

BITS OF HISTORY

HOLY NAME OF MARY
 by Joan M. Duffy

The centennial of Holy Name of Mary parish will be formally celebrated in 2002, but plans will get underway this year. According to Father Tom Harold, the pastor, Holy Name of Mary is unique in maintaining a strong tradition for nearly 100 years, facing the challenges of a changing and an aging population as well as the infusion of young people and new ethnicities. It is a parish in which several generations of the same family have lived.

At the beginning of the last century, 300 Catholics in Valley Stream petitioned Bishop McDonnell of the Brooklyn Diocese for a parish of their own. Reverend Peter McGovern was appointed to found the parish. The first congregational Mass was said on the second floor of the Corona Avenue firehouse on March 18, 1902. The first church on South Grove Street was finished in 1903 in time for Christmas Mass. Father McGovern, later made a Monsignor, died in September, 1952, after serving Holy Name of Mary as a beloved pastor for fifty years.

His successor, Father Joseph Butler determined that the parish had outgrown the existing church (see picture preceding page) and plans for the new church were established in 1954. In 1958, Bishop Walter Kellenberg, of the new Diocese of Rockville Centre, dedicated the new church building.

After Father Butler's death in 1959, Monsignor McGowan became pastor. Monsignor's first article in the Parishioner "The Parish Family" stated that new emphasis would be placed on parish group activities, including those for young people. Monsignor McGowan continued the building program. A new convent and rectory were completed in 1964. But before that in 1963, an addition to the school was dedicated by Bishop Kellenberg.

The parish school began in 1939 with 356 boys and girls. As the school outgrew its population to a number of 1100 students in 1967, the addition was badly needed and increased the number of classrooms from 12 to 24. Your author, who has been a parishioner for 45 years, remembers how difficult it was to rise at the "crack of dawn" to get four of her children to school by 8:00 a.m. They only attended then until about 1:00 p.m. so that the workman could continue construction on the school. There are now 275 students in Holy Name of Mary School which is served by 18 teachers. Sister Elizabeth, S.J. is principal and Sister Barbara, S.J. head of Confraternity.

The parish has been touched by tragedy several times. A young curate, Father Thomas Carroll, was burned to death in a barbecue accident in 1957. Father Phillips, the fourth pastor of the parish, died in an automobile accident in 1957. The sixth and seventh pastors, Father Willdig and Monsignor Fagan both died at comparatively young ages of cancer

Following the death of Father Phillips, Father Theodore LeTure, who grew up in Valley Stream and attended local schools, became pastor for about 17 years. Father LeTure is still Pastor Emeritus.

Reverend Thomas Harold, who grew up in West Hempstead and attended Chaminade H. S. was installed as the eighth pastor of the parish on October 1, 2000. Father Harold, who was formerly a Marianist Brother, was ordained a priest in 1991 and served as an assistant curate for five years at Holy Family Church in Hicksville. After that period, Bishop McGann made Father Harold Vocational Director of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, a position he continues to hold.

Father Harold became temporary administrator of Holy Name of Mary parish in December 1999 with the illness of Monsignor Daniel Fagan and was appointed pastor in June, 2000 upon the death of Monsignor Fagan. Father Harold's special hobbies are the Mets, golf and conversation.

The parish organizations are really too numerous to mention here, but Father Harold singled out for particular respect the Eucharistic Ministers who bring Holy Communion to the sick and homebound.

Parish Outreach, begun in 1983, under the direction of Sister Margie Kelly is an exceptionally vibrant force in the parish. Again, its activities, including English classes for English and Korean speaking people, are innumerable. A recent parish report indicated that over 10,000 contacts were made by Parish Outreach in one year. In conjunction with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a food pantry feeds the hungry.

Father Harold writes an informative and expressive column in the weekly parish newsletter. (He was an English teacher at Chaminade for eleven years.) He recently commented how fortunate he was to have the assistance of three devoted curates, Father Stephen Briganti, Father James Maltese and Father Saji George who also serves the Catholics of the Eastern Syro-Malankara Rite in Hempstead.

Holy Name of Mary's 3800 families are facing the new century and the parish's upcoming centennial with energy and hope.

Sources: Interview with Father Harold and the 65th anniversary booklet of the parish.



MSGR. PETER MCGOVERN

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BITS OF HISTORY

GIBSON: THE MAN AND THE COMMUNITY.

by Joan M. Duffy

An historic event occurred on December 1, 2000. Workman preparing to install new siding on the Il Bagatto Ristorante at the intersection of Roosevelt and Rockaway Avenues removed the old facade of the building. There on the top of the building, etched in wood, was the old sign, "The Gibson Corporation." This was W.R. Gibson's first sales office.

