

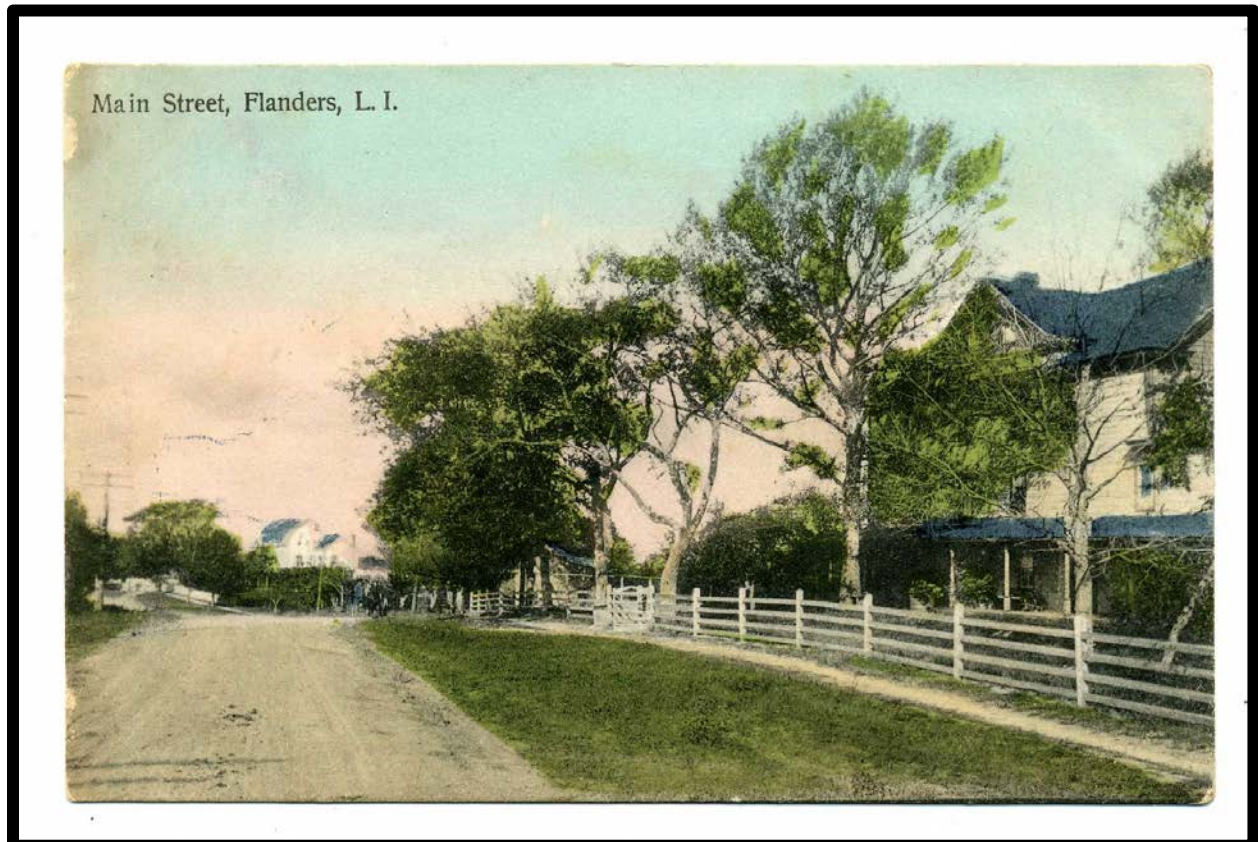
# FLANDERS

## Hamlet Heritage Area Report

APRIL 2014

*“The historian has been the hearth at which the soul of the country has been kept alive.”*

*Lord John Morley (1838-1923), British journalist and politician.*

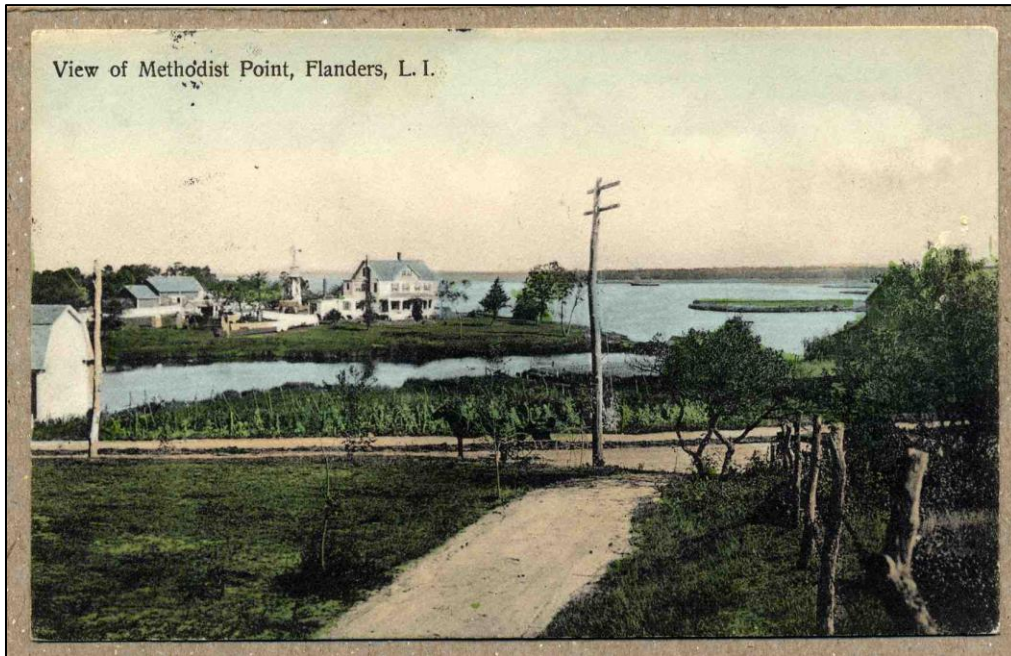


*Postcard view of Main Street, Flanders. Courtesy of Eric Woodward.*

Preface, Introduction and History by Gary A. Cobb, 2010; Edited and Formatted by Sally Spanburgh and Janice Jay Young. Resources Compiled by Sally Spanburgh with assistance from Janice Jay Young, Gary Cobb, and several Flanders community members and organizations. Overall compilation and oversight by the Southampton Town Landmarks & Historic Districts Board.

