Over the past few years, the Historical Society has been immensely lucky: we have never had to cancel or reschedule an event due to bad weather. But we came very close this year with our Christmas Open House. Originally, at the start of 2022, we had scheduled the Open House for November 26, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. As the year evolved, however, we decided to move it to Sunday so as not to interfere with the Open House at another Historical Society. Well, by shifting the date by one day, we unknowingly unleashed Murphy’s Law. No matter which weather forecaster we consulted, the answer was always the same: the weather on the 26th would be fine, the weather on the 27th would be cold, with blustery winds up to 30 miles per hour, and heavy rains. Well, here’s how things turned out.

By early afternoon, parents and children began arriving in anticipation of Mr. and Mrs. S. Claus’ scheduled appearance at 2:00 pm. This year, two of our Trustees (John Christina and Camille) volunteered, so we went ahead and invested in a deluxe velvet outfit from Amazon. From the picture, you can judge for yourself how well Santa and his Mrs. were represented. A definite encore for the years to come. Our Curator, Mark MacNish, had decorated the interior of the Tuthill House in full Victorian splendor, and Robert Harper was again providing charming holiday music on our restored 1880s vintage square piano in between visits by the kids. The children obediently confided their wishes to Santa, parents took careful notes and recorded videos, Mrs. Claus metered out a toy and a candy to each child, and Mark conducted house tours to meet the demand. When interviewed afterwards and asked how it went, Santa was upbeat and said: “Wow, there was one girl, I thought she would never

Rain didn't dampen spirits at Holiday Open House

631-298-5248
P.O. Box 766
Mattituck, NY 11952
18200 Main Road (Route 25) at Cardinal Dr.
Mattituck, NY

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the history of this special area of the North Fork and its people, from earliest times to the present day, for current and future generations.

Executive Board:
- President: Charles Gueli
  mlhsm11952@gmail.com
- Vice President: Richard Brewster
- Secretary: Susan Brewster
- Historian: Erich Cramer
- Treasurer: John Christina
- Curator: Mark MacNish
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  Loretta Garbarino
  Mark MacNish
  Mary Mooney
  Carol Anne Volcelka
  Sandra Zaremba
  Peter Zegler

Volunteer Robert Harper plays Christmas carols on our restored 1880 Thursday Abad accompanies him in song. Square Grand Piano. Special thanks to Doug Gregg for donating the tuning this year.
ticked down towards 5:00 pm and the planned lighting of our tall blue spruce outside, and the singing of carols at its foot. The plan was modified slightly to avoid the wind and rain: yes, the tree was lighted by Angelo Florenza* right on time, but the caroling was conducted inside New Egypt, led by Lucinda and Tom Hemmick, who have traditionally led our caroling for many years. On these notes, our annual Christmas Open House came to a close, and everyone departed in good spirits.

*As a related tradition, Angelo, our neighbors’ Dennis and Karen Roses grandson, gets to throw the switch that turns on the lights. He gets to do this as acknowledgment for the fact that each year, Dennis’ crew makes sure the lights look ok. This year, the crew went so far as to erect scaffolding to adjust the lights weeks before the event. You have probably seen the tree illuminated after dark when you have driven by 18200 Main Road, and now you know a bit of the rest of the story.

Generous Christmas Raffle Donors

The MLHS Christmas Open House is the one event each year where we say “Thank You” to everyone in the community for their support. Please support these local businesses, all of them located in Mattituck, that generously without hesitation donated items or gift certificates to be raffled off in the 17 gift baskets that we put together.

• CJ’s American Grill
• Goldberg’s Famous Bagels
• Jan’s Chinese
• Love Lane Kitchen
• Love Lane Sweet Shoppe
• Lucharito’s
• Mattituck Florist
• Michaelangelo’s
• Orlowski’s
• True Value Hardware
• Primavera Pizza
• Rich Harvest Wines & Liquors
• Roanoke Vineyards Wine Bar
• The Village Cheese Shop

The Tutbill house museum was fully decked out for a Victorian style Christmas. There were even a few decorations which made their debut this year, like the golden angel garland draped over the front door.

stop talking!” We didn’t see anyone leave less than happy all afternoon!

