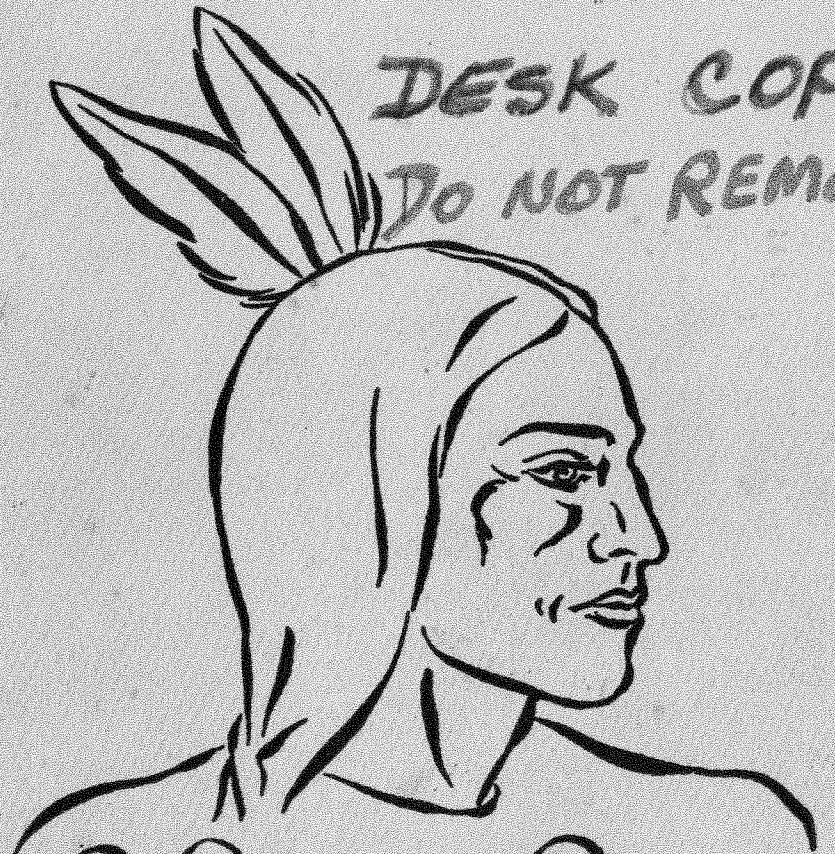


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# Historical Review

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# OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORIENT, Long Island

Melita Hofmann



This review is a publication of THE OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Orient, Long Island, New York

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*Map design:* HERBERT M. HALE

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SALISBURY PRINTERS, Uniondale, Long Island

July, 1959

# HISTORICAL REVIEW



A WORD AND PICTURE JOURNEY  
INTO ORIENT'S PAST,  
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FORMATION,  
ACTIVITIES AND MUSEUM

OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
Orient, Long Island, New York

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## Introduction

GEORGE R. LATHAM

DURING the late summer of 1943, a small group of eight or ten persons met at the writer's home in Orient to discuss the possibility of forming an historical society in the village. The significance of Orient and the adjacent communities, from an historical point of view, lay in the fact that they were largely populated by direct descendants of the original settlers of three centuries ago—a phenomenon fast disappearing in American life. Throughout their history, these settlements have played their part in the maritime, agricultural, cultural, and religious life of our country. Furthermore, many relics of Indian life have been found in Orient, both of historical and anthropological interest. Concern was felt over the gradual but constant disappearance from Southold Town of Indian artifacts, documents, family records, implements and other antiquities of the early settlers. As a result of the discussion, an organization was formed during the following year, and the minutes of the first meeting disclose that the following business was transacted:

A Village Meeting was held on July 1, 1944 at the Orient Fire Hall to consider and discuss the proposition of incorporating an Historical and Genealogical Society and Museum. There were about one hundred persons present. The idea was presented and it was announced that the Vail homestead on Village Lane was for sale for the sum of \$4500. The house was once a tavern and had been owned by Augustus Griffin, author of Griffin's Journal. Slips were passed around with the request that each person so inclined indicate the amount they would be willing to contribute toward the project. The total subscribed was \$2474.

It was voted to proceed with the formation of a Mem-



bership Corporation to be known as the Oysterponds Historical Society and the following were elected to serve for one year as Charter Officers and Directors:

*Charter Trustees*

MRS. DOUGLAS KNOX                      MRS. HENRY F. J. KNOBLOCH  
 GEORGE R. LATHAM

*Charter Officers*

A. NELSON CHAPMAN, *Pres.*              GEORGE R. LATHAM, *Treas.*  
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Yearly dues of \$1.00 were suggested in order to attract as many members as possible. Mrs. Douglas Knox, Mrs. Henry F. J. Knobloch, Mrs. Allan Heath and Mrs. Spencer Terry offered to canvas the community for members. A Committee was authorized to negotiate with the heirs of the Vail estate and enter into a contract when sufficient funds were raised to purchase the property.

On August 12, 1944 the first formal meeting of the Society was held and the Committee reported 322 adult and 62 junior members and total contributions of \$4907.75. With this fund available, the Village House was subsequently purchased and a museum established. Almost immediately a vast quantity of material was contributed and placed on display under the direction of the Society's first president, A. Nelson Chapman. His classification and arrangement of the articles, and his continuing help and advice on historical data has been invaluable to the society. From the beginning in 1944 and continuing until the end of both of their lives, Herbert M. Hale and Elliott A. Brooks contributed much to the society; Hale as cartographer, historian and Chairman of Building and Grounds and Brooks as amateur archaeologist and lifelong collector of Indian artifacts.

In the review that follows, the Oysterponds Historical Society provides a history of Orient, descriptions of the museum exhibits and pertinent facts regarding the Society's acquisitions and development. It is a further step in the fulfillment of its function of discovering and preserving for the future the story of these settlements of the Town of Southold, New York, whose inhabitants have played their part in the life of our country and contributed to our national heritage.

## *The Families of Orient*

NELSON AND MARY CHAPMAN

TEN or more generations successively living in one community is almost unheard of in this country; yet in Orient this is not only common, it is taken for granted. New England towns point proudly to a few survivors of their earliest families, but here such an origin is treated casually, being the rule rather than the exception. Old Orient family names are represented by about 90 of the approximately 219 families living in Orient throughout the year or as regular Summer residents. There are an additional 23 families where the wife is from an early family, and there are a number of families one or more generations removed from the early family names. Thus, over half of the population are descendants of the early settlers.

Some surviving surnames from families that came to old Oysterponds Lower Neck before 1700 include: Tuthill, King, Terry, Vail, Young, Petty, Beebe and Rackett. The Browns, Moores, Glovers, Conklins, Paynes, Budds and Mulfords are represented by numerous descendants through maternal lines, although, in most cases, the last of the males of these names were still here up to a generation ago. Other early Southold settlers, branches of whose families came to Orient at later dates, are: Horton, Luce, Cleveland and Havens. The former two family names remain today while the latter two have only descendants of other names. In such a small community intermarriage was inevitable, with the result that today's possessor of an early name can trace his descent from many other early Orient families as well. Another result has been the formation of complex degrees of relationship, so that neighbors are often cousins through two or more lines of descent. The majority of the children in Orient's school are cousins, from first to twelfth, but they are usually unaware of the more distant relationships.



Between 1750 and 1850 a number of new families came whose children married descendants of old families, adding an infusion of new blood at that time. Such families include the Tabors and Lathams whose descendants have clung to Orient with even more tenacity than most of their predecessors. The Dyers, Potters, Hallocks, Ways and Edwards also came during this period. In the past hundred years newcomers of various national origins have grafted their lines onto these predominantly English family trees so that today there are descendants of original settlers bearing Irish, German and Polish surnames.

About 123 years ago a thoughtful member of the Terry family began keeping records on the marriages, births and deaths that occurred in Orient. This work was faithfully continued by others of the Terry, Young and Tuthill families, and today two original copies of these records exist. The entries are very complete from 1836 to 1907. Unfortunately, the first book, which began prior to 1800, has been lost.

For the past two years, the Genealogical Committee of the Historical Society has been preparing a card file on all of Orient's citizens, starting from the beginning of the settlement in 1661. The Terry-Tuthill record books form the nucleus of this index. Other sources used for names and dates include: census and tax lists, Bible and church records, deeds and wills, Griffin's Journal and published genealogies and tombstone inscriptions.

