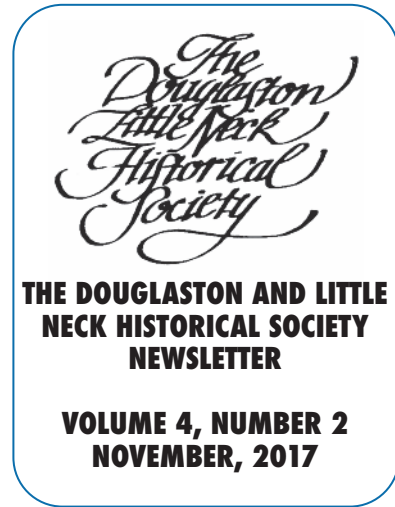




The Douglaston and Little Neck
Historical Society
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CURRENT RESIDENT OR



January, 2018
HOW TO RESTORE
WOODEN WINDOWS

February 10, 2018
BABY, IT'S COLD
OUTSIDE

**TIME TRAVELING
IN DOUGLASTON FOR
OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK**

Starting at the Modernist style mid-20th century Douglaston train station, more than 70 visitors gathered in mid-October and walked back in time into the Douglaston Historic District, culminating with cookies and cider on the porch of the Federal style Douglaston Club, built in 1819.

Victor Dadras, a board member of the Douglaston Local Development Corporation (DLDC) and Kevin Wolfe, a board member of the Douglaston and Little Neck Historical Society (DLNHS), led the two sold-out tours. They talked about the arrival of the Dutch and the extant 1735 Van Wyck farmhouse, the construction of the railroad in the 1860s, and the development of the garden suburbs of The Hill and Douglas Manor in 1853 and 1906, respectively, now both New York City-designated Historic Districts.

Visitors walked from the pedestrian friendly
(continued, page 3)

**DOUGLASTON VILLAGE:
MOVING FORWARD**

Preservation and revitalization of our historic Douglaston Village commercial area has continued to make steady progress over the past several years. The Douglaston Local Development Corporation, formed in 2008 and sponsored by the DLNHS Visioning effort has led implementation of the 2011-2012 Strategic Action Plan for Main Street revitalization.

Some of the early events included two enormously successful Arts Festivals, Bike Events, Wellness Fairs, "Pets-in-the-Plaza," and, for two summers, a "Grow NYC Farmers Market" that offered booths of outstanding fare and attracted sizeable numbers of local residents and others.

Several years ago a New York City Plaza Program grant was awarded to the north side of the railroad station area, and resulted in a beautiful Public Space enjoyed by everyone in the community, as well as local businesses
(continued, page 4)

Our mission is the preservation of the Douglaston and Little Neck communities through education and advocacy.



**Baby, It's Cold Outside!
A Valentine's Soirée
February 10, 2018**

**Warm up with the
Douglaston and Little
Neck Historical Society!
Formal invitation coming
in early 2018.**

*The Douglaston and Little Neck
Historical Society
Post Office Box 630142
Little Neck, New York 11363
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About Additions and Alterations
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A Successful Archive
Management Journey
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The October mystery photo, above, southeast corner of Alameda Ave. and Northern Blvd, was identified by Kevin McGaffney with a credit of Percy Loomis Sperr. The 1927 photo of Grace’s Sports Shop was listed in a 1931 directory at #1 Snell Blvd., now Alameda. Later an antique store, more recently the “Christmas Tree” corner, and now an office building at 241- 02 Northern Blvd.

The new mystery photo is below.



A SUCCESSFUL ARCHIVE MANAGEMENT JOURNEY

The DLNHS has been collecting since its 1989 inception and has received countless donations of photographs, architectural drawings and blueprints, maps, and other documents. Together, we have amassed an extensive archive of materials related to the history of our two towns and those who lived here. We have used some of the materials in our exhibitions, and you have often seen images or maps in the pages of this Newsletter.

