

# THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF EAST HAMPTON

SPRING NEWSLETTER  
2020

the Village  
**Preservation**  
Society of East Hampton

## EAST HAMPTON EATS

By Kathleen Cunningham

The Society is pleased to announce its partnership in a local movement called East Hampton Eats – A Community Food Fund. Created by long-time local resident, Joe Rose, in partnership with VPS, East Hampton Eats is funding local restaurants to provide take-out meals to essential workers and those in need. To date, the program has delivered over 400 meal coupons redeemed by local workers and the food insecure in our community. Distribution of meal coupons has been enabled by the East Hampton Clericus, religious leaders in the Latino community, as well as local civic organizations. “We need to come together as a community to support each other and help out those who are struggling,” remarked Mr. Rose. VPS Chair, John McGuirk added, “It’s gratifying to know that we’ve found a way to thank our local essential workers during this extraordinary time while directing some needed business to our local restaurants – a win-win. It’s a small gesture to those who are keeping things running now, but represents the gratitude of the entire community. We’re proud to be a part of it.” Because Stony Brook Southampton Hospital healthcare workers were oversubscribed the program reached out to the essential workers in our community: postal workers, supermarket cashiers, drug store clerks and others who provide the

necessities of life for the rest of us, at their peril. Local restaurants are also benefitting from this initiative. “When Joe Rose called me about this I thought it was a great idea.



East Hampton postal workers signed a joint thank you card acknowledging their take-out meals provided by East Hampton Eats.

### East Hampton Eats Meal Coupon

For Use on Thursday April 23, 2020  
This coupon is redeemable for one takeout meal at

#### The 1770 House

143 Main Street, East Hampton  
631 324 1770

open for phone orders starting at 2pm, pick up from 4:30pm to 8pm

Please call your order in as early as possible to schedule a pick-up. When calling mention that you will be using an East Hampton Eats coupon. You will have a choice of two meals.

Coupons like these provided one take-out meal per person from a special menu, distributed to essential service workers and the food insecure.

Providing meals for people in need and supporting the local restaurants. This is what community is about. Thank you for the support,” concluded Mark Smith, co-owner of the Honest Man Restaurant group. The 1770 House, Fresno, Cittanuova and Sam’s Restaurant are participating in the program also.

# A HOUSE FOR ALL REASONS

By Averill D. Geus, Historian

The last years of the gilded age propelled a philanthropic movement through both urban and rural areas. Significant notice was taken of the poverty, unhealthy living conditions and lack of educational facilities for large segments of the population. These conditions prompted the founding of settlement houses and associations to provide educational and medical relief, child care and cultural amenities to impoverished families. East Hampton was no exception, and with the influx of the so-called “summer people”, generous visitors took note of the ragged children and sorry living conditions of the town’s poor.

Widows and orphans had traditionally been cared for by the Town Trustees, an ancient elected group of men, who since the founding of the town in the late 1600’s had provided relief to cases of hardship. As the town grew, a “widow’s mite” no longer sufficed to feed large families or provide housing for the homeless.

Credit for the earliest venture into improving the living conditions of an area of East Hampton called “Freetown”, where ex-slaves, Montauk Indians removed from tribal lands, and indigents lived, was a summer visitor from Flushing, Long Island. Her name was Mary R. Pell. She purchased a small piece of land on the west side of the road leading to Three Mile Harbor from John and Lovinia Walstein on July 28, 1852. Here she built a small chapel for a Sunday School and other religious meetings, and “for no other purpose whatsoever.” For many years, non-denominational services were held here for the Freetown people.

The chapel was first served by a young circuit riding Methodist minister named Rev. Samuel S. Johnson. Each Sunday, he preached in three small chapels in Amagansett, Springs, and Freetown. No longer able to support himself on the donations of the local poor, he left his mission in 1886 to a Presbyterian Sunday School teacher named George A. Eldredge. Mr. Eldredge, a Sag Harbor man, had moved to Freetown after his marriage to Catherine Lester of Round Swamp. A few years later, the chapel became an outpost of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and was renamed St. Matthew’s



Photo courtesy of Alicia Osborne

## 1940 • NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE SERVICE CLUB

37 Years at Neighborhood House

*Seated:* Agnes Rampe, Mary Byrnes, Adelia Payne, Maude King, Winnifred Lester, Frances Cullum, Ruth Hettiger, Clarissa (Tassie) Bennett. *Standing:* Mrs. Oberhauser, Jessie Adams, Mary Card, Sarah Finckenuer, Ada Elley, Madeline Smith, Anna McClosky, Elizabeth Adams, Lillian Fisher, Edith Lynch, Rose Browngardt, Matilda Goodale, Annie Miller, Clarissa Bennett, Ruth Cullum and Elsie Lester.

