Freeport – Old and New

1917-1918

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Every community is new until it begins to relate its past and then the piling years seem to mark shadows of wisdom on its beauty until real antiquity appears. So Freeport, with all its youthful spiritliness, here shows its furrows which time has marked, which no doubt our citizens have not observed and our visitors never suspected. But they be lines of grace, not shame; lines of progress, not sleep; lines of development -- advance; and we trust the next editor who takes up the pen for the coming page of our history will have the same privilege we enjoy of writing only words of a successful onward march.

IT’S SETTLEMENT

In 1643 Hempstead, Long Island, was settled by Rev. Robert Fordham and a party of Englishmen, who had settled for a time in New England and extended their prospecting here. They received a patent of a large tract of land from the Dutch Governor Kieft, in 1644. This party included in its members, Rev. Richard Denton, John, Robert and Benjamin Coe, William Raynor and John Carman, who accepted grants of land for settlement and began the contest for success in the wilderness.

South of Hempstead was the great South Woods which extended east and west for miles, near the “Great Bay”. Seldom has it been the lot of pioneers to find shelter and food as easily at hand. The white cedars, oak, hickory and maple, like
soldiers, tall and straight, yet ready to band to the stroke of the woodman’s axe, giving
themselves to shelter him from the storm and to make cheerful fires on the great hearth
for the cold winter days; and the great inland sea, protected from the ocean tempest by
the bulwark of a sandy beach, its waters and bed richly stocked with fish and clams for
his provision.

He found his red brethren, the Merokes, in possession of this locality and
to the eastward; and the Rockaways to the west. From the Merokes in some cases he
purchased his rights, in others, he contested them; but altogether lived peaceably and
with little molestation from them.

As early as 1680 we have this record of the sale of land which we abbreviate:
“Sale by Thomas Rushmer, of Hempstead, to John Smith, in ye North Riding of New
Yorkshire (now Queens and Nassau County), Long Island, 2 lots of meadowland,
containing 20 acres, lying ye 1st at Washburn’s Neck (now Freeport), ye 2nd at Little
Coe’s Neck.

“Witness my hand and seal this 11th May, 1680.

Thomas Rushmer.

In the presence of

Edward French, Nathaniel Persell.

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To picture the life of these early settlers is but to repeat the hardships of the
development of every new country.

First, a clearing in the forest beside a clear running stream, where was erected
the log house, this spot year by year enlarging from a house garden to a larger plot,
until in the passing decade a good sized farm had been cleared. Then others came to
do as the first settlers had done and here and there in the midst of the forest they
cleared the way for civilization.

A NEW ERA

As the eighteenth century advanced, the white man began to display his
ingenuity in the use of the water power which flowed uncontrolled down the East
Meadow Brook into Merrick River. In a crude way he harnessed this force to saw his
trees into slabs and grind his grain.

Then the log cabin gave place to a different structure, one more comfortable in
appearance, as well as in fact.

At Washburn’s Neck in the Great South Woods, at a location now definitely
known as Ocean and Randall Avenues, there was erected in 1795 by Jacob Bedell, a
spacious modern homestead. Some years later this structure was moved several
hundred feet east, where it not stands, corner of Randall Ave. and Main Street, and is
the home of Mrs. R. H. Mayland. Its appearance was somewhat changed by alteration.
Two large oak trees were planted by Mr. Bedell at the homestead gateway, one of
which now remains, the other being destroyed by lightning a few years ago.

Prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century the description of property at
Washburn’s Neck was changed in conveyances to Raynor, South Reighnortown, or
Raynortown – nearly the entire section of old Freeport being then in possession of this
family. It had by this time grown to be a hamlet of a dozen houses along the road to the
Bay, (now Main Street), where lived those who made their livelihood from the water.

At the head of Freeport Creek, Mill Road near South Main Street, was the grist and sawmill of Daniel Raynor, very primitive in construction, but from miles around came those who had grain to grind and timber to be sawed. The mill pond here in winter was the skating park of Raynortown.

Joseph Smart’s mill on Merrick River was at this time, 1837, manufacturing paper of such quality as to attract the publishers of New York. The first editions of “Thompson's Long Island” and “Webster’s Speller” were printed on paper from this mill.