Meanwhile, here’s what was happening in the New Egypt schoolhouse. We had advertised Chinese auctions, hot cocoa, cookies, and mulled cider, and by 2:00 pm we had a fair number of people that trudged through the rain from the parking lot to look over the 17 gift baskets that were being raffled off. Our elderly (almost historic) boombox emitted soft Christmas music as everyone settled in to look over the gift baskets, buy a few tickets, get some refreshments, write their phone number on the back of each ticket, and then choose the baskets that would receive their tickets. This went on as the clock ticks down towards 5:00 pm and the planned lighting of our tall blue spruce outside, and the singing of carols at its foot. The plan was modified slightly to avoid the wind and rain: yes, the tree was lighted by Angelo Florenza right on time, but the caroling was conducted inside New Egypt, led by Lucinda and Tom Hemmick, who have traditionally led our caroling for many years. On these notes, our annual Christmas Open House came to a close, and everyone departed in good spirits.

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Just a few of the many raffle baskets that were offered in the New Egypt School House. Over 17 people got a boost to their holiday shopping!
A Tribute to Irving Pitman

by CAROL ANNE VOCELKA

Perhaps you recall the gentleman sitting with the ducks featured on the cover of our summer newsletter. He was our beloved Irving Pitman who was willing to sell my duck and chicken eggs for the benefit of the society at our spring fair. If you were fortunate to meet him that day, you would recall his smile and warmhearted nature. Irving passed away on November 22 at the age of 105 and a half.

Two o'clock on Friday afternoons, Irving would drive to the Cutchogue Presbyterian Church to meet me. Most of the time we never knew what adventure we would embark on together but they always ended with us both stating: "We had fun today!" On one such Friday in April, the weather was rather dismal, we spotted Emily's truck and went to the historical society. We decided to stop and say "hello". Neither of us had ever been at the historical society. We decided to stop and say "hello". Neither of us had ever been to the historical society and upon entering we immediately appreciated the historic value of the home and its contents as well as the warmth and pride of our dear friend Emily. Despite Irving's age, he eagerly ventured to the second floor admiring all the exhibits. Being a World War II veteran, the military artifacts interested him but he was even more intrigued by the arrowhead displays. You see ... Irving was in possession of a very special arrowhead. Irving shared this memory with me.

"This arrowhead was found on Mr. Tom and Mike Cassidy's farm on Albertson Avenue in Southold, NY. It was found down by the creek. Mr. Mike Cassidy was plowing with his horses Kitty and Betsy, stopped, walked back several steps, bent down, and picked up this arrowhead. I was approximately eight or nine years old watching Mr. Mike Cassidy plow. He came over to me and gave me this beautiful arrowhead."

Irving proudly gave this arrowhead to Emily and Erich on November 9, 2022 so that it could be added to the historical society's collection. He told me in the summer, "I want other people to be able to see it." As mentioned previously, Irving enjoyed the fair in June and was honored to ride aboard the historical society's wagon in Southold's Fourth of July parade. Once again Irving displayed his zest for life when he arrived at Jim Miller's farm to help decorate and load the wagon into the trailer ... no sitting in a lawn chair and just observing. Irving stood side by side with younger men guiding the wagon into the trailer. The parade was a wonderful memory for us all as I proudly shouted to the crowds: "Irving Pitman 105 year old World War II veteran!" and the crowds responded with applause.

I could continue to share my beloved memories of a friendship that was short in years but allowed for so many beautiful memories that I will cherish forever. Our summer ended with two September swims in the Peconic Bay together. Irving walked daily and loved to swim at Southold Beach. We always enjoyed ice cream together and every time I pass Magic Fountain in Mattituck, I recall our happy times together.

A beautiful stewartia tree has been planted behind the milk house on the grounds of the historical society. The tree will bloom in early to midsummer with flowers that are white with yellow centers. Daffodils will adorn the grounds around the tree and the milk house to represent the sunshine that Irving brought to all those that he met during his long and very special life.

