

# LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL



Members of the 106th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, Frances S. Gabreski Airport in West Hampton Beach, Long Island.

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*Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born...*

*Walt Whitman*

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BROOK**  
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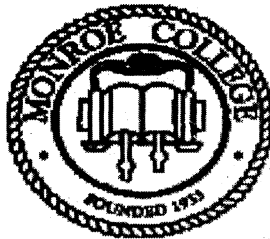
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## STEAMBOATING LONG ISLAND SOUND STYLE

Marilyn Weigold

*Professor Weigold has recently updated and expanded her 1974 classic on the Long Island Sound The American Mediterranean (reviewed in this issue). This article discusses the glorious (and hazardous) steamboats that once dotted this body of water.*

Twenty-first-century visitors to the beaches of Long Island's North Shore rarely spy ships which are in any way comparable to the grand steamboats of yesteryear. The occasional super sized yacht or cruise ship may cause heads to turn, but run of the mill pleasure craft, oil tankers, tugs and ferries fail to generate the excitement of the magnificent steamboats which first appeared on the Sound in the early nineteenth-century.

The initial attempt to navigate the Sound with a steamboat took place in 1815 when the *Fulton*, named for Robert Fulton, whose *North River* steamboat, also known as the *Clermont*, had inaugurated the era of steam navigation in 1807. The *Fulton/Clermont* made the seventy-five mile trip from New York City to New Haven in eleven hours. The return trip, postponed for a day because of bad weather, took fifteen hours. It was, nevertheless, a great accomplishment for Captain Elihu Bunker who had to contend with rough seas, wind and fog. Undaunted, he pressed on to achieve a monumental first in the history of Long Island Sound. Commenting on this feat, the New York Evening Post declared:

The facility with which she (the *Fulton*) passed Hell Gate. . . surprised everybody on board, and satisfied them that no vessel can be so well calculated to navigate the dangerous channel as the steam boat . . . The boat passing these whirlpools with rapidity while the angry waves are foaming against her bows, and appear to raise themselves in obstinate resistance to her passage, is a proud triumph of human ingenuity.<sup>1</sup>

The year after this momentous voyage Captain Bunker took command of the steamer *Connecticut*, a vessel built for the tsar of Russia and known originally as Emperor Alexander. Instead of plying the waterways of Europe, this gleaming white ship, with bright green trim, ended up on the Sound thrilling onlookers from both shores.

The success of the *Fulton* and the *Connecticut* opened a new chapter in transportation. Regular steamship service, with two weekly round trips (soon expanded to three), between New York and New Haven began in 1817. One of the first travelers to take advantage of this service was President James Monroe. Shortly after his inauguration in 1817 he undertook a tour of the New England states and sailed through the Sound on the *Connecticut*. The railroads, arriving on the scene in the 1830's augmented steamboat service. Connecting such inland cities as Hartford and Springfield with New Haven and coordinating their schedules with the steamships, trains added a new combination of comfort and speed. A train leaving Hartford at 5:30 a.m. made connections with the 8:00 a.m. steamboat to New York. If train and boat were on time passengers could expect to arrive in New York at 1:30 p.m., a trip which in the old days of sail and stagecoach took two days.

More rapid developments would have followed had New York State not granted a monopoly for the operation of steamboats in New York waters to Robert Fulton and his associates. Still, there were enterprising men who found ways to circumvent the monopoly. Using a schooner to tow his newly purchased steamboat *United States* from New York City to Byram Cove in East Port Chester, the most westerly point along the Sound shore of Connecticut, Captain Benjamin Beecher observed the provisions of the monopoly. Once across the state line he got up steam and the *United States* proceeded on her journey. On the return voyage, Beecher's steamboat had to dock at Byram Cove, where passengers transferred to stagecoaches for the trip to Manhattan. This situation persisted until 1824 when the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *Gibbons v. Ogden*, struck down the Fulton monopoly.

The decision must have gladdened the heart of many a weary traveler because overland transportation was anything but comfortable. There were dreadful ruts along the Boston Post Road, a condition that resulted from the unwillingness of coastal towns to appropriate funds for the repair and maintenance of a road considered unnecessary in an age when most people used the Sound as a highway. This age of slow sailboat and bumpy stagecoach was now receding into history replaced by fast and even luxurious steamboat travel. By the late 1820's, Sound steamers were luring passengers with such amenities as carpeted and curtained salons and, on some boats, libraries containing hundreds of volumes.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Following the Supreme Court ruling against the Fulton monopoly, fierce competition arose among rival steamboat companies, resulting in

even more improvements to attract passengers and freight. In addition to luxurious accommodations, low fares, safety and, above all, speed were offered to lure new customers. The golden age of steam navigation on the Sound was characterized by fanfare, spectacular races, and some dreadful accidents. Its beginnings, however, were slow and laborious. One of the principal difficulties was fuel, which consisted of cordwood of good dry pine. This burned well and fast but enormous quantities of it had to be carried on a long trip. When the *Clermont* made its inaugural voyage on the Hudson River it was greeted by derisive laughter because its deck was loaded with what onlookers called "pine sticks," leaving little room for cargo. Captains of cargo-carrying sloops could not understand the purpose of the steamboat. The significance of steam as the new source of power escaped them; they just could not see beyond their sails. They were right, though, in one respect: sails never exploded. Boilers did.

With the introduction of more powerful engines, the need for fuel increased. While the *Clermont* carried a dozen cord of wood, fast steamboats on the Sound needed so much fuel they could not carry all of it. Instead of pulling into a port to reload, however, they refueled by hooking up with wood sloops off Fishers Island, which while geographically close to New London, is actually part of Southold, the easternmost town on Long Island's North Fork. This practice was phased out after the mid-1830's when coal, which took up less space, replaced wood as the preferred fuel for steamboats.

Although coal solved the fuel problem another challenge remained: the inability of ships' boilers to withstand sustained high pressure. The early engines operated with low-pressure steam, but the desire for more speed and power on the sometimes rough waters of Long Island Sound produced stronger engines. Few explosions would have occurred had it not been for the willingness of steamboat captains to engage in races. In 1833 the *Providence* and the *New England* had challenged each other as they headed east on the Sound. The *New England* won but it had built up so much pressure that when it reached its destination, Essex on the Connecticut River, its boilers exploded. There were fifteen casualties. Commenting on this tragedy, the *New Haven Daily Herald* declared:

This is the most terrible accident of its kind, probably, that has ever transpired and the public anxiety is extremely alive to know from what cause it was produced. The boat was entirely new, built on the most approved model, and money and means were not spared to render her one of the best and safest boats upon our waters. Her boilers were of the

best and stoutest copper and her commander an old and experienced captain. Some one must be responsible for a dreadful account.<sup>2</sup>

To alleviate passengers' fears of boiler explosions steamboat designers removed boilers from the holds of ships and raised them above the deck. Since explosions go upward, passengers, located on the lower deck, felt more secure but the towering machinery was aesthetically unpleasant. When the noted British author Charles Dickens traveled from New Haven to New York on the steamboat *New York* during a tour of the United States in 1842, he was startled by the appearance of the ship. To him the main deck looked like a warehouse filled with caskets and crates. Nevertheless, the new design, evident in the *New York* and other steamboats Dickens spotted on the Sound, constituted an advance in safety. But design considerations aside, there was one danger which was ever present during the era of steam navigation: fire.

### **The Sinking of the *Lexington***

In 1840 a church sponsored excursion off the coast of Eaton's Neck, Long Island on the steamer *Lexington* ended in catastrophe when fire claimed the lives of 1,200 people. The *Lexington* tragedy unfolded on a freezing January night in 1840 after the ship had converted to coal firing to increase its efficiency. Coal firing required a forced draft provided by two blowers. The coal in the furnace burned so fiercely that the chimneys close to the deck turned red hot. Part of the ship's cargo, cotton bound for New England textile mills, piled close to the smoke stacks, caught fire. The blaze spread rapidly, engulfing the entire ship. Captain George Child attempted to steer his steamer towards the Eaton's Neck lighthouse, which had stood sentry on the North Shore since 1798 when it had been commissioned by President George Washington. But when the steamboat's tiller ropes burned, the Captain was unable to steer. The ships' lifeboats were launched but they were quickly swallowed up by the angry waters of the Sound. One lifeboat made it to shore at Setauket. It contained only a coat, whose owner, along with 119 other people, had drowned in the icy waters. Only four people on the boat survived. Poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who had booked passage on the *Lexington*, escaped the disaster because he decided to remain in New York City.

The loss of the *Lexington* shocked the public making them eager to obtain information about the tragedy. People snapped up Nathaniel Currier's commemorative print depicting the sinking of the *Lexington*. There was a market for other mementos as well. Using unburned bales

of cotton which washed ashore, a manufacturer turned out *Lexington* shirts intended to be worn as mementos of the role unburned cotton played in saving the lives of the four survivors who drifted away from the burning ship on intact bales. The story of one survivor was graphically related in the *Long Island Democrat*, which explained:

Mr. Crowley, 2d mate of the *Lexington* drifted ashore near Riverhead, on Wednesday last, at nine o'clock, having been forty hours exposed to the severity of ice and snow, before gaining the beach, and then walked three-quarters of a mile to the house where he now is. His feet and hands are a little frozen.<sup>3</sup>

This was quite an understatement in view of the fact that Crowley, who came ashore at Baiting Hollow, approximately forty miles from the site of the disaster, had suffered severe frostbite and, according to the newspaper, was expected to lose all of his toes and one of his fingers.

Despite their precarious condition, Crowley and the other survivors of the *Lexington* were indeed fortunate. They lived to tell the tale of a disaster that scattered bodies, baggage and wreckage over a wide area. Rumors about the hard currency carried by businessmen traveling on the ship lured thieves to Long Island and the situation became so intolerable that the state dispatched guards to patrol fifteen miles of the North Shore.

### **The Sinking of the *Seawanhaka***

In contrast to the untoward incidents which occurred in the aftermath of the *Lexington* disaster, the burning of the *Seawanhaka* forty years later elicited acts of generosity. Regarded as the fastest ship on the Sound, the *Seawanhaka* was rarely overtaken by other steamships. Once, in 1867, when it was racing the *John Romer* of the Greenwich and Rye Steamboat Company, owned by New York City's notorious Tammany Hall political boss, William March Tweed, the *Seawanhaka* came in second in what must have been a very exciting encounter. According to one of the officers of the *John Romer*:

The passengers and crew of both boats were . . . in a fever heat of excitement . . . I think I never saw such a crazy lot as yelled at each other across the span of a dozen feet between the two boats. Women shook



their parasols in the air and squealed like a flock of geese.<sup>4</sup>

Despite losing the race the *Seawanhaka* remained a dominant presence on the Sound, transporting passengers from Roslyn and Sea Cliff to Manhattan until a fateful day in June 1880 when the vessel caught fire as it was steaming up the East River. Among the 300 passengers on board were William R. Grace, at one time mayor of New York City, and Charles A. Dana, editor of the *New York Sun* newspaper. Both gentlemen were saved as were most of the other passengers, who heeded Captain Charles Smith's warning not to jump until he had beached the boat on a shoal between Ward's and Randall's islands. The selfless captain remained at the helm throughout the ordeal even as flames began to engulf him. North Shore residents who commuted regularly on the *Seawanhaka* took up a collection and presented Smith with a purse in appreciation of his heroic efforts but he was not able to spend the money. He died within a year of the accident.

### **The Heyday of Steam Navigation**

The fiery end of a steamship usually resulted in a fall off in ridership for the entire industry for a time, but in the nineteenth-century passengers were not inordinately slow in returning. In the post-Civil War period, state-of-the-art boats such as the *Pilgrim*, the first Sound steamboat equipped with electric lights, were a big draw as were the elaborate interiors of the vessels of the Narragansett Steamship Company, a venture launched by Jay Gould and Jim Fiske in the 1860's. With their uniformed personnel and beautiful salons, Narragansett Line ships offered stiff competition to the older Fall River Line, engaged since 1847 in carrying passengers between New York City and New England. By 1879, as the result of a price war, the fare from New York to Boston fell to a dollar! The low price proved so attractive that passengers used to taking the railroad switched to Sound steamers.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth-century steamboats remained a viable alternative to land travel for freight and passengers. They tied the Sound shore communities on Long Island and the mainland to one another and to New York City in a new and binding relationship unlike anything that had existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. The completion of railroads on both sides of the Sound in the 1840's meant stiff competition for the Sound steamers but they held their own. This was especially the case on Long Island where the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) filed for bankruptcy only six years after its completion in

1844. Conceived as a short cut to Boston, the Long Island Rail Road could not compete with the New Haven line, which in 1848 began providing through service from New York City to Boston in all kinds of weather. Reduced to the status of a local carrier the LIRR eventually extended its reach on the island through branch lines. In the late nineteenth-century the railroad acquired Sound steamers, but by that time the era of the grand Long Island Sound steamboats was fading into history.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> *New-York Evening Post*, March 25, 1815, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Herald* (New Haven), October 10, 1833, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Long Island Democrat* (Jamaica), January 22, 1840, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick A. Hubbard, *Other Days in Greenwich* (New York: J. F. Tapley Col, 1913), 267.

<sup>5</sup> Considerable information about the various steamships lines serving the Sound, as well as other data on the era of steam navigation, can be found in the following works: Roger McAdam *Salts of the Sound* (New York: Stephen Daye Press, 1957); Roger McAdam, *Commonwealth: Giantess of the Sound* (New York: Stephen Daye Press, 1959); Roger McAdam, *Priscilla of Fall River* (New York: Stephen Daye Press, 1956); Roger McAdam, *Floating Palaces: New England to New York on the Old Fall River Line* (Providence: Mowbray Co., 1972).

Also helpful are Samuel Ward Stanton, *Long Island and Narragansett Bay Steam Vessels* (Meriden: Meriden Gravure Co., 1962); Henry Whittemore, *The Past and Present of Steam Navigation on Long Island Sound* (New York: Providence & New York Steamship Co., 1892); William King Covell, *A Short History of the Fall River Line* (Newport: A. Hartley G. Ward, 1947); George H. Foster, *Splendor Sailed the Sound: The New Haven Railroad and the Fall River Line* (San Mateo, Ca.: Potentials Group, 1989); Edwin Dumbaugh, *Long Island Sound Steamboats* (Roslyn Harbor: Nassau County Museum of Fine Art, 1984); Gardner J. Howland, *The Development of Steam Navigation on Long Island Sound* (Providence: The Steamship Historical Society, 1994).

Shipwrecks on the Sound are described in Jeanette Edwards Rattray, *Ship Ashore* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1955).

## RESCUE OVER THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

*Martin J. Ingram*

*With Introduction by Charles F. Howlett*

*With the election of Ronald Reagan as United States President in 1981 the Cold War entered its final, dramatic stage. Tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union had intensified in the late 1970s after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Samoza regime in Nicaragua by Soviet-backed rebels. Reagan was determined to restore American pride and power in the aftermath of the Iranian hostage crisis and the nation's longest and most divisive war, Vietnam. The newly elected president immediately labeled the Soviet Union the "evil empire," launched a campaign to place more intermediate range missiles in Europe, and embarked on a major buildup in America's nuclear arsenal.*

*Yet for those living on Long Island there was a less remote event highlighting just how tenuous Cold War tensions had once again become. That November a helicopter from the 106<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, stationed at Frances S. Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach Long Island, performed a courageous mission of mercy. Major Martin J. Ingram's unit, now the 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, which later became famous through its portrayal in the book and movie *The Perfect Storm*, was asked to transport a critically ill patient from Stony Brook Hospital to Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan. This mission almost turned into a major diplomatic standoff when Ingram's helicopter took an inadvertent flight over the Glen Cove residence of the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations. The incident would capture national headlines. Below is the story as told by the mission pilot himself.*

### November 16, 1981: The Story

I used a vacation day from work so that I could accompany my wife Nancy to Stony Brook University Hospital for an examination to confirm her pregnancy. Avoiding eye contact with the other patients, I picked up a newspaper from a table that was littered heavily with well-thumbed issues of *American Baby*. I masked myself with the newspaper and glanced idly at the headlines while my thoughts were focused on the events in the examination room. Letters and sentences breezed passed my eyeballs but my brain didn't absorb them: "Aeroflot Penalized for Errant Flights"; "U.S. Government Suspends Flights into United States Airspace by the Soviet Airline Aeroflot For A Week;" "Penalty For Over Flying Sensitive Defense Installations in Southern New England;" "Shots Fired at Soviet Ambassador's Residence: Russians Claim American Terrorist Activity."

While walking to the car I came by the Hospital's Heliport and quickly surveyed the area for any new obstructions. As a rescue helicopter pilot for the New York Air National Guard I had frequently landed at the hospital while transporting critically ill patients to or from the facility. It was much easier to survey the area standing on the ground than to view it from the air in a twenty-two thousand pound helicopter cruising by at fifty knots and three hundred feet.

The helicopter, an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant, is used by the 106<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service located at Francis S. Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach, New York. The unit is part of the Air Force's worldwide rescue network and it is staffed with Air National Guardsmen mostly from the Long Island community. Their mission like many of Long Island's volunteer rescue and fire fighting organizations professes a dedication to life. Their motto simply states "These things we do, so that others may live."

The 106<sup>th</sup>'s mission is combat rescue. Their duty is to recover downed aircrews anywhere, even deep behind the enemy lines. During peacetime, they participate in life or death rescue operations, whether they are inter-hospital transports or over water search operations. In the five short years that the 106<sup>th</sup> was assigned the air rescue mission, the unit has saved well over 120 lives. Quite a few of these missions involved a visit to the Stony Brook Hospital Helipad.

On the drive home from the hospital my wife and I became very excited about the imminent birth of our child. At supper we planned to break the news to our other children. After the meal was set and everyone seated the telephone rang. "Marty, are you within crew rest limitations?" asked my squadron crew scheduler. I reviewed my recent activities and determined that I was properly crew rested. "Could you fly a life and death rescue mission?" "You bet!" came my fast response. "OK-I'll fill you in on the details when you get here; I've got some other phone calls to make."

I hastily changed into my Air Force Flight suit. The family wasn't too shocked; this sort of thing happened frequently. They wondered what type of a mission it was, but they also knew there wasn't enough time to ask. Because of its location my unit became involved in two types of operations - over water maritime search and rescue operations in support of the Coast Guard, or a transfer of a critically ill patient from one hospital to another, generally referred to as a "medevac." Any mission that we got involved with was of a life or death nature. If we succeeded in recovering the survivor alive or safely delivering the patient alive, the organization was credited with a "save." The rescues at sea were frequently dangerous and dramatic. The hospital medevacs, on the other hand, were less dramatic and even though the helipads weren't the best

planned aerodromes, they weren't as dangerous as hovering over a bobbing fishing boat. The squadron helicopter crews began to refer to the saves earned on hospital medevacs as "cheap saves."

I began to go through a mental checklist of important items to review for night rescue operations. The weather appeared to be no factor. It was dark, there was no illumination from the moon, and the sky had a fairly solid layer of clouds. Visibility appeared to be o.k., but this was all subject to change. A check with the local weatherman would be a high priority.

This Monday night there was no scheduled flying and, consequently, everyone had to be called from home. The basic crew on the Jolly Green was the Pilot, Co-Pilot and Flight Engineer. When we flew actual rescue missions, we added two Pararescuemen to the crew. The Pararescuemen are highly trained airmen who have advanced emergency medical training and are proficient in all types of rescue operations.

The forty-minute drive was accomplished in twenty-seven minutes. When I arrived at the Operations Building the Supervisor of Flying (SOF) greeted me at the door. "Marty, you'll be the Aircraft Commander, Lieutenant (LT). John Schoeck will be your Co-Pilot, Master Sergeant (MSgt) Gene Ressigue is the Flight Engineer, and Kevin Kelly will be the Pararescuemen (PJ). In the folder are a weather brief and a list of the applicable Notices to Airmen. I filled out a flight plan: you need to sign it and check the Flight Crew Information File. The Weight and Balance form is here and it too will need your signature."

"Sounds good. What type of a mission do we have?" I asked as I reviewed the necessary paperwork. "It's a MEDEVAC from University Hospital at Stony Brook to Bellevue Hospital in New York City. We've coordinated with the people at the East 34<sup>th</sup> Street Helipad. They're expecting you and will have an ambulance standing by to take the patient the remaining distance to the hospital."

"What's the medical condition of the patient?" I asked. "It's a life or death time essential mission. The patient has an aortic aneurysm. He's 76 years-old and they're afraid that the aorta will rupture at any time. They have the doctors and operating room standing by at Bellevue. One doctor, a nurse and a respiratory therapist will accompany the patient. They want us to make the transport because we'll be the fastest and if the patient has any complications while in route the PJ and medical people will have enough room in the back of your aircraft to work on him."

I was happy about the selection of the other crewmembers. I flew quite often with both Schoeck and Ressigue in the past and because of the nature of the business we had shared some harrowing experiences. I was also pleased with the aircraft that we were to fly. Helicopter 783 was flying well and all systems were functioning properly. The fuel load was

such that it allowed for more than enough to fly from the Hamptons to New York City and back. The aircraft was also light enough to permit the on loading of the patient, the associated medical gear, and the three medical personnel at Stony Brook.



LtCol. Martin Ingram in front of MH60-G

I briefed the crew as required by the regulations. The weather briefing obtained by the Supervisor of Flying was extremely thorough. The worst forecast weather for the entire duration of the flight was 1,200 foot ceiling and a visibility of five miles. Freezing levels were above 4,000 feet. The weather wasn't the best but it still permitted helicopter visual rules. The other briefing items were completed and then the crew initiated their Engine Start and Before Take Off Checklists. Within one hour from the time of initial notification the aircraft departed Suffolk County Airport on its first leg of its mission. The first destination was the tiny helipad adjacent to the emergency room of the University Hospital.

The landing there was uneventful. Once the aircraft was readied, the medical team raced the patient to the awaiting rescue vehicle. "Crew, this is the pilot. As soon as the patient is on board we'll secure the aft ramp and start the Rotor Engagement Checklist. Once everyone is strapped in we'll take off. Prior to landing here, I noticed the weather to the west looked a lot worse than forecasted. Let's get out our maps and charts, in order to prepare for marginal weather conditions." The crew fully understood. They had all lost friends when a helicopter and its crew perished in marginal weather conditions in 1978.

understood. They had all lost friends when a helicopter and its crew perished in marginal weather conditions in 1978.

“New York Approach Control, this is Air Force Rescue 783.” I announced over the radio as we became airborne. “Roger Air Force Rescue 783, New York Approach.” Air Force Rescue 783 is lifting off from Stony Brook Hospital inbound to the East 34<sup>th</sup> Street Helipad: we have a critically ill patient on board and we are requesting priority handling. We will be cruising at one-thousand feet at one-hundred and thirty knots.” “Roger Air Force Rescue 783: Squawk code one two seven seven, radar contact over Stony Brook, report reaching one thousand feet, fly a suggested heading of two seven zero for direct to LaGuardia, maintain visual flight rules,” came the response from the air traffic controller. “Roger” I replied.

Initially, all seemed well. The aircrew called level at one-thousand feet and shortly thereafter the aircraft was turned over to “LaGuardia Approach Control.” I was thoroughly familiar with Long Island. Besides being a native of Long Island, I had been flying there for six years. As I identified the checkpoints and towns that we were flying over I would announce it on the aircraft’s intercom system. John Schoeck would cross-reference the locations to his aeronautical chart and navigation instruments.

“Nissequogue, Northport, Huntington,” I announced, sounding much like a train conductor on the Long Island Rail Road. Visual navigation on a dark night is accomplished by identifying lights from towns and villages and by land and water formations. As we approached Huntington, we became aware of the fact that the cloud layer was descending, forcing us to cruise at a lower altitude. “LaGuardia Approach, this is Air Force Rescue 783. We’re leaving one-thousand feet for seven hundred feet.” “Roger,” came the reply from the controller who was busy talking to the air traffic arriving and departing LaGuardia. I called for the descent check and simply informed the crew that we were descending to maintain visual flight conditions.

Schoeck and I reviewed the procedures for inadvertent entry into Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC). Helicopter flight in night marginal weather can deteriorate in an insidious manner. As the visibility is reduced more time is spent by the aircrew in interpreting the limited information and the crew may not be fully aware of an even greater reduction of forward visibility. When the cloud ceiling is lowered, the aircraft trying to fly clear of clouds is forced closer to the ground and ultimately closer to the obstructions. When the forward visibility is reduced, the pilot has less outside visual clues and less time to interpret and respond to reference points. In weather conditions such as a fog, both ceiling and visibility deteriorate rapidly. At that point the options are very

limited. Providing the aircraft could operate in the weather conditions an instrument flight clearance would be the best option.

Schoeck and I conferred and decided that if we encountered bad weather we would turn around and return to safer conditions. In the event the weather deteriorated behind us, we would either land the aircraft and wait for the weather to improve or we would get a clearance to fly in instrument meteorological conditions. Fortunately, the Jolly Green was an amphibious aircraft; it gave us the added option of making a water landing.

Over the town of Oyster Bay the aircraft leveled off at seven-hundred feet, only to find more clouds obstructing our intended flight path. "LaGuardia Approach this is Air Force Rescue 783. We're going to descend lower than seven-hundred feet for cloud clearance and we're deviating from the suggested heading of two seven zero degrees, our route of flight will be Bayville and then the north shoreline of Long Island." Schoeck and I knew that flight along the shoreline was an excellent routing in deteriorating weather conditions. It had very few obstructions, and in the event we had to make a precautionary landing due to weather, the beaches would provide an excellent impromptu landing site.

As the aircraft flew over the western portion of Bayville I was forced to continue descent to five-hundred feet. Airspeed was now reduced to seventy knots. Prior to reaching Oyster Bay one of the nurses announced on the intercom that she was "running out of gas." Naturally, Schoeck and I immediately glanced at our fuel quantity gauges and reassured the nurse that we had more than enough jet fuel for the aircraft. Evidently, the "gas" she was referring to was oxygen. Due to the patient's problem with the aorta, the patient needed a steady supply of oxygen to survive. An ambulance carries a long-term supply of oxygen on board; the helicopter normally does not carry any.

"I need some oxygen, I need more gas!" said the nurse in a high-pitched, tense voice. Fortunately, Paramedic Kevin Kelly had carried a spare bottle of oxygen. "PJ to Pilot," said Kevin over the intercom. The patient is out of oxygen. I've got a small bottle but that should last only about ten minutes. Looks like we might have a problem." "Roger PJ. We're about twenty-six miles out; see what you can do to make it last. The weather looks pretty bad up ahead. We might have a delay."

As we approached the mouth of Hempstead Harbor, Schoeck announced that the altitude was 300 feet and the airspeed was sixty knots. The mouth of the harbor was slightly over one nautical mile wide but we were unable to make visual contact with the other side. Based upon the recent weather advisory we realized that we were within a freak weather pattern. Just fourteen miles to the west the weather reported was close to



Instead of initiating a crossing of the harbor at the mouth where the other side was not visible I chose to fly southbound into the harbor in hopes that when the harbor narrowed we would be able to resume our course on the west side and ultimately realize the improved weather conditions. As we entered the harbor, I observed two significant lights in close proximity. One was a red light that I assumed was a buoy or marina light, the other was a mansion that was brightly lit. The Jolly Green was now about two miles into the harbor and the west side was still not visible. I estimated that the harbor's west side should be a quarter mile away.

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# RED-FACED!



New York loves you, Jimmy!

MAYOR Kelly is presented the key to the city by Mayor Hugh Kelly today, in a ceremony in the Carlyle Hotel in midtown. Kelly told the legendary 85-year-old mayor, who had years in the mayor's office, "This key means so much. It is the key to the hearts of 7 1/2 million people." PAGE 3.

**NATIONAL GUARD COPTER BUZZES SOVIETS' MANSION ON L.I. — BY MISTAKE**

PAGE FIVE

**Mystery of Bill Holden's last days** Page Three

Front Page of *New York Post* November 17, 1981.



Helo (HH-3E) over Fishing Boat. July 1983 Rescue Mission performed by Major Marty Ingram and crew 200 nautical miles south of Long Island.

“Crew this is the pilot. We’re turning back . . . as we entered the harbor I noticed a brightly lit building and a red buoy light on the northeast side of the harbor. We’ll orbit that area and see if we can pick up an instrument

clearance. It looks as if the weather has gone sour behind us, if we can't get a clearance we'll land and see if we can transport the patient by ground vehicle to the nearest hospital." I knew that Glen Cove had a hospital and Saint Francis Hospital specializing in cardiac problems was located in nearby Roslyn, Long Island. If we had to land near our intended orbit point, it wouldn't be a long trip for the patient by ambulance.

The giant helicopter with its pulsating white strobe anti-collision lights, green and red position lights and powerfully bright landing and search lights made a swooping right turn in an effort to home in on their impromptu visual reference point. The three of us in the cockpit scanned our limited horizon in search of the brightly lighted mansion, which eventually became visible. "LaGuardia Approach, Air Force Rescue 783 requesting an immediate instrument clearance direct to LaGuardia. We would appreciate flying your lowest possible altitudes." "Roger Rescue 783. Fly heading of two six five, climb and maintain 1,600 feet: fly direct to LaGuardia." "Roger. LaGuardia, heading two six five climb one thousand six hundred feet." After the aircraft completed its second circuit over their visual reference point I performed a maximum climb. The lighted mansion gently disappeared as the helicopter with its roaring engines began its ascent into the blackened mist.

The helicopter was now ten miles out and still in the weather. If we didn't break out of the clouds the controller would have been forced to maneuver the aircraft for an instrument approach. It would have been an additional ten minutes that the patient did not have. Suddenly, when the aircraft passed 900 feet, the outline of Manhattan's brilliantly lighted skyscrapers came into full view. "LaGuardia, Rescue 783 we're in visual conditions proceeding direct to East 34<sup>th</sup> Street." "Roger Air Force Rescue. I have you in sight. Proceed as requested. Give me a call when lifting off."

The aircraft initiated its approach over the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and flew next to the United Nations Building gently landing on the ledge like heliport. As the rotors were shut down the aft ramp opened and the patient was wheeled to the ambulance and toward a fresh supply of oxygen. The aircraft returned to the base uneventfully and the crew went their separate ways.

It was 1:00 A.M. when I finally returned home. I found my wife, Nancy, at the front doorway. "Hi, how come you're still up?" I asked. "The weather around here was awful, about nine o'clock, you couldn't even see the front street. I thought for sure the "Blue Staff Car" was going to pay me a visit tonight," replied Nancy. The reference to the "Blue Staff Car" reflected the deepest fear that any Air Force wife possessed. In the Air Force, if a member dies in the line of duty, normally

the squadron commander, the base chaplain and a fellow co-worker make notification to the next-of-kin. It's an extremely unpleasant job for both parties. The notification team is normally dressed in "Class A" uniforms and travels in an "Official Use Only" Air Force Blue Staff car.

The weather wasn't too bad," I lied. "It's a shame that they mix such an imprecise science as meteorology with such an exacting science as aviation," I philosophized. "Why don't we get some rest and I'll tell you about the rescue tomorrow." I always postponed giving her the details. If she had known the truth on various occasions, she might not let me do what I liked best, and that was flying aircraft and saving people.

While at the kitchen table the next morning I received a call from my immediate supervisor, Col. Giere. "Hi Marty, it's Col. Giere." It was unusual for Giere to call me at home. "Marty, tell me about your rescue mission last night," he began. I was becoming alarmed. It was just too unusual. Something was certainly afoot. No one had ever called to congratulate either me or anyone else in the squadron regarding the success of our missions.

"It wasn't much," I said. "We picked up the patient and medical team at Stony Brook and dropped them off at East 34<sup>th</sup> Street at Bellevue Hospital. The weather got bad in route and we had to pick up an instrument clearance, otherwise everything was fairly routine. It was a cheap save."

Then very calmly Col. Giere said, "Tell me what you know about the Russian ambassador." Initially, this question seemed absurd. What would the Russian Ambassador have to do with last night's rescue? I paused, and after thinking about the question I responded, "Frankly, I don't know anything about the Russian Ambassador. We did initiate our approach to the East 34<sup>th</sup> Street Helipad abeam the United Nations Building. It is quite possible that he may have seen us go by his window."

"Marty, when you picked up your clearance, would that by any chance have been around Glen Cove?" "Yes, as a matter of fact, it was," I answered. "Marty, have you listened to the radio yet this morning?" Giere asked. I quickly replied that I hadn't. "They are carrying a story about a helicopter that buzzed the residence of the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations in Glen Cove last night. The news reports are saying that the helicopter was so low that it put a hole in the Ambassador's roof. A lot of people are very upset. Evidently, the Russians are filing a complaint with the United Nations. The Director of the FBI, not an FBI agent, but the Director himself called and wants to know what you were doing in that area last night."

"Oh my God! From the looks of it, we were the only helicopter in the area; however, if we were so low as to put a hole in their roof, I can

assure you that I wouldn't be here to talk about it. May I suggest that you inspect the aircraft for any damage," I replied.

"We're in the process of doing that right now," said Giere. "In light of these circumstances, there are a lot of questions to be answered. I want you to report to the base as soon as possible. We'll schedule someone else to take your flight this afternoon." I told him I would, fearful that I would never be allowed to fly again. "Col Giere, I would be very honest if I told you I am both shocked and quite scared," I told him. He replied "Marty, in light of these circumstances, you have every right to feel the way you do." Revealing his own feelings, Giere added, "We both do."

As I hung up the phone my knees began to shake and my stomach was already in a knot. The pounding in my head told that the rest of the day was not going to get much better. Turning from the phone I saw Nancy staring at me in disbelief. Although her eyes were still sleepy, they were able to immediately detect my pale and shocked facial appearance. "What's with you? You look as if you've seen a ghost."

"Chances are you're not going to believe this. The Russian Ambassador to the United Nations is rather upset. Evidently, a helicopter got too close to his house last night and it's a good bet that it was my aircraft." "Oh, my God," she said, echoing my sentiments and reflecting my shock. Again I hastily changed into my Air Force uniform. "I've been asked to come out to the base to answer some questions. It should prove to be very exciting. Evidently, the Director of the FBI has called."

Realizing that pinching myself would not remove me from this nightmare, I turned on the car's radio. Regrettably, the radio was tuned to a local news station. Immediately the announcer's words told me there was no need to listen any further. When one inadvertently is responsible for a news event, the only value of hearing about it through the media is to determine the accuracy of the reporting. Sadly enough, the news was reporting that a lost helicopter buzzed the Russian Ambassador's residence at Glen Cove, and how international tensions were increasing.

Upon my arrival at the base I was ushered into an office where the rest of my crew was already assembled in front of Col Giere and his assistant. An uncomfortable silence permeated the room. Giere rightfully assumed the role of a military commander. I instinctively knew that Giere would play a tough adversary role and I hoped that he would be fair.

As I entered the room Col Giere said, "Come in Capt. Ingram have a seat." There were two things wrong with this statement. Over a year ago, I was promoted to the rank of Major. The other problem with his greeting was that there were no other chairs available in the room. The only area to sit down was a well worn carpeted area in front of the operation's officer desk. I would always remember this experience as the epitome of the term "being called in on the carpet."

Giere prefaced his remarks by informing my crew of a series of events that helped to aggravate the situation. Only two days prior to our rescue, Russia's Aeroflot Airlines was restricted from operating in U.S. airspace due to over flights of American defense facilities. The Soviet's reciprocated by restricting Pan Am from flying to Moscow. On the night before Air Force Rescue 783 flew over the compound, someone had fired a weapon towards the residence. Later, the Soviets charged American terrorist activity. The FBI initiated a full fledged investigation of the incident. After Col. Giere made this announcement he addressed my crew. "Your sense of timing is truly incredible. It is widely rumored that the Soviet Union equipped the civil aircraft belonging to Aeroflot with cameras. It may not be a coincidence that Aeroflot strayed over Groton, Connecticut at the same time the U.S. Navy is about to launch a new Ohio Class of nuclear submarines. You should consider yourselves very fortunate you weren't shot down." I silently agreed.

The questions began. There was no pulling of punches. Giere lived up to the Squadron's management philosophy of tough but fair. "Why were you so low...?" "I encountered weather that was not forecasted," I responded. "Did you check the weather?" "Yes sir, here is a copy of the weather briefing sheet." "How low were you flying?" "Over water, at the lowest we were 300 feet; over land, the lowest we were was four hundred feet." As the questions progressed it became more apparent that they were following the British rules of justice, that being; I am guilty until proven innocent. "Were you lost?" "No Sir, I knew exactly where we were. I simply did not know who I was over and what events transpired before I got there." "Do any of you have ties with anti-Russian organizations?"

I was growing uncomfortable with both my seat on the carpeted floor and the line of questioning. I stood up and addressed my crew's makeshift tribunal. "Gentlemen, through all this confusion, I think we have overlooked some very important details. My crew was not out on an evening's joy ride. Each and every one of these people responded from their homes during their off duty time in order to help someone who was in need. We did not operate that low by choice but by necessity."

"Regrettably, the place we chose to orbit was the target of some recent violence that has led to increased international tensions. Perhaps these preceding events and the resulting increased security could explain the reason why we chose to orbit this particular area. By illuminating their area in the hopes of thwarting any further violence in their compound, the Russians inadvertently attracted an aircraft that was in need of a prominent visual reference point. I also failed to mention that while we were in the orbit over the Russian Compound, I actually had our gear down and if we didn't receive the instrument clearance, I planned to land and deliver the patient to a medical facility by a ground vehicle. It is

quite possible that we may have landed on the Ambassador's property. Considering the difficulties we encountered and the success that my crew achieved, I feel that they should be presented with a more favorable reception. Furthermore, I would like someone to inform the Russians of how valuable they were in this particular rescue operation and relay our sincere thanks."

Giere was now able to visualize and understand what happened. It was now his job to properly pass this information along so that when it reached the Russian Ambassador, he too would understand. Hopefully, after a proper explanation the Russians would withdraw their United Nations complaint and maybe the international tensions would ease.

Before releasing my crew Giere informed us that an inspection of the aircraft revealed nothing out of the ordinary. Before dismissing the crew, Giere suggested that we call home and warn our families that there might be an influx of calls from the media. Giere was right. My wife Nan had informed me that several reporters had called. My headache persisted through the evening. The local newspapers carried the story. One evening paper carried the front page headline "Lost Chopper Buzzes Russians by Mistake," "Raiders of the Red Mansion Deny Raid," somehow the wrong story was being circulated.

The following day Col. Giere's office was swamped. It wasn't until late in the business day that I was able to meet with him. "Good afternoon Sir," I said as I tested the waters. "How did the Russians respond to our explanation?" "They reacted favorably and once they heard it was a mission of mercy they immediately dropped any complaints. They were very fair and understanding about the whole episode. In a couple of days this whole affair will most likely be forgotten. I can assure you that this episode won't negatively affect your career or that of your crew."

"It was difficult last night reading the papers and watching T.V hearing all about the lost chopper. I was strongly tempted to call the media and let them know what really happened, I told Col. Giere. "It's a good thing you didn't," Giere explained. "The Russians don't like all this publicity. Someday you'll get your chance but now is not the proper time. You're not too bad with a pen. Perhaps in three years or so you'll be able to go public with your story. " Twenty-five years later, I've finally told it.

## THE ACTORS COLONY OF ST. JAMES

Bradley Harris

*In the early part of the last century St. James was home to a dazzling assortment of New York City Vaudevillians and Broadway actors who summered there under the aegis of William Collier, an actor and playwright.*

*The Morning Telegraph*, published in New York City on Monday, July 13, 1903, ran an interesting story under the banner headline which read "Stage Favorites Loaf the Summer Away, Raise Pigs and Cabbages, Play Baseball, and Go a-fishing in the Bay Fifty Miles From Broadway." The reporter for *The Morning Telegraph* waxed poetic as he described the transformation in these actors:

Twelve months in the year the actor plays. From September to June he plays to please the populace. From June to September he plays to please himself. For even as there are actors and actors, so there is play and play. In the first the man is lost in the actor . . . In the second . . . the actor is lost in the man; he stands with his coat off in the sunlight, and lo! Mr. Pickwick becomes DeWolf Hopper ready for a swim, and Hamlet becomes a very material Edward Sothern preparing for a frolic.<sup>1</sup>

By the summer of 1903 some 100 actors were making a pilgrimage to St. James to spend a few months of relaxation in the sunlight. In St. James this assemblage of actors and actresses gathered to enjoy the natural delights of "the wooded gulch on the north shore." (This last reference is to the hollow where Three Sisters Road and Harbor Hill Road intersect in the incorporated Village of Head-of-the-Harbor.) Here they enjoyed fishing, boating, swimming, clambakes, dancing, baseball games, and the company of their fellow actors. "A baseball bat and an oar" were "the coat-of-arms of the theatrical colony with two strong baseball teams, a boat club, and environment and company that might make a good fellow of a cloistered monk." St. James had enough to make even the most morose actor forget his troubles.<sup>2</sup>

The appeal that St. James had for these actors can be seen in the lines of this poem composed by DeWolf Hopper that appeared on the front page of *The Morning Horn* of 1902. (*The Morning Horn* was a local paper/newsletter published by the actors in St. James).



Oh, I like to spend the summer  
 Down at honest old St. James,  
 Where actors drop their foolish ways  
 And use their family names.  
 Where Aubrey Vere De Vere  
 Becomes plain Timothy McCann,  
 And idols of the matinee,  
 Act like a common man.  
 No managers invade St. James,  
 No contracts keep us scared,  
 No one-night stands, no longish jumps  
 That find us unprepared.  
 The piece we play is "Sweet Content,"  
 To starship no one claims,  
 Here's to a good long summer run  
 At honest old St. James.<sup>3</sup>

### **Collierville**

To the many actors and actresses who flocked to St. James for summer relaxation and a spot in the sunlight, St. James was known as Collierville. They knew it as Collierville because of its association with William Collier, an actor, playwright, and comedian, who had made St. James his summer residence in 1889. He had been one of the first to tout the virtues of summering in St. James to his friends in the theater and he was so persuasive in his arguments that others followed him to St. James. The result was that by the turn of the century, over 100 actors and actresses were enjoying the good life in St. James.