OLD ROADS

No roads in the early days went east and west through Raynortown. The Merrick Road is a modern improvement, so to speak. Fulton Street came from the west to Church Street, where it turned north to Main Street. You could then go north to Hempstead or northeast along “Crooked Lane”, now Broadway, to Hempstead and Babylon Turnpike, or south to the Mill Road, which led you east towards Merrick. Bayview Avenue and the old Turtle Hook Road were the only other roads in this locality up to 1830. There were a few lands between farms and through meadows, but no highways.

MODES OF TRAVEL

To get to Raynortown from Brooklyn in ye old days, the stage coach with its
uncertain connections and delays occupied a good part of the day. It now takes less than one hour from Freeport to Penn. Station, New York City.

In the “40s” the L.I.R.R. had a road to Hempstead, the old-fashioned tub-top-smoke-stack engine, burning wood for fuel, belching sparks that in the dry season made serious conflagrations in the woods and meadowlands. It was because of this that the projectors of the Southside R. R. were so stolidly opposed by the farmers in the “60s” when they endeavored to lay out the road which was not finally completed to Babylon until 1868. With a change of fuel the old danger was much eliminated and the advantage of transit has proved a great, and is still growing, blessing, to the landholder and residents.

In one year more we hope to have the extension of the L. I. R. R. electric service now as far as Lynbrook, which will mean through trains, without change to Brooklyn and Manhattan.

In 1905 the N. Y. and L. I. Traction Co. completed its trolley circuit from Jamaica via Hempstead, Freeport, Rockville Centre, etc. making a circuit back to Brooklyn. It is especially convenient for local travelers between villages.

POST-OFFICE

There was no post office in Raynortown in the early days, the nearest being at Merrick, one mile away at the intersection of East Meadow Road and the Hempstead and Babylon Turnpike. The postmaster from 1840 to 1858 was Joseph Smith, who kept the general store at this location and received the mail once daily by stagecoach.
running from Brooklyn to East Hampton. He was succeeded by his son, Carman Smith, who was the postmaster until its removal to Freeport in 1873. In the meantime, of course, 1868, the mail coach had given place to the better service of steam.

Sidney Smith, brother of Carman, was postmaster in Freeport, 1873, until his death in 1880. The mails were then received and sent twice daily. His successors have been: Albert Cox, Elbert Bedell, Daniel B. Raynor, Charles S. Powell, each serving about four years, Robert G. Anderson, sixteen years, and the present postmaster, T. Benson Smith, appointed in 1916. Under the influence of the rapid growth of our village, great advancement has been made in facilities and service.

In 1896 the office was changed from fourth to third class, under the receipts then mounting to $1,900. In 1908 it was made second class, with receipts of $9,000. In 1907 they increased to $13,500, and in November of that year free delivery service was established with three regular carriers, making deliveries and collections twice daily. The annual postage receipts now are $21,000; receipts and payments of Post Office orders, $200,000 and Postal Savings bank balance, $8,000.

SCHOOL

Early in the nineteenth century, perhaps 1820, the farmers agreed to open a school for their children, and at the corner of Church and Main Streets the little one-story schoolhouse was erected. It had a shelf or desk of pine built along each wall with a bench of rough slabs and peg legs in front. There was also a platform at the end of the room from which the “professor” surveyed the faces of his “hopefuls”.
In winter an iron plate stove glowed in the center with logs generously piled in to make a roaring fire. The boys played the usual tricks and received the usual “dressing down”. Perhaps thirty children. The gradual growth, however, and the years went by, made larger rooms necessary.

About 1852 the second school in Raynortown was opened. It was on the west side of Main Street, near Fulton, and was enlarged in 1858 to accommodate two hundred scholars.

In 1875 the need of a much larger schoolroom was evident. A plot of ground at the northwest corner of Pine and Grove Streets was purchased and a commodious building erected. This was sufficient for thirteen years, when alterations were necessary here also, and these had only been completed for five years when again the building was too small for all who applied.

It was a cold night, January 10, 1893, that the writer was returning on the 11 o’clock train, when the brakeman remarked on leaving Baldwin that there appeared to be a fire at Freeport. The sky was ablaze with a red glow.

It was a beautiful but awful sight as you approached to see the tall posts of the schoolhouse – all that then remained standing – blazing, upright sticks.

There was no fire-fighting apparatus except the Hook and Ladder Company and its bucket brigade, which of course was powerless in such a fire. To save the adjoining houses the whole populace was out en masse, snowballing the buildings and thus the melting snow kept the sparks from lighting.