Annual Meeting and Election of Officers

by EMILY TUTHILL

BEST CRAMER

We convened for our traditional Annual Meeting on the last Sunday of October, the day before Halloween, October 30, at 1:00 PM. For the second consecutive year, we met in New Egypt, warm and cozy, comfortably heated by the split system heat pump. There were 27 members and guests in attendance. A 22-pound turkey, who had enjoyed a great life outdoors with all his prosperous friends in the Hamptons until his last day, graced the buffet table, surrounded by a variety of favorite pot luck contributions. Before we lined up for the food, we elected the following slate of Officers for 2023: President Charles Gueli, Vice President Richard Brewster, Treasurer John Christina, Secretary Susan Brewster, and Historian Erich Cramer. We also elected the following as Trustees to serve from 2023 through 2025: Harriet Frangas, Mary Mooney, Carol Anne Vocelka, Sandra Zaremba, and Peter Zegler. After dinner, the outgoing Vice President and President, Emily and Erich Cramer, thanked everyone for their support over the past five years. Mark MacNish, acting on behalf of the Board, presented them with a floral arrangement and thanked them for their dedicated service to the Historical Society.

President's Corner

by CHARLES GUELI

As we embark on a new year, your Board and I will endeavor to provide a calendar of events which will provide opportunities for more members to attend meetings which can inform, entertain, and provide purpose. We will make our history and our organization more apparent to the community. Your support is greatly appreciated.
By MARK MACNISH

Here are the activities that are in progress and that I will be continuing to concentrate on in 2023. If you would like to help me, please let me know, there is plenty of very interesting work for everyone.

**Gilbert Parisian or Teardrop Style Parlor Clock**

The "Parisian," in Gilbert's 1885 catalog, is described as an "Eight-day strike. Height, 24 inches; 6-inch dial." The wood is walnut. Typically, at this time, these parlor clocks had a gold or silver transfer pattern and rarely were they etched. Our clock has a silver transfer pattern. This clock design often referred to as "teardrop," was produced by some, if not all, of the major clock companies, with very slight variations in details. Each company had a variety of glass designs, many of which were interchangeable for a given model. A catalog listing, dated 1890, includes a price of $7.20 for the basic 8-day strike model. A cathedral gong added 50 cents to the cost, and an alarm mechanism 60 cents. In 2023 dollars it would be $31.

This clock was always owned by the Tuthills and is original to the house. It was inherited by Emily Tuthill Best Crammer, who returned it to the house. Emily recalls that the clock was on the mantle in the parlor, but for now it is on display in the dining room.

**Colonial furniture author visits the Mattituck Museum.**

On Dec. 2, we were visited by George Fernandez, who is researching colonial-era furniture that was made on Long Island to put out another edition of the book “Long Island Is My Nation,” originally compiled by Dean F. Failey and published by the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities. This definitive work on Long Island decorative arts was first published in 1976 as the catalog to a Bicentennial exhibition of the same name. Republished twenty-three years later, the expanded edition contains many new discoveries. Now 24 years after, they hope to add even more important finds. Mr. Fernandez believes that two chairs were made by the Dominy family, a family from East Hampton that made distinctive furniture during colonial times. He also was impressed with our colonial chests.

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**The Gilbert Parisian parlor clock where it now sits on the mantle in the dining room.**

**The music room and sewing room get spruced up.**

Dennis Roses, our neighbor to the east and owner of Roses Painting, stripped the old wallpaper from the walls of the music room and repaired the plaster, and gave it a fresh coat of parchment-colored paint. When the objects were moved back into the room, we decided to move the important embroidery done by First Lady Anna Symmes Harrison. This embroidery would be considered a very fine piece of work with great artistic and antique value, even if it wasn't made by a first lady of the United States and is one of the most important pieces in the museum. It was previously in the textile room upstairs, and often people don't make it upstairs on the tours, so we decided to bring it down and give it pride of place so that more people can see it in a better light.

