FREEPORT

IT'S A
WONDERFUL TOWN

by
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In cooperation with Dave Opatow, Director Freeport Memorial Library
&
The Freeport Historical Society

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THE FREEPORT WATER WORKS
MUNICIPAL BUILDING (VILLAGE HALL)
Introduction

Indeed, Freeport has been and is a “Wonderful Town”. For close to seventy years we have “lived” Freeport. This effort deals in the main part with village life in the first half of the twentieth century. What a roller coaster ride it was!! We thank and acknowledge the following without whom this would not have been possible.

Charles Zimmerman
Gene Gelling
Dick Mitthauer
Claude Raynor *
Fred Florenzie
The Nicolino Family
Eleanor Curley *
Elise Schlegel

Sue Morgan
Frank Primavera
John Horton
Artie Lewis
Marion Gilbert *
George Curley
Ernie Stumpf
Patty Thompson

The Freeport Leader

* Deceased

WOODCLEFT BEACH -- HEAD OF CANAL ON FRONT STREET
FREEPORT MUNICIPAL STADIUM (DEMOLOISHED 1992 FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CALDOR)
STADIUM LAMENT

As the Freeport Stadium is returned to Mother Earth, hopefully for a productive future, one can only lament the loss of this pillar of the Freeport's history. The structure of concrete, steel and human toil was born during the depression spawned WPA at a time when many unemployed residents were seeking a type of entertainment and diversion from the frustration of everyday living.

SEMI-PRO BASEBALL

In the early thirties the Stadium housed the village's own semi-pro baseball team, the Penn Red Caps. How this then conservative community adopted a group named after Pullman car porters was never fully explained but, in any event, they were extremely popular. For a 25 cent admission (kids were a dime) one could enjoy high level semi-pro baseball at its best with the likes of the visiting Black Yankees, Barton Nighthawks, Kansas City Monarchs and Overton Tremper's Springfield Grays. The ace pitcher for the home team was aptly named Cream McHenry. He matched fastballs with the best of them including Hall of Famer Satchel Paige.

One of the most vivid recollections was the steamy summer night another Hall of Famer, Josh Gibson, crashed a mammoth home run which still might be floating in Zach's Bay.

The highlight of the season, however, was the annual visit by the heralded House of David nine. Jimmy Woods, the House's first sacker, never failed to dust off home plate with his flowing red chin whiskers much to the delight of the crowd and chagrin of the umpires. Unfortunately with the advent of TV semi-pro baseball was dealt a serious if not mortal blow in the early forties. It should be noted that the Brooklyn Dodgers led by the "Peoples Cherce" Dixie Walker, were beaten by the Freeport All-Stars prior to WWII. Bill Glacken (who was to become Freeport's mayor) not only pitched for the locals but hit a prodigious home run into the parking field (owned by the Elar family).

MIDGET AUTO RACING

It took rigid gasoline restrictions of WW II to temporarily conclude the midget auto races which flourished in the stadium during the thirties until the war years. Along with Cedarhurst, Freeport was the mecca for this sport drawing crowds of eight to ten thousand on its regular running nights of Tuesday and Friday. By far the most noted driver was Freeport's own Wild Bill Schindler who lived on Seaman Ave.

Indeed, it was a thrill to see Schindler (who lost a leg in a Langhorne accident) strapped in his cream colored Offy take on such Indianapolis stars from Chicago and the West as Ronny Householder, Duke Nalon, Duane Carter, Len Duncan, Harry McQuinn and Shorty Sorenson. McQuinn and Sorenson were accused of "blocking" for each other but this was never substantiated.

Another local phenom was a young lad named Bayard Tewksbury who raced under the pseudonym of Dave Randolph. An accomplished musician, airplane pilot and brilliant student out of Freeport High School, took on speedway veterans and asked or gave no quarter. Both Bayard and Wild Bill suffered untimely passing in the forties. Schindler expired in a spectacular, fiery crash at Langhorne.
In 1945 when peace was achieved and restrictions lifted, midget auto racing resumed at the stadium under the aegis of the Kedenburg-Donaldson Racing Association. It flourished for a few years with such stars as Dutch Schaeffer, Ted Tappet, Tony Boniadies, Johnny Zeke, Al Duffy and Duke Elliott (both Elliott and Duffy were killed in a first turn pile-up).

However Jake Kedeburg and Duke Donaldson saw the handwriting on the wall...stock cars were the sport of the future. By carefully developing such drivers as Bruno Brackey, the Brunhoezel brothers, Georgie Tet and Johnny Coy, the stadium was given a new lease on life as crowds of over ten thousand packed the stands in the late forties and fifties.

**FOOTBALL**

Can you imagine the reaction if we had the likes of Joe Montana, Phil Simms and Lawrence Taylor training at the stadium in today’s world of media hype? It did happen in the pre-war years when the Brooklyn Football Dodgers made Freeport their mid-week quarters while playing their weekend games at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn.

Working out on the same turf as our high school eleven, it was not unusual to see such NFL standouts as Ace Parker, Perry Schwartz, Pug Manders, Bruiser Kinard and Ralph Kerchival swapping pointers with home grown gridders like Winnie Wright, Frank Primavera, Jack Lugrin, Bill McCloskey, Bubs Moran and Jerry McCarthy. Wright was named as the footballer of the year and McCarthy went on to fame at the University of Penna and later with the St. Louis Browns.

It was the very same Brooklyn Dodgers who left Freeport on the morning of Dec 7, 1941 to meet the New York Giants at the Polo Grounds only to hear the fateful radio bulletin shortly after IPM. (The Dodgers beat the Giants that day, 14 to 7, on a late touchdown by Pug Manders).

**BOXING**

Professional and amateur boxing also shared the stadium spotlight. Harry Ebbets, a top contender for the Middleweight title was a local favorite along with Golden Gloves champ Tony Celentano along with a dead game Charlie Fisher. Fisher was a upcoming light heavyweight with a devastating right cross. The story is that in a Madison Square Bowl semi final in Long Island City he took an unmerciful beating at the hands of South American Paulino Usucudan refusing to go down and take the count. His career never got back on track.

**AND SO IT GOES**

A solid chunk of Freeport’s past will be bulldozed along with the concrete and steel as the Freeport Stadium is developed for the future...but that's the way it was.
JUMBO
FFD has proud history...

Nothing excites the adrenaline more than the approach of the marching unit of our Freeport Fire Department. Led by its band pumping out stirring patriotic marches, followed by the impressive phalanx of American flags, white hatted Chiefs, Ex-Chiefs, Company Officers and a main body of impeccable blue suited Firemen in perfect cadence. It makes the heart beat a little faster.

While our purpose is to delve into fire calls from the late 20's to the early 50's, it should be noted that presently the Department is expanding its perimeters. Guided by well informed younger members, it is undertaking programs designed to eliminate the root causes of devastating life endangering residential fires due mostly as the result of over occupancy.

For many of us who remember Pearl Harbor, World War II, and the Brooklyn Dodgers, the now defunct Freeport fire whistle is also a rather pleasant but noisy memory. Located on Sunrise Highway at the old Municipal Power Plant, long before the development of sophisticated beepers and two-way radios, this venerable piece of Freeport’s history honked out four-digit fire calls on a twenty-four hour, seven day a week basis. (the environmentalists were not yet vocal in those days) It was then, the only method of alerting the volunteers, and in many cases the general public. Every family had the fire call card usually taped to the kitchen cabinet, and know just what four digit calls were in their neighborhood. The first number signaled the general area of the village... 1 - northwest, 2 - northeast, 3 - southwest, and 4 - southeast. The succeeding three digits refined the location further as to streets, intersections, etc. Obviously, all activity ceased at the first blast, and then started a quick perusal of the call listings...this was generally followed by cars, pedestrians, and kids on bicycles to the scene. A rather humorous anecdote was related by Artie Lewis. It seems his grandfather operated a stable on Bayview Avenue, and in those days contracted the horse to pull various types of street cleaning and excavating equipment. In addition, they pulled the Hose Co. 3 ladder truck when the call came in. In the words of Artie, “The horses usually arrived at the fire house by themselves before any of the firemen.” So much for the fire whistle.

1927 saw the first of two fires at the Casino Pavilion, at the foot of South Bay Avenue and Casino Street. The Pavilion was a wood structure housing some primitive type bath houses and refreshment stands along a sandy bathing beach at the head of Casino Canal. (This was long before the development of the beloved Casino Pool.) The construction of sewers along Casino Street impeded the available water supply and the pavilion was destroyed. It was later used as a training facility for Department recruits. The second Casino fire occurred in 1976, long after the reconstructed pool was abandoned. Nothing was left but a few derelict apartments bordering on Casino Street. The Building Department eventually condemned the property and ordered it demolished. This was the forerunner of the present day Casino Condos.

