



The Historian

A Publication of the Three Village Historical Society



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Volume 47 Issue 3

Autumn 2010

SPIES! Exhibit: Grand Opening October 3rd!

Opening Day is almost here (and we don't mean the World Series)!

Yes, it's mid September and many of us are thinking of Opening Day. After months of hard work and a radical change to the entire first floor of the Society, we await the imminent arrival of our brand new exhibit, *Spies! How A Group of Long Island Patriots Helped George Washington Win the Revolution.*

We've got Opening Day jitters. Will the exhibit panels look as good on the walls as they do in the artist's renderings? Will people recognize those of us who took part in a photo shoot to provide heretofore nonexistent images of Nathan Hale, a group of Redcoats, a tavern wench, Austin Roe, Abraham Woodhull, Caleb Brewster, and Anna Smith Strong? Will the children for whom the exhibit was designed be willing to take turns using the computer program, firing at British ships as they cross the Sound in Brewster's whaleboat? Will we run out of invisible ink or quill pens?

Yes, the afternoon of Sunday, October 3rd will see some of us shaking in our colonial costumes as we greet visitors and lead them through the newly painted rooms, over highly polished floors well illuminated by track lighting and ceiling fixtures.

We thank all of the friends of the Society who donated their time, skills, talents and materials to make everything sparkle so! Thanks to Frank Turano and Peter Ostapow for the sweat equity they've invested, and, of course, let's not forget our generous donors who helped us match the \$20,000.00 grant we received from the NY Council for the Humanities.

Opening Day Factoids

- Free admission, today only. After October 3rd, \$5 for nonmembers, \$3 for members and children 12 and under.
- Receive a free coloring book or \$1 off the price of a t-shirt.
- Docent-led tours of the exhibit.
- Children's hands-on activities (partial list)
 - Decoding real spy letters
 - Writing with quill pens & invisible ink
 - Outdoor colonial games

Please do come in on Opening Day, between one and four P.M., to be one of the first to see the exhibit, say "Hello," and, perhaps, even a "Job well done!"



Chris Graf and his workforce (including his son Carter) busy installing the new brick walkway to the back entrance of our headquarters by Stone Gate Landscaping Construction, Inc. with bricks donated by Jos. M. Troffa Landscape & Mason Supply. Landscaping by Swan Cove Landscaping. Photos courtesy of David Fortuna.



TVHS Calendar of Events

**Stay connected.
Receive event
reminders and
updates on
volunteering
opportunities.
Send us your
email address!
info@tvhs.org**

Sunday, September 19th, 11:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.: 21st Annual Long Island Apple Festival

Sherwood-Jayne Farm, 55 Old Post Rd., E. Setauket. Co-sponsored by TVHS, SPLIA and Homestead Arts. Activities include Apple Pie Baking Contest, music, food concessions and children's activities. Admission: \$6 adults, \$4 seniors/children 2-12 yrs.

Sunday September 19th, 2:00 p.m. Village Green Walking Tour. Tour leaves from the Setauket Neighborhood House, 95 Main St., Setauket. \$3/members, \$5 non-members.

Monday, September 20th, 7:00 p.m. Lecture : *Record Makers and Breakers* a history of the roots of rock'n'roll by John Broven. Lecture takes place at the Setauket Neighborhood House, 95 Main St., Setauket. 7:00: reception, 7:30 Member's Meeting, 7:45–9:00 Speaker. This event is free and open to the public.

Saturday, October 2nd, 10:30 a.m.: Spies Along the Setauket Village Green, a walking tour led by Eric Waxman. This special tour will feature information about the Culper Spy Ring in celebration of the opening on Sunday, Oct 3rd of our new exhibit: SPIES! How a Group of Long Island Patriots Helped George Washington Win the Revolution. The 90 minute tour starts at the Setauket Neighborhood House, 95 Main St., Setauket. Please arrive 5 minutes prior to start. Fee: \$3/TVHS members, \$5/non-members.