## Preface

For reasons unknown very little of the rich history of Flanders has ever been compiled. The following historical sketch is based entirely on information that has been gathered, by the author, for the sake of posterity and in the hope that names such as Fanning, Goodale, Benjamin, Squires, Havens, Brown, Penney, Griffing and Hallock will forever remain more than merely labels on stone monuments.



*Postcard circa 1910 of Methodist Point (1040 Flanders Rd.). Courtesy of Eric Woodward.*

## Introduction

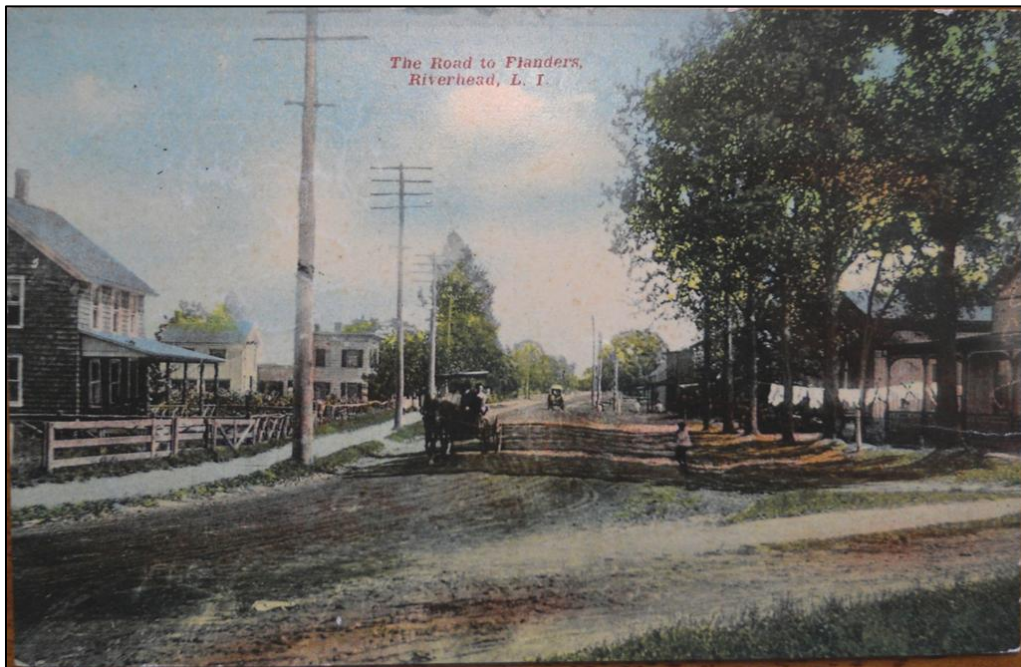
Flanders is a hamlet of the Town of Southampton, County of Suffolk, State of New York, U.S.A. The hamlet is located in the northwest corner of eastern Long Island's southern fork (latitude 40.903 north, longitude 72.618 west) and at the headwaters of the Peconic Bay Estuary. State Route 24 (Flanders Road) bisects the hamlet, which is bordered on the north by the Peconic River, Reeves Bay and Flanders Bay; on the south by the Long Island Pine Barrens; and on the east and west by the hamlets of Hampton Bays and Riverside, respectively.

Geographically and hydrologically, the Hamlet of Flanders encompasses an area that is referred to as the Flanders Drainage Basin. This area contains roughly 12 square miles of Pine Barrens and marshland that lie north of the Ronkonkoma Moraine (a ridge of hills left in the wake of the retreating Wisconsin Glacier) and south of the salt-water bays of the Peconic Estuary, several of which provide deep-water anchorage. Flanders Hill (elev. 236 ft.), the highest point on the moraine in this region, marks the southern limit of the basin. To the north of Flanders Hill, a collection of fresh water streams (Hubbard, Mill, Birch and Goose Creeks), ponds (Birch, Owl,

Sears, House, Division and others) and swamps, known as the Flanders Wetlands Complex, drain in a northerly direction from the barrens towards the estuary.

The proximity of Flanders to eastern Long Island’s largest supply of drinking water (trapped in the aquifer that lies beneath the 100,000-acre preserve that comprises the Long Island Pine Barrens) has spared nearly 85 percent of its land area from development. Consequently, Flanders has become home to an abundance of county-owned and town-owned parklands (Sears Bellows, Hubbard, Iron Point and Big Duck Ranch), linked together by an extensive system of foot trails, which provide access to one of Long Island’s least-disturbed ecosystems.

The residential neighborhoods of Flanders include the waterside developments of Bay View Pines, Waters Edge and Silver Brook, which, when combined with the development along Pleasure Drive, Route 24 and the section of Silver Brook that lies south of Route 24, make Flanders home to a population of roughly 4,000. The geographic features of Flanders have shaped the area’s history from pre-colonial times through the present and continue to influence its current demographics.



