

THE DOUGLASTON AND LITTLE NECK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving and protecting the historical significance of Douglaston and Little Neck and adjacent nature preserves.



THE 1887 QUEEN ANNE STYLE STATION BUILDING AT THE DOUGLASTON LIRR STATION

How A Railroad Baron's Financial Woes (Indirectly) Changed the Name of Little Neck to Douglaston

Have you ever wondered why the Little Neck peninsula—just west of the Great Neck peninsula—is called Douglaston? The geographical fact that the Little Neck peninsula is smaller than the Great Neck peninsula has never changed. But the name did—nearly 160 years ago—and the reason is an old one: read on!

In our last newsletter I wrote about the history of the Little Neck railroad station on Little Neck Parkway. The first station building, a switching house and a dedicated spur to ship farm products to the New York City markets were built at that location in 1870 by Benjamin Wooley, a local farmer and businessman who owned the land that was subdivided in 1907 for today's Westmoreland neighborhood.

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The station built by Wooley, however, was not the first rail station to bear the name "Little Neck." When the railroad arrived in the area in 1866, a platform and small facility were built less than a mile to the west, at the site of the current Douglaston Station. This first rail stop was originally called "Little Neck" because of its location at the base of the peninsula that was known for centuries as Little Neck.

The name of this 1866 Little Neck stop was short-lived. Just a year later, William P. Douglas, the young heir to a shipbuilding fortune whose country estate occupied the bulk of the Little Neck peninsula, donated a small farm building to serve as a rail depot. In return, the railroad renamed the station "Douglaston." Three years later, Wooley's new station was given the name Little Neck.

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A Message from the President, Peter Reinharz

As we approach the holiday season and the end of 2025, I am especially pleased that the DLNHS has continued to provide our membership with an event-filled and educational year, beginning with our annual meeting this past June. We had a large member turnout who came to hear a lecture from Professor William Nieter, a longtime environmental advocate who, literally, wrote the book on the history of Alley Pond Park. For those who have not experienced a walk along the miles of wooded trails in upper Alley Pond Park or have not spent time in the vicinity of APEC and Oakland Lake where shorebirds, osprey, falcons and owls dominate the landscape, Professor Nieter's talk provided inspiration for everyone in the room to spend some time in this unique urban oasis.

The DLNHS once again participated in two citywide events, providing walking tours for both "Jane's Walk" and Open House New York (OHNY). Once again led by architects and board members Kevin Wolfe and Victor Dadras, both tours highlighted many of the historical and architectural treasures in our local neighborhoods.

Throughout the year, the DLNHS participates in many local community activities. Once again, we participated in both the Strawberry Festival and the Halloween drive-through at Zion Episcopal Church. On November 22nd, we will be joining the Westmoreland Association at its annual cleanup and planting at Glenwood Landing Park, located at the north end of Glenwood Street in Little Neck. Our past planting efforts have provided the park with a splash of color from flowering bulbs for the last five spring seasons. We will also be joining the Douglaston Local Development Corporation at their Winter Festival in December. The celebration takes place at the Douglaston train station featured in this newsletter. If you're around, stop by and say hello to our DLNHS reps at any of these community events.

Next year is the 250th Anniversary of the birth of our nation. I am hoping that we can do something special to celebrate this milestone. You may not know it, but northeast Queens had a role in the revolution. One of the signers of the Declaration of Independence was Francis Lewis, a prominent businessman and delegate to the Continental Congress. Lewis, who lived on a large estate in Whitestone, also served as chairman of the Continental Board of the Admiralty (akin to today's Secretary of the Navy). Despite Lewis' revolutionary sentiment, most of our area, including the bulk of Queens County, had a Tory majority—those sympathetic to the British Crown. Even though the area was mostly loyal to the King, there is still a lot of history to explore and we hope you will join us during this celebratory year to do so.

I also want to add a new feature to our newsletter. We are inviting members to submit an article on the history of the Douglaston and Little Neck area that interests you for publication in an upcoming newsletter. We ask that your article not exceed 500 words and that the topic focuses on local history, not political opinion. To submit a prospective article for consideration, please email it to info@dlnhs.org.

I hope all of you continue your membership with the DLNHS. It is critical that we continue to study our past to ensure our community's successful future.

LIRR Station *continued from page 1*

But why did local landowners build the stations? Why didn't the railroad pay for them? Just like most things today, the answer was all about money.