Chapel. An energetic young priest named Rev. Oscar Tredor assumed responsibility for the chapel after he became the rector of St. Luke’s.

Meanwhile, the Eldredge family continued their Freetown interests. George Eldredge Jr. followed his father and became a builder. Known as “boss” Eldredge, he built most of the large cottages in East Hampton’s “summer colony”. Eldredge Jr., in the early 1900’s, employed about 30 men year-round. He too was interested in the people of Freetown and voiced his concerns to those who could afford to help. One of the first to respond to his requests was Mrs. Theodore Weston, the former Catherine Simson, a New Jersey native. Her first visit to East Hampton was in 1879, when she arrived with her parents. They secured a Main Street lot in 1894, at the corner of Buell Lane, and built an impressive Victorian gabled mansion.

By 1900, the need for a settlement House was apparent. Eldredge Jr. envisioned a community space for Freetown and was able to interest some of his wealthy clients in his vision. In 1900, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Gallatin and Dr. and Mrs. Everett Herrick purchased 2 ½ acres from John and Catherine Mulligan on the east side of Three Mile Harbor Road. Mr. Gallatin is remembered as the donor who bought, and deeded over to the town, property known as Maidstone Park today. Dr. Herrick was a founder of the Maidstone Club, and a donor of the Herrick Park Playground on Newtown Lane. A small one and a half story cottage was built on the property. This was the beginning of the present-day Neighborhood House. Title to the property was to be held by a corporation likely to have permanence in the town, and so it came to be that the Presbyterian Church was entrusted with the property. It was “to be cared for and be of useful service to the people of the immediate vicinity, to promote mental and spiritual culture.” For many years, the little bungalow was supported largely by Mr. Gallatin, and in 1909 the property was incorporated as the East Hampton Visiting Nurse Association.

Mrs. Weston’s support did not end with the building.



Photo credit: Kathleen Cunningham

It was she who established the residency of a Director of activities. She found and hired East Hampton's first social worker, Mrs. Mary Gustine of Mobile, Alabama. Described as "gracious, warm, and sensitive," Mrs. Gustine is remembered as always dressed in white starched blouses and skirts. One of her first projects was to borrow two sewing machines and she set to work making children's clothes. She tended children while their parents worked, mediated marital disputes, cared for the sick, played the organ for church services, and served as a midwife. She had a telephone installed for the community's use. As one Freetowner recalled, "she taught us that you didn't get anything for free."

When Mrs. Gustine retired, the Directors hired a nurse named Miss Ethel Wanklyn. A tall, plain woman, she ran a small pharmacy open seven days a week and provided child-care for working mothers. Other directors who followed her included Miss V. or Miss Vervenstein, Mrs. Josephine Oberhauser (a kindergarten teacher who was the Neighborhood House Director for 30 years (1924-1954). She was followed by Clara Howard (Mrs. Selah Lester) who directed activities from 1955-1968.

It was Mrs. Gustine who set the standard high for the neighborhood House work. Under her guidance, programs there expanded to include many new services to the community. A nursery school or kindergarten was started in 1915 and continued for nearly 50 years. In 1917, the Emergency Hospital was built next door. The gymnasium and basketball court were added in 1920. A women's service club was organized in 1915 which worked tirelessly to raise money to support their neighborhood house.

Miss Wanklyn was appalled by the illiteracy in Freetown, by men unable to sign their paychecks, who were unable to count money. She kept a playroom open for children who could use it as they wished. She started boys carpenter classes, forerunners of the manual arts classes in later school programs. She organized a Mother's Guild, a troop of Camp Fire Girls, the first kindergarten in East Hampton and classes for girls on Saturdays where they learned to sew, embroider and do crafts. For adults, she organized dances parties and other events. By 1914, a neighborhood association was formed to provide a place for boys to play ball.

One of the most ambitious projects was organized in 1917 when an emergency hospital was built next door. This was a gift from Mrs. J. M. Hodson who bought a small house nearby,

had it renovated with the help of Mrs. S. E. Martin and created a place where sick children could be isolated. Cases of small-pox had appeared in Springs and later there was a local outbreak of diphtheria. Children were quarantined for five months, but not until Dr. David Edwards began removing the tonsils of children did the disease abate. The little hospital was discontinued in the 1940's and became a private residence.