Saturday, October 2nd, 2:00 p.m. Walk Through History with Abraham Woodhull. In this living history walk you will meet farmer and Revolutionary War Spy Chief Abraham Woodhull, portrayed by historian, Beverly Tyler, who leads tour goers on a walk through the nature sanctuary that was once Woodhull's farm. Walk lasts 2 1/2 hours and starts at the Caroline Church parking lot carriage shed on Dyke Rd., opposite the Setauket Village Green. Fee: \$3/TVHS members, \$5/non-members.

Sunday, October 3rd, 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.: Grand Opening of *SPIES! How a Group of Long Island Patriots Helped George Washington Win the Revolution*, a new exhibit for children and adults at the Three Village Historical Society, 93 North Country Rd, Setauket. Admission is free on Grand Opening Day. Exhibit will be open on Sundays from 1-4:00 p.m. or by appointment. Admission: \$3/children & TVHS members, \$5/adults.

Monday, October 4th, Pastries and Patriots: *The American Revolution on Long Island and In New York.* Sponsored by TVHS with Stony Brook University Library and the Center for Global History and Local History, Stony Brook University, and supported in part by a matching grant from the New York Council for the Humanities. Advance Registration only. See our website for more information or call the office: 631-751-3730.

Sunday, October 17th, 2:00 p.m. Down the Ways Maritime Tour: historian Beverly Tyler explores the history of shipbuilding in Setauket. Tour lasts 2 hours and commences at the Setauket Dock, Shore Rd., E. Setauket. This tour will be conducted at low tide so the bones of the schooners will be uncovered in Scott's Cove. Please arrive 5 minutes early to ensure a prompt start. \$3/TVHS members and \$5/non-members.

Monday October 18th, 7:00 p.m. Lecture: *General Washington's Spies: How a Group of Long Islanders Helped Win the American Revolution*, by Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan. ATTENTION: New Meeting Place!!! Lecture will take place at the Emma S. Clark Memorial Library, 120 Main Street, Setauket. 7:00 p.m.– reception, 7:30 members meeting, 7:45– 9:00 p.m. lecture. RSVP– 751-3730. Free and open to the public.

The Historian

Is published quarterly by the Three Village Historical Society.

Suggestions for articles are welcome. Please send all articles, photos, feedback and ideas to:

newsletter@tvhs.org
In the subject line

please include:

The Historian.

The deadline: for our next issue is November 10, 2010

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"If we each asked a friend, neighbor, relative or co-worker to join TVHS we could double our membership".

Peter Paul Ostapow,
President of the Three
Village Historical Society.
*Photo courtesy of Susan
Byrnes*

If you are interested in volunteering for any of our Autumn Events help is needed for the , SPIES! Exhibit and Candlelight House Tour. Contact Donna Higgins at 751-5177

President's Message

We will soon begin to see the seasons change and as this change becomes more noticeable your society will be changing as well. Our newest most exciting SPIES! Exhibit will be opening on October 3rd and we hope you will all come and visit. Elizabeth Kaplan has been the driving force behind this venture and on behalf of the Society I would like to thank her for all her work on design, grant writing and fundraising.

One good turn deserves another and we'd like to once again thank David Fortuna - Swan Landscaping, Christopher Graf - Stone Gate Landscaping Construction, Inc. and Joseph Troffa - Jos. M. Troffa Landscape & Mason Supply for the new brick rear walkway. I am truly amazed of how community minded these businesses are

Our Director Catherine Abrams seems to have a very good working knowledge of our organization and understands that besides running the organization finding sources of funding is extremely important.

You should have already received the Stewardship Campaign letter by now and we ask you to support this effort. Our headquarters, which is over 200 years old needs some capital improvements namely a new roof and painting of the exterior. We would also like to install an internal sprinkler system to prevent a major loss in the event of a fire. We are happy to report that funds received have reached three percent of our goal. With your continued support we hope to reach our goal of \$80,000.