W.R. Gibson, a carpenter who had emigrated from England, and had built a large number of homes and 68 apartment buildings in different parts of Queens, decided in 1922 to purchase 700 acres of land in South Valley Stream. His intention was to build a community that would have a country flavor but city advantages. He purchased land from the Norumbega Real Estate Company and the Queens Water Corporation.

His original houses were on Roosevelt Avenue and the side streets off it. Lillian Weaver lives in a house on Berkley Street that was built by Gibson in 1923. Lillian said that her style of house was subsequently discontinued because it had only two bedrooms upstairs. At that time, 1923, the houses on the south side of Avondale, Berkeley, Derby and Elmwood were built and those on the north side of Roosevelt Avenue came later. Evelyn McQuade noted that her father bought her house on north Cambridge Street 76 years ago in 1924. At that time Evelyn said, "Everyone knew the area as 'Old Gibson'. The houses closer to Munro Boulevard were to become 'New Gibson'." Evelyn and her friend Olga Motley Hopkins reminisced that their parents were delighted to be able to come out from New York City and buy houses; it was the fulfillment of a dream Clint Duryea, "Seventy six years ago in 1924, my parents came way out to the country, in their Model T Ford to Valley Stream and bought a new house on Fairfield Street from the Gibson Corp." That's where Clint was born and after he married, he moved into his in-law's Gibson house on Ivy Place. At that time, 1950, your author's community of 62 houses, West Sunbury, west of Mill Road, north of Harbor Road and south of Millbrook, was being built by Gibson. Clint Duryea purchased one of the houses on Jedwood Place for \$9,990 and was able to come over every night to supervise the building of his house. Clint installed the insulation himself, since Gibson did not include insulation in his houses, and also paid the plumber an additional \$30 to have the colored tiles he preferred installed in the bathroom.

To attract homeowners to his community, William Gibson built his own railroad station for \$55,00 after the Long Island Railroad agreed to make stops there on the Far Rockaway line. Ninety two trains served the station daily in 1973, making Gibson Station only 32 minutes from Penn Station and in the other direction, accessible to the Long Island beaches.

Gibson was truly involved in many ways in his community, in too many ways to mention here. Every year he awarded prizes for the most beautiful and well kept lawns and gardens. He started the custom of carol singing around the Christmas tree at Gibson Station as well as providing a Santa Claus and candy for the children. Plans for a recreation center died with the depression, but Jack Mahoney remembers the tennis courts and the miniature golf across from Gibson Station.

An indication of the eagerness of people to buy in the Gibson area was that 733 houses were sold in 738 days. Gibson pioneered the cellarless house, or house built on a slab, called the Nantucket model which was sold during the depression in 1939 for \$3,890.

There was a sad side to all this Genevieve Elderkin MacLean claims that 70% of the houses went into foreclosure during the depression despite the fact that Franklin Delano Roosevelt pushed through legislation that only the interest needed to be paid and not the principal. Jack Mahoney who went to work for Gibson between the ages of 8 and 10, cleaning bathrooms and scraping paint off windows, remembers later going into the foreclosed houses as a plumber's helper to remove the copper boilers and water heaters to replace them with galvanized ones. Jack recollects hanging curtain rods in a model house on the corner of Page and Gordon Roads. Jack also recalls that W.R. Gibson's son, "Buster" ran the company when the headquarters were moved to Gibson Circle and then to Broadway in Hewlett.

Mary Beth Backman, who lives in a lovely Tudor style Gibson on Page Road, (the variety of Gibson models was amazing) tells a story of how Gibson and his cronies were having a party one night and discussing what to name certain streets. They looked at the bottles on the table and decided on "Haig, DuBonnet, Gordon, Carstairs and Wilson." Our family, residents of Jedwood Place in West Sunbury, discovered a town named Jedruth in Scotland and have often wondered if that is how Gibson found the name. We do know that Shine Place was named for his secretary.

To be continued next month

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BITS OF HISTORY



THE GIBSON CORPORATION

The archives of the Valley Stream Historical Society provide a wealth of information on W.R.Gibson and his houses including promotional material from the Gibson Corporation describing the different models that were built with detailed schematics of layout and construction specifications. The styles in 1928 included the Devonshire, the Copley, the Berkshire, the Avon, the Eton and the Fairmont with prices ranging from \$5,870 to \$ 11,500.

If we return to people's memories, Jack Mahoney also spoke of the horses that were used to excavate the foundations of houses with scoops since there were no payloaders. Charles "Chappy" Frederick said that the horses were kept in Gino's barn in the vicinity of Rosedale Road and DuBois Avenue. Chappy lives in the house on DuBois Avenue that was built by his father-in-law, H. Wesley Erickson, who was a superintendent of construction for Gibson. Frederick also recalled that the building we mentioned at the beginning of this article, at the corner of Roosevelt and Rockaway Avenue was Russell's Coal and Ice Company during the depression and he remembered going there for a free 50 pound bag of coal to heat their kitchen. The coal was free because they had a coupon indicating that they were on welfare.

