



Port Chester Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2024

portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com



REMINDER!

It's time to renew your membership! We've made it easier than ever with a "donate button" on the Historical Society website (Port Chester Historical Society). You can also send a check to PO BOX 1511, Port Chester, NY, 10573. Please consider making an additional donation to support all the activities we are engaged in; a future researcher or history enthusiast will thank you!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Our meetings are open to the public and are held on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom at 7:30 PM. The 2024 upcoming meeting dates are as follows:

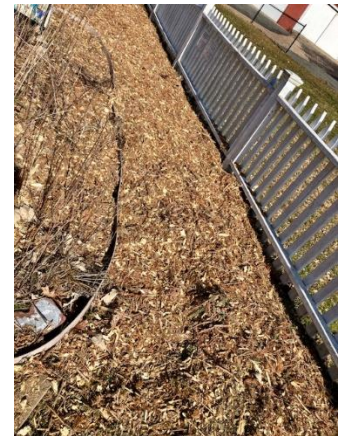
March 7th – April 4th – May 2nd

The information on how to attend will be included in an email before the meeting. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings! Contact us to receive the link to our next Zoom meeting at...

portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

GARDEN CLEAN UP

We had great weather for our Garden Clean-Up Event on Sunday, October 15, 2023, at the Bush-Lyon Homestead. The objectives for the event included making the garden ready for the winter. Thank you so much for all the wonderful volunteers who assisted with this event! We hope to have a similar event in the spring! More information to be announced soon!



CHRISTMAS TREES CHIPS IN THE GARDEN

What happened to your Christmas tree this year? For the second year in a row, we worked in a partnership with the Port Chester Sustainability Committee to use chipped Christmas trees in our Native American / Colonial Garden. Trees were chipped in Lyon Park on January 6th (residents could drop them off any time after Christmas). Instead of Christmas trees ending up in a landfill, they were used in an environmentally friendly manner, just like people in the past would have done. Plus, the chips smell fantastic!

PORT CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MAGNETS



As a fundraiser, we are selling magnets with the logo of the Port Chester Historical Society. They are \$5 each - buy some now for friends and family! Show everyone how much you value our local history and help us raise funds at the same time. Contact us at portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com to order one today!

CELEBRATION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURES



On Sunday, October 22, 2023, the Port Chester Historical Society co-hosted a Celebration of Indigenous Cultures at St. Paul's Church. There were kids' activities, refreshments, and informative presentations, among others. The presentation of traditional Aztec dancing was a highpoint. Attendees also learned about the tradition of creating an Ofrenda, or honoring departed loved ones during the Dia de los Muertos celebration in Mexican culture. We were honored to have more attendees than ever before, including Mayor Luis Marino! We are currently working to get a grant to expand our activities this fall.



PORT CHESTER-RYE NAACP RECOGNIZES KIKKI SHORT



On Sunday, October 22, 2023, at the Port Chester/Rye NAACP Freedom Fund Luncheon, Kikki Short, Director of the Port Chester Historical Society (and the energy behind many historical society projects) was recognized by the Port Chester/Rye NAACP for her work with the Port Chester Historical Society, "in honor of your commitment to our history and our future." The keynote speaker was United States Congressman Jamaal Bowman; the theme was

"Celebrating Our History and Our Future."



Deputy Mayor of the Village of Port Chester Joan Grangenois-Thomas introduced Kikki, who was presented with a "Freedom History Champion Award" from branch president Tom Kissner. In addition, she received proclamations of achievement from the United States Congress, the State Senate of New York, the State Assembly of New York, the Westchester County Legislature, and



even the Village of Port Chester.

October 26th, 2023 was declared Kikki Short Day in Westchester County and her name was displayed on the Jumbotron in front of the Westchester County Center in White Plains. ***Congratulations, Kikki!***

VR AT THE GHNN CONFERENCE *A First for the Bush Lyon Homestead!*

On October 24, the Greater Hudson Heritage Network (GHNN) Conference included the work of REX2 at its annual conference at Boscobel House and Gardens in Garrison, NY. REX2, a design and real-estate development company with the goal of providing cutting-edge real-estate technology to developers, “practiced” their software by creating a complete scan of the Bush Lyon Homestead. The scan of the Homestead can be accessed at this link on the Historical Society web page:

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=egpj1eEPBoj>

Visitors at the GHNN conference were able to virtually walk through the Bush-Lyon Homestead using virtual reality headsets - a FIRST for us! The Port Chester Historical Society has never before had visitors who were nowhere near Port Chester “walk” through the building. Because the walk through is in virtual reality, visitors could go into spaces that are not generally accessible to the public, such as the low eaves in the attic or the spaces around the original colonial chimney. We hope to make this experience available to many more people as time goes on.