This ambitious project is far from completion, but already includes entries on about 2000 of the former inhabitants. Even though the population has seldom exceeded 600, the project has not been easy. It has been necessary to disentangle the various family lines, and to separate the many individuals with identical names. There were many Richard Browns, Thomas Terrys and Samuel Beebes, and as many as three men of the same name were contemporaries. The problem of determining which of the similarly named contemporaries married which wife or wives has not been solved in all cases, nor has the proper listing of their children been completely worked out. The final result of this indexing will be a unique and valuable

record, of use to both historians and genealogists. The Society would welcome the loan of old papers or documents pertinent to this indexing.

Although there is the usual lack of interest in genealogy here that one finds elsewhere in the country, no one could help but be intrigued with the following bit of history and lore. Three of the first half-dozen men to come from Southold and settle here were Samuel King, John Tuthill and Richard Brown. They were a recognized triumvirate in all affairs and each became an important man in Southold Town. They were steadfast friends and Richard and John married Samuel's sisters. John and Samuel each had four children with similar first names, John, Dorothy, Mary and Abigail. John also had three children which were named the same as three of Richard's children, Hannah, Mary and Abigail. Richard had four children with names identical to four of Samuel's children, William, Hannah, Mary and Abigail. These three men were of the second generation of their families in America, and today they have descendants of the twelfth generation, living on the land each had tilled.

Another example of longevity of family ownership of land is the Terry farm near the village of Orient. The present Terry owner is the eighth of the name in direct descent, and tenth from the original owner through Moore line descent.

Descendants of old Orient families have dispersed throughout the United States, and many of the early emigrants were the first settlers of Cape May, Morristown and Elizabeth, New Jersey and Orange County, New York. Here in Orient there is a wealth of information on ancestry waiting for the interested Vail from Vandalia, Brown from Buena Vista, Cleveland from Cleveland or Tabor from Tallahassee.

## *History of Orient*

DR. GEORGE E. COTTRAL

THE community of Orient occupies the eastern extremity of Long Island's North Fork from Truman's Beach to Orient Point, a tract of about 3,000 acres. The village of Orient is located on the southwestern side of this area. Both the village and community of Orient were formerly called Oysterponds and, at that time, East Marion was included but was distinguished as Oysterponds Upper Neck, while Orient was known as Oysterponds Lower Neck. The Indian name for the Orient peninsula was Poquatuck. The name was changed from Oysterponds to Orient in 1836 by general agreement of the inhabitants, and the new name was selected to signify the area's eastern position on Long Island. This irregularly-shaped peninsula of Orient was formed by the last glacier, the Wisconsin Ice, about 10,000 years ago.

The area was first inhabited by a primitive group known to archaeologists as the Orient Focus people. A study of the village sites, pottery and stone dishes and implements left by these people in Orient indicates that they had no overlapping contact with the Indians of historic times, probably vanishing or migrating long before the later Indians appeared.\*

The Indian tribes found by the early explorers had settled on Long Island about 1,000 years ago, and language similarities prove that they were once part of the Algonquian Nation that held the southern New England area. The Long Island Indians were often subjected to raids by their more powerful neighbors and, in general, they favored an alliance with the early settlers for protection

\*We are indebted to Mr. Roy Latham, a self-educated Orient farmer, who has won considerable renown for his archaeological work on the Orient Focus culture and other natural history studies of the local area.



from these raids. They were very willing to sell their lands for the trinkets the settlers brought, little realizing that the newcomers also brought new diseases, such as small-pox and diphtheria, that would decimate their tribes within a generation.

The Corchaug Tribe, under Sachem Momoweta, occupied Yennicoek, the North Fork of Long Island. Their land extended from Pauquaconsuck (Wading River) to Poquatuck (Orient), and included Plum Island, which they called Manituwond. The Corchaug Tribe owed allegiance to Poggaticut, the Grand Sachem of Paumanake (Long Island). Poggaticut was also the Sachem of the Manhansets of Shelter Island, and after his death in 1654, Wyandanch, Sachem of the Montauks, became the Indian leader on the eastern end of Long Island. The early settlers had many dealings with Wyandanch and Momoweta. The Corchaug Tribe at various times established camp sites in Orient, and over 32 sites have been identified. They were located by the shell heaps, stone implements and fragments of pottery that the Indians left behind.

The tribes of Long Island manufactured wampum beads from the whelk and clam shells, which were much in demand for barter or tribute in dealings with other tribes. Dried clams and fish were also used as a medium of exchange. The Orient area produced an abundant food supply for the Indians—corn and other vegetables, fruit and nuts, birds and small game, and all types of fish and shell fish. Oysters were plentiful and it was for this reason the early settlers named the area Oysterponds.

Oysterponds (Orient) was included in the land claimed by the early settlers, who founded Southold in 1640. The purchase of the land was arranged in the Connecticut Colony and deeds were obtained from the Indians on Long Island. The original deeds have been lost, but a confirmatory deed, signed in 1665, was recorded in the town records. Later, a patent, which delineated the geographical area included under the civil jurisdiction of Southold, was granted by Governor Andros in 1676. This patent included all lands from Wading River to Oysterponds Point and

Plum Island. According to the historians, Griffin and Thompson, Peter Hallock laid claim to Oysterponds by virtue of an Indian deed obtained in 1647. Hallock, however, returned to England and made no use of the land. The Southold settlers soon found it necessary to enlarge their common pasture lands for grazing cattle, sheep and hogs, and they used Oysterponds as well as other unassigned areas for this purpose.

The date 1661 is generally accepted as the time when Oysterponds was permanently settled. In that year it was "... agreed and confirmed by a major vote that all common lands at Oysterponds, Occabauk and Mattatuck should be surveyed, and layed out to every man his due proportion in each place..." Thus, Oysterponds was divided into 40 lots and assigned as follows: John Youngs, Pastor—4; Captain Youngs—6; Thomas Moore, Sr.—2; Lieutenant Glover—2; Richard Brown—2; Thomas Moore, Jr.—3; John Herbert—2; John Payne—1; Mrs. Youngs, Widow—8; John Conkling, Sr.—2; John Corey—2; Thomas Osmond—2; Thomas Conklin, Jr.—1; Geoffry Jones—1; Abram Whittier—1; and Thomas Rider—1. The number of lots each received was determined by the amount of contribution to the initial Southold Settlement.

A single lot in the Oysterponds tract was 50 acres, and the original lots were generally laid out so that they were bounded on the north by the sound and on the south by the bay. In a short time a road was laid out through the middle of Oysterponds and by sales and exchanges of property the road eventually became the new boundary line for many of the farms.

The tradition is recorded in Griffin's Journal that "John Tuthill, John Youngs, Jr., Israel Brown, Richard Brown, Samuel Brown, and John King, were the first six men to settle in this place (Oysterponds) with their families." The tradition indicates that this settlement began prior to 1661, and the first rude dwelling was erected about one-third of a mile east of Truman's Beach by Israel Brown. Further to the east, along a road that eventually became known as King's Highway, the other five men mentioned above built houses and laid out their farms. The Youngs

farmhouse was near the present village of Orient and was the eastern-most of this first group. Within a few years other houses were built along King's Highway, which ended at the "Point Farm" on Oysterponds Point.

About 1717, when there were approximately 24 families living in Oysterponds, a general collection was taken to build a meeting house. The house was built on the north side of King's Highway on land purchased from David Youngs for five shillings. The original building was about 30 feet square, two stories high, with a steeple surmounted by a gamecock weathervane. This building served as a church and as a gathering place for civic and social affairs for 100 years. The stocks and whipping post were located nearby, but were sparingly used. In 1818 the old building was torn down and replaced, and in 1843 the present church was erected on the site. It was designated as a Congregational Church in 1735, being the oldest church of this denomination in New York. The early services held in the meeting house were conducted by lay preachers and deacons, who had been trained in the Southold Presbyterian Church. The first minister was the Rev. Jonathan Barber, who came about 1735. In 1739 the congregation had difficulty in securing money to pay a minister, who had to be a dissenter holding to the Congregational teachings; a Calvinist preacher was not acceptable. Under the leadership of Deacon Daniel Tuthill, a fund of 619 pounds was raised from 53 contributors. This fund was to be loaned at  $6\frac{1}{4}$  percent interest so that the annual income from the fund could be used to pay the minister's salary. This plan is outlined in a document now owned by Mr. William Y. Terry, Jr.

When Methodism was introduced in Oysterponds in 1802 by itinerant circuit riders, this group held services in private homes. By 1836 the Methodists had raised sufficient funds to build their church near the center of the village on land donated by Vincent Youngs. The Rev. Samuel King was the first resident minister and officiated at the dedication ceremonies. Thus, the Methodist church is the oldest church building in Orient, but not the oldest church society.

