proud to wear.

Clarke's relationship to Long Island is slight, with the exception of being buried in Brooklyn. His status as an Honorary Member of the Long Island Dead Poets' Society is enhanced by his poetry and persona which was keenly observed by Walt Whitman.

Whitman took note of Clarke's use of being the "outsider," which Whitman used in the photo of himself with his open collar in his book *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman also thought Clarke's viewpoints in his poetry were unique. Clarke wrote intimate verse to personal friends and his use of eroticism in his poetry preceded Whitman. Clarke's poem "New York" strongly resembles Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," in its theme and content.

At the time of Clarke's death, Whitman was writing for the *New York Aurora* and three days later he wrote this eulogy for Clarke-

Whoever has the power, in writ-

ing, to draw bold, startling images, and strange pictures- the power to embody in language, original, and beautiful, and quaint ideas - is a true son of song. Clarke was such a one; not polished, perhaps, but yet one in whose facilities that all important vital spirit of poetry burnt with a fierce brightness.⁵

Two weeks later, Whitman felt compelled to write again and published in the *Aurora* one more tribute to Clarke in his poem "The Death And Burial of McDonald Clarke: A Parody."⁶ It would be thirteen years before Whitman's classic *Leaves of Grass* would be published and here we can find how much of a perfectionist Whitman is in gathering ideas, themes and insights of past poets.

Margaret Fuller

Our next honorary member is the author, critic, poet and feminist, Margaret Fuller (1810-1850). Fuller was born in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, and was a quick learner, having studied Latin by the age of six. Fuller grew up to be an educator working in the Temple School in Boston and in her own experimental school, the Green School, in Rhode Island. Fuller became friends with Ralph Waldo Emerson in the mid 1830s and participated with him in the Transcendentalist movement by becoming the editor of their periodical *The Dial*. Fuller's interest in women's rights resulted in her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, published when she was thirty-five.

By that time, Fuller was well known as a writer and critic and



Margaret Fuller

joined the staff of Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* as a book reviewer in 1845.⁷ Fuller visited Long Island on several outings during this time and was revered for her intelligence and editorial writings. In 1846, Fuller ventured off to Europe as a female correspondent for the *Tribune*, interviewing heads of state and intellectuals including Mazzini in Rome. Fuller later returned to Rome to join in the revolution as a partisan against the Papal States.

Fuller secretly married one of the revolutionaries, the Marquis Giovanni Ossoli, and in 1850 they and their new-born son embarked on a ship back to New York City. Their ship *The Elizabeth*, sank off of Point o' Woods, on Fire Island in a storm and her body and those of her family were never recovered. Even the poet Walt Whitman searched the South Shore beaches to recover her body.⁸ In 1901, a plaque was erected in her memory at Point o' Woods, at the location where Fuller would have last seen land from her sinking ship.⁹ Fuller

became an honorary member of the Dead Poets' Society due to her influence as a poet and female activist.

John Henry Sharpe

John Henry Sharpe is an honorary member about whom little is known. Sharpe apparently lived on Long Island during the nineteenth century and wrote the poem "Rockaway," or "Long Island" around 1840, which poem later appeared in anthologies and was recorded as a song in 1997. Sharpe's use of language gives a clear picture of the Atlantic Ocean he is viewing from the Long Island shore.¹⁰ The rich first lines from "Long Island"-

On old Long Island's sea-girt shore
Many an hour I've whil'd away,
In listening to the breakers roar
That wash the beaches night and day.
Transfix'd I've stood while
Nature's lyres
In one harmonious concert
broke,
And catching its Promethean
fires
My inmost soul to rapture.