These new rail stations were alongside the tracks of the Flushing and North Side Rail Road (FNS) which was built by the German-born industrialist and philanthropist, Conrad Poppenhusen, who made his American fortune in rubber. Poppenhusen was owner of the FNS and several other railroads in Queens and Long Island.

At the time these stations were built, competition among multiple independent railroad companies in Queens for the same passengers and freight led to a fare war, causing significant loss of revenue for the owners. (For example, the price of a round trip from Flushing to Hunter's Point in the mid-1870's dropped from 25 cents to 10 cents.) Furthermore, the rail lines were continuing to expand, leading to large capital expenditures.

Poppenhusen spent approximately 11 months of each year during the mid-1870's in his native Germany raising the capital and operating funds for the multiple railroads he owned. His two sons ran most of his businesses during his absence, but the younger Poppenhusens did not share their father's fiscal, management and operational prowess.

The net result of this period of rail line development was that private business owners and developers anticipating suburban development could not count on the rail lines to build appropriate stations. So they built their own depots, spurs and switching stations to serve their own interests.

In 1887, Douglas and other local landowners donated funds to build an elegant new Queen Anne style station house to replace the donated farm building at the Douglaston station. The new two-story station house, designed by Roslyn resident

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2025 DLNHS Event Recap

Janes Walk

On May 3 the DLNHS once again joined with the Municipal Arts Society of New York to sponsor a local “Jane’s Walk.” This year, architects and board members Kevin Wolfe and Victor Dadras led a group of about 30 people on a walking tour celebrating the 20th anniversary of the designation of the Douglaston Hill neighborhood—“The Hill”—as a New York City Historic District. The Hill Historic District includes 31 single family houses and is located south of the railroad line, east of Douglaston Parkway and north of Zion Church. The District has a collection of 19th and early 20th century homes, mostly in the Queen Anne style, many of which are built on 200-foot-deep lots. The tour also explored the area just west of the Udall’s Cove ravine that long ago served as a thriving African-American community of fishermen and oystermen. The event ended with a presentation at Zion Episcopal Church by Pastor Lindsay Lunnum at a new memorial to those who were enslaved by some of Zion’s founding members. Refreshments followed in Zion’s Parish Hall.

DLNHS Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting was held on June 7 at the Community Church of Douglaston. This year’s speaker was William Nieter, a retired professor and longtime environmental advocate whose book *The Story of Alley Pond: Past Present Future* delves into the history of both Alley Pond Park and the Alley Pond Environmental Center (APEC). In his talk, Professor Nieter explained the political and environmental history that helped create this wonderful, wooded park that sits along Long Island’s hilly north shore, and how the area’s unique topography helps sustain its wild character.

Open House New York (OHNY)

Our sold-out annual OHNY tour of the Douglaston Club property, once the home of 19th century bon vivant, sportsman and socialite William P. Douglas, was held on October 18. Mr. Douglas’ importance is also noted in the article about the history of the Douglaston rail station in this newsletter. Once again led by architects Kevin Wolfe and Victor Dadras, the tour through this rare surviving mansion built in 1819 provided a window into the lives of the rich and famous who called this area home. Guests got an up-close look at the recent \$2 million renovation and restoration of the interior of the Club house, which has many surviving architectural details. The tour also included a visit to the Club’s most recent project, a rehabilitation of the popular basement bowling alley (ca. 1960s) and a game room that reopened this summer. The tour concluded with cookies and cider served on the front porch on a spectacular October afternoon.

Halloween Drive-Through

DLNHS once again participated in this popular community event, held on the grounds of Zion Episcopal Church on Sunday, October 25. DLNHS President Peter Reinharz and board member Kevin Wolfe manned a table and distributed candy to carloads of young ghouls, cartoon characters, movie superheroes and their parents who drove through the historic Zion churchyard, which dates to 1830. In accordance with the DLNHS educational goals, we also distributed handouts which described both the history of Halloween and the history of the Zion churchyard.



L TO R: KEVIN WOLFE, PASTOR LINDSAY LUNNUM, AND VICTOR DADRAS AT JANES WALK



BEGINNING THE OHNY TOUR ON THE DOUGLASTON CLUB FRONT LAWN



KEVIN WOLFE IN COSTUME AT ZION CHURCHYARD

A Mediterranean Revival Style House Walking Tour in Douglas Manor

Douglas Manor was developed in the early 20th century and is home to many architectural Revival styles that were common then, including Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival, often with Arts & Crafts Movement influences. Today we're going to visit some amazing Mediterranean Revival style homes, a much rarer style in the Northeast.

