

# An Introduction To Glen Cove History

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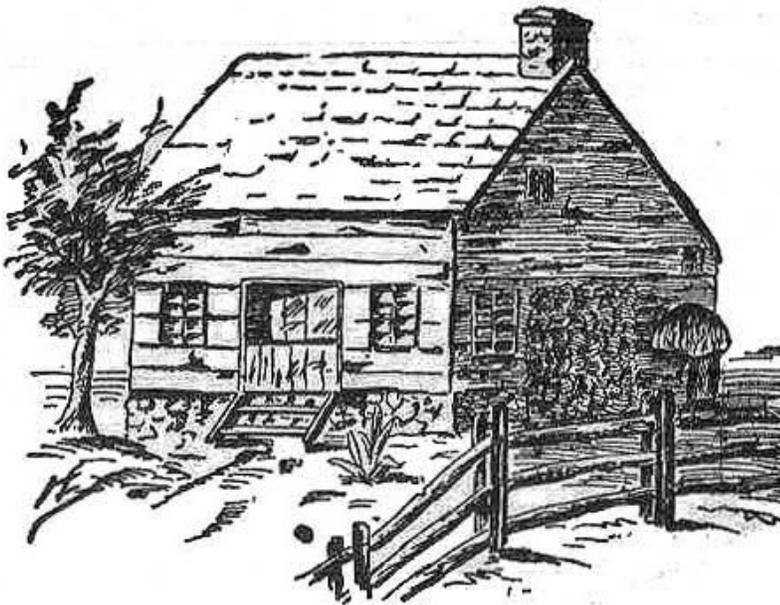
On May 24, 1668, a young Rhode Island inhabitant named Joseph Carpenter purchased 2,000 acres of land to the north-west of the Town of Oyster Bay from the Matinecock Indians. His intention was to erect a saw mill and furnish New York City with lumber desperately needed for the construction of housing. Carpenter took in as partners in his venture three brothers: Robert, Daniel, and Nathaniel Coles, who were also former inhabitants of Rhode Island living in Oyster Bay; and Nicholas Simkins, also of Oyster Bay.

These five businessmen chose to retain the place-name by which the Matinecock Indians had known the area, and therefore styled themselves "The Five Proprietors of Musketa Cove Plantation." Musketa (also spelled "musquito" and "mosquito") translates from the Matinecock's language to roughly mean "the

place of rushes" or "reedy place".

Within a rather short time, the "Five Proprietors" had dammed a small stream that ran through the valley, whose course is roughly paralleled by Glen Street today. This dam was located near the foot of Mill Hill, slightly northeast of the present fire house. The saw mill which they constructed on the dam was by an early covenant between the "Five Proprietors" jointly owned by each of them. Joseph Carpenter was permitted to construct a grist mill on the same dam under the condition that he grind the grain of the other proprietors "well and tolle free for ever." (Millers were remunerated for their services by receiving a percentage of the finished flour as payment... usually about 10 per cent).

The lumber produced by the saw mill found a ready market in New York City, and some was even exported to the sugar plantations of the Barbadoes. By 1679, just two years after Carpenter's purchase from the Indians was officially ratified by the colonial New York government, the mill was producing nine different thicknesses of boards and timber, as well as tile laths, shingle laths, wainscot, "feather-edged" boards for paneling, and custom-cut walnut for cabinet-making. A small portion of the mill's accounts were recorded in the "Musketa Cove Proprietor's Book," a hand-written record of the early settlers' land transactions and agreements. The accounts indicate that one of the major purchasers of Musketa Cove lumber was Jacob Leisler, a prosperous New York City merchant who would, in 1689, overthrow the colonial government of the colony and, in 1691, would be executed for treason. However, it appears that Leisler did not forget his acquaintances in Musketa Cove during his reign as ad-hoc governor in New York, he appointed Robert Coles as Captain in the Oyster Bay Militia.



The Joseph Carpenter house - one of the first homes built in Glen Cove - was located on The Place. The first homes of the other "Five Proprietors" were similar in size and style.

The saw mill had a significant impact in the development of the community: it provided a major influx of capital from outside the settlement.

