



# Port Chester Historical Society Newsletter

Summer 2022



## PORT CHESTER DAY 2022



On Saturday, August 27, 2022, the Village of Port Chester once again hosted its annual Port Chester Day, held at Lyon Park. It was a great all-day event with fantastic turnout. Visitors could take some selfies, see if they were as strong as a colonial woman, take a guess at our MYSTERY OBJECT (more below), grab a free postcard, and tell us what they want to know about Port Chester! More pictures from this amazing community event can be found at the Port Chester Historical Society Facebook page at...



<https://www.facebook.com/PortChesterHistoricalSociety/>.

We would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to DPW and the Recreation Department for all their hard work. Looking good, Rocco Cambareri! We cannot wait for next year!

Answers and questions from our table include...

1. The **mystery object** from Port Chester Day is a **Italian wine cork inserter**.
2. The **questions** people submitted at the table from Port Chester are:
  - a. *What's the history of the Capitol Theatre?*
  - b. *Why did Port Chester's population dip in the early 1900s?*
  - c. *What is the history of Seymour Road?*
  - d. *What is the history of Wesley manor?*
  - e. *Was there a house in the middle of Davenport Circle?*
  - f. *Is there any information on Port Chester in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s?*



We hope to answer these questions in our next newsletter!



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## WATER DAMAGE AT THE BUSH-LYON HOMESTEAD

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In order to further educate the public about conditions of buildings important to Port Chester local history, the Port Chester Historical Society has made a video, featuring member Helen Marble, about the water damage at the Bush-Lyon Homestead. It is unfortunate to see local history in the Village of Port Chester being in such a damaged condition. The Port Chester Historical Society hopes to work with the Village of Port Chester in maintaining this wonderful landmark and others throughout the Village of Port Chester.

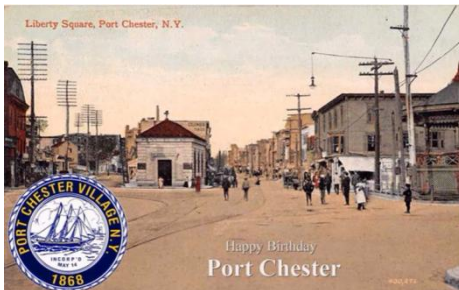


The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pB3aaweKy44>. Thank you, Helen!

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## VIDEO COMMEMORATING MAY 14<sup>th</sup>

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In honor of the 154<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the incorporation of the Village of Port Chester, Norm Davis, an expert on Port Chester history and a director of the Port Chester Historical Society, created a video of an informative presentation on the history of Port Chester, like the one he presented on May 14, 2018. Thank you, Norm! The video can be viewed at...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVxOkhH3vc8>.

Happy Birthday, Port Chester!

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## SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

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The winner of the Port Chester Historical Society scholarship this year was **Christopher Pascale** who answered the question, "What location or event is so important to you that it should be memorialized? Explain how you believe it should be remembered." In his excellent essay, Christopher wrote about how the baseball fields in Port Chester bring the community together. Jordan Allen, President of the Port Chester Historical Society, attended Scholarship Night at Port Chester High School on Thursday, May 19, 2022, to give Christopher the \$500.00 scholarship. Christopher's essay

2022 Scholarship Essay Contest Winner!

Christopher Pascale

ESSAY

has been put on the website of the Port Chester Historical Society website, where you can read it at: <https://www.pcnyhistory.com/latest-news>. Just click on the link entitled, "Essay." Congratulations, Christopher!

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## JUNTEENTH

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To commemorate Juneteenth, The Historical Society worked with local religious leaders and the NAACP to host a celebration at the Homestead. There was a great turnout to Juneteenth events this year! It was a chance to learn more about our local history, celebrate with our neighbors, and eat some cupcakes. We also got to highlight two books purchased for the local history sections of the Port Chester Rye Brook public library. The Historical Society looks forward to making this a yearly donation, so our local history section is continuously updated! The link to the video of the wonderful event, which is also on the website, is...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=yM9RdNghhow&feature=youtu.be>.

If you are interested in helping us put this event together for next year, let us know!

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## **GARDEN CLEANUP**

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On Saturday, June 4, 2022, the Port Chester Historical Society organized and held a periodical garden clean-up and maintenance day at the Colonial Garden at the Bush-Lyon Homestead. Posted below are pictures from the event. A great deal of work was accomplished thanks the work of many fantastic volunteers. The objectives were to make sure all the plants are having an excellent growing season so far and to put down railroad ties as a border to protect the garden from weed wackers and other sources of potential harm. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with this event with their excellent work! We hope to have another event in the fall. More information to be announced soon!



