# LONG ISLAND THE MAGAZINE OF LONG ISLAND'S HISTORY AND HERITAGE





## NEW YORK YACHT CLUB STATION 10

by Richard J. Reynolds

ruising sailors in search of a suitable overnight anchorage in western Long Island Sound generally eschew the open expanse of Hempstead Harbor for the more secluded waters of nearby harbors like Oyster Bay. However, those who choose to tack into Hempstead Harbor against the four o'clock southwesterly, sail past the sprawling copper beech trees of the former DeLamar estate, and drop anchor behind the stone breakwater at Glen Cove are indeed taking a side trip into yachting history. These sailors are plying the same waters, where some seventy years earlier, many of the world's premier yachtsman would gather to race yachts, entertain guests and discuss business, international affairs or national politics.

From the 1920's through the 1930's, the halcyon days of yachting on Long Island Sound, Hempstead Harbor was routinely the scene of a dazzling display of both steam and sailing yachts, due primarily to the presence of the New York Yacht Club in Glen Cove at its historic Station No. 10. From 1904 to 1949, Station No. 10 was an important rendezvous for some of the finest and largest yachts in the country, and played host to such yachting celebrities as Sir Thomas Lipton, J. P. Morgan, and Cornelius Vanderbilt, who spent his final days aboard his yacht Winchester, anchored off Station No. 10.

Although Station No. 10 was only one of ten "cruising stations" established by the New York Yacht Club at the turn of the century, it is without doubt the most famous, being the original clubhouse of the New York Yacht Club, the oldest yacht club in the country, organized on July 30, 1844. The NYYC's first clubhouse was built two years later, in Hoboken, NJ, at Elysian Fields, the present site of the Stevens Institute, named for first commodore John Cox Stevens. Described then as a "handsome Gothic cottage in a pleasant grove",1 the 23 by 46 ft. building (reportedly designed by famous New York City archi-

Opposite: Postcard dated 1906, showing Station No. 10 at the foot of Landing Road, Glen Cove.

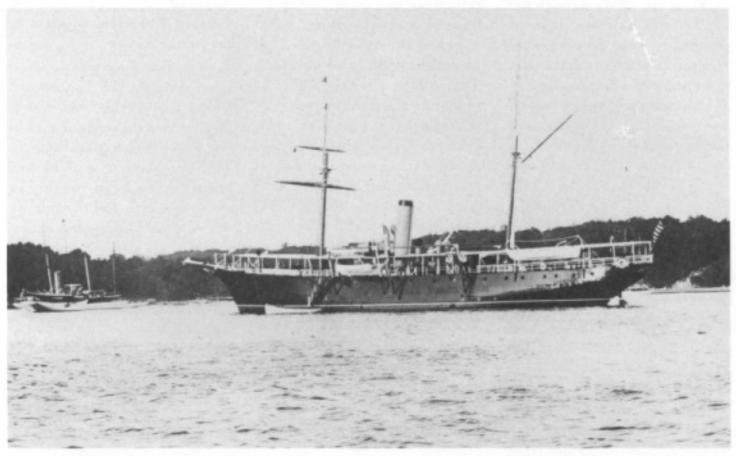
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tect Alexander Jackson Davis2 housed a single room, with exposed chestnut beams and varnished white pine interior.3 The cottage at Elysian Fields served as the headquarters for the rapidly growing NYYC until November, 1872 when the Club established its headquarters in Manhattan. It has been there ever since, albeit in several locations, ending with their present one at 37 West 44th St., where it was located in 1901.4 From 1872 to 1904 the "Hoboken House". as it was called, was all but abandoned by the NYYC and fell into disrepair. The Club's attention had been turned to establishing a series of "cruising stations" along the coast to accommodate its growing fleet. The ten stations, or "branch headquarters" of the NYYC in 1904 were: Bay Ridge, Brooklyn; East 26th St., Manhattan; Whitestone, Long Island; New London, CT; Shelter Island, NY; Ardsley, NY (on the Hudson); Newport, RI; Vineyard Haven, MA; Atlantic Highlands, NJ; and finally Glen Cove, Long Island.5 These stations served a large cruising fleet each August, during the Club's annual cruise, in which only a fraction of the Club's 600 vessels and 2,700 members usually participated.6

Station No. 10 was established by the NYYC in Glen Cove on June 21, 1904. It was situated at the foot of Landing Road, the site of present day Morgan Memorial Park, on land donated by club member Edward R. Ladew, adjacent to his estate Elsinore.

