

MICROFILMED 1972

# A SHORT HISTORY OF



*ROBE GOLDMANS*

# THE VILLAGE OF ASHAROKEN

## A Short History of the Village of Asharoken

By EDWIN L. BROOKS, *Village Historian*

1953

**T**HE University of the State of New York, Education Department, Division of Archives and History, pursuant to section 1198 of the Education Law as amended has been very active in stimulating the assembly of local history and the care and preservation of public records.

It is in line with this that this brochure is written. The Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association, so often referred to herein, has been part and parcel of the events leading to the formation of and subsequent activities of the Village of Asharoken and as a public service is financing the cost of publication and distribution of this brochure. Its present officers are—

Thomas Porteus  
Robert Murphy  
Edwin L. Brooks  
Edith Storey

President  
Vice President  
Treasurer  
Secretary

Casriel Kreis, Alfred Lippmann,  
Nathan Rogers, Oliver G. Carter Jr.  
and Walter H. Dietze, Trustees.

The present Village officers are—

Mayor, Sydney Bevin  
Treasurer, Alvah W. Haff  
Clerk, Edith Storey  
Police Justice, Anthony J. MacCarthy  
Chief of Police, Arnold G. Johnson  
Attorney, Henry A. Ingraham  
Trustees, Rube Goldberg, John S. Klein,  
Miner D. Crary, Clayton F. Mugridge

The New York State Education Law as amended by Chapter 820 of the laws of 1947 provides for the appointment of a local historian for each City, Town or Village except for a City of over one million inhabitants where appointment is on a slightly different basis.

It sets forth, among other things, that it is the duty of each local historian to collect and preserve material relating to the history of the political subdivision for which he or she is appointed with provisions for the preservation of public records.

This brochure has to do with the Village of Asharoken situated on a sand spit or bar lying between Northport Harbor and Long Island Sound together with a portion of Eaton's Neck extending from land now or formerly of the Metropolitan Sand and Gravel Company to property of the United States Government on which the Eaton's Neck Light is located.

Prior to claims of title by the Dutch and the Crown of England, the land in this area was in the occupation of the Matinnecocks, an Indian tribe of which Asharoken known as the Sagamore of Kete-womoke was Chief.

Confining our enquiry to the area now occupied by the Village of Asharoken we find a conveyance made about the last day of July 1656 between Asharoken, Matinnecock Sachem, and the rest of the Indians with him, to Jonas Wood, William Rogers and Thomas Wilkes for themselves and the rest of their associates, including all but the Eaton's Neck portion thereof, the consideration being "two coats, four shertes, seven quarts of licker and alevn ounces of powder."

Ten years later a confirmatory deed was given which included what was known as Eaton's Neck which derived its name from Theophilos Eaton, Governor of New Haven, who derived title from the Indians in 1646 under a grant covering a large Long Island tract including the Neck.

There had been overlapping purchases from the Indians but the Eaton's title to the Neck was sustained as against the claims of the Town of Huntington so that title thereto passed legally from Eaton's daughter Mary and her husband William Jones and through mesne conveyancing to the present owners.

The Light House property was deeded to the United States Government in 1798 and now forms a part of the westerly boundary of the Village of Asharoken.

Long Island is said to be the longest island adjoining the coast of United States proper.

In its general geologic relation it belongs to the inner part of the Atlantic Coastal plain, the line between the deposits of this plain and the metamorphic rocks upon and against which the sediments were laid crossing the extreme west end of the island near Long Island City.

The basic and fundamental deposits are probably of the Cretaceous age, the greater portion of both the surface and the underlying materials being of the Pleistocene age and representing the moraine and outwash accumulations associated with the last Continental glaciers.

The geological history of the Island is fascinating but beyond the scope of this writing, so we shall content ourselves with a few interesting references

to items involving this particular area.

In assembling evidence of the character of the Cretaceous deposits below the surface by the United States Department of the Interior (United States Geological Survey) one of the points of research was in a well on the property of Leander A. Bevin, father of our present Mayor, Sydney Bevin, located on Eaton's Neck only a few miles from where the Cretaceous surface descends permanently below sea level.