This fire was both destructive and constructive, and accomplished three things for Freeport.
A new brick school, a water-works and a fire department, for the people had been suddenly awakened to their need and their danger.

The old school plot of ground was too small and it was cold and a much larger site at the southeast corner of Pine and Grove Streets purchased.

Here in 1893 a new ten-room High School with every up-to-the-minute requirement of that date was erected to accommodate 500 pupils at a cost of $30,000. Yet we grew, so that in a few years the assembly room had to be used for classes and stores in nearby buildings hired for classrooms. In 1904 a large extension of 10 rooms was made, with sittings for 500 more pupils at a further cost of $30,000. Still we grew and in 1907 a brick Primary school of 10 rooms and assembly room, seating 350 more children at a cost of $30,000, was erected in the northern part of the village, at Seaman and Ocean Avenues, and in 1910 a Primary school was constructed in the south section of the village at Archer Street and Long Beach Avenue at a cost of $43,000., seating about 350 pupils; and in 1915 a building of 12 rooms with assembly room and seatings for 500 pupils at a cost of $82,000., on Columbus Avenue in the northeast section of the village. All fine brick structures of modern architecture and every appointment for the best method of instruction.

The High School has well equipped chemical and physical laboratories, manual and physical training departments under competent directors. There is also a public Library of nearly 5,000 well-selected volumes at No. 30 South Grove Street.

The school enrollment is now 1,950. The annual cost for 1917, $91,000.

The very best citizens of our village have sacrificed time and energy in serving our people. Some have been educated at this shrine and in manhood served for many
years with a faithfulness that only a love for the Alma-Mater can secure and money can not buy. Mr. Hiram R. Smith, Mr. Samuel R. Smith, Mr. Albin N. Johnson and Mr. C. Milton Foremen are of this number.

Mr. C. Dwight Baker, President; Mr. Charles Cl. Moore, Vice-President; Walter B. Cozzens, David Sutherland, Jr; and Wm H. Grace continue the excellent direction our Village has always enjoyed from its Board of Education, while the schools is their charge are under the superintendency of Prof. Ward C. Noon, and a faculty membership of a principal and 17 teachers in the High School and 3 principals and 40 teachers in the graded schools.

In the days when Freeport gave only a rudimentary education in its District school, the Rev. Marcus Burr conducted the “Freeport Academy”. He was succeeded in 1872 by a young man whose name is dear to the hearts of our people, who though he continued the school but a few years before he took up a mercantile pursuit, left his impression for good upon the minds and hearts of our people. We refer to Mr. Wm. Foreman, who died some years ago.

CHURCHES

Early Missionary Work

Though far from civilization, even in the earliest settlement the dwellers in the “Great South Woods” were not neglected in religious attention; for traveling Quaker missionaries went from house to house leaving the truth in word and example. So
zealous were they that Governor Peter Stuyvesant endeavored to supplant their labors by those of his own choice, the Dutch Presbyterian.

Methodist Episcopal Church

The first actual record of Christian work in Freeport is the statement in the Methodist Church minutes by the Rev. Thomas Birdsall, an aged local preacher in years gone by, that he was converted in 1813 in Raynortown, in a class led by Parker Baldwin.

The home of Willet Raynor was in the early days the “preaching place” though William B. Raynor is no doubt the father of active Methodism in this community. He was born in 1801, converted 1823 and appointed class reader in 1829.

In 1833 a small store was purchased on the west side of Hempstead and Babylon Turnpike, south of Seaman Avenue, and the first church in Raynortown district was open for worship. It was known as the Sand Hill Church, though some designate it Sand Hole Church to distinguish it from the old Sand Hill Church at Rockville Centre. The trustees elected June 11th, 1833, were Willet B. and William B. Raynor, William Smith, Jackson Post and Jarvis Combes.

For twenty five years, services were held in this little building. They were presided over by local preachers and exhorters and the circuit preacher.

In 1858 most of the congregation had removed or located in the settlement of Raynortown proper, now “Old Freeport”. Fulton, and erected a comfortable frame church seating 200 people. It was enlarged in 1877 and otherwise improved; but it was outgrown in 1890, when the present church was planned.

