

History of Brookhaven Village

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Fire Place

When Mrs. Post asked me to address you on the history of Brookhaven Village, little did I think that it was so long a subject. And as I already knew the outline of events, I thought it would not take long to write it down and present it to you. However, I find that the subject is such a long one, that to do it justice, one could fill enough pages to make a small book and require weeks — possibly months — to collect and assemble the data from tradition and from the authentic records of the Town and County, therefore in the scope of this article, all I can hope to do, is to present a brief and I trust, concise outline of the history of the village. There is much material easily available, and it should be collected and formulated into a readable shape. I hope to do something of the sort for Bellport in the future and would welcome cooperation from some here regarding the history of Fire Place, but whoever elects to collect tradition relating to this section, should not delay, for with the influx of new comers and the dying off of the former old residents, all tradition is rapidly being lost and what little is left is worth getting, even if only fragmentary. While from authentic records is the only reliable and the only sure way of compiling a history, yet tradition sometimes is the only basis on which to assemble the data after it is collected.

Brookhaven Hamlet Formerly Known as Fire Place

Brookhaven village as you probably all know, was formerly known by the name of Fire Place and at one time, the term was applied to the whole vicinity including South Haven where the grist, saw and fulling mills are given on the Town map of 1797, as “Fire Place Mills”. The unwise change of name from Fire Place to Brookhaven occurred about 1871, when a group of modernizers, or would-be improvers, started an agitation to drop the ancient name. Meetings were held and finally it was decided to appropriate the name of the Town, because as one of the proponents told me some few years ago “there is a brook along the eastern part, one in the middle and another along the western part”. Of course, the brook at the west — Osborn’s or Dayton’s — cannot be considered as anything but in Bellport as it lies well within the Bellport school and fire districts and the people living there adjoining it consider themselves Bellporters. However, for the sake of argument at the time, Osborn’s or Dayton’s Brook was said to be along West Fire Place and the change in name was made. I have seen it stated that the name was changed in 1876, but Bayles’ “Sketches of Suffolk Co.” published in 1872, states

that the change had but recently been made, so I assume it was about the year 1870 or 1871. If anyone can give me the exact date, I will appreciate it. Hardly a worse name could have been chosen, as from early colonial days as early as 1666, Brookhaven was the name of the Town and also the name of the mother settlement of Setauket as well. In the town records, in Book B alone, there are fourteen references to Setauket as Brookhaven and it was from the fact that Brookhaven was the English name, while Setauket or Setalcot was the Indian name, that Governor Nicolls in 1666 and Governor Dongen in 1686, officially named the Town from its then chief settlement. When Fire Place usurped their old name, indignation was high in Setauket. The Presbyterian parish there, the oldest of any denomination in the Town, still bears the official name of “the First Presbyterian Church of Brookhaven”. Before, during, and for several years after the Revolutionary War, the many mentions of the place are frequently as Brookhaven, sometimes Setauket — both terms being synonymous — and both terms continued to be used according to whether a person chose to use the Indian or the English name. In like manner, Setauket was often used as a name of the Town, but in latter years, to avoid the confusion which sometimes arose, Setauket was confined as the name of the village and Brookhaven used only for the Town.

Name Change a Mistake

It was a sad mistake that the historic and quaint name of Fire Place was dropped and the alternative name of Setauket and of the Town substituted in its place. But the error was made, and it is to be hoped that the people of this place will see fit in the near future to restore its original name and thereby save the confusion and misunderstanding that constantly arise by the village and the Town both bearing the same name. To save such misunderstanding, I shall refer to the village only as Fire Place in the remainder of this article and I shall also refer to the river on the east only as Connecticut River, its correct name, and not by its more modern nick name, “Carman’s River”.

Why Name?

I have been asked why Fire Place was originally given as the name to the Neck on which most of the village is situated. Reasons for naming places are seldom

found recorded and unfortunately what meager traditions exist, do not agree. In this case, we can only speculate and utilize tradition and harmonize it with the records. The survey of the Town made in 1797 shows that Smith's Inlet or New Inlet, now referred to as "Old Inlet" was then open and opposite Fire Place Neck. There is much that can be assembled to show that the inlet was used frequently in early colonial days and it is very probable that in order to guide the whaling crews which were so numerous off shore in the later part of the 17th Century and early part of the 18th Century and also when there was expected a vessel which might have to negotiate the inlet after dark, that fires would be built, probably at Woodhull's Point, now called Long Point, at the mouth of the Connecticut River and that these fires would serve as a range light. The inlet lay about a southwest course from the point and as it cut through the beach also on a southwest course, a light or fire on the point would very likely be seen through the inlet and out to sea and could thus be used to "make" the inlet. Such a fire would also serve at night, as a guide across the Bay to the mouth of the Connecticut River. The river was also extensively used in olden times as is evidenced by the very old names of some of the landings like Indian Landing, Zach's Landing and Squassucks Landing at the end of Beaver Dam Road.

