



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 17, 2019

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 Flo Sobolewski (longtime member and volunteer), Gwyn Cox (longtime member) and Barbara Sher (wife of Bill Shelly). Barry mentioned that Angela Reich will present at next month's meeting on February 21, 2019. Angela published her first novel based on life at sea off the south shore of Long Island. Much of her research was done using the Historical Society's archives.

Priscilla provided an update on community events including: (1) Proposal to build apartments where Touro College is. (2) National Grid building storage center on North Clinton Avenue. (3) Big Daddy's has closed but is supposed to re-open. (4) Sal's Market held its ribbon cutting ceremony and is now open. (5) Main Street and Union to be paved from Robert Moses to East Islip. (6) The speed limit in the Village of Brightwaters has changed to 25 MPH. (7) Induction to the Bay Shore Hall of Fame is in April at Captain Bill's. 10 people are being inducted. (8) Walk with Frank - Frank Romeo, a veteran with PTSD, will walk from Buffalo to Bay Shore staying at homeless shelters to raise awareness of veterans struggling with this condition. More details can be found on his website: <http://www.walkwithfrank.org/>.

Minutes from the October 18, 2018 meeting are on the Historical Society website. Joanne reported there were 386 members in 2018. Joe report income was \$1,330 and expenses were \$3,102.

The speaker for the evening was Janet Demarest. She presented "A Merry, Very Victorian Christmas". She led the group in singing 'Deck the Halls' and then she sang 'The Holly and The Ivy'. Janet talked about some Christmas tales and traditions.

Holly and Ivy: Greenery is used to decorate during the Holiday season. In the Victorian era Holly and Ivy was used to decorate. Holly was the strongest tree and depicted the male. Ivy represented the female. Hung together they were a picture of a good everlasting marriage. Ivy was sacred to the god, Dionysus. She was a girl that turned into an evergreen.

Mistletoe: To the Celtic Druids mistletoe was a symbol of peace. Mistletoe was gathered and hung above the windows and doors of their home as a sign of peace and friendship.

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.



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

Poinsettia: Dr. Joel Poinsett, the first ambassador to Mexico, brought the poinsettia from Mexico to the United States. Janet told the Legend of Poinsettia. The original name for the poinsettia from this legend is Flores de Noche Buena - Flowers of the Holy Night.

Christmas Tree: Decorating the Christmas tree is a German tradition. Janet told the story of the first Christmas tree on Long Island. German soldiers decorated cedar trees in the swamps in Brookville on Christmas Eve. In the Victorian Era, Christmas trees were typically placed on a table and decorated with candles. Toys and puzzles also decorated the tree. This is where the saying 'presents on the tree' comes from. Janet led the group in singing 'O Christmas Tree' in both English and German.

Jingle Bells: One of the most popular Christmas carols began as a song with the title 'One Horse Open Sleigh' popular at Thanksgiving. James Pierpont wrote this winter song for his class to sing. They enjoyed it so much it was sung again at Christmas time. The song name was changed to 'Jingle Bells'. Janet led the group in singing 'Jingle Bells'. This is the most popular secular Christmas song.

Silent Night: The most popular religious song is 'Silent Night'. Franz Gruber played guitar to put music to the poem written by Father Joseph Mohr. Janet led the group in singing 'Silent Night'.

Moravian Christmas Putz: A putz or Christmas village is a decorative, miniature-scale scene. It was originally carved out of wood. The scene started with a manger and expanded out to include biblical scenes. As customs changed these miniature landscapes began to include more secular figures and elements. Eventually toy trains were incorporated into the setup.

Janet then talked briefly about the dark side of Christmas. She showed a variety of odd Christmas cards. These cards included a frog stabbing a frog stealing money and children overeating a ball of plum pudding. Krampus punishes naughty children at Christmas time. The opposite of St. Nick Krampus would steal bad children. Janet then concluded her presentation by reading 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'.

Barry thank Janet for her presentation and invited everyone for refreshments.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Zebro