

# FREEPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

## FREEPORT, NEW YORK

Newsletter

Spring 2015



# Message from the President

## Freeport in the Civil War

As we commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Civil War, it seems appropriate to describe Freeport as it was during that time period, 1861 to 1865. Just a few years before, in 1854, the voters in Freeport voted to change the name from Raynortown to Freeport. It was not yet an incorporated village but part of the Town of Hempstead in Queens County. To the north, were groves of trees and to the south open meadows, swamps, and marshes. Many streams flowed into a number of ponds. The western boundary was Milburn Creek. In the east, the Freeport River was fed by a number of streams including the East Meadow Creek. A saw mill and a gristmill were located on Mill Road at the northern end of the River. A pond, Daddy Bill Smith's, at present day East Dean Street, led to a stream that flowed down the east side of Main Street to the Freeport River. A stream and a series of small ponds, including Crystal Lake, flowed down the east side of South Grove Street.

The estimated 600 residents were farmers, fisherman and baymen. There were 25 places of business: grocery stores, a general store, blacksmith shops, gristmills, paper mills, a saw mill, a harness shop, a candy store, a carpenter shop, three hotels, two saloons, a wholesale liquor store, a lumber yard and two boat builders. Scott's Hotel, on South Main Street near Ray Street, had a history back to 1837. Most residents made their own clothing, soap, candles and other necessitates but did patronize the local shops as well as the stores in Hempstead village. The first one room school-house was located at the triangle where Main Street and Church Street met. There were two churches: the Methodist on Main Street and the Presbyterian on Raynor Street now Church Street.

Main Street was indeed the main street. It extended from the meadow lands (starting around Ray Street) up to Woodside Avenue where there were 61 houses. Half of them were below Merrick Road. Merrick Road, known as the Merrick and Jamaica plank road, was completed in 1852-1853 and a toll gate was near present day Long Beach Avenue. Stagecoaches took passengers to Brooklyn. There was no railroad. Sloops sailed to New York from either Freeport River or Milburn with clams, paper or cordwood. On their return they brought bricks and coal. Market wagons brought fish, poultry, vegetables, hay and straw to the city all year round.

Forty Freeporters went to war and 14 did not return. They were Treadwell Bedell (farmer), John Combs (farmer/fisherman), William T. Golder (harness maker), John Hutchinson (wheelwright), Benjamin Losee (fisherman), William R. Mead (fisherman), brothers Dandridge and Joseph Mott (baymen), Enoch Mulliner (fisherman), Elijah Raynor (farmer), William Seaman (laborer), Cornell Simonson (bayman), brothers Asa (farmer) and Vanderveer Smith (bayman). Many Freeport men joined the 119 Regiment New York Volunteers Company H. Also known as the Willis Company, they were recruited by Benjamin Willis a New York lawyer. They were mustered in September 4, 1862, and mustered out June 7, 1865. The H stood for Hempstead. They fought at Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, in Sherman's March to the Sea and the capture of Atlanta

"During the presidential election of 1864, there was a polling place at the hotel on the corner of Main Street and Merrick Road. Men came in from a radius of several miles to vote. On the opposite side of the road a couple of drums were being played. Market wagons came to town filled with men to vote. Some waved flags and hurraed for their candidate. Some were giving cheers for Uncle Abe, while others were cheering for General George B. McClellan

The following Spring, in 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated. I remember hearing men and women say Abe Lincoln was shot in a theater. In front of some of the houses were emblems of mourning in sympathy of the nation's loss. When the Civil War ended and peace was declared, Freeport had a celebration at the corner of Main Street and Merrick Road. On the corner was a vacant lot. Several loads of tree lumber were carted in and a large bonfire started. It was kept burning all during the evening, while every 20 minutes there was a loud report from a cannon fired across the way. There was speechmaking on the stoop of the corner store. Everybody was glad that the war had ended." (Material in quotes from (William E. Golder in the *Nassau Daily Review Star*)

# Calendar of events...

April 26, 2015	Museum opens for 2015 season
May 7, 2015	Freeport markers, trophies and monuments LILC, Melville Marriott. 9am to 10am
May 25, 2015	Memorial Day Parade
June 2, 2015	Spring meeting (Civil War) Freeport Memorial Library, 7pm to 9pm
June 6, 2015	Nautical Fair
July, 2015	Exhibit of Freeport Maps Freeport Memorial Library
July 11, 2015	Reception - Freeport Maps exhibit Freeport Memorial Library, 10am to 12:30pm

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## Spring Meeting



### Freeport In the Civil War

June 2, 2015, marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the American Civil War. Today, throughout Freeport there are many reminders of this conflict including monuments to 14 Freeporters who died while serving in the Union Army. Join us for a presentation by Regina Feeney, assisted by Cynthia Krieg, about what life was like in Freeport before, during and after the Civil War.

Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Time: 7 to 9pm

Location: Freeport Memorial Library

Refreshments will be served

# Welcome New Members!

## Individual

- Janet Buckner
- Elaine Cassimatis
- Karen and Peter Chambers
- Alison and Kurt Corell
- Duane Ebesu
- Bill Glacken
- Nancy and Bill LaRocca
- Dewey Smalls
- Priscilla Weyant

## In memory of...

- Bob Raynor donated by Rita Carter
- Dorothy Carlson donated by Jeanne Booth
- Doris and Max Pirodski donated by Nancy Pirodsky

## Honoring...

- John Zaluski donated by Regina Feeney

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## In memory of Ramona Crook

Ramona was a long time member of the Freeport Historical Society and a trustee. She was a resident of Freeport from the early 1940s and a graduate of Freeport High School and the Skinner Secretarial School. Early in her career she was a sales representative for Reuben H. Donnell Corporation of Manhattan. She retired to raise her daughter Jill but soon became active in our community. Ramona also was involved with the Girl Scouts. She was on the Village's Beautification Committee and, in 1980, was appointed a part-time coordinator of the Freeport Stabilization Task Force.



She is most remembered as the director of the Homefinders Service, a municipal agency that offered the same services as a real estate broker without charging commissions. It was founded to maintain the racial balance in Freeport. Many of those original homebuyers remember Ramona with fondness.

Her last contribution to the Freeport Historical Society was to open her home to the Society's house tour last October. The focus of the tour was homes impacted by Sandy. Her house was severely damaged and had just been rehabilitated. Sadly, she died before the day of the tour, but her daughter honored her mother's commitment. It was a wonderful opportunity to honor Ramona and all that she did for Freeport.



# In memory of Robert Raynor

Robert J. Raynor was born in Freeport Hospital located on South Ocean Avenue. His father was John Henry Raynor, a Freeport motorcycle policeman. He was a direct descendant of Edward Raynor, one of the first settlers, c. 1659, in the area of Raynor South, later called Raynortown and, finally, in 1853, renamed Freeport.



Mr. Raynor was an alumnus of the Archer Street Elementary School and graduated from Freeport High School in the class of 1953. He attended the Music School at Fredonia and Ithaca, N.Y., and served in the Army Reserve, 77th Division. He worked as a music teacher, audio-visual technician, retail salesperson, owner and director of the Steinmetz Music Studios and, for more than 20 years, glazier, craftsman, and salesman in the family business, Raynor's Glass Works.

He was a charter member of the Freeport Historical Society and served as its 2nd president as well as vice president, trustee, curator, and Director of Extension Services. He was vice chairperson of the 75th Freeport Anniversary Celebration in 1967; chairperson of the 95th Anniversary Celebration "Parade of History" and managing director of the 100th Anniversary Celebration in 1992. He was director of Freeport's Bicentennial celebrations in 1976 and 1983. He also was one of the founders of the Freeport Landmarks Preservation Commission. Mr. Raynor served as president of COMBO (Alumni of the Freeport High School Band and Orchestra) and co-director of their Reunion Concerts in Freeport in 1974, 1978, 1984 and 1988. Additionally, he has been director, since 1965, of the Street Band Preservation Society Marching Band, was the first director of the Old Bethpage Village Brass Band, and was founder of the Long Island Trumpet Choir at Freeport.

Mr. Raynor founded the Great South Bay Model Railroad Club in 1980 at Freeport, was a charter member and first president (1993) of the Raynor Family Association, and a board member of the Long Island Wireless Historical Society. He also held a ham radio license. He was a member of the Freeport United Methodist Church, where he had served faithfully in many capacities. He also was a member of the Freeport Community Band, the Little Theatre Orchestra, Senior Pops Orchestra, Island Symphony Orchestra, Seaford Community Band, and Long Island N-Trak Railroad Club.

## Officers and Trustees

**President and Curator** Cynthia Krieg

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President** Marty Himes

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## On the Web

We can be found on the web at:

**[www.freeporthistorymuseum.org](http://www.freeporthistorymuseum.org)**. There you will find our current events and latest news! Don't forget to check out the [longislandmemories.org](http://longislandmemories.org) site! We have over 5,000 photos loaded there.

Follow us on **Twitter!** Our handle is @FrptHisSoc

Join our group on **Facebook!**

Read our blog **[freeportlihistory.blogspot.com](http://freeportlihistory.blogspot.com)**

Contact us at **[freeporthistoricalsociety@yahoo.com](mailto:freeporthistoricalsociety@yahoo.com)**

Visit us at our **Second Life** office (pictured below)



## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS!

**2015-2016 memberships are up for renewal. Check the mailing label for your expiration date. Please continue your support of the Museum's operation. Your dues are tax deductible. If you want a membership card, pick it up at the Museum or at the meeting.**

Freeport Historical Society is a non-profit organization solely supported by memberships and contributions. In addition to the regular memberships, the Society has established a LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND and a MEMORIAL FUND for receiving gifts.

Please make check payable to "The Freeport Historical Society", P.O. Box 323, Freeport, NY 11520

- INDIVIDUAL (\$10 annually)  FAMILY (\$15 annually)  SUSTAINING (\$25 annually)
- ORGANIZATIONS/CORPORATIONS (\$50 annually)
- LIFE MEMBER (Single Donor \$150)  LIFE MEMBER (Organizations/Corporations \$250)
- MEMORIAL FUND (In memory of) \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle any area of interest as the Society NEEDS your participation and help.

Host/Hostess at the Museum   Digital accessioning   Newsletter   Filing   Research   Gardening  
Photography   Cleaning   Hospitality Committee (baking)   Membership Mailings   Graphic Arts