Squassucks

Now in regard to the name "Squassucks," Tooker's "Indian Place-Names on Long Island", pub. 1911, states the Squassucks is a contraction of Wessquassucks, the personal name of an Indian who lived at one time at or near Squassucks Point which is either Long Point or the next point up on the west side of the River. Tooker analyses the word to mean, a pot-maker — hence we assume that Wessquassucks, the pot-maker, lived at or near Squassucks Point. I offer the suggestion that Wessquassuck may have had his firing place or kiln for his pottery in the vicinity and that his fire once used as a beacon or guiding light, gave rise to the custom of lighting fires for the purpose and the fact that Fire Place Neck is almost always spoken of in the early records, not simply as Fire Place, but "the fire place", seems to strengthen the idea that I have just advanced.

Early References

Whatever the origin of the name, it is found frequently in the early records of the Town. The first mention that I find of it is in Book I, under date of 30 March 1675, where the entry states that Francis Muncy “before he died”, exchanged his meadow share at the Fire Place with Samuel Dayton for the meadow at Sebomack (near Smith Point). It is the only reference that I have found mentioning Fire Place in Book I. In Book II, the references are more numerous, and I will cite all that I have found in that book to contain.

- 18 May 1675, Abraham Dayton and Thomas Bearsley sell 18 barrels of whale oil “lying on the South Side of the Island at a place commonly called the fire place”.
- 25 May 1675, the town meeting voted to grant to Nicholas Chatwell and to Richard Southcott each some upland and “5 acres of meadow in the “Great Fly” at Fire Place provided they occupy the land before Christmas, but as their names do not appear again, they probably did not accept the gift under the conditions required.
- 30 July 1675, Richard Floyd trades his lot, No. 25, of meadow and upland in Fire Place with Joseph Davis for meadow at Unkechauge in Mastic.
- 24 May 1676, Samuel Dayton sells to William Rogers of Southampton, his parcels of meadow “lying on the west of the brook by the fire place” that he got by the trade with Francis Muncy.
- Also in 1676, on the 4th of July, or exactly 100 years before the Declaration of Independence was voted for in Philadelphia, a sale of property here in Fire Place was made, when Robert Akerly of Setauket sold a share of meadow to Robert Kellam of Southampton.
- 5 Dec 1676, Richard Floyd sells half of his share of meadow, No. 10, “about the great flax” to William Jayne.
- 10 Dec. 1678, John Tooker sells to Joseph Mapes of Southold, another of the meadow shares, No. 6.
- 3 Feb 1678/9, Joseph Davis sells to William Jayne, his share of meadow, No. 20 with 15 acres of upland.

There may be other references to the Fire Place in Book II that I have overlooked, but the above are sufficient to show how much more active real estate was here in the last quarter of the 17th century, than it is today.

The many references and items relating to Fire Place and the vicinity, in the other record books of the Town and of the County, are so numerous, that I shall mention only the most important ones. What is meant by meadow share in the above quoted references, I will explain further on.

Corrects Errors

I must now outline for you the history of your village, but before we do, I want to correct an inexcusable error which may mislead any student of your history. On page 266 of Vol. II of the History of Long Island, written by the late William S. Pelletreau of Southampton and published in 1903, will be found this statement: "West of Connecticut River comes the long extent of territory now known as Brookhaven and Bellport, but originally Fire Place and Occombomack. The earliest deed is dated July 20, 1657, when Wyandance, the Montauk Sachem and Wenecohage sell to Richard Woodhull 'for himself and the rest of his neighbors at Setalcott two great necks of meadow lying from a river called Coneticott to a river called Wegonthotok'". I hate to have to contradict such an eminent authority as Mr. Pelletreau, but the facts demand that I do. The deed does not apply to either Fire Place or Bellport at all, but covers the meadows known as Nocommock Meadows on the east side of the Connecticut River and the meadows in Mastic. The "River called Wegonthotok" is what we know today as Forge or Mastic River. Further on in the volume, on page 281, will be found the amazing statement that Fire Place is "entirely a place of modern growth". We all know this last statement is utterly untrue and I shall disprove it later in this article. Having corrected, I hope, any misconception regarding the early history of Fire Place, that any of you have gotten from the above statements, I shall now try to present to you the history of your village, taken entirely from authentic sources.

