



The Little House on the Canal

There it sits, all by itself, a charming lone structure surrounded by reeds, marshes and water on Dune Road. The little house has changed little since it was built ca.1918 as a shelter for the local Game Warden, Mr. Everett Overton of East Quogue. In duck season Mr. Overton patrolled the land around waterways from East Quogue to Quogue, especially along the marshes where ducks were plentiful and so were the poachers. He and his father, a ship's carpenter, put up a basic structure with a fireplace to provide protection and warmth; his 12-year-old son, Allan, gathered rocks for the chimney. When the Overtons didn't use it, they rented it out for the summer season.

In the "Roaring 20s" along with the duck hunters, the south shore of Long Island was the destination for rumrunners with bootleg whiskey from Canada and the Caribbean. Gangsters picked up the boxes of booze and delivered them to speakeasies all over the island and in the city. The Canoe Place Inn in Hampton Bays was a popular spot, as well as Claudio's in Greenport which still has the trap door under the bar where boats unloaded their cargo. One boat came up where the Richmond Holdens had a house on the dunes not too far from the Warden's cottage. Roland Bursey, their man of all trades, heard something, got out of bed to investigate, and made his way to the beach where he watched rumrunners come through the surf carrying boxes of liquor onto the sand. With his shotgun,

Bursey held them off until the police arrived. As the police were leaving the beach with the bootleggers they saw the man maneuvering himself on the sand and marveled, "HE HAS NO LEGS!" Bursey had lost a leg in WWI and was recuperating in the hospital where Mrs. Holden was a volunteer. She told him he could have a job with Mr. Holden's architectural firm to deliver plans on a special bike in the city. On the day he was discharged, Bursey hailed a cab, stepped off the curb and was struck by the cab, severing his good leg. The job offer was still open and he worked for the Holdens many years in the city and their summers in Quogue.

It was still the Prohibition Era in the early 1930s, an era we associate with chaos in the social network across the country. But, in 1933, the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment and everybody including President Franklin D. Roosevelt made a martini. It was the first and only time that an Amendment has been repealed. A year before the repeal, in 1932, the little house on the canal was the scene of a gruesome murder. Dr. Henry Tuthill, a chiropodist, known as the "corn doctor", was rooming at the Dayton House and was known to carry a lot of cash in his pockets (his place of deposit after 1929 stock market crash). A couple renting the cottage on Dune Road made plans to rob him. The wife, Mitzie Downs, lured him to the house to take care of her feet. As he was leaning over her, Victor Downs bludgeoned him first

with a hammer and then shot him numerous times. The corn doctor's body was found days later in his own car a ways down Dune Road near Ponquogue Bridge.

In the 1940s, Allan Overton (the young rock collector) tended the bridge in Quogue. His niece, Susan Fox, said that he was an idiosyncratic man, educated through the 8th grade; nevertheless, he was an avid reader and writer. His "crow's nest" was filled with his reading and writing and covered over with fur to make it cozy, she said. Marcia Bradley and Joan Larson remember the times that he allowed them and other kids to come up and push the button to raise the drawbridge!

The Game Warden wanted a garage for the cottage. There is a letter on record from Mr. Henry H. Gardiner, Schenectady, NY, April 23, 1941, to Mr. Everett Overton giving permission to build a garage for the house on what was part of the Gardiners' meadow property at the time. (The village owns that land today.) Mr. Gardiner wrote, "payment on this lease will be one dollar and a tub of clams or its equivalent, payable yearly in April." The Overtons built the garage and honored the lease payment every year that they owned it. Most of the garage roof sheathing was constructed of scavenged shutters with half-moons carved in them, although some people thought they were outhouse doors.

In 1957, Eastman Kodak called on Norman Rockwell to photograph a representation of "the end of summer." He chose this cottage in Quogue. The family in the picture is a real one: dad is the Marlboro Man, Robert Lynam, with his wife, Kaye, and their children. The others are familiar names in Quogue. In the back seat of the station wagon is Emily-Hoe Lyman, Joan Larson's mother. The boy with the inner tube is Jock McLean, son of our former Mayor. Holding the camera is Billy Watson, who spent his youthful summers here.



Closing a summer cottage, Quogue, New York. Colorama #126 by Ralph Amdorsky and Charles Baker, art direction by Norman Rockwell, September 1957. Courtesy Eastman House, © Eastman Kodak.

HISTORIC DISTRICT PROJECT

Last year, in cooperation with the Quogue Historical Society, the Steering Committee for Historic Preservation embarked on a project that will result in the long overdue recognition of the extraordinary collection of historic structures located in the Village of Quogue-- the creation and listing on the National Register of Historic Places of a Historic District in Quogue. The Steering Committee consists of representatives of the Historical Society, the Mayor of the Village, the Chair of the Village Architectural Review Board, and a number of interested residents of the Village. We have retained Zach Studenroth, Town Historian of the Town of Southampton, to guide us in the preparation of the necessary applications to the New York State and Federal authorities.

