



The Information Window



What the Wantagh Preservation Society does for Wantagh

By Tom Watson, WPS President

Back in the 1960s the founders of the Wantagh Preservation Society saved the 1886 Victorian railroad station from demolition – had it moved to its current site on Wantagh Avenue and had the building restored and opened as the Wantagh museum. Currently, due to the continuing work of the Preservation Society, the museum complex consists of the 1885 Victorian railroad station and Outhouse, the 1907 Wantagh Post Office and the 1912 Jamaica Parlor Car.

The Preservation Society, in partnership with Nassau County, maintains the Wantagh Museum complex. The Society opens the complex to the public on Sundays from 2:00-4:00 from mid-April until mid-November.

The Society is very active in supporting the land marking of important Wantagh sites and structures. Thanks to the Preservation Society, Wantagh is home to more Town of Hempstead landmarks than any other town in the Town of Hempstead. Current Town of Hempstead landmarks in Wantagh are the:

- ◆ 1644 Jackson House
- ◆ 1700s Dengler Farm House
- ◆ 1794 Birdsall House (a.k.a The Mill House)
- ◆ 1808 Harold Avenue Cemetery (a.k.a. the Black Jackson Cemetery)
- ◆ 1827 Quaker Meeting House (second oldest existing religious structure in the Town of Hempstead)
- ◆ 1827 Quaker Cemetery
- ◆ 1830 Lawrence House
- ◆ 1856 St. John's of Jerusalem Chapel and Cemetery
- ◆ 1860 Seaman-Venier House
- ◆ 1876 Jerusalem School

In May of this year the Society filed an application with the Town of Hempstead to landmark the Jackson Cemetery on Wantagh Avenue.

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Wantagh Preservation Society
Holiday
Open House

Join us
for Hot Cocoa
& Cookies!
Sunday
December 11
2 to 4 PM

All are invited!
FREE!



Wantagh Preservation Society

1700 Wantagh Avenue (Museum Location)

PO Box 132 (Mailing Address)

Wantagh, Long Island, New York 11793

516.826.8767

museum.wantagh.li

happy
hanukkah

Merry
Christmas

Wantagh Preservation Society

Officers

President: Tom Watson
1st Vice President: Chris Wendt
2nd Vice President: Robert Cook
Recording Secretary: Elaine Yarris
Corresponding Secretary: Dick MacMillan
Treasurer: Joshua Soren

Trustees

Alice Blaustein
Jim Colotti
Ellen Cook
Robert Cook
Theresa Donahue
Dick MacMillan
Joan Mallon
Robert Meagher
Claire Reisert
Joshua Soren
Thomas Watson
Chris Wendt
Elaine Yarris

The Information Window is the official newsletter of the Wantagh Preservation Society. Your comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome!

Dick MacMillan & Jim Colotti
Newsletter Editors
wps@wantagh.li

Legend of the Christmas Pickle

By Elaine Yarris, Recording Secretary

A pickle used as decoration on the Christmas tree seems odd at first, but it is an old German tradition. When decorating the Christmas tree, it is traditional to hang the pickle last, hidden among the branches. (Not a real pickle, but a glass pickle ornament.)

The first child on Christmas Day to find the pickle receives a special blessing for the year and an extra gift! This is a great tradition to share with your family this year and for the years to come! 📖



*Visit the Museum
on
Sunday, December 11
From
2-4 PM*



*Stop by and see our
newly renovated
exhibits!*

New Officers & Trustees for 2012

At the October trustee meeting, a vote was held for the new officers and trustees for 2012. Those elected (listed below) were officially sworn in at the November general meeting.

President: Chris Wendt
1st Vice President: Bob Meagher
2nd Vice President: Bob Cook
Recording Secretary: Tom Watson
Treasurer: Wayne Wagner

New Trustees: Wayne Wagner, Mary Wagner
& Carol Poulos

St. Matthias Cemetery Rededication

The Rev. Lawton Bryant, Pastor of St. Matthias Ministries and Nassau County Legislator Dave Denenberg were featured speakers at the October 15, 2011 rededication ceremony conducted at the St. Matthias Cemetery. The observance honored the memories of 108 African-American local residents buried there between September 1, 1862 and June 17, 1943.