Gen MacLean recollects that when her family moved into their Gibson House on Cochran Place and Pershing Avenue in 1925, Cochran Place was a dirt road. It was Gibson who built the firehouse on Cochran Place. That may have predated a fire that a young Gen MacLean and her girl friend saw in the woods south of DuBois Avenue when returning from the movies with the friend's mother. The two curious little girls went to investigate the next day and found a burnt cross with gasoline cans hanging from its cross bars. This was the work of the Klu Klux Klan because an Irishman named Gregory Murphy was to be president of a local organization, possibly the first Gibson Civic Association.

The Gibson Civic Association was actually founded in 1946 under the presidency of Donald Tutschulte.

The Association now meets in the Olivet Baptist Church, has 469 member families, and still holds the annual Christmas party for children that Gibson started.

The man who essentially created the entire 11581 zip code area of South Valley Stream, William R. Gibson died at the age of 84, having built 10,00 homes on Long Island. At his retirement in 1952, he had been in the building industry for 58 years. Those of us who have lived many, many years in Gibson houses are grateful for his genius, even if we had to install our own insulation.

Special thanks to the Valley Stream Historical Society and our senior residents for sharing their memories.

This column is the continuation of the Gibson article in the February Panorama, a copyrighted article of mine.

We received the following letter from Jim Boerckel which I have taken the liberty to paraphrase because of space.

In the early thirties, a horse drawn steam pumper engine was placed for storage purposes in Engine 3 in Cochran Place firehouse. Someone in Engine 3 placed a wooden saw horse in front of the pumper where a horse would have been. A hobby horse head appeared on the forward end and a rope tail on the other. Visitors to the firehouse were amused by it.

After a while, some men from the Hook and Ladder Company including my brother, Win, decided to make the wooden mock-up horse a little bit more realistic. Someone purloined a key to the Engine 3 firehouse. Several of the Hook and Ladder men placed a quantity of horse manure in an appropriate place behind the saw horse. The Engine 3 men were not too happy about this bit of realism. It was said that it took a week to get the essence of horse out of their fire house.

I will have to admit that at the time, I was about 12 years old. I was a "Fire house" kid. I guess its time to 'fess up. I won't say who the other men were, but I could...

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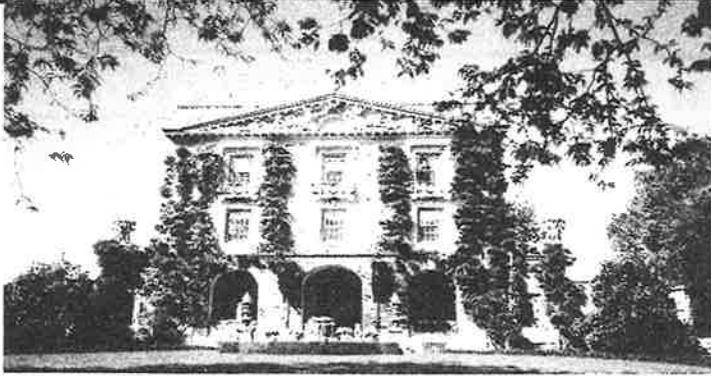
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KYKUIT

by Joan M. Duffy

Kykuit, situated on an awe-inspiring site with a panoramic view of the Hudson River near Tarrytown, was originally conceived by John D. Rockefeller, who entrusted the building of the original house in 1913 to his son. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. lived in the house with his wife, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, a renowned art collector, until 1937. One of their six children, Nelson A. Rockefeller, occupied the house from 1960 until 1979.

Last October, my significant other took me to Kykuit for a birthday present. I had wanted to visit Kykuit, which is a Dutch word meaning "lookout" for about ten years since it was first opened to the public.

The original Kykuit façade was redesigned by William Welles Bosworth, who also designed the formal classical gardens which are preserved until this day. This neo-classical country house with its garden is one of the best preserved Beaux Arts houses in the nations.

As you face the façade of the house today, pictured above, your back will be to a magnificent classical Oceanus fountain which overlooks stone terraces below.

The house is livable, not museum-like. After the porch, the vestibule and the hall, the visitor enters the music room in the style of an atrium. This room was patterned after a 17th century London house from the style of Christopher Wren. The room is dominated by a pipe organ and console with three keyboards by the Aeolian Company of N.Y. The room was intended to separate the working offices part of the house from the more private family rooms.