The first phase of the project, undertaken last summer by Historical Society summer intern Caroline Liegey, was to identify the structures in the Village that might qualify-- by reason of their dates of construction, architectural features and architectural integrity-- as "contributing" properties in a potential historic district. Over the winter, Zach has taken this information and prepared a Historic Resource Survey, which contains a brief history of the Village and

data on approximately 250 potential "contributing" structures located throughout the Village. This document was recently submitted to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and will form the basis for discussion with the State officials of the boundaries of the Historic District. The goal will be to include as many "contributing" structures in the District as possible, without being required by geographic considerations to also include too many "non-contributing" buildings. Therefore, it is likely that some historic structures located outside the center of the Village may not ultimately be included in the Historic District. (A preliminary map circulated late last summer indicated the possibility of two districts in the Village, one centered on the east and the other centered on the west sections of Quogue Street. A number of residents suggested that a single district encompassing Quogue Street and several other streets on either side of Quogue Street would be more appropriate. The current thinking is that there will be a single district centered on the Quogue Street area.)

Once the boundaries of the district have been determined, a formal application will be submitted to the

State for approval. If the application is approved, the State office will then forward the application to the U.S. National Park Service for final approval and listing on the National Register. We hope that the entire process will be completed by early next year.

We would like to emphasize that the creation of a Historic District and its listing on the National Register of Historic Places is simply a recognition of the significance of the historic resources of the Village. It entitles the Village and the owners of contributing properties to place National Register plaques on the streets in the District and on their homes if they desire to do so. It imposes no restrictions whatsoever on the ability of homeowners to deal with their property as they see fit, although the Steering Committee and the Historical Society certainly hope that the creation and National Register listing of the Historic District will raise awareness in the community of the importance of preserving our precious historic resources.

We are very grateful to a number of individuals who have contributed significantly to the progress of the Historic District project: the Historical Society's 2013 summer intern, Caroline Liegey; the Historical Society's archivist Julie Greene; Lynn Crowe who produced on short notice and in unfavorable weather conditions a substantial portion of the photographs of potential contributing properties that are included in the Historic Resource Survey; Zach Studenroth; and Quogue Village Historian Frankie Ryan who provided very useful comments on the draft of the Historic Resource Survey.

The Steering Committee would like to thank the Quogue community for its support and interest. We look forward to the successful completion of this exciting project for the Village.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Chester Murray, Peter Rothenberg, Pi Gardiner, Robert Murray (Quogue Historical Society)

Peter Sartorius, Mayor, Village of Quogue
Bruce Peiffer, Chair, Architectural Review Board

Lynda Confessore, Paul Dietche, Joy Flynn, Nancy Mullan, Janko Rasic, Donna Sessa

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Allan Overton is on the roof with the antenna. The picture is called "Closing a Summer House" and it hung in the Kodak Colorama exhibition in Grand Central Terminal until 1990. In April 2009 the photograph was the centerfold in Vanity Fair magazine's "Rethinking the American Dream" issue.

When Allan Overton's widow, Betty Fox Overton, died, she left the house to her niece, Susan, and three nephews. The siblings loved the cottage, but reluctantly decided to sell it. So it was that in 2010 Anne McMillen heard the cottage was for sale and, not only bought the house, she embraced it and all its needs. Anne and her husband, Benno Schmidt, have a wonderful house nestled in the dunes across the road where they watched the cottage being born again. Dismantling the built-in bench, workers found a secret liquor cabinet inside. Within a year, floors, walls and windows were renovated,

new kitchen appliances, new beds, chairs and a sofa were put in and the cottage put out a new glow. It was ready for the summer folks.

In its nearly one hundred years, this charming picturesque cottage, sitting there like a lady-in-waiting, emblematic of a summer cottage, has survived duck hunters, duck poachers, an infamous/famous year, the 1938 Hurricane, two more first-named hurricanes, canal overflows, and Sandy, the Super Storm.



48 QUOGUE STREET

Jessup's store holds a special place in the history of Quogue. According to the Sag Harbor Express of June 15, 1871, George H. Jessup (1849-1912) of Quogue, "was building a store 25 x 30." This was good news for local residents, who traveled north to Riverhead for dry goods and other supplies. Under his proprietorship, the store became a mail stop, dry goods store and place for tax collection. And in 1883, at the suggestion of a summer visitor, it became Quogue's first circulating library. Jessup's "Seaside Library" led to

the organization of the Quogue Library Association in 1896. But until construction of the Quogue Library in 1897, books were shelved in Jessup's general store and monitored under the careful eye of his wife, Fannie.

Since then, the store changed hands and became a pharmacy, Western Union Office and real estate office (1904), luncheonette (1960), and a succession of businesses since the 1970s including stationery store, food store and café. George Jessup's store has served Quogue village for nearly a century and a half. It

is a landmark in the truest sense of the word. This icon is being considered for development and reconstruction. It is critical that this process preserves the architectural integrity of this historic structure.



A Letter from Vermont

Our family summered in a small cottage on Dune Road from 1943 until the mid 1970's (the house has since been pulled down and replaced).