Selected to receive special honors were five (5) interred black Wantagh residents who fought in the Union Army's 20th and 26th Regiments, U.S. Colored Troops-U.S. Colored Infantry, during the Civil War: Charles Jackson, David C. Jackson, Edward S. (or Sands E.) Jackson, Gilbert Jackson, and Morris Jackson.

The cemetery, located opposite 1466 Oakfield Avenue, in Wantagh, is on the site of the original St. Matthias Church. The house of worship was built in 1845 by African-American residents of Wantagh and Bellmore, many of whom were freed slaves of Wantagh's founding families.

Although burials began in 1845, St. Matthias's burial records for that period could not be located by former church Senior Deacon, Mrs. Shirley Hardy, who compiled the list of the 108 interred congregation members for the 1975 book Old Burying Ground, by Karl F. Pfeiffer.

Speaking during the rededication ceremony, Rev. Bryant called for neighborhood residents to respect the sanctity of the site as a cemetery, rather than to view it simply as an enclosed athletic field and playground. The Pastor told the assembled gathering that members of the

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The Wantagh Museum in Winter

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Other Society activities and accomplishments this year were:

- ◆ Six General membership meetings were held: each with an interesting historical program presented
- ◆ Revamping of the museum exhibits continued throughout the year
- ◆ April/May – rotted flooring in the Jamaica train was replaced
- ◆ May 14th Spring Yard Sale fundraiser
- ◆ June – 1st issue of the revamped Information Window was published
- ◆ Sept 17th – Scout Mike Sarlo's Eagle Scout project which involved moving the 1886 Outhouse to a more historic location on the museum grounds
- ◆ October 1st Fall Yard Sale fundraiser
- ◆ Oct/Nov – interior walls were installed in Post Office
- ◆ Oct/Nov/Dec – construction of new windows for the Jamaica train (to be installed in early 2012)
- ◆ December 11th Holiday Open House

The above activities and accomplishments were mainly the result of the hard work of 11 Society Trustees and 10 Society members.

Many thanks to the 50 individuals and families who supported the Society with their membership dues this year. 📖



Get a head start on 2012!
Join or renew your WPS membership now.

www.wantagh.li/museum/membership.htm

*"Preservation with a Purpose."**(Continued from page 3)*

church's congregation would monitor the future activities on the fenced-in, locked, gated cemetery, which is currently owned and physically maintained by the Town of Hempstead.


Legislator Denenberg spoke about the struggles of various religious and ethnic minority groups to achieve racial and religious tolerance and equality throughout history, not only in the United States, but in Europe and elsewhere. The Legislator stated

that dating back to biblical times, members of the Jewish faith were collectively named after Joseph, rather than the religion's founder and Joseph's grandfather, Abraham, because Joseph had to struggle to gain acceptance by his older brothers, who kidnapped him and sold him into slavery.

Mr. Denenberg presented Nassau County Legislature Citations to the Rev. Lawton Bryant, Pastor of St. Matthias Ministries, Inc.; to Mrs. Denice Evans-Sheppard, a 12th generation descendant of freed Jackson family slaves Jeffrey and Kate Jackson, who created her family's line; to Ms. Lisa Smith, a direct descendant of Civil War Private Gilbert Jackson; to Mrs. Shirlene Jackson, a direct descendant of Private David C. Jackson; to Mrs. Barbara Evans, a descendant of Private Morris Jackson; and to Mrs. Shirley Hardy, a former Senior Deacon of St. Matthias and a Jackson family descendant, on behalf of the families of Civil War Privates Charles Jackson and Edward S. Jackson.

St. Matthias Ministries, Inc. donated, installed and unveiled a permanent sign at the cemetery, located to the right of the entrance gate on Oakfield Avenue and visible from the street, in memory of the five (5) Civil War veterans who are listed by name, and also documenting the names of the remaining 103 members of the congregation who are confirmed by the church's burial records to be interred in the cemetery. Two-thirds of the people buried in the cemetery have the last name of Jackson.

The Rev. William A. Watson, Jr., Pastor of St. John's Baptist Church in Westbury, N.Y., also spoke at the rededication ceremony.

Hymns were sung during the services by the St. Matthias Ministries, Inc.'s choir. 



St. Matthias Cemetery rededication sign, erected on 2011 October 15 in memory of the five (5) Wantagh African-American Union Army Civil War veterans (Charles Jackson, Morris Jackson, Edward S. Jackson, Gilbert Jackson & David C. Jackson) who are buried at this site, along with 103 other members of the church's congregation.