Since 2004, the archive has been stored at the Bayside Historical Society, something we truly appreciated. However, we always felt that more people should be able to look

at the materials, so we recently transferred our collection to the Queens Public Library Archive in Jamaica. Now it is far more easily accessible and can be used by students and scholars of local history, architecture, and genealogy.

We didn’t stop there, however. We are thrilled to announce that the DLNHS was recently awarded a grant from the New York Preservation Archive Project to digitize the photographs. When complete, our photographs will be accessible through a link from our website to the Queens Public Library’s Archive site.

We are grateful that the NY Preservation Archive Project has made this possible. Digitization will start in November, with it going online early next year.

SUSAN MATHISEN

THE DLNHS ARCHIVE BEGAN WITH a gift from the Caryl F. Walter estate – the portfolio of photographs used for promotion of the Van Zandt/Douglas property in 1906 as the garden suburb Douglas Manor. There may have been many of these, but ours is the only one we know of. Then came the 51 images of Douglaston before development from the estate of Nathaniel Palzer, an attorney and newspaper publisher.

To give you a glance at the range of material, gathered from many sources, there are aerial and surface views of Douglaston, maps, newsletters from the Douglaston Club, P.S. 98, the Community Church of Douglaston, Chronicles of Zion Church, early issues of The Douglaston Press and the Little Neck Ledger, Douglaston histories by Loys Gubernick and by George and Ernestine Fowler, the story of Madnam’s Neck by Percy Hoopes, R. Paul Norris photographs of Peterson’s Shipyard, Shore Road, and a children’s school at 243 Beverly Road, Alley Pond, Hoffman’s oak, Douglaston Garden Club, Douglaston Community Theater, Little Neck Douglaston Ambulance Corps, collections from Jenny Wright Cooper, Michael Kurtz, Michael Gannon, Dr. Michael D. Szap, Adolph Helmus, Walter Wientge, building plans for work in our two Historic Districts, early ones and those successfully implemented since designation, plans and construction photos of the Douglaston Parkway overpass, and an extensive file of noted Douglaston residents, from the present and from earlier times.

Let the viewing begin.

THE EDITOR

(continued from page 9)

as long as they do not compromise window and door openings.

The master plan is available from the Landmarks Commission, the Douglas Manor Association, and the Historical Society. It is meant to help you with all kinds of improvements and advise you that permits from the Commission are required for many of them, including additions and alterations to a building, color changes for doors and other elements, significant landscape improvements, and more. Procedures and regulatory policy are also defined.

Repairs are different and do not require Commission permits. A repair example would be roof replacement, done with the same color and configuration; no visible change is the rationale.

The architecture committee of the Historical Society – five professional architects and an administrator – was created to provide a

free resource for consultation and advice to property owners. The committee can help to avoid misunderstandings and pave the way for successful applications to the Commission.

We believe you live in Douglaston because you found a community with good property values and remarkable context worthy of enjoyment and – yes – preservation. Familiarization with the master guidelines will ensure successful planning and completion of improvements – in a timely manner and at minimum cost. Many residents have done this; you could, too.

The Douglaston and Little Neck Historical Society Architecture Committee
718-225-4403

The letter above is part of a packet of information distributed to new Manor residents by the Douglas Manor Association membership committee.

BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP,
IN THE DOUGLASTON AND LITTLE NECK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

*The best way to receive the latest news
and share your love for our community's history!*

name _____ address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____

telephone _____ email _____
(email ensures that you receive news and event information!)

Membership category:
 Regular \$25.
 Contributing 100.
 Business 150.
 Lifetime 250.
 Benefactor 500.
 additional donation _____

The Society has 5 active committees and welcomes your interest and participation

___ Research and Archives ___ Architecture Review
 ___ Education Programs and Events ___ Publications
Please check one or more!