The Folgers

The fourth and fifth honorary members are Henry and Emily Folger. The Folgers never published a book of poems or influenced the major poets of their day. What the Folgers did was become the biggest collectors of Shakespearian folios and material in the world. Henry Clay Fol-



The Folger House, Glen Cove; Photo by Robert L. Harrison.

ger (1857-1930), was born in Brooklyn to middle class parents and attended Adelphi Academy as a teenager. After graduation, Folger went off to Amherst College with Charles Pratt, his lifelong friend. While at Amherst, Folger paid a quarter to hear a lecture on Shakespeare by Ralph Waldo Emerson. This event was to influence him for the rest of his life.¹¹

After Amherst, Folger went on to work for Pratt Refinery, which was soon taken over by John D. Rockefeller. Now at Standard Oil, Folger earned his Masters from Amherst and his law degree from New York University.

In 1885, Folger married Emily Clara Jordan and both of them soon started on a collecting quest that would last the next forty-five years. It was an ideal marriage between two highly motivated people who both loved the poetry and writings of Shakespeare.¹² At first the Folgers collected

reprints, pamphlets, and anything they could afford on Henry's middle management salary. But Folger would rise up the corporate ladder to become first President, then Chairman of the Board, of Standard Oil. With his rise, the Folgers could afford more rare and expensive items of the Shakespearian era.

The Folgers would bid in secret on the first folios of the bard's work. They eventually succeeded in amassing more than 93,000 books, 50,000 prints and engravings, 200 oil paintings and 250,000 playbills, besides thousands of other items. By 1930, their collection included 78 first folios, more by far than any person, museum or corporation possessed in the world. Before Henry Clay Folger died in 1930, he and Emily had commissioned the building of their own library to house their collection, which was to be used by scholars and the American people. The Folger

Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. has served as their legacy since its opening in 1932.

The Folgers became honorary members of the Long Island Dead Poets' Society not only for their collecting abilities but because they were Long Islanders. The Folgers rented a brownstone in Brooklyn until 1925, but also rented a farm house on Duck Pond Road in Glen Cove for many years. They were lifelong friends of the Pratt family and with them were members of the Nassau Country Club. The only house they ever owned still stands on Saint Andrew's Place in Glen Cove. Emily Folger died in Glen Cove in 1936 and left most of her estate for the endowment of their Shakespeare Library to ensure its continuance.¹³

Notes

1. Clarke's books today are quite rare and they include, *The Elixir of Moonshine, by the Mad Poet* (1822); *The Gossip* (1825); *Poetic Sketches* (1826), *The Belles of Broadway* (1833); *Death in Disguise* (1833) and *Poems* (1836).

2. Some other Long Island poets who have marched to the beat of a different drum are William Martin Johnson, Walt Whitman, Prentice Mulford, George Sterling, Paul Bowles, George Moore, Jack Kerouac, Christopher Morley, Djuna Barnes and Jay Johnson.

3. Many articles were written about his wit and circumstances after he died. A few are: "McDonald Clarke, Hints from the Mail Bag," *New York Times*, 02/02/1901; "The Mad Poet," *New York Times*, 12/12/1893 and "Queries," *New York Times*,

04/18/1903, BR 15. The poem lines were taken from his obituary in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 03/07/1842, p. 2.

4. It has been said that when he was young he was the playmate of the poet Brainerd and while in New York the poet Halleck gave him money and wrote the poem "The Departed" about Clarke in 1836.

5. Besides Wikipedia.org many other internet sites enhance the connection between Clarke and Whitman. The Whitman eulogy was used from Reynolds, David S. *Walt Whitman's America*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. p. 89.

6. Whitman's poem on Clarke was published on March 18th and on March 26th the poem "Lines on the Death of McDonald Clarke" was published in the *Weekly Herald* by the poet William Wallace. These tributes

