

The
**INFORMATION
WINDOW**

of the
Wantagh Preservation Society
PO Box 132, Wantagh, New York 11793

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October 2008

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Rita Coffey	Theresa Donahue	Frank McKenna	Joshua Soren	Elaine Yarris
Ellen Cook	Rose Kamins	Claire Reisert	Alfred Thomson	


OCTOBER 28 MEETING

Our program for our October 28 general meeting will be a field trip to the Levittown Historical Museum. For those interested in attending, we will be car-pooling from the parking lot of the Wantagh Public Library at 7:00 P.M. Those who want to go directly to the Levittown Historical Museum should plan to meet us there at 7:30 P.M. The Museum is located at the Levittown Memorial Education Center (former High School) at 150 Abbey Lane, Levittown. Call 735-9119 for additional information.

Levittown and Wantagh share much of the early history with the colonial settlement of Jerusalem and with the 1951 Levitt homes built in the northern part of Wantagh. On exhibit are documents, maps, vintage photographs and artifacts from original Levitt homes, as well as World War II and popular culture memorabilia.

Please note we are meeting earlier than usual this month to allow for traveling time. 


GOING TO LEVITTOWN MUSEUM

From Wantagh, take Wantagh Avenue north, over Southern State, then left on Old Jerusalem Avenue to Gardiner's Avenue. At Gardiner's Avenue, turn right and continue north to Reed Lane. At Reed Lane turn right, and follow as it changes to Abby Lane, to find the former High School and the Levittown Historical Museum on the right. 

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2009


Trustees and officers of the Society have been elected by the board of Trustees at their October Meeting, and will be presented for installation during the business section of the November Membership Meeting. The trustees elected are Rita Coffey, Sue Wendt, Joan Mallon and Claire Reisert.

Congratulations to these four new trustees, whose five-year terms will end in 2013.

The officers of the Society for 2009 will be: Josh Soren, President; Ellen Cook, First Vice-President, Chris Wendt, Second Vice-President, Dick MacMillan, Corresponding Secretary; and Elaine Yarris, Treasurer. A Recording Secretary was not selected, and is still to be recruited. 

**Preservation Society
Calendar**

Tuesday, October 28, 2008. Membership Meeting – meet in the parking lot of the Wantagh Public Library to car pool to the Levittown Historical Museum, 7:00 P.M.

Tuesday, November 18, 2008. Trustees Meeting in the Museum waiting room, 8:00 P.M. 

TO JOIN OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Addr: _____

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Circle one: Indiv \$10 Family \$20
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Mail to Wantagh Preservation Society
P O Box 132, WANTAGH, NY 11793

Here's another of the stories in the recently published "Historical Sites of Wantagh," now available at the Wantagh Preservation Society meetings and at the Wantagh Museum:

WANTAGH'S BLACK COMMUNITY


The northern boundary of *The Brush*, Wantagh's black community, was Jerusalem Avenue; the eastern boundary was Old Mill Road and the southern border near Wilson Avenue. The Lawrence Homestead, Site No. 3 on the Wantagh Historic Tour, 1880 Old Mill Road and Wilson Avenue would have been the southeast corner of The Brush. The community's western border was in North Bellmore, in the vicinity of the intersection of Bellmore Avenue and Bellmore Road.

At its peak in the 1930s, the black population of The Brush is estimated to have been between 60 and 100 people, consisting of 15 to 20 families of four to five people each, living in 15 houses.


The community had its own school which opened in the 1800s, and closed prior to 1920, following the establishment of the Wantagh School District, which held its first meeting on August 21, 1891.

As of October 2007, only one descendant of the original residents of Wantagh's black community, Mrs. Shirley Hardy, still resides in the area formerly known as The Brush. She and her ancestors have lived in the same house, just west of the Wantagh-North Bellmore boundary at Oakfield Avenue, since before the U. S. Civil War.

Mrs. Hardy is the Senior Warden of St. Matthias Episcopal Church. Only one other member of the church's current congregation, Mrs. Delia Cook, also resides in what was once The Brush, also just west of the Wantagh-North Bellmore line.


Mrs. Hardy attributes the decline of Wantagh's Black population to its younger members getting married and moving into their own homes in Hempstead and Amityville, combined with the deaths of elderly members of the community. Prices offered for land by developers during the building boom that followed World War II no doubt also contributed to the shrinking of Wantagh's black community, The Brush. 

TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Check the expiration date on the mailing label on the front side of your Information Window. There should be the note, "Dues paid to Jan '09," or later. If not, just select a membership level, fill out the form above, and mail it with your check. 

MAIL LABEL CORRECTIONS

The new mail labels used for the first time on the last Information Window, remarkably enough, had a few errors. Two of our readers kindly phoned in changes, which are now in place.

We also made corrections in the *Dues paid til ...* entries, with the aid of the Society's Corresponding Secretary, Membership Chair and the Treasurer! It is still entirely possible that there are other errors still lurking. Please check your label to make sure that everything is to your liking, and give the editor a ring at (516) 785-3951 to make it better. 

The INFORMATION WINDOW

The *Information Window* is a publication of the Wantagh Preservation Society, and is published (normally) preceding its monthly Membership Meetings.

It is also available on-line at www.wantagh.li along with the Society's event program and all sorts of good things connected with Wantagh.

You are invited to submit articles on items of local historical interest. The editor is Dick MacMillan, (516) 785-3951. 