## Smuggling

It appears, however, that the lumber industry was not the sole source of income for the new settlement at Musketa Cove. Lord Bellomont, then colonial governor of New York, wrote to the Board of Trade in London in 1699 describing Musketa Cove as one of the top four ports for smuggling on all of Long Island. Bellomont estimated that a third of all the goods reaching New York City escaped payment of import duties. In our area, the local customs collector responsible for collecting import duties at Musketa Cove and Oyster Bay resigned “for fear of being knocked about the head.”

In 1693, a French privateer was spotted lying at anchor in Musketa Cove’s harbor, apparently to land illicit goods for resale in New York City. A British frigate, the *Richmond*, was dispatched from New York to capture the ship and crew, but succeeded only in seizing the captain of the French bark. Also arrested was Nathaniel Coles, for his role in the plot to defraud the King and colony of their just due in customs. Coles was released several weeks later, officials fearing that “he might perish from the cold in Queens County jail.” This incident is very possibly the source of the oft-repeated but unproven legend that Capt. Kidd buried part of his treasure in Glen Cove.

About 1710, a family of wealthy New York City merchants, the Waltons, began to invest heavily in water-front land at Musketa Cove. They also purchased the mills, including a second grist mill that had been constructed near the present location of Pulaski Street, off Glen Street. Soon, they were operating a bake house near the mills, manufacturing “ship’s biscuit” (something akin to hard-tack) to fill the larders of ocean-going vessels. The Oyster Bay Town Records make mention that the Waltons’ operation branded both the flour barrels and bread produced by their Musketa Cove mills with the letters “JW”, the initials being those of Jacob Walton, the family’s eldest brother. However, grist mills and ship’s biscuit appear not to have been the Walton’s only interests in having an operational base at Musketa Cove. In 1728, a local wigmaker named Josiah Milliken published an official declaration that he was not the individual who had informed customs agents that Walton’s base-ment was loaded with smuggled wines and brandy, and that the rumor might “turn to his Hurt and Damage” (particularly if the Walton’s believed it).

In 1758, British North America prepared to take part in a massive military campaign against the French-held territories in North America, as part of the final phase of the “French & Indian War.” For decades, a bloody guerrilla war had raged on the frontier, with countless settlers on both sides massacred. Throughout most of the established population centers of New York colony each county was requested to supply a specific quota of militiamen to assist the British regulars. Queens County provided more than 300 men, under the nominal command of Colonel Melancthon Taylor Woolsey of Dosoris, a district now incorporated into the City of Glen Cove.

Within a few weeks, Woolsey and the Queens County contingent were aboard ship on the Hudson River, bound for the French stronghold of Fort Ticonderoga, the keystone to the control of the Champlain Valley. Woolsey’s letters home to his wife and relations reveal the insecurity of the provincial troops, most of whom were simple men who had never before faced combat, nor who had ever been so far away from home in their lives. “None of us have had an Opportunity of Trying whether we like the smell of Gunpowder” wrote Woolsey to his brother-in-law, “as to my own Part I cant Promise But will do as I can and Hope to give a Tollerable acc(ount) of myself...” The campaign failed; the British would not gain control of Ticonderoga for another two years. Woolsey contracted “camp fever” (typhus) and died while en route home. A few days after his death, his wife gave birth to a son.

## The Revolutionary War

The various military campaigns of the French and Indian War served as the “school ground” for the Revolutionary War. It was on these campaigns that most of the men who would later serve as officers, either patriot or loyalist, received their educations in the art of warfare.

Like Oyster Bay in general, most Musketa Cove residents were relatively uninterested in taking an active part in the Revolution. Prior to the rout of the Patriot Army during the Battle of Long Island in August of 1776, more than 70 per cent of the local inhabitants attempted to remain neutral; of the remainder, only 12 per cent took the Patriot side, the other 18 per cent remaining loyal to the mother country. After the defeat of Washington’s Army, Long Island was placed under martial law, and was occupied by the British until two years after the British Army surrendered at Yorktown.

Life in the area surrounding Musketa Cove was difficult during the war. In addition to the regular plundering of farms by bored and hungry soldiers, the local inhabitants frequently had wagons, horses, cattle and crops commandeered by the British military to supply the army. Thousands of British, Hessian and Loyalist soldiers were quartered on Long Island, as well as thousands of Loyalist refugees who had fled to Long Island from Patriot-occupied areas. It was left to the farmers of Long Island of feed a temporary population almost as large again as the population of the island before the war.