While working in the music room, Dennis noticed that the ceiling in the sewing room on the second floor was showing signs of collapsing, so everything was moved out of that room, and he repaired the ceiling. All the items were returned, and the display was spruced up and reorganized. As you can see, Dennis does great work!
Vice President's Corner

by EMILY TUTHILL BEST CRAMER

This is a difficult piece for me to write. Five years of being Vice President and sharing duties with Erich as President has connected me to the Historical Society in such a deep way that this passing of the torch as VP is painful for me, albeit necessary. My memories of the Tuthill House, the barn where the carriage is stored (that my dad called the sprout house), and the surrounding land, are old and deep. Even now, walking into, and being within, the peaceful and quiet aura of this environment has a visceral effect on me because they are part of my childhood memories, I believe everyone feels this way about places that are part of their childhood. Yes, the Tuthill House and grounds have been a part of my life since birth. My dad was born in the house, my grandmother was the last Tuthill of five generations to live in it, and we used to visit her there before she joined us on our family farm in Delaware in the early 1950s. Then MLHS took over the house in the 1960s, and we would visit MLHS and relatives on the North Fork from time to time. A library was created in the Tuthill House, and the family collection of more than 5000 books, diaries, and journals came back to the Tuthill House in 2012 and 2013, until the dedication of the library in 2014. And from then until now, I have had the opportunity to go from being a peripheral MLHS member to spending lots of time working to keep MLHS going and growing.

I am truly grateful for all that I have learned about Mattituck, how it evolved from the 1600s, and how my forebears played into the way it developed. Working with our curators, I have become familiar with the many unique items we have on display, and their provenance. Working with our Historic Researcher, I have learned more about individuals in the past that formed Mattituck. The best gift has been the capability to understand my father better in the context of growing up in Mattituck at 18200 Main Road in the early 20th century. In retrospect, I have learned an important lesson: the Historical Society can absorb all one's available time and energy, and then there is still more to learn and more to be done. I write this not to scare anyone away, but to underline the fact that if you become engaged at MLHS, you will not be bored or feel that there is nothing worthwhile to do. In fact, it is quite possible that by working within MLHS, you too may find out important aspects of how your parents and grandparents lived.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with other Board members and Trustees who share one significant characteristic: they each have a vision for the success of MLHS, and they pursue that vision with great enthusiasm. It has been an honor to witness the start of the Graveyard Tour that is now an annual event. Not only is it a popular event, but most importantly, it is a groundbreaking cooperative effort of the Historical Society, the Mattituck Presbyterian Church, and the North Fork Community Theatre. We need more of these kinds of cooperative efforts in the community, and I hope they emerge in the coming years.

I am most grateful for the warm and meaningful friendships that we have formed within the Historical Society and within the community. They are irreplaceable and deeply treasured. It definitely seems that community spirit is alive and well. As one example, when we went door to door to solicit support for our recent Christmas Open House from local businesses, we were quite overwhelmed with the warmth and generosity of the response. I am very optimistic about the future of MLHS, a vibrant organization in a vibrant community that takes history very seriously.

In closing, I wish Richard Bresh—

BAN THOSE BARE BULBS, BUB

by GREGG WHYTE

Since the relocation of the New Egypt Schoolhouse some decades ago to the MLHS Museum grounds, interior illumination has been provided by grand chandeliers—not really. In truth four bare bulbs hanging from porcelain faced electrical boxes have “graced” the ceiling. In addition, the two bulbs at the front of the room were adorned with ugly appendages to accommodate pull chains.

While this lighting arrangement might be appropriate for the Tement Museum located in the lower east side of Manhattan, they have vexed and perplexed one of our members, in particular, for years. As a result, you might note that, in frustration, they have affixed glass globes to soften the light and improve the aesthetics.

The moral of this story is, if you find some feature of the museum that needs improvement and it aggravates, annoys or stresses you, don’t spend money on therapy, but make a donation to MLHS to remedy the situation instead!

Addition of four new frosted glass shades in New Egypt Schoolhouse, a step in the right direction.
An Example of Historical Research at MLHS

by ERICH CRAMER

One day a few months ago, I returned a call from the Mattituck-Laurel library, and the person at the front desk told me there was a package addressed to the Historical Society that had been left there for us to pick up. When I opened the package, I found a large scrapbook with many postcards inside, but no identity of the donor (that is still a mystery). Inside the scrapbook are postcards addressed to Gladys Cox, with postmarks ranging from 1906 to 1908. A number of our Board members examined the collection and we are still undecided whether to keep it or not. Our Research Historian, Joe O’Brien, took the initiative to investigate, and I think you will marvel at all that his research uncovered.