The building was located approximately 125 ft. northeast of the foot of the breakwater, about where the western most of the three brick pavilions in Morgan Memorial Park are located today, and roughly in the center of a 150 ft. wide by 500 ft. long bulkheaded extension of land which is known as The Landing, and served as a steamboat dock from 1828 until the early 1900's. 8.9 The 1,564 ft. long, stone breakwater was completed in 1906, adjacent to and north of the steamboat landing.

The construction of the breakwater was originally authorized by the Federal River and Harbor Act of August 11, 1888 and was later modified by the Act of June 22, 1895. Although originally planned to extend 2,000 ft. into the harbor, only 1,564 ft. were completed by 1906 at a cost of \$72,000.10 The little Gothic cottage, loaded on a barge at Hoboken, NJ and towed by two steam tugs, arrived in Hempstead Harbor with much fanfare; the club burgee flying from a flagstaff affixed to its gable end. As it passed Commodore Frederick G. Bourne's flagship, the Delaware, a cannon salute was fired.11 The day was marked with a special NYYC regatta for the Glen Cove Cup. The yachts, Neola; Weetamoe, Isolde, Emerald. and Katrina, all schooners and sloops, raced a triangular 21.5



J.P Morgan's Corsair III anchored off Station No. 10 (seen at extreme left), circa 1915.

(Henry Otto Korten Collection, Sea Cliff Museum.)

mile course that started off Mott Point, ran eastward to a mark off Stamford, and then westward to a mark off Parsonage Point, and finally southwestward to the finish off Mott Point. First to complete the course was the 64 ft. sloop Neola, followed by the 64 ft. Weetmoe, the 57ft. Isolde, and then the 76 ft. schooners Emerald and Katrina. Neola covered the 21.5 mile course in 2 hours, 51 minutes, and 57 seconds for an average speed of 6.5 knots; however, the Isolde won her class, and the Glen Cove Cup, with the best corrected time, beating Neola by 14 seconds.<sup>12</sup>

The new Yacht Station was not officially opened until later that summer, being in need of repair and painting from its years of neglect at Hoboken. The club fleet assembled in Hempstead Harbor on Thursday morning, August 11, 1904 as their first stop on that summer's club cruise. The morning was given to

powerboat and motor launch races, while during the afternoon a regatta was held for smaller sailing yachts. That evening, all of the yachtsmen met ashore in the new clubhouse for a formal speech and dedication by Commodore Bourne. During the ceremony, Station No. 10 was officially entrusted to member Edward R. Ladew for local supervision. At 8PM, the squadron directed its searchlights on the Club's burgee flying from the Station's flagpole and the Delaware fired another cannon salute. An informal reception, with music, followed for members and guests at the new facility. 13

The choice of Glen Cove for the location of the new Yacht Station was undoubtedly due to the fact that many of the club's more prominent and influential officers and members lived in Glen Cove. Its most famous member, of course, was J. Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan, whose series of luxurious black steam yachts, all named Corsair, usually rode at



Posteard showing view westward along Landing Road to trolley station and Station No. 10, circa 1920.

anchor off Matinicock Point, in view of his 47 room mansion on East Island, or off Station No. 10 in Hempstead Harbor. J.P. Morgan held the position of Commodore from 1919 to 1921 and later donated the property at the foot of McLoughlin Street for Station No. 10's final home in Glen Cove.

The role of the string of ten NYYC Yacht Stations was primarily to provide a place where yacht owners and guests could put ashore and make connections to other forms of transportation, and where supplies could be loaded into launches and ferried to anchored yachts. Station No. 10 was thus well situated, being adjacent to the Glen Cove Railroad Company's trolley stop at The Landing, from which a yachting guest could reach the Long Island Railroad station at Glen Street. (The trolley line operated from 1905 until 1924.)<sup>14</sup>

The steamboat dock was ample enough to per-

mit 30 to 40 ft. yacht "tenders" to tie up and load supplies for ferrying out to the much larger steam yachts, but insufficient in length and water depth to accommodate the largest 300 ft. steam yachts of the day. Soon after the move from Hoboken to The Landing, a Station Master's quarters was built as an annex to the clubhouse. Here the Station Captain lived and was on call twenty-four hours a day to receive members and visiting yachtsmen. This building is shown as a flat-roofed annex sporting the same scalloped eave trim as the original clubhouse.