Early History, Old Purchase at South, Meadow Shares

We shall have to begin by crossing the Island and starting with the first settlement in the Town of Brookhaven at Setauket where, all that is definitely known, is that a small group settled there from New England sometime between the fourteenth day of April 1655 and the first day of August 1657 — the event probably taking

place sometime in the Spring or Summer of 1655. The little colony soon became well established and through the foresight of its leaders, but principally through Richard Woodhull, began to buy up as much of the Indian lands as the red-skins would sell and this is especially true of any land containing meadows which were much prized because of the salt hay and grass that the meadows produced. Very little cleared land existed at the time and what they labored to clear from the virgin forests was put to such cultivated crops as grain, peas, flax, vegetables and fruits, depending almost entirely on the meadows for hay and for pasturing their cattle. In two years after the settlement began, the Mastic and Nocomock meadows were purchased, but some cloud appears to have hung over the title and it was not until a second or confirmatory deed was secured from the Indians in 1675, that the title was cleared, and the meadows used. In the meantime, the West Meadows nearer home, probably not supplying their needs sufficiently, they made two purchases of lands both containing meadows. One was for the "tract of land commonly called the old mans" or Mount Sinai, and the other for a large tract here on the South Side. Both deeds were signed the same day, 10 June 1664. The South Side tract became known as the "Old Purchase at South", and on it are located the western part of South Haven, called Little Neck and all of the villages of Fire Place and Bellport. It was bounded as follows: Beginning at the mouth of the Connecticut River, at Long Point (Woodhull's Point it was formerly called) and from thence running up along the west bank of the river to Yaphank Creek (or Barteau Creek it is known today) in the western part of South Haven, thence up and along an imaginary north and south straight line, called the Yaphank Line, to the middle of the Island; from thence westwardly along the middle of the Island to where it meets a north and south line leading from a certain little fresh pond, now called Pond Ditch, located in the south western part of the meadow on the former Lyman estate in the extreme west part of Bellport; from thence eastwardly along the shore of the Bay to Long or Woodhull's Point, the place of beginning. Included in this immense tract of meadow and upland, there are six necks of land each divided by a stream of water. Naming them from east to west, the necks are: Little Neck, Fire Place Neck, Tar-men's Neck, Dayton's Neck, Occumbomuck Neck and Starr's Neck. Little Neck forms the western part of South Haven; Fire Place Neck, Tar-men's Neck and the larger part of Dayton's Neck, are in the village of Fire Place while the western part of Dayton's Neck with Occumbomuck Neck and Starr's Neck make up Bellport. For all this valuable land, it was agreed, according

to the deed, to pay the grantor, Tobaccus, the Indian Chief of Unkechogue in Mastic, a sum of money to the value of fifty fathom of wampum — that would be 300 feet. From the receipt which is dated the 31st of March in the following year — 1665, we learn that four coats were first paid for and then at the date of the receipt he was paid £6/10s. Evidently it was easier to use English money than to make a string of wampum 300 feet long. While the deed conveys the land described, it reserves to the Indians free liberty for “fishing, fowling and hunting” within the territory. It might be of interest to you to know that both the original deed and the original receipt are preserved and are in the Town Hall at Patchogue among the priceless collection of ancient papers and documents owned by the Trustees. Tobaccus’ signature mark looks like a sort of wavy line that might suggest a double m. The receipt, besides being on interesting old paper, states that it is given for money paid for a tract of lands and meadows “which is already laid out and bounded at the South”. From these words, it is evident that the thirty-nine purchasers lost no time in dividing the meadow among themselves almost immediately after its purchase the previous June. From Book II and from Books A and B of our Town records, we find that it was only the meadow land that was first divided and that it was divided into 49 shares. The price of £6/10s paid to Tobaccus (exclusive of the four coats) divided among the 49 shareholders would be about 2 shillings and 11 pence per share. Seven of the 39 buyers owned two shares and one, Richard Floyd, owned three shares, hence in dividing the meadows, these men received two pieces of meadow and Floyd three while the others each received one.

From the various deeds recorded in the town and county records, it will be found that the first 32 meadow lots lay between Connecticut River and Osborn’s Brook in the eastern part of Bellport, while the remainder were all in Bellport — the last or 49th lot probably adjoining the fresh pond on the west line of the purchase. None of the lots included any upland at first and as the meadow extends further back from the Bay in some places than in others, it must have been that the lots were of different sizes and shape so that each would contain an equal amount of meadow. [A list of the original owners](#) will be found in both Books A and B. All owners were the early residents of Setauket and were probably all living there at the time.