CREEPY DOLL CONTEST

There are many rumors that the Bush Lyon Homestead, which dates to about 1760, is ***haunted!*** Many families with children ate, slept and played in this house until 1990. Is a spirit living in this house - or in one of the old dolls in the Homestead’s collection?

The Society ran a “Creepy Doll Contest” before Halloween. Posted on the Society web site were the doll heads of five of the Homestead’s creepiest dolls. Web visitors were asked to virtually vote for which they thought was the creepiest of all. The contest winner was Sophia Castro, shown here with her creepy choice, which she also got the privilege of naming “Creepy Molly.”



STORYCORPS RECORDING

The Port Chester Historical Society is excited to announce an interview for StoryCorps. In their own words, “StoryCorps is committed to the idea that everyone has an important story to tell and that everyone’s story matters. Our mission: to help us believe in each other by illuminating the humanity and possibility in us all — one story at a time. Since our founding in 2003, we’ve helped nearly 700,000 people across the country have meaningful conversations about their lives. These recordings

are collected in the U.S. Library of Congress and in our online archive which is now the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered.” Director Kikki Short had a fascinating interview with Director Emeritus Norm Davis. The interesting interview about growing up in Port Chester and the intriguing historic architecture in Port Chester can be found at:

<https://archive.storycorps.org/interviews/norm-davis/>.

Thank you, Kikki and Norm! We are working to make this a part of our regular community work. If anyone is interested in getting involved in this project, please let us know! It takes about 45 minutes to do one interview and we can walk you through the process. Happily, the interviews are stored on the StoryCorps website and are accessible to anyone around the world. Please get in touch with us if you would like to be interviewed or you would like to do an interview!

WINTERFEST 2023



The Port Chester Historical Society held its annual WinterFest event at the Bush-Lyon Homestead on Saturday, December 9, 2023. There was music, tours, food, crafts, and more for all who attended. It was a well-attended event which hopefully encouraged increased interest in the Bush-Lyon Homestead and local history. We hope to have another amazing event this year. More information to be announced soon!



LISTENING AND DISCUSSION GROUP How Did We Get Here?

We are very excited to announce that we are hosting a “Reading and Discussion Group” funded by a grant from Humanities New York. Our series is called “How Did We Get Here” and is based on listening to and then discussing a podcast entitled *Amended*, “a podcast series from Humanities New York, travels from the 1800s to the present day to show us a quest for women’s full equality that has always been as diverse, complex, and unfinished as the nation itself.” We aim to connect the struggle for women’s equality to other struggles for equality, including the immigrant experience, which has always been a part of life in Port Chester. As HumanitiesNY notes, “Most Americans learn one, specific version of the history of woman suffrage: that a few bold, white women led a movement for equal voting rights and achieved victory 100 years ago, when the United States ratified the 19th Amendment. That, we’re told, enabled all American women to vote. But history is never as simple as the stories we tell about it. After that historic milestone, more women could cast a ballot than ever

before, and yet the fight for women’s equal voting rights was, and still is, far from over. *Amended* travels from the 1800’s through to the present day to show us a quest for women’s full equality that has always been as diverse, complex and unfinished as the nation itself.”

The podcast is in six parts, each about 45 minutes long. It manages to be both accessible to the general public and to include plenty of in-depth historical information. Our discussions will happen three times and each will be focused on two podcast episodes. Be prepared to learn a LOT and to engage your neighbors!