In the Spring of 1935, the Olive Building, corner of Main and Sunrise with its 10/10 beams and open elevator shaft was a “cooker” which brought out the entire Department. Chubbuck Drugs on the main floor experienced major damage as the scorched twisted metal innards fell from the upper floors. Capt. Vernon Tepe was first on the scene.
In the late 30's a rather bizarre event occurred at the Freeport Boatmen's Assn. on the South Grove Street, home of the renowned Viking Fleet. Ship to shore radios were still under study and, consequently the association developed the use of carrier pigeons. When the fishing craft sailed from Woodcleft docks, each had aboard three of four birds. If an emergency occurred on the high seas a bird was released with the May-day message taped to its leg hopefully to return to the dock to summon rescuers. Unfortunately the pigeon coop caught fire while some were roosting and others were out on the stormy Atlantic. It was only a minor fire, but the results proved tragic.

In the dead of winter, 1938/39 the Lights Club, foot of Branch Avenue, went up. Although boarded up at the time, it had been the scene of lavish parties and activities by the flourishing "actors community". Lyman (Lum) Duryea was the leader of the Jazz Band which had concluded New Year's Eve performances in previous years. As most know "Lights" had nothing to do with illumination, but was merely an acronym for Long Island Good Hearted Thespians. Ex-Chief Dick Raynor and Fireman Spencer Clark were commended for their efforts in controlling freezing water hoses on that frigid night.

The second Lights Club fire call came in at midnight in the Spring of 1939, when according to Fred Florenzie, "The whole sky of south Freeport was ablaze". Fireman Eddie Croaker, Bob Johnson and Paul Bedell quickly set up hoses from the adjacent canal due to the lack of adequate water pressure. Two pumers were called in from Hempstead to assist Hose 5 in controlling the roof fire. As the flames subsided, Truck Company pulled down the dangerous tottering chimney. That was the end of the Freeports Lights Club.

Serial interrupted

The same year the projection booth at the Plaza Theatre suddenly emitted a thick acrid black smoke during a regular Saturday afternoon "Shadow" serial (15 cents admission). The building was quickly evacuated, but apparently some film had just come in contact with a hot light bulb. In any event, the show went on with LaMont Cranston rescuing Margo Lane from another terrifying situation.

On another frigid night in January 1937, Williams Furniture Store on Main Street was engulfed in flames fanned by a strong northeast wind. This same wind diverted the honking of the whistle, and for some reason the sirens failed. Fireman Pat Ulip somehow heard the call, and sensing the impending emergency, alerted Hose 3 and consequently the Department. It was a smoky Saturday night/Sunday morning effort which required a "second alarm".

Friedman's Drug Store, southwest corner Sunrise and Grove was a difficult and stubborn one in 1940. Boxed chemicals in the cellar emitted toxic fumes and nitroglycerin presented the possibility of an explosion. After entering the building with only safety masks (there were no oxygen masks in those days) Ex-Chief Ben Cook, George Williams and Tom Gaffney were overcome and attended to while prostrate in the middle of Sunrise Highway. It was one of the first times that the department used the spray type cellar nozzle which proved most effective. Engine Co. 1 (Jumbo) agonizing hours pumping water from the cellar until the boiler eventually blew, and from reports, this was the last time Jumbo actively pumped.
“LIGHTS" CLUB -- FOOT OF BRANCH AVENUE
TOTALLY DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 1939
A daytime early morning 1943 call came through for the South Shore Yacht Club on Westside Avenue. At the time the Yacht Club was the mecca for Freeport society with lavish costume balls, parties and the like. By the time the general call was answered, the top roof and dome was burned off. The structure was rebuilt, and for many years enjoyed by club members only, to be converted in later years to the popular Salty Bay Yacht Club.

"With a Columbia Propeller Behind, You'll Be Ahead In The End" was the world renowned motto of the Colombian Bronze Corp. located on North Main Street. In 1945, the Department under Chief Fred Buss responded to a very hot and dangerous situation. It was 6 p.m. when the big buckets of molten brass and steel spewed hot sparks and threatened to let go on the firemen below. It took eight hours before the conflagration was contained, and only after hose Co. #3 blew an engine block spreading hot oil over an already deteriorating problem.

Later in 1945, the Frisbie Machine Works, corner of Henry Street and Merrick Road called on all of the skills of our local vamps to deal with volatile lacquers and paint thinners. Chief Joe Manz quickly recognized the possible ramifications of fire spreading to the Smith Motors yard next door, and ordered chemical containment units into immediate action. It was reported that Frisbie was a contractor for the Federal Government in the war effort.

The early 50's saw one of Freeport's oldest landmarks, The Freeport Hotel located on Main Street just south of the railroad tracks, put out a call for assistance. The area was already in the early stages of demolition prior to the elevation of the tracks. The hotel suffered major damage and was torn down. Unfortunately, two favorite eating places went with it, Texas Ranger and The Lamp. The Ranger relocated towards the south of its old site and, much to the relief of most Freeports, continued almost uninterrupted with its popular "Ranger Specials".

Due to space limitations and site details, the Crystal Lake Hotel, Flasters Toy Store, Guy Lombardo's East Point House, Grove Street School, South Shore Restaurant Supply and the Sparton Lodge will hopefully be dealt with in future issues.

PLAYLAND PARK ON GROVE STREET
FREEPORT RAILROAD STATION BEFORE ELEVATED TRACKS
He Died On Remagen Bridge

Jack Schlegel was a handsome lad in the Freeport High School Class of ‘43, who lived at 49 Rosedale Avenue with his family, Jack Senior, mother Elise and sister, Carolyn. A star athlete, he made All-County in basketball, in addition to academic achievement honors.

1943 saw the Allies just about holding on most fronts with the Philippines gone, Desert Fox Rommel driving for the Suez Canal, and Hitler poised on the French Coast for the attack on England.

The week following graduation, Jack, a super patriot, was on his way to Camp Hood in Texas to join a tank destroyer battalion. After landing in Normandy, he fought his way through the St. Lo breakout with the spearhead forces of General Patton. In the waning days of the war, his tank was first to cross the Remagen Bridge. It was then that a German 88 scored a direct hit. Jackie was originally buried in Belgium and was later interred in the family plot in Greenfield Cemetery. He would have been 70 years old this past June 25th.

Following is a poem written by his grieving mother in 1945 and published in the Freeport High newspaper, Flashings.

In Memory of Jack Schlegel

He was my favorite “G.I. Joe”
My “Corporal Jack”, I loved him so.
He surely was my pride and Joy
Most sweet and lovable “soldier boy”.
Jackie left us all to go to war
Little thinking he’d see us no more.
With a wave of his hand and a cheery smile
He said he’d be back in a little while.
I ‘d think of him night and day,
Longed for him and how I’d pray
Wondered where he was, and if he were well
Think how true the words, “War is Hell”
Tortured with fears I’d try to hide
“Got to keep up” though I’m dying inside
He lived foxholes, in snow, rain and sleet
Sometimes not having enough to eat.
His letters were always cheerful and gay,
“Don’t worry, Mom, I’m still O.K.”
He had a job to do and he did it well
Too bad his number was on that shell.
WWI U.S.O. ON BROOKLYN AVENUE
So near the end, it didn't seem fair
He was longing for home and folks he'd left there.
The war is fought- it's over and done
But how, Oh, God, can I replace my son?
Nothing in this world can make up for his loss,
Why do mother's have to bear this cross?
He was just a boy, healthy and tan,
but he died doing the work of a man.

UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

War Ration Book One

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OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WWII RATION BOOK
SURREY WITH THE FRINGE ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON
The Northeast that was...

Long before the dramatic postwar socio-economic explosion, northeast Freeport was by far the most populated section of the village, shared by both black and white families who contributed so much to our community's rich heritage.

In 1904, Frank Gilbert brought his family from Brooklyn to the "country" on Gaffing Place. He wanted more sunshine and fresh air for his toddlers, Marion and Godfrey. The Gilberts were enthusiastically joined by neighbors Idella Foster, Bill Cornell (the fire chief), horse owner William Cavenan, John Wulforst, and local general store entrepreneur Henry Schluter. Henry and his trusted employee, Oakley Smith, made daily rounds of the area in a horse drawn wagon delivering supplies and groceries. The horses also served the fire department, and when the fire bell rang, Mr. Schluter simply unhitched the horses no matter where he was on route, and they made their way to the nearest fire house unattended, usually arriving before the first volunteer--according to the Gilberts.

The Circus comes to town

Just east of Grafting Place was a large tract of open land, known as Mount Estate. It was in 1920 that the Barnum and Bailey Circus set up on this very spot much to the delight of the locals. Lions, tigers and elephants were kept in cages at the intersection of Grand Avenue.

Weekend parties were not uncommon at the Gilbert homestead. Godfrey married Edna in 1936, and along with Marion, they became prime movers in the social set. In addition to the "juke box" of that era, a Victrola, a young man named Irving (Honey) Potter provided the jazz. Honey and his group also held forth on weekends at the swinging Cotton Club located on East Sunrise Highway. Mrs. Nellie Potter for many years acted as hostess at the old Elks Club on Merrick road.

North from Washburn Avenue to Stevens Street and the Roosevelt border were the homes of many familiar Freeporters--the Curleys, Nicolinos, Stumfels, Teas's, Ficaro, Schlegels, Grays (of Gray Cadillac) to recall just a few.