Other rooms that members of the public are escorted through are the Office, the Drawing Room, the Dining Room, the Library and the Living Room. The Alcove Room contains an astounding figure of a female Budhisattive from the T'ang Dynasty. In the China Room parts of the nine extraordinary dinner and desert services used by Nelson Rockefeller in his years a governor and vice-president are on display.

Personally, I am not a devotee of modern art, but it would be difficult not to be impressed in the lower level galleries of modern art collected by Nelson Rockefeller which include works by Picasso, Andy Warhol and George Segal.

The gardens around the house are extensive and again at breathtakingly beautiful places. Nelson Rockefeller placed significant works of modern sculpture by Henry Moore, Alexander Calder and Louise Nevelson among others. Each blends into the assigned site as if it were always intended to be there.

The gardens are the Inner Garden with the Temple of Venus, the tea house, one of Mrs.. John D. Rockefeller's favorite retreats, the Orange Tree Terrace, the Swimming Pool Terrace, the West Garden and the Rose Garden.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford declared Kykuit a National Landmark.

I hope that I have suggested sufficient attractions at Kykuit to merit a one day excursion by members of the VSHS. At one time only pre-established groups were accommodated but now individuals may visit on first come-first served basis. (914-631-9491.) Visitors are bused from the Philipsburg Manor. Take I-95 north to I-287 west. Exit at sign to Thruway. Take exit 9 and go 2 miles north on Rte.9 to Philipsburg Manor. A movie on Kykuit is shown while you wait and lunch is avail-

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THE OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

**Interview with
Reverend Charlotte Davis**
by Joan M. Duffy

The Olivet Baptist Church on Du-Bois Avenue in Valley Stream will celebrate its 75th anniversary in the fall of 2001.

The beginnings of the church were in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Brolin who had a Sunday School in their home on Cochran Place in 1926. In the following year, the Reverend William H. Friday organized the Calvary Baptist Church and in 1931, the present land was purchased. The newly-named Olivet Baptist Church, a member of the American Baptist Church of the United States, was built and initially welcomed thirty members. The first church was a small sanctuary, the site of the present Gibson Co-operative Nursery which meets daily at the church. In 1957, the present building was dedicated under the leadership of Reverend Clayton A. Williams.

Reverend Charlotte Davis, the tenth pastor of the church and the first woman pastor is a dynamic person who obviously relishes her multiple responsibilities to a congregation of 150 members. She has been the pastor of Olivet Baptist Church for seven years. Growing up in Massachusetts, she attended Boston University and Andover Newton Theological School. She was a very active lay person for thirty years, but was not ordained until 1985. After serving a year at a church in Boston, she came to Valley Stream.

Reverend Davis lives in the parsonage at the church with her husband, Walter. She has six children and ten grandchildren. Unfortunately for Olivet Baptist Church, Reverend Davis plans to retire in the fall and is building a house in

Nevada, where she anticipates clean slate in retirement, not sure exactly what she will do.

The 150 congregants of Oliver Baptist Church are an ethnically diverse group. It is an average sized church for its denomination. The parishioners include people from Valley Stream, Queens and Suffolk with representatives of Nigeria, Haiti, the Caribbean as well as African Americans. The intention of the church is to meet the needs of all people

Besides the nursery school, the church hosts the Gibson Civic Association, several AA groups, Friendly Seniors, the Homemakers of Valley Stream and the Baker Repertory Players. The latter have been noted in Valley Stream for putting on productions of Sly Fox, Dancing at Lughnasa, The Crucible, Sisters Rosensweig and Love Letters among other plays.

Weekly services at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays include musical selections under the leadership of Mark Engh, organist and choir director, a procession, a children's story, Scripture readings, a sermon and a gathering at the Lord's Table. Most significant is the Coffee Fellowship which follows the service which bonds the church community together.

Olivet Baptist Church is a member of the Valley Stream Religious Council and hosted the ecumenical Good Friday service this year.

A short history of the church states: "the life and history of a church are recalled... in precious memories about the deepest, most satisfying experiences of life; for the life of a church is the unrolling of a tapestry of common recollection—into which are woven forever parts of the lives of its people."

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BITS OF HISTORY



The Lutheran Church of Our Savior

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR

The following information is from the archival material, including "Fifty Years of Faith" from the Pagan Fletcher Restoration and from an interview with the Rev. Alan Steinke by Joan M. Duffy

The development of the Gibson Corporation and community in the late 1920's, which was reviewed in several Panorama articles this spring, coincided with the venture in faith of the Rev. Reinhold Zintner. Actually, a sign at Gibson Station advertised "A Christian Community." The Reverend Zintner, pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Laurelton, started a Lutheran mission on November 30, 1930 in a storefront church on DuBois Avenue in Gibson. Forty one people attended that first divine service.