A large piece of land was purchased at Pine Street, east of Grove, where the
church was completed at a cost of $20,000 and dedicated free of debt in July, 1891. The main church and the general outward appearance was the same as today; but lacking Sunday School accommodations and social appointments. It was deemed advisable in 1915 to make the general improvements at a cost of $11,000, which was done and its cost is now fully provided for.


PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In the little first schoolhouse, before described, which stood at the junction of Church and Main Streets, the Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge, of Hempstead Presbyterian Church, began in the year of 1839 Sunday afternoon preaching services. After Sunday School, which closed about 3 o’clock, the people would stand about the doorway and look for the little white horse and rig carrying the preacher from up the road. When in sight, they marched solemnly back to the school and were quietly seated and ready for the sermon.

At a meeting held April 8th, 1840, a resolution was passed to build a church; and on October 13th the Presbyterian Society was incorporated and Thomas Carman, Jr., Sylvanns Bedell and Reuben Pine were elected trustees. A lot was purchased and a
building erected on the east side of Main Street, near the Post Office.

Rev. Mr. Woodbridge was grieved because the people were careless of the services of God’s house. They even pitched quoits, ran horses and ploughed in the fields in sight of the church. His appeal to them were of little avail. Rev. F. Merrill, who succeeded him in the work of the pastorate, tried a new plea. He invited all the young people to meet at his house to form a singing class, which he taught, and so won the hearts of the people. He was the first stationed preacher, a faithful man, and left the moral tone of Raynortown far above the level at which he found it.

The present Presbyterian Church was completed May 13th, 1860, at a cost of $5,255. From this edifice the first Church bells in Raynortown rang, inviting the people to God’s house. The chapel was erected, a gift to the church by Mrs. George W. Bergen, now deceased, in memory of her mother, Elizabeth Carman, about 1879.

The many years of association in work of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches has brought to pass a very beautiful custom of ringing the bells for church services in conjunction, the sextons alternating the strokes of the bell with each other.

Many faithful ministers have served the people, none more revered than the Rev. K. P. Ketchum, who retired from active ministry January 1st, 1908, after 16 years of consecrated service, and Rev. Chas. H. Scholey, who after four years of consecrated and rare devotion, was called to his reward. His successor, the Rev. J. Sidney Gould, is greatly aiding with his people in the religious and moral advancement of our village.

ESPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
The Church of the Transfiguration, a mission of the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, was founded about 25 years ago.

The first services were held by Canon Schultz in Opera Hall, formerly on Main Street, in 1893, and in the following year the Parish House, which still serves as a place of worship, was erected and dedicated.

Services were conducted by various Lay Readers under the direction of the Canon Missioner until 1897, when the Rev. F. James R. Smith became the first Priest-in-Charge. His successors were, in 1898, the Rev. Arthur Lowndes, D. D., the Rev. Pelham St. George Bissell, M. A., in November, lot 161 x 234 feet. In May 17th, 1908, the Rev. Stanley W. Roberts began his services with the church and much added interest was secured. This brilliant young preacher served his people two years with great success, when in a sad drowning accident at the beach, he lost his life. He was succeeded by the Rev. Elmer E. Loux for a term of four years and then by the present minister, the Rev. William Breckenridge, who is worthily carrying forth the work of the Master ably supported by his people. The Nabbath School is in a most flourishing condition, having over 100 scholars on its roll.

CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE HOLY REDEEMER

The Catholic Church is situated on the northeast corner of Pine Street and Ocean Avenue. The parish originally formed part of a mission of Rockville Centre. Rev.
Thomas Carroll in 1895 found 18 Catholics at Freeport.

The first services were held on the Christmas morning of 1897, in the house of William Dougherty on Fulton Street. Sunday school was organized in the house of Mr. James F. Haggerty in the spring of 1898. At this time there were about 75 Catholics in attendance. In November of '99, Freeport was transferred to care of Rev. Wm. B. Farrell, of Hempstead, services being held in Willis' Hall until July, 1900, when the first church, on Pine Street near Gove Street was opened.

In 901 the Rev. Henry Eimmer of Jamaica was appointed pastor and in February, 1903 he was succeeded by Rev. Charles A. Logue. He was not a man of robust health, but of indefatigable works and spirit. And under such influence the parish rapidly grew with the rapidly growing community.