From the beginning of the settlement, the excellent, sheltered Orient harbor was used for commercial traffic, and by 1720 small lots had been sold nearby to erect houses and several stores. A wharf and warehouse were added by 1740, built by Richard Shaw, and the small village of Oysterponds gradually took shape. A few people were employed as tradesmen and fishermen, but farming remained the principal occupation.

The early fences between farms were generally made of the large glacial boulders cleared from the fields, and in some instances from stone used as ballast in ships. Some of these landmarks are still standing. One famous landmark was the old buttonwood tree\*, which still stands across the road from the monument north of the village. This venerable tree was planted during Colonial days on the Young's property, and has been admired by many generations of Orienters. When Young's Lane was laid out about 1910, the road was divided to pass around both sides of the tree. There is a tradition that some of the citizens of Oysterponds met under this tree and pledged loyalty to the Patriot cause after the Declaration of Independence.

During the Revolutionary War the Oysterponds farms were ravished by the British, who periodically occupied the area and continuously controlled the sea approaches. A small fort was erected on the Sound side of Orient Point in 1776 by soldiers under Col. H. B. Livingston in an attempt to ward off British attacks. This was not effective since there were many other places where landings could be made, and the colonists were unable to maintain a strong force on Long Island. Consequently, when British troops were landed in the autumn of 1776 the people were panic stricken; they had heard tales of the cruelties of the Hessian mercenaries. Many families gathered their prized possessions and fled to Connecticut, leaving their farms and stock behind. When they returned they found ruined houses and run-down farms, while those that stayed fared much better. Some of those who remained were Tories, while others attempted to be neutral.

For short periods British troops were quartered at

\*— American Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*.



Orient Point, and after Benedict Arnold deserted the Patriot Cause he used the area as a base for several raids on Connecticut. Augustus Griffin related several tales regarding the heroism of some of the women of Oysterponds. The episode of the drained whiskey barrels in the Inn, to keep the liquor from enemy soldiers, seemed to be his favorite, and he proudly described how his father, James, narrowly escaped capture by the British by jumping from the second story window of his home (the old Shaw House) on a dark and stormy night.

The War of 1812 also directly affected the community, but the people were mainly inconvenienced by the tight British blockade of the eastern end of Long Island. Most of the supplies gathered by the British were paid for and raids were infrequent. A letter written in 1813 by Henry Tuthill to his father, Christopher, stated that no difficulty was encountered in sailing from Oysterponds to New York City even though British warships were sighted enroute. Henry promised to send tea and sugar on the next sloop and thanked his parents for sending his clothing, indicating that there was frequent traffic between the two ports and that the British blockade was lax. In fact, Captain Thacher Paget, of *H.M.S. Superb*, even wrote a letter of apology to Joseph Terry, then Justice of the Peace of Oysterponds, for burning the smack *Jupiter* and holding the owner, Captain Eliphalet Beebe, a prisoner. Paget promised to release the prisoner, but wanted the fishermen of Oysterponds to heed the warning not to approach British warships and to stop when being overhauled to avoid being fired upon. The *Jupiter* was burned and sunk at the entrance to Hallock Bay. Relics from the vessel have been found in a spot known as "Jupiter's Hole", near the Long Beach shoal, opposite Peter's Neck Point.

The British destroyed the wooden lighthouse on Little Gull Island, and later regretted the incident when a barge ran aground on Plum Island, because there was no light to guide them. There was another incident involving a derelict which the Colonists had rigged as a booby-trap to destroy the British boarding party when the hatch was opened.

In the summer of 1814, Commodore Decatur stopped his patrol of the Sound for a few days and anchored his three ships, the *United States*, *Macedonian* and the *Hornet*, off Truman's Beach. The frigate, *Macedonian*, had been captured from the British. During this same period the British ships under Commodore Hardy patrolled Gardiner's Bay and Block Island Sound, and frequently anchored off Orient Point. Thus, the people on shore could see both Navy units, but no major engagement occurred.

After the War of 1812, farming and fishing brought prosperity to Oysterponds and along with it many newcomers and the fashion of heavy drinking. The two saloons flourished and the two church societies dwindled. This situation prompted the formation of a temperance society by Rev. Phineas Robinson in 1829, and paved the way for the famous Washington Total Abstinence Society, which was organized on January 15, 1842. From this latter society the Washington's Birthday banquet and dance evolved, and this event was celebrated annually until 1952.

In the early days of the settlement schooling was either neglected or accomplished in private homes. About 1820 a school building was opened on King's Highway. This dwelling is now occupied by the Gloria family. For a short time before and after 1848, the basement of the house now owned by Floyd King was used as a one-room school. The Point Schoolhouse was erected in 1825 near the present site of the Charles Rose Airport. The original structure was moved and the school was rebuilt about 1845. After many additions and alterations, this building was moved to the Latham Brothers' Farm in 1888, and a new school was built. This school was finally closed in 1930, and in 1948 the structure was moved to its present location adjacent to the Oysterponds Historical Society Museum. It is now used as a meeting place for various organizations as well as the Historical Society and serves as a youth center. The present school building, located east of the Congregational Church parsonage, was built in 1874 and remodeled in 1908. For many years high school courses were taught here, but now the older children are sent to the Greenport High School.

In addition to the public schools, there were at various times private schools. Mr. Marvin Holmes started one in 1820 in the building that is now the Luce Grocery Store, but it was on the opposite side of the street when it was used as a school. Bills for the tuition fees of Hetta, daughter of F. Tuthill, showed that M. Miller and C. C. Greene successively ran a private school from 1836 to 1839. Miller charged a fee of \$2.00 per week, and Greene's rate was \$3.00 per quarter plus a "house rent" of twenty-five cents. Miss Amanda Brown conducted classes in her home, which was located near the corner of King's Highway and Platt Road. The building has since been moved to the Orient Point Inn grounds. Miss Rhoda S. Young established a school in her home on King's Highway in the dwelling now owned by Gladys Wilkins.

The first houses of Orient were the so-called saltbox type, similar to those on Cape Cod. The older ones had a simple cornice that was almost level with the top of the windows. The later houses, built between 1725 and 1800, may be recognized by their abbreviated cornice and the greater height above the second floor windows, which allowed more headroom upstairs. There are many homes remaining that were built between 1800 and 1865 and all are still in use. They have been structurally altered, but in some houses the quaint old rooms are preserved and are still designated by their old-fashioned names. These room names indicate gracious living and show that the homes through necessity supplied facilities now provided by the community: front and back parlor, sitting room, spinning room, borning and minding rooms, larder, winter and summer kitchens, and in one instance, an idiot's room. Brick ovens and cooking fireplaces were necessary culinary features and nearly every abode had a root cellar and a smokehouse.

Some of the houses are prized for having Amon Tabor doorways, mantles, cabinets or interior trim. Amon Tabor came to Oysterponds about 1730 and was a carpenter of great skill. He soon became recognized as a first class artisan and his classic designs were greatly admired and copied. His work extended from 1730 until 1785, and after

that his son carried on the work for another twenty years.

Peaken's House, located on King's Highway east of Orient Village, is the oldest structure remaining in Orient. It is well preserved and retains much of its colonial charm. The wing added on the west side was constructed of old materials in recent years. The house was built by John Peaken shortly after the settlement of Orient, circa 1665. About 1703, Thomas Terry purchased the property, and ownership continued in the Terry family until 1850, when it was acquired by E. Mulford. In later years it was owned by Dr. Henry Heath.

The Orient Point Inn was originally a small house built about 1672. During the Revolutionary War the building was enlarged and a garrison for British troops was built nearby. Materials from the two structures were put together to form the Inn, and it was opened to the public in 1796 by Jonathan F. Latham, the first proprietor. The Inn became a mecca for Connecticut honeymooners and was often visited by city folks, who were fond of "rusticating" here in the summertime. Among the famous visitors were: James Fenimore Cooper, who wrote "Sea Lions" with a locale in Orient; Walt Whitman, who conceived part of his "Leaves of Grass" in this area; Daniel Webster, the oratorical patriot; President Grover Cleveland, the fisherman; and Sarah Bernhardt, the actress.

The Shaw House at the south end of Village Lane was built by Richard Shaw in 1730. For many years, it was the home of Widow Shaw, who is remembered for her remarkable resurrection. She was found in a coma by friends who, thinking she was dead, had her removed to a receiving vault preparatory to burial. Here she revived and returned home, giving her neighbors a ghostly shock until they learned what had happened. This house, also known as the Champlin House, was the scene of James Griffin's leap from the British pursuers on the night of August 1, 1777.