*Postcard circa 1910. Courtesy of Gary A. Cobb.*

## **History**

Present-day Flanders is but a small portion of the lands known to the native Algonquian People as Occabauk. Occabauk (or anyone of several spelling variations of that name including Accabog, Aukabog and Akkabauk) translates roughly to “cove-place” or “land at the head of the bay;” and included all of the lands on both the north and south forks of Long Island that lie near the mouth of the Peconic River. Artifacts collected throughout the Occabauk lands indicate that

pre-contact native peoples occupied the area for thousands of years prior to the 1640 arrival of the English.

In the year 1648, with their sights set on the valuable salt-hay meadows and cedar swamps that comprised a majority of the area, the settlers of Southold Town purchased the Occabauk lands (which included present-day Flanders) from natives of the North Fork. Soon after, in 1659, Southampton acquired the Occabauk lands south of the Peconic River (which also included Flanders) from the South fork's Shinnecock natives, spawning a conflict of ownership that would not be settled completely for more than 100 years. The two towns brought their claims before the Court of Assizes where it was decided, in 1667, that Southampton's claim to the area was valid. Southold's appeal of this decision eventually led to an agreement between the two towns (1686) that Southold settlers could retain some western portions of the disputed territory, although it would remain in the jurisdiction of Southampton. The dividing line between the two towns was decided on to be "the creek that comes up on the east side of Fifteen Mile Island" later to become known as "Priest's Creek."

*"At the General Court of Assizes held in the city of New York by the Governor & Council & the Justices of the peace by his Majesties authority on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> days of October and the 1 & 2<sup>d</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> days of Nov. in the 19<sup>th</sup> year of the Reigne of our sovereign Lord Charles the 2<sup>nd</sup> by the grace of God of Great Brittain France and Ireland King, defender of the points etc., and in the yeare of our Lord God 1667.*

*The inhabitants of the Towne of Southampton plts, The Inhabitants of the towne of Southold defendants, The defendants having appealed from the verdict of the Jury to be heard in Equity. This Court upon consideration of the reasons given therefore doth think fit to allow of the defendants Appeale to be heard at the next Generale Court of Assizes, to be held on the first Wednesday in October, 1688 they giving security according to law, and doe order that as to the meadows in controversy between the plfs & defts they shall both have liberty to mow thereupon each the one halfe thereof at the season of the yeare & for their cattle to feed ther upon in the mean time until the title shall be decided in Equity unless they shall otherwise agree amongst themselves, which the Court doth recommend unto both parties. The Defts are to pay the charges of Court, By order of the Governor and Court of Assizes. Matthias Nicolls Sec."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Whereas we the subscribed Isaac Halsey, John Howell Jr., James White, Theophilus Howell were Chosen and apointed by the town of*

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<sup>1</sup> Southampton Town Book of Records, Volume 2, page 65.

*southampton, and Mr. John Tuthill, Jonathan Horton, Thomas maps, John youngs and stephen bayly Likewise Chosen by the towne of southold to terminate and to make a final Devision between the two townes of the meadow at accabauge. Now Know yea, that we the persons Chosen and impowered as aforesaid doe finally conclude and Determine that the town of southold shall have of the said meadows at accabauge for their proportion the westward part thereof to below the going over the Riverhead and from the said pine trees all the meadow eastward to the spring at the head of the Creek that Comes up on the east side of fifteen mile Island, and southampton townes part of the said meadows for their west bounds to begin at the said spring, at the head of the Creek on the east side of fifteen mile Island, and from thence eastward all the meadow to the Creek called the Red Creek for their proportion the meadows that Lyes westward of ye aforesaid two pine trees (being by estimation about two Acres of meadow, more or Less) is by mutuall Consent Left out to Lye in Common, between the two towns, until both parties agree to Dispose of it as occasion may Require. and this to be a final determination and Descision of the bounds of the said meadows. In witness whereof we have hereunto sett our hands this 8<sup>th</sup> day of Sept. 1686,*