Though very little money was available, a house at 135 DuBois Avenue was rented from the Gibson Corporation. In the same year that the building was acquired, 1932, Reverend William Donahue was assigned to Gibson to do mission work. Reverend Donahue was the first full time pastor at age 23.

A new church was dedicated on November 26, 1939. However, in the late 40's and early 50's, church membership grew to approximately 500 congregants and with pledges of \$50,000 the present edifice at Rockaway and DuBois Avenues was built, and dedicated on March 27, 1955.

Pastor Donahue was a dynamo both in his church and in his community. In his early years, he "canvassed the entire Gibson community (on a bicycle) urging (people) to come visit the little Mission." He was chaplain of both the Kiwanis Club and the local Fire Department as well as being chairman of the Valley Stream Chapter of the Salvation

Army Service Unit. This is only a partial list of his memberships and involvement., Significantly, he served as a District #24 school board member for many years, and Franklin Avenue School (later demolished) was renamed in his honor in 1972.

After 45 years as pastor, Reverend William Donahue retired on January 20, 1977 only to be called to God after a long illness on February 9, 1977. He had been born in Holyoke, Ma. And was graduated from Concordia Seminary in 1932.

His successor, Reverend Alan Steinke has served the church community now for 24 years. Born in Bay Shore, L.I. in 1945, he received a Masters of Divinity Degree from Concordia Seminary in 1971. He served 5 1/2 years as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Panama City, Florida, before being called to Valley Stream. He and his wife, Marie, have a daughter, Holly who has been secretary of the church since January 1, 2001.

After his installation on June 16, 1977, Pastor Steinke made it clear that he would be a "full-time pastor" and among many other activities he "made visitations to the sick and needy, as well as a house call to the families who had drifted away from the church." One of the present goals of the church is to recruit new members.

Organizations in the church include the Lutheran Brethren and AAL, Association of Lutherans which does community service.

Community groups which the church hosts are the Democratic Club and the Valley Stream Garden Club. There are now between 175 and 200 active members of the congregation. Services are held at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays, the same time as Sunday School.

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PANORAMA

Valley Stream Historical Society

VOLUME XXIX, No. 1

September 2001

PAGAN-FLETCHER RESTORATION

143 Hendrickson Avenue
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NEXT MEETING HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Wednesday, September 19, 2001

8:00 P. M.

Brooklyn Avenue and 7th Street
Valley Stream

QUILT SHOW

At the

Restoration

Saturday/Sunday, October 20/21

1 to 4 P. M.

Admission \$3.00

PROGRAM

Mr. Tom Dapolito of Nassau County Department of Parks and Recreation will speak to adults and children about our Parks. This aspect of life and leisure in the County will be of interest to all.

Cakes for the evening will be provided by Ruth Anne Zwarico, Marge Chvatal and Lillian Weaver. Tony Melillo will man the coffee urn!

GOOD LUCK JOAN DUFFY!

You have said that as Editor of PANORAMA you were able to fulfill a youthful dream of being a journalist. We're glad that we have been able to enjoy the fruits of that realization. You have done an excellent job of writing, preparing and mailing what we consider the lifeline of our Society and the Pagan-Fletcher Restoration. Knowing that PANORAMA is always there to keep us current about our activities and events has been a real plus!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

The Membership



Our own Joan Duffy

ON THE HORIZON

One of our favorite activities is coming up on Wednesday, October 17th—the Harvest Covered Dish Supper! Mark the date and watch for details in the October PANORAMA.

DON'T MISS IT!

A REMINDER

Helen Dowdeswell and her committee are very dedicated to taping memories of long-time Village residents who tell of Valley Stream in earlier days. The file of oral tapes has increased considerably since the project was started and the varied memories bring to life a remarkable Village that, like Topsy, "jes grow'd and grow'd" and became everybody's favorite hometown. Stop at Waldinger Library and borrow a few tapes for some good listening!

A SAD NOTE

It is with deepest regret that we report the death of Carrie Mahoney, wife of Trustee Jack Mahoney, on July 15th. We extend sincere condolences to Jack and his family.

MUSEUM OPENING?

We're waiting for some word on the date of the official opening of the new Cradle of Aviation Museum. We know that Hank Anholzer will be swelled with pride and joy when the event takes place.

NEW SLATE

The installation of officers held June 20th placed in office those members whose names appear on the reverse side. They are already well into planning a full and busy calendar for 2001/02

REMEMBERING AL MAYERNICK

On September 23rd the Historical Society will honor the subject of PANORAMA's page two this month, Al Mayernick. Everyone is welcome to come join the celebration of Al's life. The ceremony will take place at 3:30 P. M.