In 1926, J.P. Morgan announced his plans to purchase sixteen acres of property fronting Hempstead Harbor in Glen Cove, which would be developed into a park for the exclusive use of Glen Cove and Locust Valley residents, and would serve as a memorial to his late wife. The planned park encompassed the NYYC's Station No. 10, so that a

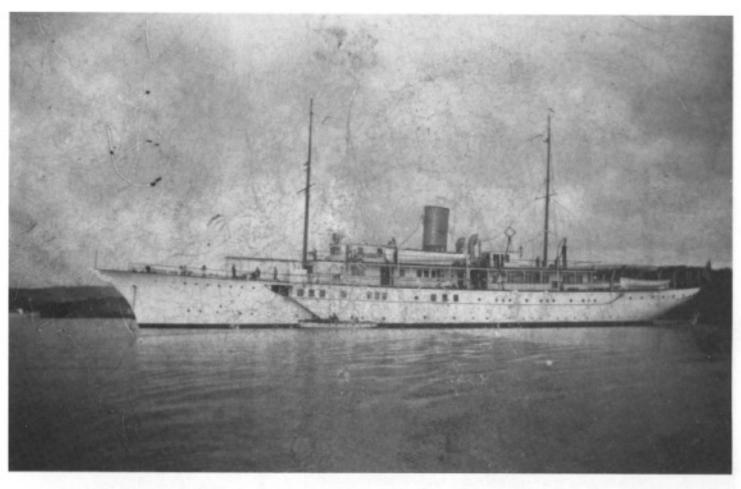


Postcard showing southwest view of Station No. 10 and Station Quarter at the foot of Landing Road, circa 1920.

new home had to be found for the clubhouse. In March 1931, J. P. Morgan purchased a 300 ft. by 112 ft. piece of property from Edgar and John Appleby at the end of the soon-to-be built McLoughlin Street. The road at this time was being extended westward from Germain Street to provide access to the new club location. That same month, Morgan turned the parcel over to his son, Henry Sturgis Morgan, who, in January 1932, donated it to the NYYC.17 In 1931, the property was lengthened by about 500 ft., by bulkheading and filling, and expanded to two acres. Later that year, Station No. 10 was again moved, several hundred feet south to its new location at the foot of McLoughlin Street. Apparently, only the original clubhouse and flagpole were moved. The former Station Master's residence was razed. and a new one built in 1932 behind the clubhouse at the McLouglin Street site. The new Station Master's residence was a two-story, gambrel-roofed, dormered building with scalloped verge and eave trim and chestnut interior beams, designed to match that of the original 1846 clubhouse. It was this building that later became the home of the Glen Cove Yacht Club.

### HALCYON DAYS

Yachting on Long Island Sound and Hempstead Harbor flourished during the 1930's. Station No. 10 was the scene of continual weekly yachting activity as sleek commuters would drop their owners off at the McLoughlin Street dock each



Mrs. William Hartness' 215 foot diesel yacht Cythera anchored off Station No. 10 in Hempstead Harbor, circa 1930.

evening, from which they were driven in waiting limousines. During the late 1930's, the club fleet that was moored off Station No. 10 grew considerably, and gained many notable additions. Perhaps the most famous sailing yacht moored off the breakwater was the Atlantic, the 185 ft.,

Gardner and Cox designed, three-masted schooner that set the world record for an Atlantic crossing under sail. The Atlantic made the trip during the Kaiser's Cup race in 1905, sailing from New York to England in 12 days and 14 hours. This record still stands for mono-hull yachts, but was broken in 1980 by Eric Tablerly in a multi-hull. The *Atlantic* was owned by Gerard B. Lambert, a NYYC member.