Old Town Road

To reach these meadows shares a direct road led from Setauket to Fire Place and the Occumbomuck or Bellport and passed through Coram. The Road entered Fire Place Neck a little distance north of the railroad bridge, followed along the east side of the swamp and continued south past George Miller's place and down either Bay Road or one near it, to a crossroad which ran about parallel with the shore along the north or head of the meadows. It is without doubt the oldest cross-island road in the Town and was probably cut through about the year 1665 and I have no doubt but what it followed an Indian trail. It was extensively used and there are numerous references made to it in the town records, especially in Books B and C. Here are some of the terms by which it was designated: *Road to South, Road to Coram, Road from Coram, South Path, Road to Fire Place, Fire Place Path, Town Path, Town Road*, and more modernly, *Old Town Road* by which it is known today. It is still used from West Yaphank to Setauket, but the section between and its entrance into Fire Place is now so little used that it is partly grown up. Part of the South Country Road, or Montauk Highway from Eugene Policastro's place to the old Ketcham place now partly owned by Mr. and Mr. Nelson. From there probably ran straight to the north end of Bay Road and so on to the south as described above. From the place where it entered the Neck, north of Policastro's, another road branched off at about a right angle and ran east to South Haven and to Smith' Point and to Mastic. This road later became part of the South Country Road as the Old South Country Road used to run — not the present cement road with its grand, modern, sweeping curve. From Henry Snow's corner — possibly a little to the east, another road ran down along the east side of Fire Place Neck terminating at or near Long or Woohull's Point. It ran a little more to the east than the present Stump Road and intersected the south crossroad, previously mentioned as running along the head of the meadows. Traces of the road, a little east of the Stump Road, could be seen only a few years ago and probably can still be found. Thus Fire Place Neck had a road along its eastern side skirting near the west sides of Little Neck Run and the south part of Connecticut River and another along the west side, a little distance east of Fire Place Creek, and both of these roads were connected by crossroads — one on the south along the upper edge of the meadow and the other along the northern part of neck following the original course of the old South Country Road. It was thus convenient to reach the meadow shares from either side of the neck. I cannot give

you the dates that these roads were opened. Perhaps they were never opened: they just grew; but I believe that a careful study of the town records and some antiquarian research, might reveal them to be older than suspected.

Long Lots & Cross Lots

Let it now return to the meadow shares that I said were laid out soon after Tobacco sold out. In our town records, in Book II, we find that on the 6th of Feb. 1676, an order was passed that John Tooker and Thomas Ward should lay out 15 acres of upland as near or adjoining each man's meadow share as could be done. This was the first allotment or apportionment of upland to the owners of the whole tract and from it resulted the first white⁴⁷ settlement in Fire Place and Occumbomuck or Bellport. In Fire Place Neck, these fifteen acres lots became known as the "Long Lots" and the "Cross Lots". The Long Lots extended up from the meadow along the Bay to what is now Beaver Dam Road, while the Cross Lots ran east and west from the eastern part of Neck, reaching nearly to the Town Road or Fire Place Path east of Beaver Dam Swamp, thus leaving a strip of unappropriated land along east of the road. This strip lay common and undivided until March 1750, when the Town trustees ordered that it should be annexed to the west end of the Cross lots. Consequently, the lots were so extended that they now had a public road along their west ends as well as their east ends. The whole block of lots lay between the north cross road and the north ends of the Long Lots or where Beaver Dam Road was later to be laid out. At the same time, 1750, that the Cross Lots were extended westward; it was also ordered that six rods should be reserved along the east side of Beaver Dam Swamp for the highway and for waterings. Some of these watering places were in later years sold, but I understand one or two — possibly more — are still unsold and belong to the Town Trustees.

Beaverdam Road

Anyone owning property along the south side of Beaver Dam Road, can well imagine how inconvenient it would be, if he or she had to drive down to the head of the meadow along the Bay and then turn into a cross road and from it, enter his or her land. It was just such a condition as this that the owners of the Long Lots found themselves in, after each of the meadow shares skirting the Bay had 15 acres of upland annexed. They must have been very patient for it was not until 1735 that they petitioned for a change. On the 26th of March, that year, they

petitioned the road commissioners to move the south crossroad up to the north ends of their lots, complaining that they had *“by Experience found: ye unconveniency of ye high waye layd att ye south end of oure :15: aker lots in ye fier place neck”*.

From this petition, it will be learned who were the owners in 1735. They were **Thomas Hulse**, Daniel Rose, Eleazer Hawkins, **Thomas Rose**, **Nathan Rose**, **William Helme**, Richard Hulse, **John Hulse**, John Hulse, Jr., Nathaniel Bayles, John Wood and **James Tuthill** — twelve names. So, we learn that there were twelve lots, each of 15 acres excluding meadow, in the Long Lots. It was two years later, on the 10th of June 1737, before the road was reported as laid out, and this road, of course, is your Beaver Dam Road. At the same time, the old south crossroad was closed and the land given to the twelve owners in exchange for the land taken off the north ends of their lots. From the report, it is learned that the old south crossroad ran from Squassucks Point to the “Little Fly”. As “Fly” is an English corruption of the old Dutch word *Vlaie*, meaning a low marsh piece of ground, or a meadow, evidence is added that the Little Fly is the meadow adjoining Fire Place Creek and that the old crossroad ran only to it. In connection with Little Fly, I might properly add here that the meadow adjoining the Connecticut river was called the “Great Fly”, thus Fire Place Neck had its Little Fly and its Great Fly and both are spoken of in the town records several times.