EDITORIAL NOTE

We all wish retiring Editor Joan Duffy only the best for the future. You can be sure that her newsletter expertise will be difficult to replace. I appreciate the opportunity to write this edition of PANORAMA during the transition. Thank you.

Lil Weaver
Guest Editor

Alphonse Mayernick
by Joan M. Duffy

Alphonse Mayernick was a very special person to those who knew and loved him: his family, friends, students and members of the Valley Stream Historical Society.

Al was born in 1917 in Maspeth, Queens and attended Mary Help of Christians School in Winfield with his five brothers. (Two others died very young) After William Cullen Bryant H.S. in Astoria, Al attended Fordham University for an undergraduate degree and received a Masters Degree from Queens College. A great deal of living intervened before he achieved those degrees. Al died in Florida in November, 2000

His family was of prime importance to Al. Besides his devotion to his brothers, Al cared deeply for his 65 nieces and nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. Shortly after New Year's every year, Al would have a party at his apartment in Bayside for "family". The party became so large that Al began having two parties.

His working career included twenty years at RCA Institute. After that experience, Al decided to teach. He taught first at the Delahanty Institute and then in the community of Plainedge before coming to North High School in Valley Stream where he taught World History and American History for twenty years. Two of his brothers, Ferdinand, who provided your writer with a great deal of information on Al's life, and Vinnie, were also social studies teachers.

Al transmitted his interest in art by teaching history through painting. He was an expert in making slides from pictures. His avid stamp collecting also became a teaching tool through the slides he created and displayed. He also displayed his fascinating stamp collection slides, arranged thematically, to the Valley Stream Historical Society. Al's knowledge and collection of stamps was phenomenal. He had many stamps that had an association with Long Island, for example, one of Nathan Hale, for whom Halesite was named. Several years ago, Irene Virag of Newsday did an extensive feature story on Al Mayernick and his remarkable stamp collection.

Besides lessons in the classroom, Al involved his students in extra-curricular activities. He had a "Concern" club, which went to nursing homes at Christmastime, and held concerts to raise money for charitable purposes, one of which was held for the starving people of Biafra. He engendered love in people, and his students called him "Poppa Al". Information on Al's teaching career was provided by Charlotte Cascio, his colleague in North High School's social studies department.

Al had an aunt in Czechoslovakia, a place he visited many times. This is where his family originated. He became friends with a minister there and had the man to his house several times. Al was an extremely devout Roman Catholic which greatly influenced his attitude.

He was drafted into the Army in 1941 and at the time there was a fear of the Japanese invading Alaska. (They had occupied two islands in the Aleutians.) Al

was sent to Alaska and served there as a first Sergeant for three years. He finally got a leave to come home and that was when the war ended.

His devotion to the men and women who served in W.W. II was incomparable. An Al Mayernick W.W. II sign is still in the storage room at the Pagan Fletcher Restoration commemorating an exhibit he prepared. For about fifteen years, he wrote the second page of Panorama about servicemen of W. W. II with information gleaned from old copies of the Gibson Herald and The Valley Stream Mail.

Al's membership in the Valley Stream Historical Society was connected to his enduring friendship with Helen Dowdeswell. Helen went to visit Al at the hospital when he had a heart attack. At the time, he was teaching history at North High School and she was chairperson of the Foreign Language Department there. Helen said to Al, "With your interest in history, you should belong to the Valley Stream Historical Society," despite the fact he lived in Bayside. The rest is history.

Besides being a faithful docent at the Pagan Fletcher Restoration, Al arranged many slide presentations for Society meetings. Those of his stamp collections, and the Southwest of the United States where he traveled with his brother, Vinnie, come to mind. We remember his enthusiasm and fascination with the cliff dwelling Indians of the Southwest. He had slides of old Valley Stream as well as of the National Parks. In fact, according to Ted Libath, there are hundreds of slides at the Restoration which Al created from pictures. He also did bulletin boards for the Henry Waldinger Memorial Library.

Al Mayernick's devotion to history infused his life in a variety of ways, and to those who knew him he was a memorable and exceptional human being.



ALPHONSE MAYERNICK

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PANORAMA

Valley Stream Historical Society

VOLUME XXIX, No. 2

October 2001

PAGAN-FLETCHER RESTORATION

143 Hendrickson Avenue
Valley Stream, NY—516 872 4159

<http://www.nassaulibrary.org/valleyst/vshist.html>
VSHistorical@hotmail.com

Next Meeting

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Brooklyn Avenue and 7th Street VS
Wednesday October 17, 2001
6:30 P. M.

Program

Covered Dish Supper.