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Trustees please let us know as soon as possible as the year is quickly coming to a close. Trustee Midge Brown has informed us that due to continued medical problems she is no longer available to serve. Midge and Bob will be volunteering their talents at the Candlelight House Tour in December. I would be (and have been) remiss if I did not thank Midge for the great job she has done with our yard sale the past 2 years.

We are the premier historical society on Long Island and we are constantly in need of your involvement and your talents. We are always looking for volunteers so please let the office know what tickles your fancy so we can find the perfect fit for you. We are looking for volunteers for the SPIES! Exhibit and Candlelight House Tour 2010. Please do not forget that we will be moving our monthly lecture series to Emma S Clarke Library in October. I'm sure you'll agree that we will be in a better position to tell the residents of Three Village about all our wonderful programs as the library has a much wider circulation than this newsletter.

In closing, I'd like to thank our Board of Trustees for another great year, our new Director, our office staff and the hundreds of volunteers that continue to allow us to be the foremost historical society on Long Island.

Peter Ostapow

Good and Welfare

By Barbara Lynch

Congratulations to TVHS Vice President, Patty Yantz on her retirement!

Hope you are feeling better to Dick Russell and Frank Turano.

Sincere sympathy to Kathy Schindler and her family on the passing of Richard Schindler.

Sympathy is also extended to the family and friends of Clifford E. Swartz, emeritus professor of physics at Stony Brook University who passed away on August 15th of Parkinson's disease.

21st Annual Long Island Apple Festival: Sunday September 19th!



Photo courtesy of Patricia Kunder

Sunday, September 19th the Sherwood-Jayne Farm will be the place to be for family fun at our 21st Annual Long Island Apple Festival, at the Sherwood-Jayne Farm, Old Post Road, in Setauket from 11:00 a.m. —4:30 p.m.

Family activities abound : pony rides, sack races and apple relay races, face painting, open hearth colonial cooking and craft demonstrations. Traditional music, tours of the Sherwood-Jayne House, as well as homemade food and refreshments offer a great day for the whole family. Tickets are \$6/Adults, \$4/Seniors & children 2-12 years of age.

The 21st Annual Long Island Apple Festival is presented by Homestead Arts, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities and the Three Village Historical Society.



Bakers preheat your ovens and dig out your best apple pie recipes for the Apple Pie Baking Contest! Entries must be traditional apple pies only, homemade by amateur bakers. The deadline for entries is Friday, September 17th at 2:00 p.m. Pies must be delivered before 11:00 a.m. on the day of the Apple Festival, September 19, 2010. A written recipe must be submitted with each entry, including the name and address of the baker.

Each contestant will receive one free entrance pass into the Apple Festival. First, Second and Third place winners will be announced for the “Best Tasting Pie” and there will be a prize for the “Best Looking Pie.” Ribbons and prizes will be awarded to the winners between 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

For more information about the contest and the 21st Annual Long Island Apple Festival visit the Three



Sack race at the Apple Fest!
TVHS photo.

Petticoats to Patriots: 32nd Annual Candlelight House Tour Dec 3-4

The Three Village Historical Society will be holding its 32nd Annual Candlelight House Tour on Friday, December 3rd and Saturday December 4th, 2010.

In honor of the Three Village Historical Society’s newest exhibit: *SPIES! How a Group of Long Island Patriots Helped George Washington Win the Revolution*, the theme of this year’s Candlelight House Tour will be ***Petticoats to Patriots***. The tour will feature houses in the neighborhood of Strongs Neck. During the Revolution, homes in this historic area were used to garrison British troops and officers. In the midst of this enemy encampment a brave group of local patriots spied on the British army and carried messages that were delivered to General Washington.

Our Candlelight House Tour is the pre-eminent holiday house tour on Long Island, showcasing select local homes dressed in holiday finery by our volunteer team of talented local decorators. Each home will be staffed by our docents who will point out the home’s most interesting architectural features and furnishings along with the home’s historic details.