This well is within the Village of Asharoken and it may not be out of place to give its depth record in feet and its content.

**Pleistocene:** White sand and gravel with a percentage of erratics 15 to 30 ft.

**Cretaceous:**

Medium coarse white sand	40 ft.
Sand and small pebbles with a rather pinkish cast	50 to 75 ft.
Coarse pinkish white sand	80 ft.
Medium white micaceous sand	90 to 100 ft.
Very fine gray micaceous sand	110 ft.
Medium to coarse white sand	120 ft.
Small angular quartz pebbles evidently broken from larger ones	130 ft.
Medium to coarse white sand	130 ft.
Medium white sand	150 ft.
White clay (kaolin)	159 to 160 ft.
Small white quartz pebbles	165 ft.
Fine gray micaceous sand	250 to 300 ft.
Medium coarse white sand	215 to 240 ft.
Fine white micaceous sand	250 to 300 ft.
Medium yellowish white sand	310 to 330 ft.
Fine sand and small quartz pebbles	335 to 350 ft.

In the investigation many borings were made and the above is set forth because the well lies within the Village and therefore should be of local interest.

Long Island Sound bordering Asharoken on the north has been stated to be a broad and partly filled Cretaceous valley, the result of erosion rather than ice scour.

Many of Long Island's pleasing features are due to its glacial kettles including the hollows or basins which help to make the North shore of Long Island an attractive residence district. A small example may be pointed out on the southerly side of Eaton's Neck Road on what is known as the Chesebrough property just before the descent to the gateway to our Village of Asharoken. Thousands pass it but few recognize it as a glacial kettle made in a by-gone age.

It may be difficult to realize as one travels the highway to and from Eaton's Neck that at one time the tideway crossed the road to the Neck especially at the time of high tide and that enjoyment of the present roadway is due in great measure to early efforts to provide a suitable causeway and later improvement and pavement by the Village of Asharoken.

In this connection the following item appearing in the Long Islander of September 8, 1871 may be of special interest.

"The people of Eaton's Neck and Northport have united in building a roadway across the beach landing to Eaton's Neck by covering that almost in-terminable sand bed with loam for a sufficient width and depth to make a good carriageway. When complete it will make a very decided improvement on the

former mode of dragging through this sand bed. The work is nearly completed the two parties having reached within half a mile of each other. When finished the improvement will be a very important one to those who travel across the beach. The distance is about two miles."

Prior to 1919 the splendid beaches, the beauties of the adjacent landscape attracted many bathers, campers and picnickers most of whom parked their cars on the narrow road leading to Eaton's Neck.

Hunters roamed over and about the various properties and finally the nuisances created by this condition led a group of property owners in the affected area to call a meeting for the purpose of finding a means of protecting their various interests.

This was held on the 23rd day of August 1919 at the home of Captain James Moorehead at which the following persons were present:

James Moorehead—John W. Arthur

Harry Buggeln—George W. Brush

Frederick A. Scheffler—Harry D. Gladstone

Sydney Bevin—H. W. Harding

William Moyle Fisher—Joshua Arthur

Harry E. Donnell—George H. Robinson

W. S. Harrison—Edith Storey—Richard Storey

William B. Codling—Paul Grout

together with Town Supervisor Field who did so much to secure the electrification of the North Shore Road of the Long Island Railroad Company and the erection of a suitable depot at East Northport.

It was then proposed and determined that property owners on Eaton's Neck, Asharoken Beach and vicinity incorporate a property owners association under the Membership Corporations Law for

the purpose of protecting their interests, their property and the roads on the Beach and Neck and in the vicinity thereof.

It was determined to take active steps to prevent the recurrence in the following year of the nuisances created by bathers and picnickers coming to the beach and parking their cars on the road.

It was also determined to employ local counsel, Messrs. Brush, Bevin and Grout being appointed a committee to engage such. To accomplish this a fund of Five Hundred Dollars was raised among those present excluding of course Supervisor Field.

On September 5th following Articles of Incorporation of the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association were submitted and executed in duplicate and a bylaw committee appointed whose report was approved at the following meeting on September 13th.