*Stephen Bailey*

*Isaac Halsey*

*John Youngs*

*John Howell Jr.*

*Jonathan Horton*

*James White*

*Thomas Mapes Jr.*

*Theophilus Howell*

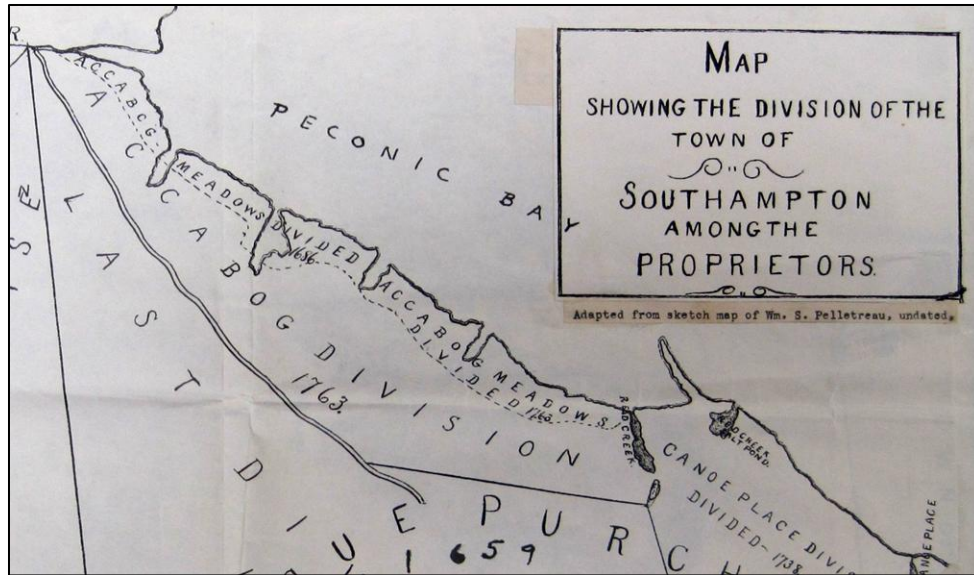
*John Tuthill”<sup>2</sup>*

In the years immediately following the agreement between the two towns, the proprietors of Southampton apparently took little interest in the area, beyond the harvesting of the abundance of natural resources that were readily available. In addition to the timber products and salt hay previously mentioned, these included clay, bog iron and a myriad assortment of game, fowl, fish and shellfish.

Although a portion of the salt-hay meadows had been divided immediately after the 1686 agreement, the Southampton proprietors did not conduct the “drawing of lots” (the colonial method of apportioning acquired land) for the remainder of the Occabauk lands until 1763. It was stipulated at this time that any persons who already had houses within the area be allowed to remove them “without molestation.” This, in addition to other surviving records, is an indication that the first dwellings in what would become the present-day hamlet of Flanders had been built by members of Southold families, who had first laid claim to the lands.

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<sup>2</sup> Southampton Town Book of Records, Volume 2, page 115.



*Hand-drawn map by William S. Pelletreau (1840-1918), 1878*

Regardless of the fact that the Occabauk lands south of the Peconic River now officially belonged to Southampton, the area continued, perhaps even to this day, to remain more closely tied to the Southold settlements on the island's North Fork than it did to the settlement at Southampton. This may be attributed to several factors.

First, with few exceptions the earliest Flanders settlers were members of the Southold families of Fanning, Wells, Benjamin, Downs, Brown, Vail, Griffing and others who had originally come to Long Island from New Haven, Connecticut, whereas Southampton had been founded by colonists from Lynn, Massachusetts (Halsey, Jagger, Sayre, Jessup, Cooper, Rogers, etc.).

Additionally, although all of these families had come to New England in search of freedom from the religious persecutions they had suffered in Europe, these families did not all share the same religious beliefs. New Haven had, in fact, been founded by the followers of the Reverend John Davenport, who, along with them, left Massachusetts because they did not agree with the religious practices of the same Puritans from whom Southampton's colonists were descended.

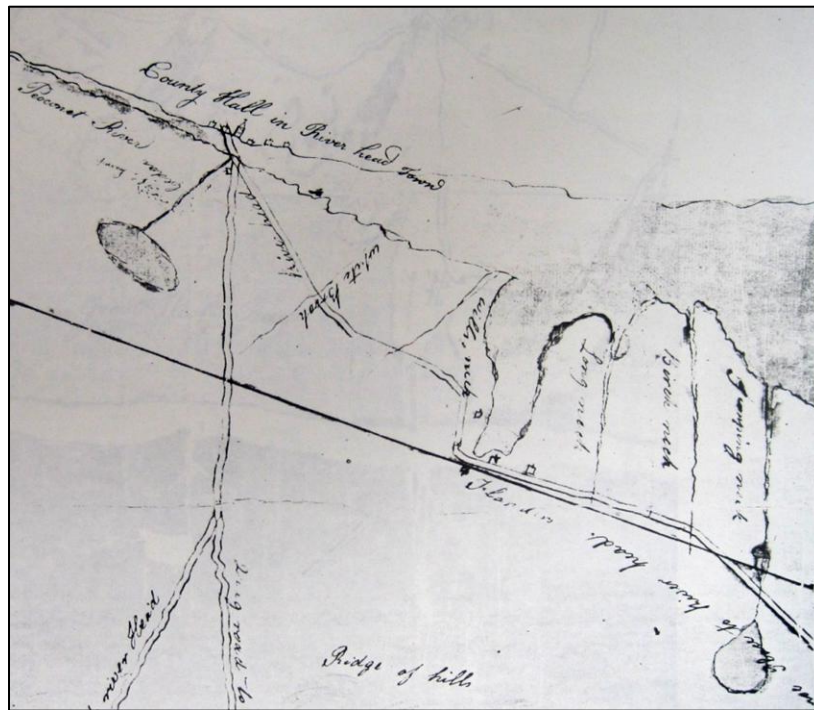
Furthermore, it was far more convenient to travel across the bay to the Southold settlements by boat (perhaps a half hour trip by sail) than it was to travel overland to the Southampton settlements at "Old Town" or "Sagg" via horse and wagon (at least a half day trip).

Throughout the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and until the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the lands on both sides of the Peconic River continued to be referred to as Occabauk.

It has been suggested that Flanders was given its name by early Dutch settlers who had been reminded of their homeland but, as the settlers of Southampton and Southold were Englishmen,

this is not very likely. However, the English were also very familiar with the European region that is known as Flanders as it is only a short sail to the east (roughly 25 miles), across the southern North Sea, from England’s Southeast Coast, an area that had been home to many of Southampton’s original settlers. Also, prior to setting sail for the “New World” in 1620, our Pilgrim ancestors had spent a dozen or more years in Leyden, Holland, which is a stone’s throw from nearby Flanders.