A Biography of Miss Gladys Cox

by JOE O’BRIEN

Gladys Gale Cox was born November 27, 1888, in Mattituck, the daughter of Benjamin Hamlin Cox and Anna Louise Goldsmith. Her home was a nine acre farm located in the northwest corner of Mattituck, an area known as Cox’s Neck. Gladys’s elementary school would have been the Suffolk Avenue School, known officially as District School No. 10, and more familiarly as either the Sound Avenue School or the New Egypt school (named for its remoteness from the center of Mattituck). Gladys started a postcard collection and scrapbook about 1903, when she was about 15. This would be a year or so after she finished eighth grade in the elementary school. Gladys did not attend high school but entered nursing school by 1909, when she would have been about 21 years old. Gladys completed her training at the Nassau Hospital School for Nurses at Mineola on June 6, 1912, in a graduating class of four. Two months before graduating, Gladys married her first cousin, the recent widower, Harry Goldsmith Cox at the Mattituck Presbyterian church. Officiating was the Rev. Charles E. Craven, and the ceremony was witnessed by Harry’s brother, Shirley Gordon Cox, and by Gladys’s brother, Benjamin Reeve Cox. Harry had been married to the late Kate Clark Ruland, by whom he had four boys. Harry farmed at Cox’s Neck, and Gladys helped to raise his children, and the two daughters she bore him.

On May 30, 1923, the Brooklyn Times Union reported that: “Mrs. Gladys Cox has rented the house known as Elmtop from the estate of George B. Reeve for five years with privilege of buying at the expiration of the lease”, which she did. The Reeve home sat at the north end of a 50 acre property that ran from New Suffolk Avenue south to the Bay. The house, now numbered 2320 New Suffolk Avenue, still sits on a rise with a view of Lake Marnatooka. Gladys used the Reeve home to provide convalescent care for invalided, chronically ill, and aged patients. She also provided rooms for maternity patients and at least one child was born there. She named the enterprise Elmtop Sanitarium and ran the business until the early 1940s.

Gladys was married at least four times, to three men, all widowers. She appears to have divorced Harry Cox in 1943, 1945 and 1947. In 1949, she married a Calverton farmer named Patrick Matthew Horgan, but they divorced also. By 1956, Gladys had made her way to Reno, Nevada. In the summer of 1962, Gladys married John Baptiste Kaiser, a twice-widowed Realtor. She appears to have been a practicing nurse during her time in Reno, a city where both of her daughters resided. Gladys died in Reno, July 4, 1965, and her remains were cremated at Reno’s Mountain View Crematory. It’s uncertain if the remains are interred there, or at the Old Bethany Cemetery in Mattituck, where she has a headstone.

If you have any further details about Gladys Cox, please let us know so we can add that to her biography. We would like to continue doing this type of historical research, so we invite you to join us in solving similar mysteries about local personalities of the past, perhaps members of your family.

Graveyard Tour 2022

by MARK MACNISH

On October 15, 2022, MLHS had their fourth annual Mattituck Presbyterian Church Historical Graveyard tour. Thanks to everyone who attended and made this event a sold-out success for four years in a row. Also a very special thanks to our collaborators the Mattituck Presbyterian Church and the North Fork Community Theatre, without whom this would not be possible. And of course a big thank you to all the seen (actors and guides) and unseen (planners, organizers, costumers & promoters) people who have annually made this event a tremendous success.

Many Thanks to our local supporter Michaelangelo’s restaurant in Mattituck for helping us by donating 10% of their proceeds on Sept. 28 from everyone who purchased a meal and mentioned the MLHS. It was a big success!
The Octagon Building

by CHARLES GUEL

The Octagon Building in Mattituck is one of six remaining examples on Long Island of an architectural style that flourished during the 1840s and 1850s. While the construction of many-sided buildings is not a new phenomenon, Orson Squire Fowler, a leading phrenologist (proponent of the theory that the detailed study of the shape and size of the cranium as a supposed indication of character and mental abilities) of the mid 1800s, wrote the book The Octagon House: A Home for All. The book is credited with popularizing the octagon style. For Fowler, the Octagon was the most beautiful of all geometric forms, being the closest to the circle, and the one which encompassed the most usable space.