Frank Curley (Pumps and Pulleys) first established his business in 1924 behind his home on Washburn Avenue (then called East Lena) only to move ten years later to the present location on Main Street. Well-known resident Harold Hicks was the postman (two deliveries per day), and it was not unusual for Harold to spend a few minutes with the Curleys to warm up in the winter or enjoy a cool drink in the summer.

Corey’s, then Schwartz’s

The local handout, Corey's Candy Store was at the intersection of North Main and Washburn. It later became Schwartz's. Next door was Neuman's Deli. Son, Seymour played the violin in the Freeport High School orchestra. Price's Bakery provided the neighborhood with the sweet smells of fresh baked bread. Earle, son of the...
original owner, developed the business into the current Price Paper and Twine. Columbus Avenue School was a one building “little red schoolhouse”. The auditorium and gym were added during the thirties.

A fresh water brook originated in Hempstead and ran behind the Colombian Bronze Plant and eventually into the Freeport river. The two Curley kids, George and Eleanor, dug out a rather sizable pond or “swimming hole” at the east end of Washburn, and turned the area into a hot weather gathering spot. George, a Broadway actor, holds the record for performances in the production, “Fantasticks”. Eleanor now runs the business with assistance from George on his free time.

Vendors of all sizes and shapes played regular routes throughout the northeast, and for that matter, the entire village although south of Atlantic Avenue was sparsely populated. Krug’s Bakery trucks with a distinctive horn, along with Dugans brought the breads and pastries...Eddie Stillwell was the ice man, and the horse-drawn wagons of Sheffield Farms delivered bottled milk to the doorstep. Nothing was more delicious (in the cold of winter) than the frozen heavy cream which pushed its way through the paper bottle cap.

Further to the south between Broadway and Seaman from North Main to the now Meadowbrook Parkway were the homes of the Schlegels, Southards, Powells, Russells, and Sheas, who were on Broadway directly across from the synagogue. Victor Cohen, now our village trustee, and Murray Siegel, among many others received their religious training on that site. The Southards lived directly behind the Columbus Avenue School. Dad Southard was a mortician. Of course we all affectionately remember Wes (Bucky) Southard, first as an outstanding high school athlete, later a gym teacher, and finally as principal of Freeport High School.

**NE athletes**

Before the development of Northeast Park, the local teenagers raked, cleaned the area, and lined out a baseball diamond which approached major league proportions. A Who’s Who of athletic talent emerged from that locale...Tom Sindler, a pitcher with a devastating fast-ball who reached the minor leagues, Walter (Huck) Murphy, Dick Drescher, Ted Moran, Frances Lyons, the Murray boys, Max Stephenoff, Ted Neundorfer and Jack Schlegel. Jack was All-County in basketball. Enlisting right out of school, he was one of the first G.I.’s to fight his way onto German soil only to have his Sherman Tank suffer a direct hit by a Nazi 88. Jack is interred in a U.S. military cemetery in Belgium.

In the early twenties, a young Italian stone mason left his native country with his wife, emigrated through Ellis Island, and settled on Lillian Avenue. There Pasquale Nicolino, by then a proud American, raised his family. All five boys, Al, Steve, Gino, Harry and Pat served in the military and later became successful businessmen. Harry, now deceased, was a Freeport police officer who established the Canine Corps. The two Nicolino sisters operated Skylark Creations, a bridal shop. When they were very young, one of their favorite pastimes was playing the “pocketbook on a string” trick. The Main Street trolley passed about every half hour. Some alert passengers would ask the
motorman to stop in order to retrieve the pocketbook only to observe the two girls scurrying through the bushes.

Gino returned from the army in 1945 after action in the Ardennes and Remagen. One day he was upstairs shaving while the local kids enjoyed kick-ball in the street. An inconsiderate neighbor kept making ethnic slurs aimed at the youngsters. They fell on the ears of Gino, who had just spent three years defending his country. Unabashed Gino flew down the stairs, towels, shaving cream in all directions, and almost killed the “old crab.” (Steve’s words)

Dick Schaap, renowned TV sports commentator, graduated from Columbus Avenue School. Bill Teas, All-County Freeport High School tackle, and Jack Neundorfer, Lightweight Golden Gloves Champion, were neighbors, as were the Wrights. Win Wright was probably the best-ever footballer for Freeport High School. He made All-everything, and followed up with an outstanding career at Cornell. Sadly Jack Neundorfer perished in a WW2 air crash.

At the intersection at Leonard and Main was Dock Steele’s Pharmacy along with Jensen’s Stationary, Nania’s Grocery, Henderson’s Deli and Steuven’s Meat Market. Sam Gerber, Nassau County Commissioner lived on Union Street. Who doesn’t remember Sam and Stu Wallace leading the Memorial Day Parade on horseback? On Colonial Avenue were the tidy homes of the Gaines, Herberts, Smiths, Johnsons and Pickneys. Musicaro’s (which later became Tarulli’s) was the local bistro.

They were wonderful times and that’s the way it was....

HONEY POTTER – WWI –
GEORGE MORTON LEVY CHARTER MEMBER OF THE FREEPORT ELKS
WHAT FAMOUS FREEPORTER IS MISSING FROM MURAL?

For some reason unknown to this writer, George Morton Levy’s picture was omitted from an otherwise pleasing mural of famous Freeporters now hanging in the Recreation Center. While all the local movie stars, government officials and the like deserve their due recognition, probably nobody more than Mr. Levy did more for this community during the first half of the twentieth century.

Native born George was rather diminutive in stature (sometimes compared to the likes of Eddie Cantor) but he proved to be a giant with more energy than the Hoover Dam. His love and dedication towards his fellow man knew no bounds regardless of station in life, race, religion or color. He was a close friend of many of the nondescript characters who plied the Railroad Ave. beat and it was said that if Levy collected all his outstanding “markers” he would have realized well over a years salary.

HIS FIRST CASE AS A YOUNG LAWYER

Brought up in a religious Jewish household along with his sister, Jeanne, and brother, Dave, young George graduated from Freeport High School at the age of sixteen where he captained and quarterbacked the football team and became All-County as a slick fielding shortstop. He graduated from New York University and received his law degree at the then unheard of age of twenty. Too young to be accepted to the bar until he reached twenty one, he clerked for that year in the law office of a local attorney, a Mr. Haskins. It was shortly after that time that the famous Carman murder case broke. Dr. Carman was a dashing local figure married to a society beauty with an office on the north side of Merrick Readjust east of the present Post Office. One warm summers evening in this very office the good doctor was allegedly performing a little more than a physical exam on a rather young attractive female patient when suddenly revolver shots rang through the open window striking the patient but not mortally wounding her.

Rumors were rampant. Mrs. Carman probably in a jealous rage and suspecting infidelity was the perpetrator...or she hired someone to “do the job”. In any event she was brought to trial which ended in a hung jury. This was the break that George Morton Levy needed. He was lead counsel for the second trial and put forth a brilliant defense. The jury unanimously acquitted Mrs. Carman and Levy was on his way.

OPENS PRESTIGIOUS LAW OFFICE

Along with fellow Freeporter, Leo Fishel Sr., young Levy opened a semi-plush office in Mineola (Mr. Fishel was the father of Leo Fishel Jr., MD, a highly respected local physician). One successful case followed another and soon Levy added another partner to the firm, Martin W. Littleton, a former crime busting district attorney. Clients came easily...Frank Costello, Lucky Luciano and Frank Erickson were all part of the Levy Story. He once debated the world famous F. Lee Bailey and in the opinion of most came
LODGE MEMBERS VISIT GUY LOMBARDO AT JONES BEACH
out on top. When over 80 years of age as a favor he represented a Holly Patterson. On the
morning of his summation lawyers young and old packed the County Court House just to
observe his style and manner.

**BUYS HOUSE ON BAYVIEW AVENUE**

Success in the legal field quickly reflected in his personal life. In the early
twenties he married a statuesque blonde (also his secretary) named Bea Baldwin. They
established a home in the regal white house on the southwest corner of Bayview Avenue
and Whaley Street. While here he and Leo Fishel established the Freeport Elks and
became Charter members. George Morton Levy II was born in 1922 and was obviously
adored by his mother and father. On most summer days he could be observed riding his
pony on the spacious grounds or local streets. At age twelve young George was involved
in a devastating automobile accident at the intersection of Southside and Roosevelt. The
mishap crippled young George for life and contributed to his premature passing at age 55.

Levy’s chauffeur was a brash young man of Gaelic ancestry named Jimmy
McClusky (later of McClusky Steak House fame). Their maid, cleaning woman and baby
sitter was a far less affluent neighbor who lived on Southside Avenue named Tillie
Hager. My pre-adolescent years as an intimate friend of young George and the family are
poignant memories. Dad Levy took us to the Yankee Stadium in the Ruth Gerhig years,
the Polo Grounds in the Ott Hubbell years, the Six Day Bike Races with Torchy Peden
and the McNamera brothers, the Rangers with the Cooks and the heavyweight fights in
the era of Max and Buddy Baer.

