



# 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

January 18, 2018

Meeting Notes

Barry called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and all stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. There was a moment of silence for John Vanderveer Gibson and Helen Schick. Barry mentioned that the newsletter will be sent out at the end of January or beginning of February. Joann reported there were 320 members in 2017. Kelly read the minutes of the November 16, 2017 meeting. Joe reported expenses were \$1,260.00 and income was \$1,980. This includes the money raised by the bake sale and raffles at the potluck dinner. The speaker for the evening was Bill Bleyer. Bill Bleyer is the author of *Fire Island Lighthouse: Long Island's Welcoming Beacon*.

The Fire Island Lighthouse was an important landmark for transatlantic ships coming into New York Harbor from Europe. Shipwrecks offshore along the barrier island prompted the construction of the first lighthouse on Fire Island. In 1826 the first lighthouse was built on Fire Island. It was a cream-colored tower with the lantern room 89 feet above sea level. The tower was built at the end of Fire Island, adjacent to the inlet. The light should have been visible 14.5 miles out, but the crude light was inefficient. The beige color was also hard to distinguish from the sand. Shipwrecks continued to happen.

In 1857 a new tower, 168 feet tall and painted a creamy yellow, was built. The original tower was almost entirely removed with only a ring of bricks remaining. Stone from the original tower was used to complete this new tower. The new lighthouse was fitted with a Fresnel Lens. The more efficient light could be seen 21 miles out. The new lighthouse was lit November 1, 1858. In 1891 the tower was repainted with the present day alternating bands of black and white.

In 1896 Lightships were used in addition to the lighthouse. These were vessels anchored 6 miles offshore fitted with 2 lights and a fog horn. The problem with Lightships was that streamliners would run into them. The last Lightship was used in 1941.

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](http://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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Over the years various fuels were used for the lamp. The lighthouse was electrified in 1938. The Great Hurricane of 1938 did no damage to the lighthouse except flood the basement and sever electricity to the island. In 1973 the Fire Island Lighthouse light was extinguished. A light was installed at the top of the Robert Moses State Park water tower.

In 1982, the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society was formed. It successfully raised money for the restoration and preservation of the Fire Island Lighthouse. The Lighthouse was restored to how it was in 1939. The Fire Island Lighthouse has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1986 the Fire Island Lighthouse was relit and reinstated as an official aid in navigation.

In 1996 the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, through an agreement with the National Park Service, took over maintenance and operation of the Fire Island Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters'. In 2007, the original Fresnel lens was re-acquired and put on display in the Lens Building. The Lens Building sits where the original generator room was located. The Preservation Society plans to bring back additional artifacts for exhibition.

Barry thanked Bill for his presentation and invited everyone for refreshments.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Zebro

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