



Bay Shore Historical Society

Gibson-Mack-Holt House c.1820

22 Maple Avenue Bay Shore, NY 11706 (631) 665-1707
www.bayshorehistoricalsociety.org e-mail bayshohissoc@optonline.net

November 16, 2017

Meeting Notes

Barry called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and all stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Barry discussed (1) the tenants will be moving out of the house on Maple Avenue and the second floor will be used to expand the displays (2) Winterfest and Small Business Saturday is November 25 (3) The Snowflake and Bake Sale is December 2 from 10 AM to 4 PM (4) Light the Night is December 10 at 5:00 PM (5) The Potluck Dinner in December 21 at 5:30 PM. Joe reported income was \$968 and expenses were \$1,055. Joe also noted that donations from the Entenmann's family and John Gibson had been received. Kelly read the minutes of the October 19 meeting. Joann reported membership was at 320. Barry pointed out that membership is strong compared to other societies. The speaker for the evening was Christopher Verga. Dr. Christopher Verga is a local historian and American history lecturer at Suffolk County Community College. Chris discussed the history of civil rights on Long Island.

During the colonial era 18 percent of Suffolk County owned slaves, while 27 percent of Nassau County owned slaves. Slavery established a racial caste system.

Long Island also saw a mass immigration of Catholics, mostly Protestant, during this time. The Ku Klux Klan recruited directly from Protestant churches and saw a spike in membership on Long Island. One in seven Long Island residents were members of the Klan. The head of the Klan, at the time, lived in Bright Waters. The KKK further created a culture of segregation.

The Holy Name Society, led by Father Donovan of St. Patrick's, held a rally in Bay Shore in 1923 to denounce pro-Klan candidates. Forty thousand people attended the rally. Despite his efforts pro-Klan candidates won all the local elections.

After World War II the Klan started to lose members, but the culture was already set. Housing had been built for black soldiers in Levittown, but in 1949 returning black soldiers, who expected a societal change in race relations, were denied homes in these developments. These soldiers turned towards activism. Black soldiers returning from war became the cornerstone of the civil rights movement.

The mission of the *Bay Shore Historical Society* is to collect, preserve and share the rich history of our community and to maintain the c. 1820 Gibson-Mack-Holt House which is located at 22 Maple Ave, Bay Shore, NY. The Society's collection of photographs, memorabilia, and historic documents is open to the public free of charge on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 1pm to 4pm. For further information contact 631-665-1707 or visit the Society's website > www.bayshorehistoricalsociety.org. The *Bay Shore Historical Society* is an all-volunteer, tax exempt not-for-profit corporation as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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Chris also mentioned some notable people in the civil rights movement that visited Long Island. Thurgood Marshall spoke in Amityville about school segregation. Martin Luther King Jr. attended a rally in Malverne about school segregation. Harry Wachtel, Martin Luther King Jr.'s attorney, was a professor at Hofstra. His work inspired student activism groups.

Chris brought his presentation to a close explaining that Long Island still has a way to go with race relations. He showed a picture of Marcelo Lucero, an Ecuadorian immigrant killed by a group of teens in Patchogue in 2008, and the KKK recruitment fliers found on cars at the Patchogue rail road station last November.

Chris had copies of his book – Civil Rights on Long Island available for purchase. Barry thanked Chris for his presentation and invited everyone for refreshments.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Zebro

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