Other new arrivals, in 1938, were the Seawane, a schooner owned by George L. Harrison; the Sea Pu.w., John T. Pratt Jr.'s commuter; the Adventure, a ketch owned by C.V. Whitney; the No-Wi-Ma, a power cruiser owned by Walter B. Duryea; and Herbert L. Pratt's Whisper a 72 ft. commuter powered by twin V-12, Allison aircraft engines that made it one of the fastest commuters on Long Island

Sound. Also new to the fleet in 1938 was the Capella, a schooner owned by Clarence Portley and the Driftwood, a palatial yacht owned by Livingston Short, who also owned the famous Stellar Polaris. Harrison Williams' 240 ft. diesel yacht Warrior, and George F. Baker, Jr.'s 180 ft. steam yacht Viking were moored here as well. 19

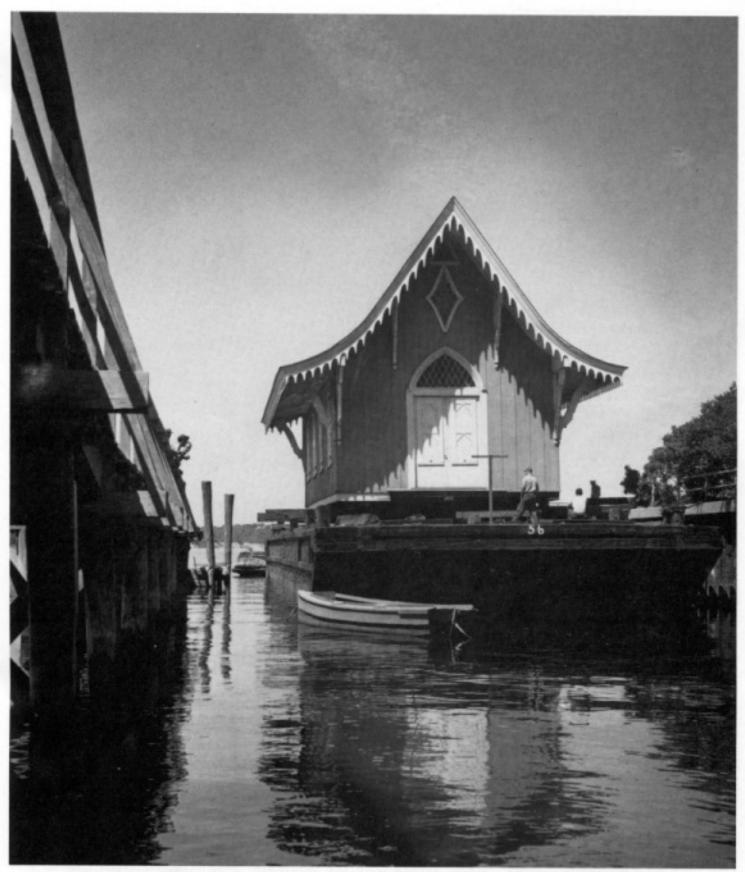
Hempstead Harbor also served as the home waters of some famous America's Cup defenders like Vigilant, Columbia, Resolute, and Enterpise. J. Rogers Maxwell, whose magnificent estate fronted Hempstead Harbor between Red Spring and Weeks Points, kept his large schooner Queen moored here. Maxwell has often been referred to as "the Father of Yachting" and probably owned and raced more sailing yachts than any other individual in the country. Numerous 50 ft. and 70 ft. racing yachts were always moored

off Station No. 10, most notably: Maxwell's 70 ft. Yankee, August Belmont's 70 ft. Mineola, J. P. Morgan's 50 ft. Grayling, and Harry Payne Whitney's 50 ft. Barbara.<sup>21</sup>

The famous Consair was kept in good company in terms of large, palatial, steam yachts. Among them were Joseph Ladew's Columbia, Mrs. William Harkness' Cythera, and Harry Payne Whitney's Whileaway. Cythera, a 215 ft., white-hulled, diesel yacht was built in 1898, saw service as a transport ship in World War I, and was a familiar site in Hempstead Harbor. Tall ships were well represented in the Station No. 10 fleet with Edward F. Hutton's Hussar II. an auxiliary four-masted barque, which, in 1935, was the largest privately owned sailing vessel in the world, and Barbara Hutton's four-masted, black-hulled barkentine Sea Cloud.22

### CHANGING TIMES

At some point in the 1920's, the NYYC began to dismantle its chain of yacht stations. This probably resulted from the cost of maintaining and staffing them, but restrictions on coastal cruising imposed during World War I had rendered the stations temporarily obsolete. For whatever the reasons, by 1928 there were only four stations remaining. Two were located in Manhattan, one at the foot of East 26th Street (No. 2) and the other at the foot of 86th Street (No. 3, not one of the original



The original New York Yacht Club clubbouse being loaded onto a barge in preparation for its trip to Mystic, CT, June, 1949.