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## **TOURING THE BUSH-LYON HOMESTEAD**

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The Port Chester Historical Society recently invited the mayor and trustees of the Village to tour the Bush-Lyon Homestead and meet with the members of the Port Chester Historical Society. One trustee and nine members of the public attended and visited the Bush-Lyon Homestead and its grounds. Are you interested in a tour of the Homestead? Email us!

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## **ARTS COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITY! PORT CHESTER WORDS INTO MUSIC**

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The Port Chester Historical Society is helping Pam Sklar, a local artist, with an upcoming ArtsWestchester-funded project called Words into Music, Part 2 [the first part was about Mount Vernon]. She interviews people and then uses those conversations to help her compose music that reflects the experiences of the interviewees - this is done through the music itself, not through lyrics.

The interviews are NOT about history, but about the individual. Sklar writes, "This could include a positive or difficult experience past or present, a special memory, an event, childhood moments, a beloved or influential person or teacher (current or from long ago) or about a personal transition, anything poignant, or a family situation."

Pam is interested in talking informally with people from all walks of life, all ages (from students to seniors) from the Port Chester/Rye Brook/Rye Town community.

The musical composition will be performed in Port Chester/Rye Brook in March of 2023. It will be free and open to the public and everyone is invited!

Details about the interviews/conversations:

- All interviewees will remain anonymous.
- They will take place in person at a neutral venue or over the phone.
- Length: 20 min - 1 hour.
- Timing: from July 19th and through the end of September.
- Scheduling will be set up in advance.

Interested people can schedule a time by emailing Pam Sklar at [oceansoundwave@gmail.com](mailto:oceansoundwave@gmail.com).

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### **HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRUSTEE NORM DAVIS DESCRIBES *1900: The Remarkable Mystery of Charles Seymour Bulkley, Sr.***

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Charles S. Bulkley was born 1825 at Port Chester, the son of Gershom Bulkley and Mary Emeline Bush, (daughter of Gilbert Bush) of the Bush Homestead on King Street. He became a Civil Engineer, and served as Chief of the United States Signal Service in the Civil War. In 1864 he was sent to San Francisco as a company representative for the Western Union Telegraph Company to organize the US Western Union Telegraph Expedition, 1865-1867. The expedition was to survey a route for, and to construct, a telegraph line between the United States and Europe by way of British and Russian America, Bering Strait, and Siberia. His maps and detailed log books are on file at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC.

When Charles left Port Chester to join the Civil War he left behind a young wife Julia Palmer. After a time, his letters ceased, and she assumed him dead. In fact, no one in Port Chester heard from him for 40 years. Only Charles's lawyer, Hanford Henderson of Port Chester, knew him to be alive and prospering in California, building railroads and public works, and amassing a fortune with engineering projects in Mexico and Central America. He also married the daughter of a California mine owner shortly after the war, without obtaining a divorce from Jane, and had two children: Charles S. Bulkley, Jr. and Howard Bulkley.

Henderson knew all of this, and invested Bulkley's money and handled his properties. Bulkley drew up a Will while in Guatemala, and left his entire estate to his "second" wife Abbie Dexter, valued at over \$100,000 in 1890. That Will was sent to Henderson about 1892. Port Chester residents were shocked to learn that Charles had survived the Civil War. And almost immediately it became clear that more than half of Bulkley's fortune was missing when his son Howard leveled charges against Henderson, when he could not produce records of the estate. It was further found that Henderson's son Herbert was living in a house in Port Chester that belonged to Bulkley, rent free, without taxes paid.

Mary Emeline Bulkley hired Frederick W. Clark to investigate. Mr. Clark discovered that 26 lots belonging to the Bulkleys had been sold in Port Chester by Mr. Henderson, who kept all the proceeds.

Mary passed away in 1893 and the issue of who would inherit the Bush/Lyon Estate and all its properties took on some urgency. The descendants of Mary's father Gilbert Bush's brothers and sisters, who believed they would be heirs to the property, are forced to contest the will in court. At issue is Gilbert Bush's will, giving the entire estate (originally 400 acres) to his wife and their daughter Mary E. Bulkley, and no others; Mary E. Bulkley died supposedly with no living heirs - until news of Charles is published. Mary "had many children but buried them one by one...." Gilbert Bulkley, the last of her children, died when Mary was 94 years old. Henderson insists that Gilbert (who apparently drank himself to death after his wife and their two children died) allowed the estate to be divided up into lots and sold, leaving Mary with nothing. Her closest relatives, the Merritts, Wetmores, and Bushes, contest the Will in Henderson's possession. Thus began a long drawn-out series of court orders and investigations, concluding at last that in fact, there was virtually no estate left in Mary's name.