At night, the local inhabitants were plagued by whaleboat crews crossing from patriot-held Connecticut, who plundered, robbed and even killed with abandon. Officially sanctioned by the patriot authorities in Connecticut to harass the British on Long Island, the whaleboat men seldom scrupled whether the home they were sacking was that of a patriot or loyalist.

The residents of Glen Cove did get at least one chance to retaliate. In June, 1779, a group of whaleboatmen conspired to steal a boat lying off Musketa Cove. Several of the local residents managed to sneak on board with their muskets. As the whaleboatmen rowed up along side of the vessel, the Musketa Cove men opened fire, killing three of the whaleboat crew with the first volley. While the “Battle of Skeety Cove” may have been short, the residents were victorious in driving off the free-

booters.

The second major “industry,” following the mills of the 17th and 18th century, was the mining of clay. The extensive clay banks at Garvies Point were known from the earliest colonial times, and were being exploited at least as early as 1801. About 1810, a local physician named Thomas Garvie, a native of Scotland and a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, made a concerted effort to mine and market the clay on a larger scale. The clay was shipped to New York City and sold to the potteries of Huntington and Greenport. Later, a second clay deposit was discovered south of Shore Road, and was exploited by the Carpenter family for many decades.

## Industrialization

However, the real “industrial revolution” did not reach Glen Cove until the 1850s, when the Duryea Corn Starch Manufacturing Company relocated their main plant from Oswego to Glen Cove, a decision based largely on the purity of the spring water here.

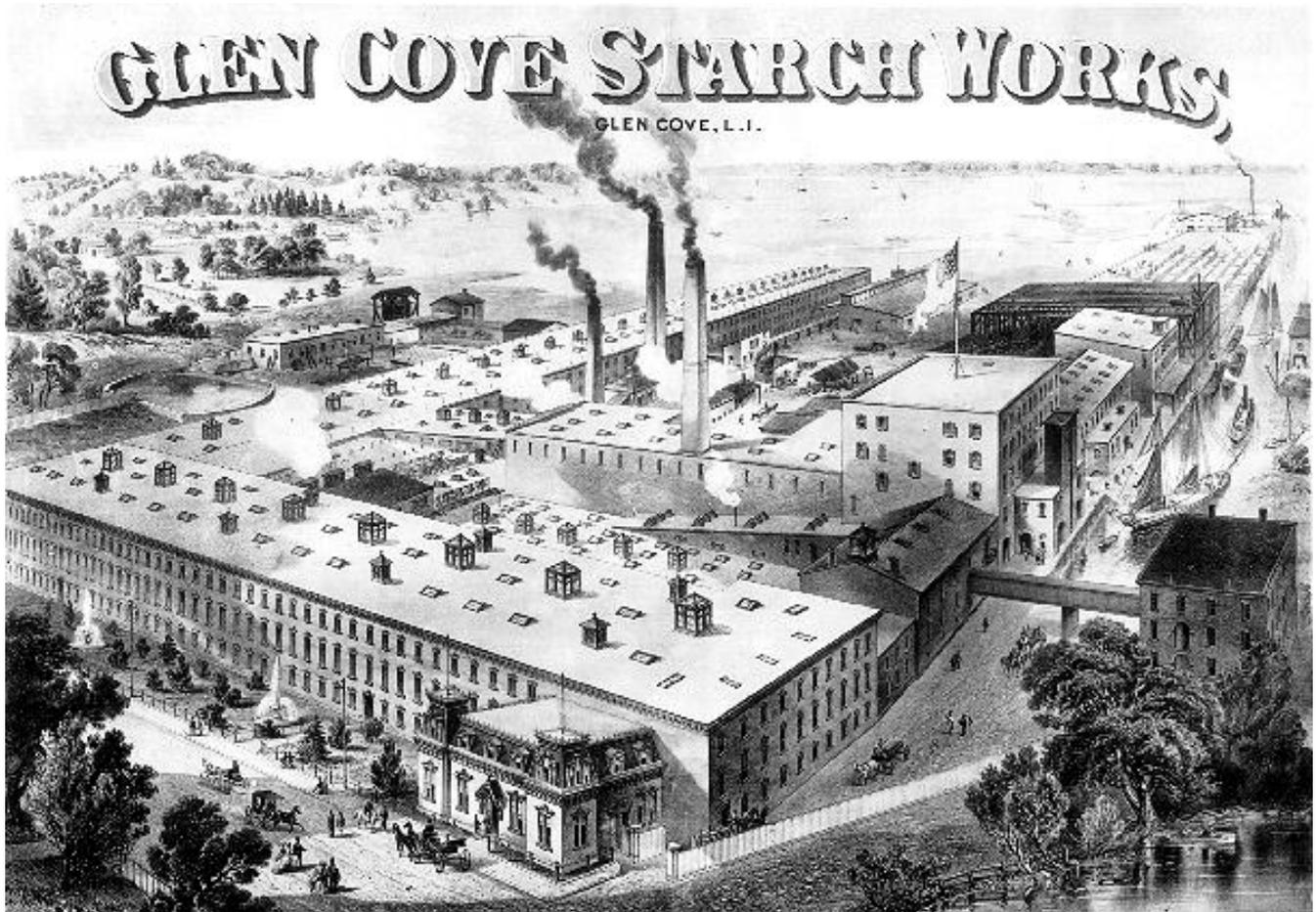
At its peak, the Duryea Starch Works sprawled over more than an acre, and employed nearly 600 people. A large proportion of the factory workers were Irish immigrants, who formed the nucleus of Glen Cove’s still vigorous Irish community.

