



COUNTY RESTORES 105-YEAR-OLD COURTHOUSE ON FRANKLIN AVENUE

In July 1900, when NYS Governor and Vice Presidential candidate Teddy Roosevelt spread the mortar with a silver-handled trowel across the foundation and the cornerstone for the courthouse at the corner of Old Country Road and Franklin Avenue was placed, he called the courthouse a symbol, telling his audience that it “embodied those aspirations of free self government.”

Now more than a century later, Nassau County has embarked on the renovation and restoration of the courthouse, which had experienced years of decay and lack of commitment to preservation. The work to restore that symbol and return the old courthouse to its historic and rightful role at the center of Nassau County government is enthusiastically spearheaded by County Executive Thomas Suozzi. With the help of a concerned citizens group and private donors, in the summer of 2002 the County restored the surface of the concrete dome and rededicated the courthouse as the Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building. This past July, demolition of later-year additions not in keeping with the original neoclassical design began.

Several Society board members recently reviewed the history of the courthouse and the current project with the County Executive, who explained that the land deed with the Garden City Company (1899), at left, was found in the basement of the Old Courthouse. The core of the courthouse — the first government building built by the newly formed Nassau County in 1900 — was designed by William B. Tubby and completed in December 1901. In 1916, the building was enlarged with the addition of two, mirror image wings connected to the main building by one story loggias, lined with arched windows. Additions were put on in 1925 and 1939, and

during the early 1940s, all court functions were moved to the “new” courthouse several blocks east. Yet more renovations took place in 1955, '58 and '61, many covering up beautiful assets of the building. Other appearances changed over the years, too. The dome was painted gold in 1935, and was once painted red. During 1930-50, the building was covered with ivy.

Inside, the courthouse featured coffered ceilings, Ionic columns, a gilded rotunda (see right) and murals depicting historic local events, which were commissioned by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression and painted by



Restoration work is underway at the Old Courthouse

Robert Gaston Herbert of Sea Cliff.

The original building is made of a reinforced concrete construction system patented by Ernest L. Ransome, in which iron bars were twisted to create an irregular surface to improve the bonding strength of the concrete.

Project Manager Ray Busch explained to Society members this October that current work includes door and period radiator restorations and refabrication of loggia window arches that were partial destroyed during renovations. To preserve original integrity of the materials, samples are taken and matched as closely as possible, and an automatic vibration system sounds if demolition work endangers the solidity of the structure.



The County will restore the courthouse to 1925 vintage, returning the main courtroom as a ceremonial conference room for County government and local organization functions. Completion of the project is expected in early 2007. The Old Courthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. More information on the Old Courthouse will be listed on our website.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BRIAN PINNOLA

Dear Friends,

The moment we've all been waiting for has finally arrived! We received our Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for the Museum, and last month we held a "soft opening" for our past and present board members, past presidents, Village officials and a few preservation advocates. It gave us an opportunity to see how the facility functions when occupied, an idea of the number of staff that will be required during operations, and a chance to hear guests' comments and suggestions.

Additionally, with the renovation work now completed, we will be directing our efforts at expanding our committee work. We encourage our members who have an interest in any of the following activities to please consider volunteering: Archives/cataloging, Fundraising/merchandising, A.T. Stewart Award, Historic Structure Survey, Building/house, Marketing, Education (including a new children's program), and Membership. You can contact us at our website www.gardencityhistoricalsociety.org, or by calling me directly at 516-456-0433.

Further, during the course of this year, we have received several donations of historic items including furniture, garments, paintings, and books from preservation minded and generous individuals. We are always seeking acquisitions to expand our collections. A donor can be assured that their items will be properly handled, cataloged and stored in our archive room, and put to good use whether it is utilized for the information it provides, or is included in a future exhibition at the Museum.

On a sad note, Betty Cook, one of the original founders of the Society, recently passed away. The Board of

Directors extends its condolences to her family and friends.

Lastly, I hope to see all of you at our fall lecture on October 26 at the Garden City Historical Society Museum. This promises to be a very informative and enjoyable lecture, and will be an opportunity for you to become acquainted with one of the communities preminent institutions – the Garden City Historical Society Museum.

Sincerely,
Brian A. Pinnola, President



From left, Newsletter Chair Maureen Traxler, Past President Joanne K. Adams, Sydney Adams, Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi and President Brian Pinnola examine the Old Courthouse land deed.

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COMMITTEE NEWS...