The name Flanders is taken from the Flemish “Vlaanderen,” which means flooded land, an obviously appropriate label for a wetlands complex such as exists at Flanders. The Belgian Coast of Flanders also bears other geographical similarities to the Southampton hamlet of Flanders since both are comprised of a system of rivers and streams that drain in a northerly direction towards large bodies of salt water. Another coincidence may exist in the fact that Southampton’s claims were for the “southern” portion of the Occabauk lands, and Belgian Flanders was commonly referred to as “The Southern Lowlands.” Also, European Flanders (the scene of the “80 Years War,” 1566-1648) had historically been involved in so many conflicts that the term “Flanders” was occasionally used in place of the term “conflict” (i.e., “They have a real *flanders* going on over there.”).



Detail of 1797 map drawn by Isaac Hulse, published by New York State.

To date, the earliest recording of the re-naming of the area, which had been historically referred to as “Occabauk,” appears on a hand-drawn map of the area that is dated 1797. The establishment of the Town of Riverhead (formerly a part of Southold Town) in 1792 may have prompted the name change to avoid confusion, as Riverhead included the North Fork’s hamlet of

Aquebogue, which was also formerly a part of the Occabauk lands. Another event that may have warranted a new name occurred in 1794 when Post Master General Thomas Pickering designated the first Suffolk Postal Route, which included a portion of present-day Flanders Road. A name change would have prevented mail mix-ups between Aquebogue in Riverhead Town and Accabog in Southampton Town. This becomes even more plausible when the spelling abilities of the day are taken into consideration. Or perhaps it became necessary as early as 1763 when lots were finally drawn for the remaining Occabauk land.

It is likely that the Hamlet of Flanders adopted its name based on the similarities that it shared with the Flanders Region of present-day Belgium on the continent of Europe. To date, *when* Flanders was given the name and *by whom* remains undetermined.

Josiah Goodale, who was born in Southampton in 1736, appears to have been the earliest Southampton native to permanently settle in the area that would come to be known as Flanders. Southampton Town records refer to his house at “Aukabog” as early as 1761, and other references indicate that it was likely built prior to 1760. Josiah is credited with clearing much of the land in this area and his descendants reside in the area to this day. Another early inhabitant was James Fanning II, a Southold native and son of Captain James Fanning, who was a hero of the French/Indian War and the first of the Fanning name to settle on Long Island.

James was living at Long Neck, the peninsula that is home to the present-day developments of Bay View Pines and Waters Edge, in 1765, but in the same year sold his house and all his land there to his brother Thomas. Included in the purchase was the parcel known as Fifteen Mile Island (the name may have been a reference to the distance by boat from the original settlement at Southold) and later as Goodale’s Island. This parcel, a peninsula today, is located directly to the north of, and attached to, the property situated at 1194 Flanders Road.

Thomas Fanning later sold the majority of his Flanders land to his nephew, James Fanning III, and acquired a 130-acre farm in Lebanon, Connecticut. During the Revolution, Thomas remained loyal to the Crown, attaining the rank of Captain in “The King’s American Regiment of Foot,” which had been organized by his brother, Colonel Edmund Fanning. On account of his connection to the Loyalists, Thomas Fanning’s Lebanon farm was forfeited to the government and sold at auction in October 1781. Later, James Fanning II’s grandson, Nathaniel Fanning, would become a well-known local preacher who earned the soubriquet “Priest Nat.” Priest’s Creek (located on the east side of present-day Bay Avenue and now the site of B+E Marine) was named for Nathaniel Fanning, whose homestead (circa 1825) and farm were situated on the property that is located at 1372 Flanders Road.

The oldest known surviving house in the hamlet is that of James Benjamin. His homestead, built about 1782, is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. It is located at 1182

Flanders Road, opposite the intersection of Pleasure Drive and immediately west of Goodale's Island. This area became the focal point of the early settlement as it was in close proximity to reliable springs of fresh water and afforded convenient access to the interior of the Pine Barrens as well as to the bay and North Fork. The principal landing of that time was located here, on the west side of the peninsula of Long Neck near Bay Avenue, and could accommodate many of the larger vessels of the period. Another landing point was from Goose Creek.

The Goodale, Fanning, Benjamin and other early families (including Squires, Havens, Hallock, Penney and Brown to name a few) wasted little time in acquiring vast tracts of land in the vicinity of their newly founded settlement. Their woodlots extended deeply into the virgin forests of the Pine Barrens where many of these pioneers, and several generations of their descendants, would soon find their fortunes in the wood industries. Although there is little doubt that the initial focus would have been on the more valuable varieties of timber that were available, the focus soon turned to the seemingly limitless supply of cordwood. Countless thousands of cords were harvested from the interior sections of the Pine Barrens and brought down to the landing to be loaded on vessels for shipment or stored on Goodale's Island for loading at a later date. The majority of these shipments were destined for either coastal Connecticut, where they would be used to fire the brick kilns that were located there, or for the City of New York where they were used for fuel to heat homes. Once emptied of their cargoes of wood, many of these vessels would take on loads of "ballast stone" for the return trip to Flanders. Bearing testimony to this practice are the numerous ballast-stone foundations and retaining walls that are scattered throughout the hamlet.

Near the end of the 18th century, and in the wake of our nation's costly Revolutionary War, events began to unfold that would have a lasting impact on the relatively insular settlement that would soon become known as Flanders. Several decades of lumbering, not only by the settlers but also by the British occupiers, had left the majority of Long Island nearly treeless. An upside to this for the settlements near the bays was the creation of expansive panoramic vistas that the war-weary public eagerly sought out for rest and relaxation. As the nation began to slowly recover from the effects of the War for Independence, the infrastructure of roads and bridges was repaired and improved, making travel to distant locales more convenient. The system of postal routes and post offices was also greatly expanded during this period. The stage was being set for the beginnings of the East End's lucrative tourist industry.