One summer’s night we left for Saratoga on the Hudson River Day Line and Mr.
Levy put us up in Luthers, a plush resort on Saratoga Lake. Somehow us two kids were
admitted to the Saratoga Racetrack Clubhouse (no children allowed). During an
extremely high stake poker game the hoarse voice of Frank Costello was heard...”Hey
kids, I’ll give you ten bucks each if you’ll call that guy a cheap skate. To the raucous
delight of the card players we did as asked. The “cheap skate” was Arnold Rothstein.

The mid-thirties brought on changes...Bea and George Sr. were divorced and
young George had his tragic accident. Bea left for Reno with another well-known
Freeporter, Midge Fedden.

**LEY HAS AN IDEA--ROOSEVELT RACEWAY**

The elder Levy still a highly successful criminal lawyer, had a dream which was
spawned during his dog racing days in Florida. Why not race harness horses (trotters) at
night, bring in pari-mutual betting and set up a suitable track in central Nassau? Some of
his closest friends called George crazy...” it will never work especially in light of the
strong flat track lobbies”. But undeterred, Levy was far from crazy as he along with
trusted friends went up and down Main Street offering stock in the undeveloped
Roosevelt Raceway. Some turned him down but the more far-sighted and with complete
confidence in the Levy mystique helped him financially only to become extremely
wealthy when the Raceway stock skyrocketed in the years ahead.

The rest is history...with typical Levy charm, ability and persistence and some
disappointing set backs he obtained State Legislature approval for pari-mutual wagering. He entered into negotiations for parts of the old Mineola Fairgrounds along with other properties along Old Country Road. Roosevelt Raceway opened in the late summer of 1939. Levy's close friend, Big Bill DeKoening, assisted in labor management. Levy never forgot his Freeport roots. Coming out of the great depression, the $24 six day weekly salary as an usher was welcome and attractive. The track offered some stock in lieu of salary, but my mother (God Bless her) said we needed the money. That's the closest we ever became to millionaires. Hundreds of Freeporters were employed at the track through the efforts of Levy. Familiar faces could be seen boarding car pools every racing night leaving downtown Freeport. This writer, Balty Moore, Cupie Ackerman, Bill Barbato, Henry Neiman, Danny Chapman, Jim Cunningham, Little Greg and Artie O’Neill to name just a very few. Many a mortgage, car payment or college tuition was met through the Raceway job. Through the forties until the seventies Roosevelt was the Harness Racing Capitol of the World and Levy was named the Father of Harness Racing. Other tracks, Yonkers, Pompano, Meadowlands all patterned after Roosevelt.

The Raceway is now shuttered and decaying and most likely will be sold for retail development. One can only picture George Morton Levy with his omnipresent Havana Cigar and cut off sleeves of his expensive silk shirt wondering from above...when the hell is post time?

He shudda been in the mural!

THE LEVY CHRIS CRAFT SEA SLED
TRAVEL AGENT HERSHY AND MAYOR SWEENEY RENAME OLD RAILROAD AVENUE
Freeport Village politics and other scary stories

Interviews with Bob Sweeney and Roy Cacciatore

'58 Trustee election

The first task at hand was to nominate candidates for the upcoming trustee election set for March of 1958, keeping in mind that the mayoralty post was up for grabs two years down the road. Popular Henry Altengarten and well-respected lawyer Ed Freedman threw down the gauntlet. Equally popular George Fairberg and Arthur Muller were the Unity Party opponents. Mr. Fairberg in particular was a very able administrator and carried the Unity Party to a close victory.

Mr. Altengarten only lost by 66 votes out of 6800 ballots cast and this was enough to circle the wagons and prepare for the big one in 1961—control of the village. Against this backdrop, the Village Party held its first “affair” in December of 1960 at Guy Lombardo’s East Point House. The place was packed and the keynote speaker was a relatively unknown lawyer who “worked for Equitable Life” named Robert Sweeney. He cleverly worked in other issues besides the Grand Union rezoning: no more apartments over two and a half stories, and it’s time for a change.

Mr. Glacken’s Unity Party was not sleeping. They enlisted the support of most former mayors including the dynamic Bob Doxee. At their “affair” which also filled the East Point House, Eddie, Bill’s younger brother, was appointed campaign manager to be assisted by Phil Gigiello. Len Smith again headed up an employees group for Mr. Glacken.

In February the battle lines were drawn. Paul Garbo, Mr. Sweeney’s strongest supporter nominated him at the convention along with Henry Altengarten, Frank Sommers and Ed Freedman. Mr. Altengarten was offered the mayor’s spot but declined in favor of his friend Mr. Sweeney. The Unity Party ticket consisted of Bill Glacken, mayor, Ted Lange and Ben Abbene, trustees, and Julie Birgenthal, justice.

The campaign was rough and tumble. It was not unusual to see three or four cars parked outside on Holy Redeemer on any given Sunday with corn brooms affixed to their roofs trumpeting, “It’s Time for a Clean Sweep!!” Cocktail parties and koffee klatches only tended to intensify the then bitter campaign. Tony Celentano and Fred Hager were school day buddies. Tony, who lived on Archer Street, was on Sweeney’s side while the Hagers, who lived only a few doors away, were in the Glacken camp.

On the Sunday before election both hosted cocktail parties attended by a rather confused group of neighbors. One issue which surfaced during the campaign was the alleged “sweetheart” deal which transferred property on Nassau Avenue from the village to Dom Pellico, a local developer. The Village Party screamed that these were valuable waterfront parcels which should bring premium prices. To counter the opposition...
MAYOR BOB SWEENEY     MAYOR DOROTHY STORM     MAYOR BILL WHITE
claims, Bob Doxee was pictured standing in the abutting creek with water just below his knees exclaiming, “This is waterfront property?”

Election Day dawned mild and clear with voters turning out in droves indicating that an upset might be in the making. The Unity Party was confident. The feeling within the Village Party was that Mr. Altengarten might have a chance but nothing more. An amusing anecdote comes from Martha Sweeney, Bob’s wife. The night before she had admonished Bob Jr. and Martha Ann, “Please don’t cry tomorrow night, Daddy’s going to lose.” The following evening in the midst of a tumultuous victory celebration, the innocent kids came up to mommy and asked, “Should we cry now?”

The Sweeney administration remained in office for 12 years, winning two more contests. In 1965, along with Mr. Altengarten and Mr. Somers, the mayor defeated Frank Musso, mayor; Pat Collins and John Collins, trustees; and Nat Zablow, justice. Four years later the incumbent mayor ran with two new trustees, Bill White and Lloyd Orr and again handily defeated the ticket of Ray Malone, mayor, Henry Spitzler and Ralph Hodgon, trustees. We will deal with the emergence of the White-Storm administrations in future undertakings.

The former mayor, now a young elder statesman, is quick to point out a few of the accomplishments during his years — new Fire Department Headquarters, Hose 2 Building, Recreation Center, Power Plant #2, computerization of Village Hall, Martin Luther King Park and the Industrial Park.

More to come.....

NEWLY ELECTED MAYOR SWEENEY PRESENTS CITATION TO GUY LOMBARDO
Freeport Village politics.....
and other scary stories

*Interviews with Bob Sweeney and Roy Cacciatore*

An old politician adage goes... the closer to home you get in the election process, the more intense and fanatic become the electorate. Nothing reinforces this more than local village elections along with primary contests for committeemen of national parties. While for the most part party loyalties remain intact in the selection of president, governor, state and even county officials, local elections tend to tear party labels apart.

In many cases we find devoted family members on different sides and long time friends becoming hated enemies... doing all sorts of shenanigans unheard of by rational folks. Destroying campaign signs, contesting signatures of well-intended volunteers and distributing unanswerable last minute smears are only a few of the overt actions. More devastating are the malicious, deliberate rumors questioning devious lifestyles, military service and, yes, even the validity of parental wedlock.

Pre and post war years: The Glacken-Sweeney upset

Freeport mayors as we observed them in pre and post World War II years were for the most part tall distinguished gentleman with impeccably groomed grey hair and Brooks Brothers suits. They were frightfully impressive and from memory encountered little opposition. In 1957 Bill Glacken fitted the mold. Well spoken and local athletic hero with an outstanding military record, he was strongly rumored being considered for higher office at either the County or State level.

The village was relatively crime free, the stadium drew record attendance and Main Street was the shopping mecca for the South Shore.

Mr. Glacken’s Unity Party had the support of the Freeport Merchant’s Association headed by Abe Siegel and Irving Grebinar, the Freeport Leader and columnist Eddie Vasil, and most village employees led by Leonard D.B. Smith, an expert in municipal finances. The Glacken administration was, indeed, popular but in 1957 made a controversial and ultimately fateful decision -- they rezoned the northwest corner of Merrick Road and Long Beach Avenue from residential to business B. This opened the door for the construction of the Grand Union Supermarket.