The Starch Works largely transformed Glen Cove into a company town. Many employees lived in company-owned apartments (which were frequently cited by the Oyster Bay

Board of Health for health violations); many bought their food and clothes from the company store; and many read the Glen Cove Gazette, which was printed at least part of its life on a press owned by the starch company.

The starch works was not well loved by those Glen Cove residents who had no financial interest in it. The volumes of waste produced by converting corn into corn starch was flushed into Glen Cove Creek, where it settled to form a layer of putrefying, obnoxious-smelling organic detritus. The smell, which was rather pervasive in both the Glen Cove Landing and Sea Cliff (depending upon the wind) was irritating to resident and visitor alike.

Hiram Duryea, son of the starch factory’s president and founder, served in the Civil War as commanding officer of the famous “Fifth New York Infantry,” better known as “Duryea’s Zouaves.” Although his men weren’t particularly fond of him (they nick-named him “Old Black-and-Tan” - a reference to a type of hound dog popular in the mid 19th century) he won their respect by his bravery in battle. During the Peninsula Campaign, at the Battle of Gaines Mill, while the regiment was being torn by enemy fire, Duryea ordered his men to stop and reform ranks before proceeding across the field. And if they weren’t fond of Hiram, the men positively disliked his brother George, one private writing that he “is unfit to be called a human being, he is despised and hated by us all...” After contracting malaria, Hiram was forced to resign, and was made a Brevet Brigadier General. However, with the coming of the Gold



Coast to Long Island's north shore, most of the land that had been used to raise corn to supply the Duryea Starch Factory with its 8,000 bushel-per-day requirements was converted into estates. About 1900, the starch factory closed down its Glen Cove facility, and moved to the Midwest. In 1906, in a spectacular blaze visible in Connecticut, the abandoned building burned to the ground.

After the closure of the Starch Works, the Ladew Leather Works began operation. Built in 1903 on a large parcel north of Glen Cove Creek, the factory made leather belting for power transmission. In the early industrial era, it was not uncommon for a single steam engine to power an entire factory. The steam engine would power a single main shaft, and secondary shafts and wheels connected to the main shaft by leather belts formed into loops would distribute the rotational force throughout the factory (the shafts were usually located near the ceiling for keep employees from being injured). Each piece of machinery, in turn, would be connected by a looped leather belt to one of the secondary shafts.

The widespread use of electric motors made leather belting for heavy industry largely obsolete. In the 1920's, after the Ladew Leather Works was shut down, the site was subdivided into three large parcels and a few smaller ones for other industries. One parcel became Wah Chang (later called Li Tungsten) which processed ore into tungsten metal (needed for lightbulb filaments, armor piercing shells, and high speed drills for ma-



Children labor in a New England textile mill. Note the leather belt attached to the end of the machine.

chining steel). The second parcel became Columbia Carbon and Ribbon, which manufactured typewriter ribbons and carbon paper. The last parcel became the site of Powers Chemco (later Konica), a manufacturer of XRay film and graphic arts film.