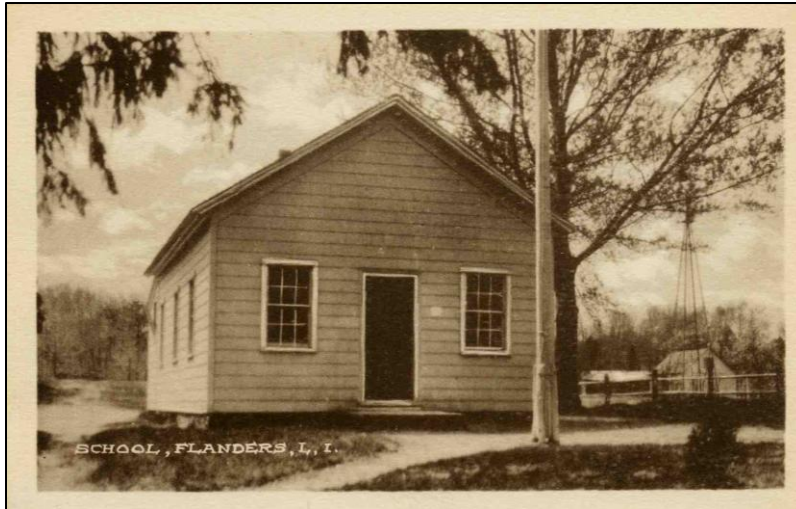
Early mail and passenger stages destined for the South Fork from points west traveled along present-day Route 25 from Queens into what is now Riverhead, continued over the Peconic River into Southampton Town and continued east along present-day Flanders Road. Upon reaching Flanders, the route then turned south along Pleasure Drive, as the eastern section of Flanders Road presented an obstacle course of creek bottoms that would not be improved for years to come. With a regular mail route running through the settlement as early as 1794, and

blessed with the cooling summer breezes that come in off the bays, Flanders, the gateway to Southampton Town, quickly became a destination. Post office services were provided within the home of the postmaster or postmistress. A post office was first established in 1834, a Congregational church was built in 1840 and a schoolhouse followed in 1858. It is about this time, although never incorporated as such, that the settlement at “Aukabog” began to be referred to as “Flanders Village.” The first depiction of a post office building on a historic map takes place in 1873.

<b>Flanders Postmasters</b>	<b>Dates Appointed</b>
Jesse Hallock	May 8, 1834
Austin E. Penny	Oct. 16, 1854
James M. Weeks	July 24, 1855
Betsy M. Goodale	April 10, 1876
Nathan B. Hallock	Oct. 16, 1883
Harvey W. Squires	May 3, 1888
Fannie E. Hallock	April 22, 1889
Jennie W. Benjamin	Sept. 8, 1894
Fannie E. Hallock	Sept. 17, 1895
Matilda D. Tuthill	Aug. 19, 1909
Grace A. Squires	Sept. 22, 1920
Matilda D. Tuthill (acting)	Nov. 25, 1921
Matilda D. Tuthill*	April 11, 1922
Grace S. Squires	Aug. 27, 1926
Mail redirected to Riverhead effective April 30, 1929.	

\*Postmistress Tuthill’s letter boxes are now a part of the Suffolk County Historical Society’s collection.

Prior to 1840 area residents had routinely crossed the bay to attend services at The Congregational Church of Upper Aquebogue (aka The Old Steeple Church) and the newly built church in Flanders was originally a branch of that parish. The trustees of the Congregational Church eventually (1891) sold their church to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church to accommodate their growing congregation. In 1931 the church was moved slightly further south, to its current location, to facilitate the widening and straightening of Flanders Road.



*The former schoolhouse at 1261 Flanders Road is now a private residence.  
Courtesy of Eric Woodward.*



*Postcard circa 1920 of the former Methodist Episcopal (M. E.) Church in its original location before being moved back from the road when it was widened. It is now the Flanders United Methodist Church. Courtesy of Eric Woodward.*

By 1844 the railroad had been extended to Greenport and service along the south shore reached Good Ground (Hampton Bays today) in 1869. As much of a boon as the railroad proved to be to the local economy, a downside to its coming was the inherent risk of fire due to sparks. Forest fires are necessary for the survival of the Pine Barrens (the cones of the area's predominate pine, Pitch Pine [*Pinus rigida*], will only release their seeds after being scorched by fire) but the fires pose serious threats to life and property. In the decades that surrounded the turn of the 20th century, Flanders suffered more than its fair share of fires, which consumed not only vast tracts of valuable timberland and habitat, but also many structures.

In the years between 1875 and 1920 (known as “The Boarding House Era”), numerous summer hotels and boarding houses were built throughout the East End, to accommodate the ever-

increasing numbers of visitors and the service industry employees who were required to see to their needs. By the close of the 19th century, the following hotels and/or boarding houses (including the proprietors) had been or still were operating in Flanders.

**Flanders Boarding Houses**

<b>Hotel/Boarding House</b>	<b>Proprietor</b>
Pine (a.k.a. Penney’s) Grove	Capt. R.W. Penney
Hallock House	Capt. N.B. Hallock
Summer Rest	H.E. Hallock
Peconic Bay House	H.E. Hallock
Range Hill House	H. Squires
Squires House	H. Squires
Willow Cottage	J.H. Goodale
Hillside House	Mrs. Z. Benjamin
Benjamin Villa	A. Benjamin
Havens House	C.M. Havens

The following three advertisements appeared in The Brooklyn Daily Eagle on the dates referenced. Each promoted the attributes of the establishment and the Flanders area.

