

The Information Window

Wantagh's First PO Comes Back to Life

By Bob Meagher

Let the news be heard! After many years of waiting while funds were procured and detailed carpentry was performed, the old Wantagh Post Office has been open to public viewing this year! It's an exact replica of the Post Office that was built in 1907 on Railroad Avenue, across from the old Wantagh train station.

Our first viewing by the public occurred during our annual yard sale on the museum grounds on May 2nd. Everyone that took a peek inside was delighted with the finished interior and the exhibits that were placed there. Many people expressed the same thought that this little building at one time handled all the postal needs of Wantagh in those days. Especially when one considers that Wantagh now needs two Post Offices today to handle the mail!

It was the Preservation Societies good fortune that both the exterior and interior carpentry work was accomplished by Jeff Saporito of Saporito Contracting. Jeff was also a past President and Trustee of the society who oversaw many other projects that benefited the museum complex through the years.

The finishing work to the floor and walls and ceiling was done by Danny Keane. While the stain was picked out by the trustee's, it was Danny's application that gave the Post Office a real antique feel.



Interior View of the Restored Post Office



*The original Wantagh Post Office
on Railroad Avenue, Circa 1910*

To complete the effort certain artifacts were restored by Lester Orlick with an assist by Bob Meagher. Lester made a pot belly stove donated by past trustees Grace and Dick MacMillan look like new. He also made a display of old time Post Offices boxes to hang on the wall.

In addition we were able to hang up a display case donated by the LIRR. Inside the case is a copy of a letter written to the society president in 1995, Josh Soren, by a Gertrude Ballam. She worked in the old Post Office in the 1920's and described the interior layout for our benefit. The Post Office will be open on Sundays from 2-4 PM, the same time that the train station museum is open for viewing. 📖



Restored Post Office on the Museum grounds

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

Upcoming Events:

- ◆ Independence Day Parade, July 4 starts at 10:00 AM, at the Wantagh 5 & 10 and ends at Wantagh Elementary School on Beech Street
- ◆ Trustee Meeting, July 7 at 7:30 PM at Wantagh Museum
- ◆ Trustee Meeting, August 4 at 7:30 PM at Wantagh Museum
- ◆ Trustee Meeting, September 1 at 7:30 PM at Wantagh Museum

Wantagh Preservation Society

Elected Officers

President: Karen Chowske
1st Vice President: Bob Meagher
2nd Vice President: Carol Poulos
Recording Secretary: Wayne Wagner
Corresponding Secretary: Joan Mallon
Treasurer: Tom Watson

Appointed Officers

Curator: Carol Poulos
Newsletter Editor: Jim Colotti

Trustees

Bob Cook
Ellen Cook
Joan Mallon
Claire Reisert
Joshua Soren
Mary Wagner
Elaine Yarris

The Information Window is the official newsletter of the Wantagh Preservation Society, and is published approximately six times each year. Please obtain written permission from the individual authors before using material contained in this publication.

We hope you enjoy our newsletter. Your comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome!

wps@wantagh.li

A Special Thanks to our friends at

Iavarone Brothers

for the donation
of delicious

Hot Dogs

at our Spring Yard Sale!



**Museum
Is now open
Sundays
from 2 to 4 PM**



**More renovations are
underway!**

Field of Honor


In honor of Memorial Day, the Wantagh 6-12 association, the Wantagh Preservation Society, the Kiwanis Club of Wantagh and the Wantagh Key Club sponsored the first annual Field of Honor. From May 25 to June 7, this display of fifty flags on the grounds of the Wantagh Museum symbolizes the community's recognition and thanks to our veterans. 📖



Golfing for the Jamaica

Mike Dunphy, owner of the Wantagh Inn, presented a check to the Wantagh Preservation Society on May 14. Inspired by a recent article in the Wantagh Herald Citizen, Mike asked that the gift be earmarked for the continued restoration of the Jamaica.

Each May, a group of Nassau County bar owners hold a golf outing followed by an après event of food and drink. Proceeds from the outing are donated to the venue owner's cause-of-choice and Dunphy decided that the WPS would be a worthy recipient. Dunphy has a deep appreciation for local history and feels it important to preserve our heritage for the next generation.

Please consider donating to the restoration efforts. Feel free to give any amount that you are comfortable with. Scan or click the QR code on the right! 



Left Photo: WPS Vice President, Bob Meagher at work securing the side windows. Right Photo: Outside view of the Jamaica as it undergoes restoration.



Help restore the Jamaica.

Scan or click the QR code now!