Mary's father Gilbert Bush was the son of Abraham Bush and Ruth Lyon. Gilbert's brother Abraham also lived in the King Street house with his family. William (1781-1856), his son, inherited the house and kept it in the family until the death of his son Hobart, in 1925. The property passed to the Village of Port Chester shortly thereafter although even during Hobart's life the house was being shown, and used, as a historic property.

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## UPCOMING MEETINGS

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The Port Chester Historical Society General Membership Meetings are open to the public and are held on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom at 7:30 PM. The 2022 upcoming meeting dates are as follows:

**October 6, 2022**

**November 3, 2022**

**December 1, 2022**

The information on how to attend will be included in an email before the meeting. To be added to our e-mail list, please e-mail your contact information to [portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings!

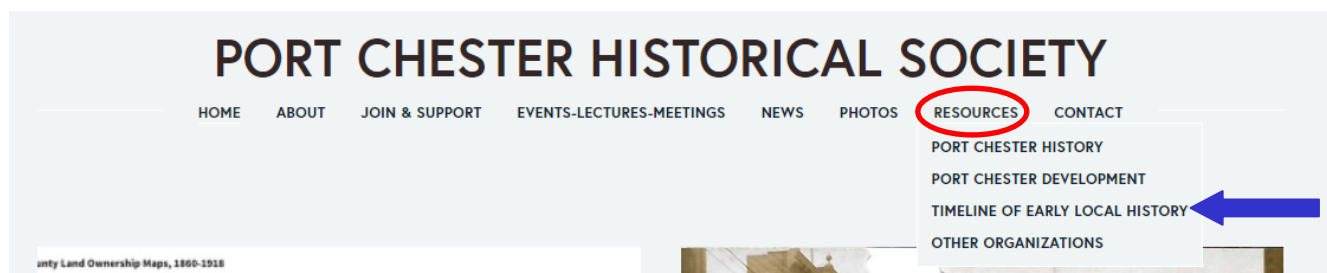
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## ANNOTATED HISTORICAL TIMELINE

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One of the missions of the Port Chester Historical Society is to educate the public on local history. To promote this aspect of this mission, the Port Chester Historical Society has created and posted a timeline to the website on the local history of the area, starting 11,500 years ago! The timeline presents a multitude of local history events along with links to reputable websites where more information can be found. A reader can browse through the dates or take a deep dive into each of the links provided. Much of this history is not well known - there was a LOT going on in our area!

This is an ongoing project, so check back for updates as we include them. The timeline can be found at [www.pcnhistory.com](http://www.pcnhistory.com). On the top menu, click on "Resources" and then click on the "Timeline of Early Local History" link.



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## GARDEN FENCING

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We would like to thank the Village and DPW for replacing the worn and broken fence that surrounded the Native American and Colonial Garden. As we add more plants and increase the enjoyment of visitors (both in human and pollinator form!) we are so glad to know that everyone will be able to do so safely. Thank you to the Village! Check back in a few months for more exciting changes to our outdoor space that is accessible to all!



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## FLOWERS FROM THE HOMESTEAD GARDENS

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Historical Society Trustee Kikki Short oversees the Society's Native American and Colonial Garden. She and her committee emphasize historically accurate plantings to compliment the Homestead. The garden, this year, exploded with color, as shown by the beautiful pictures below.