*June 18, 1899*

“Hallock House, Flanders, on Peconic Bay, has a location unusually cool and very pleasant and healthful. It is two minutes’ walk to the bay, where there are facilities for first class still water bathing, also for boating and fishing. The rooms are cool; there is a large piazza; there is a piano-for-the-guests; tennis court nearby. The table is excellent, supplied with eggs, milk and vegetables from the farm in connection. Terms \$7 to \$10 per wk. Address: Capt. N. Hallock, Flanders, L.I.”

*July 5, 1896*

“ON GREAT PECONIC BAY; VERY COOL AND healthy; fine boating and fishing; three minutes’ walk to free bathing; large rooms; piazza, tennis, piano; guarantee the table to be the best that the country affords; terms \$7 per week.  
HALLOCK, SUMMER REST, FLANDERS, L.I.  
GOOD BOARD”

*July 5, 1896*

“SQUIRES HOUSE ON PECONIC BAY  
Fine boating, bathing, fishing; large shady grounds; large piazza; cool, airy rooms; piano; table unsurpassed; terms reasonable.  
H. SQUIRES, FLANDERS, L.I.”



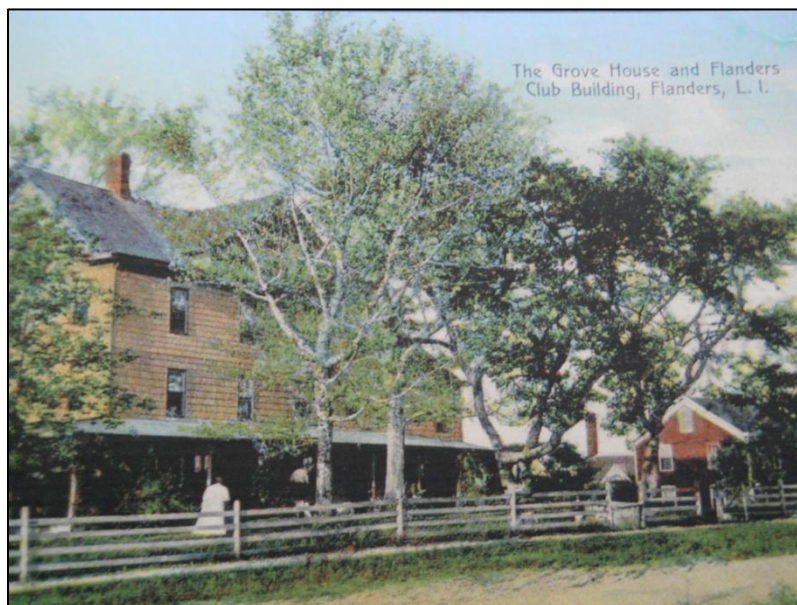
*Postcard by the Nomis Mfg. Co. Inc. (circa 1920). Courtesy of Eric Woodward.  
Demolished. Original location uncertain.*



*Postcard by the Nomis Mfg. Co. Inc. (circa 1920). Courtesy of Eric Woodward.  
Demolished. Original location near fire station.*

In addition to the structures already mentioned, Flanders Village also contained a mix of approximately 30 year-round and summer homes, some being quite large and well appointed. The majority of these were all located along “Main Street,” as it was known, which was the portion of present-day Flanders Road that stretches between Goose Creek at the Village’s eastern limit and Chauncey Road at its western limit.

During the “Boarding House Era,” Flanders also became well known throughout the greater New York Area as a secluded retreat for sportsmen. In 1891, eager to take advantage of the abundance of fish and game that was available, the exclusive Flanders Club erected their headquarters and lodge adjacent to one of the settlement’s grandest hotels, Captain Robert W. Penney’s “Grove House,” which had been in operation since 1880. (This would later come to be known as “The Brewster House,” which survives to this day at 1380 Flanders Road, albeit in a poor state of repair.)

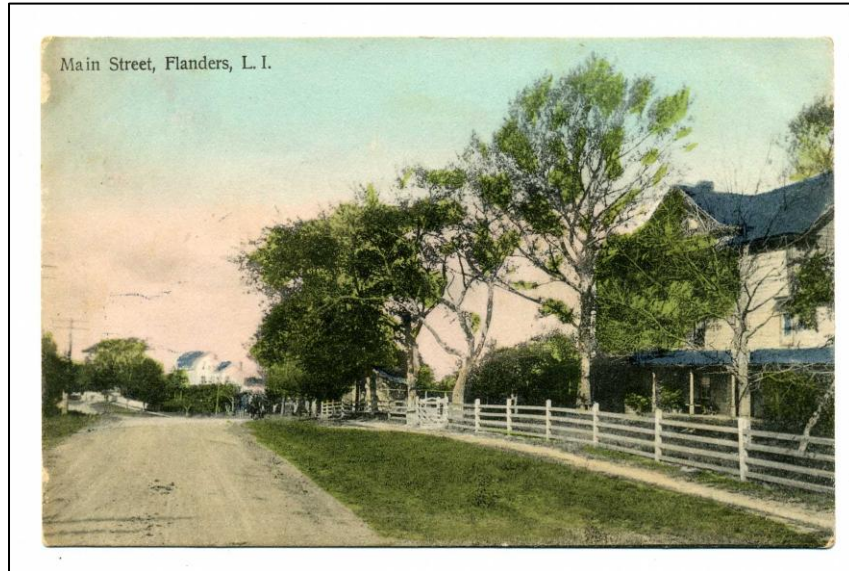


*Postcard circa 1910 of 1380 Flanders Road, later known as “The Brewster House.”  
Courtesy of Gary A. Cobb.*