"Willie" Collier was the son of Hattie and Edmund Collier. Edmund Collier was one of the best known actors in the country in his day and he married Hattie Engel, a stage dancer. This marriage of theatrical personalities produced a family of theatrical greats. There were four children: Willie who became famous; Helena Collier Garrick an actress; John Collier, who did not pursue a career in the theater; and Catharine Collier Campbell, also an actress. Other Collier family members were involved in the theater, making the Collier family one of the most well known and talented theatrical families in the nation.<sup>4</sup>

Born Nov. 12, 1864 on Varick Street, in Manhattan, Willie headed "for the stage as soon as he was old enough to know the location of the neighborhood theater." Starting as a youngster, he worked as a "call boy" for Augustin Daly's theater company and was given minor parts in several productions. Shortly after leaving Daly's theater, Collier appeared as a star on Broadway. At the age of 22, he co-starred with the famous actor Charles Reed and, in his thirties, he appeared as the lead in "The

Man From Mexico," "On the Quiet," "The Diplomat," "Twirly Whirly," "Are You My Father?," "The Dictator," "A Fool and His Money" and many other light comedies. His prominence on the stage brought him into association with another famous actor of his day, George M. Cohan. Collier and Cohan became fond friends and the foremost actors of their day. The pair became inseparable and joined together to present a "talking act" at benefit performances for New York audiences. Collier would talk and make Cohan laugh and together they would sustain a comic dialogue that had audiences flocking to hear their impromptu theater.<sup>5</sup>

Fame brought fortune to Willie Collier, and in 1889, using his new found wealth, he purchased a small farmhouse on fifteen acres of land on the northeast corner of Three Sisters Road and Harbor Hill Road in St. James. Collier was drawn to St. James because as a young boy he had spent his summers there with his father Edward. He became so infatuated with the area that when he became a successful actor, he returned and purchased the farm so his family could enjoy their summers in St. James.<sup>6</sup> The original farmhouse on the property was small and Collier "spent considerable money improving his place" and gradually extended the house into a handsome villa, "surrounded by extensive and well cared for grounds." The house has been altered considerably since it was owned by Collier. At one time it had three stories with an attached turret and a porch which ran across the full front of the house. It was said that the house contained a billiard room and "all the appointments of a country gentleman's establishment." Here in this house Collier and his wife, Louise Allen, and numerous guests spent their summers from 1895-1905.<sup>7</sup>

Collier purchased a farm and continued to run it. On the property he had a vegetable garden, two stables with associated outbuildings, three pig pens, a hen roost, an icehouse and a windmill. The pride of the farm was a fine prize winning Yorkshire pig named Willie who was kept in the pigpens along with "Mrs. Pig and a lot of little porkers." Apparently nothing delighted "Farmer" Collier so much as to lean over his pig pen and talk" to his favorite pig Willie. The hen roost with its "big cackling aggregation of chickens," was located near the windmill and the hens were carefully tended by Mrs. Collier. The Colliers also kept a milk cow that could be found grazing the Collier meadow. The cow supplied the family and friends with fresh milk. In the stables, Willie had two horses. One was Louise Allen's "Saddle horse, a blue ribbon animal" and the other horse was a "thoroughbred" named Bunker that Willie Collier occasionally raced. The menagerie would not have been complete without the six fine English setters that were housed in the farm's kennel. Collier had almost every appliance needed to run a well regulated farm



Willie Collier when he was a young aspiring actor.

and he had even gone so far as to install “a main for acetylene gas and a water system.” All of this made the Collier farm one of the finest properties owned by any member of the actors colony, and the Colliers welcomed many of their friends to their villa in St. James.<sup>8</sup>

One guest was Idah McGlone Gibson, a writer and publicist, who wrote the following account of her visit with the Colliers:

I had always considered a newspaper office on the eve of a presidential election, quite the busiest place on earth, but, at that time I had not visited Willie Collier.

The home of this clever pair is the acme of comfort. Breakfast there is a moving feast, which in some wonderful way, is kept hot and appetizing from ten until one o'clock . . . Louise delights in housewifely proficiency, and all her dinners are poems of epicurean art. All the vegetables come from the home garden of which Willie is extremely proud. Never is a meal served without Willie being called to the door by George Nash, Charlie Evans, or Billie Gray for a consultation over a coming ball game, a swim in the Bay, or some other diversion to whirl (not while) away the time, for nothing moves at a slow pace here.<sup>9</sup>

The Collier villa was the place in St. James to find out what was happening in the actors colony, and everyone made a pilgrimage there for food, drink and companionship and all were welcomed. The Collier villa became the heart of the actors colony for several reasons. It was there that one could find other actors and discover what was happening in the community. Many actors rented houses in this immediate area and the Collier villa became the geographic center of the colony.

With so many theater people flooding into St. James, a major problem became finding a place to stay. According to an article about the actors colony in the *Brooklyn Eagle* of July 21, 1901, "all of the boarding houses" were "occupied and frequently friends have to be sent to Smithtown for accommodation. As a result, handsome cottages are springing up."<sup>10</sup> These summer cottages were built on small plots of land along Three Sisters Road, Overton Pass, Hill Road, and Thompson Hill Road on land owned by E.J. Overton. On Three Sisters Road, just to the east of Collier's villa, Edward M. Jayne owned a large three-story boarding house, and actors and actresses filled his rooms for the summer. With the opening of Tony Farrell's Shore Inn in 1902, more actors could be accommodated in the immediate area. And for the overflow, the St. James Hotel, the Nissequogue Hotel and the St. James Park Hotel provided rooms near the railroad station. But the place to be and stay was near the Collier villa.

This feeling that the Collier villa was the place to be was further strengthened in 1902, when Collier purchased the house that was just across the street from the villa. This house, which originally served as the

first one room schoolhouse of St. James, became the actors' clubhouse. Collier called this building "Liberty Hall" and the actors knew it as the "St. James Opera House." Liberty Hall became a multi-purpose building for the actors colony and was the site of masquerade balls, social gatherings, country bees, and like functions. It served as the local town hall and the actors colony frequently gathered to consider and debate the momentous issues of the day. It also became the site of the first Catholic Church in St. James.<sup>11</sup>

*The Morning Telegraph* of July 13, 1903, notes in an article about "the colony of players at St. James" that the "little white building" known as Liberty Hall was being used for a Catholic Church on "Sunday and several mornings a week." Apparently there were residents in St. James and in the actors' colony who were Catholic, but there were not enough of them to be able to afford to rent a building for a church. "Whereupon, Mr. Collier offered them Liberty Hall" rent free. By 1903 Catholic services were conducted in this building in the heart of the actors' colony on a regular basis.<sup>12</sup>



Edward M. Jayne boarding house, just to the east of Willic Collier's villa, as it looks today. This boarding house was in the heart of Collierville and its rooms were filled throughout the summer months with actors and actresses who came to St. James.

Liberty Hall was the gathering spot for the actors and actresses.<sup>13</sup> The actors gathered here to enjoy each others company, while away the hours and recount the day's achievements to an appreciative crowd. Frequently the actors colony staged benefit performances and treated the residents of St. James to vaudeville routines and serious theater. But for the most part, the actors and actresses were in St. James to relax and enjoy their summer. They seem to have been a boisterous, fun loving group, and developed their own rules to keep order. These rules were published in their local newspaper called *The Pan* sometime in the summer of 1902:

**RULES FOR COLLIERVILLERS:**

Don't leave beer in the clubhouse.

There is more than one key. Knocking is allowed only between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and midnight.

Talk baseball, sailing and shop if you must, but ping-pong is barred.

Loud and boisterous singing is forbidden after 6 a.m.

Choir practice must be considered booked solid.

If you play smudge, remember there are some who think it is a rude, rough game.

Horses borrowed for the afternoon, must be returned within three days.

Going fishing alone is positively prohibited. You must have witnesses.<sup>14</sup>

An indication of the fun and frolicking that the actors enjoyed can be gleaned from an article that appeared in the *Morning Telegraph* of August 8, 1902. A reporter working out of St. James sent a special dispatch describing the festivities that the members of the actors' colony had organized for a gala weekend that included a vaudeville show, a prize fight, a baseball game, and a clambake. The gala began Thursday evening with the vaudeville show at Liberty Hall to raise funds for a boathouse for the members of the Bohemia Club. The cast of characters who ran the show and the actors who appeared on stage were all notoriously addicted to the theater.

E.J. Connolly, of *Belle of New York* fame, took tickets at the door, while Jerome Sykes squeezed himself into the box office and handled the money.

W.J. Kernwood directed the orchestra, which consisted of a piano . . . Louise Allen and Bessie Greig opened the bill . . . Robert Dailey and Frank Lalor put on their latest skit, "After the Banquet," and

made a big hit. Sam Curtiss, the boy from Stony Brook was next on the bill. Then Barton and Ashley gave "Canal Boat Sal." John Dunsmore, basso of the Bostonians, sang "Lover's Lane" from *Dolly Varden* and the "Gypsy Love Song" from the *Fortune Teller*.

Then Corbett appeared. The hall was jammed and he got a rousing reception.<sup>15</sup>

The gags and humor might not play well on Broadway today, but the residents of St. James and the actors enjoyed it then, and the show raised over \$500.

Following the show the crowd went to Tony Farrell's Inn where they slaked their thirst until 4:00 a.m. when a discussion arose between Frank De Mott and Ed Ruland as to which was the better fighter. Gentlemen Jim Corbett agreed to referee the bout, and the crowd got into wagons and drove to the plot of ground behind the St. James Hotel. Four rounds were fought. Ruland was being beaten until Jerome Sykes, his second, slipped a rock into Ruland's. This evened the match, but after the fourth round both agreed to a draw. With one last round of drinks at the St. James Hotel, the actors were finally carted off home in the wee hours of the morning.<sup>17</sup>

Later that same morning, the actors' ball club, known as the Bohemians, rallied to the playing field where they boldly faced the visiting "Port Jefferson Nine." But feeling the effects of the night before, the Bohemians took a loss to the Port Jefferson squad by a score of 6 to 3. This didn't seem to bother the crowd that included such local people as "Mrs. Katherine Wetherill, Mrs. Butler and the Emmets." The actors took their loss in stride and decided to end the day with a clambake. This extended party brought the weekend festivities to a close and the actors colony spent Sunday recuperating.<sup>18</sup>

The summer season for the actors began in early June and lasted until the end of August. During this time, the actors could be found gathered at their favorite watering hole in St. James – Tony Farrell's Shore Inn. The Shore Inn was built sometime around 1901. The proprietor of the hotel and tavern that was located on the west side of Harbor Road just to the north of Thompson's Landing, was an actor by the name of Tony Farrell. An issue of the *The Pan* which mentions that Tony Farrell was the first actor to wander into St. James and that he had done so on June 4, 1883. According to the "editorial" in their paper, Tony Farrell "was so struck with the theatrical possibilities of the place that in a little more than twenty-four hours he had his wife and Frank McNish on the spot."<sup>19</sup>



Some of the actors and performers enjoying their summer in St. James. Photograph taken near the St. James country store in 1903. (Left to right) Jerome Sykes, Tom Lewis, William Collier, Tony Farrell, Maurice Schlesinger, Bob Dailey.

Tony Farrell became famous as the “Irish star of *My Colleen*”, a play that was written especially for him by James A. Herne. Tony and his wife Jennie Leland, who was one of the Leland Sisters, liked St. James so much that they purchased a piece of property on Harbor Road from O.F. Smith. They settled in St. James sometime around 1897 and then had the Shore Inn constructed on their property.<sup>20</sup>

“The formal opening of Tony Farrell’s Shore Inn” was celebrated on July 21, 1902. The actors who had found a “safe harbor” in St. James “from the storms and temptations of Broadway” had long awaited the opening of the Shore Inn and marked the occasion with “song and dance, with ball games and clam steams, with pipe and timbrel, sea bathing and boat races, recital by eminent comedienness and gymkhana races.”<sup>21</sup>

The Shore Inn was a “cozy hotel” built on the bluff overlooking St. James Harbor. Here one could enjoy a “good dinner and the welcome smell of the brine blown from the blue leagues of the Sound.” And after dinner one could wander over to Farrell’s Tavern, a few yards from the hotel. The tavern became the hangout of many of the actors and here



they could be found when a baseball game was being scheduled or a fishing expedition was being planned. The cast of characters in the tavern was all male since it was impolite to drink in front of the ladies and the ladies typically did not drink hard liquor.<sup>22</sup>

The men may not have uttered any harsh words, but they were ever ready to challenge one another in all sorts of contests. Many bets and wagers were made at Tony Farrell's Tavern. One such wager concerned Jerome Sykes, one of the most original characters at St. James. Star of the play *Billionaire*, Sykes strutted around "the colony attired in top boots, ambitiously wide trousers, a colored neckerchief, a gray sweater, a slouch hat, and a general air suggestive of operations on the Spanish Main." He was a very large man, weighting perhaps almost 320 pounds. "**Midget Sykes**" as he was known on the baseball field, thoroughly enjoyed himself, and swam, rowed, fished and played baseball with great agility. One day an actor by the name of Tom Lewis challenged Sykes that "he was too fat and easy going to kick a barrel down a hill." Mr. Sykes then got a big cement barrel, lugged it up to Tony Farrell's café and hustled down hill after it. The barrel got to the bottom before Mr. Sykes, but Sykes saved his honor.<sup>23</sup>

Another bet concerned an actor named Lou Paine who boasted one evening at Tony's tavern that he could "row across the harbor in fifteen minutes" or he would forfeit "two shillin'." The crowd promptly took him up on his bet and marched down to the shore to watch Lou Paine row across the harbor. "After rowing for twenty minutes Paine had made no headway, and the crowd returned to the tavern" where they proceeded to drink up his two shillings. Paine learned later that the reason he had made no headway was because his boat had been tied fast to the pier all the while "he was endeavoring to break Eugene O'Rourke's sculling record."<sup>24</sup>

Many plots were hatched at Tony Farrell's Tavern as well and one of the strangest involved a local graveyard in St. James:

It was here that DeWolf Hopper was to receive the greatest scare of his life . . . Hopper was to be led by (Bert) Leslie through the graveyard which was near Leslie's cottage. Where the tombstone's were thickest, (Bob) Dailey, (Frank McNish, and (George) Nash were to arise from open graves, clothed in gray shrouds, while a chorus of others were to shriek in the background. It was never known how Hopper happened to carry a revolver with blank cartridges in his pocket on that night. Nor why, when the ghosts arose, he did not scare, but fired a continuous volley

at them. It has never been explained why the ghosts fled and dodged before blank cartridges, but it is admitted on all sides that the conspiracy failed utterly. Tony Farrell was suspected.<sup>25</sup>

With the return of the actors colony to St. James each summer, it wasn't long before one could hear the familiar cry of "Play ball!" The actors colony proudly boasted of the exploits of its two baseball teams known as the "St. James" and the "Bohemians." The antics of the actors on their playing field, located where the St. James Lumber Company now stands opposite the St. James Elementary School, were well known to local folk and provided many hours of entertainment and fun.

Willie Collier was the major organizer of the actors' baseball teams. It was said that he had the only bat and ball in town. Actually the actors fielded two complete rosters and the "St. James" and "Bohemians" would frequently battle it out on the baseball diamond on any given Sunday afternoon. The St. James team was captained by Willie Collier, and the scrub team, the Bohemians, was headed by Bert Leslie. Between these teams there was "great strife" and the Bohemians seem to have usually taken a beating since in 1904 it was noted in the local papers that the Bohemians had won only "one game out of thirty." And apparently that game was won when famed big screen actor Lionel Barrymore "introduced a noted Princeton pitcher as a new English actor" and had him play on the Bohemian squad.<sup>26</sup>

When things got really serious and the "hated, rival Smithtown, and other enemies less dear" were to be played, the Bohemians and the St. James Nine contributed "their best players, and a picked company attired in their distinctive costumes" supplied by Willie Collier, made ready to do battle for the village of St. James. The team seems to have been a good one and there is a frequent mention that this squad of actors was a championship ball club for all of Long Island. The cast of actors on the ball team changed annually.<sup>27</sup>

Sometime in 1904 Lionel Barrymore joined the squad. Lionel had gone to visit Willie Collier for a weekend in St. James and "stayed on at Willie's home for two years! Lionel was a good third baseman; too good not to be fed and housed." Notwithstanding his strength and skill as an athlete, Lionel was so lazy that he earned the nickname "Turn-me-'round" Barrymore. Once, with a runner wide off first base, Lionel didn't throw the ball. Captain Collier upbraided him. "But I didn't know there was a runner on first base," said Turn-me-'round." Collier called the team into a quick huddle. "Listen," he said acidly, "we want no secrets in this ball club. The next time there is a runner on first base, I want you to tell Lionel."<sup>28</sup>

There was always "a physician in attendance," and the "ladies ... organized an ambulance corps" to carry off the wounded.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes the tension mounted in their games and it looked as if the ambulance corps might be needed.

The St. James team played against the Kings Park Insane Asylum each year and then put on a theatrical entertainment for the patients. During one of these games Collier pitched what he believed to be a strike. The umpire called a ball. Collier began to argue with the umpire, a dignified but firmly resolved arbiter. The superintendent of the asylum interceded to admonish the angry Collier: "I would bow to the umpire's decision if I were you, Willie." Then he whispered, "You see, he's one of our inmates."<sup>30</sup>

The summers passed quickly. With an endless round of planned and spontaneous activities, the days just seem to melt away for the actors and the end of their summer run would approach all too quickly. As the end of August neared, actors prepared to depart. Wagonloads of trunks were packed and carted off to the railroad station to be shipped back into the city. Summer clothes were packed away and starched linen shirts were donned as the men once again prepared to immerse themselves in their roles as actors. "Many are settling their grocery bills at Smith's" general store and making arrangements to have their mail rerouted. Cottages were closed up and blinds were lowered and arrangements made to have someone keep an eye on the place through the long winter. The actors themselves gathered at their favorite watering holes for one last drink and to commiserate with one another about leaving Collierville and returning to work. They would reminisce about the fun they had and talk about the fun they would have next summer. And then they would get on the train and be gone.<sup>31</sup>

The actors never thought about the possibility that their summer fun might not last. But the summer of 1905 turned out to be a decidedly depressing one for the actors when Willie Collier didn't come back to St. James. Early in the summer of 1905 Willie Collier and his wife Louise Allen were in London where Willie was appearing in a smash comedy called "The Dictator." Suddenly on July 15, 1905, Louise Allen returned to the States. Gossip columns printed the news that the Colliers had separated. It was said that Louise Allen was "inordinately jealous of her husband's leading women" and that her "high strung temperament" had gradually begun to "wear her out." This in turn "did not lead to pleasanter relations between the couple, for Willie himself was high strung."<sup>32</sup> Willie's habit of being a "night owl of the most pronounced description, with a mania for card playing, matching coins, and betting on any old thing that can be made the subject of a wager certainly did not improve

his wife's temperament. Mrs. Collier "misinterpreted her husband's late hours, accusing him of conduct of which all his friends" insisted he was innocent. Increasing marital friction forced a break and the separation came when Willie Collier returned from England on December 16, 1905.<sup>33</sup>

According to the separation papers, "Mr. Collier was to pay his wife \$100 a week, give her the furniture," and after selling his properties in St. James, "he was to divide the proceeds with his wife."<sup>34</sup> Apparently, though, Collier did not follow through with the sale of his properties in St. James and by April of 1906, Louise Allen was suing her husband in court for division of the St. James property. Mrs. Collier's attorneys maintained that the property was worth \$80,000 and argued that Collier, who did not appear at the trial in Riverhead, should immediately sell the property. Collier's attorneys asked for more time in which to sell the properties since a buyer could not be found at an asking price of \$20,000. Supreme Court Justice Kelly withheld his decision to give the court an opportunity to hear from Collier when the court reconvened in Brooklyn the following week.<sup>35</sup> On April 12<sup>th</sup>, the court reconvened and Collier appeared. By this time, Mrs. Collier had reduced her claim of the value of the property to \$50,000. Collier maintained that he had "always wanted to sell the property and divide the proceeds with his wife" but he couldn't find a purchaser. The matter was further complicated by the fact that he was about to leave the country on a theatrical tour of Australia. Justice Kelly directed that the deed to his properties in St. James be turned over to court appointed lawyers who would sell the estate for him. This was done and Collier left the country.<sup>36</sup> Although the court appointed attorneys tried to sell the properties, they were no more successful than Collier had been. Finally on January 8, 1907, after the matter had dragged on for almost a year, the properties were sold at public auction at the Court House in Riverhead. The parcels that were sold individually brought only \$11,525, "less than one-half of the estimated value of the property." The Collier house, with its associated 20,000 square feet of land, sold at a price of "\$3,600, less than the cost of the house itself." The most valuable piece of property, a shore front, was purchased by Mrs. Collier for \$4,400. Collier was divested of his holdings in St. James and "Collierville" passed out of existence.<sup>37</sup>

Willie Collier continued on a tour of Australia and then returned to the United States where his theatrical star continued to shine. But he stayed away from St. James. Louise Allen went back to her career in vaudeville and was becoming reestablished professionally when she died suddenly of heart failure at her home in New York on November 9, 1909.<sup>38</sup> Shortly after Louise Allen's death, Willie Collier made a decision to return to St. James. In the fall of 1909 he purchased "a valuable piece

of property” on Moriches Road in St. James, the house that he would call “Summer Run.”



Willie Collier's farm in St. James. Collier's farm had fifteen acres of property, a vegetable garden, two stables with associated outbuildings, three pig pens, a hen roost, an icehouse and a windmill.

He immediately put an army of carpenters and decorators to work on remodeling the house and transformed it into a big house that looked like a German beer hall with a beer garden off the back of the house. Rumors ran through St. James that Willie Collier intended to return to St. James for summer fun.<sup>39</sup>

In the spring of 1910, Collier was on the road with his Lucky Star Theatrical Company touring the western United States. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, while in Davenport, Iowa, Collier married Paula Marr, an actress in his troupe.<sup>40</sup> The theatrical tour continued into June and then the Colliers returned to the East Coast. The hot summer months brought Willie Collier and his new wife Paula Marr to their new house on Moriches Road in St. James. Willie Collier was back.<sup>41</sup>

Collier had been away from St. James for five summers and in his absence the actors colony had stagnated. Many of the actors who had purchased homes and cottages in St. James continued to return in the summer, but the fun and frolicking so characteristic of the actors colony dissipated. The sale of Collier's properties had meant the loss of the Bohemian Clubhouse, the heart of the colony. The St. James community

sorely felt the loss of Liberty Hall and early in January of 1907, a newspaper article reported that a town meeting had been held to discuss the idea of erecting a town hall. At the meeting it was suggested that the residents of St. James form a stock company known as the St. James Hall Association and that money be raised for the construction of a hall by selling shares of stock in the Association. Within a month, papers of incorporation were filed, a board of directors was chosen, stock was sold and the necessary funds were raised, land was purchased, and construction of a hall was begun. By the summer of 1907, the building was completed and opened to the public. The St. James Hall on Highland Avenue became the local town hall in many ways. It was here that dances were held, social functions of all kinds were sponsored, and political rallies were convened. Although many groups and organizations made use of the hall, the actors colony did not make use of it. The Bohemian Club seems to have played itself out.

Another sign of the dissolution of the actors' colony was the fact that the *The Pan* (the actors' newsletter originally called the *Morning Horn*) was discontinued. Although the periodical continued for a number of summers by 1911 it too disappeared.<sup>42</sup> In Collier's absence, the actors no longer had a leader to organize their summer fun. They lacked a place to gather and relax. And since Willie Collier had been their baseball team's captain, pitcher, and major sponsor - he bought the uniforms, supplied the ball and bat, and recruited many of the players - the baseball games came to an end.

By the summer of 1911, Willie Collier was once again playing a role that he clearly loved, that of a genial host at his summer residence in St. James. His newly remodeled house on Moriches Road had plenty of room for guests and the Colliers hired a young French immigrant named Paul Gagliardi to serve as the caretaker and cook in their home. Over the years that followed Gagliardi met many of the actors and actresses who came for an extended visit. One famous visitor he remembered was Irving Berlin who may have composed the song "Poor Butterfly" in that house. Other visitors that Gagliardi remembered were Harry Lauder, a Scottish tenor, well known in his day, and the Dolly Sisters, who were vaudevillians.<sup>43</sup> A newspaper article written in August of 1911 mentions that Collier had invited a number of guests to "Summer Run" and managed to sucker them into shooting pool for money in the pool room that he had built in his basement. His snookered guests included George M. Cohan, Emmet Corrigan, Raymond Hitchcock and George Beban. The article also mentioned that Collier was bested at his own game when one of his neighbors in St. James, John Hogarty, a theatrical agent who also happened to be the champion pool player of the Friar's Club, picked Collier's pocket.<sup>44</sup>

But by 1911 the level and intensity of local activities that Collier participated in had been scaled back. After all, he was forty-seven and his best days of pitching and playing baseball were in the past. He was even becoming one of the most prominent actors of his day and was busy directing "William Collier's Comedy Theater" in Manhattan. His new wife, Paula Marr, had brought her son to live with them and Collier became a real father to his stepson, who became known as William (Buster) Collier, Jr. By the spring of 1911, Buster Collier had a part in "The Dictator" farce that proved to be a smash revival. We are even told that young Buster Collier organized a juvenile baseball team for St. James in the summer of 1911.<sup>45</sup> But the shenanigans of the actors had come to an end. Although many actors and actresses continued to come to St. James to enjoy their summers, Collierville had withered away.

The actors colony did have one last hurrah when they sponsored a reception for New York City Mayor Gaynor. William Jay Gaynor owned Deepwells and summered in St. James. He was aware of the antics of the actors colony and no doubt he must have been a little leery of an invitation he received to attend a reception in the actors clubhouse in the summer of 1910. But the actors convinced him that they only wished to pay him homage as the newly elected Mayor of New York City and Mayor Gaynor accepted.<sup>46</sup>

Eventually Willie Collier sold his house on Moriches Road and moved away. The New York State census for 1925 does not list Collier as a head of a household in St. James. By that point Hollywood was calling him and his last stage performance in New York was in 1927 in the play called "The Merry-Go-Round." Sometime after that he left New York and moved to California where he starred in silent movies. Collier never came back to St. James, and died of pneumonia in Beverly Hills, California on January 13, 1944.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> "Stage Favorites Loaf the Summer Away," *The Morning Telegraph*, July 13, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Pan*, 1902. This was a local weekly paper/newsletter produced by the actors in St. James. This poem was found on the front page of *The Pan* that had been placed in a scrapbook with a number of newspaper articles about Willie Collier and the Actors Colony of St. James. James Gaffney, who lives in the house on Three Sisters Road that once was Collier's home, has photographic copies of pages from this scrapbook.

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The original scrapbook is on file in the William Collier Collection of the New York Public Library on 42<sup>nd</sup> St. and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.

<sup>4</sup> "Mrs. Collier Died Yesterday," *New York Telegraph*, July 2, 1898.

<sup>5</sup> This information about Willie Collier came from an undated, un-attributed newspaper article that is part of a scrapbook about Willie Collier's life, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> "Blissful Summer Life of Colony of Clever Men and Handsome Women Who Have Solved The Problem of Social Contentment," un-attributed newspaper article from 1902 contained in the Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> "Stage Favorites Loaf the Summer Away," *The Morning Telegraph*, July 13, 1903; "Blissful Summer Life of Clever Men and Handsome Women...", un-attributed newspaper article from 1902 contained in Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> "Blissful Summer Life of Colony of Clever Men and Handsome Women...", un-attributed newspaper article from 1902 contained in Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Miss Gibson's account of life in Collier's home is contained in Willie Collier's scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit. Idah McGlone Gibson was a special writer on the *Philadelphia Press* and the *Toledo Blade* and visited Willie Collier's home in St. James sometime in August of 1903 when she was offered the job of becoming Mr. and Mrs. Collier's personal publicist.

<sup>10</sup> *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 21, 1901.

<sup>11</sup> "Stage Favorites Loaf the Summer Away," *The Morning Telegraph*, July 13, 1903.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> "Blissful Summer Life of Colony of Clever Men and Handsome Women...", un-attributed newspaper article from 1902 that is contained in the Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.



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<sup>14</sup> *The Pan* was a local newsletter produced by the Actors Colony in 1902. A copy of *The Pan* for 1902 is contained in the Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> "Round of Fun Marks Week at Actors Colony," *The Morning Telegraph*, August 8, 1902.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Editorial, *The St. James Pan*, 1902, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> "A Story," *St. James Pan*, 1902, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> "Actors to Disport as Gay Villagers," *The Morning Telegraph*, July 20, 1902.

<sup>22</sup> "Stage Favorites Loaf the Summer Away," *The Morning Telegraph*, July 13, 1903.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> "Round of Fun Marks Week Actors Colony," *The Morning Telegraph*, August 8, 1902.

<sup>25</sup> "The Sins of St. James", by Gerald Egan, *The New York Telegraph*, Feb. 1911.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> "The Fall Guy at St. James," July 11, 1904, un-attributed newspaper article contained in the Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Gene Fowler, *Good Night, Sweet Prince*, New York: The Viking Press, 1944, 112.

<sup>29</sup> "Actors to Disport as Gay Villagers," *The Morning Telegraph*, July 20, 1902.

<sup>30</sup> Gene Fowler, *Good Night, Sweet Prince*, op. cit., p. 112.

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<sup>31</sup> "Hot Weather Fun Ends at St. James," *The Morning Telegraph*, August 12, 1902.

<sup>32</sup> "Intimate Gossip of My Friends by An Actress," August 19, 1905, un-attributed newspaper article contained in the Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> "Colliers Separated," *Toledo Blade*, July 15, 1905.

<sup>34</sup> "William Collier is Not in Court," *New York Telegraph*, April 8, 1906.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> "Collier Must Stay," *New York Telegraph*, April 17, 1906.

<sup>37</sup> "Collier Home Sold: Brings Low Price," *New York Telegraph*, January 8, 1907.

<sup>38</sup> "Louise Allen Dead," *Pittsburgh Leader*, Nov. 2, 1909.

<sup>39</sup> "William Collier May Marry Again," Jan. 16, 1910, un-attributed newspaper article contained in the Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> "William Collier Married to Paula Marr," *New York Dramatic News*, May 21, 1910.

<sup>41</sup> "Amusement Notes," *Des Moines Register*, May 24, 1910.

<sup>42</sup> "The Sins of St. James" by Gerald Egan, *New York Telegraph*, February, 1911. The *St. James Pan* (sometimes called the *Morning Horn*) was a weekly newsletter/periodical edited by Will Pan who was in turn Willie Collier, Bob Dailey, DeWolf Hopper, John Barton, John Connell, Frank McNish and Tom Lewis. By 1911, the *Pan* had failed, Tom Lewis was blamed. The Bohemian Clubhouse was still being used by the Catholic Church and as a printing office for *Pan*. Bert Leslie was the printer but he lost the "b" from his typebox and this left holes in the copy. Information contained in this article about St. James.

<sup>43</sup> "St. James becomes an actors haven...", *The Smithtown News*, October 22, 1981, pg. 5.

<sup>44</sup> "John Hogarty Landed Farmer William Collier", *New York Telegraph*, August 7, 1911.

<sup>45</sup> This information comes from an undated, untitled, un-attributed newspaper article contained in the Willie Collier scrapbook, James Gaffney, op. cit. The baseball team was captained by Buster Collier and financed by Willie Collier.

<sup>46</sup> "The Sins of St. James," by Gerald Egan, *New York Telegraph*, February, 1911.

**Appendix:**  
**Members of the Actors Colony of St. James**

*Newspaper articles from the turn of the century, 1890-1920 listed many of the theatrical personalities who were making a pilgrimage to St. James at this time. These individuals may have only come for a visit, as a guest of another actor, or to enjoy a weekend in the country, but many of them became summer residents and rented cottages for the season. The spelling of some names may be incorrect, and in some cases the name may be a stage name, but this is the way the name appeared in print.*

**Key:**

*(BBP) Baseball player for St. James Nine or Bohemians*

*(w) Wife*

*(WC) stands for Willie Collier*

*William Collier(BBP) and Louise Allen(w); Charles T. Aldrich; Mrs. Allen(mother of Louise); Charles and Kitty Daly; Tom Garrick and Helena Collier(WC's sister); Ruth McCauley; John Collier(BBP) and family(WC's brother); Mr. and Mrs. Robson; Robert Campbell and Catherine Collier(WC's sister); Frankie Florida; Paula Marr (WC's 2<sup>nd</sup> w); John Kernell (comedian); William Collier, Jr. (step-son); Harry Foy and wife; DeWolf Hopper and Nella Bergen(w); Mr. and Mrs. Sam Brown; Charles Bigelow and Valerie Doughlass(w); The Dolly Sisters; May Doughlass; Michael Herkert(BBP); Jerome Sykes(BBP) and Jessie Woods(w); A. S. Sykes; Frank McNish and Rose Leland(w); Jim Corbett (prizefighter); Frank McNish, Jr.; Charles Swain; Tony Farrell and Jennie Leland(w); Harry Yost(BBP); Joseph Coyne(BBP) and Anna Boyd(w); Billy Cameron; Charles Burke and Grace La Rue(w); Nat Wills; Bert Leslie(BBP) and Clarice Vance(w); Fred Roberts; Joe Tanaka(Japanese) and Kate(w)(Canadian); Leila McIntyre; George Parsons and Laura Palmer(w); John Flatow; Gus Hill and his family; Tilly Vedder; Steve Fitzpatrick and his family; Charlie Rice(BBP); Robert Daily(BBP) and Sadie Dailey(w); Johnny Hyams; Peter Daily; Ruth Roval; Tom Lewis(BBP) and Sam Ryan; Alice Smith; Mr. and Mrs. Harry McFady; Sherlock Holmes; Maurice Barrymore(father of Barrymore clan); Lou Payne; Lionel Barrymore(BBP); Miss Arnold Ethel Barrymore; Pat Rooney; John(Jack) Barrymore(BBP); Emma Francis; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Warne; Herbert Ayling; Mr. and Mrs. Dick Mullin; Sparrow the Jugler; Mr. and Mrs. Gus Hill; May Estelle; Mr. and Mrs. W.G. Smyth; Eva Davenport; Ted Simons; Johnny Hines; Mr.*

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and Mrs. Marks; Phil Mcfarland(BBP); Harry Hill and his family; S.P. Waud(had large catboat, 40' L); Mr. and Mrs. Will Gray(manager); Donald Harold; William Kernwood(BBP); Frank Mayne and wife; Frank Lalor(BBP) and Vernie Lalor(w); Tommy Evans; George Page and Ruth McCaulay(w); George Parsons; John Saville; George Nash; Miss Mahe; Frederick Roberts; Ben Wilson(BBP)(dancer); Edward S. Abeles; Julius P. Whitmark; Allie Gilbert; Ray Allen; Marshall P. Wilder; Annie Dunn; William Holmes; Richard Mullen; Repley Holmes; Georges Fuller Golden; Miss Sadie Hilton; Charles Lewis; Chatfield Robinson; Miss Kay Allen; Charles Mason(BBP); Archie Ellis; Louis Ryan; Mark Hackett; Miss Williams; Miss Vanderhof; Edward Jack(manager); Mr. and Mrs. Frank Warne; Harry Hall; Van Rensselear Wheeler(baritone); Teddy Burns(BBP); Joseph Flynn; Sam Curtis(lived in Stony Brook); Johnny Barton(BBP) and Ashley(English); John Dunsmore(basso); Eugene O'Rourke; Julius Steger(baritone); Charles Towle; Harry Gordon; Edward Ruhlin; William Lorraine(BBP); Capt. William Marks; Frank Campau; J. Royer West; Fred Walton; Irving Berlin; Maurice Schlesinger(BBP); Bessie Greig; Timothy McCann; Harry Lauder(Scottish tenor); Frank Moir(BBP); Kate Wetherill.

## THE BLURRING OF THE QUEENS-NASSAU BORDER

*Patricia T. Caro*

*For years observers have noted that the rapid pace of development has rendered parts of Nassau county indistinguishable from parts of the borough of Queens to its west. Patricia Caro demonstrates that the similarities between the two counties are real, but that the trend runs in the opposite direction, with parts of Queens taking on the feel of suburban Nassau.*

The Queens-Nassau border represents the eastern limit of one of the world's foremost cities and the western limit of one of the nation's earliest and best-known suburban counties. The function of boundaries is, of course, to separate or create areas of different jurisdiction, activity, or values. So it is not surprising that over the course of its 107 years, the Queens-Nassau boundary line has become one of Long Island's most influential features.<sup>1</sup> Most Long Islanders from Brooklyn Heights to Montauk Point view it as a real and meaningful line separating urban from suburban life, and many of the Island's residents, past and present, have never desired to cross it.

In reality, the impact of the Queens-Nassau border was exaggerated by the assumption that it fundamentally divided the urban metropolis from its residential suburbs. For much of the twentieth-century, its mere existence fed eagerly accepted stereotypes about a fast urban life to the west and a relaxed suburban one to the east. But in fact adjacent sides of the border zone have long displayed similarities in their physical and human geography. Landforms overlap the border, and development in eastern Queens paralleled western Nassau, not the city. In the past decade, the ongoing eastward march of urbanization and, more surprisingly, a process of reverse westward suburbanization has blurred even the perceived distinctiveness of the two counties it separates.

### **Early Years of the Boundary**

The Queens-Nassau border was created in 1898 when New York City annexed the western third of Queens County, allowing the eastern portion to organize itself a year later as Nassau County. The boundary line that separated the residual part of Queens from the new County of Nassau ran mostly north to south, about 15-1/2 miles across land, and a short additional distance through offshore waters. With few exceptions, it corresponded to the old boundary lines separating the now historic Towns of Flushing and Jamaica in Queens from the existing Towns of Hempstead and North Hempstead in Nassau.<sup>2</sup> The one major exception

occurred along its southernmost mile, where the Rockaway Peninsula was severed from the Town of Hempstead and destined thereafter to be an exclave of Queens and a part of New York City. At the time of its creation, the boundary ran through a thinly populated zone with little settlement other than farmland. As a result, no communities were threatened with bifurcation. This permitted subsequent, agglomerated settlement to adjust at once to being either a part of New York City or a part of Nassau County.

### **Development of a Separate Queens and Nassau**

Yet for decades after the creation of the county boundary eastern Queens remained a distant outlier of New York City, and those formative years in relative isolation left a lasting imprint of non-urbanization on the area. Not until the 1930's did any major highways link eastern Queens to points west, or circumnavigate it and thereby define it as an integral part of New York City. Subway service never got to its mainland portion. By contrast, western Queens was connected to Manhattan in 1909 by the Queensboro Bridge and in 1917 by subway lines. This prompted very rapid population growth and industrial development in nearby areas, as newly arrived immigrants moved into hastily built apartment buildings or small houses on tiny lots. A similar version of the process occurred somewhat later in central Queens, after subway lines were completed in 1928 to Flushing and in 1937 to 169<sup>th</sup> Street in Jamaica. But eastern Queens remained unconnected to Manhattan by cheap and fast mass transit. Except for the eastern end of the Rockaway Peninsula, which in 1956 was linked to Manhattan by a tedious ninety minute ride on the A train, eastern Queens developed without the urbanizing influence of subways. Most of its development awaited the era when private automobiles became commonplace and affordable. Housing of moderately low density was then built to accommodate cars as well as people. In that car oriented respect eastern Queens was, and still is, unlike any other major part of New York City except for Staten Island.

It is also true that eastern Queens, like Nassau, never became the site of large scale public housing projects. During the 1950s, clusters of high-rise buildings were built in many parts of New York City, including western and central Queens. The sudden influx of large populations of low income residents often introduced a host of serious, typically urban, problems to those neighborhoods. But eastern Queens, devoid of subways and mostly zoned for low density housing, was not transformed. The one local exception involved the eastern half of the Rockaway Peninsula, where several concentrations of high-rise projects were placed near stops of the elevated A train. The eastern half the Rockaway Peninsula would be different from the mainland of Queens to the north anyway, due to its

physical geography. But its dominant architecture, transportation modes, economic base and demographic characteristics result from deliberate decisions made over fifty years ago to urbanize that remote sand spit. Its appearance and development have taken an unlikely and remarkable turn from the mainland of eastern Queens and the part of Nassau County that it borders. In effect, the urban character of New York City extended all the way to the Queens-Nassau border only on the Rockaway Peninsula. Most of eastern Queens developed much as western Nassau did, strongly suggesting that the boundary line itself had a muted effect as a barrier.

### **Physical Nature of the Boundary**

With the exception of its offshore portions, the Queens-Nassau border is an inconspicuous strip of Long Island that does little to impede movement across it. It follows a course that cuts across the major landforms of western Long Island. From north to south the line crosses a bay, marshes, morainic hills, outwash plain, more marshes, and finally a salt water inlet. Adjacent sides of the border share the same landforms, since the landforms differ from north to south in both counties, not from east to west across the boundary line. This arrangement had, and to a lesser extent still has, a profound effect on the transportation network, for the railroads and the early major roadways ran east-west, thereby connecting adjacent areas of the border zone better than they did places to the north or south on the same side.

Few parts of the Queens-Nassau boundary that traverse the mainland ever followed a physical feature. A two mile stretch from Valley Stream to Meadowmere Park runs along Hook Creek, a minor southwest flowing stream. But even here, the creek has largely been straightened or drained. The rest of the border across the landmass consists of straight line segments running from Great Neck to Valley Stream and also from Inwood to Lawrence, as identified on the Nassau side. Only the portion of the border that cuts through the offshore waters of Little Neck Bay in the north and Mott Basin and East Rockaway Inlet in the south corresponds to a notable, existing physical feature. This means that only the salt water portions of the border present natural obstacles to transportation or other interaction or are, for that matter, particularly obvious. There is little in the way of a physical boundary paralleling the political one.

### **Obstacles Erected By Humans**

Humans have added their own barriers along a few stretches of the boundary zone. For one-quarter mile north of the Long Island Rail Road tracks, a chain link fence separates the western edge of Great Neck Estates from Little Neck. To the immediate east of the fence is a 150



yard wide strip of marsh, one of the few that has survived on the north shore, which appears to be an effective impediment to cross county interaction. A fence also separates the western edge of the Lake Success Golf Course from Douglaston. A longer fence lines Hook Creek south of Hungry Harbor Road on the Rosedale-Woodmere border, perhaps not so much to reinforce the barrier effect as to keep people from falling into the water. There is, finally, a solid fence with a few door sized openings that lines the western edge of the Green Acres Shopping Center parking lot, sealing it off from Rosedale.

Parts of two major highways also form effective barriers between Queens and Nassau. A two mile stretch of the sixty-five year old Cross Island Parkway impedes nearly all interaction between Cambria Heights in Queens and Elmont in Nassau in the area between 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 121<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Fences line both sides of the highway, and only three roads cross over or under it. The distinctive street patterns of Cambria Heights and Elmont attest to the critical role of the Cross Island Parkway in shaping these two adjacent communities on either side of the boundary line. Further south, the three-quarter mile stretch at the southern end of Route 878/Nassau Expressway, the new Doughty Boulevard, runs a few feet to the east of the border between Far Rockaway and Lawrence. Its four lanes of fast moving traffic form a formidable barrier, with no roads or pedestrian overpasses between Seagirt Boulevard and Cedar Lawn Avenue.

Finally, the Atlantic Beach Bridge, which spans East Rockaway Inlet at the southern end of Route 878, is both a barrier and a link. In bridging the inlet, it connects the Nassau communities of Atlantic Beach and Lawrence, on its northern side just a block from Far Rockaway in Queens. It is, however, a toll bridge for motorized vehicles. There is no charge for pedestrians and bicyclists, but they are funneled along a narrow sidewalk that passes directly in front of the windows of the Atlantic Beach Bridge Authority and a Nassau County police station.