## **Pavilion Hotel, Glen Cove, L. I.**

### **A FIRST-CLASS FAMILY RESORT**



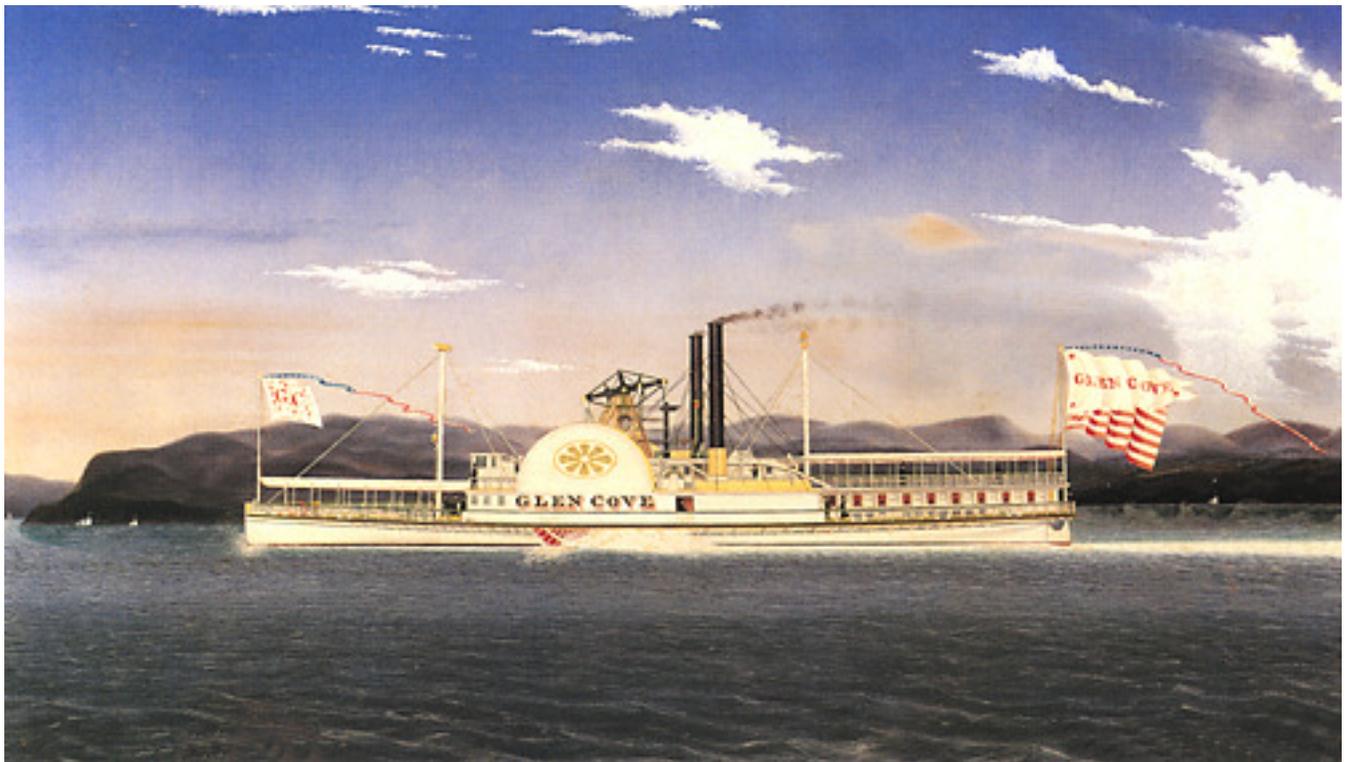
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The steamboat Glen Cove was one of the fastest and most popular of the vessels plying between New York City and Glen Cove in the 1850's.

### **Glen Cove As Summer Resort and The Rise of the Gold Coast**

In 1827, Dr. Thomas Garvie (the same Scottish physician who was mining clay at Garvie's Point) opened negotiations with Cornelius Vanderbilt to begin operating a steamboat between Glen Cove and New York City on a regular basis. Several local businessmen, most of whom had personal differences with Garvie in the past, feared that he would monopolize the facility to his advantage (and their disadvantage) and formed a small corporation to build a wharf of their own.