Many residents howled and it was the only subject on the agenda of the old Southwest Civic Association monthly meeting at the Exempt Fire Hall. Thus was born the Village Party. At this meeting were the founders -- better known as the “Dirty Dozen” -- John Mack, Dick Curran, Tom DeVincenzo, Mannie Messing, Paul Garbo, Dick Fortunato, Bud Hopkins, Mac Thaler, Bill Thompson, Bill Vagts, Charlie Moore and Leon Radin (Roy Cacciatore made it a bakers dozen a few months hence.)

The second meeting was held in Mannie Messing’s basement when representatives of all other active civic organizations were invited. New names and supporters were brought in -- Henry Altengarten, John Green, Stan Roth, Bob McNutt, Bill Wilson, Warren Millard, Fred Howard, Henry McClary, Pat Danzinger, Marion Clifford, Bill Hindenlang, Sid Fierberg and Ivan Rochford, to name a few.

[page 35]
GUY LOMBARDO MARINA OPENING CEREMONIES
WITH ROBERT MOSES IN ATTENDANCE (LOWER RIGHT)
Village politics.....
and other scary stories

Interviews with Bob Sweeney and Roy Cacciatore

Mr. Hager’s continuing story told of the Sweeney years recently. As the last installment in his current work, he talks of such Freeport political folk as Farrell, Kelly, Hager, Herr, Cullen Casmasesina, Frankel and Stebner.

A committeeman is the man (or woman) on the bottom rung of the political ladder. His duties include gathering signatures on nomination petitions, distributing literature, overseeing election board procedures and rallying the favorable vote.

Every two years committeemen are “elected,” which simply means gathering supportive signatures and filing them with the Board of Elections which then, in turn, certifies the committee’s election. However, from time to time, and for a variety of reasons, these elections are contested by persons of the same party enrollment who are usually dissatisfied with the leadership or are seeking higher political office themselves. I presume the Democrats have local contests but our experiences are mostly with the GOP.

Eddie Farrell vs. Pete Kelly

Eddie Farrell was a brash young, dynamic local attorney with a lovable Gaelic personality and a line of blarney to go with it. In the 50s and 60s he was a Republican committeeman under the GOP Freeport leader Pete Kelly. Pete held his monthly meetings at the old Sea Breeze where both the senior and junior Otto Kunz’s were the most gracious and generous hosts.

Leader Kelly was particularly adroit in guiding sticky issues through the Council - except in the case of Eddie Farrell. Glib Eddie would stand up and debate at length. Mr. Kelly’s face reddened until his patience threshold was reached. The only way to rid a dissident committeeman is to ask him to resign (this is remote) or run persons against him in the next committeemen’s “election.” Mr. Kelly opted to follow the second alternative.

The stage was set. Mr. Kelly selected two well-known Freeporters, Roy Cacciatore and Perry Fisher, to oppose Mr. Farrell and his running mate, Dom Galucci, who cut his political teeth in Glen Cove. Mr. Cacciatore was a respected Main Street businessman, active in many community projects. Mr. Fisher and his wife, Jeannie, were mainly identified with school activities and Perry, along with his two kids assisted in Little League.

With GOP organization backing they looked like shoo-ins. In fact, Ralph Caso, then the County Executive, came into the district and campaigned door to door. However, Mr. Farrell and Mr. Galucci were far from inactive. The first thing Eddie did
SELLING FIVE DOLLAR ADMISSION TICKETS TO JONES BEACH "AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS" WITH POLICE CHIEF DIXON, GUY LOMBARDO AND MAYOR SWEENEY
was to flood the district with a post card caricature depicting Roy as a donkey pulling a

cart with Leader Kelly at the reins.

Corks popped early

At the time there was a milk strike with many local families vying for the meager

supply. Mr. Farrell proceeded to hire a truck, go to Jersey, and return with 1000 quarts

which he graciously distributed to district residents the very day before the election. Roy,

Perry and the Republican hierarchy were all at the old South Shore Yacht Club on

election night ready to “pop the corks” -- only the Farrell-Galucci team won!

The cocky Irishman then decided to take on Committeemen Charlie Mehrmann

and Bob Schade with another relatively political newcomer, Averill Crane, a telephone

company executive. Mr. Mehrmann had recently been appointed Associate Village

Justice, and according to judicial ethics, it was determined that he should not run. Gloria

Mehrmann, a young wife and mother, was perfectly content at the time to take care of her

brood and support Charlie. Through some pretty strong convincing, Gloria agreed to run

against Mr. Crane for the good of the party. She put up a gallant fight, but Mr. Farrell

turned up the heat and Mr. Crane was the winner.

If memory serves this writer, this was Mr. Farrell’s last effort for whatever reason.

He moved out east and was involved in a serious auto crash, but he does return to

Freeport on occasion, and although he has a slight limp, it’s a pleasure to still see the fire

in his sparkling Irish eyes.

Following the Malone defeat in 1965, when he was covertly backed by the

Republican Party, rumor has it that some of the victorious Village Party were out to “get”
certain GOP committeemen.

In any event, Fred Frankel and Ken Stebner, both village employees, ran against

Fred Hager and Henry Herr in one district and Angie Cullin and Bill Casmasina in

another. Fred and Ken were bright and articulate and waged a credible campaign. A

number of prominent names involved themselves surreptitiously, and on election night

when the winning incumbents marched triumphantly into the assembled

Committeemen’s Council at the Sea Breeze, they received rousing applause from all --

some of whom were campaigning against them that very day. That’s politics!

There have been numerous other contests of note. A few names that come to

mind are Herb Rosenblum, Jomer Rand, Doug Moran, and Leo Canalizo. We hope to

report on them in future efforts.
BEAU RIVAGE BATHING BEACH

RANDALL'S CHANNEL AND PART OF CASINO BEACH
BAYVIEW MEMORIES

In the early 1930s, Bayview for the most part, was a homogeneous segment of our village roughly bounded by Archer Street on the north, Casino Street on the south, Miller Avenue on the east and Park Avenue on the west. Those more learned might have a better metes and bounds description but as a Bayview resident for six plus decades this is about the best at this time.

In the mid-thirties one could view the Point Lookout Pavilion some 10 miles distant while standing at the intersection of Branch Avenue and Casino Street which, possibly, might account for the "bay view" designation. Also, it should give some insight on the tremendous development in the 40s, 50s and 60s.

Hose 3 and Freeport AC

Freeport Fire Department Hose Company #3 on Bayview was and is one of the activity centers of this little tight-knit community. There is hardly a resident who hasn’t at one time or another voted in both the old or new Hose #3 buildings at which time their children and grandchildren ogled and even touched the red engines. However, a most vivid memory is that of the Freeport AC, an amateur baseball nine, which called Hose #3 home and played its games in the then vacant field behind the firehouse (this is now a municipal parking field and site of the Freeport Restaurant Supply).

A stringbean of a man from Wantagh, Jake Boos, was their ace fireballing right-hander with sinkerball specialist Elliot Montgomery in relief. Freeport’s own Larry Heenan handled the catching chores. Heenie, as he was affectionately known by his fans, was a devastating clutch hitter with the uncanny talent to drop two base hits within both foul lines. Flashy and mustachioed Jimmy Firth covered first with second base alternating between Charley Rooney and Fred Troutwein. Troutwein, a switch hitter, was quick to point out that he was the only ".400 hitter"-.200 from each side of the plate. Leslie "Chink" Lewis proved to be a rather weak hitter but slick fielding shortstop who rounded out the infield with steady Herb Smith at third. Leslie, after a distinguished career in government, is enjoying his retirement with his wife, Mary, in Roanoke, Virginia. Herb, from latest reports resides in Florida.

Popular Mack Corwin was the mainstay in left field while Lefty Tonsmeire patrolled center with Bob Sammis in right. The AC had three manager-statisticians in Lyman "Lum" Duryea, Fred Berge and Julie Raynor. One of their most important tasks was to “work the crowd” for donations, mostly of the 10 cent variety.

As the Freeport AC became a Sunday afternoon ritual with over 1000 in attendance, a new diamond was carved out of the wilds of Branch Avenue and Casino Street complete with wooden stands and a concession booth manned at times by well-known Johnny "Fish" Hroncich. As TV and war clouds approached so went the fate of the Freeport AC. Incidentally, six living members of Hose #3 will celebrate 50-year membership this year--Fred Florenzie, Paul Bedell, Herb Smith, Ed Murray, John Combs, Ben Cooke and Bill Noll.

(Tune in next week for continuing Bayview memories of "Mike’s Inn and others.")
SOUTH SHORE YACHT CLUB LATER SALTY BAY YACHT CLUB
More Bayview memories -- Mike's Inn and others

The hub of Saturday night Bayview social life was by far centered in Mike's Inn, a warm, homey type bistro.

The story goes that it was originally a speakeasy during the Prohibition days but with the repeal of the 18th Amendment was taken over by Mike and Mary Shayowitz. Mike manifested a maître de friendliness and charm which well reflected his continental heritage. Mary (who most agreed was the business brains) toiled late and endless hours as chef, porter or whatever. Beer was 25 cents a pitcher and on Saturday nights Mike included a free meal of pot roast or pigs knuckles and sauerkraut.