In sum, the Queens-Nassau border barely stands out as a visible feature. Nine of its 15-1/2 miles of land boundary form a seamless crossing from one county to the other. Few signs announce it, especially on the Queens side. Six miles of the boundary do have an environmental or human made divider made up of fence, marsh, creek, or limited access highway. But only the three miles of limited access highways impart a sense of permanence.

One might therefore expect most of the border area to be similar on both sides, except where the limited access highways intervene. Yet attitudes, movement and development in the border area have not always responded predictably to the presence or absence of any particular kind of barrier. The extent of the obstacles along the border only partially

corresponds to the degree of similarity of settlement and attitudes on the two sides.

### **Race and Ethnicity as Markers**

Even though the Queens-Nassau border never presented much of a tangible barrier, and the areas bordering it developed almost simultaneously along suburban lines, much of the boundary line did end up separating peoples of different backgrounds, appearance, and customs. Race plays a major role in community identity. Few places in New York State have a long history of actively welcoming peoples of different races to live within their borders. Suburban areas, particularly on Long Island, have a deserved reputation for their commitment to racial homogeneity. Restrictive covenants, steering, blockbusting, tradition, and preference have created a patchwork of communities or neighborhoods segregated by race. In Nassau, blacks predominate in Hempstead, Roosevelt, Uniondale, and discrete sections of many other communities, while Garden City, Roslyn, and Oceanside, among many others, are almost completely white. Segregated neighborhoods exist in suburban Queens as well. Queens Village, Cambria Heights, Rosedale, and Laurelton form a vast, contiguous network of black neighborhoods south of Little Neck and Douglaston, which are nearly all white or white and East Asian. The more urbanized parts of Queens farther west tend to have a strong ethnic character, but their racial lines are not so sharply drawn. Many of them, particularly those along subway lines, have at least a recent history of ethnic diversity. These include Long Island City, Elmhurst, Corona, Flushing, Kew Gardens, Richmond Hill, and Woodhaven.

Until very recently, the southern half of the Queens-Nassau border was a sharp racial divide. After white flight during the 1950s, blacks from many different backgrounds created a series of middle class suburbs on the Queens side. Whites, frequently of Italian origin, continued to dominate the communities just across the border in western Nassau. Caribbean bakeries dotted the avenues west of the border, Italian ones to the east. This abrupt divide at the Cross Island Parkway began to break down in the 1970s. Blacks, joined later by smaller numbers of Hispanics and South Asians, began moving into Elmont on the Nassau side. They now predominate in most sections adjacent to the Queens border, and in the past decade have gained a significant foothold in the central part of the village.<sup>3</sup> The colonials, Cape Cods, and ranch houses into which they moved match the style of those elsewhere in Elmont, and also bear a strong resemblance to those across the border in Cambria Heights and Rosedale. While Elmont's racial composition has been changing fast, the community remains steadfastly middle class and suburban. To its south in Valley Stream, a smaller number of blacks have established themselves

along the area bordering Rosedale.<sup>4</sup> In short, the Cross Island Parkway and the Queens-Nassau border now seem to be an intrusion within an eastward growing zone of black suburbia.

The northern third of the county border area has long been predominantly white, and so it remains today. But in the past decade a significant influx of Asians, mostly East Asians, have settled into the communities on both sides. Whether the lure is the general affluence or the reputed excellence of the public schools in those neighborhoods, East Asians have clearly diversified these northern neighborhoods of Queens and Nassau in much the same way.

Farther south, on the edge of Far Rockaway and Lawrence, a visible change recently occurred on the Queens side of the border, immediately west of Route 878. Fourteen large houses on Reads Lane and a new eastward extension of Meehan Avenue have been built on spongy land north of Seagirt Avenue, east of Beach 6 Street, and south of Hicksville Road. The people living here are Orthodox Jews, similar to their Far Rockaway neighbors anchoring the older suburban area immediately to the west from Beach 6 to Beach 9 Street. This newest Orthodox section of Far Rockaway meshes not only into the older Orthodox section but also, with a one mile trip to the northeast across Route 878, into the inhabited (non-marshy) part of Lawrence, whose impressive homes it resembles even more. It fills in the last patch of undeveloped land adjacent to the Queens side of the county border, except for the larger marshy zone north of North Woodmere Park near the mouth of Hook Creek.

While this new housing development lies in Queens and is linked by culture to the older Orthodox section of Far Rockaway, the area has recently begun to identify itself as West Lawrence. Real estate agencies, as well as many businesses east of Beach 9 Street, now use this designation. This certainly conveys the idea that the area is more similar to Lawrence in Nassau County than it is to the bulk of Far Rockaway, an impression confirmed by the appearance of the houses and the people.

The blacks moving into Nassau's Elmont and Valley Stream and the Orthodox Jews moving into Queens' Far Rockaway are reversing a fifty year trend in the direction of racial migration along the Queens-Nassau border. It is ironic that both these racial changes have occurred along the two most impenetrable parts of the boundary line. The fences and lanes of whizzing traffic on the Cross Island Parkway did not keep blacks from creating an ethnic extension of Cambria Heights and Rosedale within white Elmont and Valley Stream, just as the marshes and lanes of whizzing traffic on Route 878 did not keep Orthodox Jews from creating a West Lawrence within predominantly black Far Rockaway. This suggests that the Queens-Nassau border is blurring even along its most formidable stretches.

**Housing Trends**

Current housing trends along the Queens-Nassau border continue to display the parallel development that began some seventy or more years ago. Then, most of eastern Queens, like Nassau, was changing from a rural area to a region of discrete suburban developments. By 1970, Nassau's population had stabilized and that of eastern Queens was soon to follow, with the result that most subsequent expansion of their built environment was commercial. But beginning around 1990, with virtually no large expanses of land available anywhere on Long Island and coupled with a phenomenal rise in property values after 1995, the last of Nassau's few small open spaces began filling in with mega houses or upscale row houses. Within a few years, the trend moved westward into Bayside, Douglaston, and the West Lawrence sections of eastern Queens. More recently, with almost no empty lots available at all, many small homes have been replaced or expanded, metamorphosed into mega houses.<sup>5</sup> This, in turn, has prompted a recent decision to downzone several Queens communities in order to maintain their low rise suburban character by applying limits to the heights and footprints of future buildings.<sup>6</sup> In effect, this assures the continued parallel development in housing along the two sides of the county border.

**Shopping Centers as the Shopping Paradigm**

Shopping malls serve a clientele reliant on the automobile. With their concentration of stores surrounded by parking lots, shopping centers are indisputably the principal destination of the postwar suburban shopper and the retail hallmark of the suburbs themselves. Nassau County is well established as a Mecca of malls and the site of one of the country's oldest, largest shopping centers, trendsetting Roosevelt Field.

In recent years shopping centers have also become a prominent feature in New York City's outer boroughs, most notably Staten Island and Queens. Malls, created for a car culture, replace retailers within residential communities and accelerate the development of the landscape to suit drivers. Their swift diffusion not just outward toward the outlying suburbs but now in the reverse direction toward Manhattan signals a takeover of the older commercial mentality and, in the process, a blurring of the suburban/urban divide. Queens now has nine shopping centers.<sup>7</sup> They are generally smaller in total retail square footage than their fifteen counterparts in Nassau, but they nevertheless yield a similarly high density of one shopping center every twelve to fifteen square miles. Each has ample parking, free in all cases except for the three clustered on Queens Boulevard near the Woodhaven Boulevard exit of the Long Island Expressway. Those three, plus the Metro Mall in Middle Village, are also served by nearby subway lines. But the other five shopping

centers of Queens lie in locations conveniently reached only by car, either on Northern Boulevard or close to highway exits. In appearance and convenience, they are similar to the shopping centers of Nassau, although they lack the most upscale of the department stores. And like their counterparts along Old Country Road in central Nassau, those along Queens Boulevard in central Queens have undergone significant expansion in the past few years and now constitute an entire district of shopping malls.

The shopping centers of Queens have altered the local landscape and the shopping patterns of its residents. It is no longer necessary to choose between walking to small local stores, heading to Manhattan by mass transit, or driving just across the border into Nassau to shop at Green Acres, the Five Towns Shopping Center, or the Lake Success Shopping Centers. Shopping centers are beginning to transform Brooklyn in the same way. Recently completed Atlantic Terminal near downtown Brooklyn and the Gateway Center Mall in East New York (just north of the Belt Parkway's newly constructed Erskine Street exit, a testimonial to the significance of the car as a means to go shopping) now join King's Plaza in Flatlands and Caesar's Bay near Coney Island in providing a streamlined cluster of stores and their accompanying parking lots to that more hard core urban borough of New York City.

Big box stores are also migrating from their suburban home turf in Nassau westward into more urban settings. By selling heavy, bulky general merchandise items or food and cosmetic items packaged in bulk, and not providing bags or delivery service, they virtually require shopping by car and parking close by. They first appeared in Nassau in the 1980s, normally separate from shopping centers, in places where large amounts of land were available at relatively low cost. By 2004, Nassau had five of them. At the same time, Queens had three, evenly spaced from west to east in Long Island City, Middle Village, and College Point. Along with Home Depot, of which Queens had five in 2004, big box stores have added considerably to the new car based retail landscape of the borough.

While shopping in Queens has become more like shopping in Nassau County, there has also been an influx into Nassau of shops that appeared much earlier in Queens. Ethnic markets selling mostly South Asian, East Asian, Caribbean, and Russian grocery items now dot the Nassau communities where members of these groups now reside. Often on streets near the center of town, these small markets have added a veneer of shopping typically associated with the ethnic neighborhoods of Queens. Within the central area of Nassau, these include Front Street in Hempstead, Post Avenue in Westbury, and Newbridge Road in Hicksville.

In sum, both Queens and Nassau share the type of shopping for which each is justifiably famous. The growth of malls within the New York City limits, and the concomitant development of roads and parking, is one of the striking features of recent suburban development on the western side of the Queens-Nassau border. By the same token, the appearance of small, ethnic markets on many of Nassau's streets is a striking feature of recent urban development on the eastern side of the Queens-Nassau border.

### **Cross County Transportation**

Traveling across the Queens-Nassau border has never been viewed as an obstacle in so far as all the railroad lines and most of the major roadways follow the grain of the land and go directly across the border with no fanfare. Moreover, going to Manhattan and getting back to Nassau has been a necessary part of the lives of many Long Islanders. Yet for those people, the sixteen miles of Queens lying between Nassau and Manhattan were viewed as a time consuming intervention. Few people found themselves deliberately going from Queens to Nassau or from Nassau to Queens.

This pattern has changed in recent years. Long Island Bus, a subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, runs bus routes across Long Island, including thirteen that start in Queens and terminate in Nassau. They make a useful index of interaction between the two counties, because eastbound passengers picked up in Queens may not exit until Nassau, and westbound passengers are picked up in Nassau only. (This arrangement keeps Long Island Bus from competing for passengers on the bus lines serving Queens only.)

From 1998-2004, the ridership on the Nassau-Queens routes increased far more than ridership on the routes that did not enter Queens. The average weekday ridership on the Nassau-Queens routes increased by 18.8 per cent, as compared to 0.2 per cent for the others; the average Saturday ridership on the Nassau-Queens routes increased by 17.6 per cent as compared to 5.7 per cent for the others; and average Sunday ridership increased by 24.6 per cent as compared to 10.9 per cent for the others. Of its average weekly ridership of approximately 592,000 in 2004, Long Island Bus was carrying 296,600 passengers on lines traversing the Queens-Nassau border.<sup>8</sup> Even though some of the cross county bus riders connect to or from the city's subways, both the fast growth and the absolute numbers of riders on the cross county bus routes indicates a substantial increase in local movement across the Queens-Nassau border.

**Conclusion**

The Queens-Nassau border has blurred in the past ten or fifteen years. The main reason is the growing adoption of the suburban lifestyle, which has prompted the housing and shopping patterns of Nassau to diffuse *westward* into the parts of New York City where money is available to build the latest fashion of suburban mega house or where land is available to construct shopping centers. It has also prompted immigrants and minorities to push outward – *eastward* - from the inner city into established suburban areas. In doing so, they have altered the ethnic composition of the communities of Nassau and eastern Queens and infused them with a smattering of small shops and food markets. Accompanying these changes is a marked rise in travel by bus between the two counties.

The most surprising aspect of these changes is the reverse diffusion of suburban values and artifacts. For most of the postwar era, suburbs kept moving outward from the central city, encompassing a growing share of the nation's land and people. But now that suburbs house over half of all Americans, the single family house, the private car, and the shopping center are no longer springing up merely at the outermost zone of agglomerated settlement. They are also turning around and redesigning the city, too.

Perhaps this long, skinny island is an extreme case of an area that has run out of land for additional outward suburban expansion, and the filling in of the last of the vest pocket open spaces of Nassau and Queens is the inevitable consequence of having nowhere else to go. Yet the Queens-Nassau border area may also be reflective of a national disinterest in extending expensive urban services and infrastructure to the outer limits of the cities. It can be argued that, at one time, eastern Queens, despite being part of New York City, was too thinly populated and too far from Manhattan to warrant being integrated by subway. But with its demographic growth, its ongoing exclusion is probably more a testimonial to the popularity of suburban life. It may be a blow to New York City's urban self-identity, but it is not astonishing that even the Big Apple has been incapable of resisting all of the nation's suburbanizing tendencies. Nassau, in the meantime, with no space left to create new segregated settlements, has begun to absorb its urban newcomers into existing communities, thereby reflecting a degree of the city's ethnic diversity.

The Queens-Nassau border area, now more similar than it has been since both sides were covered in farms, is a manifestation of the dream of driving to the mall in a private vehicle and unloading the goods into a

large detached house. The blurring of the border is likely to continue as long as preferences for these suburban artifacts and activities prevail.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Jon C. Teaford, "Nassau County: A Pioneer of the Crabgrass Frontier" in *Nassau County From Rural Hinterland to Suburban Metropolis*, ed. Joann P. Krieg and Natalie A. Naylor, 27-37 (Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 2000), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia T. Caro, "The Location of the Queens-Nassau Border" in *Nassau County From Rural Hinterland to Suburban Metropolis*, edited by Joann P. Krieg and Natalie A. Naylor, (Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 2000), 55-75.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1-100 Percent Data and 1990 Summary Tape File 1-100 Percent Data.

<sup>4</sup> "A Delicate Balance in Elmont," *Newsday*, October 2, 1979; "Elmont Trying to Cope with Change," *Newsday*, November 28, 1986; "Redbook: Elmont High School is Number 1," *Newsday*, March 3, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Dennis Hevesi, "In Queens, the Houses Are Growing and Growing," *New York Times*, January 30, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> "Remaking, or Preserving, the City's Face," *New York Times*, January 18, 2004. So far within eastern Queens, down zoning will take effect in Bayside, Bellerose, and Rosedale.

<sup>7</sup> Counts of the number of shopping centers in Queens and Nassau have been calculated by a variety of means: telephone book listings, *Newsday* listings, Hagstrom atlases, and field observation. The criteria for a shopping center, as compared to a smaller grouping of stores or a strip mall, is somewhat arbitrary, and probably varies with local perception.

<sup>8</sup> MTA Long Island Bus. Percentages have been calculated from average weekday, Saturday, and Sunday ridership figures supplied for all routes from 1998-2004.



## PORT WASHINGTON AND LONG BEACH: CASE STUDIES OF LONG ISLAND'S FIRST WAVE OF SUBURBANIZATION, 1900- 1930

Sean Kass

*During the late nineteenth-century an unsettled and predominantly rural Long Island first caught the interest of urban residents. Real estate speculators and Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) executives worked to promote the area as an ideal resort for summer sojourners. Massive hotels were erected along the shores and wealthy city residents made their way east to enjoy the island's pristine beaches. By the turn of the century the resort boom had evolved into a residential boom. The area's image as a favorable spot to vacation fed naturally into its promotion as a favorable residential area. Sean Kass continues the examination of the impact of the LIRR on the development of Long Island that he began in our last issue.*

The foundations of Long Island's suburban character were established during the years 1900-1930. The opening of the East River Tunnels and Pennsylvania Station in 1910 accelerated this evolution by making commutation between Long Island and New York City possible on a wide scale. Land developers across the island naturally seized upon this opportunity. They began building homes aimed at the large number of middle class families moving eastward. The bulk of scholarship on the topic of Long Island's development tends to frame the birth of Long Island's suburban communities as a post-World War II phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> But the case studies of Port Washington to the north and Long Beach to the south lend support to the case for an earlier origin of the Long Island suburbs. In particular, the Long Beach case study demonstrates the integral relationship between the Long Island resort industry and the growth of suburban communities. Similarly, the extension of railroad service to Port Washington in 1898 marked a major turning point in the town's history and development.

### **Case Study 1: Long Beach**

In 1879 Long Beach was an unsettled island separated from Long Island's southern coast by a series of bays and inlets. It was inaccessible except by small boats from Hempstead Bay and was rarely visited by anyone but gunners and fishermen.<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter Long Beach was brought out of isolation by real estate developers closely associated with the LIRR. Under the name of the Long Beach Improvement Company, they built the Long Beach Hotel in 1880. Colonel Thomas R. Sharp,

president of both the LIRR and the Long Beach Improvement Company, had railroad tracks extended five miles to Long Beach that same year. Ultimately the suburbanization of Long Beach occurred for the same reasons as the suburbanization of the rest of Long Island. People came to Long Beach because it offered excellent recreational opportunities, was heavily advertised by the LIRR, and was within easy reach of New York City via the LIRR.

The story of the Long Beach resort industry was intertwined with the railroad from the very beginning. In fact, the resort industry at Long Beach began with the railroad. As Will Hughes writes in *A History of Long Beach 1500-1944*, "Long Beach may have remained a sedge pasture for Hempstead burgesses were it not for the Long Island Rail Road."<sup>3</sup> Colonel Thomas R. Sharp, the railroad's receiver and president, visited Long Beach in 1877 along with a number of wealthy associates. Their objective was to assess its worth as a summer resort. One of these men, William H. Bartlett, was impressed and decided to lease the whole of Long Beach. After spending \$25,000 to improve the land, he left his lease to Sharp in 1880, who was able to obtain from the Town of Hempstead a deed for additional land in Long Beach and a 200 foot wide strip of land from Long Beach to Lynbrook that would serve as a railroad right of way.<sup>4</sup> This property was transferred to the Long Beach Improvement Company, which began construction of a massive seaside hotel.

The Long Beach Hotel was opened on July 17, 1880. Railroad service began the same year. Austin Corbin, who succeeded Sharp as president of the LIRR, entered the picture shortly thereafter. Operating the property as the Long Beach Hotel and Cottage Company, Corbin and his associates purchased the hotel and the surrounding acreage from Colonel Sharp's Long Beach Improvement Company in 1885.<sup>5</sup> It was symbolic that the transfer of ownership of the hotel so nearly coincided with the transfer of power over the LIRR. Long Beach was seen as "virtually a continuation" of Rockaway Beach, where Corbin owned two other seaside hotels.<sup>6</sup> Encouraged by the success of the resort industry at Far Rockaway, Corbin sought to develop Long Beach in a similar manner. The hotel itself housed 800 guests, spanned 900 feet of shorefront, and was hailed as "The Largest Hotel in the World."<sup>7</sup> Nineteen additional summer cottages were constructed near the hotel. Besides the hotel, the cottages, and the nearby railroad station, the whole of Long Beach was undeveloped.

The Long Beach Hotel was initially a huge success. It became very fashionable and attracted people from the highest echelons of New York City society. During the summer season the LIRR ran twenty-two trains to and from Long Beach each day.<sup>8</sup> Yet the Long Beach Hotel soon ran

into difficulty. It suffered through a disastrous summer season in 1892, after which Corbin and the Long Beach Hotel and Cottage Company left the property in the hands of J.P. Morgan & Company.<sup>9</sup> The hotel was closed during the summer of 1893, and no trains ran to Long Beach that summer.<sup>10</sup> As Tom Patton and Vic Scutari write in their *History of Long Beach*, "Long Beach's development as a quality resort area had died by the turn of the century."<sup>11</sup>

Revitalization began with the arrival of William Reynolds in 1906. Reynolds was a former state senator turned real estate developer who had successfully developed several large communities in Brooklyn and the world's largest amusement park at Coney Island. He hoped to build a boardwalk, a number of large hotels, and a village of luxurious homes.<sup>12</sup> After acquiring the necessary land in 1906 and 1907, Reynolds set about his new project. The Long Beach Hotel burned to the ground on July 29, 1907. The destruction was actually a blessing for Reynolds: the old hotel was outdated and had lost much of its swagger as a premier resort facility. Reynolds intended to replace it with the new Nassau Hotel, which would be "a model of modernity."<sup>13</sup> Built by the Westinghouse Company, it opened less than two years later in June of 1909. The state of the art hotel brought summer sojourners back to Long Beach for the first time since the early 1890s. However, there was an important quality to the new Nassau Hotel that its predecessor had not possessed. It was built "for occupancy the year round."<sup>14</sup> As the site of the incorporation meetings for the village of Long Beach in 1912 and 1913, the Nassau Hotel symbolized the emergence of Long Beach as a year round community. The *New York Tribune* commented:

Six years ago Long Beach Island was a sandy waste. Today, Long Beach is one of the most entrancing places for a summer vacation or a day's outing along the Atlantic Coast and one of the most superb places for an all year home in the metropolitan district.<sup>15</sup>

Successful promotion was as central to the suburbanization of Long Beach as it was to the rest of Long Island. As elsewhere on Long Island, the leading promoters were the LIRR and the local real estate companies. Since William Reynolds' Long Beach Estates Company was the only developer in Long Beach at this time, promotional efforts on behalf of Long Beach came from essentially two sources: the Long Beach Estates Company and the LIRR. Their promotions emphasized many of the aspects that applied to the more general promotion of Long Island. First and foremost there was the classic attraction of recreation. According to a railroad promotional booklet published in 1916, Long Beach offered a

vast number of ways to “pass an ideal weekend.”<sup>16</sup> Obviously, the main attraction was the ocean. The same pamphlet declared, “there may be a more thoroughly delightful seashore resort close to New York than is Long Beach, but if so the present chronicler does not know where.”<sup>17</sup> In like manner a later promotional pamphlet showed a picture of Long Island’s shore with the caption “One of Long Island’s popular ocean beaches where countless folks come in summer – Long Beach.”<sup>18</sup> Second, Long Beach was promoted as a healthy climate for individuals and families. The ocean had traditionally been seen as a soothing element and a healing device. That traditional belief would be confirmed for some when the city’s health officer declared Long Beach one of the healthiest locations in the state.<sup>19</sup> Hence, people came “in search of the beneficial effects of salt air.”<sup>20</sup>

There was an element of glamour and sophistication to Reynolds’ new resort community at Long Beach. Reynolds was looking for “upper middle class homeowners with cultural aspirations.”<sup>21</sup> He was very well connected in the New York City theater scene and successfully recruited many of its prominent members to the Long Beach summer community. Long Beach became by far “the most widely known portion of the town of Hempstead.”<sup>22</sup> The construction of the grand boardwalk served as an exclusive summer boulevard along the beach where the wealthy and famous could stroll for the sake of seeing and being seen.

Efficient railroad service and infrastructure also brought people to Long Beach for summer vacations and permanent residence. The new railroad station and electrification made it one of the better served spots on Long Island. Reynolds swapped real estate with the LIRR to ensure the best location for the new station with respect to the hotel and the new residential communities.<sup>23</sup> The station, like the new hotel, was opened in June of 1909. Also in 1909, the rail line to Long Beach was electrified. A little more than a year later, in September of 1910, the LIRR began running trains directly from Manhattan to Long Island via the newly completed Pennsylvania Station and East River Tunnels. The tunnels eliminated the need for passengers to transfer to ferries or elevated trains in order to cross the East River. These improvements led to dramatic increases in the summer population of Long Beach. A second hotel, the Huber Hotel, opened to accommodate the high volume of vacationers. In fact, the growth of the summer industry was so rapid that in 1913 the *New York Tribune* predicted that the area would soon be home to hundreds of large hotels and thousands of modern summer houses.<sup>24</sup> The LIRR made all this growth possible. Dramatically improved service made Long Beach an enticing option for commuters and sojourners, especially those short on time or patience. After the opening of Pennsylvania Station and

the East River tunnels, the trip from Manhattan to Long Beach took just forty minutes.<sup>25</sup>

Reynolds had surveyed the entire town and subdivided each block into lots before construction began.<sup>26</sup> His intention was to make Long Beach a residential community. The residences he developed were designed to form "a community of summer homes."<sup>27</sup> Most of the new homeowners were from New York City. Initially, the lots were sold as is and the purchasers then built homes to their own specifications. By 1909, Reynolds had sold \$3 million worth of subdivisions in his new community. In light of the success of his first community of homes, the Estates of Long Beach, Reynolds decided to begin construction of a second residential community. Plans for the new community, Sandringham Colony, began in 1909. Since the desired clientele was located in New York City, Reynolds employed a sales force on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. He hoped to target new rich families, believing that these people would be more likely to sign on to a new and less established resort enclave.

The Estates of Long Beach and Sandringham Colony were unambiguously intended to be upper class communities. For one, they were designed to be summer homes. Only people of exceptional wealth could afford such a luxury. The minimum cost of a home in one of these early developments was \$25,000 – a very hefty sum at the time.<sup>28</sup> There were also strict requirements for those who undertook construction themselves. These included a minimum lot size and a minimum setback distance from the street. As Henry Isham Hazelton wrote in 1924, Long Beach "has many homes that in other localities would be called 'show places.'"<sup>29</sup>

Initially used as summer homes, many of the residences in Long Beach soon became year round homes.<sup>30</sup> Reynolds, ever alert to trends, began constructing homes for the rising population of year round residents.<sup>31</sup> By 1915, he had recruited a year round population large enough to induce the New York State legislature to pass a law creating an independent Long Beach School District. By 1918, all covenants and restrictions on residences, including those mandating minimum lot size and setback distance from the road, were lifted.<sup>32</sup> Precipitated by the bankruptcy of Reynolds' corporation, this change permitted the construction of homes that were smaller, less expensive, and not subject to stringent rules regarding lot size and setback distance. The most significant of these subdivisions was constructed in 1920 and named Westholme. Over 500 homes were built in Westholme; a development designed for middle class families.<sup>33</sup> Another important change was that Reynolds began selling lots at auction through auctioneer Joseph P. Day. Between 1918 and 1921, Day sold fifty homes and 1,031 lots on

Reynolds' behalf.<sup>34</sup> These lots were soon occupied by homes as part of a phenomenal building boom that saw over two thousand buildings erected from 1922 to 1924.

The various improvements in railroad service to Long Beach also led to substantial increases in the number of commuters from Long Beach station. In 1912, 385 commuters took the train from Long Beach each day.<sup>35</sup> The number of Long Beach commuters would increase to 525 by 1915, 724 by 1918, 1,064 by 1927, and 1,673 by 1930.<sup>36</sup> In the wake of effective promotion, improved year round railroad service, and the realistic possibility of commutation, summer vacationers became permanent residents in increasing numbers. While reliable population numbers for Long Beach are unavailable before 1925, by that year the population was 2,891.<sup>37</sup> It rose to 5,817 by 1930.<sup>38</sup> From these population and commutation figures, it is clear that Long Beach experienced rapid and substantial growth from 1912 to 1930. In 1922 William Reynolds led the incorporation of the village into a city. The change was mainly a political maneuver secured by Reynolds' political connections and general popularity in both Long Beach and Albany. He correctly calculated that he would be elected the new city's first mayor, thereby ensuring his control of Long Beach's development. While Long Beach's growth had been substantial it was not so large as to mandate designation as the City of Long Beach. The new moniker belied its more accurate characterization as an expanding suburban village.<sup>39</sup>

### **Case Study 2: Port Washington**

Until the railroad tracks were extended four miles east from Great Neck in 1898, Port Washington was a rural village. The principal industries were sand mining, farming, fishing, clamming, and oyster culturing. Port Washington was also the home of many large estates, which sustained a sizeable service industry. The total population at the turn of the century was about 1,500. The arrival of the railroad in Port Washington was "a momentous event for the community."<sup>40</sup> Even at the time, the residents of Port Washington appreciated its importance. Over 4,000 people met the first train to arrive at the station with "the greatest celebration of any kind ever given" in Port Washington.<sup>41</sup> Many new commuters settled in Port Washington shortly thereafter.<sup>42</sup> They brought large numbers of homes and people to what was previously a sparsely settled area.

The extension of railroad tracks had a number of effects that set in motion a process of suburbanization. One of these was that it increased land values substantially, making the land more valuable for residential development than for agricultural pursuits. The farmers of the area quickly took their profits. The Onderdonk family, which had presided

over seven farms in the area since the early nineteenth-century, sold their entire property at the turn of the century. This property became the first part of the residential community known as the Park Section, the first major development built after the railroad extension.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the Mitchell Farm (which occupied most of the Southern part of Port Washington) was sold in 1898 for \$50 an acre.<sup>44</sup> The land had more value for residential purposes than it did for agriculture.

The promotional efforts of the LIRR and local real estate companies brought the merits of Port Washington to the attention of New York City's upper and middle classes. The Passenger Department of the LIRR hailed Port Washington as a suburban village offering the benefits of both open water and woodland. More specifically, Port Washington was "a region for downright, comfortable, intelligent living of a sort that sane and normal city people, if one could get them to confess, are everywhere secretly longing to know."<sup>45</sup>

As was the case with Long Island as a whole, recreational opportunities motivated people to give up their homes in the city to resettle in Port Washington. Most of the new homes were built near the water. S. Osgood Pell & Co. advertised that anyone who bought property in Port Washington Estates could enjoy the wooded country overlooking Manhasset Bay and shore privileges.<sup>46</sup> Hyde & Baxter, another real estate company, promised "fine boating and bathing."<sup>47</sup> In fact, Port Washington was "the center of attraction for yachting."<sup>48</sup> It had excellent sailing facilities and was home to several yachting clubs including the Knickerbocker Yacht Club and the Port Washington Yacht Club.<sup>49</sup> Canoeing, tennis, golf, and swimming were all major activities. Country Clubs such as the North Hempstead Country Club and the Port Washington Club were centers for these activities. Due to the general promotion of Long Island as well as the local country clubs and activities supported by the large estate owners, Port Washington was able to acquire a reputation as a recreational playground even in the absence of a large seaside hotel.

The railroad infrastructure was a crucial factor in the development of the community. First, the extension of the railroad line to Port Washington in 1898 jump started the town's development. Second, the construction of the East River tunnels and Pennsylvania station had a tremendous effect on the village of Port Washington. It made the journey to and from New York City faster and more convenient by eliminating the need to transfer in order to cross the East River. Situated just nineteen miles from Manhattan, one could travel from Port Washington to the heart of New York City in less than an hour. Naturally, that made Port Washington a more attractive residential option for potential commuters. Indeed, Hyde & Baxter inserted "electric trains direct to

New York” as one of the selling points in their ads.<sup>50</sup> In June of 1910, the number of daily commuters at Port Washington station was 192. Pennsylvania station and the East River tunnels were opened shortly thereafter in September of 1910, dramatically reducing travel time between Manhattan and Long Island. By 1915, the number of daily commuters at Port Washington station had increased to 329. There were 433 daily commuters at Port Washington in 1918, 863 in 1927, and 990 in 1930.<sup>51</sup> From twenty-three trains daily in 1900, the number of Port Washington commuters had grown large enough to support sixty-six trains daily in 1930.<sup>52</sup> This phenomenal growth was only compounded by the fact that each commuter generally represented an entire family, meaning the total population of Port Washington was growing even faster than the number of commuters. People were attracted to the promotional image of Port Washington as a place that possessed all the recreational opportunities of suburbia “within a stone’s throw” of Manhattan.<sup>53</sup>

The new commuters who moved to the village brought money and new business opportunities. These resources were incredibly important because the “accoutrements of modernizing suburban life all cost money.”<sup>54</sup> New residents and potential new residents wanted electricity, water, sewage, better schools, and well built roads. The new residents fully appreciated the importance of the railroad in their lives, as many of them were entirely dependent on the railroad for daily transportation. On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of railroad service in 1923, over 10,000 people gathered in the town to recognize the railroad as “the reliable daily transporter of the family wage earner.”<sup>55</sup>

As a matter of sheer numbers, Port Washington grew tremendously from a population of roughly 1,500 in 1898 to 12,500 people in 1929.<sup>56</sup> The rural village became one of the principal villages in the town of North Hempstead. By 1924 the community of Port Washington was large enough to support a high school, churches representing four different denominations, a local newspaper, two banks, and a number of fraternal organizations.<sup>57</sup> Reflecting the trend of Long Island as a whole, Port Washington in the 1920s would experience unprecedented development, population expansion, and home construction.<sup>58</sup> New residential communities emerged and old ones grew significantly; the Park Section, Baxter Estates, Port Washington Estates, and Beacon Hill all underwent their most rapid development during the 1920s.<sup>59</sup> Developers like Monfort & Hegemon advertised “HOMES-LOTS-PLOTS-ACREAGE-We have homes for sale.”<sup>60</sup> The 1926 edition of *Long Island, America’s Sunrise Land* noted that the Port Washington area of North Hempstead contained many “cozy suburban homes.”<sup>61</sup>



### **Conclusion**

The case studies of Long Beach and Port Washington reveal two specific instances of the process of suburbanization that swept over Long Island between 1900 and 1930. Both Long Beach and Port Washington sat at the terminus of their respective railroad lines. Yet all along the line commuter villages thrived as a result of successful promotion and improved railroad service. The most important common elements are the promotion of recreation and leisure, the extension of railroad service in the late nineteenth-century, and the emergence of large scale commutation in the wake of the opening of the East River tunnels and Penn Station. These elements echoed powerfully in other communities across the Island.

The promotion of Long Beach and Port Washington was substantially different on account of Long Beach's emergence as a resort area. Long Beach's development and growth may be viewed retrospectively as a more precarious process than that of Port Washington. Although it had a niche in the nineteenth-century as a popular athletic retreat for the very wealthy estate owners, Port Washington never became a resort on a scale comparable to Long Beach. In this sense, the promotion of Port Washington's leisure activities by real estate companies and by the railroad was more directly aimed at summer vacationers and permanent residents than weekend sojourners. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how promotion of either kind quickly became promotion of the area in a more permanent manner. The leisure activities that promotion centered upon were common to both - the ocean, boating, athletics, and fresh air. As indicated by the enthusiastic response of New Yorkers vacationing and moving to Long Island, these factors evidently provided a powerful impetus to the middle and upper class residents of New York City in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries.

The early role of the railroad was substantially different in the two case studies. In the case of Long Beach, the railroad was a factor in the suburb's development from the very beginning. There was a railroad track to Long Beach before there was a village. By contrast, Port Washington was an established community long before the LIRR arrived in 1898. This distinction initially resulted in significantly different types of communities - one was a resort, the other a community of mansions. For the purposes of subsequent suburbanization, this chronological reversal makes little practical difference. In either case, the railroad was a crucial component of the growth. The rate and scale of growth in both Long Beach and Port Washington (and many others on Long Island) was compounded exponentially by the drastic reduction in commutation time

that occurred as a result of the opening of the East River Tunnels and Pennsylvania Station.

In their similarities and their differences, the history of Long Beach and Port Washington from 1900 and 1930 demonstrate the phenomenon of suburbanization on Long Island during this period. Although the process varied substantially by locality, it nevertheless contained common core elements: promotion of recreational opportunities by real estate developers and the LIRR, improved railroad service after the construction of the East River Tunnels, and the consequent rise in the number of commuters and year round residents.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Henry Gabriel, *The Evolution of Long Island: A Story of Land and Sea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 181.

<sup>2</sup> "Sea Shore Resorts – Long Beach," *Harper's Weekly*, 14 August 1880, 518.

<sup>3</sup> Will Hughes, *A History of Long Beach 1500-1944* (Long Beach, NY: The Long Beach Historical and Preservation Society, 1940s), 3.

<sup>4</sup> David B. Tolins, *The History of Long Beach* (Long Beach, NY: n.p., [1931]), 49.

<sup>6</sup> William S. Pelletreau, *A History of Long Island From its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1905), 2: 106.

<sup>7</sup> Roberta Fiore and Elizabeth Coffin Allerhand, "Sandbar to City: William H. Reynolds and the Planned Community of Long Beach, 1906-1922," in *Nassau County From Rural Hinterland to Suburban Metropolis*, ed. Joann P. Krieg and Natalie A. Naylor (Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 2000), 266.

<sup>11</sup> Tom Patton and Vic Scutari, Jr., *History of Long Beach* (Long Beach, NY: Long Beach Public Library, 1972), 5.

<sup>15</sup> "Long Beach L.I., A Great Seashore Colony," *New York Tribune*, sec. 5, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Long Island Rail Road, *Long Island, America's Sunrise Land* (1930), 4.

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<sup>20</sup> "Long Beach LI, A Great Seashore Colony" *New York Tribune*, 20 July 1913, sec. 5, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Fiore and Allerhand, 268.

<sup>22</sup> Pelletreau, 106.

<sup>24</sup> "Long Beach L.I.," sec. 5, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Fiore and Allerhand, 271.

<sup>29</sup> Hazelton, vol. 2: 881.

<sup>32</sup> Fiore and Allerhand, 271.

<sup>34</sup> Patton and Scutari, Jr., 6.

<sup>36</sup> Seyfried, vol. 7: 192; Lee, *Almanac and Year Book 1927*, 187; Lee, *Almanac and Year Book 1930*, 209.

<sup>37</sup> Lee, 144.

<sup>38</sup> Lee, 241; Long Island Regional Planning Board, *Historical Population of Long Island Communities 1790-1980: Decennial Census Data* (Hauppauge, NY: Suffolk County Department of General Services, 1982), 25.

<sup>39</sup> A cursory look at population statistics reveals the inaccuracy of the city label. In 1930, Long Beach's population was 5,817 (see Lee, *Almanac and Year Book 1930*). At that time, the following Long Island villages all had larger populations than the "city" of Long Beach: Floral Park, pop. 10,016; Freeport, pop. 15,467; Garden City (not an official city, despite the name), pop. 7,180; Hempstead, pop. 12,650; Lynbrook, pop. 11,993; Mineola, pop. 8,155; Rockville Centre, pop. 13,718; Valley Stream, pop. 11,790. See Jon C. Teaford, "Nassau County: A Pioneer of the Crabgrass Frontier," in *Nassau County From Rural Hinterland to Suburban Metropolis*, 37 n.7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

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<sup>42</sup> George L. Williams, "The L.I.R.R. and Community Transportation: The Development of Port Washington 1900-1915, Part II," *Long Island Forum*, vol. 60 (Fall 1997): 41.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, 6.

<sup>45</sup> *Long Island and Real Life*, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Advertisement reprinted in Williams, 38.

<sup>47</sup> *Long Island, America's Sunrise Land* (New York: The Long Island Railroad Company, 1926), 81.

<sup>48</sup> Hazelton, 2: 902.

<sup>49</sup> *Automobile Guide of Long Island* (New York: Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1928), 85.

<sup>50</sup> *Long Island, America's Sunrise Land* (1926), 81.

<sup>51</sup> Seyfried, 7: 193; Lee, *Almanac and Year Book 1927*, 187; Lee, *Almanac and Yearbook 1930*, 209; The figure from 1910 is for the month of June, the ones from 1915 and 1918 are for July, and the ones from 1927 and 1930 are for February. The demonstrated increase in the number of commuters between 1915 and 1930 is therefore less than the actual increase because there were invariably fewer commuters in the winter months than in the summer.

<sup>52</sup> Lee, *Almanac and Year Book 1930*, 298.

<sup>53</sup> *Long Island and Real Life*, 15.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Gabriel, 156; Edward J. Smits, *Nassau Suburbia, U.S.A.: 1899 to 1974* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1974), 156.

<sup>56</sup> Williams, "L.I.R.R. and Community, Part I," 6; Lee, *Almanac and Year Book 1930*, 297.

<sup>57</sup> Hazelton, 2: 902.

<sup>58</sup> It should be noted that the luxury estates of Port Washington did not disappear during this period. Although Port Washington remained the center of many fine estates, some of the processes that eventually led to the downfall of the great estates were already in motion. These included the Federal Income Tax and the restrictive Immigration Law of 1924 (which cut down on the supply of inexpensive servants).

<sup>69</sup> Williams, "L.I.R.R. and Community, Part II," 40.

<sup>60</sup> Advertisement in Lee, *Almanac and Year Book 1930*, 298.

<sup>61</sup> *Long Island, America's Sunrise Land* (1926), 15.

## **LOPPED TREES: THE LIVING FENCES OF OLD LONG ISLAND**

*By Philip Marshall*

*Long Island is known for many interesting natural features, including dwarf pines, barrier beaches, and piping plovers. Less well known are the intriguing, strangely bent trees that line its landscape.*

In 1893, the nineteenth-century Long Island historian Martha B. Flint described a distinctive feature of the Long Island landscape.

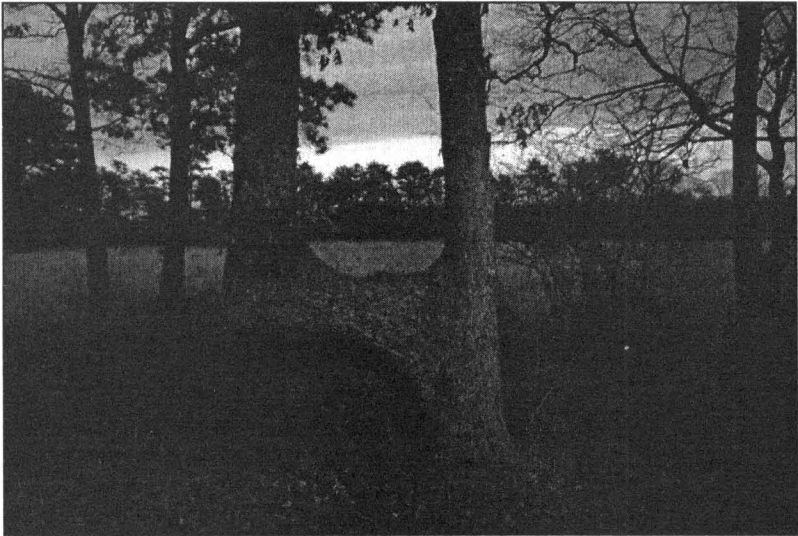
*In eastern Suffolk a unique form of hedgerow is common, at once picturesque and distinctive. It is formed by cutting down the oaks or chestnuts leaving the stumps and prone bodies of the trees to form a line of rude fence. The sprouts are then allowed to grow up, and their contorted branches interlaced with blackberry and greenbriar form an impenetrable barrier. They, in turn, are cut and re-cut, until the hedge becomes several feet in thickness, the abode of singing birds and the more timid marauders of the field.<sup>1</sup>*

The “living fences” that Flint describes are formed by the partial cutting and then bending over of small trees, which then continue to grow in a prostrate position. Such “laid” or “plashed” hedges (from the Latin *plectere*, “to weave”), often associated with “dykes” or ditches running alongside, remain a familiar feature of the rural landscapes of the British Isles, where great effort and attention is devoted to their management and preservation.<sup>2</sup> The custom was transported to the English towns of Long Island in the colonial period and modified to suit local conditions, and the resulting hedges survive today in the form of what are known locally as “lopped trees,” living relics of a vanished system of agrarian custom with ancient roots in northwestern Europe.

