



# Gazebo Gazette

The Newsletter of the Larchmont Historical Society

September-November

2003

## WALKING TOUR OF THE MANOR

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Free and Open to the Public.

Meet in Fountain Square at 3 p.m.

The tour will be led by Cheryl Lewy, former Mayor of Larchmont

### From the Archives

by Diane Holland

We have received the following donations between spring and September 2003:

\*Mamaroneck and Larchmont original photographs in three family albums dated 1906-1913 by Anne Baade.

\*A professionally bound photography and biography of Carl Mydans, including the 2002 House Tour exhibit; a professionally bound scrapbook of his *Life* Magazine articles; and three interviews by John Loengard, January 1992, from the Time Inc. Archives. These items were prepared by photo archivist Lily Solmssen Moureaux, and the donation was coordinated by Jan Northrup.

\*Original blueprints of 90 Park Avenue by architect G. J. Fernschild; professional sketches and photographs by Fernschild; and *New Rochelle in Pic-*

*tures, 1931*. These items were donated by Fernschild's nephew, Charles Lange.

\*Early glass negatives of 46 Magnolia Avenue and members of the White, Freeman, and Allen families, donated by Beth and Kevin Mullaney.

\*A new filing cabinet for the Archives, donated by the Holland family.

\*Two boxes of copies of Phil Severin sketches, donated by his daughter-in-law, Lois Severin.

\*Several hundred boxes of note cards featuring a painting of Manor Park by Christopher Parrott to be sold for \$10 a box, with \$3 going to the Society and \$7 to the Bonfire Foundation. The donation was coordinated by Jan Northrup.

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### *Larchmont Historical Society Century Homes*

by Ellen Martin

The Society is pleased to announce five new Century Homes members. The owners of One Fountain Square, 21 Oak Avenue, 20 Maple Avenue, 24 Helena Avenue, and St. John's Church have received certificates indicating that their buildings were constructed before 1903. Each owner graciously open their doors last spring for the Society's annual

house tour. Extensive research was done for each property, and they have all been a part of Larchmont's history for at least 100 years. If you would like to add your home to the growing list of Century Homes, please contact the Society for an application. 2004 is not far away, and that will open membership eligibility to even more Larchmont homes!

## Our Constitution: The Design of Providence

by Theora Pierce Hahn

Americans now celebrate our "Charter of Freedom," signed September 17, 1787, in its 216th year. Constitution Week was designated by a 1956 Joint Act of Congress, including an annual Presidential Proclamation. We refelect on America's foundations while a series of challenges question our roots. Our remarkable Founders were inspired to establish a unique government whose power and rights came not from royal mandate or dictator's fiat, but from God to the people to government. Rev. Thomas Hooker, a Founder from Hartford, Connecticut, in his 1638 "Election Sermon," declared: "The authourity of government is granted by God to the people; magistrates should be chosen by majority vote and their authority defined and limited by law." His principles became the basis for the "Fundamental Orders" enacted by the General Court of Connecticut, January 1639--history's first written constitution of self-government and forerunner of the the U.S. Constitution.

This new concept, developed by those visionary Framers, created a document praised around the world. British Prime Minister Gladstone: "The American Constitution is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." As highly educated and brilliant as they were, the vast majority acknowledged that their inspiration came from a Higher Power. It was truly a "Miracle at Philadelphia." James Wilson, signer and original Supreme Court Justice, co-authored early commentaries on the Constitution: "Human law must

rest its authority ultimately upon the authority which is Divine...Far from being rivals or enemies, religion and law are twin sisters, friends, and mutual assistants. The Divine law forms an essential part of both."

Alexander Hamilton, NY Delegate, Signer, creator of "The Federalist" (with Jay and Madison; first and supreme analyst of the Constitution for Ratification) was the first to call for a Constitutional Convention. Hamilton wrote: "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power." George Washington, President of the Constitutional Convention: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports...Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania and Morrisania, NY, spoke 173 times during the Convention, wrote the Preambles--"We the People"--and drafted the document. Morris also wrote: "Religion is the only solid basis of good morals; therefore education should teach the precepts of religion and the duties of man towards God." Thomas Jefferson was Ambassador to France in 1787. He wrote the phrase "the wall of separation between Church and State" to Danbury Baptist Association in 1802, 11 years after the

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The Larchmont Historical Society was founded in 1980 and chartered in 1981 as a not-for-profit educational corporation by the New York State Board of Regents to discover, preserve, and disseminate information concerning the natural, social, and civic history of Larchmont, and to promote the preservation of local historical sites and structures. The Society maintains an archives in the Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 W. Boston Post Road, Mamaroneck; publishes a newsletter; offers programs; conducts tours for school children and adults; and offers outreach lectures to other community groups.

The newsletter is published to provide news of the Society and occasional articles of related interest. Opinions expressed are those of their authors; publication should not be construed as endorsement by the Society.

