



# 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

March 15, 2018

Meeting Notes

Barry called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and all stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Barry asked we keep Gene Horton in our thoughts as he battles throat cancer. Barry also noted that the tenants have moved out of the house and that the St. Patrick's Day parade was wonderful. Kelly read the minutes of the February 15, 2018 meeting. Joann reported there are 112 members. 35 are new members. Priscilla provided an update on community events including: (1) The Beautification Society is still seeking donations to purchase hanging baskets around town (\$50 a basket); (2) The Distinguished Citizens dinner, honoring the Beautification Society, is May 18; (3) The Summit Council, in February, discussed the idea of shoppers donating 5 cents to the community in lieu of purchasing plastic bags; and (4) The Lions Club 'Taste of Sight' raised \$28,000 to support the food pantry. Joe reported expenses were \$549 and income was \$848. Most of the income was from the baby negatives.

The speaker for the evening was Jack Smith, President of the Cumsewogue Historical Society. He presented about the Gentlemen's Driving Park - the last known Victorian era harness racing track on Long Island.

Jack discovered the track by using Google Earth. The track is in Terryville. It is a half-mile mile oval loop that was built in the 1880's. Adjacent to the track was the site of legendary owner, trainer, breeder and track operator Robert L. Davis's Cumsewogue Training Stables. Today that land is occupied by the Davis Professional Park.

The Gentlemen's Driving Park was a place where bettors watched men race horses in carts called sulkies. A sulky is a two-wheeled cart with a driver pulled by a horse. This track was for the common man. Ladies also attended the races. There was no alcohol served at the track.

The track was later renamed Herman Floyd Track. Horse racing continued until 1946. When horse racing ended, kids raced jalopies around the track until the mid-1950's. Car racing is probably what prevented the track from becoming completely overgrown. Bicycle races and track and field

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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events were also held at the track. Car racing at the track ended when a LILCO substation was built on the southeast curve.

Jack found a broken pair of Victorian-era field glasses in the dirt near the finish line using a metal detector. He also has an original ticket from a racing event on July 4, 1892.

Echo was a horse who was originally bred and owned by Captain Nathaniel Dickerson. He was a horse of royalty descended from the illustrious Messenger. Messenger is buried on Long Island with a memorial plaque located on Duck Pond Road, not far from his burial spot. Port Jefferson Station was originally named Echo but was later changed.

Brookhaven Town purchased the land and received open space funding to restore the track to its natural state. The curve was put back by the substation making the distance around just shorter than a half-mile. The width of the track was restored to 30 feet wide. The track is a public park with public funding, but there is no place to park except to trespass at the substation. The track is a Brookhaven Town Historical Landmark.

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

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Zebro

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