



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

October 17, 2019

Meeting Notes

Barry called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and all stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Barry gave a special thank you to Joe, Mimi and Matthew for all their work on the exhibits on the second floor. Barry also thanked Priscilla, Joe and Matthew for working the Historical Society booth at the Brightwaters block party. Kelly read the minutes of the September 19, 2019 meeting. Priscilla provided an update on community events including: (1) The Long Island Housing Partnership moved their Spruce Up Bay Shore Day to Oct 18 due to bad weather; (2) The Bay Shore Beautification Society Spruce Up Day was a successful event and will be held again in the Spring; (3) The pictorial history of Brightwaters, that was on display at the Brightwaters block party, is now at the house; (4) The Bay Shore Chamber of Commerce annual Haunted Halloween Festival and Trunk or Treat is Oct 19; (5) The Japanese knotweed has been bagged and left to die along the stream behind 2nd Avenue. This is done so the seeds do not germinate; (6) Meet the Candidates Night is being held at the First Baptist Church on Oct 29 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM; (7) Clothing donations can be made at the drop box at Astoria Federal until Nov 8 for distribution at the First Baptist Church; (8) Work at the Fire Department on Fifth Avenue will go beyond the proposed completion date; and (9) Any leftover Halloween candy can be given to the Lions Club to be sent to the troops overseas. Joe reported income was \$459 and expenses were \$1,470.

The speaker for the evening was Amy Folk. Amy is a historian, researcher and Southold Town Historian. She presented the book she co-authored "Murder and Mayhem on Long Island". Amy told the story of the 1854 murders of James and Frances Wickham of Cutchogue. James Wickham was a wealthy farmer and lived in a large estate in Cutchogue. This estate is known as the Old House of Cutchogue. The estate and farm were maintained by a staff of Irish and African American servants. Wickham got into an argument with one worker, Nicholas Behan, after Behan harassed Ellen Holland, a female servant who refused to marry him. Wickham fired Behan and sent him away. A few days after being fired, Behan returned to the Wickham's estate as midnight. He found an open window and entered the house armed with a post axe. Behan hit Steven Winston, a servant, in the head with the axe while he slept. After a struggle, Behan murdered James and Frances Wickham. The other servants, Ellen Holland and Katherine Dowd, escaped. There was a manhunt for Behan. Behan halfheartedly tried to commit suicide and while he laid there a searcher stepped on him.

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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Behan was captured and tried. The trial included three days of testimony and twenty minutes of jury deliberation. The prosecutor was William Wickham, the brother of James Wickham. Behan was convicted and ordered to be hung. He spent a month and half in a jail cell in Riverhead until his execution on December 15, 1854. Over 3000 people attended the hanging. He became one of the last people to be hanged in Suffolk County.

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

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Zebro

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