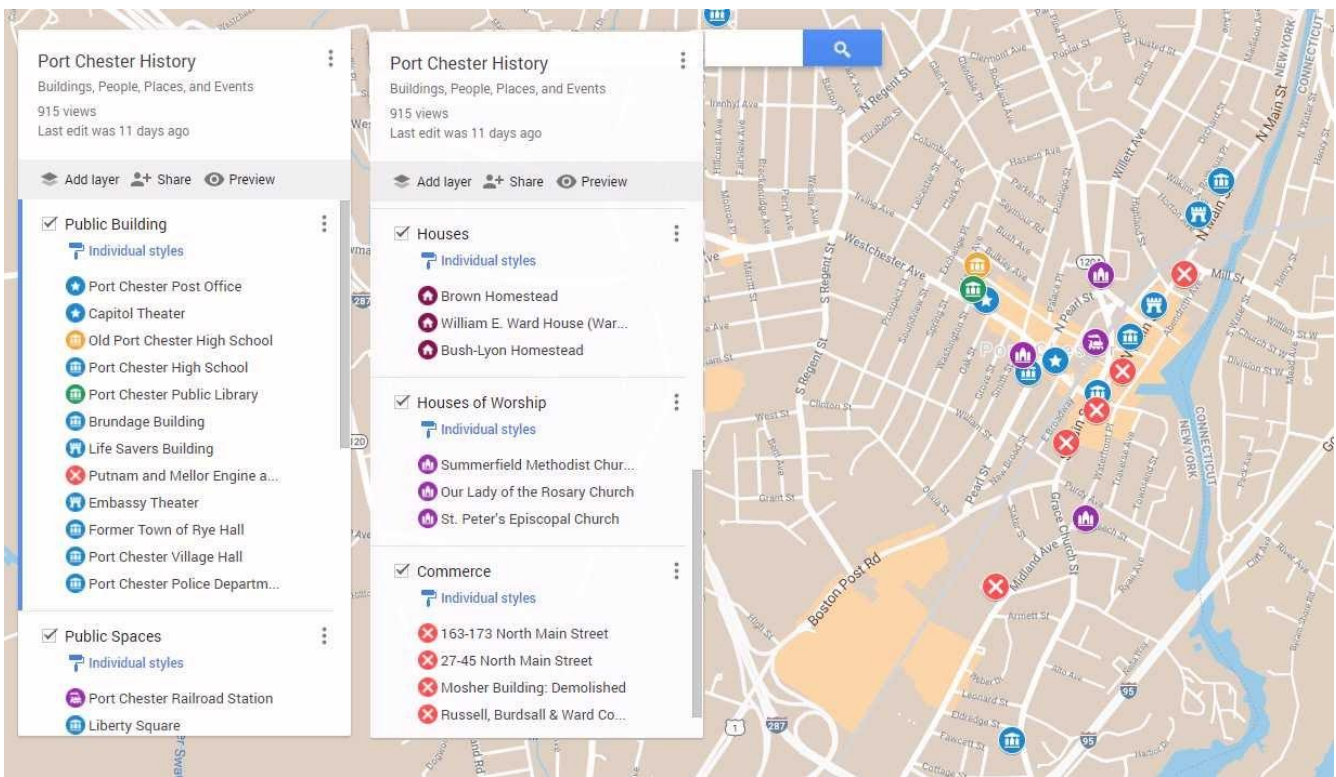


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## INTERACTIVE LOCAL HISTORY MAP

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The Port Chester Historical Society is working on an interactive map of historic buildings and locations in and around the Village of Port Chester. The map will be a free resource for anyone interested in exploring Port Chester's past, online. If you know of a building that should be on the map, please drop us an email! Our email address is [portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com).



Map Link: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1oUEO9xvvyUIjbepBjqomdDa74IvPVqft&usp=sharing>

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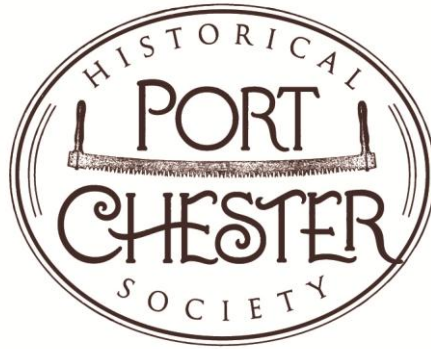
## FOLLOW THE PORT CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY ONLINE

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- Visit our web page at [Port Chester Historical Society](#)
- Take a virtual tour of the Bush-Lyon Homestead at <https://sites.google.com/view/bush-lyon-homestead>
- Join us on Zoom at one of our monthly meetings
- Like us on Facebook @PortChesterHistoricalSociety
- ...and on Instagram @PCNYHistory
- ...tag your photos with #PCNYHistory
- Contact us/subscribe to our newsletter at [portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)



Point your camera at the QR Code above to jump to the Port Chester Historical Society website.



## Join The Port Chester Historical Society TODAY!

### Annual Membership

- Individual ..... \$20.00
- Family (Household) ..... \$30.00
- Senior (Over Age 62) ..... \$10.00
- Student (Enrolled in HS/MS) ..... \$0.00
- Commercial/Business Sponsor ..... \$500.00

### Lifetime Memberships

- Single Lifetime.....\$200.00
- Family Lifetime .....\$300.00

Please check the appropriate box  
and return with your check (made out to *The Port Chester Historical Society*) to:

**The Port Chester Historical Society, P.O. Box 1511, Port Chester, NY 10573**

or sign up at **[www.pcnhistory.org](http://www.pcnhistory.org)**

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Member Benefits

Your membership to The Port Chester Historical Society entitles you to participate in the love of local history, all newsletters and mailings, advance invitations to public and member-only events and tours, and programs as we develop them. Commercial or business sponsors are eligible for recognition in our newsletter and other printed material, as well as acknowledgment at public events and gatherings.