Join us in welcoming Fall with our traditional Covered Dish Supper on October 17th. Bring your favorite dish (see guide below) and a copy of the recipe if you'd like to share it. Be sure your name is on your serving dish as well as the serving spoon or fork. Wine and cheese and non-alcoholic beverages will be served at 6:30 and supper will begin at 7 PM. Covered dishes should be brought according to the first letter of your last name as indicated below:

A-G: Vegetable or fruit dishes such as salads or casseroles.

H-O: Dairy Dishes such as eggs or cheese as well as gelatins or fish.

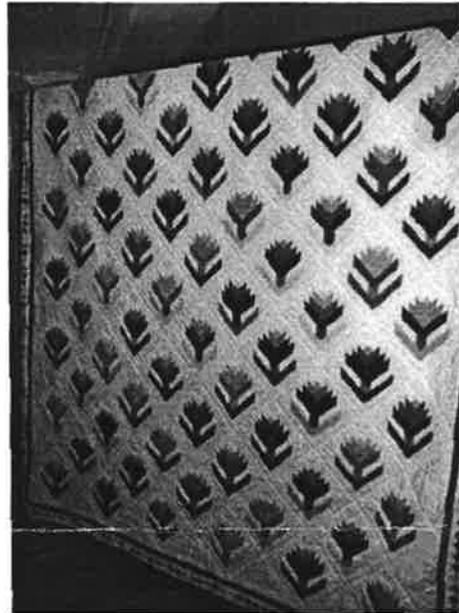
P-Z: Starchy dishes which might include rice, beans, potatoes or pasta.

Dishes may be hot or cold. As kitchen facilities are limited, please bring hot food fully cooked and hot. Do not bring meat or meat content dishes. The Society will provide these items as well as rolls, butter, tea and coffee. Desserts will be brought by Agnes Libath, Carol McKenna, Adele Hagmann, Barbara Ehlinger, Eileen Brennan, and Dorothy Vitale.

Guests are most welcome but they will be expected to bring a covered dish according to the guide above unless you undertake to do this for them. There will be a \$3.00 admission for each member and guest.

Halloween Costume Contest

On Sunday, October 28th the Society will hold its annual Children's Halloween Costume Contest. Children are urged to come to the Restoration in costume between 1 and 4 PM for Halloween goodies. Costume judging and Ragamuffin Parade (weather permitting) will be held at 3 PM. Adults are also encouraged to come in costume and join in the fun.



One of the beautiful quilts from the last quilt show.

Quilt Exhibit

The Society will host the Malverne Piecemakers Quilt Exhibit at the Pagan-Fletcher Restoration on Saturday and Sunday, October 20th and 21st from 11-4. Admission is \$3.00, \$2.00 for seniors and free for children under 12. This is a marvelous opportunity to view beautiful handmade quilts and to take a chance on one which will be raffled off by the Piecemakers in November.

On the Web

Thanks to the efforts of Mamie Eng, Assistant Director of Valley Stream's Waldinger Library, the VSHS is now "on the web". Please see above panel for our address and e-mail address.

Mayernick Memorial

A memorial ceremony for Al Mayernick, held at the Restoration on September 23rd, was a warm and nostalgic remembrance. Members of his family, co-workers (including his department chairman at North High School) and many friends were on hand to celebrate his life. Donations in Al's memory will be put towards the purchase of a new bookcase for the Restoration, a fitting tribute to this learned and wonderful man.

The Society is still seeking a permanent Editor for Panorama. Anyone interested, please call Hank Selah at 872-0006. In the meantime we'll struggle along and beg your indulgence.

Karen & Hank Selah
Interim Editors



Because the last issue of Panorama was printed and mailed a day or two before the tragedy of September 11th, we were unable to share our feelings of shock, sadness and sympathy with you. We, of course, send our deepest condolences to any of you who were directly affected by the attacks. We can not begin to understand your sorrow and we know it must be very difficult to feel pain and pride in almost equal measure. We do send our support and love and a determination to help your and your family through this terrible time.

But even those of us who didn't suffer a personal loss are touched by this tragedy. Virtually every one of us knows someone who lost a loved one. We all saw televised images of small, brave but bewildered children dressed in unaccustomed "Sunday best" walking in funeral processions surrounded by uniformed firefighters and police officers.

We are a large and diverse community but we have never been more united. Our safety and peace of mind have been threatened but we've turned our feelings of fear and outrage into a determination to honor and help victims and their families. We have rediscovered feelings of patriotism for our country and pride and admiration for our fellow Americans.

We are an Historical Society and though it is too soon to know the final outcome of this situation we hope history will record how we reacted with strength and courage and a renewed sense of tolerance for all faiths and creeds. America was founded on these ideals and we are grateful to have that legacy and pity those whose total intolerance blinds them to the beauty of freedom.