Fires and storms have taken a heavy toll and houses have been lost and gained by moving. The venerable, twice-moved Webb house facing the park and Orient harbor was built about 1740 and served as the Inn of Lt. Constant Booth on Sterling Creek in what is now the Village of



Greenport. George Washington stopped at this Inn in 1756. About 1830 the house was moved to a farm at the edge of Sterling Village on the north road.\* Here for many years it was the home of the Webb, Young and Jerome families. The famous evangelist, George Whitefield, visited this home, preached from the balcony to a large gathering and, as a memento of the occasion, scratched a biblical passage on a window pane with a diamond.

The Orient Point Lighthouse, located in Plum Gut, marks the end of Oysterponds reef. It was constructed in 1899 at a cost of about \$20,000, and is classed as a cylindrical tank or caisson type. Considerable difficulty was encountered in erecting the lighthouse, and most of the base work had to be done at low tide. The tower has a fixed red light and is about 64 feet above sea level. The lighthouse was considered too dangerous for women, so the wife of the keeper usually roomed in Orient.

Orient also has the famous Devil's Rock, which Indian folklore described as the place from which the devil jumped when he was driven from Long Island to Connecticut by the medicine men. A "footprint" is visible on the rock, which is located north of the village. Also to the north, but along the Sound beach, may be seen the rock carvings of a local fisherman-sculptor, Elliott Brooks. The seascapes and rustic views of the local area have had a stimulating effect on native as well as visiting artists for many generations.

Long Beach, a sandy peninsula extending southwest from Orient Point, forms a sheltered bay along the southern edge of Orient. A deep well (668 ft.) drilled on Long Beach indicated that bedrock was found about 660 feet below sea level, and overlying this for about 450 feet was the sand, clay and gravel of the Mesozoic Era. The upper strata, about 213 feet, were attributed to the more recent glacial deposits of Pleistocene times.

At the time of division of Oysterponds, Long Beach was left as common property belonging to all male inhabitants. Some people abused the privilege of using the

\*—Sterling, now extinct, existed prior to and concurrently with Greenport for a time.

land as a pasture and also cut down many of the trees. As a result, the Long Beach Association was formed in 1774, with a committee to determine who should use the pastures, what rents would be charged and what civic projects would be supported with the revenue. This unique organization held annual meetings and flourished as a benefactor of the community for over 170 years, holding its last meeting for final disposition of funds in 1955. In the early days, rents of two to five pounds per season were charged for pasture lands and beach rights. About 1865 the Atlantic Oil and Guano Company leased a parcel of Long Beach for \$500 per year to establish a fish factory, utilizing menhaden or bunkers to make fertilizer and fish oils. This enterprise was taken over by the Atlantic and Virginia Fertilizer Company in 1875, and a decade later it became known as the Orient Guano Company. In the meantime, the lease rental had been raised to \$1000 per year. The factory went out of existence in 1895, and the Mallard Inn, at the edge of the East Marion-Orient causeway, was made from one of the buildings moved by barge from this factory. With money from the fish factory and other rentals, the Long Beach Association had funds to maintain a hearse-ambulance, provide care for cemeteries, monuments and many other civic projects, including the Liberty Pole and publication of a newsletter to servicemen during World War II. The Association deeded Long Beach to the State for the establishment of Orient State Park in 1929 and thus lost its source of revenue. The park is four miles long and offers excellent bathing and picnic facilities and is a refuge for wild life. The road right-of-way to the park was donated by the King Farms. The first road along the beach was destroyed by the 1938 hurricane.

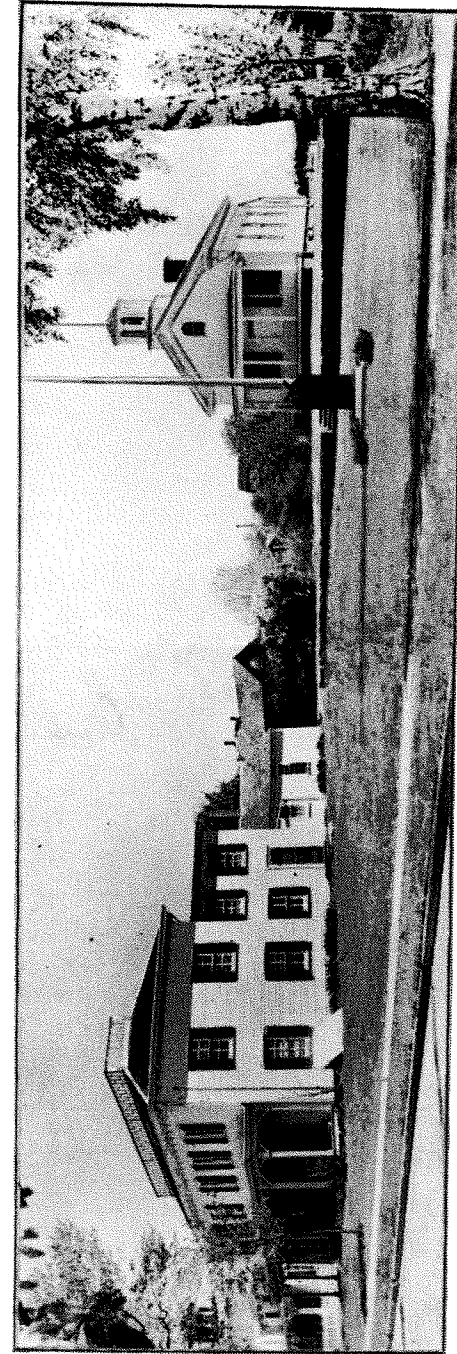
The Long Beach Lighthouse was built at a cost of about \$17,000 in 1870 to mark the shoal water and sand bar off the southwestern end of the beach. Until it was abandoned, its fixed red light guided ships using Orient and Greenport harbors. Truman's Beach was known as Hard Beach in Colonial days, and this narrow isthmus of sand and gravel formed the only land connection to Orient. During storms the sea has washed through this beach to

cut off Orient eight times in the last 300 years. For many years a tide mill with a huge water wheel was operated at the mouth of Dam Pond. The sea wall and causeway were built about 1898, and then rebuilt and extended in 1901 at a cost of \$15,600. They have been repaired many times since, following storm damage. The first grist mill was constructed in 1700 and was replaced in 1760 by a mill built by Amon Tabor, Sr. for Noah Tuthill. This served the community until 1810 when the old English windmill was erected on the village waterfront. The builder was Nathaniel Dominy, Jr. and the Terry family operated the mill for many years. In 1898, the mill was sold to J. H. Starin for \$600 and was moved to the Glen Island Amusement Park, amid a storm of protests from the villagers. The following year a fire at the amusement park destroyed the windmill.

From August to October, 1849, Orient suffered from an epidemic then called "cholera dysentery". Griffin stated, "in a district of our village, about one-fourth of a mile square, thirty died in the short space of two months". "In the street leading from the main road to the wharf, seldom a house escaped, and, in some families, one half were prostrated; in others, four out of five were seized".