Couples danced (there was no such thing as a amusement tax) to live music provided by Herb Smith, tenor sax, Sam Wilde, piano, Eddie Croaker, clarinet, Charlie Francis, drums, with wife, Helen, as the sexy vocalist. There was no rowdism, drugs, or crime. At 3AM sharp Mikes closed according to law as most of the late night revellers retreated to the Depot Lunch on Railroad Ave or the Merrick Rd. C & R Cafeteria for bacon and eggs.

Directly across the street from Mikes on Atlantic Ave was "Jim", the barber. His God given name was Vincent Inglima, but, as we all know, in true Italian, a Vincenzo are somehow "Jim". Vincent and his family lived directly over the shop in a comfortable apartment. His oldest son, Phil, was an accomplished violinist who, if memory serves right, played with Paul Whiteman and at times sat in with the Mike's Inn group. Number two son, Johnny, was an outstanding pitcher for Freeport High School while his two daughters could be heard on any given evening harmonizing with the player piano. Unfortunately none of the Inglima family are with us save one of the daughters, Josephine, who some time ago relocated to the West Coast with husband, George Van Epps. George, a highly skilled guitarist, played with most of the name bands of that era including Ray Noble

West of the barbershop stood the teen age hangout of that time, a stationary store with a soda fountain and comic books. Hangout in those days of innocence meant nothing more than sitting on the sidewalk breadbox arguing the merits of the Dodgers, Giants or Yankees ( with a one cent pretzel and five cent Pepsi if you had the money.. The first proprietor was grey haired Santa Claus like, Pop Mitchell. Pop, originally a conductor on the Atlantic Ave trolley, sold to Mildred and Bill Florenzie who operated the store in true "mom & pop" tradition. It might be pointed out at this juncture that the Atlantic Ave trolley originated in Lynbrook, proceeded thru Freeport via Atlantic Ave and Main Street, made stops in Hempstead and connected with the Hicksville car at the railroad bridge in Mineola.

Following the Florenzies, the gathering place was operated by affable Sam Kahn and his wife, Sonya. The Kahns were veterans of the Brooklyn type soda fountain and to the best of recollection were the first to introduce the "egg cream" in the Freeport area. The Bloom Brothers and the Racfael family succeeded the Kahns until the late 30's when, once again, with threatening war clouds, egg creams were replaced by C and K rations.

A residential abode on that same side was that of the Staros family. The property also housed the grocery chain of Daniel Reeves where it was almost impossible to walk out with an order if you couldn't cut your way through a thick Irish brogue. An avid gardener, Mrs. Staros home grown produce was the pride of the area, probably only rivaled by Jim, the barbers, fig tree.
BILL OF FARE

LITTLE NECK CLAMS
Cocktail .......................... ........ 25  Chowder ............................. ........ 15
Half Shell ....................... ........ 30  Steamed ........................... ........ 35
Fritters ........................... ........ 35  " Soft Shells ...................... ........ 35
Broth ....................................... 10

FISH
Fried Fish .......................... ........ 35  Boiled Fish ........................... ........ 50
Broiled " ............................... ........ 35  Fried Eels ........................... ........ 40

SOUP
Clam Chowder ....................... ........ 15  Tomato ........................... ........ 15

STEAKS AND CHOPS
Sirloin Steak .......................... ........ 50  Ham and Eggs ............................ ........ 35
 " " for two ............................... ........ 90  Bacon " " ............................... ........ 35
 " " for three ............................. ........ 1 35  Pork Chops ............................... ........ 50
 " " family .................................. ........ 2 00

RElishES
Olives ..................................... ....... 15  Pickles ............................... ........ 10

VEGETABLES
Stewed Tomatoes ...................... ........ 10  Hash Brown Potatoes .......................... ........ 10
Green Peas ............................. ........ 10  Pan Fried " ............................... ........ 10
Fried Onions ........................... ........ 15  Boiled " ............................... ........ 10
Lyonnaise Potatoes ..................... ........ 20

EGGS AND OMELETTES
Fried Eggs, two .......................... ........ 25  Plain Omelette ............................ ........ 30
 " " three ........................................ ........ 30  Ham " ............................... ........ 35
Scrambled " ............................. ........ 35  Bacon " ............................... ........ 35
Boiled " ............................... ........ 30

SANDWICHES
Club Sandwich ....................... ........ 25  Cheese Sandwich .......................... ........ 10
Ham " ............................... ........ 10  Roast Beef " ............................... ........ 10
Egg " ............................... ........ 10  Hot " ............................... ........ 15

Tea, Coffee and Cocoa .......................... ........ 5
Pie, per cut ............................. ........ 10

ORIGINAL MENU FROM CAPT. ELLISON'S BAY SIDE HOUSE (POINT LOOKOUT FERRY)
Deiter Bros. operated the butcher shop next to Reeves. Soup meat was 29 cents a pound and if you were a steady customer you would get free bones and a slice of liverwurst. Otto Winther, a Queens meat purveyor, came on the scene in the late thirties with his partner, Freddie Heubner. Otto and Freddie were very active and were responsible for the construction of the one story building on the southwest corner of Atlantic and St. Marks. The was first an Associated Food Store, Jerry Deimer manager, and is now Freeport Restaurant Supply. Winther, not long after the conclusion of WW II, sold out to Harold Quinton.

Finally, on the south side of Atlantic, east of Bayview, was the fancy and then high priced Royal Scarlet Grocery. This was not a supermarket along the lines of King Kullen or Big Ben (they were on Main St) but a classy outlet whereby upper crust housewives could order over the telephone without questioning price. The two proprietors were Ted Haas and Tom Lambertson. One to be remembered was trusted clerk, Charley Vaughn, a tall gangly gentleman. Charley was expert with the long wooden stick with claws on one end. He could expertly pick canned goods off the top shelf and deftly catch them in his apron. Although it seems rather far fetched, the story goes that this is how, in baseball, an easy catchable fly ball to the outfield became known as a "can of corn."

So goes only a portion of beloved Bayview. Future attempts will dwell on Doc Callahan, Charley Pisicchio, Lewis Bros. barn and gas station, and the Kregstein's seven cent ice cream soda. Also Frank Primavera and Gene Gelling will have some words about beautiful Turks Island.

![Image of Freeport A.C. Season 1930](image-url)
REMEMBER TURKS ISLAND?

Shortly after the turn of the century until the late 1940's, there flourished within our Freeport borders a relatively tiny, tightly knit community known to most of us “dyed in the wool” residents as Turks Island.

It was bordered on the north by Merrick Road, on the south by Ben Southard’s farm, on the west by the undredged Freeport Creek and on the east by nothing more than a drainage ditch which the residents aptly named “Back Creek.” The Freeport Creek was subsequently dredged and widened and the fill used for the construction of Meadowbrook Parkway. Little Back Creek was piped underground in approximately the sight of Peter Bear’s Progressus Mfg. Company.

Just where the name of Turks Island developed is still a mystery...it really is a peninsula and no one has ever reported seeing roaming bands of Turks!

The residents of Turks Island were extremely proud people. In the words of Gene Gelling, “Nobody owed anybody.” They worked hard, played hard and pleased hard. There was precious little crime on the “island.” If someone strayed the elders dealt with the culprit and seldom were there any repeat offenders. The police were seldom called there.

The names of the resident-families are, themselves, Freeport history...Gelling, Primavera, Smits, Enstad, Smith, Southard, Richie, Whaley, Carman, Larkin and Conrad, to name a few. Clara Gelling was the matriarch of not only the Gelling brood, but of the community itself. With a family of seven children (Gene, Joe, Bob, Charley, Bill, Jimmy and John), she not only found time to abundantly feed her gang during the Great Depression, but also organized social activities, quilting-bees and card games. She was a charter member of the Pocahontas, Women of the Redmen organization.

Following a devastating fire in their Island meeting hall, Clara arranged a move to the Odd Fellows location on Church Street. It should be noted that one of her most enthusiastic card players was Mrs. David Pettigrew, mother of our Isabelle. The Pettigrews lived on Shea Court, and although they were not Turk Islanders, they participated in most activities. Who can ever recall Turks Island without further mention of the Primavera clan (Frank, Louie, John, Joey, Dolly, Jeanette, Henrietta and Tommy) or the Enstads (Gunner, Hans, Knute, Boerchild and Karl, a Nassau County Police Officer)?

Cliff Smith’s Oyster House

The center of economy and a favorite gathering place of the era was Cliff Smith’s Oyster House located on the east bank of the Freeport Creek. (According to Frank Primavera, some village documents and maps show the building on the west side. Mr. Primavera indicates that this is a mistake.) It was to this oyster house that baymen daily brought their catches of clams, oysters and giant blue claw crabs for reshipment to market. Two prominent baymen were “big Andy” and “little Andy.” Rumor has it that they occupied a primitive bay house off Garrets Lead near Long Beach for periods of two or three weeks, filling their nets with local seafare. Earning a rather handsome profit.
OYSTER HOUSE ON FREEPORT RIVER
they fell prey to friendly card games and the bistros.