Within a few months, work on the construction of this wharf was begun, and in 1829, a mere 22 years after Fulton launched the Clermont, a steamboat making regularly scheduled trips was operating between Glen Cove and New York City. The first boat on the line was the "Linnaeus," piloted by Captain Elijah Peck.

During the next 80 years, the steamboat line had a tremendous impact on the community, touching off a chain of events that, more than anything else, made Glen Cove what it is today.

Firstly, it was responsible for the change in name of the town from "Musketa Cove" to Glen Cove. Many New York residents were reluctant to visit the town; they didn't realize that there was a difference between "mus-kee-tah" (the place of rushes) and "mosquito" (a rather pesky insect). A public meeting was held to discuss the matter. Several possible names were suggested as alternatives. Local legend has always claimed that someone had suggested "Glen Coe," after a rather pretty spot in Scotland, which was misheard as "Glen Cove." Since the locals could still refer to the town as "the Cove," the sug-

gestion was adopted. Recently, it was discovered that this legend was untrue; "Glen Cove" was the name as proposed, and adopted, and a scenic view in Scotland had nothing to do with it. In 1834, the town's name officially changed.

With the "Musketa/mosquito" matter settled, the second important evolutionary step in Glen Cove's history began. Glen Cove became a resort community. Initially, New York City families seeking a refuge from the unhealthy stench of Manhattan during oppressively hot summers began to board with local farm families. While they found spending the summer in cool, green Glen Cove pleasant, the less-than-sophisticated cuisine served by local farmers was not quite to the taste of affluent city folk. Very quickly, a few enterprising residents opened hotels to better cater to the jaded tastes of urbanites.

By the time the Civil War began, there were half a dozen hotels in Glen Cove, most centered near the steamboat landing (which, although no longer extant, was at the foot of Landing Road, within present day Morgan's Park). The largest of these was the Pavilion Hotel. In addition to the hotels themselves, a number of "oyster saloons," taverns, and boarding houses opened in the Landing.

The steamboats also helped create the "Gold Coast" on Long Island's North Shore. It now became feasible for wealthy New York City businessmen to maintain a summer home in Glen Cove, and still conveniently commute to their New York City offices. The steamboat trip from Glen Cove to New York City took roughly two hours, not much more than the current trip by Long Island Rail Road, and was certainly more serene.

Among the earliest Gold Coast estates were those of editor and comedian William Evans Burton; real estate developer and hotelier Jean Frederic de la Farge (whose son, John LaFarge, would become an important artist in both oil and

stained glass); English-born engineer Thomas W Kennard who would help construct vital railways connecting New York City with the midwest; Charles A. Dana, editor of the *New York Sun*, and Samuel L.M. Barlow, a prominent New York City attorney. Ironically, both Barlow and Dana were heavily involved in Lincoln's "War Cabinet" during the Civil War: Barlow as McClelland's staunchest friend and confidant, and Dana as the man who first recognized U.S. Grant's abilities as a general.

Gold mining baron Captain Joseph Raphael Delamar perhaps one of the Gold Coast's more interesting residents. Orphaned at the age of seven, Delamar started his career as a cabin-boy aboard ship, eventually rising to captain. Giving up the sea at an early age, he studied geology and metallurgy, and invested heavily in silver and copper mines in Idaho. His investments paid off well: he retired a multi-millionaire.



**"Pembroke" - The Joseph Raphael Delamar mansion**

Frank Winfield Woolworth, founder of the chain of "5 and 10" stores, resided in a palatial marble mansion which he named "Winfield Hall", located on Crescent Beach Road. The estate was later owned by Richard S Reynolds of Reynolds Aluminum.

The largest single estate complex in Glen Cove was owned by the Pratt family, and totaled more than 1,100 acres in the northern part of the city. Charles Pratt, one of the founders of Standard Oil, settled in Glen Cove about 1890. In an effort to keep his family near him, he purchased large tracts of land sur-

rounding his estate, on which his six sons and one of his two daughters later built their homes. Most of the Pratt mansions are still extant: Welwyn (the home of Harold I. Pratt) is now owned by the Nassau County Museum; The Braes, originally owned by Herbert L. Pratt, is now Webb Institute of Naval Architecture; The Manor House, built for John Teale Pratt, is now Harrison House Conference center; the Frederick B. Pratt house, Poplar Hill, is now owned by Glengariff Nursing Home; and Killenworth, now the retreat for the Soviet Delegation to the United Nations, was originally the house of George D. Pratt.



