



THE YEOMAN

Farmingdale-
Bethpage
Historical Society
www.fbhsli.org

Mildred Johnston, President

James McCullagh, Vice-President

“George Washington’s Long Island Spy Ring” Set For February 14

In a program provided by the New York Council for the Humanities, Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan will present "George Washington's Long Island Spy Ring" at a meeting of the Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society on Sunday, February 14, at 2 pm. at the Board Room of Village Hall, 361 Main Street, Farmingdale. (The change from the usual meeting site is occasioned by the renovation program at the Farmingdale Public Library.)

Although General George Washington lacked today's sophisticated electronic equipment, he nevertheless had an effective intelligence network on Long Island during the American Revolution. After the defeat of the Continental Army in August 1776 at the Battle of Long Island in Brooklyn, the island was occupied by British troops until the end of the war.

Ms. Kaplan's presentation reveals how Patriot spies gathered British military information from Long Island westward to Manhattan and delivered it to George Washington despite constant danger.

Don't miss this exciting program on how a group of courageous Long Islanders contributed to an eventual victory for the Patriots!

Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan: Educator, Writer, and Lecturer

Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan, the FBHS speaker on February 14, specializes in art history and American history. For many years she was Director of Education for the Three Village Historical Society, where she developed in-school programs on local history, including "Long Island During the American Revolution". She is also co-editor of the book, WILLIAM SIDNEY MOUNT: FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND IDEAS, published by the TVHS.

The February 14 presentation is her third lecture during the last several years for the FBHS. She has spoken previously on Emanuel Leutze's painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and also the wit, humor, and satire found in the paintings of Long Island artist William Sidney Mount.

FBHS Thanks Mayor and Village Board For Use of Meeting Site

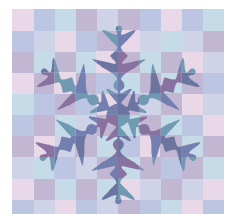
The officers and trustees of the Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society extend sincere thanks to Mayor George Starkie and the Village Board of Trustees for granting permission to use the Board Room of Village Hall for the February 14 meeting and also, if necessary, the March 21 meeting.

Members are advised to watch for the site of the March meeting in the next issue of THE YEOMAN and www.fbhsli.org, the Society's website.

January/
February
2010

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February 14 Marks Annual “Cherry Pie” Meeting

For several years the Society's February meeting has had program topics relating to George Washington and his relationship with Long Island. The theme continues on February 14, and with it, the drawing for the traditional cherry pie. Will you be the winner this year?

Society Honors Former Executive Board Members

The Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society will recognize at the February 14 meeting four former members of the Executive Board who have recently concluded their service. They include Jeanne Buck, Corresponding Secretary for many years, former Trustee Dolores McAfee, who was Chair of the Archives Committee, and former Trustees Elaine Ezzo and Maria Zito.

Be with us as we honor the many years of devoted service provided to the Society by these four individuals.

Priscilla Hancock Honored by Town of Islip

Congratulations to Priscilla Tedesco Hancock, a native of Farmingdale and a resident of Brightwaters. Priscilla was honored by the Town of Islip at an awards ceremony in late November which recognized Town residents who are helping significantly to preserve Islip history. The awards program was a culminating event as the Town observed November as Islip History Month.

Mrs. Hancock received the Peter Fox Cohalan Award for Preservation and Restoration in recognition of her organizing and maintaining more than 300 years of information in the library of the Bay Shore Historical Society, in addition to numerous other historical leadership achievements.

THE YEOMAN is proud to note that Priscilla and her husband Robert are also longtime members of the Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society! Bob Hancock is the current president of the Bay Shore Historical Society.

In Memoriam: Clare J. Rose

Clare J. Rose of our Society passed away November 30, 2009. Clare was a U.S. Army nurse from 1945 to 1948. She also served as a public health nursing supervisor for Nassau County and a teacher of students in nursing programs. Clare, who was predeceased by her husband Anthony, was a member of the Farmingdale chapter of the AAUW as well as the Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society. Her Funeral Mass was held December 4 at St. Kilian Church.

The Society extends sincere sympathy to Clare's nephew, nieces, and many friends.

Executive Board Meetings

The next meeting of the officers and trustees of the Society will be on Thursday, February 4 at 7pm at the Farmingdale Public Library in the conference room near the Reference Desk. The meetings will follow the traditional first, non-holiday Thursday of the month schedule. Subsequent meeting dates will be: March 4, 2010 and April 1, 2010. Members are reminded that they are always welcome to sit in on meetings of the executive board and, with prior arrangement with the president, to address the Board on matters of concern. Please be advised that due to renovation work in the Farmingdale Public Library, the meeting location may be subject to change. Notice of any such change will be posted in a future edition of THE YEOMAN and the Society's website, www.fbhsli.org.