In a few years the little church was for the small and with unbounded faith and enthusiasm he went forth with his people to the task of erecting a structure for the future. This beautiful church was completed in 1911 at a cost of $85,000. His constant devotion to this work bore heavily on his health and he died September, 1914. He was succeeded by the Rev. John L. O'Toole who leads his large membership of 1100 with full cooperation into fields of great opportunities in the service of our King.

CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

In answer to the earnest prayers of the Lutheran families who lived in Freeport, Pastor George O. Loos, Eastern Field Missionary at that time, held the first Lutheran service in this village on Palm Sunday, April 4th, 1909. Seventeen were present and
eleven attended Sunday School session on the same day. Services for three months were held in Brooklyn Hall and on Thursday, June 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1909, the congregation was incorporated as a religious society under the title: Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The first regular pastor, Rev. Oscar V. Werner, was installed October 17, 1909. He served his congregation until September, 1911, when he sailed for India where he is laboring with great success as a missionary of the Cross. The present pastor, the Rev. August C. Kharkau, came from Newport News, Va., to take charge of this field on Sept. 24, 1911.

During the first summer the congregation was able to secure the use of a portable chapel from the Home Mission Board, which was erected at first on rented ground on North Main Street, but which since September, 1911, stands on the property bought by the congregation. During the present pastorate many improvements have been made to the chapel. The church roll shows 125 members: the Sunday School about 150.

The Ladies’ Aid Society, the Men’s Club, the Luther League and the choir afford opportunity to old and young for work and social enjoyment.

We mention, also, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, located on Henry Street, which has been successfully working among their people for a dozen years. They have a neat little house of worship and a good field for their harvest. There are also gatherings of religious workers of the Plymouth Brethren and similar groups, working without organization, but earnest zeal, spreading the gospel message with
ardent spirit and success.

THE OLD COUNTRY STORE

As far back as the memory of any informant, 1837, Raynortown had two general stores. The larger of the two was formerly on Pine Street, between Church and Main Streets. It was kept by Riley Raynor and John Mead. Its stock was not large but answered the people’s necessities: dry goods, boots and shoes, hardware, etc. and last, but not least, we are sorry to say, the indispensable annihilator, liquors. Here, indeed, can Freeport find the vast change of sentiment in the intervening years, and rejoice that an evil once so commonly handled, is now despised and relegated to one class of business and not only under rigid restrictions of the government, but condemned by the people, even those who use it. May the day soon come when public sentiment will have taken one more step and banish it altogether.

The old country store is not with us today; but the enterprise of this day has given the people a more ready servant in all good things. Today he waits upon you at your door, he delivers a better goods at a cheaper price in better manner; and Freeport can well say of the store of the past as of every other gain or improvement: the old friend has changed into a new and more serviceable one.

THE FREEPORT CLUB

The Freeport Club is a social organization in which our citizens take pride. It was
organized in 1901, with Wm. P. Miller as President, having its home on Main Street. It began to grow rapidly and in 1903 procured land on Grove Street and erected a very fine clubhouse. The present management is: Elvin N. Edwards, President; Forest S. Dunbar, Vice President; C. M. Vanderoef, Treasurer; John S. Sumner, Secretary and a Board of eight directors.

The club has 280 in its membership, some of the best and most prominent men, not only of Freeport, but the neighboring villages, and the reason is probably because of its strict prohibition of all alcoholic beverages from its premises and that its door are closed on Sunday.

Many social events and entertainments have been held in its large hall on the second floor. The main floor is reception hall, library, dining room, etc., while the basement is used for the bowling alleys.

THE FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

It would be a worthy but quite impossible task for us, in the space we have, to attempt to mention the great work of helpfulness and beneficence constantly going forward from the many fraternal organizations meeting in our village, some in halls, or their own rooms or houses. Every good work has a large place for advancement in our beautiful village and the prosperity of each, such is the hearty wish of our people.

OUR BANKS
The Freeport Bank was established in 1893 with John J. Randall, President, and Wm. S. Hall, Cashier. It has steadily grown to more than $1,000,000. Resources and its splendid building on Main Street is a credit to our village.

The First National Bank of Freeport was organized 1905, and has had substantial success under the management of Mr. Roswell Davis, President. Its resources now nearly $800,000. Its fine building near the station is conveniently located and gives prominence to our village.

THE COUNTRY HOTEL

The country Hostelry or Tavern of ye olden times was not so much for a comfort to the traveler as a place of amusement and entertainment of the community, where in “frolics” were wont to be held. It would have served a good purpose had it avoided the sale of liquor; but like toe country store, here also it was indispensable.