*Send the form and your check payable to DLNHS to
The Douglaston and Little Neck Historical Society
Post Office Box 630142, Little Neck, New York 11363*



*above: on Shore Road,
on Douglaston Parkway,
and on Hollywood and Shore
(former residence of Claudio Arrau,
curb restoration by New York City)*

*top right: front lawn of the
Douglaston Club*

PHOTOS BY VICTOR DADRAS AND ILANA TEITEL



(continued from page 1)

Douglaston Station Plaza, into the Douglaston Historic District and along Shore Road, stopping occasionally to hear about Douglas Manor's commonly owned shorefront, a Gustav Stickley house, or some of the neighborhood's more famous former residents, including actress Ginger Rogers and world renowned artist George Grosz.

The Douglaston Club threw open its doors to visitors, and invited them to tour the 200-year old building and grounds. They were shown the recently restored Douglaston Room, with a collection of photographs dating to the days of the building's use as a hotel in the early 20th century, and heard of the \$2 million plans to renovate and restore the building, due to start next year.

The tour was a partnership with the DLNHS, the DLDC, and the Douglas House Trust of the Douglaston Club, and offered as part of the annual Open House New York weekend. Each October, Open House NY, a non profit, partners with local groups and holds a weekend in which visitors can access important architectural landmarks normally closed to the public. The tours are led by volunteers involved in designing, building, and preserving the city, in neighborhoods throughout the City's five boroughs.

(continued from page 1)

and LIRR commuters. Generous funding by the Department of Transportation – and City Council speaker Mark-Viverito – has provided for cleaning and maintenance of the Plaza, landscape improvements, and several years of programming events, such as “Music in the Plaza,” and the very popular “Movie Nights,” enjoyed by hundreds of community residents each summer.

Working with our local government



officials, Councilman Vallone and State Assemblyman Ed Braunstein, the LDC plans to engage with the Metropolitan Transit Authority for a Beautification Agreement, and a potential for community control of the LIRR station building, the underpass, and improvements to the station property. An application for inclusion of the area in the National Register has also been undertaken.

To improve its capacity to implement the



us. But more important, two wars to which we contributed many men and from which ten of our boys did not return. Our memorials will stand as a permanent reminder of a debt which can never be repaid – but inadequate tokens of affection and remembrance.

Our Club has been the beneficiary of the affection and unselfish service of many fine, loyal men and women. To one inspired man, however, our Club stands and will stand as a lasting and living memorial

WILLIAM HINGSTON JOHNS

ABOUT ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

Let’s suppose you want to plan for some home improvement projects, or you just became the owner of a property in the Douglaston Historic District and long to make changes for comfort, livability, enhancement, or any other interest. In 1997 The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designated our District. They provided, in cooperation with the Historical Society and the Douglas Manor Association, a master plan of guidelines for going about work on the exterior of your building. There are no regulations for changes to the interior

(continued, page 10)



clockwise from top, left: daffodil planting, Schwinn event, movie night, the Douglaston Plaza



We wrote in an earlier Newsletter about John Stuart, a prominent builder in Douglaston and Little Neck in the early twentieth century. His grandson lives in the same Douglaston Hill Historic District, house, and had given a collection of John Stuart’s architectural drawings and documents to the DLNHS archive. Then, a year ago, we received an envelope in the mail, no return address, but some postcards, one of which is this wonderful photograph of the Stuart brothers and their horse-drawn cart, going about their business.

LITTLE NECK BAY YACHT CLUBS

In the spring of 1960 the annual roster of the Bayside Yacht Club included this “Brief History,” describing the evolution of Little Neck Bay yacht clubs. Sadly, BYS disbanded in 1993, although the public marina there thrives across from our own Douglaston Dock.

Just off the tip of Douglas Manor, still visible at low tide, stands a huge boulder. The passing years, ebbing and flooding of tides, and the ice of many winters have scaled off the top, which now leans at an angle against the side of the rock. In the top is imbedded a massive iron ring, partially eaten away with rust.

The boulder stands as a monument to the end of one yacht club and the beginning of two others: for to the ring in this rock was moored the home of the first Douglaston Yacht Club. It was a palatial floating clubhouse, which on week-ends was towed out near Stepping Stone light; from which point races, in which some of our cup defenders of yesteryear took part, were held down the Sound.