Have You Visited www.fbhsli.org Lately?

The Society's website is continuing to add content on various facets of local history. The site contains information on the Bethpage Purchase, Farmingdale State College, Bethpage State Park, the area's proud aviation heritage, and the Quaker Meeting House, among other topics. There are also short historical articles in the "Vignettes" section, including the story of Benjamin Franklin Yoakum, Nazareth Trade School, the Cross-Island Trolley Line, and the theaters of Farmingdale's Main Street. Look at the old photos in "Then and Now" to see if you can identify what the pictured site now looks like! Present and past issues of THE YEOMAN are also there, as well as information on Society events. Visit www.fbhsli.org soon and often!

March 21 Meeting Marks Centennial of Penn Station

David Morrison and Pierre Lehmuller will share the program on Sunday, March 21, as these rail historians discuss the opening of Penn Station one hundred years ago as well as the tunnels beneath the Hudson and East Rivers that made Penn Station possible. The presentation will begin at 2 pm. Where is the meeting site? Stay tuned! The program will mark the conclusion of the FBHS 2010 Winter Lecture Series.

The Central Branch: Farmingdale's Other Rail Line

Farmingdale residents are likely more familiar with the Main Line of the Long Island Rail Road than with the Central Branch. After all, Farmingdale Station, now almost 115 years old, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located on the Main Line, which first served Farmingdale in 1841. The "Main Line" designation derived from its being the route to Boston, with ferry service linking Greenport to Connecticut.

But what is the story of the single track rail line which forms the southern boundary of the Village of Farmingdale? It was originally built as part of the Central Railroad of Long Island in the early 1870's by Alexander T. Stewart, the wealthy merchant who developed Garden City. Its Farmingdale station was located on the east side of Main Street, a short distance south of Fulton Street, and was later known as South Farmingdale Station after becoming part of the LIRR.

The Central's route from Flushing included, among several others, station stops at Garden City, Hempstead, Island Trees (Hicksville), Farmingdale, Breslau (Lindenhurst), and Babylon. It crossed the LIRR at Bethpage Junction, still an active division point, just west of Merritts Road. In its early days in the 1870s, the Central Railroad provided Farmingdale with seven daily trains, as opposed to just two for the LIRR. The station agent was the son of W. C. Dupignac, whose hotel was located just north of the Central's station in Farmingdale.

A spur of the Central line ran from Bethpage Junction up to the Nassau Brick Works in what is now Old Bethpage. The bricks were transported by rail to Garden City to build A. T. Stewart's planned community. Part of the right-of-way after World War II became Thomas Powell Boulevard, named after Farmingdale's founding settler.

By 1881 the Central Railroad was acquired by the Long Island Rail Road. Some of the lines the LIRR swallowed during this time of consolidation were just village-to-village routes, but the Central was a major acquisition.

The Central Branch was to figure in railroad and bicycle history on June 30, 1899, when Charles "Mile-A-Minute" Murphy pedaled a bicycle behind a LIRR train for a measured mile in 57.8 seconds southeast of Farmingdale.

Today the Central Branch continues to serve the LIRR by enabling diesel-powered trains to bypass the heavily trafficked section of electrified track of the South Shore Line west of Babylon. Heading eastward, these trains use the Main Line to Bethpage Junction then connect to the South Shore Line via the Central Branch.

The whistles of the diesel locomotives on the Central Branch approaching the grade crossings at Staples and South Main Streets help to recall an era almost 140 years ago when Farmingdale residents had two railroads vying to serve them!



**Farmingdale-Bethpage
Historical Society**

Box 500
Farmingdale, New York 11735
www.fbhsli.org

“We hold fast to the elements that
are dear to us.”
- Jesse Merritt

The Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society was founded at a meeting in historic Powell House, Merritt Road, Farmingdale, on April 12, 1964. It is chartered as an incorporated non-profit educational and cultural organization by the University of the State of New York.

Executive Board

- Mildred Johnston - President; Membership
- James McCullagh - Vice President
- Gail Goldschrafe - Recording Secretary
- Madeline Bondiotti - Corresponding Secretary
- Frank Bondiotti - Treasurer; Collections Committee
- JoAnne Bihary - Trustee; Hospitality; Collections Committee
- Serena Brochu - Trustee; Newsletter Editor; Collections Committee
- Joseph Carosella, Sr. - Trustee
- Nancy Cinque - Trustee
- Eric Goldschrafe - Trustee
- Harrison Hunt - Trustee
- William J. Johnston - Trustee
- JoAnn Krapp - Trustee; Exhibits Coordinator
- Pierre Lehmuller - Trustee
- Seymour Weinstein - Trustee; Website
- Nancy White - Trustee
- Lawrence R. Jorgensen - Ex-Officio Immediate Past President

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