Almost forgotten today is the close connection between the Neighborhood House and the Harriet Ford Herrick Playground on Newtown Lane, opposite the Middle School. With the rising interest in the welfare of the town's children, a much-discussed issue was that of a playground for sports and recreation. In 1914, the Neighborhood Association was organized on April 6th, and in December the group was incorporated. Four acres were acquired, most of it a former cow pasture. The creation of the playground was carried on largely by volunteers. The subject of playgrounds was widely discussed in the town and in village organizations such as "The Ramblers" where women researched topics titled, The Recreation Movement, The Playground, and Problems of Country Amusement. A summer director for the playground was hired. He was William G. Moench, who later wrote an outstanding thesis on the development of the East Hampton playground. During the summer, there were classes in folk dancing, gymnasium work, story telling and community parties. The director worked with children for sixteen hours per week. Two of his afternoons each week were given over to swimming instruction at Maidstone Park. Eighty to one hundred thirty children took part. There was one big difference between the Neighborhood House activities and those of the "Neighborhood Association."

This was the membership fee charged for taking part on the playground when there was no charge for classes in Freetown. The subject was taken up at a meeting of the Directors at a hot meeting in April where it was decided that charging a dollar per child was wrong. The program of sports, baseball, croquet tournaments and others was so successful that when winter approached, it was decided to move many activities to the building in Freetown. At this point, activities meshed and the two entities began to work together. Today, the summer programs which have been privately run by the town and by professional recreation people have lost their connection with the Neighborhood House. The athletic programs introduced many new sports to local



VPS Chair John L. McGuirk III presents a grant for \$10,000 from the Society to Neighborhood House, Chairwoman, Alicia Osborne and Board Member, Mark Crandall. The grant will fund the installation of a kitchen venting system to enable Project Most programs there.

Photo credit: Kathleen Cunningham

The athletic programs introduced many new sports to local

children. One of the most important was tennis.

Today, the century old Neighborhood House is a vital part of the East Hampton community life. It has been a clinic, a social hall, a kindergarten, a day care center, a public meeting room, a party and anniversary room, an election precinct, and a playground, as well as a church. It is reasonable to ask just how many government agencies it would take today to fill grants to meet all of these needs. The latest slot to be filled is that of Project Most, which has recently joined the long list of neighborhood projects for children in need.

A shortage of money has always been a problem for the Neighborhood House, and yet, many a crisis has been overcome by generous donations and donors and local organizations, including several grants from the VPS over the

years. Women's clubs such as The Ramblers, the Ladies Village Improvement Society, as well as the Maidstone Club, have never forgotten this important village asset. Despite its heavy workload, its amazing record of service, this is an organization that has never applied or accepted a government grant. It is uniquely self-supporting and has served every segment and need in town throughout its century of service. From it has come the Herrick Park Playground, medical programs, and a hospital, pre-school and kindergarten classes, physical education programs and much more. Most important of all, the small brown building in the oaks of Freetown has had an enormous impact on the lives and well being of hundreds of local families and created harmony and unity among formerly forgotten residents of our town.

## THE PROCESS OF PRESERVATION

*By Gene E. Cross Jr.*

The ongoing construction of the new building on North Main Street opposite Collins Avenue is just one of a series of separate steps undertaken to preserve the legacy of the Dominy craftsmen. While few will recall the original Dominy house (c.1770) and shops removed from the site in 1946, many have since participated in a series of distinct preservation efforts.

The Dominy craftsmen made many of the tools they used in making clocks, fine furniture and, several windmills. Beginning with patriarch Nathaniel Dominy IV (1737-1812), who taught his son, Nathaniel Dominy V (1770-1852), and ended with Felix Dominy (1800-1868). Each generation improved upon the knowledge base with both talent and experience. Their creations contribute to the historic legacy their lineage embodied. The Historic American Buildings Survey undertaken in 1940 includes photographs and documentation of the structure with 93 pages of detailed field notes and illustrations now preserved in the Library of Congress. Prior to demolition of the building in 1946, the clock shop to the south and woodworking shop to the north were dismantled and relocated and reconstructed to a private property where they remained in use. In 1958, the Winterthur Museum acquired a collection of Dominy tools, which are on display in museum recreations of the 1791 woodworking shop and 1798 clock shop. A 1976 book entitled "With Hammer in Hand: The Dominy Craftsman of East Hampton, New York" authored by Charles F. Hummel records the story of the Dominy family and their works. Having acquired the property on which the Dominy home and shops stood, the Village reconfigured the existing parking lot in 2005 to provide for the original building site.