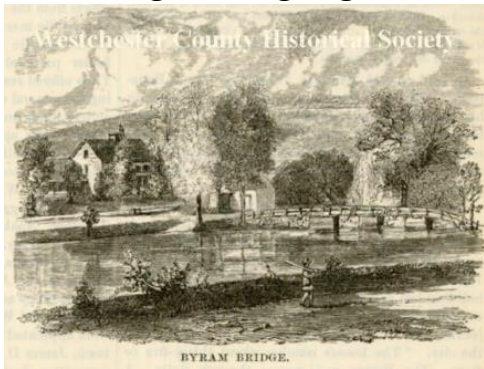
Look for specific dates and times to be announced in the coming weeks. If you want to get a jump start on listening to the podcast, here is the link:

<https://humanitiesny.org/our-work/amended-podcast/>

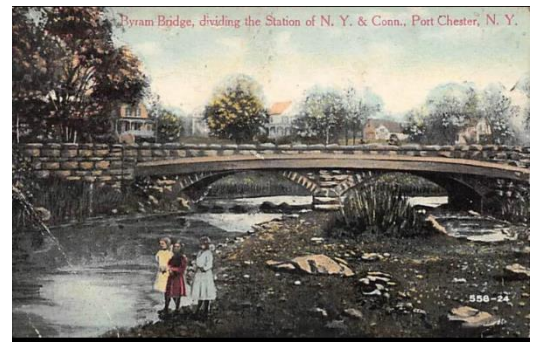
Thank you, Humanities NY!

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Two bridges on the Port Chester-Greenwich border that span the Byram River will soon disappear. Both bridges are going to be replaced for flood mitigation. Historical Society Director Mike



DiVittorio, in a video on the Society Facebook page, explains that the current bridges replace a wooden bridge which spanned the Byram River in the mid-18th century. The current Putnam Avenue bridge was built in 1888, while the Hillside Avenue stone bridge was built in 1926.



They will be replaced by concrete bridges. The Historical Society is attempting to work with Westchester County governments to save the two memorial markers that were installed when the stone bridges were built. The Putnam Avenue bridge has a stone marker, while the Hillside Avenue bridge has a bronze plaque.



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS - LOOKING TO GET INVOLVED? WE NEED YOU!

We are inviting volunteers who are interested in Port Chester local history and making a difference in the community - WE NEED YOU! If you care about preserving and educating people about Port Chester local history, you will fit right in. All people are welcome and encouraged to volunteer with us; we have many different projects and there is definitely a place for your skills in our organization. Email us at portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com today!

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DPW EVENT – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024



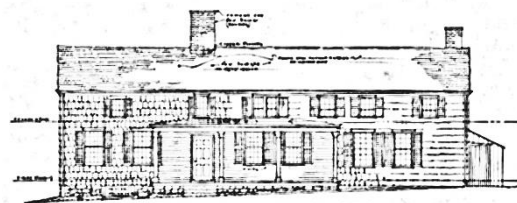
On Monday, February 12, 2024, at the Bush-Lyon Homestead, the Port Chester Historical Society recognized the Village of Port Chester Department of Public Works for all their amazing work with the Bush-Lyon Homestead. Visitors to the Homestead will no longer see discolored walls, crumbling masonry, dilapidated fixtures, or dingy paneling.

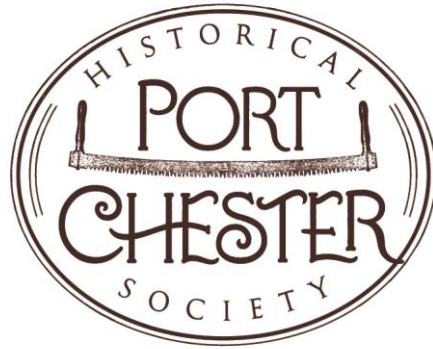
Thank you, DPW!



FOLLOW THE PORT CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY ONLINE

- Visit our web page at [Port Chester Historical Society](https://www.portchesterhistoricalsociety.com)
- Join us on Zoom at one of our monthly meetings
- Like us on Facebook @[PortChesterHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/PortChesterHistoricalSociety)
- ...and on Instagram @[PCNYHistory](https://www.instagram.com/PCNYHistory)
- ...tag your photos with #[PCNYHistory](https://www.instagram.com/PCNYHistory)
- Contact us/subscribe to our newsletter at portchesterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com





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**

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.