



THE HERITAGE NEWS

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EAST ROCKAWAY & LYNBROOK

Volume 15 #1

January-March 2012

2011 A TOAST OF A YEAR!!!

Have you read the news lately? It can often be dark and grim. However, the Historical Society of East Rockaway and Lynbrook had a banner year.

>**ITALIAN TIDBIT TEA-** was our first event for 2011. Pictured below is the table prepared by Matilda and Ernest Tarmin for our second course of tortellini.



>In this second picture, President Madeline Pearson, is checking for last minute glitches. In the background are members of the East Rockaway High School Key Club. In past year

both the Key Club members and Girl Scouts have assisted in serving at our Annual Teas. This is our sixth such Tea.



>**America's 9 First Ladies from New York State** was a topic for our spring speaker, Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan. Her program was made



possible through the support of the New York Council for the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was interesting and informative. We know of Eleanor Roosevelt, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis but did we know that Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush were among five first ladies also born in NYS?

> Our **SPEAKER PROGRAM** is ongoing. Program Chairperson, Mary Colway has been very successful in obtaining interesting people and timely topics

ONE HUNDRED YEARS

>No, HSERL is not 100 years old. Lynbrook Village is. It celebrated its Centennial in 2011. Thanks to Assemblyman Francis X. Becker and Long Island American Water President William Varley, we were able to participate in a meaningful and historic way. Legislator Becker provided us with special funding and President Varley invited us to hold **>An Historical Show Case** at the Water Company. Pictured below is the beautiful centerpiece for our opening night.

We showcased pictures from the Village of Lynbrook which were in Art Mattson's collection, pictures from HSERL as well as

pictures from Marty Hymes whose family once owned property at Five Corners (Now Shake-a-Paw and land adjacent to Atlantic Avenue School). As always there are a few people who work behind scenes. Let give them a round of applause: Joe Herbert, Richard Schimmel, Bob Sympson, Margaret Alter, and Mary Colway to name but a few responsible for this event

The LIAW allowed us to highlight Lynbrook's history with our exhibit there for the Month of May. During working hours members of HSERL were available to answer questions on a posted schedule of times.

Madeline Pearson, Bud Robinson, Art Mattson, Maryanne Hoesel and Pat Sympson had attended a number of Centennial meetings and thus we became an integral part of the Centennial celebration.

Pictured below is the Water Company when it was located on Merrick Road in what is now McQuade's Restaurant.



Fourth Annual Retrospective

>We have had an educational program for all fourth grade public and parochial youngsters from East Rockaway and Lynbrook respectively for probably fifteen years. For the last four we have worked in conjunction with the Lynbrook Library, fourth grade teachers and members of the Historical Society to make the history of our communities come alive.

We have developed the Retrospective with fourth grade teachers. The students come to the Great Room of the Lynbrook Library and



have a chance to participate in various “events” of history.

>**Turning the Quern** is a hands on activity. The kids have an opportunity to actually make flour from wheat seeds by turning a mini mill stone. Louise Campbell, Madeline Pearson and Gloria Christiano are memorable in working with the fourth graders. We have several other stations for which pictures are not presently available.

>**The Grist That Grinds** is a presentation which gives the youngsters insight into early colonial days, the economy of the area and the social life. Bob Sympson has a 1” scale model of the Haviland Davison Gristmill and he and other helpers like, Bud Robinson, Joe Herbert and Mel Krivoshey work to “Make History Come Alive”.



>**Your Story is History** exhibits essays that the boys and girls write in advance and which we put up for display. Pat McGivern and Betsy Davison work assiduously with the teachers and with the mechanics of this display

>**Do you know an Artifact?** - We have the original weather vane from the Davison Grist Mill and our moderators talk about its history. Then they go on to ask if there is anything which the students might consider artifacts in their own lives. Barbara Gribbon, Alene Krivoshey, Tom Hickey are among those on whom we rely for this station.

>**A Picture in History-** These are not headless people. They are wooden silhouettes where students can have their picture taken as if in costume of Shorty the Cop, a young lady of colonial days or a water boy for the Grist Mill.