The certificate of incorporation was filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Albany on September 6th 1919.

Thus was born a property owners association which has continued to this day to be one of the most useful and influential agencies through which the taxpayers and residents may endeavor to serve their common interests.

The incorporation certificate provided that James Moorehead, Henry A. Ingraham, Harry E. Donnell, Oakley R. Delamater, William B. Codling, Frederick A. Scheffler, Albert Chesebrough, Sydney Bevin and Paul Grout serve as directors for the first year.

The first meeting was held at the residence of

Paul Grout on September 13, 1919, the meeting being organized with Henry A. Ingraham as Chairman and Paul Grout as Secretary.

Subsequent meetings were devoted to the consideration of the various problems which had resulted in the formation and incorporation of the association along with the employment of a watchman, the question of garbage disposal, including other matters of common interest such as the method of preserving bushes and trees, deterioration of Beach plum bushes, trespassers, and fire prevention.

It may not be out of place to indicate the purposes of the Association as shown by its charter.

"To uphold and maintain the legal rights of all property owners and residents of Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach in the Township of Huntington, County of Suffolk, and State of New York and to secure and facilitate the construction and maintenance of good roads on Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach and in the vicinity thereof and to prevent their misuse and abuse and to protect its members and their property from the maintenance of any private or public nuisance and generally to promote the welfare and property interests of its members."

Indicative of the then existing conditions about this time the following notice was posted along the highway.

#### NOTICE

By order of the Town Board Parking of cars on the road from Chesebrough corner to and including Eaton's Neck is prohibited. Trespassing on any of the land adjoining said road is prohibited.

In 1921 through Henry A. Ingraham, the Department of Agriculture at Cornell University was consulted concerning a blight affecting the cedar trees, plum bushes and other vegetation.

The first local policing dates from July 1920 when under the auspices of the property owners association arrangements were made with Town Constable Kissam for policing during the summer months. This arrangement continued until his resignation in July of 1921 when Rudolph Arndt was employed with the admonition to use the utmost caution as he pursued his job of a police officer patrolling the road.

In the spring of 1922 the property owners through their association were called upon to consider the question of the repair of the road then called Asharoken Avenue and the recent action of the Huntington Town Board in consolidating the Eaton's Neck and East Northport School District with the Northport District and the question of a new school site for the erection of a new school building.

About this time the property owners took up the consideration of the propriety and advisability of purchasing for the Beach officer either a motor cycle or a second hand Ford runabout, painted a bright red and the officer furnished with a uniform.

This was referred to a committee with power to act. After due consideration a second hand Ford runabout was purchased for the police officer for the sum of \$200, whose salary was raised to a dollar a day to be applied on the purchase price of the machine so that his job was reasonably secure until the same paid for.

The next step in the development of this area came in 1925 with a proposition from the Northport Water Works Company offering to run a water supply main from its then terminal on Ocean Avenue, Northport, along the highway to Paul Grout's house on Asharoken Beach with the idea of supplying the community with water for the property owners along the line. Of course this involved voluntary subscriptions by such owners and a Committee was organized to consider its possibilities.

The estimated cost of installation was approximately \$23000. It was recommended that a six inch pipe would be the most serviceable. The Duck Island Corporation offered to subscribe \$6000 toward its construction. Further investigation dictated the use of an eight inch pipe which might involve an additional cost of \$10000. Negotiations for installation of water supply were conducted in September 1927 and completed except for the preparation and signature of individual contracts.

Repairing the road was now contemplated awaiting prior installation of water pipes.

In the July 1925 issue of the Northport Observer a letter written by the Commissioner of Highways, Floyd Baylis, relating to the rights of the public in Asharoken Avenue and to the opening of lateral roads from it to the beaches was published. The use of these highways had become a matter of great importance and concern to the residents of the area. There were also many complaints of fast and reckless driving.

This matter was taken up by the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association and at a meeting held on July 18, 1925 a resolution was adopted recit-

ing the situation and setting forth the desirability of the community being incorporated into a village and providing for the taking of necessary steps to effect the same.

Thus was born the concept of the village respecting which this historical comment is written.