The Mediterranean Revival style began as part of a broader "Revival" movement in the late 1800s and early 1900s when American architects began to embrace nostalgia for not only earlier American architectural styles but also styles that might be characterized as more "romantic." Mediterranean Revival architecture was intended to convey the exotic lifestyle of an Italian villa, a Moorish castle, or a Spanish mission. Common elements include stucco walls, clay-tiled roofs, arched doorways, and flourishes specific to a country or culture, often Italy or Spain.

Mediterranean Revival style houses were most common in California, Florida, and the Southwest. A relative rarity in the northeast, Douglas Manor nonetheless claims close to a dozen examples.

Here is a walking tour of six terrific ones:

#1

Start at the entrance to the Manor, at the intersection of Douglaston Parkway and Hillside Avenue. The house looking down at you is **5 Cedar Lane**. Vaguely Italian, it would look right at home on a Tuscan hillside overlooking olive groves. However, there are no distinguishing features beyond stucco and a tile roof to suggest a specific country of origin. It is a "plain vanilla" Mediterranean Revival, so a good example with which to begin our tour. Built around 1910, its stately appearance, carefully positioned on a slight rise overlooking the entry to the neighborhood, makes a positive first impression on Manor visitors. It was a long-term home to the Neligh family from the '20s through the '60s, and to the Radd family since 1980.

#2

Walk east up Hillside Avenue, all the way to the top of the hill, and start heading down the other side. On your left, **309 Hillside Avenue** resembles a Medieval Spanish monastery, entered through a simple arched stucco wall with a wooden gate that is painted the same soft green as the house's oxidized copper roof. The house was designed and built by Elbert McGran Jackson, who was trained as an architect but became one of the principal artists for the *Saturday Evening Post* in the 1920s and '30s. In 1916, at the age of 21, he moved from Atlanta to Douglaston, found work in an architectural firm, and built an artist's studio for himself at 309 Hillside, where he painted. He continued to build additions to his home for the next twenty years, embellishing his creation with exquisite leaded-glass windows, lavishly decorated interior spaces with multiple level changes inspired by the Middle East and Spain, and a walled garden with a fountain. The result is an eclectic and exotic piece of architecture unique in the Manor. Local architect Kevin Wolfe restored the house for the current owner.

#3

Next, head back to East Drive and proceed north for eleven blocks to Knollwood Avenue. On the northeast corner, **303 Knollwood Avenue**, built in 1926, is an Italian Renaissance manor house that looks as if it could have hosted numerous Gatsby-like parties. Features include textured salmon stucco with subtle tiled mosaic accents, stained-glass windows, and a romantic wrought-iron-encircled Juliet balcony over the ornate front entrance.



FROM LEFT: 5 CEDAR LANE, 309 HILLSIDE AVENUE, AND 303 KNOLLWOOD AVENUE



FROM LEFT: 104 KNOLLWOOD AVENUE, 806 SHORE ROAD, 5 GROSVENOR STREET

#4

Diagonally across the street is **104 Knollwood Avenue**, a Spanish Mission Revival style house from 1909. Spanish Mission style drew inspiration from late 18th and early 19th century Spanish missions in California. The style is distinguishable by its curved parapet—the part of the front wall that extends above the main roof line and is curved on top. (“Remember The Alamo,” as the saying goes.) 104 Knollwood’s original red-tile roof is long gone, alas, and its semi-circular Mission-style open front porch was enclosed by glass doors and glass block when it was “modernized” in the ’30s. It was home to Pap smear inventor Dr. George Papanicolaou as well as the Ward and Erazo families.

#5

Proceed west down Knollwood Avenue all the way to Shore Road and you will see **806 Shore Road** on your left. Designed in 1907 by Lionel Moses of McKim, Mead & White (architects of the original Penn Station), its stark simplicity is the antithesis of the more embellished 303 Knollwood. Other than the tile roof—which is green, not the traditional red—it’s hard to discern any specific Mediterranean Revival elements; it certainly has none of the stylistic flourishes of 303 Knollwood. Its careful restraint, despite being the largest house built in the Manor at the time, is the “Old Money” version of Mediterranean Revival—imposing but understated, looking out regally over Little Neck Bay without embellishment.

