



OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE MUSEUM of ORIENT
and EAST MARION HISTORY

Summer 2011

NEWSLETTER

From Away: The Changing Face of Oysterponds by Fredrica Wachsberger



Summer Visitors, a painting by William Steeple Davis depicts those who came “from away” to visit the area in the early 20th c. meeting those who called Oysterponds home. Davis’ father came from Brooklyn to marry the daughter of a local ship captain. Glass plate negative in the OHS collection.

When we first came to Orient 32 years ago, we were described as the people living in Tommy Devoe’s house. Our friend Ed Papantonio said he thought that people only recognized him when he was standing on his front porch. When we are gone, the folks who succeed us in our house on Orchard Street will be living in Freddie and Sylvia’s place. All of this goes to show that while Oysterponds persists, its occupants are both deeply tied to it and yet transient. We are all part of a continuum which extends back well into the prehistoric period.

This summer, the Oysterponds Historical Society will present the first part of a two-year exhibition, *Oysterponds’ Changing Face: The First Millennia*, which will explore the various waves of settlers, immigrants and incomers that have molded the face of Oysterponds from its first

peoples to the present day. The exhibition will look at why people came, how they impacted the community and how they assimilated. We begin the story this summer with the different Native American groups who occupied this place from prehistoric times, whose burials and artifacts were studied by Roy Latham in the 1930’s. The exhibition will then take us through the period of the earliest settlers, most of whom came from England via the New Haven Colony. They developed large farms in the late 17th century. Many of their descendants still occupy the land and continue to work the farms. They also became ship captains, coastermen, and fishermen. Later still, there were lucky visitors who came, like Marvin Holmes of Connecticut, who boarded with Augustus Griffin in 1825.

-- At that time out of health, said he was from Connecticut, and in pursuit of that inestimable jewel health -- As the place looked agreeable, its harbour, bays, islands and prospects were congenial to his mind, he would stop with us some time-- Mr. Holmes is now 1845 one of our most prominent Merchants in our Village (The Diaries of Augustus Griffin, 1792-1852)

The charms of the area were a significant attraction that drew people to Oysterponds. In 1857, a visit was described in the *Long-Islander*:

Orient...instantly basks in the radiance of another new born Day. Then it seems as a pet child of Old Sol, sparkling with jeweled beauty beneath his smiles. Neptune, too has favored the locality by surrounding it with water highways, which richly yield the contents of the deep to add to its fertility and opulence, and aid in carrying its products to the world’s great marts of trade.

After the middle of the 19th century, and particularly after the Civil War, easy access to Oysterponds (by then Orient and East Marion) by railroad or by overnight steamboat to the Orient wharf brought city folks in droves to “rusticate.” They filled the boarding houses, built vacation homes, and married Orient and East Marion boys and girls -- not always with the heartiest welcome! Jane Hubbard thought that the reason the local boys made such a racket at the wedding night of her daughter Carrie to Charles Davis

(con’t on page 2)

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From Away (*con't from pg. 1*)

of Williamsburgh was that she hadn't chosen one of them:

I didn't know I told papa but that some of them done it out of spite because you slited [slighted] them and took Charlie --

Carrie and Charlie later became parents of Orient artist William Steeple Davis.

Finally, work on the big late 19th century farms, particularly the Hallock Farm, attracted workers who had emigrated from Europe and stayed to own their own farms and businesses. In 1884, the names of those Hallock hired to work his land were almost all German; Schiller, Richter, and Gossman,

Native American Artifacts

In conjunction with our summer exhibition *Oysterponds' Changing Face*, we have begun cataloging OHS' extensive Native American artifact collection. The collection contains a great many stone tools, including axes, adzes, mortars and pestles, hammers, net-sinkers, a bannerstone (spear-throwing weight), an ulu (curved knife) and some unidentified tools. It also contains a variety of rare bone tools such as leather-punches and sewing needles.

There are close to 600 arrowheads and spear points in the collection! The projectile points range in size from those smaller than a quarter inch to others as large as seven inches long. The oldest is a Clovis spear point dating to the Paleoindian period, between 11,500 B.C. and 8,000 B.C. They come in a variety of colors including white, pink, brown, grey, brown and black. Some arrow heads are salt-and-pepper colored and others are white-and-clear striped.

The collection also contains a number of steatite (soapstone) bowls and pipe fragments dating from 1000 – 700 B.C. that were found in local burials found by Orient archeologist and naturalist Roy Latham. Steatite is not found on Long Island, making these items evidence of early trade among the first Oysterponders and native people of southern New England. Many archeologists believe that the eastern tip of Long Island

among others. Another, Mr. Jaegger, came to work as foreman and eventually owned his own land. The Jaegers became an established family in Orient and eventually intermarried with some of the older families of the area such as the Griffings.