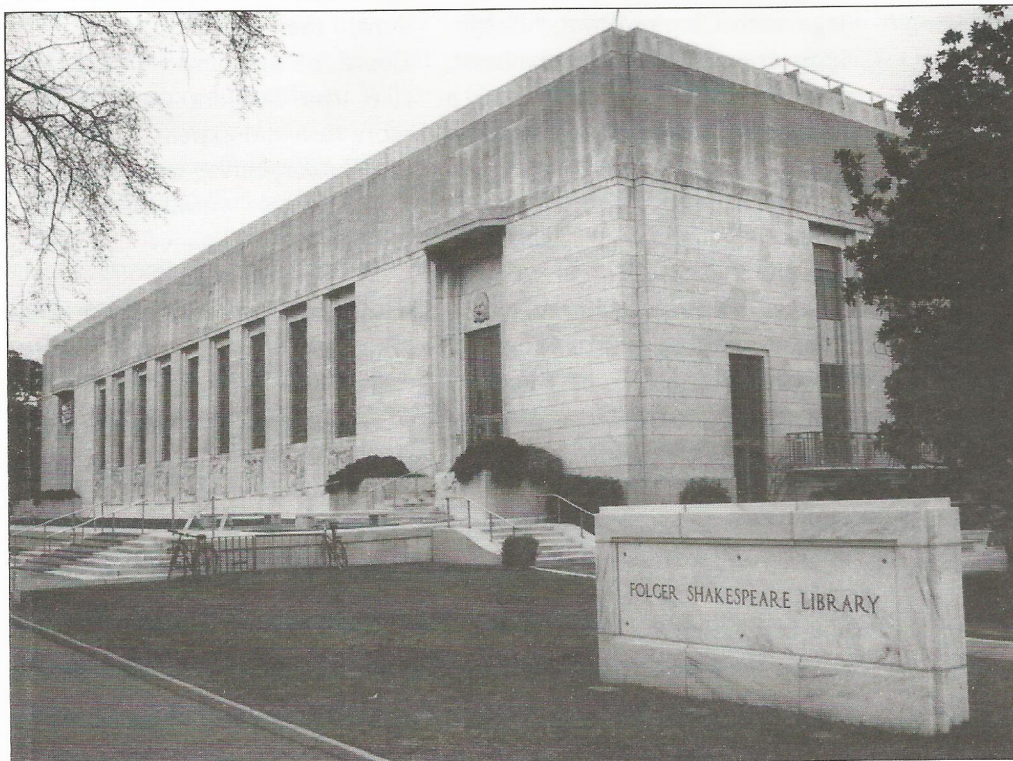
to fallen Long Island poets have carried on to the present time with eulogy poems written about just about every local poet after their death.

7. Fuller became the first full time book reviewer of either sex in an American newspaper.

8. Burrows, Edwin G. and Wallace, Mike. *Gotham*, Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 679.

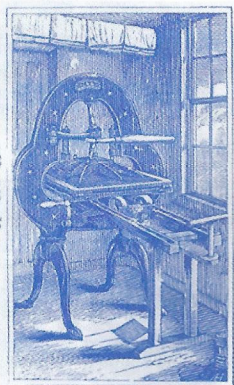
9. "Margaret Fuller Memorial Tablet," *New York Times*, 07/29/1901, p. 7.

continued on p. 24



The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C; Photo by Robert L. Harrison.

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Libraries in the Ancient World.

By Lionel Casson. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002. 177 pp. Notes, illustrations, and maps. \$12.95.

In the absence of a book trade, how did ancient libraries amass their collections? Plunder was a favorite strategy. Ashurbanipal, King of the World, King of Assyria, made free with the looted libraries of Babylon and Ashur, carting them back to Nineveh for his royal collection. Tablets in private hands he acquired by royal request (confiscation).

Bookselling, established in the Greek world between the fifth and second centuries BCE, smoothed the edges of collection building, but not completely. Acquisition practices at Alexandria were aggressive, creating such a demand for older (and so more reliable) texts that forgeries supplemented the inadequate supply of the genuine. Meanwhile, what the Ptolemies couldn't buy they commandeered through the confiscation of all books unloaded at Alexandria. The original texts went to the

Library, with copies (the Ptolemies had lots of papyrus) returned to the importers. Ptolemy III acquired the authorized texts of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides by borrowing them from Athens against a huge bond, which he was happy to forfeit when he sent off to Athens "deluxe" copies of the originals.