We Will Never Forget!

Valley Stream Historical Society
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Valley Stream, NY 11582

Waldinger Memorial Library
60 Verona Place
Valley Stream, NY 11580

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WE WILL NEVER FORGET

Next Meeting

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Brooklyn Avenue and 7th Street VS
Wednesday, November 28, 2001
8 P. M.

Program

Woodcarving by Wilbur Gamper. Mr. Gamper, whose many interests include guiding tours in the Cathedral in Garden City, will share his love of wild-fowl and woodworking with a demonstration of carving duck decoys and other pieces.

Cakes for the November meeting will be provided by Ruthanne Zwarico, Anita Buckley, Marge Chvatal and Agnes Libath.

Valley Stream's 75th Anniversary Book is complete and now on sale at the Pagan-Fletcher restoration. This wonderful history, which continues the story of Valley Stream from the 50th Anniversary Book, includes memories from members Lillian Weaver, Ted Libath, Helen Dowdeswell, Jim Buckley, Bob Presbrey and Marge Chvatal. It was compiled by Bert Keller (whose picture is on the back cover) and Carol McKenna, whose research and hard work have given us a wonderful memory of our town. The Society and the Restoration (whose picture is on the front cover) are prominently featured in the book.

Both the Quilt Show, run by Marge Chvatal and the Malverne Piecemakers, and the Halloween Costume Contest, hosted by the Pagan Fletcher Players, were wonderful successes. Thanks to all who helped.



"The Kids"

Gingerbread House Contest

Sunday, December 2, 2001—11 A. M.—4 P. M.
Bring in the Holiday Season with this wonderful tradition. Entrees may be brought into the Restoration between 10-10:45 A. M. Doors open to the public at 11 A. M. Hans Semder will once again demonstrate Gingerbread House decorating at 1 P. M. and 3 P. M. Contest results will be announced at 3:45 P. M. Donations for the Bake Sale may be brought in at 10 A. M. Please join us for this very special event and vote for your favorite Gingerbread Creation.

Caroling Sunday

Sunday, December 16, 2001
More Holiday for the family—Caroling, sponsored by the Pagan-Fletcher Singers, will begin at 2 P. M. at the Restoration. Come sing your favorite carols and enjoy holiday refreshments.



"Our Big Kid"

The Society is still seeking a permanent Editor for Panorama. Anyone interested, please call Hank Selah at 872-0006. In the meantime we'll struggle along and beg your indulgences.

Karen & Hank Selah, Interim Editors

Christmas in Valley Stream – 1921

By Alonzo Gibbs

We met the train. Our sober Ford
Had coiffed its somber hood with
snow.

It was the birthday of our Lord
And so our merriment ignored
The bleak way home we had to go.

A watchman came from stove within

–
Two lanterns rose. My father
cranked.

“Now, give it spark!” He bounded
in.

A ghost of smoke rose where we’d
been –

A tire-chain on fender clanked.

And down the main street, past the
West

Hotel we backed, past Lang’s trolley,
Stalled since morn. We came
abreast

Of Muller’s Drug Store. Now a crest
Of Snow jeweled by that old-time
folly.

Two bottles hung on a golden chain,
And each a gleam with water tinted
So that an eerie light might strain
And touch our country street so
plain

With “purist ray serene” unstinted.

Next at Eisenberg’s, we rocked
West on Merrick. Here “the
Greek’s”

Diner bore a streaming load
Upon its train-like top. We mowed
From tallest drifts their windy peaks,
Flew, at Corona Avenue,
We headed north beneath the trees.
Side streets graciously opened, to
The reservoir, where loudly blew
Unimpeded winds. The freeze

Would bring good skating. Staring

hard

We made out Rothstein’s and the
dark,

Two storied, wooden school. Its
yard

Where many a marble, top, or card
We traded, was deserted, stark.

We skidded on to Hendrickson;
The brook had set the road to steam-
ing;

Up a slope, through wooded run,
Beside the Fletcher home we spun
Into a drift. Front windows, gleam-
ing

Made the mansion house less drear;
The columns on the porch, the tower
With its hatchery flashed near.

We rocked back and had to steer
Between two hickories. Our power

Less at that moment, horse than will.
We straightened out and made our
way,

Up what we Islanders term “hill”
(Really just a rise). The chill
Winds blew - the furies said their
say.

Then peering-out through isinglass,
We saw our farmhouse on the right.
Here, still the storm would blow, yet
pass

And over bar we’d see - alas,
At last, The Holy Star that night.

*Christmas in Valley Stream - 1921
was written by Alonzo Gibbs who
died in 1992.*



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