The selection committee has been busy making their final confirmation of this year’s houses. If you are interested in volunteering with us for the Candlelight House Tour, now is the time to contact our volunteer coordinator, Donna Higgins at 751-5177. She will be working closely with Patty Yantz, this year’s Chair of the Candlelight House Tour.

The *Candlelight House Tour* is the major fundraiser for the Three Village Historical Society. Proceeds enable the Society to continue to provide for the preservation of photographs, artifacts, documents and other materials of local significance. These items are used in the interpretation of the history of the region for community programs and in-school education. The Three Village Historical Society is the largest in-classroom provider of programs about Long Island and American History to schools in New York.

Tickets for this year’s tour will go on sale to members on November 15th at our headquarters on 93 North Country Road. For more information about our unique and festive tour or on how to purchase your tickets please contact the Three Village Historical Society by phone at 631-751-3730, by email at info@tvhs.org or visit the Society’s website, www.tvhs.org.

Rhodes Trip: The Bruce House



Photo of the Bruce House circa 1944 from the Capt. Edward R. Rhodes Memorial Collection.

In 2002, the Three Village Historical Society, with the help of New York State Assemblyman Steve Englebright, saved this modest 1920's "workforce" house from demolition when it purchased the property from the heirs of the original owners. Built in 1924 it was the residence of the Bruce Family for 78 years.

After an initial clearing of the property, the late Ken Tuck undertook a personal crusade to remove the persistent vines and debris. With the formation of the Three Village Community Trust, it was realized that the Bruce House could better serve the community as a conspicuous headquarters for the Trust. Shortly thereafter, the Trust began assuming the rehabilitation of the house with the Historical Society administering the funds remaining in the original grant. Legal negotiations

for the final transfer were begun and finally completed this spring with the pro-bono work of TVHS Trustee Ron LaVita.

On May 12, 2010, the Three Village Historical Society officially signed over the Bruce House, at 148 Main Street, Setauket, New York to the Three Village Community Trust for \$1.00. In the spirit of community cooperation, we, at the Three Village Historical Society wish the Three Village Community Trust every success in their new home.



2010 Photo of the Bruce House (Photo by F. Turano)

Information on the Bruce Family:

George H. Bruce (1883-1967) was the head of the household, according to the 1930 census, which listed him as a 46 year old laborer born in Massachusetts. His 49 year old wife Rosina (Rosina Huber 1880-1962) was born in Switzerland. At the time of the 1930 census they had three children: Robert (9 yrs.), Catherine (11 yrs.) and Frieya (daughter, age 7).

The Bruce house is unchanged from its original configuration, with the exception of a small addition to the rear for a bathroom – a modest upgrade from the outhouse (the



Setauket Baseball Team, July 3, 1932. Seen here (second row) **George Bruce (manager)**. (Photo courtesy of a private collector).

small structure to the left and rear of the house in a 1924 photograph). Built c 1924, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce raised their three children in this house.

Pastries and Patriots: Breakfast Lecture October 4th

Not to be missed! That's what one of our members said when she heard about Pastries and Patriots. This special event on Monday morning, October 4th offers an opportunity for comparatively few of us to enjoy breakfast and two exciting lectures at Stony Brook University, co-sponsored by the Three Village Historical Society, the Center for Global and Local History, and Special Collections, Frank Melville Memorial Library, Stony Brook University. This day is also being sponsored in part, by a matching grant from the New York Council for the Humanities.

Lectures will be given on the theme: The American Revolution on Long Island and in New York. Edward G. Lengel, Associate Professor of History, University of Virginia, and Editor-in-Chief of The Papers of George Washington Project will give a special presentation on : George Washington, Unconventional Soldier.

Edwin G. Burrows, Professor of History, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and Pulitzer Prize winning co-author of Gotham, A History of New York City to 1898,

will present The Prisoners of War of Occupied New York City, 1776-1783.