#6

Take a leisurely stroll south along Shore Road and admire the views. When you get to Grosvenor Street, take a left. On your left you’ll see **5 Grosvenor Street**, a 1922 flat-roofed Moorish Revival style house by noted architect Bradley Delahanty, who designed many lavish estates on Long Island at the same time he designed this house. Stylistic features include a rounded entryway and front door; an unadorned stucco facade; a distinctly-shaped chimney cap; and of course, a flat roof ringed with ceramic tile. It somehow evaded the Douglas Manor Association’s 1907 bylaw forbidding flat-roofed dwellings. But the illegal flat roof provided—and still does—some of the most dramatic views of Little Neck Bay, because of the careful positioning of the house on its lot to maximize views of the Bay.



Finally, head back to Shore Road. Watch the sunset and pinch yourself at your good fortune to live in such an amazing part of Queens!

-by Todd Tarpley

How an Airport Runway Extension and a Sewage Infrastructure Project Helped Restore Douglaston's Wetlands

Nearly 30 years ago, the uplands and wetlands adjacent to Alley Creek north of Northern Boulevard bore the legacy of many years of negligible environmental stewardship. Part of the area once housed a coal-fired electrical plant, with loading docks for barges built on the edge of Alley Creek in the 1920s and abandoned after World War II. At times, the area had been used as a dumping ground for construction wastes. Fill for several planned housing developments that did not get built also degraded the wetlands. Today, osprey, Great Blue herons, egrets and other wildlife call this now-beautiful wetland oasis home.

The wetland restoration adjacent to Alley Creek is the result of the landmark Clean Water Act (CWA) passed by Congress in 1972. The CWA assigned to the Environmental Protection Agency the herculean task of making the “*waters of the United States*” (abbreviated as “WOTUS”) fishable and swimmable. CWA Section 404 requires “mitigation” of water quality degradation caused by projects in or adjacent to WOTUS. This is often done by building new wetlands or restoring degraded wetlands nearby.

The phrase “*waters of the United States*” proved difficult to interpret. Major waterways like the Hudson River or Long Island Sound obviously qualified as WOTUS. It was less clear whether small tributaries or even drainage ditches would qualify; and still less clear whether adjacent wetlands could also be protected under the law. Fortunately for us, two infrastructure projects in Queens required mitigation measures to offset water quality impacts on WOTUS and resulted in two wetland improvement projects in Douglaston.

In the 1990s, six acres of Long Island Sound adjacent to LaGuardia Airport had to be filled in because a runway needed to be extended to enhance safety. To mitigate the effect of the fill, the Port Authority (the airport owner) was required to restore 13 acres of degraded Douglaston wetlands. The restoration work was done in 1997 by removing landfill, creating tidal channels and replacing low-value *Phragmites* reeds with environmentally beneficial *Spartina* grasses in the area west of the Doug-Bay Manor community.

During this work, the Udalls Cove Preservation Committee (UCPC) secured a NY State permit to install an osprey nesting platform in the center of the restoration area. UCPC built the platform, and Con Edison provided and installed the utility pole on which it was mounted. Within a few days an osprey pair was making a nest, and chicks have fledged from that nest every year since.



A decade later, New York City needed to mitigate for loss of wetlands along Alley Creek in Douglaston, at the site of the combined sewage storage tank that was being constructed north of Northern Boulevard near the Alley Pond Environmental Center. The City built a tidal inlet south of the LIRR tracks and west of the creek and also restored wetlands between the LIRR tracks and the golf driving range—a total of another 16 acres of wetlands restored.

Governmental agencies and the Supreme Court have flip-flopped repeatedly on the exact boundaries of “WOTUS” ... but meanwhile, more than 30 acres of Douglaston wetlands have been successfully restored as a result of the 1972 law.

THREE AREAS OF DEGRADED WETLANDS TOTALLING MORE THAN 30 ACRES HAVE BEEN RESTORED SINCE 1997 AS A RESULT OF THE 1972 CLEAN WATER ACT

-by Walter Mugdan

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Civics and More: Woman's Club of Douglaston

During the early years of the Douglaston neighborhood, two civic associations were formed to help the growing community: the Douglaston Civic Association (established in 1910 and limited to male membership) and the Woman's Civic Club of Douglaston (established in 1916).