**"Winfield Hall" - The Frank Winfield Woolworth mansion. (Photograph copyright 2010 by Daniel E Russell; all rights reserved)**



“Killenworth” - The George Dupont Pratt Estate

J.P. Morgan also made his summer home in Glen Cove, on East Island. His private luxury yacht, the “Corsair IV” was 343 feet six inches long, a virtual floating landmark anchored off Glen Cove. Morgan commuted to his Wall Street offices on board his 110 foot launch, the “Navette,” each work-day. After an attempt on his life in 1915, by a pro-German radical attempting to end armament shipments to England, the single bridge between Morgan’s island and the Glen Cove mainland was guarded by several former Marines, to prevent a recurrence of the incident.

One of the lesser-known Gold Coast residents of Glen Cove was Henry Clay Folger, who started his business career with the Pratt family. Rather than waste his money on grandiose exhibitions of architecture, Folger preferred to invest his money in Shakespeareana, his most consuming passion. Folger amassed one of the world’s largest collections of Shakespeare folios, and at his death bequeathed sufficient funds to establish the Folger Shakespearean Library in Washington, D.C., to house his collection.

Yachting was an important part of summer life in Glen Cove during the Gold Coast era... so much so that the New York Yacht Club moved their original clubhouse to Glen Cove to serve as one of its many stations scattered along the coast from New York City to Newport, Rhode Island. Most of the estate owners could boast ownership of a large luxury yacht, and many of those who took sailing seriously -- like cement magnate J Rogers Maxwell -- possessed an assortment of smaller sailing craft with which to race in regional regattas. Delamar’s yacht, the 239 foot long *May*, was morred in Hempstead Harbor off of his estate, while Charles M Pratt owned the *Jathniel*, a 134 foot schooner-rigged yacht.

## Glen Cove Becomes a City

During the 19th century, there had been several attempts to incorporate Glen Cove as a village -- a move which would give the residents greater autonomy over local affairs. The earliest was in 1867, and the effort died because of local disinterest and a lack of money to pay for the legal fees. Another attempt to form an incorporated village in 1894 met a similar fate.

In 1915, a new effort to incorporate Glen Cove was launched -- this time, as a city rather than a village. Many residents felt that Glen Cove, home to some of the wealthiest families in the nation, was paying an inordi-

nate amount of taxes to the Town of Oyster Bay, and getting back far less in services. In 1915 the local newspaper, the Glen Cove Echo, began agitating for Glen Cove to break away from the Town of Oyster Bay. By gaining its independence, Glen Cove would be able to elect its own government, giving residents a greater voice in decisions that impacted the community. It also meant that all of the taxes generated by the estates could be put directly to meet the needs of the community.

In early 1917, a charter was drafted for the proposed city, and an informal vote was taken among the residents which amply demonstrated that a majority favored independence from Oyster Bay. A small but vocal “anti-city” party sprang up, opposed to the idea of incorporation. On May 9th, 1917 the proposed charter (with a few minor changes) passed the New York State Legislature. It was signed by Governor Charles Seymour Whitman on June 8th, 1918. The next day, the residents paraded through the streets in a spontaneous celebration, firing a cannon at 30 minute intervals. A more formal - and more boisterous - celebration was held a week later, with the Carpenter Memorial Church Band and the bugle corps of Boy Scout Troop



Corsair IV being launched at Bath, Maine in 1930.

4 leading a parade through the downtown area. Fireworks were set off in the sky over the corner of School and Glen Street.