Advance registration is required and seating is limited to 55 fortunate people. Fee of \$20 to the Three Village Historical Society must be received by September 26th. Mail your check to : Three Village Historical Society, 93 North Country Rd., E. Setauket, NY 11733. Call 631-751-3730 for more information or visit us online at :

www.tvhs.org/specialevents.html

Three Village Historical Society 1994-2003— The Fourth Decade

by Beverly C. Tyler

The Three Village Historical Society was founded on October 30, 1964 by a group of men and women who believed that the history of the Setauket/Stony Brook area needed to be brought to the attention of every resident and visitor. The Three Villages was, they understood, not only the original settlement in the Town of Brookhaven, but the home of many ordinary people who did extraordinary things. These ordinary people were hard-working settlers, patriots and Revolutionary War spies, farmers and sea captains, shipbuilders and leaders of industry, poets and painters, Native Americans and immigrants.

Under the leadership of Society Director Michele Morrisson and President Franklin Neal the Society ended 1993, having just completed a project to disassemble the South Setauket Samuel Hawkins house. Samuel Hawkins and his seven children were Revolutionary War Patriots. After the war it became the home of Samuel's third son Zophar. The story of the 273 years of the home of the Hawkins and Matusky families was presented at the February, 1994 Society meeting by Sy Robbins and Bev Tyler.

The situation that led to the dismantling of the house and the attempt to save it was the granting of a demolition permit by the Town of Brookhaven in March 1993. South



11-1-1993 The Samuel Hawkins House was constructed between circa 1720 and 1746 in two main sections. The timber frame is exposed and now the task is removing the layers of roofing.

Setauket resident David Selleck brought the fact that the house was threatened to the attention of the Society. Finally in October, developers Richard Raskin and his partner Jay McNulty agreed to give the Society time to remove the building. The entire structure was carefully dismantled, with only a few minor injuries, in less than a month by volunteers from the Society and the community including restoration carpenter Robert Barrett and architect John Stevens. Volunteers were at the site every day from November 1st to the 27th including Thanksgiving Day.

Architectural drawings of the structure and a report on its age and significance were prepared and are now a part of the Society collection. Unfortunately, in the final analysis, the framing could not be preserved. However we learned a great deal about this Colonial home. Briefly, the left half was a circa 1746 saltbox and the right half, thought at first to be newer, turned out to be a circa 1720 saltbox that had its rear section removed and a kitchen wing added. This was a fine example of a pre-Revolutionary one-and-a-half-story farmhouse.

Looking for a headquarters building for the Society became a major goal during the Society's 30th Anniversary year. The committee, headed by President Neal, considered a number of locations including the former Lyon Bros. Boatyard and the Detmer Farm site. A \$3,000 planning grant from the New York State Council on the Arts provided us with consultants to help in our search and to plan for acquisition of a headquarters. As 1994 came to a close, the Lyons Boatyard was finally rejected and the Detmer Farm site remained an unknown.

Our spring education programs, for families with children ages 7 and above called *Artistic Explorations*

of History, included, with numerous hands-on activities, General Stores in Stony Brook, Dig in a Box, Shipbuilding in East Setauket and Archaeology in Stony Brook. The Society also began, together with the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, a *Discovery Day Mini-Camp* the second week in July for children ages 7-11. We also took part in the 5th Annual Long Island Apple Festival at the Sherwood-Jayne House in East Setauket. Eleven walking tours of the Setauket Village Green area were conducted, by Eric Waxman and his volunteers. In June, Society members went on a field trip to Windsor, CT. where they visited the Windsor Historical Society's 1640 and 1765 houses, a 1796 church and a cemetery dating to 1640. The second annual Spirits of the Three Villages Cemetery Tour, initially suggested by Belle Barstow was held again in October, this time chaired by Barstow.

Our exhibit in our exhibit case in the Emma Clark Library's 1892 reading room, curated by George Moraitis was *Coming to America: The Poulianos/Poulos Family: The first Greeks in South Setauket*. The exhibit case, restored by member Lewis Davis, is now used for exhibits in the Society's Headquarters. The Society set up an exhibit on the history of the Swezey's Department Store in their East Setauket Store for their 100th anniversary.