Both civic associations operated in parallel, often duplicating efforts, until Mrs. A. M. Jenks became president of the Woman's Civic Club in 1924. After determining that the bylaws of the Woman's and Men's Civic Clubs were nearly identical, Mrs. Jenks spearheaded a renaming and reorganization of the Woman's Civic Club so it could operate on a much broader scale. The newly-named Woman's Club of Douglaston (WCD) maintained its role in community civic concerns but also became a clearinghouse for the other clubs in the community. The goal was to help the existing clubs organize meetings and activities without unintended conflicts with each other. Remember, this was well before the time of easy communication via text message and email.

The WCD has a large number of committees which run programs for members. While some committees align with early clubs which were brought under the WCD umbrella, and have existed since the WCD inception, others have formed and disbanded based on members' interests and current local and world events.

Throughout the years, the WCD has maintained a few key aspects that keep them thriving. The women of the club come together to serve people who are in need, help their community in times of crisis, and improve their knowledge of the arts in an environment of comradery.

Side note: In 1925, Mrs. Jenks petitioned The Douglaston Civic Association (DCA), aka The Men's Civic Association, to join forces and become one Civic Association. *"The time has gone by when men and women have found it expedient to do their work separately ... As citizens of the same state and residents of the most charming community in that state don't you think it possible that it might work out to greater efficiency if we got together, those of us who are really interested in doing the utmost for our benefit and the benefit of our children ...[and]*

grandchildren, so far as our community life is concerned? This request was denied at the time but in later years women were welcomed into the DCA.

-by Maura Wrynn

WCD Fun Facts

In 1935 babysitting services were available for young members with children for \$1.00 per hour, during the general meetings.

In 1948 the New York Times hosted a forum series on "What's on Your Mind" for the WCD at PS 98. They had to guarantee that 300 people would attend.

One of the most famous guest speakers was Amelia Earhart (famous female pilot).

In 1939-1945 many members were active in the Red Cross and British War Relief.

In 1969-1981 WCD had a Roadside Committee which focused on beautification of the community.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, members made face masks for people in Elmhurst hospital, a woman's' homeless shelter in Jamaica and a Veterans hospital in Long Island City. Their motto was "When the going got tough, our ladies got tougher."

**DOUGLASTON AND LITTLE NECK
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LIRR Station *continued from page 2*

Frederick Copley, included an apartment above for a station master who sold tickets and who also opened and closed the gates at an at-grade railroad crossing over the road into the peninsula. The 1887 Douglaston station house proved a wise investment, providing a ticket office and waiting area for the next 75 years. The only major change during that time was to move the entire building seven feet north to accommodate a second track installation by the LIRR. As time went on, however, the building fell into disrepair. The 1887 building was demolished and a new single-story "Mid-century Modern" style station house designed by Douglaston resident and architect Allan Gordon Lorimer replaced it. The new station building opened in 1962 and continues to serve the community today with a waiting area, restroom, and ticket vending machines.

The history of both the Douglaston and Little Neck stations is forever intertwined with Long Island's railroad barons. Their financial battles and travails resulted in two communities building their own rail service depots and the switching of names from one community to another. Perhaps if the railroads had not met with financial hardship, and if William P. Douglas had not had the vision to secure a permanent station in modern Douglaston, we might all be residents of one community called Little Neck.

-by Peter Reinharz

AN INVITATION

Ceremony of Healing and Remembrance

Members of the **Unkechaug** and **Matinecock Nations** with the support of the members of the **Shinnecock, Montaukett, and Setauket Nations** invite you to a ceremony of remembrance and headstone unveiling honoring the **Davis-Jones-Waters families** of Queens, New York.

In the late 1800's two young brothers—**Charles Edward Jones** and **Harry Jefferson Jones**, descendants of **Jane Davis Waters (Unkechaug)** and **Charles Waters (Shinnecock-Montaukett)**, were taken from their family and sent to the **Carlisle Indian Industrial School** in Pennsylvania, part of the federal system which sought to erase Native identity. They returned home gravely ill; both died in 1900 at ages 11 and 15. Their mother, Emma, would lose six of her fourteen children to tuberculosis in the years that followed—illnesses brought home from the boarding school.

Through the research of **Donna Barron (Matinecock-Montaukett)**, author and genealogist, the boys' story and resting place were rediscovered. **More than a century later**, with the support of **Friends of Maple Grove Cemetery** and funding from the **Douglaston and Little Neck Historical Society**, their graves are now marked for the first time.

The ceremony honors the enduring love, resilience, and heritage of their family and Nations. It will be held at 11:00 a.m. on **November 22**, at Maple Grove Cemetery Reception Hall, 127-15 Kew Gardens Road, Kew Gardens, NY 11415.