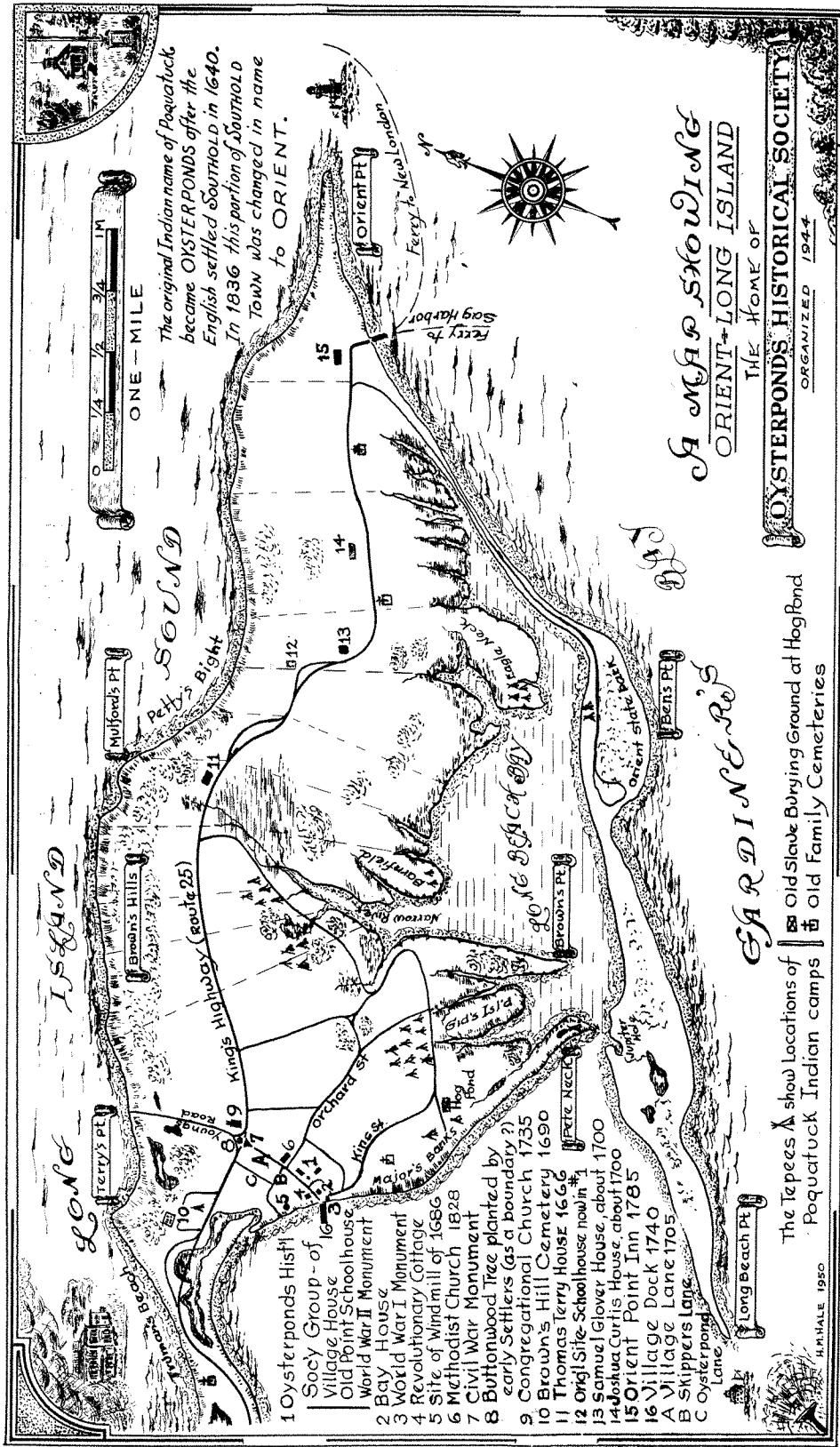
The Brown's Hill burying ground contains about 54 graves and was used from about 1699 until about 1766. Here, beginning with Gideon Youngs, many of the first residents were laid to rest, and some of the tombstone inscriptions were, according to Thompson, "remarkable for their quaintness and a saintly humor—". In 1790, the cemetery across the road from the meeting house was started. In addition, there were established two private cemeteries along the road to Orient Point (Latham and Terry) and two near Truman's Beach. The old slaves' burying ground situated on a knoll of Hog Pond Farm contains the graves of Dr. Seth H. Tuthill, his wife, Maria, and 20 family slaves. Slavery was abolished in Oysterponds about 1830.

The Civil War Monument was erected on Peter's Hill overlooking the Sound in 1870. It was moved to its present triangular plot at the head of Village Lane in 1906 so



VILLAGE HOUSE and OLD POINT SCHOOLHOUSE

*Grounds of Oysterponds Historical Society showing Village House and Restored Orient Point Schoolhouse;  
World War II Memorial Tablet in foreground.*



that it would receive better care and protection. The names of Orient's twenty-six Civil War soldiers and G.A.R. veterans are inscribed on the shaft.

The Poquatuck Hook and Ladder Company was organized on August 11, 1894, and the Oysterponds Chemical Company was formed in 1916. The fire house built in 1895, burned in 1938, and a more modern structure was erected in its place. In addition to the volunteer fire companies there are interesting clubs. The Ladies' Benevolent Sewing Society, organized June 19, 1843, was one of the oldest societies of its kind in New York; it dropped its last stitch in 1946. The Daughters of America and the Junior Order of Mechanics are active societies. The Orient Gun Club, organized in 1902, has as its objectives the enforcement of laws to protect game and the advancement of its membership in the art of shooting. The Orient Garden Club, formed in 1952, actively stimulates interest in all forms of home gardening and tree planting by lectures, exhibits and demonstrations.

R. R. Wilson, a writer who visited this area in 1900 and drove along the road to Orient Point, said, "This road is shaded almost continuously with patriarchal cherry trees, so that in May a snow storm seems always to be travelling just ahead of you, so white are the masses of tree tops on either side, and a ride along it is an experience to be remembered for a life-time". This road, King's Highway, was secured for the Town of Southold in 1818 by Commissioners, Daniel and Joseph Terry and Elisha Mulford. The rights were purchased from individuals who were maintaining sections and charging tolls.

Orient contains about 2400 acres of farm land, and of this, about 1200 acres have been devoted to extensive potato raising since about 1800. The heavy soil gave Orient farmers an advantage over farmers in other areas with lighter soils, since the Orient farms usually could get an earlier second crop of Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cucumbers or beans from the potato land. But after irrigation came into use the lighter soils also could be made to produce early maturing second crops and this initial market advantage was nullified.

The second major occupation in Orient, commercial and pleasure fishing, has brought many boats to Orient, and hundreds of tons of fish and shellfish have been taken ashore in the Orient harbor. The famous and delicious bay escalops were not gathered commercially until 1857. Oysters were packed and sold from Colonial times, but the cultivation of oysters did not begin until 1872. This business is now experiencing difficulty in obtaining new sets of young oysters. The Indian technique of clamming in the tidal waters has been improved very little; however, the modern digger is not interested in the forgotten Indian art of clam drying.

Orient has been the scene of numerous shipwrecks and disasters: sloop, name unknown, five lost, Dec. 1800; sloop, name unknown, owner Abraham Merrifield—January, 1802; the *Smack Jupiter*—1814; the sloop, *Two Brothers*—October, 1816; the sloop, *Wave*—September, 1827; the sloop, *Morning Star*—June, 1835; the schooner *Emperor*—March, 1855; the schooner, *Josephine*—December, 1877; the schooner, *Boston*—April, 1884; the schooner, *Ida E. Latham*—January, 1888; the yacht, *Jenny*—December, 1890; the schooner, *Mary H. Hall*—March, 1895; the barque, *Athlon*—March, 1897; the U. S. Steamer, *Gen. John Wilkins*—May, 1922; the steamer, *Cape Cod*—March, 1923; the motorship, *Orient*—August, 1954. This last vessel, the New London ferry, was beached by Hurricane Carol. This area has been in the path of many severe storms, which have caused considerable property damage. There were extreme blizzards in 1717 and 1888, which buried some houses to the second story windows, and the blinding gale of 1811 is remembered as the Christmas snow storm that wrecked many ships. The tornado of August, 1909 came close, but the hurricanes hit with full force. These were named: The September Gale of 1815, the 1938 Hurricane, the Great Atlantic Hurricane of 1944, Carol and Edna in 1954 and Connie in 1955.

Prolonged cold waves have been recorded; the winter of 1780 formed ice thick enough for Noah Terry to ride horseback from Orient to Shelter Island, and the winter of 1917 provided a similar situation for the war-time

generation. The year 1762 was hot and dry, for 123 successive days with no rain from May 1st to September 1st; hay and grain had to be imported by the Colonists. The wettest Spring happened in 1858 with rain 24 days in May. Perhaps the most discouraging year was 1816, when frost occurred in every month.

The population of Orient continued to increase from about 35 people in 1662 to a high of 856 in 1940. During and after World War II many people left so that the 1950 census counted only 622, a loss of 234 individuals. The recent 1957 census places the population at 653 year-around residents, but the influx of summer residents and visitors increases this number by over 200.

Orient has retained much of its rural atmosphere and charm, and although each generation of Orienters has had the desire to preserve these qualities, change has been inevitable. Behind the facade of many of the quaint old houses lie all the modern conveniences and labor saving devices associated with modern living and working. Orient has been, and will continue to be an interesting community to study, offering nearly 300 years of miscellaneous historical records. The Historical Society welcomes further pertinent data and will continue to delve into Orient's past to make the story more complete than can be presented in this brief summation.



## *A Tour of Village House*

MELITA HOFMANN

WALKING or driving bayward along Village Lane in Orient, a visitor passes on the way a few quaint old homes, both large and small, the Village Post Office, several stores and then three doors beyond the Methodist Church, a stately house commands attention. Shaded by a huge old maple and draped with a mantle of venerable wisteria, the time-worn face of this old house mysteriously seems to beckon to all who heed, that a link with the past lies within, even before the sign is noticed and read. This is Village House and it has been known by that name since the days of Augustus Griffin, the teacher, Innkeeper, historian, who provided bed and board to sea captains, merchants and chance visitors in this, his Inn and home. It was fitting that this old Inn was selected as the home of the Oysterponds Historical Society in 1944. In the year following, Village House was dedicated as a memorial to the veterans of World War II. The monument, plaque and flagpole shared in this dedication, which took place July 4, 1945.