Out of some sixty persons who would have the right to vote in the district forty-two were property owners.

In August of 1925 with the filing of its certificate of incorporation with the Secretary of State at Albany the Village of Asharoken came into being.

On September 25, 1925 the first zoning regulations or ordinances were adopted and, of course, since amended from time to time as the public interest demanded.

On June 12, 1926 the first Code of Ordinances was adopted likewise amended from time to time as the situation required.

But this is not all that the village had to contend with.

In June of 1927 it learned that a sand and gravel works was negotiating for the purchase of the Hall property abutting the village property on the east, a matter of grave concern.

A committee was appointed by the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association and representing the village residents was formed to secure, if possible Zoning restrictions that would prevent its maintenance.

It was suggested that the impracticability of access and haulage by truck transportation would be a deterrent unless it obtained waterside docking facili-

ties and contact was made with the Huntington Town Board and Northport village authorities both of which felt handicapped by its earlier decision against zoning.

By 1928 Goodwin and Gallagher had purchased the Hall property. A permit to build a dock into Northport Harbor had been refused. Its plan in developing the property was unknown. That firm had refused to move a hedge in front of its property which constituted an obstruction to the laying of the water pipes. This compelled the Board of Trustees of the Village of Asharoken to obtain a survey of the roadway prior to further action in the matter.

One problem succeeded another—the question of adequate fire protection had to be considered. One suggestion was the formation of a voluntary fire department among the residents of the village. Another to make arrangements with the Northport Fire Department to include Asharoken within their protected area.

In 1933 the question of fire protection again came up. The Board of Trustees of the Village of Northport requested the Trustees of the Village of Asharoken to make some provision for contributing to the support of its Fire Department. It had in the past answered calls as a matter of courtesy. Contributions had been made from time to time by the property owners association but these were considered an inadequate contribution toward the overhead expense of that department in responding to calls outside of its village.

Arrangements were finally made for contribution by the Village of Asharoken of its quota of the expense involved which arrangement is still in effect.

The first step to provide gas service for the village was taken in August 1928 in the appointment by the property owners association of a committee to go into the matter.

By June of 1929 considerable progress had been made and the expectation was that a gas line would be installed sometime in the summer of that year, and it finally was as to a considerable portion of the village.

In the same month it was learned that the Metropolitan Sand and Gravel Company had received a permit from the Land Board at Albany to build their docks out into the waters of Long Island Sound. This aroused the property owners who desired that steps be taken to delay or defeat this objectionable enterprise, and the Village Trustees were asked to proceed accordingly. On September 17, 1929 a hearing was held before Col. Hoffman of the United States War Department relative to the request by the gravel company to build two jetties out into the waters of the Long Island Sound which the property owners insisted would result in great damage to the properties in the Village.

In this connection the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association engaged General Black to estimate the effect of such jetties, the cost to be borne by it.

By September 14, 1929 negotiations for a gas line through the representatives of the property owners association were practically complete through the acceptance of the proposition made by the Long Island Lighting Company to install mains in the village on payment of the sum of \$5675.64 upon completion of the work and the turning on of

the gas service. By August of 1930 the gas service had been installed and the above amount collected and paid through the agency of W. Royden Klein as Trustee for Gas Installation at Asharoken Beach payment being made on July 30, 1930.

The sand and gravel situation continued to be the subject of discussion and consideration and the Village Trustees were urged to take all steps that they could to protect the village and its residents and property from damage from sand and gravel operations including the building of jetties and channel dredging across the foreshore.

At this point the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association appropriated or provided for the expenditure of the amount in its treasury to pay necessary disbursements and expenses in any action which might be brought on behalf of the Village or its residents, such disbursements to be made in the discretion of the Association officers. At the same time Paul Grout was employed as attorney to represent the residents of the village whose property was in danger of being damaged by the erection of jetties and the establishment of a sand and gravel works in the vicinity.

By June of 1941 Paul Grout reported to the property owners association that the trial of such action, requiring eighteen days in Court, had been finished. The minutes of the trial consisted of 2800 pages. Briefs had been submitted to the Court and oral arguments held on June 11 with further argument adjourned to June 22nd.