On the northeast corner of Main Street and Broadway, there stands the building now occupied as a dwelling. It is the ole hostelry kept in the ‘30s by Benjamin Smith. Here gathered in ye old days the lads and lassies whose feet made time to the tune of colored Townsend’s fiddle. The latter was a quaint old character in Raynortown and made an easy living by the drawing of his bow.

While some improvements in appointments are found in the village Hotel of today, much the same motive exists and the “comforts of home” will be sought in the boarding-houses, and in Freeport there are a number worthy of patronage.
FREEPORT VILLAGE

By the opening of large farms into streets and avenues and building plots in 1885, which will be mentioned later, the growth of Freeport was so rapid as to make it desirable for a local government. On Saturday evening, June 18, 1892, 20 citizens met at Van Riper’s Hall and discussed village incorporation. William Foreman was elected chairman; Charles L. Wallace, H. P. Libby, Hiram R. Smith, Platt Conklin were appointed a committee to take steps to incorporate the village of Freeport. By a vote of the citizens of the territory incorporation was accomplished. The first officers were Carman Cornelius, President; Raynor R. Smith, Henry Mead, H. Asa Nichols, Trustees.

We have been well served by careful officials during these years. Assemblyman George Wallace, Supervisor Smith Cox. The retiring President, Mr. Ernest S. Randall, deserves great credit in his work in our village Board for the last few years. The present officers are: Sidney H. Swezey, President; Henry L. Maxson, Franklin Bedell, Silas Williams and John Mahnken, Trustee; and Sylvester P. Shea, who has been clerk for fifteen years, and Albin N. Johnson, Counsel. Freeport Has government in which political parties have so far taken no part, and it works.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department was organized October 20, 1893. Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company had been doing excellent service since 1874, and is still very active. Our department now consists of one steam fire engine, one Hook and Ladder company
and four hose companies and one patrol, nearly all of which are motorized. The department officers and men give entirely gratuitous service. The excellence of their discipline and the promptness of their work has so many times been exemplified in actual service that we have the utmost confidence in their ability to fight fire. Fire Chief John L. Randall, Jr. and his assistants and foremen are ably supported by 275 men, and have property value in their charge of $40,000.

THE WATER SYSTEM

The need of a water system had been plain to the people in the schoolhouse fire of 1893 and for some time had been the topic of conversation; and by their vote to build a water works plant at a cost of about $40,000. The water department was established in 1893. The first tap was put in July 24, 1894, and the comfort of this splendid service is the pride of our village today. It has cost upward of $120,000. It has deep driven wells from which the pure filtered water is pumped into the iron standpipe, which is 25 feet in diameter and 120 feet high, giving steady, heady pressure to all parts of the village. It supplies the best water at a reasonable charge and last year yielded $11,000 profit to the village.

For the want of a better service the streets of Freeport were lighted by large oil lamps in June, 1894. This was not intended as a permanent enterprise and though it greatly improved our village, it needed but the suggestion of our Village Board that the village erect an electric light plant in connection with the water system, to awake all the people to interest in the cause. At the special election the Board were instructed to
erect such a plant at a cost not to exceed $20,000. The first arc light was turned on May 25, 1898. Our streets are now lighted with 1,000 c.p. arc lamps. The plant has cost $96,000. Its light for use in our homes is excellent at 10 cents per 1,000 watts and last year yielded a profit of over $21,000 to the village.

The incorporation of Freeport, making the possible the establishment of the two necessities of comfort, light and water, together with our admirable public school system, has done more to enhance the value of Freeport as a place of residence than ten times the cost of the enterprises. The homes are also supplied with light and cooking facilities by gas from the Nassau-Suffolk Lighting Company.

In the old days the Freeport Roads and streets in winter were a trial to men’s souls. A few years ago we spent $50,000 for the building of improved streets, principally with Peekskill gravel. This improvement has been extended each year until we now have 23 miles of gravel streets, seven miles of cinder streets, and two miles of macadam streets, and one mile of shell streets. Each spring these are improved where necessary, and in the most traveled sections, oiled to allay the surface dust.

Many other departments of the village; the Police, Board of Health, etc., could occupy space, if we had it, to give credit to their efficiency and service; their work is just as important as those mentioned if not as interesting reading.