### **Descriptions and definitions**

Lopped trees are commonly encountered in the form of single rows of strangely shaped hardwood trees, typically white oak (*Quercus alba*), with low horizontal branches oriented in a distinctive candelabra-like form. Found along roadsides, property boundaries, and the borders of vanished farmland, and frequently associated with ditch-and-mound earthworks, they are best understood not as individual trees but rather as

linear associations of trees or hedgerows. Lopped trees may superficially resemble the so-called "trail marker trees" or "Indian trees" of the Upper Midwest, but these have a completely different origin.<sup>3</sup> While they may coincide with property boundaries, lopped trees are also distinct from the so-called "bound trees," individual trees bearing blazes or numbers that were designated as fixed points of reference in surveys of town boundaries or private home lots and that frequently appear in early Long Island deeds and town land records.<sup>4</sup>



Lopped Tree in Connetquot.

In the literature of plant ecology, hedges are classified as *planted*, *spontaneous*, or *remnant*, according to their origins relative to surrounding vegetation.<sup>5</sup> Lopped trees are an example of a remnant hedge: unlike planted hedges, the plants for which are imported from elsewhere, the initial trees used to form a lopped tree hedge are remnants of the original forest that were retained when it was cleared for agriculture. A border of trees one or two rods wide would be left around the edges of the new field, through which a ditch measuring two to three feet deep and wide would be excavated, the earth thrown up on one side to form a linear mound. What remained was "the task of felling the trees lengthwise of the ditch, so that the mound would be topped with a fence of living tree trunks." This "lopping" (equivalent to "laying" or "plashing" in British usage) was accomplished with the help of a boy assistant who would climb the tree and pull it over, so that it would fall in the proper orientation and with minimal cutting. The lopping would be

repeated every twenty-five years, once a generation.<sup>6</sup> Lopped trees, however, are frequently found without ditch-and-mound earthworks, and the earthworks are frequently found without lopped trees.

### Early Historical Accounts

The mundane features of daily life are seldom recorded in significant detail by diarists and other observers, and this scarcity of documentary material is one of the great challenges of research in environmental history.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, primary accounts of farm hedging on Long Island in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries are very few, and those that do exist come mainly from the accounts of visitors and passing travelers rather than local residents. Among the earliest extant Long Island travelogues, that of the Scotsman Dr. Alexander Hamilton in 1744, there is no mention of lopped trees or any other farm hedging or fencing, although Hamilton does offer a unique and significant early description of burnt over Pine Barrens vegetation along the Middle Country Road in Brookhaven.<sup>8</sup> Yet Hamilton's route, from the Brooklyn ferry to Jamaica, Hempstead, Huntington, Smithtown, Brookhaven, Riverhead, Southold, and finally Oysterponds (Orient), from which he made the crossing to New London, Connecticut appears to be precisely the same as that taken by George Washington on his famous tour of Long Island in 1790, and may also have been the one followed in 1750 by Benjamin Franklin. Both Franklin and Washington left descriptions of lopped tree hedges in Suffolk County.

Franklin's account of Long Island hedges, unique in its emphasis on the technical and economic aspects of hedging, emerges in correspondence with his friend Rev. Jared Eliot, a prominent Connecticut agriculturist and author of *Essays upon Field Husbandry in New England* (1760). Franklin clearly implies that hedging was a response to a shortage of suitable timber for fencing, and was eager to see its introduction to long settled regions of eastern Pennsylvania that were already suffering from the depletion of local forest resources:

I request you to procure for me a particular Account of the manner of making a new kind of Fence we saw at Southold on Long Island, which consists of a Bank and Hedge: I would know every Particular relating to this Matter, as, the best Thickness, Height, and Slope of the Bank; the Manner of erecting it; the best Time for the Work; the best Way of planting the Hedge; the Price of the Work to Labourers per Rod or Perch, and whatever may be of Use for our Information here, who begin in many Places to be at a Loss for



Wood to make Fence with. We were told at Southold that this kind of Fencing had been long practis'd with Success at Southampton and other Places on the South Side of the Island, but was new among them. I heard the Minister of Southold is esteem'd an ingenious Man; perhaps you may know him, and he will at your Request favour me with an explicit Account of these Fences.<sup>9</sup>

It is unfortunate that no response by Eliot to Franklin's queries has survived.

George Washington noted lopped tree hedges in the vicinity of Coram in 1790, but saw them as evidence of slovenliness and poor husbandry rather than industry. Like Franklin, he associated the practice with shortage of materials for conventional fencing, but in terms of stone rather than timber.

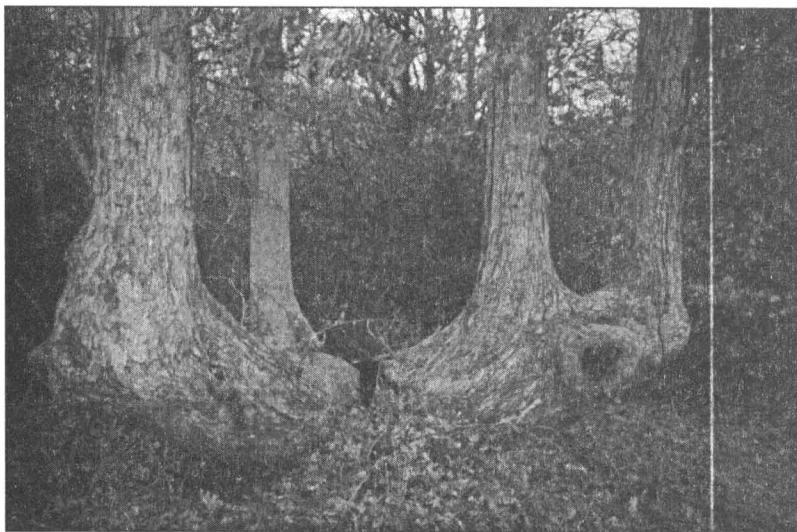
Their fences, where there is no Stone, are very indifferent; frequently of plashed trees of *any & every* kind which have grown by chance; but it exhibits an evidence that very good fences may be made in this manner either of white Oak or Dogwood which from this mode of treatment grows thickest, and most stubborn. This however, would be no defense against Hogs.<sup>10</sup>

If Washington saw lopped trees in central Brookhaven town where Hamilton did not, it is possible they weren't any there in 1744. Hamilton's humanistic description of Long Island seems more concerned with people than trees and agriculture, so even if he saw lopped trees he may simply not have cared. Furthermore, neither Hamilton, Franklin, nor Washington appears to have visited the South Fork, where hedging had been "long practis'd" according to Franklin. Yet even the observant Timothy Dwight of Yale College, who noted the Dwarf Pine Plains in Westhampton, the treeless barrens of Canoe Place (Shinnecock), and even the fruit trees in Rev. Lyman Beecher's garden in East Hampton in his tour of Long Island in 1804, makes no mention of lopped trees. Indeed, the first visitor to mention the existence of lopped trees in Southampton was Nathaniel Prime in 1845, who speaks of "fences . . . composed in a great measure of *living material*."<sup>11</sup>

### **Origins and Development**

Fences were among the most dramatic symbols of the introduction of

European systems of agriculture and land tenure in the New World. Fencing was an important part of any claim of land ownership, the erection of a fence around the privately owned home lot was an act as symbolic as it was utilitarian, and one bearing definite legal implications and responsibilities (enforced, on Long Island as in New England, by the town officer known as the "fence viewer"). Some of the earliest laws of the Town of Southampton, Long Island's first English town, are concerned with fencing and the control of livestock. One such law, dated May 28, 1643, states that every townsman must contribute to the maintenance of the portion of the town's "common fence" adjacent to his home lot, and that the fence should be post-and-rail, four rails high. Another regulation, enacted March 6, 1645, goes so far as to state that any townsman who has properly fenced his own home lot, but whose neighbor fails to fence his, would have "the benefit of the herbidge" on his neighbor's lot, and that the neighbor would be forbidden to make improvements on his home lot "unless the sayd person shall fence as aforesayd." In East Hampton, those found delinquent in their fencing were exposed by having their initials carved into the fence for all to see.<sup>12</sup>



Lopped tree in Amagansett

As we have seen, both Benjamin Franklin and George Washington associated the use of hedges on Long Island with a lack of fencing material. But how could this have been? Were there no trees? Perhaps not, as tradition records the landscape of Long Island in the colonial period to have been "in great measure bare of timber," in the words of the

nineteenth-century Huntington historian Silas Wood, with large trees a scarce commodity in the vicinity of settlements. While Wood ascribed this denuded condition to forest fires set by Native Americans, the farming, shipbuilding, and cordwood cutting activities of the European settlers were much more extensive. "Old accounts, as well as old pictures, tell us that by the year 1700 the primeval woods had been mostly cleared off and that the villages, which are now shaded, then loomed up on treeless fields," writes Robert Cushman Murphy.<sup>13</sup>

In this treeless landscape cattle were king, and the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries should be remembered as the great period of pastoralism on Long Island. Of the inhabitants of Suffolk County, Smith's *History of the Province of New-York* (1757) says, "The Farmers are, for the most part, Graziers." As described by Murphy, "The countryside between villages for the better part of two centuries became indifferent pasture full of half-wild cattle, horses, and sheep," that is to say, an open range. Bidwell and Falconer report that the combined tax lists of ten Long Island towns in 1675 show 4,293 neat cattle, 1,564 sheep, 1,344 swine, and 941 horses, phenomenally large numbers for that early date. Given this animal abundance, the initial purpose of fencing in the colonial period was not the containment of livestock in fields, but rather the *exclusion* of free-ranging stock from the small area of improved land, the "home lots" or "pightles." The latter term, variously spelled "pichtel", "pikel," or "pikell," (from the Middle English *pigtel*, a small field or enclosure) persisted in common usage on Long Island through the end of the nineteenth-century as a designation for the outdoor portion of the domestic space (roughly synonymous with the modern suburban "yard") long after it had become a forgotten archaism in the rest of the English-speaking world.<sup>14</sup>

To be sure, large quantities of cordwood were cut from the Pine Barrens and shipped from isolated North Shore landings to New York City and the Hudson Valley, a trade that continued through the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, but this forestry activity was removed from the centers of population and agriculture in Suffolk County, which were at that time concentrated on the East End.<sup>15</sup> In the very same period, farmers on the North Fork were forced to import wooden "fencing stuff" from Connecticut at considerable expense, while some on the South Fork are reported to have built their pightle fences from salvaged shipwreck timbers.<sup>16</sup> In the face of this harsh economic reality, hedging would have presented an attractive alternative to the crection of miles of expensive wooden post-and-rail fencing. Similar pressures moved the inhabitants of treeless Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, to fence their fields with hedges and ditches also, and in the late 1700s the Swedish botanist Pehr Kalm saw hedges of privet (*Ligustrum*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus*) on

treeless farms in eastern Pennsylvania, much as Franklin had envisioned decades earlier.<sup>17</sup>

While farm hedging clearly can be interpreted as a rational strategy of adaptation to local depletion of forest resources, the lopped tree phenomenon on Long Island furnishes an example of the persistence of European tradition in a New World environment, a clever story of Englishmen making English hedges. Numerous authors as far back as Timothy Dwight have sought to portray the pre-twentieth-century rural culture of eastern Long Island as an insular relic of Old England, its inhabitants retaining the archaic language and customs of their ancestral land.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the first hedges on Long Island were of Old World species almost certainly grown from seeds or live plants imported from England, and different plant species appear to have been favored in different towns. Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) hedges were planted in Southampton, privet or "prim" (*Ligustrum*) in East Hampton, and hawthorn (*Crataegus*) may have been used in Smithtown. The differing choices of plant material may reflect the regional origins of the inhabitants of each town.<sup>19</sup>



Lopped tree at Laurel Lake

The supposed special status of eastern Long Island as a land of relics is certainly an exaggeration, as the survival and recombination of traditional British folk custom in various permutations has been well documented in other regions of the former American colonies. The cultural heritage of the several counties of East Anglia in particular was not unique to eastern Long Island but rather shared in common with the settlements of Puritan New England.<sup>20</sup> An overemphasis on the continuity

of tradition among colonial Long Islanders may cause us to lose sight of their capacity as innovators, adapting inherited technologies to the new conditions and new materials of the New World. This is especially relevant to the problem of the origin of lopped trees.

As noted above, lopped trees are a form of remnant hedge, a linear relic of the original forest vegetation that was retained when the land was cleared for agriculture and then trimmed regularly thereafter by "pleaching" or "lopping" to form a kind of living fence. In their heterogeneous structure and composition (formed from several types of native forest trees as opposed to a single species of planted exotic, and with multiple size and age classes of trees represented), lopped tree hedges were quite unlike the homogeneous planted hedges of Europe, and cannot be considered a direct continuation of European tradition.<sup>21</sup> If anything, the lopped tree hedges of Long Island represents a kind of creolization of husbandry, a synergistic combination of Old and New Worlds in response to a historical crisis in agriculture that has gone unrecorded and unremembered.

At some unknown date in the second half of the eighteenth-century, the prim hedges of East Hampton unaccountably died. "In the town of East Hampton, in Suffolk county, by the best computation, at least two hundred miles of good prim-hedge died in the course of two or three years," reports Ezra L'Hommedieu in 1794. The crisis soon spread west to Southampton, where the Blackthorn hedges also began to fail. The effect of the sudden disappearance of a large portion of the fencing in two adjacent towns was extreme beyond modern comprehension, "a greater loss to the inhabitants than if every house in the township had been burnt down at the time."<sup>22</sup> L'Hommedieu could not identify the cause of the mortality of the prim hedges, but his description of the malady responsible for the death of the Blackthorn is consistent with the black knot disease of cherries.<sup>23</sup> Writing some twelve years after L'Hommedieu, Rev. Lyman Beecher took an entirely different tack, unaccountably associating "the death of the prim" in East Hampton with a dramatic improvement in the public health of the town in the same period, as if to imply that the prim hedges died as a sacrificial scapegoat to expiate the sins of the community.<sup>24</sup>

Farmers who could not afford expensive post-and-rail fencing were forced to resort to meager temporary fencing of stakes and poles, and experiments with replacement hedging species yielded decidedly mixed results. The native black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) and locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) were rejected as both "easily destroyed by cattle, who are fond of the leaves," but hedges of apple (*Malus domestica*) grown from the seed rich waste pomace of cider mills had some success.<sup>25</sup> The real innovation, however, came in East Hampton when attention was turned to

the native oaks (*Quercus*) and hickories (*Carya*):

It is found that where lands have been cleared, and young oaks, walnut, or any other trees that will bear lopping, have been left, they have answered well for a hedge by lopping the same on a ditch, and it is a good fence against cattle and sheep.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, was recorded the birth of the lopped tree hedge on Long Island. The practice soon spread to neighboring towns, and lopped tree hedges appear to have formed a significant component of the farm fencing in the region in the early nineteenth-century.<sup>27</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The end of the nineteenth-century brought a dramatic expansion and intensification of market gardening and truck farming on Long Island. Farmers in Suffolk County were now producing fresh vegetables for sale in the markets of Brooklyn and Manhattan, and this transformation of the economics of agriculture became manifest in changing patterns of land use and land ownership, and in the very appearance of the landscape itself. Unlike traditional mixed husbandry, truck farming did not involve livestock and so had no need for fenced pastures, and agricultural machinery made large fields more efficient than small. Hedgerows and fences, which just a generation before had been an essential component of the agricultural infrastructure, were now barriers to the modernization of production, literally a waste of space. The Northport farmer and agricultural writer William Crozier reported in 1884 that he had “torn down miles upon miles of fences, and have gained by it a great deal of the very best land,” and he recommended that other farmers do the same. In this way many miles of lopped tree hedges were removed as colonial era five acre fields were joined together to make massive new potato farms.<sup>28</sup> While farmers may have been unsentimental about the removal of the hedges, Long Island historians and naturalists such as Martha Flint and William Tracy expressed dismay at the loss. “However unprofitable and shiftless these old hedgerows may be from an economic point of view,” Tracy observed in 1893, “they are often exceedingly beautiful, not only of themselves, but in their effect upon the landscape.” He warned that they were being “rapidly rooted out, and a few years hence hardly one of them will be left.”<sup>29</sup>

Now in the twenty-first century, lopped trees may still be found throughout Suffolk County, although they are most numerous in Brookhaven, Southampton, and East Hampton towns. Local concentrations are evident in Middle Island, Manorville, North Sea, and

Springs. Lopped trees may be seen at Connetquot State Park and Preserve in Oakdale and at Cathedral Pines County Park in Middle Island. Extensive networks of lopped tree hedges and ditches may be traced through the woods in Sears-Bellows County Park in Flanders. While many roadside lopped trees have been lost to widened highways, perhaps the most famous alignment of lopped trees may be seen along the Northern State Parkway, just east of Route 110 in Melville.

As noted by Bryson, any hedgerow will eventually become a mere line of trees if it is left alone.<sup>30</sup> This ecological dynamic has obscured the origin of lopped trees, and it is difficult for the casual observer to understand how a row of strangely shaped trees could have once formed any kind of barrier to livestock. Once their story is known, however, lopped trees emerge as unique living monuments to the changing face of agriculture and land use on Long Island. Their presence throughout the Pine Barrens region in particular serves as a reminder that this landscape has been extensively modified and managed by human hands in the centuries since European settlement and can hardly be considered a "wilderness."<sup>31</sup>

Lopped trees will not be with us forever. The process of "lopping," although neglected for the last century or more, has weakened the trees significantly and exposed them to the effects of rot and disease, and they are rapidly dying. There is little that can be done to prevent this, and it can be said with certainty that within a few decades there will be no lopped trees left alive anywhere on Long Island. With their passing we will lose one of the last extant components of the agricultural landscape of colonial Long Island.

#### **Editor's Note:**

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#### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Martha B. Flint, *Early Long Island* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Bill Bryson, "Britain's Hedgerows," *National Geographic*, September 1993, 94-117; also Oliver Rackham, *The History of the Countryside* (London: J. M. Dent, 1986), 181-204; Robert J. Manner, "The Man in the Moon and Hedging," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* XLVIII (1949), 1-14.

<sup>3</sup> Charles E. Brown, "Trail Marking Trees," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 21(3, 1940): 48-50; Dorothy M. Brown, "Indian Tree Myths and Legends," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 19 no. 2 (1938): 30-36; Robert E. Ritzenthaler, "Trail Marker Trees," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 46, no. 3 (1965), 183-189.

<sup>4</sup> See Kate W. Strong, "Old Wills and Bound Trees," *Long Island Forum*, August 1948, 149-154. Note that the accompanying photograph confuses the issue by showing a lopped tree rather than a bound tree *per se*.

<sup>5</sup> Richard T. T. Forman and Jacques Baudry, "Hedgerows and Hedgerow Networks in Landscape Ecology," *Environmental Management* 8 (6, 1984): 495-510; Jacques Baudry, R. G. H. Bunce, and F. Burel, "Hedgerows: An International Perspective on Their Origin, Function, and Management," *Journal of Environmental Management* 60 (2000), 7-22.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Overton, "Old Lopped-Tree Fences," *Long Island Forum* (March 1943), 49-50. For a survey of farm fencing traditions elsewhere in the United States, and where lopped trees fit in this context, see Mamie Meredith, "The Nomenclature of American Pioneer Fences," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* XV (1951), 109-151, as well as Mary Catherine Davis, "Another Pioneer Fence: The Lopped Tree Fence," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* XXI (1957), 174-175.

<sup>7</sup> The diary of Ebenezer Miller of Miller Place, one of the richest remaining records of the agricultural routines of eighteenth-century Long Island, contains but a single reference to fencing. See Ebenezer Miller, *Diary of Ebenezer Miller of Miller Place, Long Island, New York 1762-1768*, edited by Margaret D. Gass and William H. White (Miller Place, NY: privately printed, 1996), 10 and 4n.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Hamilton, *Hamilton's Itinerarium*, edited by Albert B. Hart (Saint Louis, MO: William K. Bixby, 1907), 108-117.

<sup>9</sup> Letter of correspondence between Benjamin Franklin and Jared Eliot, 25 Oct. 1750, Yale University Library, Franklin Collection. The minister at Southold at the time was Rev. William Throop (1720-1756).

<sup>10</sup> George Washington, *The Diary of George Washington From 1789 to 1791*, edited by Benjamin J. Lossing (Williamstown, Mass.: Corner House Publishers, 1978), 128.

<sup>11</sup> Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York* (Cambridge:



Belknap, 1969) III, 198-235; Nathaniel S. Prime, *A History of Long Island* (New York: Robert Carter, 1845), 54.

<sup>12</sup> William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 127-156; *Records of the Town of Southampton* (Sag Harbor, NY: John H. Hunt, 1874-1878) 1, 2, 29 and 36; Henry P. Hedges, *A History of the Town of East Hampton* (Sag Harbor, NY: J. P. Hunt, 1897).

<sup>13</sup> Silas Wood, *A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns of Long Island* (Brooklyn, NY: Alden Spooner), 1-5; Robert C. Murphy, *Fish-Shape Paumanok: Nature and Man on Long Island* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1964), 40.

<sup>14</sup> W. Smith, *The History of the Province of New-York* (London: Thomas Wilcox, 1757), 206; Murphy, *Fish-Shape Paumanok*, 41 and 52; Percy W. Bidwell and John I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States 1620-1860* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 26; Michael Williams, *Americans and Their Forests: A Historical Geography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 69.

<sup>15</sup> Marsha L. Hamilton, "Barren and Waste Land: Long Islanders and the Pine Barrens," *Long Island Historical Journal* 10: 2 (1998), 207-221.

<sup>16</sup> "C. N. B.," "Farming on Long Island," *The Cultivator*, June 1848, 187; J. T. Adams, *History of the Town of Southampton* (Bridgehampton, NY: Hampton Press, 1918). Adams claims (209-210) that "many a barn yard or pigstile fence in Southampton and in fact all over the southern coast of Long Island was made wholly or in part of the ribs and planks of ships."

<sup>17</sup> Charles E. Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard* (Boston: George Dean, 1911) I, 492; Pehr Kalm, *Pehr Kalm's Travels in North America*, translated and edited by A. B. Benson (New York: Dover, 1966); see also E. L. Larsen, "Pehr Kalm's Observations Concerning the Usefulness of the American So-Called Cockspur Hawthorn for Quickset Hedges," *Agricultural History* 19 (1945), 254-255.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York* III, 218-219; Murphy, *Fish-Shape Paumanok*, 49-54.

<sup>19</sup> Ezra L'Hommedieu, "On Ditches and Hedges," *Transactions of the Society Instituted in the State of New York for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts, and Manufactures* 2 (1794), 103-105. Also Robert L.

Miller, "Bread and Cheese Hollow: A New Interpretation for an Old Name," *Long Island Forum* Spring 1994, 17-22; Miller suggests that settler Richard "Bull" Smith may have demarcated the western bound of his landholding in Smithtown in the late 1600s with a planted hedge of Hawthorn. Unlike his East Anglian neighbors on the East End, Smith was a Yorkshireman.

<sup>20</sup> David H. Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); David G. Allen, *In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transferal of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

<sup>21</sup> Overton, "Old Lopped-Tree Fences;" Forman and Baudry, "Hedgerows and Hedgerow Networks in Landscape Ecology;" Baudry, Bunce and Burel, "Hedgerows: An International Perspective."

<sup>22</sup> L.Hommedieu, "On Ditches and Hedges," 103.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 104: For a modern technical description of black knot disease, see Wayne A. Sinclair, Howard H. Lyon, and Warren T. Johnson, *Diseases of Trees and Shrubs* (Ithaca, NY: Comstock Publishing Associates, 1987), 152-153.

<sup>24</sup> Lyman Beecher, *Sermon, Containing a General History of the Town of East-Hampton (L.I.)* (Sag Harbor, NY: Alden Spooner, 1806), 29.

<sup>25</sup> L.Hommedieu, "On Ditches and Hedges," 104-105.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>27</sup> In October of 1821, the Town of Brookhaven expressed concern that the Middle Country Road between Westfields (Selden) and Coram villages had become "in many places too narrow and much obstructed" by "hedge fences". A resolution was made to reestablish the public right of way by clearing the road to a width of four rods, "on or before the first day of may next," *Records of the Town of Brookhaven* (Port Jefferson, NY: Times Steam Job Print, 1888), 236.

<sup>28</sup> Bidwell and Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States*, 242; Murphy, *Fish-Shape Paumanok*, 43; William Crozier and Peter Henderson, *How the Farm Pays* (New York: Peter Henderson,

1884), 223; Overton, "Old Lopped-Tree Fences," 49.

<sup>29</sup> William W. Tracy, "The Old Hedgerows of Long Island," *Garden and Forest* 6 (1893), 57.

<sup>30</sup> Bryson, "Britain's Hedgerows," 111.

<sup>31</sup> Leonard G. Paul, *The Pine Barrens of Ronkonkoma: A Guide for the Hiker to the Long Island Pine Barrens*, (New York: New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, 1986), 23; Hamilton, "Barrens and Waste Land."

## ELWOOD: PIECING TOGETHER HISTORY

Charolotte Muchnik

*Once a tiny farming community, Elwood has managed to preserve a distinct identity despite lacking a post office, a downtown and being sandwiched between East Northport, Huntington, Greenlawn, Dix Hills, and Commack. Huntington resident Charlotte Muchnik hobbles together a history of this sometimes overlooked hamlet through personal interviews with living members of one of the first families to settle the area, as well as the examination of other historical sources.*

The old fashioned little Red Schoolhouse comes to mind when thinking of Elwood, a small hamlet within the Town of Huntington. One can easily conjure up those days when a teacher might have taught a class with students from four grades instead of one - a time when life was uncomplicated. Elwood was one of those communities where a main street and the group of stores at its core have never stayed in place for long. In the 1950s the vague boundaries of Elwood began at the red silos and barns of King's Dairy which sat on the vast expanse of land sandwiched between East Deer Park Road and Jericho Turnpike. Black and white cows grazed contentedly on the adjacent meadow swishing their tails back and forth to shoo away a fly here or there. A dairy was established here in 1948, with a few goats and a milk route. Continuing east on the north side of Jericho Turnpike, Harvey's Burger 'N Bun stood out with its colorful miniature golf course. East of Elwood Road was Acme Supermarket next to Nordale Pharmacy, followed by Friendly Frost. Mueller's Meats was on the opposite side of Jericho next to a German bakery, the only one for miles around. Parallel to this strip of establishments the remainder of Elwood stretched north of Jericho Turnpike for about two miles.<sup>1</sup>

There is very little known about Elwood until the mid-twentieth-century. However, in his 1874 book about Suffolk County Richard Bayles mentions an area known as Cuba, a sprawling region land just south of Greenlawn. A 1909 map indicates a farm called Cuba encompassing the same spot. Bayles goes on to write about Elwood to the southeast, sparsely settled by a few families with large farms. The early settlers of Huntington were drawn to the level land which was recognized for its potential ability to yield abundant vegetation. Cuba Hill Road and the school later built on the hill at the western end of this street took their names from this early area.<sup>2</sup>

There is no definitive information on how Elwood got its name, although Anita Singer gives one possible explanation in an article from the *Long Islander*. She recounts that Elkanah Wood settled in North

Dix Hills, the original name for Elwood. Whether the El from Elkanah and Wood from his last name led to the name Elwood is not documented, yet Singer contends that it is a possibility.<sup>3</sup>

During the late nineteenth-century North or Upper Dix Hills referred to the hills just north of the Turnpike and South Dix Hills referred to those hills on the opposite side. Dix Hills was named for the Secatogue Indian, Dick Pechegan who had his crops planted on the hills and fields of that segment of town and his wigwam was set up there too. Somewhere along the line Dick's Hill became the shortened Dix Hills and the original boundaries encompassing parts of Wolf Hill Road, Caledonia Road, and Vanderbilt Parkway have actually expanded to include Deer Park and Commack.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Soper Family**

The Soper family of Elwood dates back to the 1600s when Henry Soper established mills by the wood dock on Huntington Harbor's west side, and set up residence in the Dix Hills/Elwood region and became the town's first brick maker. Based on the memories of his living relatives, some of whom continue to live in the area, Jacob Soper established a general store in a section of his home which still stands today on 462 Elwood Road. Since the family always seemed to be lending many things to those that lived nearby, they decided to transform this friendly attitude into a profit making arrangement which sometimes entailed selling goods which were shipped as much as fifty miles to the general store.<sup>5</sup>

Elwood does not presently have its own post office, but in 1870, Soper's son Henry Edgar added one to the family's business near his home just north of his father's home on Elwood Road. The post office is listed in an 1873 Beers & Comstock map of Huntington. The map shows "Elwood P.O." in upper case letters. The U.S. National Archives and Records Service in Washington, D.C. recorded that Uriah Baker was appointed postmaster of the Elwood Post Office on June 7, 1870 and Henry E. Soper was appointed on May 6, 1873. Out of the nine postmasters appointed to the Elwood Post Office, five were from the Soper family. The post office operation was discontinued October 31, 1902.<sup>6</sup>

A short distance away in Northport, George Scudder Soper, Henry's brother, was the proprietor of a general store at Scudder Avenue and Woodbine Avenue. Upon Henry's death, George attempted to further expand the conveniences provided at the Soper operation in Elwood by incorporating the services of a tax collector. When George died in 1888, his wife Phoebe Gildersleeve took over the store for only

two years. At that point the combination general store, post office and tax collection operation was put up for auction marking the end of that



The Soper House in 2002.

establishment. A Town of Huntington Historic Cemetery located on Elwood Road north of the Soper house is a graveyard for the Soper family. The headstones for these graves are either missing or never existed.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Conklin Family**

Conklin is a name that has been seen in all parts of Long Island for over 300 years. The history of the family in Elwood was related by three living members - Albert, Gladys, and Eleanor - in interviews conducted in 2003. According to the three living Conklin's, their father, William Conklin, worked as captain of an oyster boat that journeyed between Providence, Rhode Island and Northport, Long Island at the end of the nineteenth-century. He tried his hand at house contracting for a short time, but when the Brush Farm became available in Elwood, Conklin started a farm of his own growing potatoes, cabbages and other vegetables on fifty-six acres of land that he purchased for \$20,000. The house that he lived in was across the street from the present home in which the Conklin's now reside.<sup>8</sup>

Conklin worked his fields with vigor. He met and married Cora Skidmore and they had three children, Albert, Gladys and Eleanor. The Skidmore family was well-established in Deer Park, a town a few miles south of Elwood. Cora's father, Leegrand Skidmore, made his living by carting money around by horse and wagon in Manhattan, a kind of old fashioned Brink's truck. Later on, the Conklin's sold their farm and purchased the Thomas Rogers' peach orchard, where they also grew potatoes, cabbages and other vegetables.

A wagon piled high with vegetables and pulled by a team of horses was a familiar sight for Albert Conklin. These daily journeys to the Wallabout Market in Brooklyn (later the Brooklyn Navy Yard) were necessary for the farmers to bring their produce to market. The farmer's most prized asset was the team of horses that drew the market wagon full of produce. A good team might be spared the labor of plowing and other farm duties and used almost exclusively for the trip to market. The farmer and the team would set out in the evening with a fully packed, carefully balanced load. The farmer might stop at a livery stable west of Jamaica during the night to water his animals or exchange his team for a fresh one for the final leg to Brooklyn. The original team would be picked up on the return home the following day. The trips were sometimes dangerous, and William Conklin would eventually be killed in a wagon excursion on a trip back from the Yaphank army camp in the early 1920s. He is buried in the Northport Rural Cemetery.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Conklin/Silberstein Family**

After William Conklin died in the early 1920s, Mrs. Conklin met and eventually married Isaac Silberstein, one of five Silberstein brothers (Charlie, Harry, Max and Morris being the other four). Mr. and Mrs. Silberstein decided to join the old Conklin Farm with his adjacent property and make it into one large farm. "Ike" Silberstein, as he was known by friends, had grown up in Elwood after his family moved from Dix Hills near Jericho Turnpike in 1892, when he wasn't even a year old. Later on Ike began growing crops with his brother Charlie. Their property extended from what is now Elwood Road stretching westward to what is presently Cuba Hill Road.<sup>10</sup>

Ike and Charlie Silberstein ventured into the dairy business in the early 1920s and had 150 head of cattle in the 1930s. Molly Schoen quoted Roy Lynch who was an employee of the dairy for about ten years.

And it was raw milk at the time. That was right direct from the cow to the separators in the house over the cooler into the cans. And

then from there it was put right on the truck and I did the delivery . . . to Riverhead, Amityville, Syosset. I had a two and a half ton truck and we had forty quart cans of milk at a time.<sup>11</sup>

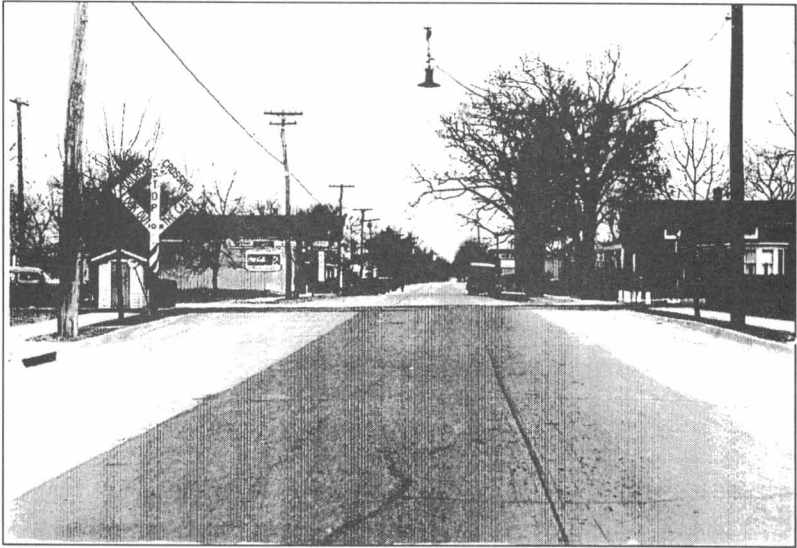
A collection of about thirty men hired from a city agency would hand milk every cow at two o'clock in the morning and two o'clock each afternoon. This team of workers would travel by railroad to either East Northport or Greenlawn station where Mr. Lynch or Albert Conklin would transport them back to the farm. At six o'clock in the morning, after the crew had finished milking, they would take care of the animals and make certain the barns were clean before they went to eat breakfast. There were no wells at the time, so horses drank rain water collected from a cistern on the roof. Mr. Lynch related to Molly Schoen that Mrs. Silberstein and her daughter Carol prepared the food for the workers, who did not earn much in those years, but were offered three meals a day and lived on the farm. Gladys Conklin was the bookkeeper at the dairy for eight years from 1933-1941, and she continued to keep it all in the family when she married Charlie Silberstein.

The crew that worked at Silberstein's Dairy was transported from the city by train, usually to the neighboring village of Greenlawn just two miles away, where the tracks ran across Broadway in the center of town. The railroad crossing was not a particularly busy one in the 1920s and 1930s, or even in the 1940s. At this point, there were no flashing lights to warn of an oncoming train or crossing gates to prevent cars from passing over the tracks. However, during the day whenever a train was scheduled to pass by, the barber in town Mr. Bivona, would stand by with a steel pole that was topped with a small circular sign that had the word STOP printed in black letters. When the train was coming he would face the traffic and rotate the sign to STOP signaling the oncoming cars to halt. Beginning at dusk the job of gesturing to the traffic was accomplished using a lit lantern to alert the vehicles that they needed to stop for an approaching train. A tiny wooden building equipped with a potbelly stove stood on the northwest side of the tracks to protect the railroad crossing guard from the harsh elements.<sup>12</sup>

Since Charlie Silberstein was a recognized expert on cattle, he took pride in the fact that each year of the Cow Harbor Day parade he was the farmer who was asked by the promoters to supply the cow that rode on the platform in the procession. During the time that the dairy was in operation and even for a period of time after it shut down, the Silbersteins sold cows to some well-known people who lived in



Huntington or in neighboring towns. Secretary of State Henry Stimson, who had owned his farm Highhold (situated on 100 acres of land in West Hills) since the early part of the century, often bought cows from



Broadway Railroad Crossing in Greenlawn looking north, circa 1944. Courtesy Greenlawn-Centerport Historical Association.

the Silbersteins. Stimson's wife Mabel enjoyed flowers and tended an extensive garden at the farm. She would buy flowers from the farmers, but Albert remembered that Mabel often emphatically reminded them that she didn't like or want any yellow flowers! President Theodore Roosevelt was another famous person whom the Silbersteins encountered in their business dealings. According to Albert Conklin, Roosevelt, who lived with his family at Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, also purchased cows from Ike Silberstein. A vivid memory of Roosevelt's wife sitting all in white on a black iron chair still remains with Albert after all these years.

Some years back the Silbersteins sold the dairy and the new owners selected Oak Tree Farms as the present name of the operation. There are no longer any cows kept on the property, but up until a short time ago when the property was sold, milk was trucked in, pasteurized and put into bottles on the farm.

### **The Little Red School House**

The Little Red Schoolhouse in Elwood was the center of education in this small community from the time it opened its doors in 1915 until

the more modern Cuba Hill School (now James H. Boyd Intermediate) was built in 1955. Located at 330 Cuba Hill Road, this structure was constructed at a cost of \$7,000 and is currently listed on the Inventory of Historic Structures.<sup>13</sup>

According to Henry Shea, a long-time resident of Elwood, the area's earliest schoolhouse was built around 1840 and further south, but on the same parcel of land where the Little Red Schoolhouse now stands. It was a crude, wooden structure of one room with a stove in the center of the wooden floor and bench-type chairs along the walls. Two essential tasks that needed to be completed every school day were stoking of the fire and fetching water for the class. A boy at a higher grade level who required no permission to leave his seat, tossed wood into the stove as needed, providing heat and according to students from that schoolroom, a large helping of smoke.<sup>14</sup>

By 1912, the schoolhouse was no longer large enough to house the students from the community, and it was time to build a new school. During the period that this was taking place, students attended class in another building. In the early 1980s Barbara Brand interviewed Henry Shea who told her that a structure on the northeast corner of Burr Road and Elwood Road, which had served as Silberstein's Butcher Shop, was utilized for this purpose. However, Albert Conklin reports that the Silbersteins never had such a store, although they did have a slaughter house and he didn't recall any building owned by them that was ever an interim schoolhouse.<sup>15</sup>



The "Little Red Schoolhouse" was built in 1914 and wasn't red. Courtesy of Hunt. Hist. Society.

The Little Red Schoolhouse did not start out red and did not include indoor plumbing until 1932, when lavatories were built on the east and west sides of the main entrance. Prior to that the girls went to

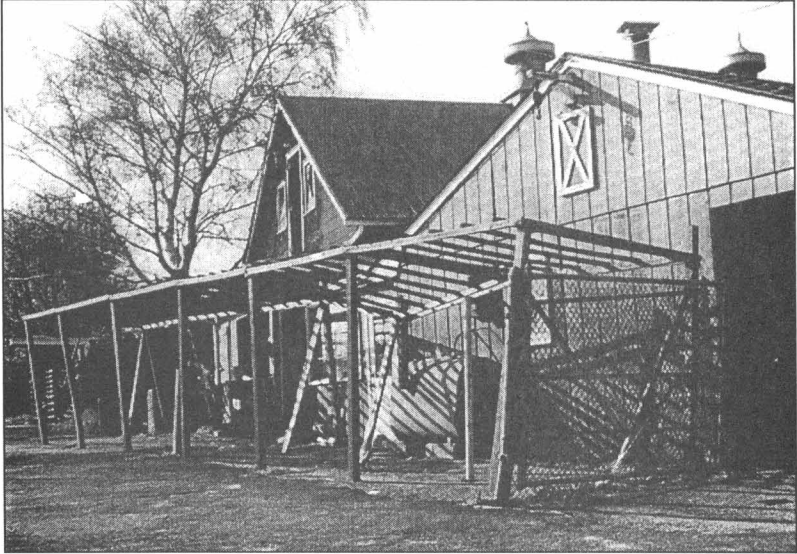
an outhouse on one side of the building and the boys had their crude facility on the opposite side from the girls.<sup>16</sup>

It was common practice for an out-of-district instructor to live with a neighboring family for the duration of the semester. There was one teacher, usually a woman, for each of the two classes. Two other schools were built during the early fifties in Elwood, but the Little Red Schoolhouse continued educating students even through 1958. There were two classes on the first floor and two classes on the second with one class being taught by Mrs. Church, the future wife of James H. Boyd who eventually became Superintendent of the Elwood School District. Since the Little Red Schoolhouse only accommodated students up to the eighth grade and, at that point Elwood had no high school of its own, families often car pooled to take high school students from Elwood to Northport High School where they could attend for an annual fee. Later, Elwood District hired a bus which transported Elwood and Commack students to Northport High School.<sup>17</sup>

### **A Farming Community Starts to Stir**

Elwood was a sleepy hamlet in the 1920s and 1930s. Modern conveniences were starting to trickle into parts of Long Island, but Elwood was one of the last places to feel the effects of those changes. There was no electricity or running water in most of the area until the late 1920s. The Silberstein Farm did have electricity, although it was without indoor plumbing or running water until the early 1930s when a well was finally installed near the dairy. Early on, it was difficult for most homeowners to dig wells in this part of Long Island. The soil contained an abundance of clay and in order to reach the water table it was necessary to dig down 200 feet.<sup>18</sup> At this point in time, many Elwood residents had no means for digging a hole that deep, so their water supply came from the same place as that of their livestock: cisterns on their roofs that collected rainwater. This method was sufficient for personal needs, but crops suffered when there was a dry spell.

As the years passed Elwood began to catch up with the rest of the town in terms of water and electricity connections. By the 1960s, the hamlet's population began to increase rapidly. The school boundaries had expanded from their original two miles to the present 5-1/2 miles. Both of these developments necessitated the building of Elwood's own high school. Alice Carlson sold many of her acres between Cuba Hill Road and Elwood Road for this purpose and a junior-senior high school was opened in 1962. The name John Glenn was chosen to commemorate America's first earth orbiting astronaut.



Out buildings from old Silberstein Farm – 2002.

The Silberstein sign is no longer used and now stands askew at its original site on Elwood Road. But if you pass through Elwood try to visualize how this area might have looked with a general store and post office, a tavern on Cedar Road, the Methodist church on the corner of Burr, the old Silberstein Dairy and, of course, the Little Red Schoolhouse at it heart. Observe and appreciate the bucolic setting that Elwood Road still affords, and view one of the last sections of Huntington that shows traces of the farming town of years past.<sup>19</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Albert Conklin, personal interview, Feb. 19, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Richard M. Bayles, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County* (New York: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1962), 166; *Atlas of Suffolk County* ( E. Belcher Hyde, 1909), plate 2. Since 1983 this intermediate school has gone by the name of James H. Boyd to commemorate a Superintendent of the Elwood District.