The Commemorative Brick Committee reports that a new order of bricks has been installed in the pathway around the Museum. Order forms available at Dougall Fraser Realty and the Garden City Library. For more information, please call 747-1774.

Membership Committee is looking for a few volunteers to help with the 2006 drive, which will begin in January. Volunteers are needed during February and March. Any one interested is welcome to attend the upcoming meeting of Society committees (see below).

The Historical Society's artifact collection has approximately 1,000 pieces. Until now, all of the recording has been logged neatly into two marble notebooks by our artifacts chairperson Betty Patterson. With the opening of the new, state-of-the-art archive room at the museum, we are now in the process of cataloging and computerizing all that data.

Historic Structure Survey Committee has forwarded the first half-dozen listings to our webmaster. This survey includes homes and non-residential structures in the Village that date from 1935 and prior. New submissions are welcome. See website for details.

A general planning meeting for all Society committees will be held on Thursday, November 3, 7:30 p.m. at the Museum on Eleventh Street. All interested in volunteering are welcome to attend. For more info: call Maureen, 319-1906. Messages will be returned.



GOLF GOLF GOLF

Garden City: A Golf Incubator

Tom Kirby, lecturer

**Wednesday, October 26, 2005
7:30 p.m.**

at the Garden City Historical Society Museum 109 Eleventh Street

In Garden City's early days, the seven golf clubs that dotted our landscape were a must-stop for the "big name players" of the time. Tom Kirby, the author of several articles about the sport of golf, will bring his audience back in time to hear the swish of their clubs — he'll even bring along some famed clubs and speak about the personalities who owned them.

A 37-year member of the Garden City Golf Club and its historian, Tom will talk about the history and current activity at today's three clubs - Cherry Valley, the Garden City Country Club and the Garden City Golf Club.

A question-and-answer session will follow Tom's slide presentation.
FREE ADMISSION.

WHERE IN THE GARDEN CITY WORLD ... DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS DATE MARKER?

Rumble, rumble, rumble. Where's this noted 1871 marker located? It sits in the shade and out of view to most passers-by. Send your guess to our webmaster at info@gardencityhistoricalsociety.org. Be the first reply and received a complimentary copy of Mildred Smith's book, "Garden City, Long Island in Early Photographs, 1869-1919," from the Historical Society.

Congratulations to Anne Imbornoni and Melissa Bradley who both identified our last newsletter's mystery location — the first Garden City public school house — which is now the administrative offices of our Garden City Public Schools. Our prior winner was William Slattery who identified the southwest wall of St. Paul's School, which is scrolled with graffiti.



ARTIFACTS WANTED: Period artifacts and memorabilia, either donations or on loan. Please contact us at info@gardencityhistoricalsociety.org, or call 516-456-0433.

GIFT ITEMS: Holiday time is approaching! The Society offers afghans featuring Village historic sites, Village pictorial book, commemorative bricks and historic site ornaments. Gift memberships available. Visit our website for a preview and details on how to order.

HISTORIAL SOCIETY OPENS MUSEUM DOORS

After seventeen years, the Garden City Historical Society has made a dream come true. On September 15, the Society held a soft-opening of the Garden City Historical Society Museum on Eleventh Street, inviting historical preservation advocates, Historical Society founding members, Village of Garden City officials, and Society board members and past presidents to view the recently renovated 1872 A.T. Stewart-era Apostle House.



Prior to the opening, board members Joe Stanco, Sally Schreier, Kris Harder and President Pinnola cleaned and waxed period pieces of furniture, and hung paintings, prints and photographs that had been gathered from various locations and stored in the Society's state-of-the-art archive room. Past president Joanne Adams prepared the St. Paul's-St. Mary's permanent exhibit, which she was instrumental in developing.

Above, Society President Brian Pinnola and Immediate Past President Joanne K. Adams acknowledge State Senator Kemp Hannon, center, for his assistance in helping to secure the grants from the Empire State Development Corp. for the historic home's renovation and restoration.



At left, former treasurer and current board member George Bowen created an exhibit of the hardware utilized in the construction and renovation of the museum. The display includes a spring loaded Victorian window lockset made in 1868, an 1872 lockset made of white porcelain knobs and privacy latches, a Victorian lockset of cast iron with ornamental bronze knobs mounted in 1872 and found on the third floor, a 1903 glass door knob set installed after the home's first relocation in 1902, and a 1903 brass finish steel plate doorknob set used on various closets on the third floor.



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