During a tough Northeaster one fall night near the turn of the century, the big float broke from its mooring, careened southwesterly across our Bay and broke up on the shore near the little lake in Crocheron Park. The morning sun found little left but an overturned piano, a splintered building, and a mass of badly battered furniture strewn along the beach.

Out of chaos, a disillusioned membership leased a plot of ground on Manhasset Bay, and, under the leadership of W. J. Newman of Bayside, its first Commodore, the Manhas-

set Bay Yacht Club was formed. This move left Bayside, and particularly Little Neck Bay, the most beautiful harbor on Long Island Sound, without adequate yachting facilities.

On July 9, 1902, a group of ardent yachtsmen met to do something about it. Shortly after, a so-called clubhouse in a pavilion on the shore in front of the famous Crocheron House was rented for “Eight Dollars per month together with dock privileges” – and the Bayside Yacht Club was born.

On July 26, 1902, the first election of officers was held. G. Waldo Smith, a prominent Bayside resident became its first Commodore. For eleven consecutive terms he was chosen to serve in that capacity until death claimed him on June 28, 1913. In the midst of his beloved “Garden of Allah” the Bayside Yacht Club stands as evidence of his optimism and generosity.

With unusual dispatch and high ideals, the club shortly after its formation applied to membership in the Yacht Racing Association of Long Island Sound. The application was rejected because it had no permanent place of meeting. Again something had to be done – and was. Land on which our present clubhouse stands was purchased; a sturdy century-old barn was moved from a nearby farm, and the nucleus of the clubhouse came into being. On July 2, 1903, the remodeled club was ready for occupancy and, with much ceremony, was opened to our members and our present burgee flung to the breeze.

The next forty-three years unfold a saga of struggle, disappointment, reverses, spirit, determination, accomplishment, and constant improvement. We have suffered two serious fires, one of incendiary origin. Two hurricanes, still fresh in the minds of many of



*Open House New York tour guide
Victor Dadras, front hall,
Douglaston Club*

TREES FOR DR. KELLERMAN

Strategic Action Plan, the LDC is growing its membership, raising funds and securing grants, and, most recently, retaining a new Executive Director, Ms. Ilana Teitel, an experienced revitalization professional, to help manage and lead these efforts.

More recent actions include partnering with the Douglaston Garden Club for the beautiful daffodil plantings in the spring, and landscaping the tree pit surrounds previously restored by the Douglas Manor Environmental Association. Working with the DLNHS, there were educational tours for PS 98 students. First was the Municipal Art Society Jane’s Walk event, and on October 15 the Open House New York tour, jointly sponsored by the Douglas House Trust.

With your support, efforts continue to preserve and enhance the physical environment throughout the Village area, and to attract new businesses to existing sites.

VICTOR DADRAS

PHOTOS BY VICTOR DADRAS AND OTHERS

In the Summer 2013 edition of the Newsletter we reported on a memorial celebration for Dr. Leo Kellerman held at the Douglaston Club on March 23 of that year. Table centerpieces at the dinner were tiny seedling trees from the Green World Project. Some of us took these home, planted and cared for them in protected spots, and now three of them have been re-planted in Douglas Manor as a tribute to Leo. The Meyer Spruce and one of the Mugo pines are in the triangle park at Grosvenor and Center, the other Mugo pine in the Manor island, the carriage turnaround between Shore and West.

Dr. Kellerman was a founding member of the Douglas Manor Environmental Association and the Udalls Cove Preservation Commission. Years ago he planted a grove of hemlock at Douglas and Hollywood as a visual barrier to the tract houses being built on the other side of the creek, and then branched out (excuse it, please) to the excellent idea of planting street trees in the Manor, hundreds and hundreds of them.

THE EDITOR

A DOUGLASTON VALENTINE

Douglas Manor is a wonderful and unique place. As an architect in practice today I can tell you that sadly it would be almost impossible to replicate. Take Shore Road for example: no developer I can think of would take waterfront property and turn it into the shared public amenity that Shore Road is today, full of people walking, biking and jogging. Instead you would have private lots on the waterfront, a quick glance towards Great Neck shows what that would look like: great for a handful of people, not so good for everyone else in the neighborhood.