Broke and exhausted, they returned to the bay only to appear two or three weeks later with overflowing nets and traps.

Up the street stood the Swattling Fish Depot. Still another Cliff Smith, uncle of the Oyster House Smith, captained the Glady B., a sturdy wooden craft, making daily trips for not only shellfish but blues, weaks, fluke and porgies. The Fanny W, under the steady hand of Bud Smith, dragged the bay waters for clams and oysters. While most residents owned their own homes, Bud was a major land owner and landlord at the time. Although unconfirmed, it was said that on some dark nights, Turks Island boats could be observed unloading unmarked cases onto unmarked trucks for shipment into New York City. This was during the roaring 20’s!

With World War II declared and Uncle Sam calling in 1941, Turks Island residents responded. Of some 30 families at that time, 27 men and women answered the call. Tommy Brittingham was the first casualty when a Nazi torpedo caught his freighter midships. (Note: His widow Mildred Terry Tucker, is a frequent writer to our Museum’s curator). Two of the Richie boys also paid the supreme sacrifice.

A supper block party marked the end of WWII with Merrick Road’s Patsy Boom Boom supplying the fireworks.

As the Industrial Park developed, so Turks Island, as we knew it, became part of Freeport’s history...loved and never to be forgotten....with artifacts of its existence preserved at the Freeport Historical Museum.
SOUTHSIDE MIDGETS (1933-34) PLAYED ON SOUTHSIDE AV "PONY FIELD" OWNED BY VAN derwerkKINS.
FREEPORT’S “SANDLOT DAZE” OF 1930’S REMEMBERED

With the local election behind us, the days getting longer and delightfully warmer and Florida spring training in full tilt, it might be an opportune time to recall local sandlot baseball in the early and mid-thirties considerably before the present day Little Leagues.

Hardly anyone could afford uniforms, there were no sponsors or no rookie, minor or major leagues. If you could play...you made the team, if not you sat on the grass or became an umpire. In the village existed a loosely knit “league” of teams such as the Southside Midgets, Jack Deitz’s Ray Street Aces, Bill Trutners Terrors, the Glacken Boys Cat’s Meows, Sammy Pisicchio’s Baview Wildcats, Frank Musso’s Baldwin Bombers and a gang of ringers from Turk’s Island and Bennington Park aptly called the Diamond AC and Colored All-Stars.

The most remarkable part of the structure was that there was practically no adult supervision and all “rules” and schedules were adopted by mutual agreement and strictly adhered to. Some fortunate participants like the All-Stars and AC wore spikes and at the very least parts of uniform...otherwise old clothes and sneakers made do. Most made the $1.95 Thom McAns last for two summer’s (by necessity) simply by purchasing stick on rubber soles for a dime.

Plenty of vacant lots

Playing diamonds both large and small were hacked out of vacant lots (in those days there were plenty). Three of the better remembered fields were on the sight of the now Northeast Park, the lot behind the old hose 3 at St. Marks and Ray Street, and the intersection of Mill Road and Hanse Avenue.

Official Major League Baseballs could be purchased at Danzingers for $1.25, so obviously these were rare! Most of the balls were supplied by Tony Elar whose family owned considerable property adjacent to the old Freeport Stadium. Tony had the uncanny ability of keeping “over the fence” foul balls under his foot while gazing into the sky with a look of puzzlement until the zealous searchers gave up. His going rate was 25 cents for an almost new horsehide.

One went pro

Many of the kids went on to become outstanding athletes not only in high school and college, but in few instances the professionals. Jerry McCarthy (first baseman) made it to the St. Louis Browns and his first major league at bat was at the Yankee Stadium. He got an infield single off Yankee veteran Eddie Lopat. The Glacken boys, Bill Trutner and Bubs Moran could all hit the ball out of the Freeport Stadium. Donny Abbott made the high school varsity as a freshman third baseman...Bill (CueBall) Clausen, Johnny Inglima and Tom (Buck) Sindler were mainstays of the hurling staff. In earlier years...
such as Bullets Willets, Happy Williams, Snooks Mitchel, Dave Roberts and Frank (Good field-no hit) Primavera performed locally. (The almost professional Freeport AC was dealt with in earlier editions).

While sandlot baseball was positive, a few “non positive” and humorous incidents should be recalled:

- Nick (Freeport Equipment) Preziosi set the unofficial all time record for errors in one inning...six!!! In his defense it should be noted that he was playing second base at the Hose 3 field in Bayview and a deep drainage ditch criss crossed the keystone sack area.

- George (Poski) Wilson could have tied Nick’s record but was mercifully spared only when Bubs Moran almost pummeled him to death with his catchers mitt.

- Another record of sorts was by a lean youngster named Charley (Van Mungo) Mohrmann. Van Mungo was a fireballer with the old Brooklyn Dodgers. Charley had great difficulty in finding home plate and set the unenviable record of nine walks and three hit batters in the 12 men he faced. Van Mungo he was not. Manager Sammy Pisicchio immediately “cut” Mohrmann and to the best of knowledge he did not surface again until after World war II.

This was only a small segment of sandlot baseball during the depression years...not much money, but a fortune in good, clean fun.

"CALL FOR PHILLIP MORRIS", JOHNNY AT FREEPORT STADIUM
FREEPORTERS ATOP MEADOWBROOK BANK SPOTTING FOR ENEMY AIRCRAFT (1943)
FREEPORTER ABOARD
‘RED BALL EXPRESS’

It was October, 1944...the D-Day landings were already four months into history and the Allied forces were positioning for what would turn out to be the final and fatal strike at Hitler’s Third Reich.

Montgomery’s English and Canadian armies were in Belgium and Holland, General Hodges First Army on the north flank, General Patton’s Third Army in the center and General Patch’s Seventh Army on the southern tier. After brutal tank battles at St. Lo in Normandy, General Patton broke free and raced through France for the German border. French cities and towns welcomed the liberators...St. Mere Eglise, Chartres, Paris, Brussels and Liege all uncovered cognac and calvidos hidden in cellars five long occupied years, waiting for this wonderful time of liberation. The onslaught across France, Luxemburg and Belgium was for the most part, lightly opposed other than rear guard action. However, the Nazi’s stiffened once they were resisting on home turf. Then what happened to Napoleon a century before, and to Field Marshall Irwin Rommel in the blazing sands of Africa, caught up with the Allied forces...they outran their supply lines. Thus was born the Red Ball Express.

Major port blocked

The Germans scuttled the Normandy port of Cherbourg and it took Allied engineers almost three months to clear the harbor. Initially ammunition, gasoline and K & C rations were unloaded from the big ships to amphibious “ducks” and brought ashore from the beach. With the opening of Cherbourg harbor, mountains and supplies were on the docks with the fighting forces well into the interior. With this almost insurmountable logistical problem delaying ultimate victory, the Army Quartermaster and Transportation Corps established the Red Ball Express.

Army Segregated in 1944

With segregation still a military-accepted practice in the 40s, most black soldiers were either assigned to Warehouse or Truck Companies. This is not to foreclose the fact that there were many brave, black fighting units as will be pointed out. Supreme Allied Headquarters put out an urgent call for every Truck Company with experienced drivers to assemble at the port...the rolling stock consisted of 6 x 6s and semi-trailers. Freeporter Frank Warren of Port Company 545 was one of the thousands ready to answer the call at Cherbourg. Frank had left the POE of Boston and landed in Liverpool eventually to hit Omaha Beach on D plus 20.

Tank Battalion hits beach

It was one dark night while bivouacked on Omaha Beach that G.I. Warren was
suddenly awakened by an ear splitting rumble, with the corporal of the guard shouting that the “Germans had broken through the already weakened lines.” Thank God it was only General Patton’s 761st Tank Battalion heading for the front under the cover of darkness. Midway in the tank column, Frank’s face lit up as he recognized two fellow Freepoters in the turrets...Henry Wyley and McKinley Tibbs.

General Eisenhower gave the Red Ball Express top priority and field commanders were quick to map out the torturous route through the mostly two lane roads of the Loire Valley, Champagne and the Seine Basin. The trucks, fully loaded, rolled 24 hours a day on the almost 500 mile trip to the front under cover of the Tactical Ninth Air Force. The Nazi Luftwaffe was practically decimated and, in fact, sent only one Focke-Wolffe over the beach on a nightly basis, dropping a few harmless flares. The aircraft became somewhat affectionately known by the troops as “Bed Check Charlie.”

The rest stops on the Red Ball were familiar names... Caen, Chartres, Paris, Rheims and finally Spa and Liege. MPs, and in many cases, field officers of high rank, manned each critical intersection to give encouragement to weary Red Ball drivers and keep the gas and ammo speeding to the combat zones.