We Need You! Join or Renew Your Membership in 2015!

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ New ☐ Renew ☐
 Email: _____

I'd like to help with:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening & Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> General Meeting Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting museum on a Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Event Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Publication & Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | | |

Check Membership Level: ☐ Individual \$15 ☐ Family \$25 ☐ Friend \$35 ☐ Patron \$50 ☐ Fellow \$100

Please Make Checks Payable To: Wantagh Preservation Society PO Box 132 Wantagh, NY 11793

✦ *For more convenience,
scan or click the
QR code!*



“Preservation with a Purpose.”

Cemetery Rumors Denied: Part I

By John Drake

Back in 1945 July 6, Donald and Lynda Gover purchased their former house, located at 1788 Old Mill Road in Wantagh, where it still stands today. In a recent interview with the Wantagh Preservation Society, David Gover, the eldest surviving son of Donald and Lynda Gover, stated that he never saw any evidence of a cemetery on his parents' former property. He firmly declared that there was not a cemetery on that land.

Dave Gover attributed the rumors of a cemetery at his parents' former home to people who viewed the property from Old Mill Road. He believes that they mistakenly confused some of the headstones of the Jackson Family's 1808 Harold Avenue Cemetery, which is located immediately to the west of 1788 Old Mill Road's rear property line, as being located on his parents' former property. Those headstones were reportedly removed from the Harold Avenue Cemetery circa 1947-1948. A former owner of that property apparently believed that the land would be easier to sell if it did not appear to have a cemetery.

In a letter dated 1976 February 23, the late Wantagh historian Helen Strang wrote to Richard Weddle, the Town of Hempstead's Director, Real Estate Division, citing the memories of elderly Wantagh residents as evidence of an abandoned cemetery existing behind 1788 Old Mill Road. Ms. Strang wrote: "I learned that there are a number of old timers who remember gravestones there going directly back of the old house still standing at 1788 Mill Road, (the former name of Old Mill Road) in one group, as well as another group of burials a bit off to the northwest and almost adjacent to the eastern plot. It is thought one area was used for the landowners' families and the other for slaves (sic.) way back when.... I find on a copy of a 1859 map that the owner was JACKSON; (sic.)...."


The second cemetery which Ms. Strang described in her letter is the black Jackson Family's 1808 Harold Avenue Cemetery. Family founder Jeffrey Jackson and his wife Kate were freed slaves of the white Jackson family, which co-founded Wantagh in December of 1643. The Nassau County (Department of) Assessment Record for 1788 Old Mill Road contains the following inscription: "Lots 3 & 8 Graveyard for 1951 – 1/5/50 LWR"

Nassau County Tax Maps originally identified 1788 Old Mill Road as a rectangular lot (Section 56, Block X, Lot 3). The Department of Assessment Record states: "Lot 8 Apportioned for 1949 (-) MAR 11 1949", indicating that the second parcel was combined with Lot 3 on that date. A deed dated 1949 February 16 and recorded on 1949 March 2 in Liber 3789, CP 17 appears to document the Govers' purchase of Lot 8.

Section 56, Block X, Lot 8 was a narrow, triangular parcel of land extending over 228 feet from the western side of Old Mill Road to the eastern boundary of the black Jackson Family's 1808 Harold Avenue Cemetery. It appears to have been designed and functioned as a right-of-way to the cemetery, enabling the descendants of Jeffrey and Kate Jackson to more easily visit their ancestors' graves from Old Mill Road, without trespassing on neighboring properties.

By Nassau County Change Order No. 74366, dated 1975 September 22 and apportioned on 1975 October 7, the combined former Lots 3 and 8 were subdivided and renumbered, Lots 38 and 39. Lot 38 begins at the western side of Old Mill Road, and extends West to include the house (1788 Old Mill Road), the driveway, the garage and a smaller backyard. The 6,000 square foot Lot 39 begins at the western boundary of Lot 38, and extends further west to the eastern property line of the Harold Avenue Cemetery. The southern boundary line of Lot 39 is the northern end of Lawrence Place, which is the property's only street frontage.

By a deed dated 1975 August 14, and recorded on 1975 August 15, under Liber 8834, Lot 38 was sold by Don and Lynda Gover to Brian and Concetta Donohue. The Govers retained ownership of Lot 39 for almost 17 more years (1975 August 14 – 1992 June 11) despite having relocated to the vicinity of Syracuse, NY, eventually settling in nearby Phelps, NY.

Learn more in part II in an upcoming edition of the Information Window. 



1788 Old Mill Road as it Stands Today