The old house was built about 1790 and in its frame are hand-hewn timbers, joists and sills. Originally it was enclosed by a picket fence, a decorative necessity in the early days. The house is surmounted by a "widow's walk" or a "captain's watch", which was popular in the days of sail. From this lofty vantage point a waiting "widow of the sea" could walk and watch for her captain's ship to return. The arrival could be known for certain only when the ship was sighted entering the harbor. Spy-glasses of the type on display in the Village House were used for this anxious scanning.

The original house was enlarged several times by proprietor Griffin and by a later Innkeeper, Gelston Vail. In the process several upstairs rooms were added, the dining

room was enlarged and an extended kitchen was provided. The Inn was the second stop on the stage line which ran from the Orient Point Inn to Huntington, and thence to New York. The house remained in the Vail family until 1944 when the Oysterpond Historical Society obtained it to house a collection of memorabilia, antiques, historical items and documents, all pertaining to the eastern end of Long Island.

The Village House Museum has many heirlooms and objects of interest, and among them is the chair in which Augustus Griffin sat, possibly while writing his "Griffin's Journal", a history of Southold Town. He published his journal in 1857 when he was in his ninety-first year. He had compiled the journal in his later years from a series of diaries which he had kept from his youth. A few of these original manuscripts have come into the Society's possession and may be seen in the Museum, along with other mementos of Mr. Griffin, such as his high beaver hat with silk ear-muffs, his portrait, a small, brass-studded trunk marked "A.G." and a miniature painting of one of his daughters.

The collection of Indian artifacts contains many rather rare specimens garnered along the shores of Oysterponds, and from its fields, woods and hilltops. Some relics come from the very early, more primitive culture, known as the Orient Focus. Their stone vessels are beautiful in shape and proportion and are comparable in workmanship to those made by Stone Age man in Europe. A visiting young archaeologist from Albany examined the collection and discovered that we have a rare "clovis point", being the third such point found on Long Island. One of the features of the collection is the skeleton of a young Indian male, prepared for display, as found, to illustrate the flexed burial position used by the Indians.

Many objects from the more recent Indians complete the display, including arrowheads, tools, fishhooks and pottery.

From the Colonial days can be seen mementos of the industry and ingenuity of the early settlers. There are spinning wheels, hatchels, yarn winders and looms that

were used to produce the early homespun, hand-woven fabrics, and handmade hardware is here, including the nails, tools and hinges that were used in building the early homes. There are handmade cradles and chairs, a rope-strung bed, cooking vessels and household utensils, the fireplace gadgets and necessities, Dutch ovens and butter churns, paddles and moulds. Also displayed are hand-hewn oxen yokes, the handmade meadow shoes worn by the horses, cattle de-horning instruments, along with many other handmade farm implements such as rakes, scythes, flails and planters. And, of the more personal items of long ago, the Museum has bicycles, carts and baby carriages, and many articles of feminine attire: sunbonnets, carriage bonnets, calashes, tiny lace mitts and dainty slippers, petticoats, pelerines and pelisses, hoop skirts, wedding gowns and night gowns. Articles of men's clothing also are included—from the Revolutionary soldier's uniform and dress suit to the Prince Albert wedding suit of a once illustrious citizen of not-too-long-ago Orient, and the hats worn by each.

Of particular interest of a bygone day is the model of the old windmill that stood not far from Village House, the mill that ground the grain into flour for the housewives to bake into bread. Here preserved is the old street lamp that stood on Village Lane, with its wick to be kindled by the old lamp-lighter, as he climbed the tiny wooden ladder, every evening at dusk in fair weather or foul. Then there are the "lights of the past" for indoors; the tallow candles, with the moulds in which they were made; the candle sticks and the snuffers, the whale oil lamps, the kerosene lanterns, the foot warmers and the warming pans. And in another room are the relics of the old volunteer fire department; the leather water buckets, the buckled belts, and the firemen's hats, and the photograph of the proud men who pulled the truck by hand. Of great interest is the model of a train. It was started by a boy of eleven, worked at painstakingly through his youth, and completed by him when in his thirties. Perfect in every detail, from the bell on the locomotive to the springs above the wheels, the little train has passengers

inside in the dress of the time of Abraham Lincoln; this was the style at the time the model was made.

Around the walls of the "Marine Room" are many fine early paintings of the coast-wise schooners that went out to sea, captained by the sea-faring men of Orient. There are the *Lucinda G. Potter*, and the *Ida E. Latham* which were both commanded by Capt. William T. Potter; Capt. Charles Franklin's *Lavinia*; and Smith Dewey's paddle wheel boat, *Frances* and the later used ship, *Black Eagle*. There are several interesting ship models handmade and in perfect detail, one of them illustrative of the special gear aboard a whaler. There is an excellent display, too, of the sailor's art of the whalebone and walrus ivory called "scrimshaw". The only tools employed for this art were the ship's grindstone or file for smoothing down, a pocket knife or sail needle for etching the design, India ink for color, and wood ashes and the palm of the hand for polishing. The objects made were mostly gifts for the sailor's lady: adjustable swifts for winding yarn from skein to ball, corset busks and beautifully carved pie or jaggging wheels, used for crimping the edge of pies, some being equipped with a fork to punch the holes for steam escape. The variety of objects carved is almost endless—walking sticks, a sewing box, knitting needles, a rolling pin, etc.

In one corner of this room stands the collection of unusual shells in almost perfectly matched pairs, coral and native handiwork collected by Captain Edwin P. Brown on his voyages around the Horn to the South Seas. In other cases are navigation instruments, compasses, sextants, ship's logs and many other treasures of the days of salt sprayed canvas and trade wind cruising. A most unique and recent addition to this room is the hawser which gave way when the ferry "*Orient*" broke from its mooring at the Orient Point Landing during Hurricane Carol in October 1954.

In the room dedicated to the Revolutionary and Civil Wars are the relics of our early struggles for independence and individual and racial freedom. The collection includes: guns, swords, powder horns, bullet moulds, the canteens which carried the precious drink of water, and the small

piece of hard tack which was the Civil War soldier's emergency ration. Here, too, are the posters calling for volunteers, and the names of the Civil War recruits who went out from this small village to fight for the great and prevailing issues which may have seemed remote issues from this distant tip of Long Island. Here, too, are the medals and the soldier's hats along with the patriotic banners and flags. Among the most cherished is a set of letters written by John Henry Young which tell of the reactions of the humble private to army life and his thoughts about the death of Abraham Lincoln.

A typical exhibition piece of the time of the Civil War is the replica of one of the most famous of the "Rogers' Groups", a statue entitled "The Wounded Soldier". From 1860 to 1900 the parlor decorations in many American homes included one of the many group statues by John Rogers, and "The Wounded Soldier" like the other 80 designs of Rogers, is an authentic representation of the clothing and customs of the times.

In a small room upstairs in Village House, two tiny people, and their not-much-taller aunts, who all lived in Oysterponds a century and more ago, capture the imagination of all visitors. Here are daguerreotypes of perfectly proportioned doll-like little Emma standing beside an average size chair or table and the dramatic looking picture of Emma and Addison, miniature man and woman posed beside a draped portiere with cord and tassel almost half as big as themselves. The tiny chairs and tables are here that were once used by little Addison Tuthill and his sister Emma, who were each less than a yard tall. Many were the stories of them related by their niece, Lucy Tuthill Luce. Addison was said to have been smaller than Tom Thumb and P. T. Barnum would have liked him to join his company of tiny people, but Addison and Emma were shy and reserved and did not wish to be in the public eye. In this room one can see the tiny, high silk hat and miniature gold-headed cane used by Addison and his high laced shoes. Here, too, are examples of Emma's careful needlework, gloves which she made for herself, her bodice and her apron all sewn with minute stitches, and the long

white stockings into which she knitted her own initials. She had learned the trade of dress-making as had her three dwarfed aunts, Asenath, Lucretia and Lucinda Tuthill.

MDGETS -  
NOT  
DWARFS

Across the hall is a room arranged as a schoolroom with the old handmade desks from an early schoolhouse. Old school books and slates, charts and diplomas are here and even a graduation corsage, and photographs of the pupils and various graduation classes.

Interesting scrapbooks have been assembled, one of them telling of the old schoolhouses of Orient of which there were many. Other scrapbooks tell of the Orient of years ago, of the Epitaphs on the old tombstones in the cemetery on Brown's Hill, of the voyage of a small school girl aboard the five-masted schooner *Jennie French Potter*, and in picture story, the hurricanes which caused considerable damage to Orient.