My father and I were standing on the beach east of the Surf Club on the morning of the fighter plane crash that you describe (Winter 2013 Newsletter). We watched a number of P-47's in the air over the ocean that on that beautiful calm July morning. They were firing on a target towed by one plane, which was a common and interesting sight in the war years.

Suddenly one plane fell and spiraled into the sea. Just before it hit something dark came off it, perhaps the canopy or the pilot.

A day or two later boats appeared out there, obviously grappling for the plane. They appeared much too far out and, the weather still bright and calm, my father paddled out in our canvas kayak to tell them that they should be looking further in shore. They ordered him ashore and ignored his advice. Perhaps they would have found the plane had they heeded it. I was twelve

years old at the time. The experience has been firmly fastened in my mind ever since.

The pilots training at the Westhampton Air Corps base at the time were Brazilians. They liked to frequent Basso's, where my parents also liked to dine. The

South Americans became favorites of Mama Basso and they gave her a large framed photograph of them which she proudly hung in the restaurant.

Sincerely
Robert Gerlin
Cornwall, VT

Did You Know?

Dartmouth Indians

Azariah Horton, a native of Southold, a graduate of Yale and an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church, came to the east end in 1741, spent ten years as a missionary here and established the first Indian schools at Poosapatuck and Shinnecock, which still exist, and one at Montauk, which lasted until the middle of the 19th century. Upon Horton's retirement, he recommended as his successor the Indian Samson Occum. Occum was a student at Eleazer Wheelock's School for Indians at Lebanon, CT. When he arrived at Montauk in 1749, age 26, he became a close friend of Samuel Buell, minister of the East Hampton Presbyterian Church, who helped him become an ordained member of the clergy in 1759. In 1765 Occum was sent to England by the Presbytery to preach on behalf of a movement to establish

an American College for Indians. He spent three years in England and on his return had gained a reputation for eloquence and scholarly achievement; he had become one of America's most famous missionaries of his race. However, the funds he had raised were not used to found an Indian College here on Long Island; they were used to move Dr. Wheelock's Indian school in Lebanon, CT, to Hanover, NH, where they changed the name of the school to Dartmouth College, and the only concession made to Occum's demands was that a number of Indians be admitted each year to that school, an agreement that Dartmouth still honors in Occum's memory. His portrait hangs in the school's library.

This bit of history is from *The Thirteen Tribes of Long Island*, by Paul Bailey. A copy is in the collection of the QHS.

Calendar

Wednesday, July 2, 3 to 5 p.m.

1822 Schoolhouse opens for the season

Friday, August 8, 5 to 7 p.m.

CELEBRATE ART! Cocktails and Art Talk Benefit Brian Rutenberg, one of America's finest painters of his generation, will speak on "My Painting Life."

Saturday, August 9, 10 to 4 p.m.

39th Annual Art Show & Sale on the Village Green

Saturday, August 16, 2 to 4 p.m.

Children's Art Show at the Quogue Library
Lessons with Amy Hess Fridays, July 18, July 25, August 1, 1:30 to 3 p.m. or 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.
Sign-up dates for lessons: Thursday, July 3, and Saturday, July 5, 2 to 4 p.m., at the Library

Exhibitions at the Pond House.

Open Saturday, 11 to 2 p.m.

New! Admiral Alfred T. Mahan: The Pen That Launched a Thousand Ships; Through the Lens of George Bradford Brainerd: Quogue, ca. 1875; Whaling in Quogue: From Shore to the South Seas

Pond House & 1822 Schoolhouse

Summer Hours: July 2 to August 31,
Wednesday & Friday, 3 to 5 p.m. and
Saturday, 10 a.m. to Noon

Admiral Alfred T. Mahan: *The Pen That Launched a Thousand Ships*

Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) was a United States Navy flag officer, strategist, and historian—and without doubt the most influential and historically significant figure to have ever resided in Quogue. His most famous work, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, published in 1890, argued that even in an era of land-based colonial expansion, the countries with the greatest naval power would exert worldwide dominance. His strategies were the basis for naval operations in WWI and well into the 20th century. The Mahan family built two homes in Quogue, "Slumberside" in 1894, and "Marshmere" in 1909. Following his death in 1914, his widow, Ellen Lyle Evans Mahan, and his two daughters, Ellen Kuhn Mahan and Helen Evans Mahan, maintained residence at "Marshmere," until Helen's death in 1963. Exhibition

curated by M. Llewellyn Chapman.

This exhibition was inaugurated at an open house on Sunday, May 25. Curator M. Llewellyn Chapman and Sir Harold Evans, the distinguished journalist and author and long time Quogue resident, spoke about Admiral Mahan to an audience of about 50 people.



The Quogue Historical Society is a not-for-profit, all volunteer organization dedicated to collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of Quogue in order to foster among its residents and the broader community a deeper understanding and appreciation of the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the Village. If you would like to become a volunteer or make a donation, please respond to QHS, P.O. Box 1207, Quogue, NY 11959 or info@quoguenhistory.org.

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Quogue Historical Society