<sup>3</sup> Anita Singer, “Elwood: Compact, with Roots and Character,” *Newsday*, May 23, 1974, 16.

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<sup>4</sup> Romanah Sammis, *Huntington Babylon Town History* (New York: Huntington Historical Society, 1937), 233; *Home Town Long Island* (Brentwood, NY: Newsday, 2000), 200.

<sup>5</sup> Singer, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Historical information on Conklin and Silberstein families comes from personal interviews with Albert, Gladys, and Eleanor Conklin conducted throughout 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Hoffman, "The Perils of Farming in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries," *The Long Island Forum* 65, 4 (Fall, 2002): 8.

<sup>10</sup> Bernie Bookbinder, *Long Island People and Places - Past and Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 174; Singer, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Molly Schoen, ed. *East Northport: An Incomplete History* (East Northport, NY: Rotary Club of East Northport, 1987), 30.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Michelle Athanas, "The Little Red Schoolhouse," in *Elwood Library 2003-2004 Proposed Library Budget*, Mar. 2003; *Inventory of Historic Structures*, 1979 (Town of Huntington), GC55.

<sup>14</sup> Kerriann Brosky, *Huntington's Hidden Past* (Huntington, NY: Maple Hill Press, 1995), 133; Barbara Brand, "The First School in Elwood," (unpublished essay) 1980s. Barbara Brand is the unofficial Elwood historian who interviewed Henry Shea in the early 1980s and quoted him in her essay.

<sup>15</sup> Barbara Brand interview with Henry Shea in early 1980s.

<sup>16</sup> Mitzi Caputo memorandum, October 2, 1985. "The Date Red School House Was Built" Elwood Vertical File, Huntington Historical Society Library; Vincent Gillen to Caputo, 1985, Elwood Vertical File, Huntington Historical Society Library.

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<sup>17</sup> Brosky, 133; Gillen to Caputo; Caputo, "The Date Red School House Was Built"; Robert Ziemblicki, personal interview, Mar. 9 2004; Athanus, "The Little Red School House"; Gladys Conklin, personal interview, Feb. 19, 2003; Brand, "The First School in Elwood"; Albert Conklin, personal interview, Mar. 16, 2003; Terry LoPipero, personal interview, Mar. 3, 2004; Schoen, 91; Albert Conklin, personal interview, April 23, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher R. Vaghts, *Huntington at the Turn of the Century* (Huntington, N.Y.: Huntington Historical Society, 1974) 46.

<sup>19</sup> Albert Conklin, personal interview, April 23, 2003.

## **THE ORIGINS OF ADELPHI SUFFOLK COLLEGE: THE PORT JEFFERSON AND STONY BROOK INITIATIVES: 1953-1956**

*Leroy E. Douglas*

*Before the establishment of a state university in Stony Brook, Adelphi College in Garden City ran an extension program in Port Jefferson and struggled mightily to form a full service baccalaureate college in the area. Leroy E. Douglas details this exciting yet ultimately failed attempt to establish a private, four year degree granting college in the Setauket-Stony Brook area.*

Educational history was made in September 1960 when Adelphi College's Suffolk Division (Dowling College after 1968) began full time operations in Sayville as Suffolk County's first four year degree granting liberal arts college.<sup>1</sup> Adelphi-Suffolk was created in response to a very pressing educational need. While over six thousand students graduated from the forty-two high schools in Suffolk County in June 1960, the fastest growing county in the United States did not have a single four year college. Although Nassau and Suffolk had been fruitlessly lobbying officials of the State of New York for a Teachers College since the first decade of the twentieth-century century, the modern movement to establish a four year college in Suffolk began in the fall of 1954 when Carroll Loper, a resident of Port Jefferson, was appointed head of a special committee of the Long Island Association business group "to investigate the need for a State Teachers College here on Long Island."<sup>2</sup>

### **Adelphi's First Extension Courses in Suffolk: 1953-1954**

Adelphi College-Garden City began offering college extension courses in Suffolk in 1953, by providing nursing classes at Kings Park, Central Islip and Pilgrim State Psychiatric Hospitals. Adelphi also conducted college level courses in English, Psychology and Social Work at Pilgrim State Hospital for sixty-nine staff members during the 1954 school year. The strong interest shown in Adelphi's courses at the state mental hospitals in Suffolk prompted Academic Dean Francis K. Ballaine to conclude that "Adelphi College, as a community service, might offer courses in Education and Business Administration, in addition to those in nursing and liberal arts at a suitable center in Suffolk County." Civic minded individuals in the Port Jefferson-Stony Brook area, such as Dr. Stuart Gracey, George Crouse, Dr. Earl Vandermeulen, and Cecil L. Hall, joined Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy, Adelphi College's visionary president, to establish "a specific and concrete program" of college level extension classes for Suffolk County residents in Port Jefferson High School in the

evenings during the fall of 1955. The Port Jefferson pilot program gave Adelphi the opportunity to "measure the strength of interest in college extension work in Suffolk County." Dr. Eddy expanded Adelphi's evening extension courses in Suffolk to Riverhead and Patchogue High Schools in the Fall of 1957, and to Sayville Junior High School in the Fall of 1958.<sup>3</sup>

### **Suffolk Leaders Work For A Four Year College**

The directors of the Long Island Association met with leaders of The New York State Agricultural and Technical Institute, Adelphi College, and Hofstra College in September 1954 to convince the Commissioner For Higher Education of the University of the State of New York that Long Island would be an ideal place to establish a new teachers college. The Long Island Association's teacher college concept was enthusiastically received by residents of Port Jefferson, who wanted the institution located in their centrally located community to provide Suffolk's high school graduates the opportunity to attend a four year college nearer their home communities.<sup>4</sup>

Stuart Gracey, the far sighted publisher-editor of the Port Jefferson Record, endorsed the idea of a Long Island State Teachers' College in January 1955 saying there was "a tremendous need for such an institution." Gracey, an artist, singer, and patron of culture, reported that Earl Vandermeulen, the president of the New York State Teachers Association, and the Supervising Principal of the Port Jefferson schools, also supported the creation of a Long Island teachers college. Stuart Gracey suggested the State of New York use the "secluded" 660-acre Norman K. Winston estate in Belle Terre as a campus.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Gracey justified a teachers college on the grounds that "Suffolk County is the fastest growing county in the United States and yet has no institution of higher learning." He added that the western third of Long Island "has several colleges or universities" yet "the eastern two-thirds has had to send all of its high school graduates away . . . or get along without any higher education." A teachers college was needed in Suffolk, Gracey believed, not just to train new teachers, but to provide an accessible location for established teachers to earn Masters Degrees, and further enhance their professional development.<sup>6</sup> Gracey championed Port Jefferson as an ideal place for the four year college, stating: it "is located . . . near the geographical center of Suffolk," and because he felt many "cultural values would be added to our social existence." Gracey noted that "We are living within sixty miles of the greatest city in the world and yet in a multitude of ways we are still in the backwoods." He predicted that "a great university would bring us so much in the way of Art and Music, Science and Learning that we should evermore be beholden to it."



Gracey believed a state college would stimulate business. "The addition of thousand to five-thousand people within our community could transform Port Jefferson businesses," he wrote. "There is little likelihood that we could bring in an industry so large so close to our village and yet be so desirable in so many ways."<sup>7</sup>

Port Jefferson's leaders quickly supported the concept. Dr. Clarence Hansell, president of the Port Jefferson Board of Education, said a teachers college "would be a fine thing for the community" and indicated that although "Port Jefferson was not the center of population on Long Island, most of the upstate colleges are more or less removed from the center of population." Dr. Gerald Tape, president of the Port Jefferson Parent-Teachers Association and deputy director of the Brookhaven National Laboratories, enthusiastically endorsed the plan, stressing the cultural advantages a college would bring to the region. He looked forward to the arts, musical, and discussion programs a college would provide, and predicted that "many working people . . . would take advantage of courses . . . to better his or her education." David Alleman, president of the Chamber of Commerce, felt that the community would provide college students and faculty with many recreational activities such as, "access to all sports sailing, fishing, swimming, golf and tennis." Alleman said the "culture and educational opportunities afforded by such an addition to the community could never be counted in dollars and cents but would provide fine training for the youth in Port Jefferson and its environs . . . with a boundless benefit which could never be calculated."<sup>8</sup>

The drive for a state teachers college on Long Island received a big boost when a State Education Department report showed that while "a higher percentage of Long Island high school students plan to continue their education . . . Long Island has the smallest number of higher educational facilities" in the state. The report estimated that "about half of Long Island's high school students plan to continue their education" at a time when "Suffolk has no higher educational facilities, while Nassau has two private colleges and one agricultural institute."<sup>9</sup>

The Suffolk County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution in February 1955, introduced by Southold supervisor Norman E. Klipp, advising the New York State Board of Regents and the State University's Board of Trustees "to further the establishment of a State Teachers College in Suffolk County." The resolution indicated Suffolk's "willingness to cooperate in the selection of a site and all other aspects of such an undertaking." The New York State Assembly adopted a resolution, introduced by Assemblyman Elisha T. Barrett (R-Brightwaters), asking the State University to "take immediate action" to establish a teachers college on Long Island.<sup>10</sup>

On March 1, 1955, Dr. John Cranford Adams, the President of Hofstra College, was invited by Dr. Gracey to the Port Jefferson Rotary Club to discuss the future of higher education in Suffolk County. Dr. Adams advised the Rotarians to "get behind and push and do something now," if they wanted a teachers college in Port Jefferson. President Adams astutely predicted that "the great growth in population which is now being felt in the elementary and secondary schools, would within the next decade be a problem which can be solved only by the creation of more higher educational institutions." In an altruistic example of selflessness Dr. Adams, the president of a private college, called upon state and local government to create two community colleges in Nassau County, and two community colleges in Suffolk in addition to establishing a four year State teachers college in the region. Realizing that private colleges lacked the financial resources to meet the enormous upcoming higher educational needs of Long Island students, Dr. Adams said it was important for government to "take care of the educational needs of the local population" by insuring that "students would be able to live at home but still attend college." Dr. Adams disclosed that "while eighty-five percent of the high school graduates in Nassau County went on to college, only thirty-three percent of Suffolk high school graduates sought higher learning." Stuart Gracey later said that Dr. Adams' "figures were very startling to many of his listeners as well as to me and I made up my mind that I would do whatever was within my power to alleviate this situation."<sup>11</sup>

On March 7, 1955 William Haessig, Chairman of the Professional Education Committee for the Long Island Zone of the New York State Teachers' Association and Supervising Principal of the Half Hollow Hills Central School District, endorsed siting a state teachers college in Belle Terre in an address to the Port Jefferson Chamber of Commerce.<sup>12</sup> The State of New York signaled that it might develop colleges in Nassau and Suffolk when Frank C. Moore, a Republican from Buffalo, the Chairman of the State University's Board of Trustees, declared in April 1955 that "a special committee had determined that Long Island needs more post-high school institutions." Moore wanted data about "the extent to which private colleges or universities can relieve the burden of growing population and increased demand for higher education in the two counties."<sup>13</sup> The Trustees acted after a special committee, chaired by Frederick F. Greenman, a Manhattan Republican, had analyzed studies conducted by the State University staff members and the state Education Department. Moore forecast that by 1970, 26,000 Long Islanders would be "ready for post-high school courses, and he anticipated a 378 per cent increase "in the number of [high school] graduates in Nassau and Suffolk Counties within the next 15 years." The State University Chairman noted

that in 1954 approximately 5,000 Long Island high school graduates sought to attend college, but only about 1,000 actually "attended colleges or universities on Long Island."<sup>14</sup> In late April 1955 the New York State Board of Regents unanimously directed the trustees of the University of the State of New York "to draw up plans for a state teachers college on Long Island "by January 1, 1956 so as to "properly supplement the existing private college facilities."<sup>15</sup>

In July 1955, Philipp Hattermer, the Brookhaven Town Supervisor, told a town board meeting that he was "wholeheartedly in favor of locating a state teachers college in Suffolk County," adding that "he was inclined to believe that the best location would be in Brookhaven Town." Hattermer reported that he had recently joined "several educators and laymen from the Port Jefferson area" in a meeting with Frank C. Moore, the Chairman of the State University's Board of Trustees at the State Agricultural Institute in Farmingdale, and had lobbied for a teachers college in Port Jefferson, arguing that the cost of land would be lower in Brookhaven.<sup>16</sup>

### **Ward Melville's Land Offer**

August 1955 was a watershed month for the future of higher education in Suffolk County. Ward Melville, the philanthropic chairman of the board of the Melville Shoe Corporation, who lived "in the select settlement of Old Field," offered the State of New York one hundred acres in South Setauket as a site for the Long Island State Teachers College. Brookhaven Supervisor Hattermer was "happy to report that Ward Melville has offered to dedicate 100 acres of land and more if needed for use by a State Teachers College here."<sup>17</sup> R. Ford Hughes, the Suffolk County Republican leader, said that Melville's offer of property between the St. George Golf Course and Gould Road in South Setauket was "a grand gesture on the part of Ward Melville," which "is quite in keeping with his usual procedure of showing a great interest in the community."<sup>18</sup> Hattermer said Melville's land offer "came on the heels" of the town board's receiving a letter from the trustees of the University of The State of New York indicating that the trustees "would offer to Governor [Averell] Harriman a town board recommendation that the [teachers] college be built in Brookhaven." Hattermer was jubilant that the Brookhaven Town Board "now has something concrete to offer the [state] trustees."<sup>19</sup> Melville's offer of a hundred acres of valuable property in Setauket was made just as Robert Moses, the powerful Long Island State Parks Commissioner, "squashed hopes that the proposed college would be built on state-owned land at the Bayard Cutting estate" in Great River. The Port Jefferson Record reported that "The estate site suggested by the Islip Town Board was met with coolness by Moses, who stated the board

and others were wrong "in thinking that any state park or parkway property can be used for a state college."<sup>20</sup>

A historic precedent was established in August of 1955, when Brookhaven Supervisor Hattemer, a Republican from Patchogue, declared that "schools and educational matters must be kept out of politics" and election campaigns in Suffolk County. Hattemer's statement was a response to efforts by the Brookhaven Town Democratic Committee to enlist "the aid of Suffolk County leader Adrian Mason in the fight for the college." Hattemer stated that "the need for a teachers college should be the weight of the argument, not political prestige" after Robert Robertson, Brookhaven Democratic Committeeman asked the Democrats to draft "a plank calling for the establishment of such a college for the [Democratic] platform in the fall elections."<sup>21</sup>

### **Extension Center at Port Jefferson**

Adelphi acted decisively in the fall of 1955 to satisfy the growing demand for higher education in Suffolk County. The private Garden City liberal arts college pioneered college-level studies in Suffolk by opening an evening Suffolk County Extension Center in Port Jefferson High School in October 1955 with the approval of Ewald B. Nyquist, the Commissioner for Higher Education of the (New York) State Education Department in Albany. Commissioner Nyquist instructed Dean Ballaine in an August 11, 1955 letter, "I see no reason why Adelphi College should not undertake to provide some extension services to residents in Suffolk County this coming academic year." Ballaine told Commissioner Nyquist that Adelphi was starting classes in Port Jefferson later in September than in Garden City because "we simply cannot physically handle the problem of registering in all three divisions at Adelphi College and the Port Jefferson Center at the same time." In a follow up letter dated September 27, 1955, Commissioner Nyquist wrote Adelphi officials: "the Department approves of your general policies for conducting extension work at Port Jefferson High School." Nyquist reminded Adelphi officials that "As you know, work conducted in extension does not carry residence credit towards a degree. I think, therefore, that it would be good practice to indicate on your transcripts all work conducted in this extension program as being extension work." This correspondence illustrates that virtually every move Adelphi made between 1955 and 1960 to establish college extension courses, and later an institutional branch college in Suffolk County, had to be carefully reviewed and specifically approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education at the State Education Department in Albany.

Over one hundred and seventy residents from eastern Long Island enrolled in the (evening) program in Port Jefferson (an extension of

Adelphi's Evening Division, which originated in 1952) even though it received almost no publicity. Adelphi expanded its course offerings at Port Jefferson in February 1956 to nineteen classes for the Spring semester. Graduate and Undergraduate courses were offered and credits earned were applicable towards Adelphi degrees.<sup>22</sup> Dr. Ballaine, a philosopher, promised Suffolk residents "We will continue to expand our Center at Port Jefferson as the need arises." Adelphi offered evening extension courses in Nursing, English, Economics, Business Administration, Sociology, Education, Psychology and Mathematics at Port Jefferson High School in the Spring of 1956. Dr. Earl Vandermeulen, the Supervising Principal of the Port Jefferson School District was commended by Adelphi officials for suggesting, planning and smoothly "putting into operation" Adelphi's pioneering evening college classes in Suffolk County.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Adelphi Attempts to Establish a College in Stony Brook**

Ward Melville was so impressed with Adelphi's educational initiative in Port Jefferson that he offered "Sunwood," his father Frank Melville's forty acre "show-place estate" on the Long Island Sound in Old Field to Adelphi College, if the Garden City institution would establish a permanent branch college there. Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy, Sr., Adelphi's 61-year old president, said at a press dinner at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant in Port Jefferson that Melville's generous offer "if accepted, could make the possibility of a four-year liberal arts college for Suffolk County a reality by the fall of 1957." Although the Sunwood estate was separate from the one-hundred acres in Setauket, Melville had offered the State of New York in 1955; he was willing to donate the one-hundred acres as well as the Sunwood estate to Adelphi if the State of New York failed to proceed with establishing a teachers college in Suffolk. Dr. Eddy, a graduate of Crozer Theological Seminary and the University of Pennsylvania, was "high in his praise of the Sunwood property as 'idea for a college'" and was optimistic about "the possibilities of the large house itself as a nucleus for class rooms." Eddy, who had been the President of Adelphi since 1937, indicated that his college would be able to utilize the one-hundred acres in Setauket, even though it did not adjoin the main college campus at Sunwood. "The Setauket acreage," he forecast, "could be put to good use as athletic fields." Dr. Eddy cautioned Suffolk leaders that while Adelphi officials were ready to help establish a four-year liberal arts college in Suffolk, it would be up to the "people of Suffolk" to provide the economic support required to actually operate a permanent Suffolk branch of Adelphi College. He said that the success of Adelphi's 1955-56 evening college extension courses at Port Jefferson High School "with almost no

publicity," demonstrated the need for "some kind of institution of higher learning" in Suffolk County. George Crouse believed that many Suffolk businessmen would update their formal education at an Adelphi Suffolk branch college. Dr. Eddy said that Adelphi's interest in Ward Melville's land gift proposal should in no way "affect the decision of the State Board of Regents to establish a state supported college in Suffolk." In fact, he indicated, "if the situation should arise wherein the State found it economical to utilize the same site, Adelphi would simply withdraw from the picture having laid the groundwork and demonstrated the need" for higher education in Suffolk County. Dr. Eddy applauded the decision of the State University to establish three community colleges on Long Island and a four-year science and engineering school, with training facilities for science and math teachers as "a step in the right direction."<sup>24</sup> Eddy said that while he anticipated that it would take the State "at least five years" to establish the community colleges and the science college, small private colleges such as Adelphi could satisfy some of the immediate educational demand more quickly.<sup>25</sup>

Since Adelphi was not overwhelmed with the economic support from individuals or businesses in Suffolk, Dr. Eddy returned to Port Jefferson, and implored Suffolk residents to help Adelphi fund the project. He bluntly told the Port Jefferson Rotary Club, lead by Cecil L. Hall of the Tinker National Bank that "the initiative" for a move by Adelphi into Suffolk County must come from "interested citizens" in Suffolk. He noted "that the offer of the Melville estate, Sunwood, with forty acres surrounding it and another 100 acres south of the railroad constitute a fine start for the establishment of a college but that without local support there would be no point in Adelphi's even considering the matter."<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Eddy declared that the "fantastic 400 per cent increase in high school graduates in the last ten years in Nassau is the hand writing on the wall for Suffolk," where "the percentage of . . . high school graduates [who] continue into higher education is just about half that of Nassau where there are facilities within reasonable commuting distance." On June 14, 1956 SUNY Chairman Frank C. Moore spoke at the sixtieth annual Adelphi College commencement in Garden City and declared that the plans for two new community colleges in Nassau and Suffolk "must be advanced swiftly."<sup>27</sup> Dr. Eddy declared that "Adelphi stands ready, willing and able to help in any way" to meet the demand for higher education in Suffolk County. He stressed that the proposed State science and engineering college "would have no effect on Adelphi's decision to come to Suffolk in as much as Adelphi does not offer any engineering courses and the demand for science teachers on both elementary and high school levels is mounting each year."<sup>28</sup>

Stuart Gracey, the editor of the Port Jefferson Record, moved quickly to support Dr. Eddy's educational initiatives. In an editorial, "Higher Education For Suffolk," Gracey said Adelphi's president was "one of the country's great educators," and "great educational administrators as well," and implored Suffolk residents "to listen well to his words." Gracey called for the organization of "county-wide committees" to raise "large sums of money by donations from people in all walks of life, who are interested in making this a finer community in which to live." He said that establishing a branch of Adelphi College in Suffolk County would "require the brains, ability and business acumen of a multitude of people," as well as "enlightened leadership."<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Eddy continued his fundraising efforts in Suffolk by addressing eighty Suffolk civic and educational leaders at a dinner on May 22, 1956 at the Patchogue Hotel, organized by George Crouse. Dr. Eddy "estimated the value of Mr. Melville's gift at approximately \$500,000" but frankly declared that "the people of Suffolk County" would have to raise at least "a matching half million . . . within the next three years if Adelphi was to get the project underway with freshman classes commencing in the fall of 1958."<sup>30</sup> More immediately, President Eddy said that "it would be necessary for the sum of at least \$100,000 to be raised by . . . October 15th [1956] for Adelphi to feel secure in undertaking the project." He promised that if the \$100,000 was raised by mid-October, "Adelphi would immediately commence work on the establishment of a permanent institution." Dr. Eddy forecast that given the "tremendous growth" in Suffolk which had occurred in the 1950's, and which was expected to be even greater in the 1960's and 1970's, the county "would need two to four colleges within the next twenty years."<sup>31</sup>

In June 1956, Adelphi College announced that evening extension courses at Port Jefferson High School would be resumed and enlarged in September "to meet the need for higher education in Suffolk County." It was reported that Adelphi's Suffolk Extension "serviced approximately 200 Eastern L.I. residents during the 1955-56 college year."<sup>32</sup> Richard F. Clemo, an associate professor at Adelphi, who had been a member of the Adelphi faculty since 1949, was appointed Director of the college's Extension Division effective July 1st.<sup>33</sup> Clemo was to be in complete charge of the Port Jefferson program, as well as the evening and summer courses given on the Garden City campus. In appointing Clemo, President Eddy said "The new post we are turning over to Clemo is vital in Adelphi's effort to serve the Long Island community particularly Suffolk. The enthusiastic response to our Port Jefferson program and its initial success both prove beyond doubt the need for a college in Suffolk. Adelphi stands ready to offer full cooperation in filling this need."<sup>34</sup>

Registration for Fall 1956 evening courses at the Port Jefferson Center of Adelphi College was scheduled for September 20, 1956 from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M. at the Port Jefferson High School. Twenty-nine undergraduate courses were offered including Business Administration, Education, English, Nursing, Philosophy and Psychology, as well as graduate education courses in the areas of teaching methods, curriculum and child development. Clemo told the press that the number of courses scheduled for 1956-57 "has almost tripled since the evening center first began a year ago." The largest course expansion at Port Jefferson had occurred in Business Administration. Where only three business courses were offered by Adelphi in the Spring of 1956, thirteen business courses, including Retailing, Accounting, Business Law, Sales, Small Business, Finance and Office Management, were being offered by Adelphi in the Fall of 1956 at Port Jefferson High School.<sup>35</sup>

In late June 1956 George B. Crouse was chosen as Chairman of an Adelphi College Executive Committee For Higher Education in Suffolk County, at a well attended meeting of forty business and educational leaders at the Three Village Inn in Stony Brook. Paul Dawson Eddy, and several other officials from Adelphi attended the luncheon "where groundwork was laid with an eye to establishing a college in the county to serve Eastern L.I. residents." Committee members agreed to begin "a campaign of personal solicitation during July 1956 in order to raise a reasonable proportion of the estimated initial goal of \$500,000."<sup>36</sup> The success of the "advance subscriptions would determine whether or not Adelphi would be able to accept the available Melville estate." To help in the fundraising Adelphi made three college officials available for speaking dates before local service clubs, chambers of commerce and industrial leaders. In an effort to best service the educational needs of school teachers, and prospective teachers in Suffolk, members of Adelphi's Education Department were polling teachers, from local schools to determine their immediate professional course requirements. The Dean of Adelphi's School of Nursing was contacting hospitals in Suffolk to see how a branch college in the county could meet the educational needs of nurses, and prospective nurses.<sup>37</sup>

Individuals involved in helping raise funds for Adelphi Suffolk institutional branch college included: Elizabeth Hall (Sag Harbor), Carlos Videla (Bridgehampton), the publisher of the Bridgehampton News, Leslie Weiss (Patchogue), Glenn Hendrickson (Babylon), Ward McCabester, George Cushman, and John C Stark (Riverhead), Robert E. Reid (Shoreham), F.S. Heberlig, Dr. Hugh Mc Brien, D.D.S., Lawrence R. Toal, Andrew J. Boylan (Port Jefferson), Edward J. Acker and Mrs. Attmore Robinson, Jr. (Setauket), and Charles Wood and Mr. and Mrs. Russell Meir (Wading River).<sup>38</sup>



George Crouse organized another fundraising meeting on July 18, 1956 at the Henry Perkins Hotel in Riverhead. The Adelphi College Council on Higher Education in Suffolk County hired the consulting firm of Ward Dresham and Rheinhardt to begin raising a million dollars starting August 1, 1956 to realize the "great dream" of bringing a four year Adelphi College, Suffolk County Division to Stony Brook. Time was running out, as Mr. Melville's offer of his father's "Sunwood" estate in Old Field was to expire on October 21, 1956. Dr. Eddy told the fundraisers he was "absolutely confident that the million dollars could be raised through pledges over a three year period, and that Adelphi could be prepared to accept a freshman class in the fall of 1957. The forty Suffolk residents, who would raise the start up funds for Adelphi, were designated "associate trustees."<sup>39</sup>

President Eddy informed the civic and educational leaders that \$100,000 would be required to "recondition" Frank Melville's Sunwood mansion, and an additional \$150,000 would be needed to pay for "equipment and a library."<sup>40</sup> The remaining \$750,000 would be retained for the development of the first building which would be built in Setauket, south of Route 25A, near the Long Island Railroad's Stony Brook station. Dr. Eddy disclosed that he would contact Richard Haviland Smythe, the architect who had designed Ward Melville's Stony Brook Village, "to draw tentative plans for the Adelphi building in keeping with the colonial type architecture in the village."<sup>41</sup> Adelphi's advance planning called for the student body at Stony Brook to be "evenly divided, or nearly so, between commuters and resident students so that dormitories would have to be constructed along with several other buildings and an athletic field."<sup>42</sup>

### **Adelphi's Plans for its Stony Brook Campus**

In July 1956, Adelphi's trustees accepted Ward Melville's generous gift of land, and approved a plan to build a four year liberal arts college in Suffolk County.<sup>43</sup> Adelphi's tentative plans for its initial construction involved building a "combined administration, classroom and library building" on the Sunwood estate.<sup>44</sup> George Crouse, the primary force in the drive to bring higher education to Suffolk County, told the Port Jefferson Rotary Club on July 20, 1956 that Adelphi "is faced with its saturation point" in Garden City "as far as accepting more students goes."<sup>45</sup> Approximately ninety percent of Suffolk's population lived within thirty miles of Adelphi's proposed campus in Setauket and Crouse predicted that the "future population growth of this radius will be almost fantastic." Crouse indicated that because the evening extension courses at Port Jefferson had been so successful "Adelphi would start another such program in Riverhead" in the fall of 1956. The courses in Port Jefferson

and Riverhead, Crouse said, "were cutting down considerably the traveling distances" of Suffolk students, thus saving them substantial time and money. Cecil L. Hall, the president of the Tinker National Bank in East Setauket from 1924 until 1967, was designated the treasurer of Crouse's fundraising committee., officially named: The Adelphi Council For Higher Education in Suffolk County. Hall, who lived in Old Field, was educated at Northwestern University and Columbia University and began his career as a certified public accountant before becoming president of the Tinker National Bank in 1924. He served on the Long Island State Park Commission and the Suffolk County Industrial Commission, and belonged to the St. George's Golf and Country Club in Stony Brook.<sup>46</sup> Adelphi's Dean Francis K. Bellaine told the Port Jefferson P.T.A. on September 9, 1956 that Adelphi-Garden City had to "turn away one out of three applicants this year because of inadequate space."<sup>47</sup> Bellaine saw no conflict between a four year state college on Long Island and Adelphi's plan to establish a Suffolk branch, stating that where approximately 10,000 students graduated from high schools in Nassau and Suffolk Counties in 1956, 20,000 would be graduating in 1960. Therefore, Bellaine predicted more than sufficient future educational demand would exist in Nassau and Suffolk to ensure the success of new public and private colleges.<sup>48</sup>

### **Adelphi's Stony Brook Dream Ends**

Adelphi's dream of a Suffolk campus in Setauket-Old Field ended suddenly in October 1956 when Democratic Governor Averell Harriman announced that a state college on Long Island "to train mathematics and science teachers will be a reality on Long Island by October 1958." The world famous diplomat refused to reveal either the location of the "temporary quarters" or the permanent site of the State Teachers College on Long Island "because negotiations are still underway to acquire the property."<sup>49</sup> A week later, in perhaps the most important development affecting higher education in Suffolk County in the twentieth-century, Governor Harriman revealed that the State of New York was accepting Ward Melville's enhanced offer of 340 acres in Setauket for the establishment of a Long Island State College, which would specialize in the training of science and mathematics instructors for high schools, and community colleges.<sup>50</sup> Harriman said he wanted the state sponsored college at Stony Brook built with "priority speed."<sup>51</sup> This bold move by the State of New York was made a full year before the Soviet Union's shocking launch of its Sputnik earth satellite in October 1957 accelerated government spending on science research and education in the United States on federal and state levels. The decision by the State of New York to build a teachers college at Stony Brook, and Ward Melville's desire to

give New York State a substantially larger gift of land than previously offered to the State, or Adelphi, doomed Adelphi's dreams of a branch College in Suffolk County at Stony Brook. Melville apparently concluded that the State of New York, with its vast powers of taxation, was much more likely to successfully create and administer a permanent college in Suffolk County than Adelphi, which would be much more dependent on voluntary contributions. The disappointing loss of the Melville property to the state hindered Adelphi's fundraising program in Suffolk County but did not terminate its long range plans to expand into Suffolk. President Eddy bravely vowed that "the proposal to establish a branch of Adelphi in Suffolk was still very much alive." He added that "the state teachers college at Stony Brook would in no way affect the decision of the liberal arts college to locate either on the Melville property or somewhere else in the county." The truth was that the loss of the Melville property ended any possibility of a permanent Adelphi-Suffolk branch college in the Stony Brook-Port Jefferson area, but it motivated Dr. Eddy and Adelphi to look towards establishing Adelphi's Suffolk Division in another progressive, educationally aware, community. President Eddy quietly appointed Stuart Gracey and Dr. Cecil L. Hall "as a committee to find a location for the (branch) college" at another site on the south shore in Suffolk County.<sup>52</sup>

Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy and Adelphi College Garden City pioneered part time, college level liberal arts evening studies in Suffolk County at Kings Park State Hospital and Pilgrim State Hospital in 1953 and 1954 and at Port Jefferson High School in 1955 and 1956. Adelphi made a serious effort to establish a liberal arts college in Stony Brook on land offered by Ward Melville in 1955 and 1956, but was frustrated when Governor Averill Harriman and the State of New York officials agreed to build a major downstate science and mathematics oriented teachers college on the same property. While Adelphi expanded evening studies to Sayville and Riverhead, Dr. Eddy worked assiduously from 1956 to 1959 to establish a permanent branch college in Suffolk County, first unsuccessfully in Southampton, and later successfully in Sayville. Adelphi Suffolk College's initial fourteen full time students began studying in the late afternoons and evenings in "Old 88," a former Sayville district school on Greene Avenue in September 1959. Adelphi Suffolk's first full time day program started in September 1960 as Suffolk County's first four year liberal arts college.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Until 1962 the (New York) State Education Department insisted that Adelphi's institutional branch in Sayville be called Adelphi College: Suffolk Division. Dowling College now serves over 7,000 full and part-time students at the Rudolph campus in Oakdale, and at the Brookhaven Center in Shirley. *Dowling: The Personal College: 2003-2004 Catalog For Undergraduate Studies* (Oakdale, N.Y., Dowling College, April, 2003), 10; see also Roy Douglas, "At the Door of the Metropolis: The Struggle To Locate The New York State School of Agriculture on Long Island in Farmingdale:1911-1913," *The Long Island Forum*, 65, No.1 (Winter 2002) 16-30, and "Serving Community and Country: The New York State School of Agriculture at Farmingdale: 1914-1919," in *The Nassau County Historical Journal* 57, (2002), 13-27.

<sup>2</sup> "Caroll Loper to Head Drive for Teachers College," *Port Jefferson Record*, September 9, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> "Report on the Luncheon Conference at the Garden City Hotel 7-28-55," in the Adelphi University Archives, Garden City.

<sup>4</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, September 9, 1954.

<sup>5</sup> "Possibilities Unlimited," *Port Jefferson Record*, January 20, 1955.

<sup>6</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, January 20, 1955; Dr. Stuart Gracey, "Some Recollections of The Early Days of Adelphi Suffolk College---Now Dowling College," 1985 in the Dowling College Archives, Oakdale, N.Y.

<sup>7</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, January 20, 1955.

<sup>8</sup> "College Interest High," *Port Jefferson Record*, January 27, 1955.

<sup>9</sup> "Need For Teachers College On L.I. Will Be Stressed, *Port Jefferson Record*, January 27, 1955; "Levitt Says State Will Expand Role In Aid To Schools," *New York Times*, January 23, 1955, 1; "Regents Get Plea For Campus Funds," *New York Times*, January 24, 1955, 18; "State Is Said to Lag in Plan To Build Low-Cost Colleges," *New York Times*, January 24, 1955, 1. The two-year New York State Institute of Agriculture and Technology at Farmingdale is actually located in Suffolk County, just east of the Nassau-Suffolk border in East Farmingdale.

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<sup>10</sup> "County Board Wants State Teachers College in Suffolk," *Port Jefferson Record*, February 17, 1955; "Two Steps Nearer," *Port Jefferson Record*, February 17, 1955.

<sup>11</sup> "Need Action States Adams," *Port Jefferson Record*, March 3, 1955; Dr. Stuart Gracey memo, "The Beginnings," to Mrs. Doris Pike, May 3, 1985 in the Dowling College Archives, Oakdale, NY.

<sup>12</sup> "Chamber of Commerce To Discuss Teachers College," *Port Jefferson Record*, March 3, 1955.

<sup>13</sup> "State Plans Conference on College For Long Island," *Port Jefferson Record*, April 1, 1955.

<sup>14</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, April 1, 1955; "State University Scans Expansion," *New York Times*, April 16, 1955, 21.

<sup>15</sup> "Regents Bd. Directs Trustees to Plan State College on L.I.," *Port Jefferson Record*, April 28, 1955.

<sup>16</sup> "Teacher College in Suffolk Is Hattemer and Board Aim," *Port Jefferson Record*, July 1, 1955.

<sup>17</sup> "Melville Offers Property For Institution: Acreage in Setauket is Made Available to New York State," *Port Jefferson Record*, August 4, 1955; "Ward Melville Is Appointed To State Schools Committee," *Port Jefferson Record*, May 2, 1957.

<sup>18</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, May 2, 1957.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> "Hattemer Praises Dem's Stand: Party Lauds Melville Offer Of Land For State College," *Port Jefferson Record*, August 11, 1955.

<sup>22</sup> August 11, 1955 letter from State Education Commissioner Ewald B. Nyquist to Dean Francis K. Ballaine; September 19, 1955 letter from Francis K. Ballaine to Ewald B. Nyquist; September 27, 1955 letter from Nyquist to Ballaine, all located in Adelphi University Archives, Garden City; "Adelphi To Offer 19 Courses Here," *Port Jefferson Record*,

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January 19, 1956. Dean William J. Condon explained that the Port Jefferson Extension Center was an outgrowth of Adelphi's Evening Division program administered by James H. Rayfield, Jr. in a May 27, 2004 interview at Adelphi University. See also "Evening Division," in Adelphi's 1955 Yearbook *Oracle*, 28; "The Graduate Division," 1956, *Oracle*, 18-19, and "The Extension Division," 1957 *Oracle*, 34 in the Adelphi University Archives.

<sup>23</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, January 19, 1956; Dr. Stuart Gracey, "Some Recollections..." 2, Dowling College Archives.

<sup>24</sup> "State Board of Trustees to Recommend Science College," *Port Jefferson Record*, February 2, 1956; "Paul Dawson Eddy," *Nassau Daily Review-Star*, Eighth Annual Award Presentation Reception And Dinner Program, May 8, 1947 in the Adelphi University Archives; "Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy Sr. Dies; Ex-Adelphi President Was 80," *New York Times* May 31, 1975, 30; "Paul D. Eddy, Retired Adelphi Head," *Newsday*, May 31, 1975, 19; "Dr. Eddy Will Be Speaker At Setauket J.H Exercises," *Port Jefferson Record*, June 6, 1956.

<sup>25</sup> "Offer Sunwood for Adelphi Branch: Stony Brook Show Place Is 'Ideal' Says College Prexy," *Port Jefferson Record*, January 26, 1956.

<sup>26</sup> "Adelphi President Urges Suffolk Back Higher Education Now," *Port Jefferson Record*, April 5, 1956.

<sup>27</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, April 5, 1956; "375 Are Graduated In Adelphi Exercise," *New York Times*, June 14, 1956, 67.

<sup>28</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, April 5, 1956.

<sup>29</sup> "Higher Education for Suffolk," *Port Jefferson Record*, April 5, 1956; Dr. Stuart Gracey, "Some Recollections ...." 1985, Dowling College Archives, Oakdale, N.Y.

<sup>30</sup> "Need \$100,000 By Oct. 15th: Adelphi President Reveals Cost of Branch at Sunwood," *Port Jefferson Record*, May 24, 1956.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> "Adelphi College to Resume Courses Here in September," *Port Jefferson Record*, June 21, 1956.

<sup>33</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, June 21, 1956; "Named to Adelphi Post" *New York Times*, June 17, 1956, 35.

<sup>34</sup> "Adelphi College to Resume Courses Here in September," *Port Jefferson Record*, June 21, 1956.

<sup>35</sup> "Registration for Adelphi Extension Courses Here Scheduled For Sept. 20th," *Port Jefferson Record*, June 26, 1956; "Adelphi Extension Offers 29 Courses," *Suffolk County News* (Sayville), August 17, 1956.

<sup>36</sup> "Crouse Selected Chairman of Suffolk Education Group," *Port Jefferson Record*, June 28, 1956; "Council Head Named," *New York Times*, June 21, 1956, 36.

<sup>37</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, June 28, 1956; "Groundwork Laid By Adelphi For Suffolk College," *Suffolk County News*, June 28, 1956.

<sup>38</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, June 28, 1956.

<sup>39</sup> "College for Suffolk Dream Nearing Reality: Adelphi Asked to Accept Ward Melville's Land Offer," *Port Jefferson Record*, July 19, 1956.

<sup>40</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, July 19, 1956.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> "Liberal Arts College Given OK by Adelphi," *Suffolk County News*, July 27, 1956.

<sup>44</sup> *Suffolk County News*, July 27, 1956.

<sup>45</sup> Rotary Hears Geo. Crouse on Adelphi in Suffolk," *Port Jefferson Record*, July 26, 1956.

<sup>46</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, July 26, 1956; "Cecil L. Hall, Head Of Bank on L.I., 65," *New York Times*, October 30, 1969, 47. The Tinker National Bank was acquired by Marine Midland Banks, Inc. in May 1969, five months before Cecil Hall passed away.

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<sup>47</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, July 26, 1956.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> "Plans for Teachers College Are Revealed By Harriman," *Port Jefferson Record*, October 11, 1956.

<sup>50</sup> "Teachers College Is Set For Setauket: State Accepts 340 Acres: Adelphi Branch Is Still Alive," *Port Jefferson Record*, October 18, 1956; "Harriman Seen Speeding Plans for College Here," *Suffolk County News*, October 26, 1956; "Teachers School Planned For Long Island: Stony Brook Tract in Suffolk to be Donated for Campus of New State College," *New York Times*, October 12, 1956, 31.

<sup>51</sup> *Suffolk County News*, October 26, 1956.

<sup>52</sup> *Port Jefferson Record*, October 18, 1956; Dr Stuart Gracey, "Some Recollections...",<sup>3</sup>; Dr. Eddy was seeking a site on Suffolk's south shore for the Adelphi Suffolk College campus because the state had selected Stony Brook on the north shore for the math and science teacher's college, and the state and Suffolk County were looking to establish a Suffolk County Community College in the center of the county.



## WILLIAM SIDNEY MOUNT: HIS PLANS FOR THE STONY BROOK HARBOR AREA

*R. Lawrence Swanson, Francis Turano, and Joseph Amondolia*

*William Sidney Mount promoted and organized the first dredging of Stony Brook Harbor at the western end of Long Beach Spit. His motivation was to stimulate the economy of the area by improving navigation in and out of the harbor. This, he believed, would expedite travel to other ports of call. Navigation was cumbersome in the shallow harbor due to the difficult entrance channel. With a shortcut to Long Island Sound, he hypothesized that the community would flourish as a commercial center.*

### Introduction

William Sidney Mount (1807-1868) is recognized as Long Island's premier nineteenth-century genre painter. Indeed, his paintings are so realistic that it is beneficial for a coastal marine scientist to study them for such purposes as identifying marsh grasses, beach forms, or tidal characteristics. But Mount was much more than a painter. He was a Renaissance man. He played the fiddle for public occasions and designed and patented a hollow backed violin.<sup>1</sup> He designed and had fabricated to his specifications his portable studio, which he called an "Artist wagon."<sup>2</sup> He was knowledgeable of Long Island's coastal landforms and used the glacial till as a source of pigments for his paints. According to Cathy Nelson, he called these paints "Stony Brook Colors."<sup>3</sup> In 1849, he wrote to his friend Benjamin Thompson (author of the mid-nineteenth-century *The History of Long Island*) how he and his brother, Alonzo Shepard Mount, searched the bluffs of the island's north shore for morainal residues.