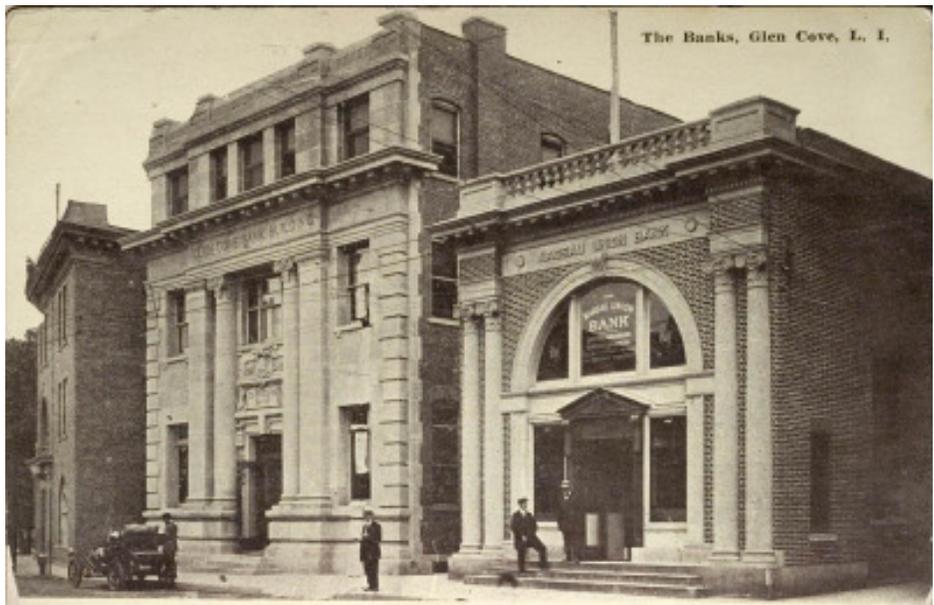
Although the “anti-city” faction attempted to get the charter voided, and several factions in the Town of Oyster Bay tried to prevent Glen Cove from becoming a city, they ultimately failed.

In the fall of 1917, the people of Glen Cove voted for their first Mayor and City Council. The pro-city party stood Bennet H Tobey for Mayor; the anti-city party nominated Dr James E Burns as their candidate. In one of the many strange twists in Glen Cove’s history, it was the anti-city candidate who won.

On January 1st, 1918 the first Mayor and City Council were sworn into office - the same year that Glen Cove celebrated the 250th anniversary of its founding. Although the City Council meetings were held in the local Justices’ Court on Glen Street, the first City Hall was actually the Danis Building at the corner of West Glen Street and Bridge Street.

In addition to the Gold Coast estates and their extravagant inhabitants, Glen Cove was home to many prominent people.

One of the most famous surgeons of the early 19th century was Valentine Mott, born in Glen Cove in 1780. Mott was a pioneer in the field of arterial surgery; he successfully operated on an aneurysm of the innominate artery (which leads out of the aorta) in 1818, in an era before antiseptic operating theaters and surgical anaesthesia. Mott reportedly amputated more than a thousand limbs in his life time, as well as performed operations on the carotid artery 51 times, with (at least for that period) excellent success. He was the second surgeon to success-



**The Glen Cove Bank and Nassau Union Bank on Glen Street, circa 1910. Photograph courtesy of Griffin Postcard Collection, Glen Cove Public Library Robert R Coles Long Island History Room.**

fully amputate a leg at the hip. He died in 1865, a few days after receiving news of Lincoln’s assassination.

Other famous residents include General Nathaniel Coles, who in the early 19th Century bred numerous race horses including American Eclipse; LaMarcus Thomapson, often called “the father of the rollercoaster,” who built amusement rides throughout the United States and Europe in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries; naturalist and illustrator William Crowder, who’s works on local marine life remain classics even today; Daniel Josphe Daly, two time Medal of Honor winner, who was born in Glen Cove in 1873; architect Martin E Thompson, who designed the facade of the Second Branch Bank of the United States in 1824 (later moved and placed on exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art); early 19th Century Methodist clergyman Nicholas Snethen; author Thomas Pynchon; Frost Thorn, the “first Texas millionaire”, who made his fortune from



**School Street as it appeared circa 1915. Photograph courtesy of Griffin Postcard Collection, Glen Cove Public Library Robert R Coles Long Island History Room.**

land concessions in early 19th Century Texas; author John Treat Irving, nephew of Washington Irving, who penned a series of short stories about ghostly goings-on in Glen Cove; movie theater owner and MGM founder Marcus Loew and his son Arthur Loew; author Miriam Coles Harris, who pioneered the romance novel in 19th century America; Frank Price, the engineer who helped move “Cleopatra’s Needle” from Egypt to Central Park in New York City; and Charles T. Vincent, a playwright, actor and early motion-picture screenplay author. exile in Australia.