Local farmers presented huge problems, attempting to share the narrow roads between herds of cows and sheep with the 6 x 6s and semis (It was no contest). On the return from the front, the Red Ball brought trailer loads of German POWs to the coast for confinement. Spa, Belgium (see note) was the largest gas dump in the ETO and was the target of Field Marshall Von Rundstet during the Ardennes breakthrough (Battle of the Bulge). (1)

World War II gave us many name to remember...Pearl Harbor, Bastogne, Iwo Jima, D-Day. Count the Red Ball Express among them!!!

Note: Spa was a favorite rest and pleasure area for G.I.s on pass from the forward sections. For more detailed information, one might contact Vinnie Fiore, proprietor of Fiore’s Market on Woodcleft.
THE GROVE THEATRE ON MERRICK ROAD
Memoirs of a Freeport paper boy -
Roger Gaynor

I had an opportunity to share a late afternoon with Roger Gaynor, an alert, feisty, spry, septuagenarian and a super patriot. In the late twenties and early thirties Mr. Gaynor was an alert, feisty and spry paper boy who delivered the Nassau Daily Review in the Main Street-Merrick Road areas of our village.

A paper boy in those days was an eager young lad who, after finishing school at about three p.m., picked up his duly designated bundle of 50 or more papers, attached his loaded paper bag to his bicycle handlebars and then, until supper time, serviced his awaiting customers.

The daily Review was two cents per day or 12 cents per week (six days-no Sundays). After spending most of Saturday morning collecting, the paper boy would then pay his bill...out of each 12 cents, eight cents went to the publisher and the newsboy kept four. On an average route of 50 subscribers, the carrier realized a gross profit of two dollars for his week’s labors...this did not count delinquents and missing papers. Try this scenario on junior the next time he badgers you for a pair of $75 Reeboks!

Mr. Gaynor’s recollections became a panorama of old Freeport...police officers “Lefty” Williamson and Tony Fierro, both men of substantial proportions, standing by the Banana King, watching Leo Carillo ride his fractious stallion down the middle of Main Street...The elegant Rainbow Restaurant with its tanks of oriental goldfish, Himmels Bakery, Staros Ice Cream Parlour, Liggetts Drugs, Bliss Card and Gift Shoppe, Samets, Golden’s Jewelry and Bragg’s Menswear all thrived on and around Main Street and Newton Boulevard.

A gala parade, festival, and beauty contest was conducted by village fathers to name “Miss Sunrise Highway.”

As a young usher in the Freeport Theatre, our friend Mr. Gaynor rubbed elbows with the likes of Joe “Wanna Buy a Duck” Penner, Pat Rooney, Nancy Walker and a very young crooner named Jack Leonard who shortly was to become world famous with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. His recordings of “Marie” was a classic. State shows “Girl Crazy” and “The Gorilla” were both tested in the Freeport Theatre before becoming Broadway successes.

While the Plaza on Grove and Sunrise did not enjoy the elegance of either the Freeport or the Grove, and was affectionately named “the Itch,” it provided weekend serials, two features, and the Pathé Newsreel for 10 cents. Unfortunately, passing Long Island Rail Road steam engines not only sometime disrupted the picture, but almost shook the wood framed building off its foundation.
Just south and east of the Plaza started the hub of Freeport night life, Railroad Avenue. A haven for horse players, numbers runners, and bookmakers, the street became alive around 9 p.m. with the arrival of the Daily News and Mirror pink bulldog editions with the results of the late races at Jamaica, Aqueduct and Empire. Crowds waited in Lou Posner's United Cigar Store and "Pep" Raynors. Some were winners but most were losers in the daily game of handicapping. Refreshments were plentiful...The Depot Lunch, Presto Luncheonette, Whiteheads, Steve Hafners Cabin Bar and Grill, Millie and Otto's Capri, The Lamp, and a small Chiliberger upstart known as the Texas Ranger. No early Freeport commuter can ever leave the Railroad Avenue area without pungently recalling the underground walkway which connected the east and west platforms.

As the shade of evening approached, our former paper boy, remembered Playland Park. On an undeveloped meadow (with an ample supply of mosquitoes) at the end of Grove Street, Playland was a major amusement facility complete with roller coaster, carrousel, refreshment stands, games of chance, a roller skating rink, and boxing ring. It was at Playland that Freeport's own Harry Ebbetts, a rated middleweight, fought Tommy Loughran, a world champ. Kid Chocolate was in the audience that very evening.
Reminiscing with Claude Raynor,  
retired policeman

After close to thirty years on the Freeport Police Force, Lieutenant Claude Raynor retired to Florida in 1968, but you can rest assured that he left his heart in Freeport. Up home for an extended visit, the former lieutenant is a spry octogenarian with an amazing recollection of "old" Freeport.

Elmer Raynor, Claudes dad, was one of the first Village Officers after the department was established in 1892, joining the force in 1896. By bicycle he maintained law and order working 12 hour shifts with no days off or vacation at an annual pay of $300.

By 1911 he was the first police lieutenant working under Captain John Dunbar with an annual salary of $840. Patrolmen at that time received 30 cents per hour for actual duty performed.

Vivid in his memory ( an also for those of us on the wrong side of sixty) was the "red light" alert system for foot patrolmen. Scattered throughout the village on the tops of utility poles was a series of bright red lights. They were activated from central police headquarters. The patrolman on the beat had three minutes to call in once the light flashed. Failure to meet this response time would result in a meeting with the chief. Of course the advent of the two way radio made the system obsolete. It should be noted that the red lights generated resident calls to the department switchboard.

Claude was born in a small homestead on Sunrise Highway (then Olive Blvd) near the present site of the American Legion. To the immediate west was an outdoor movie abutted by the Marigold Restaurant, a popular dining spot of that era. He vividly recalls the Canary Cottage and miniature golf course on Merrick Rd along with the Elks Club. As a young lad he spent many hours gawking at theatrical personalities performing at the American Theatre in Sigmunds Opera House on Main St and the Star Theatre on Brooklyn Ave.

One summer day, a Mrs. Clemens, who according to him was a fortune teller of sorts and, obviously, a frog leg gourmet, contracted the lad to trap the critters in Scotts Pond on Laurel Road south of President St (at the time this was the southernmost boundary of the village...there were no Bay Estates), Claude returned with a pailful only to be told they were not frogs but toads. He deposited his catch in the meadows and from reports many of their descendants still remain.

William Randolph Hearst and Marion Davies lived on adjoining corners at the intersection of Wilson Place and Long Beach Ave. Rene Davies, Marions sister, and a resident of Lena Ave, one balmy spring night hosted a celebrity type cocktail party which resulted in the love triangle shooting. Along with the Dr. Carman murder case, the provided fodder for the local gossip mill for months.

At the end of Main St (Laurel Rd) stood a vintage hotel called the Stagecoach. When questioned as to just what a wild west stopover was doing in this unlikely location the lieutenant crisply responded..."Don't you know the name of your village "Free Port? It seems that ships of all sorts would discharge passengers of all descriptions who would stay at the Stagecoach for future transfer to New York City.

With his fathers #1 badge and countless photos in front of him on the dining room table, Lieutenant Claude emitted an undying love of "his" village and while he might return to warmer climes...his heart will never leave "his" Freeport.
GUY LOMBARDO ALONG SIDE HIS RACING BOAT "TEMPO VI"
Folk’s, your time is up!

Answers to our vintage quiz:

In response to overwhelming popular demand (actually mark Treske called) and encouraging correspondence from the likes of vintage Victor Cohen we now publish the eagerly awaited answers to our Vintage Quiz . . .

1. Where was Gâter Park? Intersection of Miller and Smith.
2. Where was Alan Courtney Restaurant and theme song? Across from the Grove Theatre. The Most Beautiful Girl in the World.
3. Who was John Frogge? Announcer for WGBB and Roosevelt Raceway.
4. Who was first Mrs. Merry Christmas? Norma Braun.
5. What was name of famous fishing boat foot of Woodcleft captained by Mort Carman? The Selenada.
6. Name the song with lyrics, diddam doddam, whatem, chew? Three Little fishes.
7. Who was on deck when Bobby Thompson hit “the home run?” Willie Mays.
8. What Freeport family owned and operated the Stadium Tavern? The Primavera’s.
9. Who were partners in the C&R Lunch on Merrick Rd.? Morris Carlyle and Bill Reynolds.
10. From where in Freeport did the Point Lookout Ferry Leave? Ellison’s Hotel.
11. What was the name of the headwaiter in Otto Kunz’s Sea Breeze? Karl.
13. Who was founder of radio station WGBB? Harry Carman.
16. Who was high scorer in FHS basketball win over Baldwin (9 to 6) in 1934? Balty Moore.

Thanks to all who have inquired. Be prepared for our new book, Freeport, Its Proud History, which will be published shortly.
ELINOR SMITH, FAMOUS FREEPORT AVIATRIX
WITH A COLUMBIAN PROPELLER BEHIND, YOU WILL COME AHEAD IN THE END (COLUMBIAN BRONZE NORTH MAIN STREET)
SOCONY STATION ON GROVE STREET AND MERRICK ROAD ONE OF THEIR MANY EXTRAVAGANZA'S
FREEPORT EXEMPT FIREMANS HALL
ON LONG BEACH AVENUE