>**Oral Histories-** We also have a replica of the porch of Sam Rhame's store which used to be in East Rockaway. We like to video *our* stories here because our subjects sit back, relax and remember the “Good Old Days.”

>**The Bristol Mexico Monument** is an eye opener as you walk into the Great Room. It is life size. (An aside: The *Bristol Mexico* monument is located in the Rockville Cemetery on Merrick Road. When you remind the kids about its location just beyond McDonalds their eyes light up.)

>**Our Annual Meeting**, - our fifteenth one, was held in May. Maria Burke became our new Treasurer. We added three new Board members Margaret Alter, Robert Krendel and Steven Villardi.

>We also participated in Lynbrook Expo wherein Art Mattson, Richard Schimmel, and Pat McGivern answered questions about Lynbrook and informed the public about TTT.

>**Our Garage Sale** was held the same day while starting late because of rain, we were successful in achieving our goal for Scholarship funds. Nancy Wolfsohn, Bob Sympson, Alene and Mel Krivoshey, Joe Herbert, Richard Dietrich, Richard Schimmel, Madeline Pearson and Caroline Krendel are invaluable in bringing this event off.

>**The LIRR Long Island's Lifeline for 177 years** was a program presented in the fall. Michael Charles of the LIRR's Public Affairs Department 1131 gave an interesting lecture on the railroad. Its history is long and important to the development and prosperity of the island.

The picture above right is when the multi crossings in Lynbrook were elevated. A souvenir journal **LYNBROOK CELEBRATES LYNBROOK GRADE CROSSING ELIMINATION, JANUARY 2, 1939** related the history of the ten crossings in the village. After a series of hearings in 1929 an order was issued to the railroad company to eliminate the crossings from Horton Avenue to Ocean Avenue on the Montauk division and the Sunrise highway one on the Long Beach Line. The depression came and there was a cessation of work. The project ultimately expanded to include elevation of the West Hempstead branch at Merrick Road, Valley Stream. All was in working order by 1939 and the village celebrated,



>**Tales Tombstones Tell** Nothing happens in a vacuum. The idea of a cemetery walk came about as a result of Art Mattson recalling one in which he had participated. Mary Colway has an interest in cemeteries. Indeed several years ago she took her niece, Georgia Krendel to Vermont and they visited a cemetery wherein they saw a tombstone in the shape of a tree. That was quite memorable for both.

However, HSERL's cemetery walk was unique. Tales Tombstones Tell, with the ideas and scripting of Betsy Davison, Art Mattson, Louise Campbell and Pat Sympson decided to make the dead come back to life. Ten ghosts returned. Two returned to tell of their connection to Lynbrook and East Rockaway but were not entombed there. Belle Fleming suffered a thwarted love affair but she returned to lament her fate Stephanie Maddalone was superb. Some of our ghosts were originally buried there but their tombstones have disappeared so their graves have become difficult to locate by descendants. Antonie DeMott AKA as Steven Villardi; Wright Pearsall who was portrayed by Richard Schimmel and Mordecai Rock Smith of RVC fame was remembered by Mel Krivoshey. John Van Ingen, as Walt Whitman read from Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass which commemorated the *Bristol Mexico* shipwreck. Edward Felix a sailor who jumped off the

Mexico and was left to drown was played by Derek Jennings. Felix's burial was consigned to a different location in the cemetery because of his race. Captain Winslow a cowardly fellow was reenacted by Art Mattson and Louise Campbell as Catherine Galligan, Irish immigrant, berated him for his cowardice. Veronica Krendel, in her part as Judy Pepper, the mother who froze in the arms of her husband, learned her Irish' accent by listening on You Tube. Kent Howell a well-known Civil War buff played Sgt. David Driscoll a true hero from Pearsall's now known as Lynbrook.

Alexander Davison and Irene Davison were 'returned' by Bob and Pat Sympson respectively. These people were brought back to life through scripts written by Betsy Davison, Art Mattson and Louise Campbell. Indeed Louise was the producer, director, coordinator and communicator of a major part of this endeavor. Our thanks to all of you who enjoyed this wonderful presentation.

This can be viewed at

<http://vimeo.com/34145004> the password is **FELIX**.