(Harvey A. Weber)

ten stations), another in Newport, RI (No. 6), and finally Station No. 10 in Glen Cove.23 These four stations continued to serve the NYYC on its annual cruise and, in the case of Station No. 6 in Newport, act as a field headquarters every three years for the America's Cup Defense. World War II again put severe restrictions on coastal cruising so that Stations 6 and 10 became very underused during the war years. This, coupled with the fact that emerging reciprocity among duly registered yacht clubs had created all of the benefits of a private chain of yacht stations without the associated expense of maintaining them. spelled the end of this extravagance for the NYYC. The NYYC sold their Station No. 6 in Newport in 1945.24

In 1949, the NYYC announced that it was closing its historic Station No. 10, and was placing the original clubhouse on permanent loan with the Marine Historical Association's Mystic Seaport Museum. In a separate transaction, the NYYC offered the remaining Station Master's residence and the two acres of land to the City of Glen Cove for \$35,000.25, 26, 27 The City Council approved the purchase in March of that year, and on June 9, 1949, riggers expertly skidded the original clubhouse onto a waiting, ex-Army scow tied up to the southern bulkhead. Along with the original clubhouse, the NYYC also loaned two 3,000 lb., Spanish-American War era, bronze cannons and the Station's flagpole to the Museum. At high tide, the next morning, the tug Cavalier pulled the scow and its historic cargo out around the breakwater to begin its ninety mile trip to Mystic, Connecticut, thus ending the NYYC's forty-five year presence in Glen Cove. That summer the "Hoboken House" was settled onto a waterside foundation near the south entrance to Mystic Seaport Museum and dedicated on August 1, 1949.27 Today, it still serves as a yacht club for NYYC members and visiting yachtsmen, and as an exhibition hall for yachting memorabilia.

### THE GLEN COVE YACHT CLUB

With the purchase of the former Station Master's quarters in 1949 by the City of Glen Cove, a new era of yachting was ushered into Hempstead Harbor. The sleek commuters and palatial yachts owned by the titans of industry gave way to a fleet of outboard runabouts, cruisers, and daysailers owned by middle class Glen Cove suburbanites. For ten years after the rafting away of Station No. 10, the former Station Master's quarters was used at various times as a restaurant/bar and as an informal clubhouse for boat owning City residents. In 1960, a charter was drawn up, a club burgee was designed, and a slate of officers was elected for the Glen



The "Hoboken House" at Mystic Seaport on June 1990. (Richard J. Reynolds.)

Cove City Yacht Club. From its start, the philosophy of the Glen Cove City Yacht Club was to provide low-cost moorings and modest Club facilities for its predominantly working and middle class membership. In fact, for the first few years of its existence, the Club did not provide launch service, members had to provide their own dinghys or use the Club rowboat to row out to their moorings. In the mid 1960's, an 18 ft., outboard powered, wooden garvey was purchased and used as a launch for weekend service. The Club was able to provide a low-cost membership, in part, because it required its members to participate in annual spring work details to get the Club, launch, and floats ready for the summer season. Throughout the following years, this low-cost philosophy of the Club attracted many new boatowners, and membership quickly rose to well over one hundred members.

During the 1960's and early 1970's, the Club's fleet consisted primarily of powerboats, as most of the Club's membership were weekend, sport fishermen. In the mid-1970's, however, a slow transition to sailboats began, so that by the mid 1980's most of the club fleet consisted of daysailors and cruising auxiliaries. The old Station Master's quarters continued to serve the evolving club well, although occasional late-night acts of vandalism on the Club grounds

caused concern to the officers and members during the close of the 1980 season. On October 26, 1980, the Club's storage shed caught fire in the middle of the night, destroying the structure. Local authorities considered the fire suspicious. Two months earlier, the neighboring Sea Cliff Yacht Club was almost completely destroyed by an arsonist's fire that had been set to conceal a robbery. Three months after the shed was destroyed, vandals finally succeeded in destroying the old Station Master's quarters. At 3:45 in the morning on January 20, 1981, neighboring residents called the Glen Cove Fire Department to report flames from the vicinity of the yacht club. By the time fifty-six volunteer firemen arrived, the western end of the building was fully engulfed in flames. The Club's waterside doors had been forced open, indicating the Club had been broken into and purposely set ablaze. The firemen

were able to get the blaze under control by 6:15AM, but not before the building and the Club launch (which had been stored inside for the winter) had been totally destroyed.<sup>28</sup> The last vestige of the New York Yacht Club's forty-five year presence in Glen Cove was gone.