**The Archives are located in Suite 301 of the Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 W. Boston Post Road, Mamaroneck. 10543.**

**Regular hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-2. Appointments on other days, including Saturdays, may be arranged. Please call 381-2239 for more information or to make an appointment.**

**Archivist: Diane Holland**

Home page: <[members.savvy.net/lhs](http://members.savvy.net/lhs)>

Our Constitution, continued from page 2

Bill of Rights and the First Amendment were ratified. He was assuring protection to the Church from the State, not the reverse. This phrase from a personal letter, not even a public policy paper, was inserted as if part of the original Constitution by Supreme Court Justices from 1947, influencing rulings ever since, but never mentioned by those Founders, nor by Fisher Ames, who gave the final phrasing to the First Amendment. Ames urged that the Bible remain always as the primary textbook in America's classrooms. President John Adams declared: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark wrote: "The Founding Fathers believed devoutly that there was a God, and the unalienable rights of man were rooted--not in the State nor

the legislature nor in any other human power--but in God alone." Alexis deToqueville observed: "In America it is religion which leads to enlightenment and the observance of Divine laws which lead men to liberty."

John Jay, crucial to Ratification and original U.S. Chief Justice, declared: "National prosperity can neither be obtained nor preserved without the favor of Providence." Ben Franklin's long and eloquent observations broke the stormy deadlock of Convention. "We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." James Madison, "Father of the Constitution," edited George Mason's "Virginia Declaration of Rights" for the "Bill of Rights" and affirmed: "Religion is the basis and foundation of government." He authorized Congressional Chaplains, Bible distribution, National Prayer and Thanksgiving. Countless quotations by

Founders prove their intent was establishment on the law of God, yielding "Blessings of Liberty." Many agree with Jay: "It appears as if it was the Design of Providence."

*Theora Pierce Hahn is a founding and current trustee of the Larchmont Historical Society and Chairman of Constitution Week for the Larchmont Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.*

#### Archives, continued from page 1

We have begun renovation of the Archives. Document capacity has increased by 50%. Further improvements include blueprint holders, archival binders, and furniture rearrangement. We are currently weeding, cleaning, and updating the library. We need volunteers to complete this work and to assemble metal shelves and move books. Please contact the Archives if you can help, especially on a Friday or Saturday. Also, if you know of any organizations that receive used books, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The Larchmont Historical Society  
proudly announces the publication of  
*House Calls Vol. 2:*  
*The LHS House Tours 1994-2003*

This 123-page softcover book contains the historical and architectural text from the annual handbooks of the Society's house tours from 1994 to 2003, representing 56 remarkable dwellings and other structures. It contains a photo of each building and four indices and is available from the Archives for \$20 a copy. Also, *House Calls Vol. 1 (1981-1993)* is back in print and is available on the same terms.

### But Is It History?

The following is the second in a series of local myths written by the late Phil Reisman, Jr., and first published here in 1989. We will republish one of the myths in each issue.

Few local myths are so persistently believed as the one that insists that Execution Rock, that tiny islet in the Sound off New Rochelle, was in the 18th century a place where criminals convicted of capital offenses were barbarously subjected to judicial drowning by being chained alive to the rock and executed by the incoming tide. [A variant holds that patriots were thus executed by the British during the Revolution.] Here is one of those legends so cherished that it probably will never be allowed to die. So this, then, is just for the record.

There has never been the slightest evidence that anyone has ever been executed, judicially or otherwise, by drowning or otherwise, on Execution Rock. It received its name solely because it was a notorious ship-killer, strategically situated in mid-channel to rip out the hulls of unwary vessels, to execute them for the crime of careless seamanship.

George W. Blunt--still familiar to all sailors as the distinguished author of *Blunt's Coast Pilot* and editor of *Bowditch's Navigator*--wrote over 125 years ago that Execution Rock was so

named because "so many vessels and lives had been lost there." But cherished stories die hard and even get embellished. Now we hear that the rusty iron ring imbedded in the rock is the very one to which hapless criminals were chained to await the rising tide. Few myth vendors wish to know that the ring was put there to enable the lighthouse keeper to tie up his dory. But on a night with no moon, when the wind is just right, Execution Rock might be just the place from which to hail *The Flying Dutchman*.

### *Alton Tobey: Exhibition and Reception*

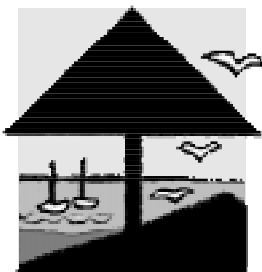
All are invited to an exhibition of over 30 paintings by Alton Tobey to be held at the New Rochelle Public Library October 22 through November 14. The exhibit has been mounted by the New Rochelle Council on the Arts.

Tobey, a trustee of the Larchmont Historical Society, is an internationally known artist, illustrator, and muralist whose works are in scores of museums, public places, and private collections.

Members of the Historical Society are also invited to attend the reception in honor of Mr. Tobey on Sunday, November 2, between 3 and 5 p.m. at the library.

More information on the show with over a dozen images of the paintings in the exhibition may be seen at [www.dolice.com/Tobey.html](http://www.dolice.com/Tobey.html)

**Larchmont Historical Society  
P.O. Box 742  
Larchmont NY 10538**



### Membership Form

Please enroll me as a member of the Larchmont Historical Society. My tax-deductible dues for one year are enclosed. Membership year ends June 30, 2004.

New

Renewal

- Individual \$15.
- Family \$25.
- Senior (65 or older) or student \$5.
- Institutional or Business \$25.
- Sustaining \$50.
- Life (individual only) \$150.

Make checks payable and mail to:

Larchmont Historical Society  
Box 742  
Larchmont NY 10538

I would like to serve on the following committee:

- Membership
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- Program
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- Publications
- Historic Sites
- Costumes
- Archives

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