Tar Men's Neck

So far, I have told you only of **Fire Place Neck** which lies between the Head-of-the-Neck line on the north and the Bay on the south and between Little Neck Run and Connecticut river on the east and Beaver Dam or Fire Place Creek on the west. I must now tell you something of the other two Necks — **Tar-men’s Neck** and **Dayton’s Neck** to which the name “Fire Place” was in later years generally applied — the three necks making up the village. Tar-men’s Neck is the relatively small tract, south of the Head-of-the-Neck line that lies between Beaver Dam Creek on the east and the Otter Swamp and Otter Hollow on the west. The neck comes to a point at the junction of Otter Creek and Fire Place Creek south east of the Methodist church property — the Otter Creek being the one where Clinton Smith now has a winter storage for small boats. The swamp and creek were evidently much larger than they are today and probably extended across the Montauk

Highway through the hollow south west of the late Mrs. Edward Raynor's and north east of Mrs. Post's corner. It was also called Tar-men's Swamp.

Tar-men's Neck derives its name from the fact that tar was made from the pine trees of the vicinity and the tar-men had a house in the Neck, some time prior to 1678. According to tradition, the house or shack stood a little east of the center of the neck, probably in the immediate neighborhoods of Mrs. Amy d' Arcas' place. The manufacture of tar and turpentine was carried on quite extensively in the Town at a very early date. By 1715, it had grown to such an extent that the trustees put a duty of "a bit" for every barrel of tar and ten shillings for each barrel of turpentine made in the Town. That they had difficulty in collecting the duty, is evident from that fact that on 2 Dec. 1717, they met for the expressed purpose of calling those men to account that had made or "run tar" upon Town lands, to pay the money they were owing.

Dayton's Neck

Dayton's Neck is the next neck to the west. It lies between the Head-of-the Neck and the Bay and from Fire Place Creek on the east to Dayton's or Osborn's Brook on the west. It was in later years sometimes called West Fire Place. The neck was named after Samuel Dayton who on 13 Sept. 1678, had 40 acres laid out to him by the Town in lieu of some other land he did not get in a former allotment. At the same time he received "***another addition of land aloyning to it of the nor est corner from a lot that was part munces where the tarr mens hous stooode***", hence it is evident that Samuel Dayton owned a part of both Tar-men's Neck and the neck that bore his name. However, he did not own the fifteen acre lots with their adjoining meadow shares which extended also along the south of his neck as they did along the south of fire Place Neck as I have previously told you. Dayton came from Southampton to Setauket and finally removed to his neck here on the South Side, probably about 1678 and from an entry in Book B of the town records, it appears that he gave the name of "West Hampton" to some part of the section. On 4 July 1690, the day before he died, he deeded his land to his two daughters, Sarah and Elizabeth, with the proviso that his wife was to have it during her lifetime. He was probably the first white man to live in this section. Just where his house stood is not known, but it probably was somewhere in the vicinity of Clam Hollow, (which some of you may not know is the name of the hollow east of the George Washington property), possibly even nearer to Bellport and he may thus

properly be claimed by both villages. As the Bellport School District and Fire District boundary line is at Arter's or the Hollow Road, the western part of Dayton's Neck is consequently in Bellport.

I do not know the chain of title of the neck, and it would be out of place to give it here even if I did. I do know that Elias Bayles owned it sometime after 24 Feb 1714/5. In 1780, it was owned by Micah Mills of Southampton, who sold it that year to Nathaniel Woodruff after which it became known as Woodruff's Neck, and later as West Fireplace.

Head-of-the Neck Line & South Country Rd.

Probably you may have noticed that I said that the boundary of Fire Place Neck, of Tar-Men's Neck and of Dayton's Neck, on the North was the Head-of-the Neck Line. This line was established when the East Division and West Division of Lots now generally called the Great Division and Little Division, was laid out in 1733^{[see [Town Records](#)]}. Each Division contained 55 lots. The **Great Division** extends back of Little Neck, Fire Place Neck, Tar-men's, Dayton's Neck, and Occumbomuck Neck and a part of Starr's Neck in Bellport. At the south ends of the 55 lots is the Head-of-the Neck line. It is really the head of the necks as it officially defines the heads of six necks. I will quote to you from Book C where this line is described, but will somewhat modernize the wording and spelling: "Beginning at a white oak tree near Yamphank Creek (Barteau's, in South Haven) and so bounding westward as the path runs across Little Neck and the Fire Place Neck (i.e. the South Country Road in its old course) until it comes to Beaver Dam Swamp and then running due southwest until it comes to a due north line from a pine* tree in the head of Dayton's swamp (now Mrs. Mott's in Bellport) and then running from the said tree, due west until it comes to a due north line from a pond in Starr's Neck". In the record of this division, there is one important item regarding some of the lots well worth remembering and it is this: — ***"them Lots from Bever Dam swamp and Dayton's Crick are to Run Due South from thare bounds untill thays Cume upon the first laid oute Lands"***.