The next day, the Officers of the Glen Cove Yacht Club held an emergency meeting and voted to continue to operate. Within a year, with the assistance of the City of Glen Cove, a new clubhouse was built on the foundation of the old Station Master's quarters, and the Glen Cove Yacht Club was back in business. Today the Club still continues its philosophy of providing a low-cost alternative for middle class boaters at a location where once only the wealthiest yachtsmen in the world could gather.

This is Richard J. Reynolds' first appearance in the Forum.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Fessenden S. Blanchard, Long Island Sound (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand & Co., 1958), p. 79. <sup>2</sup>Marine Historical Association, Factsheet on New York Yacht Club Station No. 10, (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum), 1983.

Mew York Yacht Club to Move NYYC's Old Home", New York Tribune, May 19, 1904.

\*Fessenden S. Blanchard, Long Island Sound (Princeton, NJ: D. VanNostrand & Col, 1958), p. 81. \*\*First Home of NYYC Moved to

Glen Cove", Brooklyn Daily Eagle, August 14, 1904.

"Ibid.

"Ibid.

\*Peter Luyster Van Santvoord, "The History of Appleby Beach Park", Long Island Forum, April, 1963, pp. 81-93. (Copy of author's draft on file at the Glen Cove Public Library).

<sup>3</sup>Map of Glen Cove (Harbor Portion), Scale 250 ft. to 2 inch, 1906, (Glen Cove, NY: Glen Cove Public Library.)

\*\*New England-New York
Interagency Committee, The
Resources of the New England-New
York Region; Part Two, Chapter
XXXVIII, Special Subjects, Subregion
E (Boston, MA: New EnglandNew York Interagency
Committee, October, 1954).

""Old Hoboken House of New York Yacht Club Arrives at Glen Cove," New York Herald, June 22, 1904. 12 Ibid.

13."First Home of NYYC Moved to Glen Cove."

<sup>14</sup>Glen Cove Public Library, anonymous notes on Glen Cove Trolley (Glen Cove Public Library Historical Files).

<sup>15</sup>"J. P. Morgan to Donate 16 Acres to City for Park", Glen Cove Echo, May 28, 1926.

<sup>16</sup>"Lease for Morgan Memorial Park, July 8, 1926, executed by John Pierpont Morgan to the City of Glen Cove", p.24 (Copy on file at the Glen Cove Public Library, Glen Cove, NY).

17 Title Abstract-Section 31, Block 67, Lots 58 and 57, October 10, 1950, (Mineola, NY; Nassau County Tax Assessor's Office).

<sup>18</sup> Morris Rosenfeld, William H. Taylor and Stanley Rosenfeld, The Story of American Yachting (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1958) p. 168-170.

<sup>19</sup> "Many Noted Vessels Moored at New York Yacht Club Station," Glen Cove Echo, June 9, 1938. <sup>26</sup> Dr. A. E. Cocks, "Yachtsman Find Glen Cove Harbor an Ideal Anchorage", Glen Cove Echo, June 20, 1935.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

New York Yacht Club, Yearbook, 1928, (New York, NY: privately printed), p.327.

<sup>24</sup>In 1989, the New York Yacht Club re-established a yacht station in Newport, Rhode Island with the purchase of "Harbor Court", a mansion fronting Brenton Cove in Newport.

25."Old Yacht Station Closes a Sea Era", New York Times, June 10, 1949.

Yachtsmen Sails to Become Museum Piece", New York Daily News, June 10, 1949.

<sup>27</sup>Tim O'Brien, "The Historic Gray Cottage Who Couldn't Find a Home", Long Island Heritage, March, 1984, p.5.

<sup>28</sup> John Ward, "GCYC Building Lost to Fire", Glen Cove Guardian, V. 5, No. 30, January 22, 1981.