The Women at Sea exhibition tentatively titled: *The Sailing Circle: Social and Domestic Life of Seafaring Women from New York, 1840-1915*, moved along during the year with research funded by the New York State Council on the Arts. In October, Morrisson noted that the project was in its final research stage. "Project historian Joan Druett has located two additional women who sailed from Orient on coastal trading voyages bringing our total to thirty-one discovered to date representing women who sailed with deep-sea merchant, coastal

History of TVHS (continued)

merchant, and whaling ships. The project has designed an exhibition, a catalog, a family activity book, public programs, and a symposium." All of this dependent on the grant submitted to the NEH.

Finally, as 1994 was coming to a close, the funding answer came. The NEH, which had an established record of not funding small museums and historical societies, fully funded Women at Sea for \$60,000. Two

small historical organizations with limited staff had pulled it off, thanks in large part to the work of TVHS part-time director Michele Morrisson who led the effort in every category. Morrisson thought the matching portraits of Captain Benjamin Jones and his wife Mary Swift Jones, who accompanied him on his voyage to China and Japan, could be a jumping-off-point to discover other women who went to sea with their ship-captain

husbands, fathers and families. During 1992 and 1993, she secured the research funding from NYSCA, cajoled the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum into joining together with us on the project, brought on board maritime author Joan Druett, put together the research team, hired the exhibit design and construction team, and finally, almost single-handedly, wrote the NEH grant. 1995 was certainly going to be a busy year. (To be continued)

In Memoriam: Belle Barstow

By Fran Harrison

This past June the Three Village Historical Society lost a beloved former member. Isabelle "Belle" Florence Barstow passed away on June 14, 2010.

"Belle Barstow was a warm and wonderful, member of the Society, strong in the Society's goal and deeply interested in our area's history," said Dr. Robert. deZafra. "Her later work, well after leaving the area, in editing and publishing Town records from the early days of Brookhaven, when it was centered around the Three Village area and later, bear eloquent testimony to that. We can all be thankful that Belle and her husband (Harold) cared so much for the community and it's history".

As an integral and tireless contributor to the Society, Belle Barstow served as Trustee from 1981 through 1991 and again in 1992 as Corresponding Secretary. As Society historian she concentrated her research on the Culper Spy Ring.

Ms. Barstow moved to the area with her husband Harold in 1964, the same year the Society was founded. She had recently retired to New Bern, North Carolina, but as TVHS Historian Beverly Tyler noted, "Belle continued her research and writing, which,

beginning with a love of the history of this area, eventually became a thirty-year project."

In the final chapter of her book *Setauket's Religious Beginnings* written in 1984 Belle talks about what inspired her to write:

"During the years of attending the Setauket Presbyterian Church, I have felt drawn to the past that was so evident in the worn brown and white tombstones seen from the sanctuary's windows. As I watched the seasons move across the landscape on Sunday mornings, showering the ancient pine and cherry trees through the seasons with sun, rain and snow, a creative longing overcame me to express my intrigue with this church's peopled past. This book is a "poem" to the people who have sat where I have sat and who have worshiped in the same religion for the past two hundred and seventy years"

Belle Barstow,

Setauket's Religious Beginnings

Apart from her extensive research and writing about Brookhaven's history, Ms. Barstow was also active in the community, founding Three Village Meals on Wheels, and served as their President. She was also an

active member of the First Presbyterian Church, House Church and Women's Circle.

In 1994, Ms.

B a r s t o w

initiated one of

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Belle Barstow

Photo courtesy of B. Tyler

tramping through the Setauket Presbyterian Churchyard as she "introduced me " to the to the spirits that had been on past tours."

For many years Belle Barstow was a vital part of the Three Village Historical Society and the local community as large. Although she left the area several years ago she continued her work and writings about this area based on a strong love for its history. For that she will always be remembered with a great deal of fondness and respect.

Three Village Historical Society
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membership please visit our website:

<http://www.tvhs.org>

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Setauket, NY 11733