The 14th lot was the first lot west of Beaver Dam Swamp and is the old Gerard place opposite the post office. From that lot to lot No. 35, (the old Jehiel Woodruff place just east of Mrs. Mott's) the lots appear to have been always bounded south by the South Country Road and as the record says they are to run

due south to the “**first laid out Lands**” is meant the north ends of the 15 acre lots previously referred to — those west of Beaver Dam or Fire Place Creek. Another bit of information we glean from the record of the Great Division Lots is that a four rod road was established west of Beaver Dam Creek in lot No. 15, from the head of the swamp as far south as the road in front of the post office. On 3 Jan 1742/3, the road was moved from the 15th to the 14th lot adjoining the swamp, but in 1814, it was closed entirely, and I have the original deed in my safe whereby the trustees sold the road bed to Robert Hawkins who was the previous owner of the old Gerard place and one of my ancestors. Traces of this road are still to be found north of “Robinson Blvd.”

First White Residents - the Rose's

Probably the first white resident of Fire Place proper, was **Thomas Rose** unless Samuel Dayton has that distinction, but as the location of Dayton’s residence is not determined — he might have lived so far west as to have been in the Bellport territory, therefore it is hardly possible to consider him as a resident of Fire Place until his place of residence is determined. But concerning Thomas Rose, there seems very little doubt that he lived in Fire Place Neck at an early date.

Unfortunately, the early Rose family genealogy has never been fully traced. William S. Pelletreau, in his history that I mentioned in the first part of this article, states that Thomas, John and Jonathan Rose were the sons of Robert Rose of Southampton and East Hampton, but I can find no confirmation of it.

I am inclined to believe that Thomas, John and Jonathan were more probably the sons of Robert Rose who was taken in as a townsman of Brookhaven on the 17th of Dec. 1699, and that he was Robert Rose, Jr. son of Robert of Southampton. At any rate, Jonathan became the earliest settler in Bellport while Thomas seems to be the first settler in Fire Place. Liber A of deeds in the Suffolk County Clerk’s office shows that Thomas Rose bought lot 25 of Richard Floyd on the 12th of July 1704 and lot 26 of Benjamin Smith. These two lots were probably in the Cross Lots. There are doubtless other deeds I have not found which would show earlier and more extensive purchases by him.

In 1728, his water-fence is mentioned, hence he must have owned property adjoining the Bay. He was also first among the twelve who petitioned for the change of the road in 1735 that I have already told you of. The fact that he had

the description of the earmark for his cattle recorded on 12 Oct 1700, shows that he must have had a farm at the time, for a person does not have cattle unless he has a farm. By trade, he was a weaver and his wife's name was Rebecca, both which facts will be found in a deed he and his wife gave to Moses Burnet, 31 Jan. 1717/8 for lot No. 7 — apparently one of the Long Lots. He had at least one son, who was Nathan Rose, Sr. and I believe Daniel Rose was also a son. Nathan owned the old Ireland property and became the father of Jesse, Lieut. Thomas and Capt. Nathan Rose, who commanded one of the Southold companies and also one of the Brookhaven companies during the Revolutionary War. He and his brothers, Jesse and Thomas and most of their families lie buried in the shamefully unkempt little burying ground on the old Ireland place in the nursery across the street — a disgrace your Village Improvement Association should remedy.

Other Early Families

Members of the Hulse family from Setauket also became settlers at an early date and they were followed by members of the Hawkins family also from Setauket. But on the whole, the settlement was small and continued small for a number of years. By 1790, the Federal census taken that year, shows quite some growth and the heads of families of Fire Place and South Haven taken together, gives the following names: Mordecai Homan, Francis Bates, James Greenfield (a Scotchman) (sic), Joseph Terry, John Rose (owner of the land on which this Library building stands), Timothy Rose, Zepheniah Conklin, Margaret Jayne, Jesse Rose, Joseph Hawkins, Isaac Overton, Henry Hulse, David Rose, Benajah Hobart, Joseph Swezey, Jeremiah Hobart, Stephen Swezey, Thomas Colley, Ezekiel Hand, Nathaniel Hulse, Nathan Rose, Barnabas Rider, Abigail Hulse, Eunice Rider, Richard Hulse, William Rogers, Abigail Woodruff, Abraham Corey, David Homan, Morris Homan, Daniel Rose, Mary Gee, George Lambert, Thomas Ellison, Jonathan King and Samuel Carman. It is unfortunate that the census does not give the villages in which these listed lived, but it is fortunate that the names do not appear in alphabetical order, but are in the order in which the persons lived along the various streets and by some little study, it is possible to ascertain from the census, with quite a degree of certainty, the name of the heads of families of the villages and settlements of any town or county in the State. It should be remembered that in 1790, South Haven was the largest settlement on the south side of Brookhaven Town and that probably most of the above names were residents of that place.