As should be expected the suit was costly and expensive to the Village and others contributing. A temporary injunction had been granted restrain-

ing further operations.

On the basis of an appeal being dropped it was agreed that as long as its sand and gravel operations shall continue the Sand and Gravel company would preserve its wooded hillside facing the Moorehead property, Northport Bay and the Chesebrough property. That during all such times the said company would preserve a strip of land at least 200 feet wide north of the fence lying along the cement road and will permit the Village, its agents or employees to plant trees thereon and during all such times to care for and preserve such trees. That it would anchor such barges as it may require in Long Island Sound opposite its own land and not in front of any land of the residents of the Village. That the Sand and Gravel company would permit the Village and its agents during all such times or so long as it may own the same to keep trespassers off the strip of land owned by the company between the cement road and Northport Bay, provided that if any future actions similar to the above shall be brought by either the Village of Asharoken or the Town of Huntington then the Metropolitan Sand and Gravel Company shall not be bound by the terms of this agreement.

Up to December of 1931 the Village Police Justice appointed in connection with the incorporation of the Village, presently Village Historian and compiler of this brochure, had been compelled to hold hearings at his home. To remedy this situation a police booth was erected on the northerly side of Asharoken Avenue adjacent to the land now of Thomas Porteus.

The cost of this was borne by the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association. It was not much

of a Court House but it served its purpose and provided the village peace officers a place from which to phone and protection from inclement weather.

During the severe storm of 1932 a large part of the upper end of the beach was washed away leaving the highway in a most exposed condition, so much so, that during the same storm the waves not only washed over the road but started to undermine it in several places.

This brought up the advisability of erecting some sort of bulkhead or breakwater to protect the road from serious damage. It was concluded that the erection of jetties would afford the most protection which were accordingly built by the Village at an expense of \$12000 raised by a bond issue which has since been paid off. The jetties were a substantial protection but could not prevent the severe storms which from time to time continued to damage the highway at a substantial cost to the Village as well as damage to many of the waterfront properties of residents of the Village.

In 1934 an interested group of Village residents advocated the feasibility of the construction of a side walk on the southerly side of the road to extend from what was known as the Arthur property on the East to Duck Island road on the west. Construction cost was estimated at about \$4000 if built of a mixture of gravel and asphaltum and \$6000 if constructed of concrete. Much discussion with considerable objection and the project was abandoned.

Perhaps it is the story of the birth and progress of every community—always progressing in spite of any hazards or obstacles involved.

In June of 1937 the Village Board of Trustees

decided to purchase a plot of land at the southerly end of the village to be used for village purposes now the site of the Village Hall. The property owners association had recommended its purchase and its acquirement consummated.

In September of that year plans for the construction of a Village Hall were under consideration. There were varying views and many tentative plans submitted both as to cost and design but full accord as to its desirability.

Meanwhile the police booth and garage for the peace officers car were removed to the newly purchased site, the cost of removal being borne by the property owners association so frequently referred to herein.

Finally plans were adopted which were more in accord with the village exchequer and construction completed.

A courtroom for the Village Justice, a meeting room for public and private assembly, here the ballots are cast for village officers, also police headquarters, with garage space for equipment, an ideal gathering place for community activities, meeting place of the Eaton's Neck and Asharoken Beach Association whose history is that of the Village.

It is situated at the entrance to the Village, fronts on Asharoken Avenue, formerly known as Eaton's Neck Road, abutting on and overlooking beautiful Northport Harbor, in all of its simplicity standing as a symbol of Village Activities.

The author and compiler of this short review has had to resist the temptation to enlarge on the local history of this section of Long Island.

Within the bounds of Suffolk County, organized in 1683 at the time the ridings were abolished, the Sound side considerably broken and hilly, like most areas it has had to yield to modern civilization but fortunately our Village therein is so situated that our heritage is seldom equalled in its beautiful setting.

All hail Matonnacky the aboriginal name of Long Island.

All hail Asharoken whose name we have adopted. All hail the spirit of fellowship and cooperation which has made this Village possible.

May this brief review inspire and keep alive and active our love for this our Village home.