As we strolled along the bank we picked of brown, yellow and red—we thought the rich 'placer' must be somewhere near. Shepard struck his hoe a few feet up the bank and we were astonished to see a lot of bright red running down the bank and mingling with the sand. It was a rich day for us—we worked with the spirit of gold diggers, and were well paid. The red found in balls, was in tint like India red, and Venetian red—some of those sandstone balls contained purple, some yellow, and some red like orange vermilion . . . The browns had the nature of

Vandyke brown, Cologne earth and Cappah brown.  
We also discovered pure black. What interested us  
very much was the finding of brimstone  
balls of a seagreen color.<sup>4</sup>

Mount was also aware that Long Beach was migrating eastward and that the mouth of Stony Brook Harbor was open to Long Island Sound near the Rasapeague Bluffs (near the Smithtown Bathing Pavilion) in the geologic past. He had a working knowledge of the local tides and currents to the point of understanding what might happen if Stony Brook Harbor was dredged at certain locations, and learned about and attempted to undertake mechanical means to dredge the harbor. Mount had a vision for the potential development of the surrounding communities provided that the harbor could easily be navigated. W.S. Mount was, perhaps, the Stony Brook area's first would be developer.

To implement his vision of a navigationally accessible harbor, he became a booster for commerce. "Do all the good you can to help business in the community, throw your bay open to vessels of all nations and make it a port of entry," Mount wrote.<sup>5</sup> Mount believed that the economy of the area, and particularly that of St. James Place (now parts of the villages of Head-of-the-Harbor and Nissequogue), could be improved if the southern harbor was easily accessible to the east-west flow of commerce on Long Island Sound. In fact, he envisioned that there might be an influx of anywhere from 3,000 to 5,000 people if the sailing time to New York City could be reduced several hours.<sup>6</sup> The population of all of Smithtown was 2,130 in 1860, but in 1930 the combined population of Head-of-the-Harbor and Nissequogue (a more applicable area) was only 418. The Long Island Power Authority's 2004 population estimate for the two villages was 3,096.<sup>7</sup>

Mount's thoughts about the area's sluggish economy were reflected in his Fall 1856 notice posted on Mr. Platt Hawkins's workshop, in Smithtown (probably St. James), whereon he stated, "scarcely a sail is seen upon its [Stony Brook Harbor's] waters and as a place of business it is almost dead." He referred to the harbor as being nearly landlocked and useless "remaining in Indian simplicity."<sup>8</sup>

Mount was not alone in realizing the limitations of the island's north shore harbors due to navigational inaccessibility. Benjamin Thompson, a leading scientist of his day and from Setauket, observed "Almost every bay, inlet and marsh upon the north coast of Long Island have their outlets blocked up entirely by materials deposited or nearly so as to leave only narrow entrances."<sup>9</sup>

Stony Brook Harbor is historically shallow. The mean depth of the northern harbor was only about 2.1 feet as determined from the 1886

nautical chart. The mean depth of the southern harbor was 4.2 feet.<sup>10</sup> The channel into the harbor was apparently circuitous and constantly shifting.<sup>11</sup> Despite there being a ship building industry in the harbor and the harbor being a commercial port of call in the nineteenth-century, traffic moved primarily on high tides. Benjamin Thompson commented that the harbor was one of the "most accessible harbors" on the north shore of Long Island.<sup>12</sup> He also stated, concerning several north shore harbors including Stony Brook Harbor, "[they] afford shelter only to vessels of small burthen, on account of sand-bars, which extend from the extreme points of the sand-spits across the entrances."<sup>13</sup> Nineteenth-century packets transporting passengers throughout the sound generally hove-to (not making headway but not anchored) off the Stony Brook Harbor entrance as passengers were lightered (ferried) to and from the Stony Brook village dock. The largest vessel that tied up at the Stony Brook dock between 1868 and 1873 was the schooner *Nancy Smith* that was just over 445 tons. Most were in the range of 50-100 tons.<sup>14</sup> This practice of lightering aided scheduling of the packets up and down the sound, saving time, and avoiding the dangers of the shallow waters of the harbor.

Mount was concerned with the difficulty of sailing in the southern harbor and the time it took to transit from the southern harbor back through the harbor entrance. He believed that the viability of the southern harbor as a port depended on being able to depart the harbor at its western end in order to reduce the sailing distance and hence travel time to such ports as Bridgeport and New York City. Mount envisioned a new port at the western end of the harbor called "Rassapeag" Harbor, and embarked on the harbor's first dredging project and thus began a controversy that still rages today.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Dig**

In the early nineteenth-century, Nathaniel Smith, a descendent of Smithtown patentee Richard Smith and a resident of Sherrewogue, proposed to cut a channel through Long Beach. Mount developed this idea and convinced the local populace that it was to their economic benefit to dig a channel through Long Beach about 133 yards from the foot of the "Rassapeag Banks," probably near where the Smithtown Bathing Pavilion is today.<sup>16</sup>

Mount, though not a property owner in the area, was a community leader, and was nominated as chairman of the Stony Brook School Board.<sup>17</sup> He used his political astuteness to convince not only the residents of the southern harbor that his idea had merit but also the Stony Brook community that cutting a new channel into Stony Brook Harbor would not harm their existing, small commercial port. In fact, he

believed that the Rasapeague channel would improve the shoaling (the buildup of sediment transported by currents) problems that were occurring near Stony Brook village at Hallock's banks and dock. Mount was apparently referring to George Hallock's dock, also known as Upper Dock and originally constructed in 1809. The Hallock Dock was located at the present site of the Brookhaven Town Dock. He likened the harbor to a teapot where the harbor entrance was the spout and the proposed new entrance would be the lid. Mount believed that the new entrance would create a current that would circulate around the harbor and counteract the strong flood currents at the harbor entrance and relieve the shoaling in that area.<sup>18</sup> (Shoaling is still a problem but, in part, because of the existing dredged channels, the site of deposition has now moved further upstream to the vicinity of the Stony Brook Boatworks at the entrance of the Stony Brook.).

The site of the proposed Rasapeague dredged channel was carefully selected near the western edge of the former coastal indentation that has more recently developed into Stony Brook Harbor. Of course Mount was seeking the narrowest part of Long Beach where he would also have a landowner willing to donate land for the project. That landowner was Edmund Thomas Smith, a lawyer, whose property was near Pig Creek.<sup>19</sup>

Richard Smith obtained a "grant" from the New York State Legislature to help with the undertaking, and on a "beautiful and calm" October 9, 1856, a gathering of people met at the proposed site for the purpose of forming a committee to commence exploration of cutting the channel. Mount was selected as chairman and he and the other members of the committee - Joel L.G. Smith and Timothy C. Smith - chose the exact location. The objective was to create a channel that was wide enough and deep enough to accommodate a sloop and a steamboat. The thirty-one yard wide channel was to be oriented approximately north-south through some fifteen to seventeen rods (one rod is equivalent to 16-1/2 feet, so eighty-three to ninety-four yards) of beach and it was to lead to the natural channel (probably about four feet at mean low water) that still runs some distance close to shore along the west side of the harbor, beginning just north of the Nissequogue Golf Club.<sup>20</sup>

Joel L.G. Smith, a committee member, used his team of horses and plow to mark out the area to be worked. Nathaniel Smith read the grant to the audience and construction began. While there was a grant for the project, the work was carried out by volunteers. About 330 man days were devoted to the undertaking, and local residents also provided on the order of nineteen teams of horses and several oxen. These same volunteers also supplied the drags that were needed to remove the sand and cobble from the barrier beach. Part of the Smith family (Richard, Joel, Nathaniel, and Timothy) and some of their workmen contributed the

bulk of the manpower, about 120 man days. The chairman, Mount, worked about three days at the site. In his notes, he stated what each volunteer did including such activities as cutting meadow, driving a team, carting, and sleeping at the site. Mount recorded that the work proceeded with the "greatest spirit" and that "order and harmony prevailed." He also admitted that all in the community did not favor the digging of a channel and indicated that he hoped that the success of the project would please all in the end.<sup>21</sup>

The cutting of the channel was neither surveyed nor engineered. Hard working individuals who made their living farming and living on and navigating the local waters undertook this difficult and complex project. They had a feel and understanding for what would work but it was clearly a project of trial and error. The two page "engineering" plan is dated October 13, 1856. Two sand dikes, or bulkheads, as Mount called them, were to be constructed, one on the sound side of the proposed cut and one on the harbor side. The beach was to be removed between the two dikes to the low water line, apparently about ten feet of material. The harbor side of the project area was then to be cleared (marsh removal) toward the south followed by dragging away as much sand as the tide would allow on the sound side. At this point there would have been three dredged sections separated only by the harbor side dike and the sound side dike. Next, the harbor side dike was to be removed. The plan was to remove the top of the remaining dike "one or two hours" before high tide. The rising tide was to be let in "gently" so as to get the full force of the ebb current to flush material in the channel toward the sound. It was anticipated that this procedure would then cause the next flood current to deepen the channel into the harbor.<sup>22</sup>

After a few tidal cycles more dragging in the channel by horse teams was recommended in order to widen and deepen the channel. It was also recommended, once the ideal dimensions of the inlet had been reached, that wooden and stone bulkheads be constructed on both sides of the cut in order to stabilize it from the longshore drift.<sup>23</sup>

On November 12, 1856 at 11:30 AM, the water from the sound initially poured through the Rasapeague Channel. The first boat to pass through was a small sailboat owned by Charles H. Wells. Besides Mount, Joel Smith, Gideon Smith, Samuel Carmen, Richard Skidmore, and George V. Davis were aboard. Samuel A. Snooks was the helmsman. A second boat with Mortimer D. Smith in command also sailed through the passage. Apparently there was quite a celebration. It was recorded that there was "great cheering and music" as the boats passed with about three or four feet of water under the keel.<sup>24</sup>

Almost immediately it was realized that the channel was not deep enough. Within days a crew of volunteers including Richard, Joel,

Timothy Smith, Samuel Carmen, George V. R. Price, and Benjamin Newton, Jr. joined to deepen the channel to below low water. However they failed to deepen the channel sufficiently. The project was deemed incomplete. The weather and the water were beginning to get cold and most involved agreed that they should have begun earlier in the year.<sup>25</sup>

### **Observations about the Oceanography**

The current rushing through the cut, as might be expected, was strong and Mount stated it could be heard almost a mile away. However, the current did not scour the inlet deeper as was anticipated. The sand in the inlet tended to pack unless it was physically kept in motion by the horses and drags so it could be swept away. The committee was also of the opinion that the inlet needed to be deeper but must be at least "two to three rods wide at the base" in order to prevent the sides from slumping and filling the channel. Mount came to realize the importance of having the proper channel depth to channel width ratio for the inlet to remain stable.<sup>26</sup> The relationship between the tidal volume entering the harbor through the minimum area of the entrance channel is an important concept of channel stability in modern coastal engineering.

Mount also noted that there was at least 1-1/2 feet more water in the southern harbor while the inlet was open. It is not clear what this means. Mount does report that there were ten to fifteen feet of water at low tide some forty rods (660 feet) from the inlet.<sup>27</sup> The 1886 hydrographic survey of the harbor as well as more recent surveys (in non-dredged areas) shows that there is a depression but that it is at least 1,000 yards from the site. This depression was probably there before the channel was cut.<sup>28</sup>

Mount reported on several observations concerning tidal currents. As flooding began, the current appeared to approach the inlet from the direction of Crane Neck. However, as the tide rose the current appeared to flow from the northwest. The current apparently flowed through the inlet creating a jet that shot south instead of circulating around the harbor as anticipated. On ebb, the current approached the channel from the southeast and spewed in a northerly direction into the sound.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Outcome**

There is little mention in Mount's notes as to what happened to the channel that so many worked so hard to complete. In his March 11, 1858 summary he mentioned that the west channel in the harbor was shoaling. It is reasonable to assume that the cut through the beach filled rapidly over the winter as the northwesterly winds set up littoral currents that transported sediment from the Nissequogue/Rasapeague bluffs to the east. Instead of commenting on problems, Mount emphasized what was

learned so that the next dredging would be more effective and completed much more quickly.<sup>30</sup>

Mount began to push the new effort in 1858 and by that time he had pursued the use of a "steam underwater excavator." His new proposal was to use mechanized technology that was beginning to revolutionize port and harbor construction. He noted that the new dredged channel should be about five to six feet below low water and that the channel should continue to deeper water near the farm of William Mills (near the Nissequogue Golf Club). His pitch continued to be that of economic development. "It shouts commerce in the harbor . . . This work finished, Smithtown would be a perfect bee hive in the way of business of all kinds . . . The bay is elegantly situated for manufacturing and other purposes, as coal can be brought here in vessels." Mount proposed that April 20, 1858 commence the new endeavor so that the farming community, after planting, could assist.<sup>31</sup>

Once again Mount posted a notice on behalf of the committee calling for a meeting on "harbor improvement" to be held on April 2, 1858 at the Head-of-the-Harbor schoolhouse (presumably on Three Sisters Road). In this notice he pushed for using a dredging machine. Mount thoroughly investigated the new dredging technology, including its costs, and worked with a "Captain Mannie" who apparently owned an "under water steam excavator," and with steamboat owner Thomas Collyer to advocate for the dredging project. Mount included in his notes and in his own hand some of the calculations for estimating the cost of the project, which varied from \$548 to excavate 2,800 cubic yards to \$1,763 for 13,400 cubic yards. For comparison, in 2001, Suffolk County dredged 49,000 cubic yards from the two channels leading into Stony Brook Harbor for about \$20,000.<sup>32</sup>

Mount tried to solicit funds from the local residents to undertake the second dredging. Collyer, Mannie, and Mount pledged \$50, \$25, and \$25, respectively. It does not appear that others were willing to donate. Mount's notes give the impression that he was becoming desperate to accomplish the job. He talked of bringing in larger and larger steam dredging machines including one christened *Leviathan*. This vessel, 105 feet in length with a beam of thirty-four feet, was thought to be capable of removing about 3,600 cubic yards of material per day. In April and May of 1858, he was still getting specifications on dredging equipment as well as quotes for undertaking the work. Apparently, despite Mount's colorful, enthusiastic, drumbeating interest in a shortcut to the sound was waning. The dream of cutting a channel through Long Beach to create a working harbor and to improve the local economy quietly died.<sup>33</sup>

**Discussion**

One can only speculate as to why Mount was not able to inspire the community to undertake cutting a second and perhaps permanent channel through Long Beach. People may have realized that coastal processes were just too difficult to overcome and that dredging a permanent channel was unlikely. Maybe they believed that even if successful, the economic benefits that Mount embraced were in reality unlikely to occur. Or, maybe they didn't want to invest hard cash to hire an underwater excavator. Some apparently questioned Mount's motives. He alluded to this in his address to the committee, where he stated "The interest I take in this enterprise is a labor of love, not of money, as has been hinted."<sup>34</sup> Whatever the reason, the enthusiasm that was exhibited in the fall of 1856 was gone by 1858.

From an environmental perspective it is probably best that the project failed. There are several possible consequences: Long Beach would likely be about 200 yards shorter today due to disruption of the long shore drift of sediment; the tidal regime in the harbor would have been altered; a flood tide shoal would have formed inside the harbor hindering navigation and contributing to shoaling of the southern harbor in general; a breakwater would have been required on the western side of the Long Island Sound entrance. Perhaps the most devastating consequence might have been that the main entrance to the harbor would have shifted from Stony Brook to Rasapeague. The Stony Brook entrance might have been completely closed off.

Mount's talents and pursuits reached beyond his painting to an insightful and far reaching civic mindedness. He apparently inspired others through his music, words, and deeds, as well as his paintings. But while his vision for the community eventually came to fruition, he was not able to motivate his neighbors to carry it out in his lifetime, despite his best efforts and encouraging statements. Below is a representative sample of the kind of civic boosterism Mount engaged in.

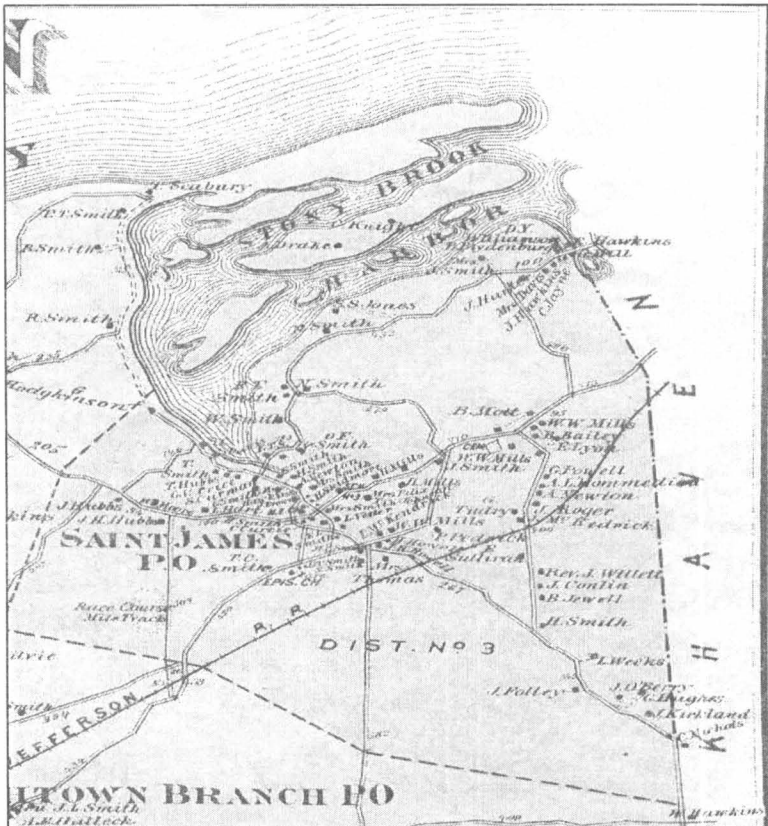
All the lands, west & south of Pig creek to Nissaquag & the lands bordering the harbor in every direction would enhance in value, by being made useful, roads laid out & Docks, Railroads, Lumber yards. Shipyards, mechanic shops of all kinds: besides the beautiful scenery, would invite people of taste & wealth to select country seats. Academies & churches would ornament the surrounding hills.<sup>35</sup>

Mount was convinced that the economy of the area was poor but with port development it could be improved. Port development depended on



improving accessibility and hence his concerted effort to open a new entrance to the harbor. "It is our bays and harbors that make Long Island so interesting to the traveler and the business men."<sup>36</sup>

Mount foresaw populated land and subdivided, expensive housing, a busy harbor, an active business enterprise, and facilities for inspiration and learning. Today the land around the harbor is built out to the limits of zoning regulation and the population around the harbor is about 17,000. The harbor now has facilities for approximately 550 recreational vessels including the mooring fields. Stony Brook University, including the hospital that looms above the harbor, accounts for 6.7 percent of Suffolk County's jobs and about 5 percent of its economic activity when appropriate economic multipliers are applied.<sup>37</sup>



1873 map of Stony Brook Harbor showing the homestead of E.T. Smith near the site of the Mount dredging project.

## Notice.

To the inhabitants of St. James Place & vicinity.

Harbor Improvement. — All persons interested in the improvement of property and business in our section of Long Island, are requested to attend a meeting, to be held in the School house at the head of the Harbor, at seven o'clock Friday evening April 2, 1858, for the purpose of making arrangements to open a navigable channel for a Steamboat, to pass in and out of the harbor at all times of the tides by means of a Steam Under water Excavator, or Dredging Machine. The work is practicable.

The audience will be entertained with music, and appropriate speeches. A large attendance is expected. The meeting is important.

Beach Committee.

Richard Smith. — — —	Edmund S. Smith.
Joel S. G. Smith. — — —	Phoenizier Smith. — —
Timothy C. Smith. — — —	Nathaniel Smith.
Samuel Carman. — — —	Charles H. Wells.
Benj <sup>r</sup> Newton Jan. — — —	John Hubbs.
Izidon Smith. — — —	

W<sup>m</sup> S. Mount, Chairman.

If the weather should prove stormy the next fair evening.

April 2, 1858 Mount notice announcing a public meeting to organize for constructing the Long Beach Channel.

*Editor's Note:* The authors would like to thank Eva Greguski of the Long Island Museum, Louise Hall of the Smithtown Historical Society, and Paula Rose for modifying maps.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> E.K. Kaplan, "Ties of Family, Friendship, and Music: William Sidney Mount and Shepard Smith Jones," in E. K. Kaplan, R. W. Kenny, and R. Wunderlich, eds., *William Sidney Mount: Family, Friends, and Ideas* (Setauket, NY, Three Village Historical Society, 1999), 13-22.

<sup>2</sup> C. Nelson, "William Sidney Mount and the Thompson Family," in E. K. Kaplan, R. W. Kenny, and R. Wunderlich, eds., *William Sidney Mount: Family, Friends, and Ideas* (Setauket, NY, Three Village Historical Society, 1999), 29-32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> A. Frankenstein, *William Sidney Mount* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1974), 235.

<sup>5</sup> W.S. Mount, unpublished notes, collection of the Long Island Museum, bequest of Ward Melville, 1977.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Long Island Regional Planning Board, *Historical Population of Long Island Communities 1790-1980* (Hauppauge, NY: Long Island Regional Planning Board, August 1982), 77; Long Island Power Authority, *2004 Long Island Population Survey* (Uniondale, NY: Long Island Power Authority, 2004), 23.

<sup>8</sup> Mount; Heritage Quest Online-Census Image, Accessed August 17, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> B.F. Thompson, *The History of Long Island from its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time* Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Gould, Banks & Co., 1843), 511.

<sup>10</sup> R.L. Swanson and Robert E. Wilson, *Final Report, Stony Brook Hydrographic Study*, Report to the New York Department of State, Town of Smithtown, Town of Brookhaven (Marine Sciences Research Center, Stony Brook University, 2005), 37.

<sup>11</sup> E.A. Lapham, *Stony Brook Secrets* (New York, NY, Gotham Bookmark Press, 1942), 146.

<sup>12</sup> B.F. Thompson, *The History of Long Island from its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time* Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Gould, Banks & Co., 1843), 511.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>14</sup> E.A. Lapham, 146.

<sup>15</sup> Mount

<sup>16</sup> B.F. Van Liew, *Fifty Years, 1928-1978, Head-of-the-Harbor, Suffolk County, Long Island* (Head-of-the-Harbor, NY, Incorporated Village of Head-of-the-Harbor, 1978); Mount.

<sup>17</sup> R.W. Kenny, "Introduction," *William Sidney Mount: Family, Friends, and Ideas*, eds. E.K. Kaplan, R.W. Kenny, and R. Wunderlich (Setauket, N.Y., Three Village Historical Society, 1999), 5-8.

<sup>18</sup> Mount; H.K. Klein, *Three Village Guidebook* (Setauket, NY: Three Village Historical Society, 1976), 158.

<sup>19</sup> Beers, Comstock, and Cline, pub, *Atlas of Long Island, New York* (New York, NY 1873), 150.

<sup>20</sup> Mount.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey, *Port Jefferson Harbor and Vicinity L. I.* (Register No. 1734, 1886).

<sup>29</sup> Mount.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Mount; R. Lawrence Swanson and Malcolm Bowman, *Between Stony Brook Harbor Tides*, unpublished paper.

<sup>33</sup> Mount.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Mount.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

## REFLECTIONS

### THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NEW YORK STATE

Natalie A. Naylor

*Natalie Naylor contributed a dozen articles to the recently published Encyclopedia of New York State, and served as a member of its editorial board. Below professor Naylor shares some observations about the volume, its treatment of Long Island, and the experience as a whole.*

In May 2005 after nearly eight years in preparation, the *Encyclopedia of New York State* was published by Syracuse University Press. With an editorial staff of nearly fifty in Albany aided by more than 1,200 contributors throughout the state who wrote roughly 4,600 entries, it was a mammoth undertaking. The result is a 1,949 page volume, nearly the size of an unabridged dictionary, which includes more than 100 maps, 200 charts and tables, and 500 illustrations. Bibliographies, cross references, and an extensive index add to the value of the work. As editor-in-chief Peter Eisenstadt, notes in his preface, it is the "first, comprehensive, scholarly encyclopedia ever published about New York State" (xii). A copy of the *Encyclopedia* has been deposited in every public library in the state and is available for \$95.

Readers may be familiar with the *Encyclopedia of New York City*, published in 1995 under the editorship of Kenneth T. Jackson. Eisenstadt was the Managing Editor of that volume and made an early decision to include material on New York City in the state *Encyclopedia*. The entry on New York City by Edwin T. Burrows is the longest one in the volume (13+ pages); other entries treat some topics specific to the city. However, although this volume is considerably larger than the 1,365-page *Encyclopedia of New York City* (as well as having a larger 9x12 page and smaller type size), there is not as much detailed treatment of the city.

The scope of the *Encyclopedia of New York State* is broad: politics, economics, the built environment, ethnic and religious groups all receive attention. Entries on individuals are limited to those with important accomplishments in New York State and some are included in related entries. (For example, Barbara McClintock is mentioned in the entry on the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.) All the state's governors and popularly elected U.S. senators have individual entries, as do all four year colleges and departments in the executive branch of the state government. Information in tables includes a wide range of

topics from birds, constitutional conventions, crime statistics (1965-2000, for New York City and the state), executions (by race and gender, in the entry on capital punishment), football teams, major golf championships, psychiatric facilities, and state parks. Election results on gubernatorial and presidential elections provide convenient access to statistics. The entry on climate and weather has maps giving data on average temperatures and precipitation during the last three decades of the twentieth-century. Many of the entries include interesting information that is not otherwise easily found. A six page article on September 11th, 2001 reflects the desire to include a significant event in the history of the recent past.

A great deal of time was spent initially deciding upon entries to include, with suggestions from the editorial and advisory boards. The late Roger Wunderlich (founding editor of the *LIHJ*), a member of the editorial board, provided many topics and names of Long Island individuals, and some were added to the staff's initial lists.

Though Long Island is often short changed in scholarly projects emanating from upstate, in the *Encyclopedia* the region fares well. Initially it had been decided to have entries on every county, town, city, and incorporated village in the state. However, the majority of people in Nassau and Suffolk lived in unincorporated areas, and communities such as Levittown certainly deserved to be included. The municipal entries were expanded to all Census Designated Areas with a minimum population of 4,500. Since Dering Harbor on Shelter Island is an incorporated village, it has a separate entry, although the year round population in the last federal census was only thirteen. Nearly 200 Long Island localities are included, though finally some of the entries were consolidated. Thus, the Roslyn entry includes Roslyn village, Roslyn Estates, Roslyn Heights, and Roslyn Harbor. Similarly, the Brookville, Farmingdale, Great Neck and Hewlett entries each include several localities. In some cases, where the town and an unincorporated locality have the same name (e.g. Huntington), the two are covered in the same entry.

Most of the entries on localities were limited to 100 words. Communities with larger populations and those deemed more significant (e.g. Sag Harbor) have longer entries. The instructions to contributors were to cover communities chronologically: founding or origins; distinctive demographic and ethnic history; economic history; significant places, persons, or events; and the recent past. The guidelines for localities also specified inclusion of "the essential facts and forces that have shaped the history" and "what makes the place distinctive from its neighbors." All entries were edited and content checked and returned to the contributor to review. Although some of the

entries add little to those in *Newsday's Hometown Long Island* (1998), most of the locality entries do provide welcome attention to economic history, ethnic diversity, and the recent past.

All the county entries include a map with localities, tables with population 1790-2000 (including nonwhite and foreign born), and population of towns, 1800-2000, at forty year intervals. Because Nassau County did not exist until 1899 the population statistics in its table begin with 1900. Unfortunately, the editors did not include the population of the eastern towns of Queens which became Nassau County in the entry on Queens County. (Census data for counties from 1698 to 1786 is in the entry on Colonial New York.) Edward J. Smits, Nassau County Historian, wrote the entry on Nassau County and Roger Wunderlich the entry on Suffolk, each of which are more than three pages. All the county entries include bibliographic essays.

More than a dozen entries begin with the heading "Long Island," including baymen, ducks, ferries, and steamship lines, as well as the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) and State Park Commission. American Indian entries include Fort Corchaug and Fort Massapeag, Matinecock Indians, Montaukett Nation, Poospatuck Indian Reservation, Shinnecock Nation, sunksquaws, Paul Cuffee, Samson Occum, and William Wallace Tooker. Among the women included are pioneer aviators Harriet Quimby and Elinor Smith, and suffragists Rosalie Jones and Ida Bunce Sammis.

Government and political entries include Alphonse D'Amato, Perry Duryea, Ezra L'Hommedieu, Allard Lowenstein, W. Kingsland Macy, Joseph Margiotta, Eugene Nickerson, J. Russel Sprague, Sol Wachtler, and, of course, Theodore Roosevelt. William Cullen Bryant, Mario Puzo, and Walt Whitman are authors with Long Island connections; *Great Gatsby*, *Amityville Horror*, and *Jaws* also have entries. Among the Long Island artists included are William Merritt Chase, Arthur Dove, Lee Krasner, William Sidney Mount, Jackson Pollock, and Louis Comfort Tiffany. Other Long Islanders include Samuel Bolton, Jupiter Hammon, the Hicks family, Billy Joel, Robert Moses, William "Bull" Smith, William "Tangier" Smith, A. T. Stewart, and Nathaniel Woodhull. Businesses represented are Entenmanns, King Kullen, *Newsday*, Northrop-Grumman, Republic Aviation Corporation, Sperry Corporation, and Weight Watchers.

Many other entries focus on Long Island topics including: Amagansett U-boat Landing; Belmont Park; Belmont Stakes; Bonackers; Brookhaven National Laboratory; Cherry Grove and Fire Island Pines; Fishers Island; Hempstead Plains, Jones Beach State Park; Plum Island; Roosevelt Field; Shinnecock and Peconic Canal; Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant, Camp Upton and Camp Wikoff; and



the Vanderbilt Cup Race. Long Island is also represented in entries on aviation, carousels, fireworks industry, oysters, pine barrens, suburbanization, wine industry, and whaling, as well as in general articles, e.g. on New Netherland.

Local historians among the contributors include Joan Gay Kent, Robert Hughes, Suzanne Johnson, Tom Kuehhas, Georgina Martorella, John Strong, Luise Weiss, Richard Welch, and Richard Winsche. (Articles are signed and brief biographical information on all the contributors is included at the end of the volume.)

This is an indispensable and excellent reference work on New York State. Anyone simply browsing or seriously consulting specific entries, is sure to be rewarded. Those seeking more depth on topics can consult the bibliographic references in most of the entries as well as *The Empire State: A History of New York*, edited by Milton M. Klein (2001). Though one might dream of an encyclopedia devoted exclusively to Long Island which would do full justice to its history, Long Island is well represented in the *Encyclopedia of New York State*.

## **FEATURE: LONG ISLAND PLACE NAMES**

### **SOUTHOLD: WHAT'S IN A NAME? MORE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK**

*Antonia Booth*

The mortal remains of Puritan minister John Youngs are buried near the first meeting house in the town he founded in 1640. His raised surface grave occupies a prominent position in "God's Acre," the oldest section of the oldest English cemetery in New York State. The massive horizontal slab across its top proclaims: "Mr. John Yongs Minister of the Word and First Setler of the Church of Christ in South Hold on Long Island. Deceased the 24 of February in the Yeare of Our Lord 1671."<sup>1</sup>

Three years before he led the founding of Southold, Youngs made the following application to the Commission for Foreign Plantations for permission to take passage on the *Mary Anne* of Yarmouth, England, William Gooch (or Goose) master:

The examination of John: Yonges of St. Margretts: Suff/Minister aged 35 years, and Joan: his wife/aged 34 years with/6/children...ar desirous to pass for Salam in New England to inhabit". In the margin of the application is written, "This man was forbyden passage by the Commission and went not from Yarmouth."<sup>2</sup>

Despite this denial the clergyman and his family were in Salem, Massachusetts, in less than three months. On August 14, 1637, the minister was accepted as an inhabitant of Salem and granted land there.<sup>3</sup> In 1973 historians Breen and Foster wrote "John Yonges, the only minister in the 1637 group, left to found Southold, Long Island (named for his birthplace in Suffolk) in 1646, taking with him another of the Yarmouth emigrants, Philomen Dickinson, an established tanner in Salem." Breen and Foster had the date wrong. It should have been 1640. But their facts as to the creation of the new outpost are correct. For more than a century it has been accepted that John Youngs founded Southold and that it was named after the town in which he was married and fathered children, and where his father before him served as vicar.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of this certitude a review of early Long Island historiography reveals a different narrative. Silas Wood, lawyer and assemblyman from Huntington, wrote in 1828: "The Rev. John Youngs was the first minister

of South Old. He had been a minister at Hingham, in Norfolk in England before he emigrated to this country.”<sup>5</sup>

This apocrypha found its way into the work of another lawyer, Benjamin Thompson of Setauket, who wrote in 1843 of Southold, “The present name was adopted a short time after the commencement of the settlement in 1640 . . . The most material documentary evidence in relation to the first purchase has not been preserved, but the names of the early planters are pretty satisfactorily ascertained. Many of them were natives of Hingham, in Norfolkshire, Eng(land) . . . they came to this place with their most distinguished man and spiritual leader, the Rev. John Youngs.” There is no evidence that any of the Southold settlers whose names Thompson records came from Hingham. The pastime of researching one’s colonial forebears which resulted in printed family histories dates back only to the end of the nineteenth-century. In an age before air travel, only the wealthy person with time to spare could afford traveling abroad by ship to view parish registers in person.<sup>6</sup>

Not long after Thompson’s book was published, Reverend Nathaniel Prime of Huntington wrote his own ecclesiastical history. According to Prime “Southold was the first town settled on Long Island. The first company established themselves here in 1640, and consisted principally of English emigrants from Norfolkshire, who had spent a short time in the Newhaven (sic) colony. . . the first pastor of this church was the Rev. John Youngs. He had been a minister in England, and emigrated to this country, with several of his church, not long before their removal to the island.”<sup>7</sup>

By the time John Romeyn Brodhead published his two volume history of the state of New York in 1853 the misinformation had hardened and was virtually set in amber. Now it sounded as if Southold’s first settlers all came at the same time from Hingham in Norfolk, stopped just briefly in New Haven, and then sailed across Long Island Sound to found the colony whose Indian name was Yennecott.<sup>8</sup>

The Hingham tale is repeated in Richard Bayles’ sketches of Suffolk County published in 1874. Bayles hypothesizes that “the name South Hold was given by New Haven and was suggested by the fact that they had gained a *hold* on the land that lay *south* of them.” Bayles also repeats a since discredited myth that a party of thirteen men founded the town.<sup>9</sup>

How could so many early historians be wrong about the founding fathers of Southold? Perhaps because almost no attention was paid to the origin of emigrants to New England: “the existing literature is surprisingly silent about the migrants’ previous life in the mother country . . . town studies usually begin not with the migrant in England but with the townsman in New England.” Why choose Hingham? Southold was

known as the most religiously inflexible of the United Colonies of New England while Hingham in England was "of all the Norfolk parishes known to be closely associated with New England, one of the most vigorous and united in its nonconformity." But "Hingham, Norfolk was almost depopulated by the group that founded Hingham, Massachusetts," and that would seem to leave very few to colonize the new town on eastern Long Island.<sup>10</sup>

Charles B. Moore was a descendant of Southold's first settler Thomas Moore who was, by tradition, a shipwright. In 1890, as an official of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, Moore gave a long and well annotated address upon the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Southold. Reading it one senses Moore is aware the Hingham tale is wrong, but doesn't want to impeach the credibility of previous historians. Moore writes of John Youngs' marriage in Southwold, Suffolk, in 1622 with his father Vicar Christopher Youngs officiating, and of the baptism of two of his children in the same church in 1625. Reydon is two miles from Southwold, (also spelled Southold in some early records), and St. Margaret's there is the parent church of the much larger St. Edmund's in Southwold. Charles Moore's ancestor was very likely from Southwold and was married to Martha Youngs, daughter of Vicar Christopher Youngs, and sister of John.<sup>11</sup>

The New Jersey man who became pastor of the First Church of Southold in 1851 was a printer and newspaper editor before ordination at age thirty-one. Described as a "scholar, a prolific writer and a tireless worker," Rev. Epher Whitaker became deeply interested in the town's history and is best known for his *History of Southold, L.I.: Its First Century*. Whitaker was involved with the Long Island Historical Society (now the Brooklyn Historical Society) from its founding in 1863 until he died at ninety-six. He was also active in the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, and helped establish the Suffolk County Historical Society in 1886.<sup>12</sup>

Among the questions Epher Whitaker undertook to answer was which of three St. Margaret's Churches in Suffolk was the one mentioned in the 1637 examination of Rev. John Youngs by the royal commission for emigration in which he and his family indicated their desire to leave for Salem, Massachusetts. Whitaker first wrote to the vicar of St. Margaret's in Southolt in the Hundred of Hoxne, Suffolk, having seen that name also spelled Southold. He learned that "Mr. Youngs was not at any time during the seventeenth century an incumbent of that parish." At the second St. Margaret's, in Wangford, between Halesworth and Bungay, Whitaker learned in a letter from its rector there was "nothing to indicate that the Rev. John Youngs was ever minister at that place." By the time his *History of Southold* was published in 1881, Whitaker was

convinced that the correct St. Margaret's was the one in Reydon connected since 1460 with Southwold.<sup>13</sup>

In time and with more delving into the Southwold parish register and allied sources, the Youngs family of Southold and its origins were sorted out. Vicar Christopher Youngs of St. Margaret's, Reydon, and St. Edmund's, Southwold, and his wife, Margaret, had six surviving children (the parish register shows that in 1616 their daughter Elizabeth drowned on the way back from Dunwich Fair.) The remaining six children, John, Joseph, Christopher, Mary, Margaret and Martha are mentioned in the wills of both parents. With the probable exception of Margaret, all migrated to New England. Rev. John and his brother Joseph, a sea captain, their brother Christopher's children, as well as their sister Martha with her husband Thomas Moore, all left Salem to become residents of Southold (Christopher died in Massachusetts.) The Rev. John Youngs was first married to Joan Herrington in Southwold in 1622. His second wife was also named Joan. The children born in England were John, Thomas, Mary, Rachel and Joseph. Those by his third wife, Mary Warren (originally of Southwold), were Benjamin and Christopher. Even lacking these clarifying details, Epher Whitaker still felt confident in stating that it was "highly probable" that Southold was named for John Youngs' home in England and that the name of our county was also taken from Suffolk County, England.<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Epher Whitaker, Rev., and *History of Southold, L.I.: Its First Century* (1881), 139-40; Richard F. Welch, *Memento Mori: The Gravestones of Early Long Island, 1680-1810* (Syosset, New York: Friends for Long Island's Heritage, 1983), 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Selah Youngs, Jr., *Youngs Family* (New York: 1907), 16; John Hotten and John Camden, *The Original List of Persons of Quality* (New York, 1874), 294; Norman Tyack, C.P., "The Humbler Puritans of East Anglia and the New England Movement: Evidence From the Court Records of the 1630's," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 138 (1984), 79-106.

<sup>3</sup> *Youngs*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Southwold means "the place south of the wood" according to A.F. Bottomley in his "A Short History of the Borough of Southwold" (Southwold Corporation 1972); T.H. Breen and Stephen Foster, "Moving

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to the New World: the Character of Early Massachusetts Immigration” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 30 (1984), 189-222.

<sup>5</sup> Silas Wood, *A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns on Long-Island with their Political Conditions to the End of the American Revolution* (Brooklyn, New York: 1828), 34.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin F. Thompson, *The History of Long Island and its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time with many Important and Interesting Matters, including Notices of Numerous Individuals and Families; Also a particular account of the Different Churches and Ministers*, 2nd Ed., vol. I, (New York: 1843), 374; Adeline Horton White, *The Hortons in America* (Seattle, 1929); Edward Tanjore Corwin, *The Corwin Genealogy* (Millstone, N.J.: 1872); Lester Dunbar Mapes, “A Tentative Correction of the Mapes Family Line”, typescript, 1941; Charles Wells Hayes, *Wells of Southold and His Descendants* (Buffalo, 1878); Lucy Dubois Akerly, “The Tuthill Family of Tharston, Norfolk County, England and Southold, Suffolk County, New York” (Newburgh, N.Y.: Privately printed, 1898).

<sup>7</sup> Nathaniel S. Prime, *A History of Long Island from its first settlement by Europeans to the Year 1845 with special reference to its Ecclesiastical Concerns*, (New York, 1845), 131-133.

<sup>8</sup> John Romeyn Brodhead, *History of the State of New York, First Period, 1609-1664* (New York, 1853), 300; Charles J. Hoadley, *Records of the Colony and Plantation of New Haven from 1638 to 1649* (Hartford, C.T. 1985), 70.

<sup>9</sup> Richard M. Bayles, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County and its towns, villages, hamlets, scenery, institutions and important enterprises with a Historical Outline of Long Island from its First Settlement by Europeans* (Port Jefferson, N.Y.: 1874), 360-361; *Whitaker's Southold, being a Substantial Reproduction of the History of Southold, L.I.: Its First Century*, ed. Rev. Charles E. Craven, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1931).

<sup>10</sup> Breen and Foster, 189-190; Tyack, 28 and 98; Alan Simpson, “What's In A Name: the Case of Little Compton, Rhode Island,” (Little Compton Historical Society and Massachusetts Historical Society, 1982), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Charles B. Moore, “Celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of the Town and the Church of Southold, L.I.,” August 27,

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1890, printed for the town, 1890. Selah Youngs, Jr., *Youngs Family* (New York, 1907), 14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Whitaker, 18-57; *Whitaker's Southold*, 12-24.

<sup>13</sup> *Whitaker's Southold*, 17-36; *The Founders of Southold*, 12-24.

<sup>14</sup> *The Founders of Southold*, 19-25.

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*Kristen J. Nyitray*

Beginning in 1892 with Henry Hicks' and Asa Gray's thesis *The Flora of the Hempstead Plains, Long Island*, the evolution of Long Island from barren bedrock to expansive suburb has served as an inspiration for research by graduate and undergraduate students.<sup>1</sup> Long Island's unique geography provides both established authors and students with ample opportunities to research and document the unwritten histories of its peoples and places.

The following bibliography is a compilation of the dissertations and theses published between 2000 and 2006 and includes materials that are relevant to the study of Nassau, Suffolk, Kings, and Queens Counties. It can be consulted as a companion resource to Natalie A. Naylor's *Bibliography of Dissertations and Theses on Long Island Studies*.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to identify the published scholarship related to Long Island within this time period, searches of several academic databases were conducted, including *American History and Life*, *Dissertation Abstracts*, and *WorldCat Dissertations*.

The subject headings listed in the cataloging records of each work provided important information about its scope and content. The categories selected for this bibliography are: African Americans; agriculture; arts and architecture; colonial period, economics; education; energy management; government and politics; Greek Americans; immigration; Jewish Americans; land use; literature; Native Americans; religion; Revolutionary War; science and environment; sociology; and transportation. Please note that scientific reports and educational case studies were not selected for inclusion in this bibliography.