Of importance, too, is the catalogued library, lining the room that was once the large dining room of the inn. It was assembled as almost the first exhibition of the Oysterponds Historical Society from generous gifts by charter members from their own personal libraries. It contains valuable books on history, biography, science, horticulture, literature, art and genealogy. Recently the Oysterponds Historical Society was given the historical collection of the late Dr. Clarence Ashton Wood, eminent historian and author. This valuable collection of books and pamphlets on history and genealogy is available for use in a room set aside as a memorial to Dr. Wood. Here scholars, students and laymen may study and do research.

Before leaving this museum which is Village House, the visitor will probably wish to peep into the old-time kitchen with its rain water pump and oldtime gadgets and, in departing, to look once again into the parlor. It is furnished as it was when the last residents, Jennie and Rose Vail, still lived here. The gold-patterned wallpaper, the mahogany and gold valance boards and the red glass chandelier, the large oval mirror and Empire sofa presented by Sheldon Vail, a descendant of the former owners, and the old organ and the red velour platform rocking chair all convey the quaint old-fashionedness and charm of a

bygone day. And, as the visitor leaves, he sees the portraits of some of the illustrious old citizens who made Orient. Captain John Brown and his wife, Phoebe Tabor are depicted in quaint "primitives" painted on wood panels. The portraits of Captain Frederick King, known as the handsomest captain in this locality, and his wife Cynthia, draw attention. Their portraits were painted in Holland in 1806, his with his ship in the background, and, about her portrait it is tempting to think that her little lace bonnet and gold chain had been recently acquired in Holland and painted so beautifully as a tribute to them. And lastly, the visitor is bid to come again by the portraits of Captain John A. Rackett and his wife, Henrietta, prominent citizens in the village of Orient during the 19th century.



## *The Lamplighter*

BY CECIL ROCKWELL

*When twilight touched the length of quiet street  
With sooty fingers, blurring outlines there,  
The old lamplighter, small with years and care,  
Came into view along his wonted beat.  
Encumbered by a ladder, he would pick  
A cautious footing till he paused to climb  
One of a mile of lamp-posts, and each time,  
He held a spark against a waiting wick.  
With sudden burst, within the crystal cage,  
The empty darkness blossomed into flame;  
And instantly transfigured, he became  
A fire-bearer of a bygone age.*

(This is an old poem often quoted in Orient as it so closely resembles and reminds those who remember him. . . the Orient lamplighter.)

## *The Old Orient Point Schoolhouse*

NANCY L. GRIFFEN AND GRACE B. HOUSE

*"Oh, once I taught a little school beside a lonely road,  
Where, through gaunt, sea-blown apple trees the autumn sunsets  
showed;  
And in the autumn gardens grew chrysanthemums, as warm  
And glowing as the sunset hues, As heedless of the storm,  
When mad Atlantic gales swept in heavy and dark with rain  
That shot beneath the schoolroom door and smite the window pane.  
And once a drowning bird we saved and in a chalk box nursed,  
Until the storm, triumphant the rifted cloud burst.  
And plodding up the sodden road to good Aunt Georgie's door,  
I sat me down to beach plum jam and oyster pie once more.  
We knew no hill, no cross-road there—our long, low tongue of  
land  
Stretched out between a pebble beach and one of beaten sand.  
And there were days, when, white and soft, the sea fog wrapped  
us round,  
And ever, through the playground's din, moaned on the siren's  
sound.  
And there were days of radiant light with pungent scents astir  
Of Indian posy and of bay, as fresh as mountain fir.  
But that was very long ago—and now the motors scream  
Along the road where Grady jogged behind his placid team.  
If I could have them back again just for a little while,—  
My children's dusk and flaxen heads, Aunt Georgie's heart warm  
smile,  
If I could have them as they were, those years ago,—why then  
I really think, I'd like to teach the 'Down Neck' School again."*

THUS wrote Miss Grace Goodale in the "Youths' Companion" in 1895, as she looked back across the years to her early experiences in the "Down Neck School", as it was called then. Now the Old Point Schoolhouse has been moved to its new home on Village Lane and is an

important part of the program of the Oysterponds Historical Society of Orient.

The old building, which in the long ago echoed with the fun and laughter of children, and doubtless with their sighs and sorrows, as they struggled with the "3 R's"—the rule of 3, and the ruler of the teacher, was located on the farm of the Tuthill family.

The first schoolhouse was built in 1825, but this structure was replaced by a new school built in 1845. The first school meeting recorded was on October 31, 1845. "It was called by the Freeholders and inhabitants of School District No. 1 of Southold Township", with Orange Petty as moderator, and Clerk, Peter W. Tuthill, owner of the land on which the schoolhouse stood.

In 1851 it was voted to enlarge the schoolhouse by six feet and turn it around. To carry out this commission Peter Tuthill and David Terry were appointed with the instructions not to expend more than \$25.00, which was to be raised by tax.

In 1930 there were so few pupils at the Orient Point School that it was decided to close it and send the children to the larger Village School of Orient, and the High School in Greenport.

After the closing of the school, the building was bought by Edwin King and used for migrant farm help for several years. In 1949, the Historical Society acquired it by gift of Mr. King.

A moving contractor was engaged and, with the assistance of some of the local farmers, the schoolhouse was moved to its present location in the Village. George and Alexander Latham, former residents of the village and active members in the Society, engaged an architect to prepare plans and specifications, and undertook the restoration of the building. Their vision and generosity enabled the accurate restoration of the building in a fitting and attractive setting. In addition, the restoration provided space and facilities for the continuing usefulness to the Society and the community.

The original edifice sat upon a foundation of boulders; however, when the plans were being prepared it was

thought wise to provide a full cellar at the new site. The interior of this cellar or basement was finished off in pine paneling and is now known as "The Pine Room". An extension, not a part of the original structure, was added on the rear of the building to provide room for a kitchenette; also a chimney with a fireplace was added. The flooring used in the basement came originally from a castle in Scotland. A group of friends, headed by Mrs. Henry Knobloch, contributed funds to supply the building with a steam heating plant.

The cupola which had been destroyed by the 1938 hurricane was replaced, but the old bell was missing. Upon inquiry it was learned that it was in the possession of a resident of Shelter Island. However the gentleman who had acquired it, although informed of the sentiment attached to the bell and the purpose for which it was intended, refused to relinquish it for any consideration than that it be replaced with one of the same size and quality. An exhaustive search was made and finally one of the same specifications was located and the exchange was accomplished. It is interesting to note that the names of the then officials of the School District (No. 1), C. H. Terry, Trustee and D. T. Tuthill, Clerk, were cast in the bell with the date 1888.

The old "Down Neck" Schoolhouse whose classic proportions are admired by many is now serving the Society in countless ways. The main floor provides a room for lectures, arts and crafts exhibits, flower shows, etc. while the lower floor or "pine room" is used chiefly for conferences, clubs and entertainments for young and old. It has become an indispensable part of the activities of the community.

Echoes of the past still linger in our hearts as we enter the Old Schoolhouse today and remember its use of old. These childhood memories are reflected in the verse of a poem written before 1850 by J. O. Terry:

*"Oh! I would give the brightest gem,  
Could I again be one of them,  
And in their ranks behold return  
That peace and happiness I mourn."*

*Activities of  
Oysterponds Historical Society, Inc.*

PAUL I. VAN VALKENBURG

THE primary purpose of the Oysterponds Historical Society is to perpetuate memories of the past of Southold Town, particularly those related to the communities of Greenport, East Marion, and Orient, and thereby to preserve for posterity the life and customs of our forebears. This is accomplished primarily by means of the museum exhibits and the Society's historical and genealogical library and records.

The acquisition of the Old Point Schoolhouse led to a fulfillment of the Society's desire to act as a cultural center for the community. A library had already been established in the Museum, on the shelves of which are some volumes, both fiction and non-fiction. These are available for loan to members.

Soon it was discovered that there was much local talent in Orient, particularly along artistic lines. This has led to frequent art exhibits of paintings and prints by a number of the local inhabitants. These exhibitions have proved to be most popular.

In cooperation with a former theatrical group called "Play Shop", various presentations have been sponsored through the years. Also work among the youth of the vicinity has proved fruitful. Not only has the building been made available for use as a youth center during the winter months, but also various other projects, such as the Saturday night movies have been featured during the summer period.

Each summer the Society has been proud to present prominent lecturers on art, history, and travel, including the distinguished official historian of Southold Town, Mr.

Wayland Jefferson. All of these lectures have generally resulted in "standing room only".