>**The 175th Anniversary of the Wrecks** of the Bristol & the Mexico was commemorated on November 19 at the Rockville Cemetery.



["The Wreck of the Mexico" James Fulton Pringle](#)

We have written before about the significance

of this beautiful picture which was recently acquired by Art Mattson. After the ceremony Art invited the participants back to his home and over 40 people returned. It was a wonderful historical event in collaboration with Irish American Society of Rockville Centre



>**Scholarship 100 Raffle**- thanks to an idea put forth by Joe Herbert, we raised funds for our scholarship fund. We combined this with an Annual Party.

The Winners were:

1 st Prize	Carol Burak
2 nd Prize	Sympson-Krendel
3 rd Prize	Gail Erlitz
4 th Prize	Bud Robinson
5 th Prize	John Van Ingen

>There are **Unsung Heroes** in every organization who always **volunteer**. It is appropriate at this time that we acknowledge them at the end of a very successful year-

JOHN BISHOP	LOUISE CAMPBELL
MARY COLWAY	BETSY DAVISON
JOE HERBERT	ELAINE KIERNAN
ROBERT KRENDEL	MARY MALLOY
RICHARD SCHIMMEL	ROBERT SYMPSON

>**We extend a warm welcome to new members**

Margaret & Daniel Alter

Nancy & Peter Rosenthal

AN INTRODUCTION TO 21012

By Art Mattson

>On the night of January 7, a small group of intrepid HSERL members walked into the Rockville Cemetery with flashlights nervously playing off the surrounding gravestones. A nearly full moon revealed, the Bristol and Mexico shipwreck monument. We were not alone. With us were three "Paranormal Investigators," Matt Haas, his wife Josie, and their partner Brian, all from Sleepy Hollow Paranormal. Matt had heard about a "ghost story" that I had written in the Lynbrook and East Rockaway Herald.



That story concerned a woman living quite near this cemetery who had told me that her home was repeatedly visited by the apparitions of young girls. Based on the old-fashioned look of the girls' clothing, their young ages, their stony expressions, and by the cold atmosphere that they brought with them into a particular room, they could – theoretically at least – be linked to wreck of the barque Mexico in January 1837. Several young girls froze to death on the deck of that ship off Long Beach. Some of the girls were buried in graves around the monument.

Brian, Josie and Matt reach out to the spirits. The HSERL members "tagged along" as the three investigators employed various pieces of video, audio, and electromagnetic sensors on and near the monument. They then attempted to orally coax any spirits that might be nearby to reveal themselves by

creating a reaction on the equipment. At one point the investigators heard a voice from an empty space. A few moments later a photo was partly obscured even though nothing was observed to have passed in front of the camera. Then an investigator's back was lightly brushed by what felt to him like two hands. We await their final conclusions as they analyze their recorded data.

Don't worry folks, HSERL is not becoming the Historical and Paranormal Society of ER and Lynbrook. None of us thought for a moment that this was historical research. We were there simply to see what "paranormal investigators" do – not in a movie or TV show, but right in front of us. They seemed to me to be more thorough and professional than I had expected. I suppose if I had a ghost in my attic, I would give them a call before making an appointment with a psychiatrist.

Mark your calendar:

>Tuesday, **March 27th at 7:30 PM, in the Great Room of the Lynbrook Library**, HSERL will welcome **Mark Adler, who is a captain with Company H 119th New York Volunteers Historical Association**. Captain Adler, will talk about his time in the Civil War with an infantry group that was comprised of men from this area, including two who are buried at the Old Sandhole Cemetery (Rockville Cemetery). Company H 119th Volunteers fought in Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, then went west to Tennessee, back to Georgia and then made their way up through the Carolinas.

>Genealogy Research (CED 9246 B1)

This course introduces the student to U.S. census, military and passport naturalization information. Also provided are web sites and databases that assist in searching for genealogy information in the United States. Learn where to write for vital records in New York State and New York City, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Samples and examples will be presented to the class.

Instructor: Jean King, M.L.S.

CED 9246 B1 Meets: Saturday, March 24, 10:05am-12:05pm.

One Day Workshop Fee: \$25

Ed.Patricia C. Sympson, PhD
psympson@optonline.net

.