1855

In 1855, on the map of the county, (an enlarged copy of which may be seen in the Brookhaven Planning Board office in Patchogue), there are given the names of property owners. From Alfred Brown's to Snow's corner or Yaphank Ave., along the South Country Road, there are 27 owners; 13 on Beaver Dam Road; 1 on the School House Road, or whatever you now call it, and none on Bay Road — evidently an omission for we know that Capt. Augustus Hawkins lived on it at the time. The Stump Road is not given at all and none of the roads have names on the map.

Street Names

Regarding the names of your streets, in the Long Island Atlas of 1872, Beaver Dam Road appears as "South Street", School House Road as "Beaver Street", Bay Road as "Atlantic Avenue" and the old Fish Road running to Bellport depot from Post's corner as "Ruland Avenue". In the 1888 atlas, the name of but one road appears and that is Beaver Dam Road which appears as "Brookhaven Avenue". From some of the notes left by my late uncle, Dr. Edward Shaw, I learn that an old name of this road was "Fire Place Neck Road" and I vaguely recall hearing it also called the "Squassucks Road" when I was a boy.

While I fully realize that I have already made this article more lengthy than perhaps you care to have it, I cannot properly close without telling you of grist mill, of a calamity, of your old schools and of the beginning of your two religious organizations. I will begin with the mill.

Grist Mill

At the town meeting held 5 May 1724, the people voted that **Nathaniel Brewster** should have the stream called Beaver Dam on which to build a grist mill and fulling mill to be begun within two years and the right to the stream to be his and his heirs, but only as long as it was used for mill purposes, otherwise to revert to the town. At the time, Justice Brewster was the owner of, and was probably living in, Little Neck adjoining Fire Place Neck on the east and which he had bought of the Trustees at public auction 15 May 1716 for £40/13 shillings. He was then 65 years old, and it was very probably (sic) that after securing the grant for the stream, he considered it too great an undertaking to build and maintain a mill and dam at his age in life and that he dropped the project. At any rate, on the

25th of March 1742, the trustees regranted Beaver Dam River north of **John Hulse's** land, to **William Helme, Jr.** for a grist mill on the same conditions as given in the former grant. There seems to be some evidence that he did build the mill, but it probably was not much of a success either because of the competition of the mill at South Haven or the lack of proper power due to an insufficient head of water, to get which would have flooded the road on the east of the stream which we all know is not much above the level of the bank of the stream. The mill dam is today used as a road bed over the creek.

Terrible Calamity

Of the terrible calamity that befell this community, there is not an old family in this section but knows about it. On Friday night, the 5th of November 1813, eleven men from this vicinity went as a fishing crew over to the South Beach. Just what happened will never be definitely known, but from what was printed in the "Long Island Star" of 10 Nov. 1813 and from what my late grandmother and father and the late Capt. Chas. E. Hulse have related to me, the men went through "Old Inlet" and hauled their boat on the "dry shoal" in the ocean opposite the inlet. The shoal was bare at low water but covered at high tide. While busily engaged in shaking out their net, they did not notice that the tide was rising under their boat and it being not properly secured, it floated away in the swift current running through the inlet. When they realized their predicament, they began calling for help, and set up such a howling that their cries were heard over here in Fire Place, it being a clam moon-lit night. One woman here, went to a neighbor's and remarked that something must be wrong over on the beach, as she was sure she recognized her husband's voice. It is said that another rival crew was at the time, also on the Beach, and that they were fiddling and drinking and some of their members were drunk. Some one of them heard the cries of the imperiled men and suggested going to their aid. He was greeted with the remark: "Damn 'em, let 'em drown" from another member and the eleven men were left on "dry shoal" with the tide gradually rising over them. Every man was drowned and there were six or seven women left as widows here the next morning. 🗨️ The names of the men were: **William Rose**, **Isaac Woodruff**, **Lewis Parshall**, **Daniel Parshall**, **Benjamin Brown**, **Nehemiah Hand**, **James Homan**, **Henry Homan**, **Charles Ellison**, **James Prior** and **John Hulse**. The boat came on shore in pieces and eight of the bodies were recovered. I have located the tombstones

of some of them. William Rose was buried on the ground on which this building stands but was removed some few years ago to the present village cemetery; Isaac Woodruff's stone is in St. John's Cemetery in Oakdale; the two Parshall boys have a stone in the old Patchogue Cemetery on Waverly Avenue; Benjamin Brown's body and stone were removed to the Bellport Cemetery; Nehemiah Hand's stone is in the Presbyterian Cemetery in South Haven. If the other five have stones, I have failed in finding them.