*Photo credit: Library of Congress*

*The Dominy house and shops as they appeared in 1940.*



*Photo credit: Gene E. Cross Jr.*

*The Dominy house and shops during renovation in April of 2020, eighty years later.*

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# IRA H. WASHBURN, JR. – A TRIBUTE

By Kathleen Cunningham

The Society mourns the passing of former Trustee and inaugural Grants Committee Chairman, Ira H. Washburn, Jr. Mr. Washburn served the VPS for over 20 years before retiring from Board service, as he and his wife, Calista, continued to support VPS initiatives by active membership.

Ira helped to envision and launch the Society's first Grants committee, which revived the group's commitment to preserving historic structures by researching and identifying worthy projects that fell within the budget to support. He was a gentle, but strong leader. Ira found compatible committee members, brought attainable



initiatives forward, conducted very cordial meetings and kept good minutes. His vision helped to lay the groundwork for the Society's active Grants program, which has grown to include many worthwhile historic preservation projects, two of which are reported in this newsletter. His early support of the VPS involvement in controlling aircraft noise impacts came from his own experience as a pilot. He was very dedicated to East Hampton and lived a life that manifested that commitment through his good work for the Society. We extend our sympathies to his wife, Calista, and their family. He is greatly missed.



**Please fill out, cut along the line and mail to THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 2015, East Hampton, NY 11937 • 631-324-3524 • [www.villagepreservationsociety.org](http://www.villagepreservationsociety.org)**

Please enroll me as a member of The Village Preservation Society of East Hampton for the Membership Year from January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Members in this Membership** \_\_\_\_\_

For year round Newsletters and information, please print winter address

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Contributors of:*

\$ 25,000.00 will be listed as **Chairman's Circle**

\$ 10,000.00 will be listed as **Visionary**

\$ 2,500.00 will be listed as **Advocate**

\$ 500.00 will be listed as **Patron**

\$ 100.00 will be listed as **Friend**

\$ 15,000.00 will be listed as **President's Circle**

\$ 5,000.00 will be listed as **Champion**

\$ 1,000.00 will be listed as **Benefactor**

\$ 250.00 will be listed as **Supporting Member**

Regular Membership (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_

**The Membership Year runs from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.**

I would like to be active. My special interests are: \_\_\_\_\_

I (We) support VPS principles but do not wish to be listed as a member.

Enclosed is a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2015

East Hampton, NY 11937

[www.villagepreservationsociety.org](http://www.villagepreservationsociety.org)

## UNPRECEDENTED ELECTION DURING UNPRECEDENTED TIME

*By Kathleen Cunningham*

The 2020 Village Board Election, scheduled for Tuesday, June 16, 2020, will present more choices for Village voters than ever before in the history of the Village of East Hampton. Eight candidates are seeking office, including that of Mayor and two Trustee seats. All seats are for four-year terms with two Trustee seats open at two-year intervals. The VPS submitted questionnaires to each candidate canvassing them on issues of importance to our members and Trustees. The completed questionnaires are available on the VPS website at this link:

<http://www.villagepreservationsociety.org/election.html>

The other historical element of this election is the extraordinary impacts of the corona virus and social distancing

restrictions on traditional election campaign activities. Candidates need to employ different forms of outreach. Electronic access to our questionnaire is an important way to understand candidates' positions on issues that should inform voters.

At this time, the election is still scheduled to be held on June 16, 2020, but at press time, Governor Andrew Cuomo extended the lockdown date to May 15, 2020, so it is unclear whether the election will occur as scheduled or be postponed til later in the summer.

Information about voting by absentee ballots can be found at: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html>

## THE PROCESS OF PRESERVATION

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Four years ago the Village acquired the woodworking shop and clock shop, which have since been incorporated into the new building, which replicates the original framing as documented. The Village Preservation Society provided a \$10,000 grant toward the reconstruction of the clock shop workbench. A plaque indicating our gift will be placed on the bench. A grand opening is planned for this fall in concert with the Village's Centennial celebration.



*VPS Grants Committee Chair, Mary Busch, presents a grant of \$10,000 to fund reconstruction of the Dominy Clock Shop workbench to the Village Board. Left to right, Mary Busch, Mayor Richard Lawler, Deputy Mayor Barbara Borsack and Trustee Arthur Graham.*

*Photo credit: Kathleen Cunningham*