This rich history, which created the Oysterponds which we have been lucky to inherit or to choose in our turn, will be interpreted with genealogies, documents, diaries, artifacts and photographs. We will have to wait for next summer's exhibition to find our own 20th and 21st century places in this long continuum. ☺

by Amy Folk & Ellen Cone Busch

was much farther inland at the time these bowls were made. It is thought that Orient and East Marion, Plum Island and Fisher's Island were one continuous chain of hills enclosing a fresh water lake that later became Long Island Sound as sea levels rose.

The arrowhead pictured below is a shape known as the Orient fishtail because it was first found in Orient by Roy Latham. This type of projectile point was only made for about 300 years during the Transitional Stage between the Archaic and Woodland periods, about 1,000 B.C. The Orient People were hunter-gatherers whose unique culture may have spread from southern New England along with trade for steatite bowls. ☺



Orient Fishtail projectile point of rhyolite found locally by Larry Reybine near his former residence in Orient and donated to OHS by Brierly Reybine & Eleanor R. Myles.

SUMMER PROGRAMS & EXHIBITIONS

Made possible in part by grants from the New York State Council for the Arts and the Suffolk County Office of Cultural Affairs

Traditional American Craft Series

Celebrate the North Fork's rich history of traditional handcrafts, get to know your inner artist and learn centuries-old techniques taught by skilled artists and artisans. **Participants must register at least 3 days prior to the first session.** Classes have a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 participants. Ages 13 & up are welcome! Call 631-323-2480 to register.

WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP with Alan Bull

Whether you're a first-time or a veteran looking to improve your skills while working 'en plein air', this workshop will help you learn with individualized problem-solving. Join artist Alan Bull for one, two or three days of painting and drawing in Poquatuck Park. Includes demonstrations, ample time to work in a relaxed setting, and a critique at the end of each day.

July 14, 15, 16, 1:00 – 4:00 pm, \$165 / \$150 members, or per day: \$65 / \$60 members, materials not included.

BEGINNING BASKETRY with Carol Losquadro

Master basket weaver and co-president of the Basketweaver's Guild, Carol Losquadro, teaches age-old techniques and leads the beginners and veterans alike in making a roomy carry-all tote bag with seagrass accent. The class will be just outside the historic 18th century Webb House overlooking Poquatuck Park. The age minimum for this class is 10 years old.

August 6, 13, 20, 1:00 – 4:00 pm, \$70 / \$65 members, materials are included.



July 3 Oysterponds Heritage Day Community Celebration

Join friends and neighbors at a home-grown **FREE** celebration of local history and culture. Parade starts on Village Lane in Orient at 12:00 – decorated bicycles and pets on leashes welcome! We'll march to the Old Point Schoolhouse to read the Declaration of Independence and hear the North Fork Chorale. Then we'll head over to Poquatuck Park for a picnic, games and an 'open mic' of local music until 3:00.



June 25 North Fork Fresh Benefit

Kickoff the summer season with friends, sampling the richness and variety of local specialty food and drink on the Webb House lawn. 5:00 – 7:00 pm. \$75 per person, attendance is limited, please call 323-2480 for ticket information.

August 6 Summer Benefit

Our elegant summer bash held this year at a lovely bayside home in Orient. Silent art auction and live auction of chairs from local artists, architects and designers. An event not to be missed! 5:30 – 7:30 pm. \$125 per person and sponsorship opportunities as well, please call 323-2480 for ticket information. A preview of the chairs to be auctioned will be held on July 30th on the lawn at OHS together with a bake sale organized by our community's youngest supporters!

2011 EXHIBITIONS:

OYSTERPONDS' CHANGING FACE: THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

The first of a special two-year exhibition that will look at who our community is from its Native Americans to our present population, and what this meant to Oysterponds through two millennia. Swanson Gallery of the Old Point Schoolhouse.

WEBB HOUSE MARITIME ADDITIONS

VILLAGE HOUSE "UNDRESSED"

For more information, call (631) 323-2480 or visit our website:

www.oysterpondshistoricalsociety.org

Give the Gift of Membership

If you have already sent in your membership renewal for 2010-2011, thank you! If you are not yet a member, please consider becoming one, or if you have forgotten to renew, please consider doing so. Your membership dues are an integral part of continuing our operations here at OHS. The benefits of membership include unlimited free admission to the museums, discounts to special events and programs and a discount on all purchases at the Beach Plum Gift Shop. Most importantly, you will experience the satisfaction of helping to preserve the heritage of Orient and East Marion for the benefit of every generation.

Individual \$30 Family \$50 Associate \$100 Sponsor \$250 Patron \$500 Benefactor \$1000

Renew by check: Please fill out the form below and mail form and payment and to: OHS, PO Box 70, Orient, NY 11957.

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Oysterponds Historical Society - Preserving the Past for Every Generation



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