Competition among libraries made sharp practices only sharper. Eumenes II was so intent on making his library at Pergamum a respectable rival of Alexandria that the owners of Aristotle's famed personal collection buried their holdings in a ditch to safeguard them from "acquisition." Eumenes might have saved himself such trouble by adopting the civilized collection policies of the provincial Ptolemaic libraries, featuring the regular dunning of wealthy community leaders for funds to purchase or copy texts.

With booksellers rare in early Rome, library acquisition reverted to predictably Ashurbanipalian methods. Scipio carried off the royal Carthaginian library as spoils of war. Lucullus' booty of books from conquests in Asia Minor apparently inspired Plutarch to remark that "his use of them [books] was more commendable than their acquisition." Sulla brought back with him to Rome the library of—yes—Aristotle, from Pergamum via Athens. Only Asinius Pollio showed any real innovation in collection development practices. Rather than stealing books outright, Pollio sold whatever he pillaged during his military campaigns and used the proceeds to found Rome's first public library.

The decline of the Greco-Roman world brought new challenges to library collection, particularly with the rise of Islam at the edges of the Eastern Empire. The Serapeum Library met this challenge badly when armies of the Caliphate overtook Alexandria in 642. A friend of the commanding officer asked for the books as a "gift"—at least this much is familiar—but Caliph Omar had other plans: "If these writings of the Greeks agree with the book of God, they are useless and need not be preserved; if they disagree, they are pernicious and ought to be destroyed." The books fueled the fires of the city's four thousand baths for six months.

What small remnant survived of the classical world's literature made its way to medieval monastery scriptoria and libraries, where they were "to form the core of important libraries in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance." And how did these libraries amass their collections? "Copying, sale, gift, theft, looting." Library history, like all history, loves a full circle.

Note: Lionel Casson is professor emeritus of classics at New York University.

Further Reading:

Boyd, Clarence Eugene. *Public Libraries and Literary Culture in Ancient Rome.*

Richardson, Ernest Cushing. *Some Old Egyptian Librarians.*

Staikos, Konstantinos. *The History of the Library in Ancient Civilization: From Minos to Cleopatra.*

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Dead Poets

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10. The CD, *My Long Island Home*, was produced by Stan Ransom under the Connecticut Peddler label. Another Long Island poem used in this collection was the "Ballad of Pudding Hill" by Miss Fannie Elkins.

11. For more on the Folgers go to the Folger Shakespeare Library web site or read my more extensive article: "The Folgers and Shakespeare: A Long Island Story," *The Nassau County Historical Society Journal*, Volume LVI, 2001, pp 11-18.

12. Emily received her Bachelors from Vassar College in 1879, as well as her Masters in 1896. Her thesis was entitled, "The True Text of Shakespeare." Emily handwrote every acquisition they made on index cards, which became the first catalog of the library.

13. The ashes of Henry and Emily Folger are in urns in the Folger Shakespeare Library's reading room.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

FEBRUARY

Saturday, Feb. 14, 4 - 6 p.m.

Exhibition Opening

Earle-Wightman House

A collection of letters serve to introduce the lives of a far-from-garden-variety family from Long Island's Gold Coast and form the basis of the Society's winter exhibition, opening February 7, 2009: *Dearest Jane... Love L: Jane Bush de Lamoutte Francke and Her Love Letters From Habana*.

Please join us for a reception planned for Valentine's Day, February 14, from 4 to 6 p.m., to celebrate the opening of

this unusual look at an important family in Oyster Bay history. The letters, along with family photographs from their Brookville estate, Glenby, and their plantation in Havana, allow us to take an intimate glimpse into the life of Jane Bush, a simple Indiana girl, divorced with two children, who married a Swedish and Cuban sugarcane mogul fifteen years her senior. The exhibition runs through April 26, 2009.

For further information, call 516-922-5032 or visit the Society's website at www.oysterbayhistory.org

Blocklyn's Books

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Thompson, James Westfall. *Ancient Libraries*.

Wright, H. Curtis. *The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship*.

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Join the Society on Valentine's Day for
the opening of *Dearest Jane...Love L.!*