**OUR PAPERS**

The Nassau County Review was established in Freeport in November, 1895 by Mr. Charles D. Smith as The Queens County Review, and upon the separation of the
County of Nassau, its title was changed. It was purchased some years ago by Mr. Smith F. Pearsall, one of the members of Freeport Chapter, who conducts a clean, newsy weekly paper. It speaks promptly in behalf of all good work and the village is fortunate in having so faithful an advocate. By his kindness some of the cuts appear in the illustration of this book.

The Nassau Post, also a thriving competitor and co-operator in the journalism of our Village, Town and County, under the editorship of Mr. James Stiles, was established in 1914. Its successful progress has been no small gain to our community.

REAL ESTATE

In the early days, to own property in Raynortown was generally to possessed of it. The first enterprise or effort to sell small plots was made by Mr. Charles L. Wallace in 1892. He advised Mr. Daniel Raynor, who tried long to sell his farm, but failed to do so, to cut streets through the property and sell it in small parcels. Bedell Street, Raynor Street and Smith Street were opened and the property sold for three times the price of the farm.

RANDALL PARK

John J. Randall moved to Freeport in the Spring of 1885, and purchased of D. Wesley Pine the cottage at the corner of Fulton Street and Ocean Avenue.

During the summer he purchased the farm of E. A. and John R. Bedell and
portions of the farm of John Mead, Robert Porterfield and Samuel Smith, comprising about 100 acres. The land was laid out in streets, and otherwise beautified by the setting out of cedar, spruce and maple trees, and was known as Randall Park. The only building on the property at the time was the “Old Homestead”, erected by Jacob Bedell, which has been heretofore described. Hundreds of residences have been erected here. This was the first large enterprise towards the making of new Freeport.

He next purchased what is known as East Randall Park, comprising about 40 acres, which was laid out, and on which many cottages have also been erected.

Mr. Randall’s beautiful residence, Woodbine Cottage, is on Lena Avenue, in the northern section of the park, and is one of the many attractive homes in Freeport’s one and on-half miles square.

That section of Freeport known as Woodcleft, extending from the Merrick Road South to Woodcleft Channel, was opened up for building purposes in the spring of 1890. This property formerly comprised the farms of the late S. S. Carman and adjoining lands known as the Whaley and Southard sections; also the farms of Elisha Raynor, Albert Cox, D. W. Pine, John Holloway and others.

Woodcleft Channel was constructed in 1898 by Messrs. Randall and Miller and opened up a waterway directly into the South Bay. Its channel was 100 feet wide and of good depth at low tide, so that steamers from the beach found accessible dockage and the owners of pleasure craft built houses for their boats along the shores. In 1907 Mr. Randall built a much larger channel from Bayview section to the Bay. It is 300 feet wide and 10 feet deep at low tide. Both of those channels are great pleasure spots in the summer season.
Many other sections have been developed by Mr. Randall and others until Freeport has scarcely a plot and certainly no acreage of undeveloped land.

The correct village would certainly not be fully so without a golf course, and so in the northwest corner of the village, on each side and across the brook, from Stearns Park to Grand Avenue, Baldwin, is the local grounds.

In Bayview section the Tennis club has its grounds.

The former of these places would be a beautiful rumble of about a mile along the brookside for our convention visitors. The Freeport Power House, Centre Street, near Long Beach Avenue, will be of great interest to those interested in machinery, and the chief engineer will be pleased to see our visitors in groups of ten to inspect the works.

Freeport is not a manufacturing centre and we hope will still remain the “home village”, yet we have some enterprises, not large as compared with city plants, but manufacturing goods of renown.

The Columbian Bronze Works, manufacturers of the famous Columbia propellers, is located at 214 North Main Street. In groups of ten you would be welcome to see the casting of the propellers and the finishing of the work.

The Nassau County Review has nearly always in operation their Linotype machine, and other interesting work going on in the typesetting and press room. Go visit them at 64 South Main Street. They will be glad to see you. Though you may have seen larger works in the great city, none are more efficient.

The early facts of this story of Freeport were compiled by the writer from incidents written and related some years ago by Messurs. Carman Peasell, A. J. Smart
and Valentine Smith, now deceased. We are indebted to many others for items of information on the various topics. We wish also to acknowledge the generosity of our advertisers who have aided us in this publication and hope that it many awake in all a deeper interest and pride in our village.

THE END