The School

Public Schools Established

At a meeting of the town trustees held 4 Jan. 1802, there was a petition presented by **John Rose, Esq.** and "signed by sd. John Rose, **James Greenfield**, **Nathaniel Woodruff**, **Phineas Rose**, Nathan Rose, **Timothy Rose**, **Jonathan Howell** & c. Praying or petitioning sd Trustee for the privilege of building a School house on the Highway between the House of the late **Scudder Ketcham**, dec'd (now Mr. Valentine's place) and the lot of land owned by John Turner, so as not to interfere with the Road but to leave it four Rods wide on the east side of the School House, taking two Rods wide and four Rods long for sd privilege beginning Ten feet North of the School House — sd. Trustee do hereby grant the liberty to the Petitioners to set a School House in sd Place so as not to incumber the Road". This quotation, from the Town records, gives the first mention of a schoolhouse in Fire Place Neck. As the school was not built until the following year — 1803, it would be 130 years ago that the first school was established here. When the Town was divided into School Districts on 3 Nov. 1813, we find that District "No. 18 is to Embrace the Inhabitants West of Fire Place Mills as far West as Jeffrey Brewsters". In other words, to begin at Connecticut River in South Haven and end at Osborn's Brook. On 12 May 1815, the district was divided, and the South Haven district formed: Fire Place being numbered 26. On 24 Oct. 1842, it was renumbered, No. 29 In 1855, the district was divided when all lying west of Beaver Dam Creek to Osborn's Brook was made into a new district and numbered 38. Later, the number 38 was changed to 25. On 28 Sept. 1874, Dist. No. 25 was abolished, a small slice given to Bellport and the greater part of it was given back to Dist. 29, the dividing line being Arter's on the Hollow Road on the west, now known as "Belhaven Rd."

The following excerpts taken from the old school clerk's book are worth quoting regarding the school meeting held the third Tuesday in October 1815 in the schoolhouse "at Early Candlelight". The meeting voted to raise by tax "One Hundred and seventy-five Dollars for to build a School House". In 1816, it was voted to "raise one Hundred and fifteen Dollars to finish the school House" and that the school master should collect from each nonresident pupil "25 Cents pr Quarter ——— to be paid before the Pupil enters the School". In 1855, a new location was bought "4 Rods on the road & running 5 Rods back for the sum of fifty dollars". This is the present site. Also, that year "a new schoolhouse 16 feet by 24 feet and 100-foot Posts" was voted to be built and to raise \$350 for the building and for a suitable fence on the south and east of the lot. The old school was sold at auction and brought in \$44. In 1874, the building of 1855 became so small that another was voted for that year to cost \$1000. The belfry was voted for later at a special meeting. The building continued in use until replaced by the present one in 1927, built at a cost of \$40,000.

The Churches

Churches Established

The old church in South Haven supplied the needs of all the territory for more than a century as that parish dates back to 1740, though the present building wasn't dedicated until New Year's Day 1829. In 1848, a small Methodist church was built just about where Mr. Floyd Carman has recently built his new house—possibly a little to the east. In 1872, it was removed to its present site and enlarged. Until 1870, it was supplied in connection with Coram, when it was associated with Moriches and a few years later with Bellport. I haven't the date when it became an independent organization, but that date was probably about 1890 while Mr. Stockdale was the minister.

The Episcopal church began with services held in the dwelling of **Charles Swezey**, whose house stood on the corner now the Mr. Avery place, north east of the present church. They were first conducted by the Rev. Charles Douglas. In 1873, the present church building was erected at a cost of about \$1,500. and St. James chosen as the patronal saint. The ground on which it stands, was given by **Mr. John L. Ireland** from the north-west corner of his large farm, but I understand the

property must be used only for an Episcopal church to hold the title. The first regular minister was the Rev. I.N.W. Irvine who was also in charge of St. Andrew's in Yaphank — the two churches being served jointly and connected almost continually until within the last few years. I might add that in later years, Mr. Irvine left the Episcopal denomination and became a priest of the Russian Orthodox Greek-Catholic Church in America.

I thank you for bearing with me so long and patiently in presenting this article regarding your village, which only sketches an outline of the interesting history, and it is my hope that someone can use the outline to build upon it so that a real history of the place can be preserved to posterity.