Popular for almost twenty years, the octagon style declined prior to the depression of 1857 and the onset of the Civil War. Few octagons were built after that, and those that still remain today are living reminders of a curious phase of American architecture. The Mattituck Octagon is the only one in Eastern Long Island, and is a good example of one that served both commercial and private uses.

Historically, the Octagon has helped shape what is Mattituck’s business center.

Built by Andrew Gildersleeve in 1854 for his own use as both a home and a store, it is one of the earlier commercial buildings built on the North Fork. In 1862 John Wells bought the Octagon House and made it into a store and residence. Through the years, the building has been used as a post office, a barbershop, a tailor shop, a paint store, a dentist’s office, and real estate offices. Unusual for Mattituck at the time, the building had a full basement, which was probably used to store produce. It is on an important corner in Mattituck, at the intersection of three roads, and is located in what became the heart of Mattituck. For many years, the Octagon was the center of trade and a gathering spot for the townspeople, as the location of the early post office, and as an agency for local produce. It also played a contributing role in one of Mattituck’s chief livelihoods in the late 1800s, the summer tourist trade.

Of the octagons remaining on Long Island, the Mattituck Octagon is not only the last 19th century octagon on Eastern Long Island, but is the least altered of all the Long Island octagons. It’s easy to imagine several men gathering on the porch to discuss aspects of the local economy while watching horse-drawn carts go by.

It was built ten years after the railroad came to serve a highly fertile agricultural area which today retains a rural character. The Octagon, with its attached store, was built one short block from the Long Island Railroad Station and as one of the earlier commercial buildings in the area, its location and size reflect the optimism of the builder toward the economic possibilities generated by the new transportation system.

The building has become a landmark and has been considered such for at least one hundred years. As early as 1889 the corner store was mentioned in the Long Island Traveler (L.I. Traveler 10/25/1889) as “an old landmark.” It also played a contributing role in the summer visits that became so popular in the late 1800s. The Mattituck Octagon, in effect, forms the gateway to the North Fork.

2022 Lecture Season Ends With A Bang!

by GREGG WHYTE

The last two lectures for the 2022 season were held in September and October. Amy Folk, author and Southold town Historian recounted many fascinating stories from her recently published book, RumRunning in Suffolk County. Many of these happenings occurred right here on the North Fork.

From Potatoes to Agribusiness, the story of three generations of the Harbes family North Fork businesses was delivered to a record breaking sized audience by Ed Harbes, with his wife and daughter in attendance, as the concluding presentation.

In the new year efforts are underway to bring new dimensions alive of our North Fork story. We can anticipate learning more about local founding families, the environment, land conservation and the LIRR changing the fate of Mattituck and beyond.

Many thanks are offered to those who assisted in making this season a success. But this gratitude is not limited to those members and business efforts but to all who came to visit us and gave us support with their time and funds!
Membership Sign-Up

The Historical Society depends on membership contributions and donations to help operate and maintain the
our site. We receive no funds from any Government entities, we are solely sustained by contributions from
private citizens and companies. Please fill out the following form and send in your contribution to MLHS, Box
766, Mattituck, NY 11952.

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MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM 2023
Enclosed is my check payable to Mattituck-Laurel Historical Society & Museums for the membership category
checked:  □ Active Membership, Individual $20 □ Family $30 □ Business $50
□ Patron Membership - $100 □ Life Membership - $500 □ Donation $____
Name: _____________________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________
Phone#: ___________________________ E-Mail__________________________

Here are some items for which we need your help, please check at least one:  □ Keep track of membership and
correspondence  □ Oversee refreshments for events  □ Edit newsletters  □ Canvass local businesses for do-
nations □ Plan and schedule programs □ Conduct guided tours □ Assist with Public Relations □ Assist the
Pres/VP □ Help with Grounds/Gardening

Mattituck-Laurel Historical Society & Museums
PO Box 766 Mattituck, NY 11952
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