In the early days of the Society, following a devastating hurricane, the Society sponsored the planting of many trees throughout the community to replace those destroyed. Their present day beauty has proved to be real compensation to those who spent so many weary hours planting the trees, watering them, and generally providing for their welfare.

Early, the maintenance of the Brown's Hill Burying Ground was undertaken. Here, in a vale near the highest spot in the vicinity, lie buried the early settlers of the Oysterponds community, the Browns, Vails, Tuthills, Beebes, Kings, Terrys, Youngs, and others—names still familiar in Orient.

More recently fourteen historical markers have been erected in Orient to mark Indian encampments and graveyards, old historic buildings, and other points of interest; these are listed in this review as a guide to interested persons. It is hoped that this project may ultimately be expanded to include other nearby communities.

In 1955, some half dozen interested citizens acquired by purchase a four acre tract of land near the center of the Village and presented it to the Society for a Park. Through the years many Indian artifacts have been found on this land. An unusually large stone axe from this site is now in the Society's Museum. A number of pin oaks and other trees have been planted on this property at no expense to the organization. Further landscaping is contemplated.

In addition to the activities directly sponsored by the Society, its facilities have been made available to various organizations in town, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Gun Club, Hospital Auxiliary, Garden Club, Extension Service, Adult Education classes, Play Shop, and Youth groups.

These activities and the variety of facilities provided by the Society for youth and adults, it is hoped and believed, will widen the interest and increase the sources of information and material pertaining to the long history of this part of the Island.

## OYSTERPOND POINT DISASTER

December 12, 1800

*"Come all ye good people of every degree  
come listen awhile with attention to me  
a sorrowful story i am going to relate  
a mournful disaster that hapened of late*

*O Oyster Pond tremble at that awful stroke  
remember the voice that Jehovah has spoke  
to teach us we are mortals exposed to death  
and subject each moment to yield up our breath*

*on Monday the 12th of december so cold  
in the year 18 hundred as i have been told  
the winds blowing high and the rains beating down  
when a vessel arived at Oyster-Pond town*

*their anchors being cast their ships tore away  
all hands for the shore were preparring straitway  
down into the boat soon they did repair  
and on to the shore was praying to steer*

*But mark their hard fortune it is mournful indeed  
yet no one can hinder what God has decread  
the council of heaven on that fatal day  
by death in an instant calld numbers away*

*A number of men in their halth and their prime  
called out of this world in an instant of time  
the boat turning plundge them all into the deep  
and 5 out of 7 in death fell asleep*

*the sorrowful tidings were caried straitway  
to friends and relations without more delay  
but o their lamentins no launge can express  
nore point out of joy, great grief and distress*

*the widows are breaved in sorrow to mourn  
the loss of their husbands no more to return  
besides a great number of orphans we hear  
lameting the loss of their parents so dear*



*Also a young damsel a making great mourn  
for the untimely death of her lover that gone  
for the day of their nuptials appointed had been  
and the land of sweet wedlock those lovers to join*

*Alas all their lamentings are all but in vain  
their husbands are drowned, they can't come again  
o friends and relations lament not to late  
the council of heaven has sealed their fate*

*their bodies when found were all conveyed home  
on the sabbath day following prepared for the tomb  
their bodies in their coffin being all laid aside  
in Oyster Pond meeting house ally so wide."*

ANONYMOUS.

From: Sporting Scenes and Sundry Sketches, Vol. 1, 1842.  
The original spelling has been retained.

## Historical Site Markers

THROUGH the generosity of Alexander D. Latham, the Oysterponds Historical Society has set fourteen markers at places of historic interest in Orient. The sites and inscriptions are listed below:

### *Five Acre Indian Village* **MARKER TAKEN BY VANDALS**

The site of one of several camps that existed in Oysterponds some 600 years prior to the settlement of Oysterponds, Lower Neck in 1661. Fragments of shellfish and implements are still in evidence.

### *The Congregational Church*

This, the oldest church of its denomination in the State of New York, built its first meeting house on this site prior to 1718. Adoption of the Congregational form of government followed in 1735. Present edifice built in 1843. Here stood, in the early days, the stocks and the whipping post.

### *The Methodist Church*

Built in 1835 under its first resident pastor, Rev. Samuel King, on land donated by Thomas Vincent Young. Earlier pioneers of Orient Methodism met together regularly for classes conducted by itinerant circuit riders as early as 1802.

### *Orient Point Inn* **TORN DOWN**

Original part built circa 1672. Enlarged by Jonathan Latham about 1800. Previously a garrison for British troops landed here before the Battle of Long Island. Known for decades for such distinguished visitors as Daniel Webster, James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, and Grover Cleveland.

### *Orient*

Settled in 1661. First used as pasture ground. Called by Indians, "Poquatuck", later Oysterponds, Lower Neck and in 1836 changed to Orient. Ravished by the British

during the Revolution. After Benedict Arnold deserted the Patriot cause, it was used by him as a base for raids on Connecticut.

*Truman's Beach*

Called "Hard Beach" by the first settlers. During the War of 1812, Commodore Decatur with three ships, *United States*, *Macedonia* and *Hornet*, lay at anchor off this sand spit. Records show that eight times in two centuries storms tore through here and cut Oysterponds off from the mainland.

*Peaken's Tavern*

Built by John Peaken circa 1656. Later became the property of Thomas Terry II, circa 1703 and ownership continued in the Terry family until 1850 when it was acquired by E. Mulford. Last of seven houses built in the mid-17th century. *NOW RESTORED BY R + E WILLIAMS*

*Village House*

Once the Inn of Augustus Griffin. It was here Griffin wrote his *Journal*, a history of Southold Town, published in 1856. Second stop of stage line between the Point and Huntington and thence to New York. Acquired in 1945 by the Oysterponds Historical Society.

*Shaw House*

Built in 1730 by Richard Shaw. On the night of August 1, 1777, James Griffin, pursued by British soldiers, leaped from an upper window in this house and escaped into the forest. Home of Widow Shaw who, being taken for dead, was placed in a receiving vault only to revive and return home to the consternation of the villagers. *RESTORED - PRIVATE HOME*

*Brown's Hill Burying Ground*

In this narrow vale lie buried the early settlers of Oysterponds, Beebes, Browns, Kings, Terrys, Tuthills, Vails, Youngs and others—names still familiar in Orient, a locality on Long Island where the present meets up closely with the distant past.

*Slaves Burying Ground*

Slavery persisted in Oysterponds until about 1830. Here were buried some twenty slaves. Here lie also the remains of Dr. Seth Tuthill, proprietor of "Hog Pond Farm", and those of his wife, Maria. It was their wish that they be buried with their former servants.

*Webb House*

Originally the Inn of Lt. Constant Booth, built circa 1740 on Sterling Creek in the Village of Sterling (Greenport). Moved about 1810 to North Road and became home of Orange Webb. Later acquired by George R. Latham and again moved in 1955 to Orient via barge. In the year 1757, Col. George Washington stopped at this Inn en route Boston to Virginia.

*Orient Point Schoolhouse*

Built in 1888 and originally located on Orient Point about a mile from the tip end of the Island (School District No. 1). Affectionately called the "Down Neck" Schoolhouse. Abandoned as a school in 1930. The original cupola was destroyed by the hurricane of 1938. Acquired and moved in 1949 by Oysterponds Historical Society to present site and restored.

*Poquatuck Park*

Four acre tract of land acquired by a group of Orient's citizens and presented to the Oysterponds Historical Society in 1955. On this site many Indian artifacts have been found indicating that it was one of their campsites. Poquatuck was the Indian name for the whole area of Oysterponds.

## Membership

**HONORARY**

LIFE . . . . . \$500.00

SUSTAINING (*Annual*) . . . . . ~~25.00~~ 100<sup>00</sup>

CONTRIBUTING (*Annual*) . . . . . ~~10.00~~ 50<sup>00</sup>

**DUES RECORD CARD**  
Please enclose with check

Name(s) .....

Address: .....

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Enclosed herewith is check, payable to Oysterponds Historical Society, for membership year ending June 30, 198 . Corresponding dues category is checked below. All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

Individual	— \$ 6	*Associate	— \$ 25
Senior Citizen	— \$ 3	*Contributing	— \$ 50
Husband & Wife	— \$10	*Sustaining	— \$100
*Family	— \$12	*Patron (Life)	— \$500

\*Includes spouse and children under 16.

Membership card enclosed; more on request. Individual Junior Members, under 16, may purchase Admission Cards for the summer season at the Museum for \$1.00. Family enrolled Juniors may request cards free.

OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Box 844, Orient, NY 11957