The Manor also has a great diversity of architectural styles and homes of many different sizes. That eclectic mix creates a vibrant and interesting streetscape. I have nothing against uniformity at times – Forest Hills and Kew Gardens are great examples of neighborhoods where the ‘Tudor’ architectural style is dominant, and they were built at roughly the same time period as the Manor. However, seeing Spanish stucco next to Georgian clapboard next to Tudor brick next to Neo-Classical stone arches makes for a much more interesting and lively composition.

The Manor’s building lots vary greatly in size, ranging mostly from smaller lots on the east side of the peninsula to larger lots on its west side. This is reflected in the homes too which range in size from smaller bungalows to larger mansions. This stylistic and economic variety creates wonderful variation, we have a coral reef teeming with different architectural creatures rather than a monoculture of one size and style.

The Manor’s sidewalks, lawns and trees create a pedestrian network that enlivens the whole neighborhood and encourages and

creates a sense of community and collegiality. True, there is the occasional house that turns its back to the public, and shrouds itself in the privacy of a tall hedge, but they are the exception, not the rule, and in general one feels welcome to walk around the neighborhood. That is by design and is no accident, one only need look at any postwar subdivision to see how far less collegial and neighborly they are. We are lucky to have inherited this arrangement and the Douglaston and Little Neck Historical Society strives to keep the character of the neighborhood, and not just the houses intact. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, this is what makes it a historic district.

The Douglaston Historic District which encompasses Douglas Manor and properties south and west was adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) in 1997 and the nearby Douglaston Hill Historic District was adopted in 2004. The small stretch of Douglaston Parkway that links the two districts was up for consideration recently but failed to gain an affirmative vote at LPC. The character of this little stretch of road has recently changed significantly with a large and insensitive ‘addition’ that dwarfs the original house. Such changes could and would occur all over the neighborhood without the protections the historic designation confers.

The neighborhood has additional public spaces such as the dock and its landscaped areas, as well as Memorial Field that further that sense of shared neighborhood life.

Whether it’s the blessing of the fleet at the dock or Sunday morning soccer practice for toddlers at the field, the spaces are there to create a sense of community and belonging. Sadly the roundabout at the north side of the LIRR tracks feels like it has seen its best days and is in decline. The Local

Development Corporation has been active with movie nights and other activities, and some merchants are doing their best to enliven this area. I hope they succeed and the neighborhood gets its ‘Main Street’ feel which it is currently missing. A place where a cup of coffee can be grabbed on the way to the train, or a drink is shared with friends at the end of the day, or an ice cream parlor for kids to bike to; a little ‘downtown’ buzz is all we need.

MICHAEL ARAD

FINDING JAMES GRAHAM

A letter from Patricia Barry of Middleton, Wisconsin, tells the tale of her great grandfather James Graham, a shoe dealer in Little Neck, who was murdered on February 7, 1873. The map shows his shop in Little Neck on Lakeville Road, now Little Neck Parkway.

The family oral history had maintained that her great grandfather Thomas McCreary and his brother John were accused of the crime, but were later exonerated after a confession

from an inmate at the Massachusetts State Prison.

However, it became clear that James was in fact a full brother of Thomas and John McCreary; he used Graham – his mother’s maiden name – to hide his identity, as he may have been a deserter from the British Army.

You may wonder why we are telling you about this. Along with her letter, Ms. Barry provided a copy of a February 10, 1873, newspaper article from the New York Sun in which there is a vivid description of the murder; another describes how “the remains of James Graham were consigned to the Little Neck churchyard,” and a third reports on a “funeral procession through the country roads to the Zion churchyard.”

Zion churchyard records reveal no such entry, but Ms. Barry suggests that her family would like to pay respects if the burial site can be found, and wrote to the Historical Society with this request.

We hope that someone from our readership will recognize names and be able to respond.

THE EDITOR