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## **SECONDARY SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST**

*We are pleased to present the following essay in our Secondary School Essay Contest, an annual event co-sponsored by Stony Brook University's Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education, Dr. Eli Seifman, director emeritus. We encourage social studies teachers to submit papers by their students exploring any aspect of Long Island history.*

### **THE TAINT IS IN THE BLOOD: LONG ISLAND AND THE EUGENICS MOVEMENT**

*Rachel Merker*

In the 1930s Buck Smith, from Rush Mountain, Virginia, was sterilized. Declared feeble-minded by the state at only fifteen years of age, Smith was fed pills to make him drowsy and then wheeled to the operating room where a vasectomy was performed on him. For Smith and thousands of others perceived as poor, uneducated, and "simple minded," the decision of whether or not to have children was made for him, a consequence of the ideas coming out of the Eugenics movement. Eugenics had its origin in England, but the location from which it gained a powerful grip on America, and ultimately the rest of the world, was Long Island, New York.

A complex of buildings in Cold Spring Harbor produces scientific advances in genetics on a daily basis. Over one-hundred years ago, scientific discoveries and conclusions were formed in this same complex during an era where prejudice, wealth, and pseudo-science ruled. On Long Island, an organization dedicated to establishing the negative eugenics movement was created and led by the zoologist Charles Davenport. His ability to gain financial backing from organizations such as the Carnegie Institute of Washington and wealthy Long Islanders such as Mrs. Edward Harriman allowed Davenport to establish the foundations he needed to spread eugenics across America. After creating a Station of Experimental Evolution at Cold Spring Harbor in 1902, with financial aid from the Carnegie Institute, in 1910 Davenport co-founded the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) with Mrs. Harriman. The ERO, established on Long Island, allowed Davenport to fulfill both local and national eugenics goals. Davenport and the ERO sought to identify those thought to be unfit and prevent them from reproducing. By doing so, the spread of what were perceived to be negative hereditary traits, such as poverty and feeble mindedness, would, in the opinion of the ERO, be prevented. By collecting genetic information both locally and nationwide, spreading knowledge of eugenics and using means of "social intervention," the

ERO sought to eliminate the least desirable elements from the human gene pool.

Wealthy and influential Long Islanders, including Mrs. Harriman, were willing to provide both monetary and social support for eugenics research, and took summer courses in at Cold Spring Harbor that spread knowledge of eugenics and affirmed the need for this movement. Also on Long Island were universities where eugenics could be preached. Long Island's physical location also aided the movement: while it was close enough to New York City for word of the institutions to spread to the largest metropolis of the country and for members of the city to come down and learn about eugenics, it was still secluded enough for workers to go about their business undisturbed. Figures such as John D. Rockefeller, from New York City, also ended up being a monetary asset to the ERO. Davenport took advantage of the wealth and education that the area had in such abundance to further his eugenics agenda.

The roots of eugenics, the social philosophy that advocates the improvement of human hereditary traits through social intervention, can be found with Herbert Spencer and his idea of "survival of the fittest."<sup>1</sup> In the 1850s, Spencer, an agnostic English philosopher, published *Social Statistics*, in which he asserted that through evolution, the "fittest" would naturally survive to create a utopian society, while the "unfit" would naturally be impoverished, less educated, and ultimately extinct. Spencer declared that "all imperfection must disappear."<sup>2</sup> In 1859 Darwin further advocated survival of the fittest, coining a new term: natural selection. In his book, *The Origin of Species*, Darwin describes natural selection as a process of nature that guaranteed the eradication of traits thought of as harmful to a population and the preservation of those seen as beneficial. The concept of "social Darwinism" applied natural selection to the social world, explaining that to preserve the weak and needy was an unnatural act, because they were automatically destined to wither and become extinct. These theories led to the creation of the science and philosophy of eugenics under Francis J. Galton.<sup>3</sup>

Galton, a cousin of Darwin, was fascinated with science and math as a young man. The beginnings of his eugenics discoveries are found in the patterns he discovered in various qualities of human beings. From these patterns, Galton concluded that heredity transmitted more than just physical features. It was his inference that heredity transmitted mental, emotional, and creative aspects of humans. Based on his findings, Galton suggested that "bountiful breeding of the best people would evolve mankind into a superlative species of grace and quality" and that "like begets like."<sup>4</sup> The name that Galton used for this new scientific theory was "eugenics," combining the Greek words for "well" and "born."

However, the theory of eugenics was one entirely lacking in scientific evidence. In 1892, Galton himself admitted to this fact in the preface to the second edition of *Hereditary Genius*, stating that “The great problem of the future betterment of the human race is confessedly, at the present time, hardly advanced beyond the state of academic interest.”<sup>5</sup> His search began for more data that would provide substantial evidence for the idea that superiors bred superiors, and inferiors bred inferiors. According to author Edwin Black, Galton “began pasting numbers together, sculpting formulas, and was finally able to patch together enough margins of error and coefficients of correlation into a collection of statistical eugenic probabilities.”<sup>6</sup> After this, Galton tried to predict the precise formula describing the genetic relationship between ancestors and descendants. His conclusion was that, in essence, “every person was the measurable and predictable sum of his ancestors’ immortal germ plasma.”<sup>7</sup>

Charles Davenport, originally of Brooklyn, became interested in the works of Galton and even started a correspondence with him. After studying the works of famous scientific figures such as Mendel and performing studies at the Biological Laboratory summer school of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences in Cold Spring Harbor, Davenport was determined to spread eugenics across America. He first approached the Carnegie Institute of Washington (CIW) with a proposal for a Station of Experimental Evolution at Cold Spring Harbor in 1902, outlining his aim to investigate the method of evolution and to analyze and study race change. Davenport offered a tantalizing proposal to the CIW: ““The Carnegie fund offers the opportunity for which the world has so long been waiting.””<sup>8</sup> The CIW, claiming to be devoted to improving mankind in the broadest manner, agreed to Davenport’s proposal in 1904, granting him \$34,520 to “plant the first seeds of eugenics in America.”<sup>9</sup> Davenport then gained the support of the American Breeders Association (ABA), an association that originally focused on animal and plant breeding but soon became a part of the eugenics movement; in essence, they began to fund human breeding. The ABA added, at Davenport’s request, a Eugenics Committee. According to Davenport, the committee would “devise methods of recording the values of the blood of individuals, families, people and races . . . to emphasize the value of superior blood and the menace to society of inferior blood.”<sup>10</sup>

Davenport needed a Eugenics Record Office to register the hereditary and genetic backgrounds of as many Americans as possible, to encourage public officials to accept eugenic principles, despite the absence of strong scientific support, and to apply eugenic research into governing policy in American society.<sup>11</sup> This new establishment would be costly, and so Davenport searched for a person who would not only fund

the Office, but also give it credibility through his or her name. The woman that Davenport selected for this purpose was Mrs. E. H. Harriman, of the Harriman railroad family, who lived in Sands Point. In 1906, Mrs. Harriman's daughter had attended the Harbor's summer school and become enamored of eugenics, introducing her mother, who happened to be the richest woman in the world, to the science. Davenport, remembering Mrs. Harriman's daughter, quickly began cultivating a relationship with Mrs. Harriman, sending her letters, taking her to lunch, and visiting her daughter.<sup>12</sup> Mrs. Harriman willingly joined the crusade, and with a heavy donation, in 1910 the Eugenics Record Office was created.

The Eugenics Record Office (ERO) stood near Cold Spring Harbor on Route 25A at Morris Hill Road. Originally the Charles P. Stewart House, Mrs. Harriman bought the building and adjoining property of approximately eighty acres for \$80,680, and presented them to Davenport. A eugenicist named Harry H. Laughlin was elected as the organization's superintendent. The House's transformation into the ERO was official. The actual house served as living quarters for resident scientists as well as a workspace for ongoing research until 1913, when a separate building was built for the research. The ERO was an expensive establishment, and its overall finances are divided into two distinct periods. The first is the "Harriman Period," which lasted for the seven years in which the ERO was strictly under the control of Mrs. Harriman, from October 1, 1910, to December 31, 1917. The establishment and maintenance for this period cost \$246,832.82, while an endowment to CIW in 1918 cost \$300,000, making the total cost \$546,832.82 for Mrs. Harriman, excluding outside donations from other sources. In 1918 the "First Carnegie Period" began, which lasted twenty-two years, until 1939. The total sum expended for the ERO during this period was \$474,014.69. The total gross cost of the ERO for twenty-nine years and three months was \$1,020,847.51, excluding numerous outside gifts that were given by figures such as John. D. Rockefeller.<sup>13</sup> Davenport's fundraising schemes were elaborate and fruitful. At one point, Davenport decided to ask the Rockefeller foundation for \$600,000, and if they agreed, he then planned to go back to Mrs. Harriman and ask her to "go one better," perhaps an endowment of \$800,000 to \$ 1,000,000.<sup>14</sup> In the eyes of leading eugenicists such as Davenport, the ambitious goals of their project justified such expenditures.

The ERO had numerous goals in its crusade to better American society through eugenics. The first was securing pedigrees of both those who were thought to be the better families of the country, and those who represented the so called socially inadequate. The ERO aspired to eventually become a useful central bureau for depositing records and

seeking data concerning eugenics.<sup>15</sup> With this data, the ERO would build up a collection of records and analyses that would be valuable in furthering the new science.<sup>16</sup> With these records the ERO would build up an analytical index of the inborn traits of American families based on individuals' general traits. The records would allow fieldworkers to find locations specific to certain traits, both harmful and beneficial, thus allowing for the tracing of their descent. Another important activity of the ERO would be to train field workers to gather the data and records needed to create their analyses.<sup>17</sup> Studies would range from investigations of the "Ishmael" tribe of Indiana to skin color studies in New Orleans and in the islands of Bermuda and Jamaica, and even to ancestry in eastern Long Island.<sup>18</sup> The ERO also planned to investigate other eugenical factors, such as mate selection. The ERO would "advise concerning the eugenical fitness of proposed marriages."<sup>19</sup> Persons making requests for eugenical advice often filled out family history studies per instruction of the Office, and then eugenical advice was rendered in accordance with the limitations set by facts presented.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the ERO planned to publish the result of researches, in bulletins, memoirs, and reports. By fulfilling these numerous goals, the members of the ERO worked to spread eugenics across the US.<sup>21</sup>

To strengthen the eugenics movement, Davenport established ties with the Eugenics Research Association and was elected president of the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations, a grouping of individual eugenic leaders. Davenport also had connections with the American Eugenics Association and represented the ERO at a series of International Congresses of Eugenics and Race Betterment Conferences. To popularize eugenics, the ERO published a monthly news journal called the *Eugenical News*. The ERO also sent eugenic surveys to schools across the United States, asking for various genetic histories of students. Other surveys sent across America asked for traits ranging from complexion to hair form to prevailing mood. Many members of the lower tenth had been located and interviewed by field workers. Eugenics had been popularized and spread across America.

In 1891, eugenicist Robert Fletcher made a speech in which he referred to the unfit, proclaiming, "The taint is in the blood, and there is no royal touch which can expel it."<sup>22</sup> How would the ERO stop the eugenically unfit from tainting the blood coursing through America? The solution was in restrictive marriage laws, compulsory birth control, forced segregation, sterilization, even euthanasia. The most common method was compulsory sterilization. As the eugenics movement became more popular and more members of government became full-fledged eugenicists, sterilization laws became increasingly common. The ERO firmly supported sterilizations of the unfit. Laughlin even created a 502

page compilation of state eugenical legislation, entitled *Eugenical Sterilization in the United States*, which included a model sterilization law. Virginia's actual legislation regarding eugenics closely resembled Laughlin's model law in format and text.<sup>23</sup> In his written history of the ERO of 1939, Laughlin reported, "The Eugenics Record Office has been called upon frequently for service in legislative, court and administrative fields in the course of the enactment-testing and application of the eugenical sterilization laws."<sup>24</sup> In 1937, twenty-nine states had active sterilization laws on their statute books, including New York State, where forty-one men and one woman were sterilized.

While no sterilizations took place on Long Island, studies did take place there that greatly influenced all levels American government. Desiring to revise federal law so that "defective aliens" could be deported after a five year deadline, Laughlin decided to perform a eugenic study at Kings Park State Hospital in Long Island. Marvin D. Miller observes in his book that the hospital was "burdened with a population of 3,308 schizophrenics, 470 manic depressives, 141 epileptics, 138 alcoholics, 135 general paralysis cases, 136 feebleminded, and others suffering from Huntington's chorea, syphilis, senility and pellagra."<sup>25</sup> Arguing that the costs for this institutionalization were too high, Laughlin and other eugenicists became part of an anti-immigration movement that successfully ushered in the Immigration Act of 1924, and its quota system permitting 131,937 immigrants from Northern and Western Europe and only 21,247 others to enter annually.<sup>26</sup> Miller, perhaps overstating, assesses that the Act "was passed largely because of supporting testimony by the staff of the Eugenics Record Office of Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island, the center of power and influence of the American eugenics effort."<sup>27</sup>

Further studies made use of Long Island resources to aid the eugenics movement. One such study was done by the ERO in Nassau County, where it was located. In 1916, the Rockefeller Foundation granted \$10,000 to the ERO and the National Committee for Mental Hygiene to locate and enumerate so called defectives in Nassau County in the belief that they caused serious social problems such as truancy, sexual immorality, vagrancy, dependency, criminality, drug addiction and domestic maladjustment.<sup>28</sup> Nassau County was selected for this study for a variety of reasons. It possessed a good transportation system, a sizable population of colonial descendants, immigrants and minorities, the cooperation of its social agencies, and, obviously, the location of the ERO.<sup>29</sup> Using leads from court dockets, social agencies, and many of the county's physicians, the defectives were located (a great number just happened to be African American; others were categorized as "Natives of unascertained parentage."). Based on the survey, it was proposed that

New York register the so-called defectives and place them in psychiatric clinics, examine pupils' mental health, and combine school districts for more obtainable special education. The survey was referred to in a medical journal as "the influential Nassau County Survey which explored the relationship between mental disability and criminal behavior."<sup>30</sup> The journal also noted that many other states had followed suit, taking part in surveys of their own.<sup>31</sup>

For decades the ERO was the leader in American eugenics. However, it also attempted to bring the eugenic movement across the Atlantic and into countries such as Germany. While it is impossible to draw a direct line from the ERO to the Holocaust in Germany, there are still some connections worth mentioning. American eugenicists were constantly impressed with German race hygiene and Nazi sterilizations. Davenport had both written and person-to-person contact with many German race hygienists, such as Dr. Ernst Rudin. Although they were excluded from eugenic conferences during times of war, German scientists still had contact with many American eugenicists. Rockefeller donated significant sums of money for ERO bulletins to be distributed in Germany. German race hygiene articles and German speeches were translated in the *Eugenical News*. The ERO also distributed Nazi race hygiene films to schools and had pro Nazi articles written in the *Eugenical News*. Even during the war, but prior to the release of information about Nazi death camps, the *Eugenical News* criticized "anti-nazi propaganda" and praised the works of the German eugenics movement. Mussolini, Hitler's ally, was also a eugenicist, and he had his associates engage in correspondence with Davenport and other American eugenicists. Mussolini even hosted Laughlin shortly while Laughlin conducted research in Europe. Davenport contributed to the German Race Hygiene Society's articles. He had correspondences with Nazi race hygiene journals, and told Laughlin to urge Mussolini to start a sterilization program. Laughlin and Davenport shared many anti-Semitic views. However, while Germany advanced with race hygiene, which strongly promoted euthanasia, the American eugenics movement never engaged with such extremes. Still, as time wore on, the ERO and its support of German race hygiene brought large amounts of bad publicity.

In the late 1930s, criticism of the Eugenics Record Office was increasingly common. In 1935, an advisory committee formed by Carnegie toured the ERO and found it to be a worthless endeavor, recommending that "The Eugenics Record Office should engage in no new undertaking; and that all current activities should be discontinued . . . eugenics is by generally accepted definition and understanding not a science."<sup>32</sup> In 1938, aware of the dying enthusiasm for eugenics and the bad publicity that the ERO was earning, Carnegie disengaged from the



*Eugenical News*. In 1939 Laughlin retired from the ERO (which Davenport had also retired from a few years before). After this the ERO changed its name to the Genetics Record Office. Eventually, the ERO building was closed, and its files were transferred to different libraries and universities. While the eugenics movement lasted for decades more due to the sterilization laws that remained intact even after the Treaty Against Genocide was created in 1946, the ERO's involvement had ended. The *Eugenical News* had changed its name to the *Eugenics Quarterly* and later to *Social Biology*. Other eugenics organizations purged the word "eugenics" from their titles and changed their goals, often choosing to focus on genetics instead.

The Eugenics Record Office, founded on Long Island in 1910 by Charles Davenport and funded by Mrs. Harriman and later, the Carnegie Institute of Washington, was eugenic center of the United States. The ERO grew with the aid of wealthy Long Islanders who emptied their pockets to aid what was to them an extremely valuable cause. However, not so valuable to the eugenicists and their sponsors were the legacies of those who did not fit into a perfect eugenic mold. Future generations of thousands of families across America were ended quickly with the cut of a surgical tool. Without the Long Island based Eugenics Record Office performing studies, creating analyses, publishing news journals, attending eugenic conferences, and even spreading eugenic propaganda, the eugenics movement may not have had such a large impact on America.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003), 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-14.

<sup>4</sup> Black, 15; Marvin D. Miller, *Terminating the Socially Inadequate: the American Eugenicists and the German Race Hygienists, California to Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island to Germany* (New York: Malmud Rose, 1996), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Black, 18.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>9</sup> Miller, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Black, 39.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

<sup>12</sup> Black, 46.

<sup>13</sup> Harry H. Laughlin, *Official Records in the History of the Eugenics Record Office*, (unpublished, 1939), 4-6.

<sup>14</sup> Black, 94.

<sup>15</sup> Laughlin, 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>22</sup> Black, 25.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>24</sup> Laughlin, 188.

<sup>25</sup> Miller, 19.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Black, 391.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Marilyn Weigold, *The Long Island Sound: A History of the People: Places and Environment*. New York: New York University Press, 2004. \$16.35 (hardcover). Pp. 265.

In the updated and expanded edition of her 1974 classic *The American Mediterranean*, Professor Weigold describes the importance of the Sound in the development of communities in both Long Island and Connecticut, noting the Sound's changing role over the years in the lives of the people who live along its shores. In this new edition, Weigold gives special attention to the environmental and safety concerns that challenge residents in the twenty-first-century. The scope of the study is wide, including historic development, technological innovations, political decisions and demographic changes that have placed demands on the Long Island Sound and affected the condition of its waters.

In the early years of European settlement that followed Adriaen Block's discovery of the Sound in 1614, its waters provided the settlers with food and a means of both communication and trade at a time when inland travel was very difficult.

The Sound, so beneficial in peacetime, presented hazards in time of war. During the American Revolution, with the British occupying Long Island and the Patriots facing them in Connecticut, the water route provided a way for both opposing armies and lawless individuals to plunder the coasts. Weigold reminds us how brutal the fighting was during the Revolution, including attacks led by the traitor Benedict Arnold against Connecticut's coastal towns.

The British occupation of Long Island brought particular hardships. As late as November 1782, when the Paris peace negotiations were already in progress, the British forced the citizens of Huntington to help build a fort on the town cemetery. Today an historic marker indicates the site of the structure, fittingly called Fort Golgotha, which was torn down as soon as the British departed.

During the War of 1812 the British blockaded the Sound, ending trade and resulting in the capture of a number of ships owned by Long Islanders. After the war the United States Government built Forts Schuyler and Totten to protect the western entrance to the Sound. Fortunately, they have never been needed for this purpose.

Weigold also considers navigation on the Sound, including sail, steam, and pleasure boating. In describing the age when the side wheeler steamers plied the waters, the author conveys both the glamour and the occasional tragedy, such as the sinking of the Lexington.

The Sound even had a central role in the plans to build the Long Island Rail Road. The project began in 1834 with the intention of providing a better route between New York City and Boston. When the line reached from Brooklyn to Greenport in 1844, passengers would board steamboats to be carried across the Sound to the mainland railroad connections. In retrospect, it is surprising how little significance was given to Long Island, which was mainly considered as a means of linking two important urban areas.

Weigold provides a general history of Long Island, from describing the development of commercial agriculture, fishing and industry to the building of estates and the Gold Coast Era. The automobile and the roads it inspired, from the Vanderbilt Parkway to the Long Island Expressway, were vital in the transformation of the Island in the twentieth-century, providing employment opportunities and encouraging the development of communities and the growth of population. Weigold does not hold the common misconception that suburbia began with Levittown. Rather, the period following World War II saw a rapid acceleration of a process that had already begun; the movement of people and corporations from New York City to the Island.

The rapid increase in population magnified the problems of waste disposal and pollution. The large number of people using the Sound for recreational purposes, bringing power boats as well as sailboats, turned Long Island Sound in Weigold's words, into "Everyman's Sea."

Included in this volume is the concluding chapter from the 1974 edition which projected possible developments, from the use of nuclear power plants to possible plans for a bridge to span the Sound. This provides a long range view of changing perceptions and the efforts of individuals and governments to balance the demands for power, housing, improved transportation, and recreation with the need to ensure the health of the Sound.

The final chapter "Long Island Sound in the Twenty-First Century" examines present evaluations of the environmental problems concerning the Sound. The results of the Long Island Sound Study's investigation of natural and man-made toxic substances emphasize the challenges that face us today, as well as some achievements.

This study encourages people who enjoy the Long Island Sound to learn its history and to become involved in efforts to preserve the beauty and health of America's Mediterranean.

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Joseph S. Tiedemann and Eugene R. Fingerhut, eds. *The Other New York: The American Revolution Beyond New York City, 1763-1787*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005. \$60 (cloth). Maps, tables, index, Pp. xi-246.

The military history of the American Revolution has been the subject of many books. For Long Island, the Battle of Brooklyn, whaleboat warfare, and the spy ring have usually received most of the attention. Many other books on the Revolution focus on the cities but, as the editors point out, 93 percent of the population in colonial America lived in rural areas. This book is a welcome contribution on the Revolutionary era beyond New York City, including the history of the British occupation of Long Island during the war.

The editors provide an Introduction and brief Conclusion. Each New York county beyond Manhattan is the subject of a chapter by a different author, except for Dutchess, Orange, and Ulster counties, which are discussed in one chapter on the Central Hudson Valley. The maps are of the three regions, Downstate, Hudson Valley, and the Frontier. Three tables provide the population of the counties in 1771 and 1786, with detail by age, gender, and race. (Suffolk was inadvertently omitted from one of the population tables).

The population tables invite interesting comparisons. Suffolk, which of course covers the largest land area, also had the largest population of the three counties on Long Island (Queens then included today's Nassau County). Kings County (today's Brooklyn) had the smallest population, the reverse of the pattern of the last 150 years. King's population was less than one-third the population of either Queens or Suffolk County. Although New York City was the capital of the province and headquarters of the British army throughout the Revolution, Long Island's population (27,731) was 18 percent larger than the city's and nearly 17 percent of the province's in 1771. However, Albany County had a larger population (42,076) than either Long Island or New York City.

Edwin G. Burrows, co-author of *Gotham* and professor at Brooklyn College of City University of New York, is the author of the chapter on Kings County. He attributes its Tory sympathies to its descendants of Dutch and Walloon settlers who resisted assimilation and depended heavily on enslaved African laborers. Blacks were one-third of the population in Kings County in 1771 - the highest proportion of any county in northern states. Residents in Kings virtually boycotted patriot organizations and activities in the years before the war.

Kings became the site of the Battle of Brooklyn, a major battle early in the war. The strategic importance of Brooklyn Heights for defending New York City and the British army's need for food and wood from Long

Island made Kings a huge strategic asset. In February 1776, patriot troops began to construct fortifications on the Heights. The British assembled a large expeditionary force (the numbers would not be surpassed until D-Day in World War II). Their troops assembled on Staten Island in early July 1776 and soon invaded Kings County. American troops were outnumbered and outmaneuvered, but Washington managed to evacuate his troops after suffering heavy losses in late August, 1776.

Co-editor Joseph S. Tiedemann wrote the chapter on Queens County, which is based on his doctoral dissertation "Response to Revolution: Queens County, New York, during the Era of the American Revolution" (1977). Tiedemann has published a number of articles based on his dissertation, but it is useful to have this summary of his work which is more accessible here. Some readers may be puzzled by references in his notes to the Long Island Historical Society which changed its name some two decades ago to Brooklyn Historical Society.

Other historians have generally portrayed the Queens population as divided in attitude toward the war. (Indeed, North Hempstead seceded from the southern portion of the town in September, 1775, a split confirmed in 1784.) But Tiedemann makes the case that the majority of residents in Queens were "neutral or apolitical." He estimates that 12 percent of the population of Queens were Whigs (or Patriots), and that only in Newtown were the Whigs a majority. Tories (or Loyalists) were less than 27 percent in the county, and 60 percent were neutral or uncommitted. Compare this to the oft-quoted statement of John Adams that one-third of the people in the thirteen colonies were Patriot, one-third Loyalist, and one-third didn't care.

With lives centered on family, farm, and community, political apathy was widespread, particularly at the beginning of the conflict. Quakers, who were prominent in Flushing (as well as in Westbury, Jericho, Manhasset, and Matinecock), were pacifist and most tried to stay neutral. Three of the five towns in Queens refused to send delegates to the Provincial Assembly in March 1775 and even after Concord and Lexington, the popular vote in November 1775 was 778 to 221 against representation in the patriot's Continental Congress. The lines were in part religious, with a higher percentage of Presbyterians Patriots; more Anglicans and Dutch Reformed were Loyalists. But in western Queens, even 49 percent of the Anglicans were neutral and not aligned with either group.

In many respects, Queens was unique because of its proximity to New York City and a "solid core of Tory Leaders," some of whom had country homes in the county. The British army, however, during the occupation "failed to win the political struggle" for the allegiance of the civilian population. In fact, military misrule alienated even those who had

been initially favorable to the Crown at the beginning of the conflict. A few prominent Loyalists went into exile, but Tiedemann convincingly argues that contrary to some accounts, less than 6 percent of the population left at the end of the war, and the state's harsh anti-Tory legislation was not rigorously enforced. Tiedemann indicates that only twelve of fifty Queens men indicted under the Forfeiture Act had their property confiscated. He concludes that "most county Tories escaped legal persecution" (p. 56). In fact, after the war, significant numbers of those elected to office had been Tories before the war (more than 12 percent in 1784-1785 and more than 20 percent in 1786-1787).

John G. Staudt is the author of the Suffolk chapter, drawing on research for his dissertation, "'A State of Wretchedness': A Social History of Suffolk County, New York in the American Revolution" (2005). The majority of Suffolk's population were Whigs who supported the patriot cause. More than 90 percent of eligible men signed the patriot document in 1774 supporting the boycott of British goods, and some 2000 were in the patriot militia by 1776. Moreover, the majority of the five thousand Long Islanders who left Long Island for Connecticut and New York after the Battle of Brooklyn were from Suffolk County. These refugees suffered a disruption of their lives. Under occupation and martial law, British soldiers "plundered, pillaged, and terrorized the civilian population" by seizing cattle, grain, and wagons, denuding the woods and fences for firewood, and desecrating Presbyterian churches.

As the war continued, however, Staudt notes that some of the American partisans "behaved more like pirates than Patriots" and "compounded the war's viciousness by looting and killing Loyalists and Patriots alike" (p. 63). After the war, the turnover of government officials increased and plural office holding declined, making for a more equitable society. Eventually religious diversity and manumissions increased (Suffolk in 1790 was the only county in New York where free blacks outnumbered slaves).

While Long Island's three counties did not share political allegiances before the war, the common experience of the Revolution unified and transformed them (and all New Yorkers) into Americans. The editors conclude that as a result of the Revolution the new state was "more open, free, and republican than colonial New York had been," though not all the promises of the Declaration of Independence had yet been achieved (p. 229). Long Island led in the state in manumitting slaves after the war, with Quakers in the forefront (though their role is mentioned only in the chapter on the Hudson Valley).

The social history and details on the more than seven long years of occupation are particularly good in *The Other New York*. Although pricey



at \$60, it is a valuable contribution to the history of the Revolutionary era, including Long Island's role.

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Nedda C. Allbray. *Flatbush: The Heart of Brooklyn*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2004. \$24.99 (paperback). Charts, maps, illustrations. Pp 160.

Of the many neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Flatbush must be considered one of the most historic. An original Dutch settlement, Flatbush was to become the site of America's first major battle with the British in 1776. From the post-Revolutionary period up until the dawn of the twentieth-century, the town's rural way of life contrasted with the increasingly urbanized neighbor to its north, the town of Brooklyn. By the early 1900's, Flatbush's old ways fell victim to the inevitable modernization that came with advances in industry and transportation. Large family owned farms were sold, torn down, and residential homes built for the burgeoning middle class. As a result, Flatbush evolved into New York City's first suburb.

The history and cultural life of Flatbush from its initial establishment to contemporary times is explored in Nedda C. Allbray's volume. The author traces the beginnings of Dutch exploration and settlement in what was to become New Netherlands. The early seventeenth-century's lucrative fur trade led to Dutch emigration to New Netherlands for the purpose of "communal enterprise." As a result, by mid-century six Dutch towns had been founded and chartered in what became Kings County. The village of Flatbush, originally known as either Midwout (Middle Wood) or Vlachtebos (Wooded Plain) emerged as the Dutch colonists from nearby Flatlands moved to the more hospitable forested areas to the north. After a land deal with the Canarsee Indians, they settled at what was the center of Kings County, along an Indian trail better known later as Flatbush Avenue. After years of rivalry and conflict, England conquered the Dutch in 1664. The Dutch settlers were allowed to maintain their secular and religious freedoms, local autonomy, close ties to the Netherlands, and language. After a period of linguistic transition, English replaced Dutch as the language of usage.

The major historical event that occurred in Flatbush was the disastrous defeat of the Americans in the Battle of Brooklyn. The author recounts the story of how the British marched through the unguarded eastern Jamaica Pass, outflanking and trapping the Patriot forces at Flatbush. The account of the entire battle comes primarily from one of the

book's sources, John J. Gallagher's *The Battle of Brooklyn, 1776*. What Allbray weaves into the narrative was the fact that Flatbush residents were ambivalent regarding the Patriot cause. Allbray largely disputes this and presents anecdotal evidence of secret support by many for the American cause. Monetary donations and other forms of support were given even though the consequences for those involved if found were harsh. Unfortunately, the result of the battle and subsequent long British occupation resulted in destruction and loss of property, raids, the repugnant billeting of British soldiers and a typhus outbreak. Nevertheless, the community showed its resilience by rebuilding completely after the war ended.

Ms. Allbray's book was most enlightening in her depiction of the cultural, everyday life of the Flatbush community. The architecture and layout of the well-furnished, comfortable homesteads (among them the Wyckoff-Bennett, Lefferts, Lott, Martense-Schenck and Vanderbilt) are described. The houses all faced south, to take advantage of southern exposure. They were only 1-1/2 stories high, and broad with a long wall and a porch. Rooms were cleaned by sanding; a method whereby wet beach sand was placed in piles, allowed to dry, and then swept across the room, leaving the bare floors spotless! Fields were located behind the homes. This helped to prevent the customary isolation of farm life. Shade was provided by large leafy linden trees.

Allbray details as well the genealogy of Flatbush's founders and early settlers. She tracks the changes in land ownership and residential locations of the prominent families through the years by comparing maps of 1790, 1842 and 1873.

Flatbush was a self-sufficient community of farmers and slaves. Prior to their emancipation in New York in 1827, slaves were treated humanely and more like indentured servants by the Dutch. They participated in the community, were able to own land, learn to read and write, and testify in court. The prosperous farmers of Flatbush had little need for outside help. They assisted each other, sharing their unique skills. According to the author, family ties, friendship, and public spiritedness were hallmarks of the town's residents. Family and neighbors participated in the community custom known as 'schemeravond' (twilight). Everyday they would meet to discuss the day's events. There were also breweries, both publicly and privately owned, for those who wished to partake. This may or may not have led to the many legends and ghost stories that sprung up among the populace. One such tale told of a place where it was said Satan had danced. Oddly, the place referred to in the old story turned out to be the site of the deadly Malbone subway crash of 1918.

The Dutch Reformed church provided both religious and secular studies. Until the latter part of the eighteenth-century, the church was administered by Holland, where ministers were assigned and church matters decided. Erasmus Hall Academy, whose trustees were Flatbush residents, was established after the Revolution and was to become the first secondary school chartered in New York State.

By the late nineteenth-century the vestiges of rural life in Flatbush had faded away. Descendants of the old landed families moved on to more modern professions. Land costs rose, making farming less viable. The marketing of grain had long since changed to that of produce, as industry and advances in transportation developed rapidly. Commercial enterprises replaced farms along Flatbush Avenue, although out of deference to the past no factories or warehouses were built. Included among the dynamics involved in all these changes were industrialization, immigration and the increased need for housing, the construction of the three East River bridges, new roads, and the advent of a more advanced train and trolley transportation system. The creation of Prospect Park effectively dissolved what had been the natural geographic barrier resulting from the Ice Age's terminal moraine. This area of hills had long separated pastoral Flatbush from the more urbanized town of Brooklyn. With annexation in 1894, Flatbush became fully absorbed into the city of New York's new borough of Brooklyn.

Allbray concludes her study of Flatbush by discussing the changes that took place through the twentieth-century. The first few decades saw churches, synagogues, and social clubs established as the population transformed from being predominantly Protestant to more ethnically diverse. Architects using various European styles and motifs built homes in the wealthier areas. Victorian homes with porches and gardens were common. The author continues with a comprehensive discussion of the surrounding neighborhoods and residences with their respective, distinctive architectural styles. Art deco apartment houses were erected after opposition to such buildings by long time homeowners died down. Movie palaces like the Loew's Kings, built in 1929, were to provide entertainment for decades to come. Famous cafeterias, restaurants, and other establishments that flourished on Flatbush Avenue are recalled by residents who lived there at the time. And of course what history of the life and times of Flatbush would be complete without a discussion of Ebbets Field and the legacy left by the Brooklyn Dodgers? Allbray also points out that life in Flatbush has been well represented in popular culture, such as television shows, movies and literature. The book concludes with a look at the modern demographics of the area over the last few decades. New populations of Caribbeans, Mexicans, Pakistanis,

Russians, and other nationalities have helped make present day Flatbush a microcosm of urban cultural diversity.

*Flatbush* contains thirty-three pages of charts, maps, illustrations and photos. References used include oral histories, some of which date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The only problem with the book is the fact that the author uses the British pound sign whenever indicating values, payments or costs. Therefore, anyone not aware of how to convert pounds into American dollars would be unable to interpret the information conveyed, accurately. Outside of this minor complaint, Allbray's contribution to Arcadia Publishing's 'The Making of America' series is a welcome overview of the story of Flatbush. For its cultural and architectural chapters alone it is highly recommended.

GARRY WILBUR  
New Hyde Park, N.Y.

*Slavery in New York*, The New York Historical Society. Two part exhibit. Review of first part (October 7, 2005).

The New York Historical Society's (NYHS) two-part special exhibit on "Slavery in New York" is a major contribution to public history and the history of the African Diaspora, but it also has significant flaws. Hopefully these can be addressed before the second stage of the exhibit opens at the end of 2006.

One of the greatest strengths of the first exhibit (October 7, 2005-March 26, 2006) was its advertising campaign. In newspapers, magazines and on subways full-page ads and billboards proclaimed that "IT HAPPENED HERE," that enslaved Africans had constructed many of the city's earliest landmarks. These ads did more than anything else to make New Yorkers aware of people and events that had essentially been erased from its history. The NYHS also did a very effective job of bringing public school teachers to the exhibit and providing classroom support services using money available from federal Teaching American History Grants. As a result of these efforts, thousands of school groups poured through the exhibit and tens of thousands of young people discovered a connection between history and their own lives.

Displays in the first exhibit included 400 artifacts, primary source documents, paintings from the period and maps presenting details about slavery and the African-American experience in New York City prior to New York State's emancipation day on July 4, 1827. The introductory video at the start of the exhibit was clear, accurate and engaging and may well have been the educational high point of the project. The second part of the exhibit is supposed to focus on the abolitionist movement in New

York City and the involvement of New York's commercial, political and religious elite in support of the slave system in the years preceding the American Civil War.

Primary contributors to the exhibit's conceptualization, design and implementation were Louise Mirrer, president of the NYHS, Richard Rabinowitz, president of the American History Workshop, and James Oliver Horton, a historian at George Washington University. The exhibits were unusually well funded, with grants from the New York City Council, the federal Department of Education and corporate sponsors such as J. P. Morgan Chase.

Another great strength of the project was the companion volume published in conjunction with the exhibit. *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press, 2005) was edited by Ira Berlin and Leslie Harris and includes twelve essays and numerous illustrations that provide a more in-depth look at the African-American experience in New York and the north during "slavery days." The historians involved in the project included Jill Lepore, author of *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York: Knopf, 2005), who wrote about the evolution of the slave system in colonial New York. Graham Hodges, author of *Root and Branch, African Americans in New York and East Jersey 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), contributed a chapter on local blacks during the American Revolution. David Quigley wrote a chapter on the economic relationship between New York merchants and bankers and Southern cotton planters. Iver Bernstein discussed efforts by New York's African-Americans to support the war against slavery and the impact of the anti-African-American draft riots on life in the city.

The project had numerous flaws. First, the NYHS is committed to organizing exhibits around material drawn from its own collections. This is not unusual, but it is problematic. For example, one of the defining events in the colonial history of New York City was the 1741 slave conspiracy trial. As a result of local hysteria thirty-four blacks and four whites were executed. Thirteen of the blacks were burned at the stake. Seventeen blacks and four whites were hanged. Seventy accused rebels had their lives spared and were transported to the sugar islands of the Caribbean. Yet this trial is barely touched on in the exhibit, apparently because there was nothing in the NYHS collection to display.

A broader problem is the issue of historical significance. While the exhibit demonstrates that slavery was at the center of New York City's early development, it fails to make clear that during this time period New York City was on the periphery of world events. This may be addressed in the second stage of the exhibit which explores an era when New York played a more important role on the world stage.

Another problem concerned space, organization, and direction. Visitors who come in groups are sometimes crowded into rooms, which are dark and difficult to navigate. Dramatic blow-ups of newspaper advertisements show notices for the recapture of runaway slaves, but in reality the notices were barely two inches high. Students could not figure out what the abstract, and sometimes cartoon-like, representations of enslaved people were or why they were there.

If there is any interest in a permanent museum, a good site would be at New York City's South Street Seaport restoration site. At the Seaport, enslaved Africans were unloaded from cargo vessels and sold and rented out at the Wall Street slave market. It is also the site of the building that housed the restaurant, Sweet's, where in the first half of the nineteenth-century slavers, who were known as "Blackbirders," met to discuss smuggling the illegal cargo they called "black ivory." Nearby is 55 South Street (now part of the 111 Wall Street complex), the office of Moses Taylor, a nineteenth-century banker who helped finance the illegal trade. Currently, none of these sites are even marked.

ALAN SILVER  
Hofstra University

Elizabeth Shepherd, ed. *Head-of-the-Harbor: A Journey Through Time*. Laurel, New York: Main Road Books, 2005. \$25.00 (paper). Illustrations, index, Pp. 227.

*Head-of-the-Harbor: A Journey Through Time* is the second book about Head-of-the-Harbor issued by its village. The first, *50 Years Head-of-the-Harbor, Suffolk County, Long Island 1928-1978*, compiled by Barbara Van Liew nearly thirty years ago, presented facts about the village and its history primarily through the use of maps, documents and listed entries of historic houses. Mrs. Van Liew's position as village historian placed her at the center of that endeavor, and gave the book a uniform direction. The authors of this most recent book have approached the subject from a different perspective. In this new book, Head-of-the-Harbor's story is divided into vignettes, each of which is signed by its individual author. This volume, with Elizabeth Shepherd as its overall editor, has individual entries by McKim Dangerfield, Richard P. Feyk, Geoffrey K. Fleming, Richard B. Hawkins, Norma J. Hayes, Brett Kuri, Marcial B. L'Hommedieu, Laura Wishod, Barbara Van Liew and others.

Although Mrs. Van Liew was still the Village Historian, and as such exercised influence over the content, the finished product reflects the strengths and weaknesses of a multi-authored volume. The book is useful in differentiating between house histories and brings to life the persons

who gave the village its rich history and local color. It also discusses in much detail the response of the village to modernization efforts. Cathy Caracciolo, the photographer, did a fine job including images of persons and places.

It is distressing to note the absence of sources for the very specific information contained in the individual vignettes. The decision to omit such references was a deliberate one, based upon space considerations (pp. 7-8). This seems unwise for a book that needs to stand the test of time and in which some assertions are open to question. A basic bibliography, included at the end of the volume, does not make up for this shortcoming.

Much time and care were devoted to the writing and production of this volume. It was truly a community project, and provides unique coverage of its topic. As such, it should be regarded as an interesting presentation of a community with a rich history, of which it is justly proud.

CATHERINE BALL  
Smithtown Public Library

Edward L. Dunbaugh. *New England Steamship Company: Long Island Sound Night Boats in the Twentieth Century*. Gainesville, FL.: University Press of Florida, 2005. \$59.95. Illustrations, Xii + Pp. 406.

Edwin L. Dunbaugh's latest book, the third in a trilogy dealing with steamboats linking New York and New England, is a masterful account of an important era in the history of commerce on the Long Island Sound. The book "is not an economic history of New England maritime transportation systems," yet many pages are devoted to hard fought struggles between the all powerful New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad and various competitors for control of the passenger and freight business which constituted an important part of the regional economy.

Charles S. Mellen, president of the railroad, was ruthless in his mostly successful efforts to eliminate competition but sometimes things just fell into place naturally. This is precisely what happened when Charles W. Morse, president of the Consolidated Steamship Company, ran afoul of the law. Morse, who had made a fortune in the ice business, became a major competitor of the New Haven Railroad's steamship service by funneling the assets of banks which had become depositories of the ice company's proceeds into his steamship company. When one of the banks closed in 1907, an investigation revealed that the books had been doctored to conceal the huge investment in Consolidated Steamship. Morse went to jail but was pardoned after his wife smuggled in some

rancid victuals which her husband swallowed in a successful attempt to feign terminal illness. Financier J.P. Morgan, a leading member of the New Haven Railroad's board of directors, also avoided penalty. He died a few weeks before Interstate Commerce Commission hearings on the New Haven began in 1913; his son then proceeded to pin the blame for the railroad's monopolistic practices on Charles S. Mellen, who was forced to resign.

Although the business intrigue and financial chicanery described in Dunbaugh's book will strike a responsive chord with twenty-first-century readers familiar with the unraveling of Enron and the liberties a former TYCO CEO took with stockholders' money, Long Islanders who pick up the volume may be more interested in the detailed information about the Shinnecock and Montauk. Part of the Montauk Line owned by the Long Island Rail Road, these vessels linked New York City with Orient and Greenport on the North Fork, Shelter Island and Sag Harbor. Following a 6:00 P.M. departure from the city, passengers were deposited at their East End destinations between 5:30 A.M. (Orient) and 8:30 A.M. (Sag Harbor). Anyone wishing to go to Block Island could disembark at Greenport at 7:00 A.M. and catch a boat which reached Block Island at 9:30 A.M. Service to Block Island was offered on Sundays from Sag Harbor. The *Shinnecock's* crew labeled this trip "Perpetual Motion" because it followed a Saturday departure from New York at 1:00 P.M. to accommodate businessmen working a half day on Saturday. It arrived back in New York at 7:00 A.M. on Tuesday. The weariness of the crew notwithstanding, the Long Island Rail Road was in business to make a profit, and not just in the summer. During the winter *Shinnecock* was chartered to the Florida East Coast Railroad for daily trips between Knight's Key and Key West.

Despite the additional revenue generated by winter charters, the Montauk Line became increasingly unprofitable following the completion of the tunnel beneath the East River. Most people traveling to East End resorts opted for a fast train which sped them to their destinations in a matter of hours rather than an overnight journey on a steamboat. Moreover, during World War I, when many Long Island Sound steamboats were acquired by the government, civilian vessels were prohibited from passing through Plum Gut. Instituted to safeguard military installations on Plum Island, this ban added nearly an hour to the trip from New York to Orient or Greenport providing the Long Island Rail Road with the excuse it needed to suspend steamboat service for the summer of 1917. Once shut down, the service never resumed.

Following World War I it was business as usual for other lines on the Sound and new careers for some of the vessels which had seen war service. The Yale and Harvard, the fastest ships in American registry



when they were launched in 1907, had steamed across the Atlantic a decade later to serve as troop transports in the English Channel. This wasn't the first time these sleek vessels had left Long Island Sound. In 1910 they had traveled, within sight of each other, around South America to California where they were leased to a company providing service between San Francisco and Los Angeles. After their sale to California investors the Yale and Harvard made a second trip to California in 1920 but this time they traveled through the Panama Canal, which had not been completed when they made their initial voyage to the West Coast. In preparation for their role as first class vessels linking Northern and Southern California the Yale and Harvard were completely refurbished. Large staterooms, with beds, replaced cramped quarters with upper and lower berths. A ballroom and numerous bathrooms were added as well.

Boats which continued to serve the Long Island Sound were also refurbished and new vessels were added. The Eastern Steamship Company's Boston and New York, built in the 1920s, "conveyed an atmosphere more like that of a modern cruise ship than of an overnight steamboat." Dunbaugh notes that their interiors were "stark and plain" but that this may have been perceived as "stylishly modern" to the post-war generation. With staterooms featuring hot and cold running water, many of them with adjoining toilets and showers, the Boston and New York were more appealing than the old fashioned Fall River Line boats which offered only cold water in its staterooms.

In the early 1930's before the full impact of the Great Depression was apparent, the Fall River Line engaged a decorator to redesign the *Priscilla*, *Providence* and *Plymouth*. Out went uncomfortable straight-backed chairs and red plush velvet; in came "overstuffed sofas, comfortable armchairs . . . all arranged as though the steamer's lounge were a larger version of a passenger's own living room." These additions failed to inflate the company's bottom line. Nor did the addition of dance floors. The line even established a Mayflower Tours division offering package tours of Cape Cod, Canada and the Hudson Valley, the last originating in New England. Like the other multi-day trips by boat and bus it began with a trip through the Long Island Sound. The Fall River Line even attempted to lure passengers by making an arrangement with the Long Island Rail Road for Fall River vessels heading to New York to tie up at the railroad's Whitestone dock on mornings when thick fog prevented vessels from safely navigating the crowded East River. Passengers transferred to the Long Island Rail Road for the remainder of the trip to New York. In the final analysis, none of these initiatives saved the day.

The end for the once proud company came in 1937 after the *Priscilla's* crew staged a sudden strike. Other Fall River Line crew members soon

joined the strikers. Within months the line's largest ships were sold for scrap. This was unavoidable because, as Dumbaugh explains, "the overnight steamship lines had survived into the 1930s only because of the low wages, unregulated hours and unacceptable living accommodations of the people working either aboard the ships or on the wharves." With the advent of unionization and the elimination of these conditions, the overnight lines, which utilized low fares to attract passengers, simply could not continue to operate.

Although 1937 marked the end of an era, Long Island Sound steamboats saw service in both the Atlantic and Pacific during World War II. Some vessels had multiple wartime assignments. The President Warfield, which had been chartered by its Massachusetts owners to other companies for service on Long Island Sound in 1930 and 1931, was a convoy vessel, a troop transport, and a headquarters ship for the Normandy invasion. Renamed *Exodus, 1947* after the war, it transported nearly 5,000 immigrants from France to Palestine, then a British protectorate. British authorities returned the immigrants to France but not on *Exodus, 1947*, which had a capacity of only 600 and was hardly seaworthy; it remained at a Haifa pier until fire destroyed it in 1952.

Back in the U.S. in the immediate postwar period the Eastern Steamship Company and the Colonial Navigation Company made plans to resume Long Island Sound service but the cost of rebuilding and altering vessels for passenger and freight service was prohibitive. The last of the Long Island Sound night boats, the *John A. Meseck*, which had operated as an excursion steamer between New York and Playland amusement park in Rye, New York from 1947 until 1961, was scrapped in 1974. Nevertheless, the night boats live on, in memory, thanks to this incredibly detailed account of these majestic vessels. Dumbaugh really tells it like it was, devoting ample space to not only detailed descriptions of the most luxurious vessels but to the havoc wrought by laser sharp ice in the Sound during cold winters early in the century, fires engulfing ships in transit and at piers, and tragic collisions.

Despite the absence of endnotes, which would have enhanced the book immeasurably, Dumbaugh's thorough research is evident on every page of this substantial book and in the superb appendixes, one of which consists of a sixty-seven page alphabetical profile of night boats. Further enhancing the volume are forty-nine illustrations which serve as vivid reminders of the important role the night boats played in the maritime history of the northeast.

MARILYN E. WEIGOLD  
Pace University

Corey Dolgon. *The End of the Hamptons. Scenes From the Class Struggle in America's Paradise*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2005. \$19.77. Index, Xiii+ Pp. 271.

For over a hundred years the South Fork has basked in its reputation as one of the most attractive, least developed parts of Long Island. It earned additional cachet as the chosen residence of many of the nation's most creative and chic. While much of that image endures, it has been reworked by substantive changes washing over the area in the past thirty years. Today the Hamptons remains one of the nation's most celebrated trophy addresses, the playground of rich and trendy folks from the world of arts and entertainment as well as the moneyed and supermoneyed. Like previous Hampton epochs, the current South Fork scene is subject to intense conflicting pressures, and whether or not the status quo that has prevailed over the last twenty years will continue is an open question. The Hamptons today, how they got there, and possible future directions, are the subject matter of Corey Dolgon's *The End of the Hamptons*.

Large chunks of Dolgon's narrative will seem familiar to readers who have an interest in the area. His argument that the different waves of Hampton residents ("conquerors" is his preferred term) have imposed their presence on the landscape, while adopting a "romanticized" view of the region's past, will be familiar to those who have read T. H. Breen's *Imagining the Past*. Similarly, though he criticizes Steven Gaines' *Philistines at the Hedgerows* for failing to address those below super money status (which was not Gaines' topic), his depiction of the arrival of the mega wealthy after 1970, the proliferation of their huge, but often ugly houses, and their assumption of the role as the public face of the Hamptons follows the trail laid out in Gaines' book. Dolgon brings the story up to date, introducing what he dubs the "hyper bourgeoisie," those whose megabucks derive from the ongoing communications revolution and globalized economy.

A professor of sociology, Dolgon's analysis of the Hamptons past and present is governed by the ideology of class and race (the former often subsumed by the latter) currently fashionable in academe. Early in the book, discussing New York City's urban problems which encouraged a migration to the Hamptons between the 70s and 90s, he gratuitously refers to the New York City Police Department as "Herr Giuliani's militia," and suggests the Mayor's successful campaign to reduce crime was little more than "crackdowns on poor people and people of color" (p.51). New York City voters elected Giuliani Mayor twice, suggesting some people may differ in their view of his administration. Needless to say, these editorial comments do nothing to strengthen Dolgon's thesis.

Throughout the book Dolgon attempts to cram reality into the class/race theory. In an otherwise solid overview of the Peconic County movement, he injects questions of "exclusivity" and charges that the County's proponents followed a "romanticized historical narrative" which denied "the rich legacy of the area's human diversity." But as his own cited sources testify, Peconic County's supporters, who sought to create a new political entity from the five easternmost towns of Suffolk County, aimed at preventing the transformation of the East End into little more than a replica of Nassau and western Suffolk. Those areas are more developed and heavily populated, traffic arteries are clogged, and local governments are often deemed irresponsible to citizen needs. Perhaps political action on behalf of protecting one's home and community is "romantic," and attempting to protect its distinctiveness a lost cause, but a new County would have no obvious effect on the region's "diversity." Peconic County, with a more localized government, could well have offered more opportunities for minorities. In any event, the rapid development of the East End, especially on the South Fork, has undercut the rationale for a separate Peconic County.

Dolgon's chapter on the contemporary Hamptons social scene contrasts the polo playing "hyper bourgeoisie" with Hispanic immigrants, primarily day laborers and service workers, who have become a growing presence on the South Fork. Dolgon observes that the Hispanic immigrants - substantial numbers of whom are not in the United States legally - were drawn to the Hamptons by the concentration of wealthy and near wealthy who sought out, or quickly discovered, this abundant source of cheap labor. The rising number and visibility of these immigrants has led to many of the same tensions found in other parts of Long Island and across the country, tensions which Dolgon explicitly and implicitly lays at the door of native born whites. In contrast, he is highly sympathetic to the Hispanic workers, and approvingly notes the creation of various Hispanic advocacy groups which have sprung up in the last ten years. A little more balance would have served the author's purpose, and the region he writes about, more honestly.

In describing the accommodations the area's institutions have made in response to the immigrants, Dolgon lists more English as Second Language teachers, more free lunches, after school programs, Spanish speaking hospital staff, and higher hospital budgets. Though he does not say so, all of these measures are part of the hidden (or officially ignored) costs of the so-called cheap immigrant labor. Those who criticize the influx of illegal (a term he puts in quotation marks) aliens are depicted as bigoted, probably racist, certainly unenlightened. Dolgon interviews numerous individuals who are supportive of the immigrant presence in the Hamptons. He interviews no one who expresses reservations about

the negative effects connected with the influx of large numbers of poorly-educated, unvetted foreigners. All he needed to do to correct this imbalance was contact those who write in large numbers to the *East Hampton Star* and other area newspapers expressing their concerns.

Dolgon's writing is littered with clumsily pretentious and tendentious politically correct terms and phrases currently in favor in academe. So, for example, the Shinnecock and Montaukett Indians that inhabited the area are deemed "civilizations," probably an exaggeration for minor subdivisions of the Algonquian people. Dolgon is also steeped in the theory of "whiteness," a recent academic theory that conveys privilege, power and domination by people of European descent over of "people of color." The theory originated with studies of the Irish which contended that the exalted status of "white" was only bestowed on the Gaelic newcomers after decades of trials and tribulations. Whiteness theory transforms complex class, ethnic, and cultural differences into a simplified racial one. Incongruously, Dolgon fervently adopts the template of whiteness when discussing the movement of the descendants of Eastern European immigrants to the East End towards the end of the twentieth-century. According to him, these people became not only "local citizens . . . [they] also became white" (pp. 36-37). In fact, any "whitening" that took place among these second and third-generation East European immigrants happened long before the move from the boroughs to the East End.

Whiteness plays a key role in Dolgon's the final chapter, in which he discusses a running dispute between the custodians' union at Southampton College and the College's administration. The controversy began when the College attempted to outsource its custodial work. Outsourcing is the target of much justifiable criticism, but it is clearly a method chosen to cut costs. To Dolgon and his cohorts, however, the confrontation was racial, with the intended victims largely comprised of what Dolgon clumsily dubs "Custodians of Color." An organization called the Coalition for Justice (CFJ), dominated by the most "privileged" of white people - college professors and their middle and upper class students - was organized to advance the custodians' cause. They charged the College with practicing "institutional racism," and accused the college Provost, and currently Congressman, Tim Bishop, with enabling the practice.

The custodians' struggle was successful and Southampton College rescinded its outsourcing measure, a turnabout which may have had more to do with the custodians joining the Teamster's Union than the work of the CFJ. The victory, however, was pyrrhic as the institution folded in 2004. But like John Brown's Body, the soul of the CFJ went marching

on. Dolgan credits the CFJ with seizing control of the Southampton Anti-Bias Task Force and radicalizing it.

By limiting his definition of the working class almost exclusively to racial minorities, Dolgan makes non-persons of significant elements of the South Fork's population. The majority white population consists of much more than Dolgon's "hyper bourgeoisie." Some are given short shrift, as the European immigrant custodians. More are simply ignored as they do not fit the author's model of social stratification. Among the latter are the "Bonackers" (mostly descendants of the pre-Civil War population) who still ply the land and sea - admittedly a relict of their former selves, but hardly extinct - plus all the white workers in the shops, malls, movie theaters, bars and restaurants. Dolgon also overlooks the substantial number of Irish workers who have alighted on the Montauk area every summer for over thirty years. They are small in number compared to the Hispanic workers, but still important. Even those "people of color" that don't fit neatly into the victim paradigm are ignored, including the residents of Azurest and Nineveh. By concentrating only on the extreme upper and lower ends of the Hamptons population, Dolgon has created an image of the South Fork at least as distorted as any traditional "romanticized narrative" of the area's history.

Is "The End of The Hamptons" really at hand? As Dolgon himself acknowledges, the Hamptons has seen many "ends" in its recorded history. Possibly the area is poised for another burst of change. But the great changes are likely to be determined by dwindling undeveloped and attainable land, as well as the vagaries of the real estate market. It is equally possible that the trade off between a trophy address and impossible traffic, overpriced amenities, and crushing taxes will send perspective new residents elsewhere. In the meantime, the identity of the Hamptons will be dominated by the image it has shaped for over half a century - a playground and residence for the wealthy and celebrated, the location of much of Long Island's unspoiled land, New York State's most important agricultural county, a summer hangout for the young and single, and the setting of some of the best preserved and maintained historic sites on Long Island.

RICHARD F. WELCH  
Huntington, Long Island

Glen Williford and Leo Polaski. *Images of America: Long Island's Military History*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004. \$19.99. Illustrations, Pp. 128.

*Long Island's Military History* is the third book in Arcadia Publishing's *Images in America* series in which authors Glen Williford and Leo Polaski join together to examine local military history. Their previous works *Portsmouth Harbor's Military and Naval Heritage* and *New York City's Harbor Defenses* focused on the history of coastal defenses in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and those surrounding New York City. Both authors are active leaders in military history organizations including the Coast Defense Study Group and regular contributors to the *Coast Defense Journal*. Their expertise in the history of coastal defense systems allows them to provide unique insights into the various military activities that took place along the shores and around the communities of Long Island.

From colonial times through the late twentieth-century, Long Island's geographic position and level terrain gave it a significant role in the military events of our nation's past. Located along the Atlantic Ocean at the coastal edge of the eastern United States, and adjacent to the country's most populous city, Long Island provided ideal sites for America's seaward defenses. At the same time, the flat, treeless Hempstead Plains (the only natural prairie east of the Allegheny Mountains) offered excellent conditions for fortifications, encampments, and once the martial application of the airplane was realized, a number of the nation's military airfields. As a result of the proximity to these airbases, Long Island's home grown aviation industry produced a large portion of the nation's aerial arsenal in World War One and Two and during the Cold War era.

The intent of Arcadia's *Images in America Series* is to highlight a specific community or region's unique past through the use of historic photographs and images. Williford and Polaski's combined depth of knowledge along with their use of more than two hundred vintage photographs and historically important maps and drawings allow them to trace Long Island's unique role in American military history. The photographs which span the period from the late nineteenth-century to the early 1960s help bring the region's local military history to life. The meticulously compiled and cataloged photographs include images from various collections of the National Archives, The National Park Service, the Northrop-Grumman History Center, the Cradle of Aviation Museum, and numerous local history organizations and private collections.

The book is filled with discerning images accompanied by insightful captions that not only recount the historical significance of local military activities but also reveal fragments of the social impact associated with the people, places and events involved. For example, one poignant photograph of wartime factory workers illustrates how towards the end of the Second World War "after four years of military conscription" many

Grumman workers were mostly older men (p. 126). Meanwhile, other images of factory workers reveal how local wartime industries sometimes met employee shortages by “offering jobs to disabled people, assigning them positions and adapting facilities to accommodate their needs” (p. 124). A number of images also demonstrate how local wartime labor shortages of both skilled and unskilled labor were met by employing other groups who were often marginalized in the workforce during peacetime. These included both women and African-Americans who not only worked in local factories but served in the military as Wacs, Waves and pilots.

JOHN G. STAUDT

Theodore Roosevelt Association

James E. Haas. *Conrad Poppenhusen, The Life of a German-American Industrial Pioneer*. James E. Haas, 2004. \$19.95 (paperback). Pp. 164.

Conrad Poppenhusen came to New York City in July of 1843 from Germany to seek his fortune and make a name for himself as a businessman. Although the Poppenhusen name is no longer recognized by most Long Islanders, during his lifetime Poppenhusen became one of the wealthiest men in New York City and was hailed as a philanthropist and innovator in the fields of education and business. He was a capitalist with a conscience and demonstrated how a factory might produce goods, make a profit, and share those profits with the factory workers. He did this by building up a business, the India Rubber Company, that produced a number of utilitarian objects such as combs, buttons, and knife handles manufactured from vulcanized rubber. By the fall of 1854, eleven years after immigrating to America, Poppenhusen’s India Rubber Company began work on the construction of an immense manufacturing plant in College Point, Long Island. This factory would become known as the India Rubber Comb Company and would ultimately give employment to over 1,000 workers. In the process of building a factory, Conrad Poppenhusen also helped establish and develop the community of College Point, a tight knit community of German Americans who, to this day, remember and honor the memory of “the benefactor of College Point.”

Conrad Poppenhusen was not a penniless immigrant. He came to America when he was 25, leaving his wife Bertha and his young son Adolph behind in Hamburg, Germany, with the promise that they would join him in America as soon as possible. Poppenhusen was asked to go to America by a man named Heinrich Christian Meyer, a Hamburg merchant who had an established company that manufactured “canes,



umbrella sticks, keys for pianos, and whip handles" from whalebone (p. 8). In 1842, Meyer dispatched his twenty year old son Adolph to New York City to "start an American branch of the family business," and a year later, Herr Meyer decided to send Conrad Poppenhusen to work alongside his son.

Adolph Meyer and Poppenhusen worked together and created Meyer and Poppenhusen's Manufactory of Whalebone in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The location was excellent and the whalebone business prospered. In 1844, Adolph Meyer returned to Germany to help his father run the business back in Hamburg and left Conrad Poppenhusen in charge of the American branch. Under Poppenhusen's management, the business thrived and was doing well. It was at this time that Poppenhusen applied to become an American citizen. In 1849, he became a naturalized American citizen. It was also in 1844 that Bertha Poppenhusen and her now two year old son Adolph came across the Atlantic and joined Conrad in a small flat he had rented in Brooklyn Heights. The Poppenhusen family expanded and by 1854 had grown to include sons Adolph, Herman, and Alfred and daughter Marie.

Following Heinrich Christian Meyer's death in 1848 friction developed between Conrad and Adolph Meyer over the way to run the business, and when Adolph returned to New York City to "change the conduct" of the business, the firm of "Meyer and Poppenhusen ceased doing business" (p.22).

Conrad Poppenhusen now struck out on his own. He joined forces with a new business partner, Frederick "Fritz" Konig, a banker from the city of Bonn. Konig assumed responsibility for finding financial backers for a new venture that Poppenhusen wished to pursue. In the industry of making utilitarian objects from whalebone, Conrad Poppenhusen had become familiar with Charles Goodyear and his effort to create "imitation whalebone" out of hard vulcanized rubber. Poppenhusen believed that "his future success depended on using hard rubber as opposed to whalebone, for the manufacture of combs, dress stays, and sundry other articles." Acting on that belief, Poppenhusen purchased a license for \$10,000 from Charles Goodyear so that he could manufacture the whalebone substitute. By securing several other patents Poppenhusen secured a virtual monopoly on the manufacture of hard rubber combs in America.

With the license in hand and the financial backing secured by Fritz Konig, Poppenhusen began the search for a suitable location for the construction of the India Rubber Company's new factory. Poppenhusen settled upon the growing village of College Point for his new factory. College Point, located on the shores of Flushing Bay, was accessible by steamboat or by stagecoach via a planked road from Flushing. It was

only eight miles from Manhattan's City Hall, affordable, and there was plenty of land for further expansion. The India Rubber Company purchased four waterfront lots in College Point for the construction of the factory that would become known as the India Rubber Comb Company. It was the construction of this factory that led to the expansion of the village of College Point.

It was anticipated that the factory would employ 800-1000 workers and as the construction of the factory proceeded, the India Rubber Company began to sign up employees for the new plant, most of them German immigrants. Recognizing that his workers would need housing, Poppenhusen purchased more acreage in the fledgling village and then "sold to the likes of individuals bearing familiar if not famous family names such as Bowne, Bergen, and Boker, Prince, Parsons and Schermerhorn, Locke, Lawrence and Willets, not to mention Achelis, Roe, Van Siclen and Van Nostrand" (p.32). By 1854, the evolving village of College Point "was already taking on a decidedly German atmosphere" and Poppenhusen was making a substantial return from his real estate ventures (p.33).

By 1855, when the India Rubber Comb Factory was operational, "upwards of three hundred new houses had been built and many more were being added to accommodate the ever increasing populace employed at the factory" (p.37). The village that emerged had a decidedly German flavor and many German restaurants, beer halls and beer gardens opened their doors for business. Newspaper stories "reported on the thousands of Germans who flocked to the village on Sundays to drink and dance" in the town that was becoming known as Little Heidelberg. (p.45). A newspaper story pointed out that in 1874, \$80,000 had been spent to buy lager in College Point. At five cents a glass, an incredible amount of beer was consumed by "excursioners from all over the New York City metropolitan area coming to College Point" looking for a good time (p.111-112).

In 1855, Poppenhusen, who did not drink, did not care for the notoriety that College Point was gaining and spoke out against selling liquor and the opening of dance halls on Sunday. But he couldn't stop Germans from enjoying their beer and he certainly wasn't going to tell them how to spend their days off. But Poppenhusen found other ways to use his wealth and generosity to upgrade the quality of life in College Point. In 1857, he supported the creation of a special school district for the College Point community and when it was approved, in 1858, he was appointed to serve on the local school board. To offer further incentive to the local populace to get a public school built, he donated a plot of land for the new school. As a school board member he was involved in the negotiations, design, and actual construction of the new school.

But while he wrestled with the problems of school construction, he struggled with personal problems at home. His wife of sixteen years had fallen grievously ill and died June of 1858. Poppenhusen was deeply distraught and concerned about the future for his motherless children. He began a correspondence with an old friend and neighbor Caroline Hutterott, who had been living in America but then returned to Germany. Within a year Poppenhusen and Caroline would be engaged, and in the spring of 1859, he sailed for Germany where on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1859 he married Caroline in Bremen. The newly married couple did not return to College Point until September, but he saw the public school project through to completion. On November 2, 1859, the school was formally opened. The College Point free school was up and running.

Conrad and Caroline Poppenhusen would have twenty-four years of married life together until Poppenhusen's death in 1883. They had four children, 2 boys and 2 girls: George Ernest, born 1860; Frederick Adolph, born 1861; Bertha Julie Alette, born, 1864; and Johanna Marie, born 1868. All of these children were born in America making them American citizens. Sadly, the two girls would die within a few months of one another in 1872. Following Poppenhusen's death in 1883, the two boys remained in Hamburg with their mother where they eventually married and raised families of their own.

But Poppenhusen's achievements (and failures) went beyond the India Rubber Company and the development of College Point. In April of 1859, he contributed \$20,000 to a start up fund for a new high speed steamship ferry service that would run between Flushing, College Point, and Manhattan. This ferry service would ultimately bring more job seeking German immigrants directly to College Point. In March of 1860, "three hundred voters" in College Point turned out to unanimously elect Poppenhusen local Justice of the Peace. In May of that same year, Poppenhusen funded a night school for the community and hired teachers.

When the Civil War erupted in 1861, Poppenhusen demonstrated his support for the war effort by contributing \$2,000 to support the families of soldiers who enlisted with the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Volunteers that was raised in College Point. He also guaranteed the jobs of his employees who volunteered to fight. To encourage enlistments Poppenhusen offered an additional \$15 enlistment bonus. And to reassure enlistees that their families would be provided for while they were in service, Poppenhusen agreed to provide twenty-five percent of all the money pledged by the community to support the families of drafted men. This financial pledge must have been a considerable sum since the College Point Election District sent over a one-third of its legal voters off to a war. Whether or not Poppenhusen industries benefited from the war is hard to determine,

but it is clear that combs and buttons continued in great demand and his factories continued operations throughout the war. It is interesting that his sons, Adolph and Herman, both of draftable age during the war, were "continuing their studies" in Europe for the duration of the war.

Following the war, Poppenhusen again turned his full attention to expanding the production of the India Rubber Comb Factory and to improving the College Point community. He directed an effort to bring a much needed water and gas supply to the College Point area. He helped establish fire companies in the community and even funded a private fire fighting force, the Enterprise Engine Company, which was created to protect his own factories in College Point.

It was also at this time that Poppenhusen began his involvement with railroads. It started with his purchase of iron mines in New Jersey, and his purchase of rights-of-way for a railroad that would extend from Flushing into College Point. By 1868 Poppenhusen had a railroad track yard and depot constructed in College Point. This was followed by his purchase of the New York and Flushing Railroad from the LIRR, "a deteriorating, poorly run line that ran from Flushing to its East River terminus at Hunter's Point." (p.90) Poppenhusen now became President of the Flushing and North Shore Railroad and, by the end of July of 1869, tracks had been laid between Flushing and College Point. On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, service was inaugurated. By the end of September, rail service had been extended into Whitestone.

The crowning achievement of Conrad Poppenhusen's career came in 1868 when he created and funded the educational enterprise known as the Poppenhusen Institute. In May of 1868, the New York State Legislature passed an act enabling "Conrad Poppenhusen to found an institution in the village of College Point for the protection, care and custody of infants under the age of five years; together with an institution for the advancement of science and art; together with such scientific and historical collections, chemical and philosophical apparatus, books, drawings, pictures, statues and other means of instruction as may be useful for that purpose; and for the improvement of the moral and social conditions of the working classes" (p.78). That same month witnessed the laying of a cornerstone for the building that would become known as the Poppenhusen Institute. On land that had been donated by Poppenhusen to the Village of College Point, an elegant five-story building topped with a mansard roof was constructed. In creating the institute, Poppenhusen had also donated \$100,000 (\$1,250,000 in today's money) to the Village of College Point with the understanding that \$35,000 of the gift be applied to the construction costs of the building.

The building was completed in 1870 and the Poppenhusen Institute officially opened on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The Institute operated a free kindergarten

for the residents of College Point. The Institute also ran free classes in practical education for the people of College Point and taught classes in sewing, arithmetic, writing, ornamental drawing, architecture, mechanical drawing and English. The Institute also housed the first library for the community and in many ways became a community center for the Village of College Point. Surprisingly, the Poppenhusen Institute is still standing and still functions as a community center where "a variety of programs and events are offered annually . . . giving people the opportunity to improve their lives" (p. 147). The Poppenhusen Institute is the most enduring legacy of Conrad Poppenhusen's philanthropy.

In 1874, with their father back in Germany, Poppenhusen's two sons made a fateful decision to join forces with A.T. Stewart's Garden City Railroad. They formed a new railroad line known as the Central Railroad of Long Island that would stretch from Hunter's Point on the East River to Farmingdale in Suffolk County. And in another questionable decision, they purchased the South Side Railroad. By the end of 1874, The Poppenhusens owned three railroads, all heavily mortgaged. The Poppenhusen railroad lines now went into a murderous head to head competition with the Long Island Railroad in a struggle to secure the business of Long Islanders. In 1876, the Poppenhusens concluded a deal with the LIRR to purchase the railway for \$1,700,000 "guaranteed by mortgage on all Poppenhusen owned roads." To buy the LIRR, the Poppenhusens were leveraging the debt ridden railroads they already owned to buy the debt ridden LIRR. These were not good business decisions yet Poppenhusen apparently supported his sons' decisions. With the purchase of the LIRR, the Poppenhusens controlled all rail service on Long Island. It is estimated that they invested over \$7 million to achieve control of that rail service.

The consolidation led to changes in rail service – increased fares, schedule changes, eliminated trains, and the removal of Sunday excursion fares were changes that angered commuters. Newspapers attacked the odious German "Poppenhusenists" and their operation of the railroads. Within a year, "revenues from all lines" proved to be "insufficient to pay principal and interest on the various outstanding loans" (p.117). The entire Poppenhusen fortune was being swallowed up. By November of 1877, Poppenhusen was forced into bankruptcy.

The railroads went into receivership and many of Poppenhusen's assets were liquidated to pay off mortgages and outstanding loans. Somehow, within a year, at the end of September 1878, Poppenhusen had satisfied his creditors and his case had been dismissed from bankruptcy court. Although he had lost much of his fortune he had reestablished his good name. Poppenhusen and his wife decided to remain in Hamburg, where Conrad still retained a controlling interest in New York-Hamburg

Gummi-Kamm Conglomerate. Apparently, Conrad gave up any further thought of remaining in America.

James Haas does an excellent job with this book in detailing the life of Conrad Poppenhusen. Sometimes the book is too detailed and, as Haas notes in a chapter devoted to Poppenhusen's religious life, information he conveys is "anecdotal and perhaps merely conversational" and may not prove anything about Poppenhusen's religious life (p.101). The book is also filled with suppositions, probabilities, maybes, could haves, etc., which give the impression that the author has no factual basis for many of the things he suggests about Conrad Poppenhusen. This is unfortunate because it is readily apparent that his careful research of local newspapers has provided him with a wealth of information about Poppenhusen's activities. There are parts of the book that are confusing, especially when the author goes off on tangents and switches back and forth in time, or writes about events or individuals which are incidental to the story of Poppenhusen's life. But a careful reading of the book reveals the story of a "kind and friendly" man with a "warm, generous heart" that made him "public spirited and interested in the welfare of his employees and his community" (p.140). Conrad Poppenhusen truly was a pioneer industrialist who deserves to be remembered as the benefactor of College Point.

BRADLEY HARRIS  
Smithtown Historian

Michael Drinkard. *Rebels, Turn Out Your Dead*. New York and London: Harcourt Books, 2006. \$24.00 (hardcover). Pp. 272.

This novel is a lively, poignant tale of a Long Island family surviving British occupation during the American Revolution. A deadly clash between a British officer and a young Hempstead patriot named James results in upheaval for the boy's family. His father, Salt, takes the blame for killing the redcoat, and finds himself entombed aboard the prison ship Jersey. Molly, Salt's wife, finds herself alone and defenseless against British occupiers, yet experiences an exhilarating sense of freedom once she acknowledges her independence as a widow, as her husband is presumed dead. Molly's father, Ebenezer Woodstock's character epitomized the self-serving attitude of many Long Islanders, willing to tolerate occupation as long as their economic well-being was not compromised. This family story pits Loyalist against Patriot, as was so often the case on Long Island during the Revolution. The complex plotline includes murder, imprisonment, rape, betrayal and finally vindication for the Patriots at wars end. Revolutionary War events

described in the novel include the oppressiveness of the British occupation, horrific conditions aboard the prisoner-of-war ships in Wallabout Bay, and the struggles endured by patriot residents in order to survive wartime exigencies.

Ann M. Becker  
Stony Brook University

Mark Mills. *Amagansett*. New York: Berkley Books, 2005. \$14.00 (paperback). Pp. 394.

From its opening epigraph taken from Walt Whitman's "From Montauk Point," to its closing chapter (number 42), *Amagansett*, a mystery novel by Mark Mills, portrays the lives of East Hampton summer people—the wealthy Wallace family and their friends—and those of fishermen and other locals. Mills concentrates on their points of intersection in a small Long Island village, Amagansett, during one month in the summer of 1947. A story of love and murder unfolds against a backdrop of social tension and conflict, like the fierce battle waged by sports fishermen to ban locals' use of the nets and traps they need to make a living.

Mills builds a persuasive plot with strong characters lucidly portrayed and exhibits a skill in pulling readers into his tale. With flashbacks to the "Spanish" flu epidemic of 1918, Prohibition, and World War II, the reader is transported in historical context. This book is a fine piece of "detective fiction," as one reviewer wrote, with imagined people located in a well-researched past. It is not the kind of historical novel that describes actual events or changes in trends over time, or that introduces us to real people in history. A good read.

Ann H. Sandford  
Sagaponack, NY

## BOOK NOTES

Emily Barton. *Brookland: A Novel*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006. \$26 (hardcover). Pp. 496. Set in eighteenth-century Brooklyn, this historical novel tells about the lives of two sisters who manage a distillery and become obsessed with the construction of an East River bridge.

James Driscoll. *Flushing, 1880-1935*. South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2005. \$19.99 (paperback). Photo history. Pp. 128.

Pat S. Hogeboom, *Idle Hours: The Grace and the Glory*. Xlibris Corporation, 2005. \$30 (hardcover). Pp. 286. This historical novel explores the life, culture and relationships surrounding the Vanderbilt family's Oakdale, Long Island estate.

Alexander Rose. *Washington's Spies: The Story of America's First Spy Ring*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2006. \$26 (hardcover). Pp. 366. To be reviewed in the next issue of the *LIHJ*.

Ann Sandford. *Grandfather Lived Here: The Transformation of Bridgehampton, New York, 1870-1970*. Sagaponack, NY: Poxabogue Publishing, 2006. \$25 (paperback). Illustrations, notes, index, Pp. 212. To be reviewed in the next issue of the *LIHJ*.

John R. Stevens, *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1640-1830*. West. Hurley, NY: Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture, 2005. \$65 (hardcover). Illustrations, plates, notes, maps, index. Pp. 449. An important contribution to the history of early Dutch architecture in New York State and on Long Island.



## IN MEMORIAM

John Allen Gable, Ph.D. (1943-2005)

In February 2005, the Theodore Roosevelt Association announced with profound regret the death of Dr. John Allen Gable, Ph.D., a resident of Glen Cove, Long Island and an adjunct professor of American history at Hofstra University's New College.

Dr. Gable was best known as the driving force behind the Theodore Roosevelt Association where he served as the executive director for thirty-one years. The Association, whose national headquarters is based a few miles from Sagamore Hill near Oyster Bay, is a nonprofit national historical society and public service organization. Its main purpose is to perpetuate the memory and ideals of one of the region's most famous residents and the only president from Long Island - Theodore Roosevelt.

Dr. Gable was widely considered the world's leading authority on Theodore Roosevelt and frequently appeared as a consultant and commentator for television and film documentaries including, among others, The History Channel's *TR: An American Lion*; PBS's *Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War*; and American Experience's *TR: The Story of Theodore Roosevelt*. Dr. Gable's published work on Theodore Roosevelt is extensive. In addition to editing the Association's *Quarterly Journal*, which he founded in 1975, his *The Bull Moose Years: Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party* is widely considered a classic among scholars. Dr. Gable contributed and edited countless journal and magazine articles, chapters, introductions and forwards including the TRA's publication of *The Man in the Arena*, a compendium of speeches and essays by Theodore Roosevelt. In addition to his voluminous work on Theodore Roosevelt, Dr. Gable authored numerous books on religious history including *How Firm a Foundation: The Anglican Church in Oyster Bay, New York and Colonial America*.

In addition to significantly advancing our understanding of Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Era specifically and the American presidency in general, Dr. Gable was responsible for several public service initiatives. Among these on the local level are the Theodore Roosevelt® Public Speaking Contest and the distinguished Nassau and Suffolk County Theodore Roosevelt® Police Awards. The public speaking contest, now in its twelfth year, offers a range of cash and other prizes for contestants from the county's various high schools. The Long Island police awards, also in their twelfth year, recognize local law enforcement officers who despite facing physical challenges or serious illnesses continue to render outstanding service to their respective communities.

In light of his dedication to historical scholarship, as well as on behalf of his efforts in establishing numerous public service programs, Dr. Gable was awarded the highly prestigious Theodore Roosevelt Distinguished Service Medal shortly before his death. Despite the multitude of honors and accolades accumulated during his lifetime, Dr. Gable will likely be remember most for his commitment to helping us gain a better understanding of the life and legacy of one of the giants of American history.

*John G. Staudt for the Editors*

## IN MEMORIAM

Barbara Ferris Van Liew (1911-2005)

Barbara Ferris Van Liew, resident of St. James, New York, and Village Historian for Head-of-the-Harbor, died at her home this past July 13. She was ninety-four years old at the time of her death. Passionate in the pursuit of historic preservation, Barbara Van Liew stood out as a living legend in preservation circles. As a part of her relationship with the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA), she developed and edited *Preservation Notes*. Mrs. Van Liew was an expert in the field of colonial architecture, authoring an article in the *Nassau County Historical Journal*, which later was published as a book by SPLIA entitled *Long Island Domestic Architecture of the Colonial and Federal Periods*. It serves as an excellent introduction to the study of the subject. In 1980 she created the New York State Department of Historic Preservation's inventory of historic properties on Long Island. This inventory has served as a handbook for identifying and locating these properties to the present day.

Ever passionate about saving historic buildings from destruction or alteration in unsuitable ways, Mrs. Van Liew was the spearhead for the preservation of Route 25 as an historic corridor in the Village of the Branch, Smithtown. Her efforts eventually led to Governor Rockefeller's creation of the Branch Historic District in 1964.

Mrs. Van Liew was the recipient of numerous honors for her work in the fields of historic and open space preservation. She was active in preservation causes right up until the time of her death.

Mrs. Van Liew was possessed of two qualities that served her in good stead throughout her long career: a dogged determination to whatever cause she espoused in the face of obstacles; and a remarkable memory. She was quite capable of remembering the page number of a reference she had written twenty-five years earlier, a truly rare mind and spirit that will be irreplaceable in our Long Island community. We honor her memory.

*Catherine Ball for the Editors*

## IN MEMORIAM

Alice H. Fiske (1917-2006)

Alice H. Fiske of Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island died in her home on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at the age of eighty-eight. Mrs. Fiske made invaluable contributions to Long Island history by making Sylvester family papers available to researchers and allowing archaeologists to excavate the manor property. Mrs. Fiske was predeceased by her husband, the late Andrew Fiske, a thirteenth generation descendent of Nathaniel Sylvester who settled on Shelter Island in 1652.

Alice Hench Fiske was born in Ohio and grew up in New Jersey. Her family summered on Shelter Island from the mid-1930s. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, she married Arthur Fiske in 1952 and moved into the manor house. The Fiskes were involved in many community organizations, including the Shelter Island Historical Society and the town library. Mrs. Fiske often opened her house for tours, whether for school children or as benefits for the Historical Society. The gardens at Sylvester Manor date from the eighteenth-century and were famous in the early twentieth-century, but were devastated by the 1938 hurricane and in shambles by mid-century. Over the years, the "Lady of the Manor" revived the two acres of gardens. Her passion for gardening brought her into contact with Mac Keith Griswold, a garden historian.

Griswold heads the documentary research on Sylvester Manor and gathered transcripts from related records in other repositories. She is preparing a book on her research, *Slaves in the Attic: The Story of Sylvester Manor, a Long Island Plantation*. Before he died in 1992, Andrew Fiske had collected and started to organize Sylvester family papers, dating from 1652. The Sylvester Manor Archive (more than sixty linear feet of manuscripts) is being transferred to New York University.

Mrs. Fiske invited archaeologists to the manor property and endowed the Andrew Fiske Memorial Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Under the direction of Professor Stephen Mrozowski, excavations of the site have been conducted annually since 1999. Thousands of artifacts uncovered during these excavations provide new evidence on the early settlement of Shelter Island. At the end of each summer's dig, the manor grounds have been open for a "show and tell" afternoon, reporting on the summer's findings. The archaeological and documentary research reveals interactions in the colonial period among the English Sylvesters, white indentured servants, enslaved and free Africans, and Manhansett Indians on the island.

Andrew Fiske's nephew, Eben Ostby of California, will inherit the manor, its c. 1735 house, and its more than 200 acres. He intends to

preserve its history and environment. The historical and archeological research is expected to continue and is a lasting legacy of Alice H. Fiske to the history of Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island, and Long Island.

*Natalie A. Naylor for the Editors*

## LETTERS

To the Editor:

The suggestion by Lee E. Koppelman and Seth Forman that Long Island become the 51st state ("The State of Long Island?" *LIHJ* 17:168-84), is reminiscent of similar proposals for Long Island statehood in the mid-nineteenth-century. Those early proposals encompassed geographical Long Island, including Kings and Queens counties Daniel Tredwell in his *Personal Reminiscences* (1917) indicates that the legislature had been "memorialized" in the 1820s and 1830s for statehood and that "Alden J. Spooner was one of the many old time Long Islanders who never became reconciled to the rude and uncourtly treatment of the proposition to enroll Long Island on the galaxy of Union Statehood" (2:326). At a local convention (c. 1840), a vote declared "Long Island to be a free and independent state" and elected Spooner governor (2:328).

The movement continued in the 1840s. In 1846, Walt Whitman advocated statehood for Long Island in his editorials in the *Brooklyn Evening Star* (see *The Journalism*, ed. Herbert Bergman, 2003, 2:245-53). George Stowe of Jamaica wrote a song, "The Long Island State," which was published in the *Long Island Democrat* in 1848 (it was recorded by the Old Bethpage Village singers on a 1984 audiotape entitled *The Long Island State*). Writing in 1849, historian Benjamin J. Thompson, maintained that Long Island had an "invincible right to a separate and distinct political existence with the aspiring and wealthy city of Brooklyn as the appropriate seat of her legislature." He noted that Long Island at that time had a population of more than 150,000, larger than four of the thirty states then in the union (*History of Long Island*, 1918/1962, 3:278). Today, as Koppelman and Forman noted, Nassau and Suffolk's population is larger than nineteen of the fifty states (172); with Brooklyn and Queens, Long Island would be the tenth largest state in population.

In 1861 Walt Whitman revived the idea for what he called "The State of Paumanok" in one of the articles in his "Brooklyniana" series in the *Brooklyn Daily Standard*. After recounting the resources of Long Island, he noted that certain politicians "when they get within control of half-fun and half-whiskey" propose the "secession" of Long Island from New York State as a sovereign state with Brooklyn as the capital. (See Henry M. Christman, *Walt Whitman's New York* (1963), 106.)

Alas, the state of Long Island seems as unlikely today as it was in the nineteenth-century. But perhaps the article will help spur more cooperation and planning for Nassau and Suffolk.

Natalie A. Naylor  
Professor Emerita  
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