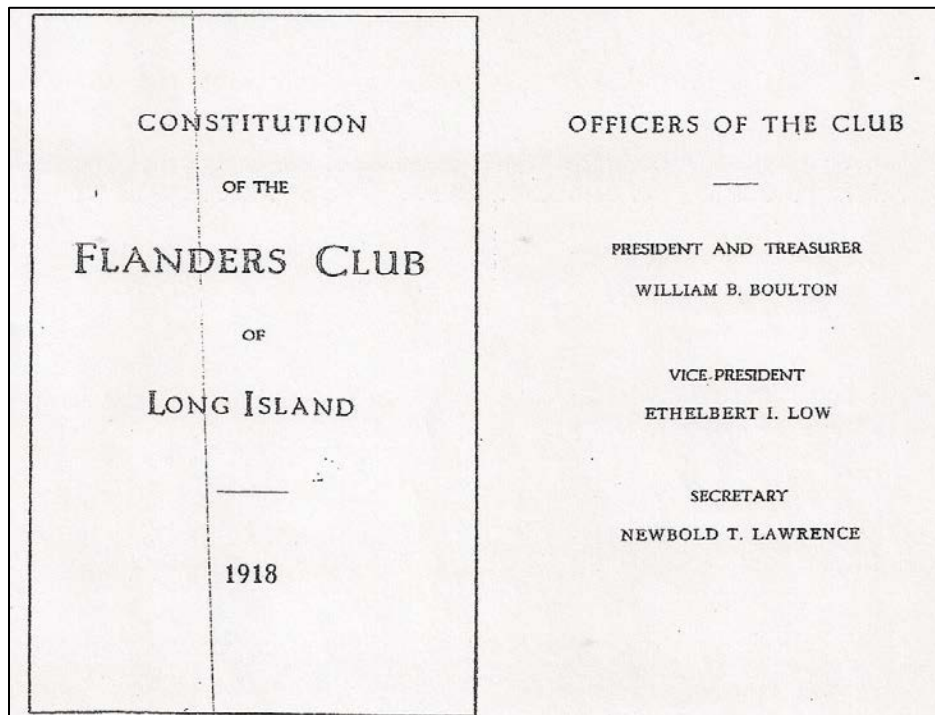
The interior of the club’s lodge was paneled in pine, and it contained a large stone fireplace but the members slept and took their meals at Captain Penney’s next door. In 1905, Captain Penney signed a 10-year contract with the club giving them virtual control of the hotel’s operations. This agreement stipulated that summer boarders could only be taken at the club’s discretion, as the majority of the rooms had been apportioned to the club’s members, and it reserved the hotel’s usage during the hunting and fishing seasons exclusively for club members and their guests.

The Flanders Club was comprised of wealthy New York City businessmen who would spare no expense in their pursuit of sport and relaxation. The club purchased 3,000 acres of marsh and

upland in the vicinity of Flanders and leased another 7,000 acres, stocking the ponds and streams and raising thousands of game birds that were later released on club lands. This gave them exclusive hunting privileges on a majority of the lands from Canoe Place (site of the present-day Shinnecock Canal) westward to Riverhead, and from Shinnecock Bay north to the Peconic Estuary.



*Postcard looking west from Grove House, later known as Brewster's (1380 Flanders Road).  
Courtesy of Eric Woodward.*



*1918 Flanders Club Constitution Booklet (front and back cover).  
Courtesy of Lillian Fais, Suffolk County Parks Historic Services.*

In 1918, following a series of particularly destructive forest fires, the Flanders Club president, William B. Boulton, succeeded in convincing the State Conservation Commission to erect a fire detection tower on Flanders Hill. This was the second tower to be raised on Long Island and one of 121 that were eventually constructed statewide. The first observer assigned to the Flanders Hill tower was John M. Brewster, the patriarch of the family that would later operate Brewster's Boarding House. During World War II, the Flanders Hill tower served double duty as an aircraft spotting station and continued to operate as a fire detection tower until 1959.

It was about this time, circa 1920, following a fire that had claimed their lodge, that the Flanders Club relocated their operations a few miles east, to a site on the west side, and near the mouth, of Mill Creek. In addition to a new lodge, several cabins and outbuildings were constructed, all of which survive within the confines of Hubbard County Park.



*2013 Views of the Flanders Club Property. Clockwise from top left: Flanders Club Lodge front, Flanders Club Lodge rear, dog kennels, Flanders Club cabin. Courtesy of Gary A. Cobb.*

A few years later, in 1924, prompted by the exclusiveness of the Flanders Club (who had reportedly denied him membership), Wall Street legend Edward Francis Hutton purchased a large tract of marsh and upland on the east side of Mill Creek directly opposite the club's headquarters. This property had been the homestead of several generations of the Hubbard family who had been actively involved in the thriving shipyard operations that existed at nearby Southport (at the time boasting more residents than Southampton Village) and with the mills that existed on the adjacent creek. E. F. Hutton expanded the old home and created a private hunting retreat of his own, which exists to this day and is known as Black Duck Lodge.



*Black Duck Lodge, 2011.*

The Flanders Club continued operations, although on a somewhat smaller scale, into the 1960s. R. Brinkley Smithers, who had inherited the remaining club lands via a “last man standing” clause, donated the last remaining parcel of club land (430 acres) to Suffolk County in 1971. Ducks Unlimited currently manages this parcel, known as the Smithers Preserve. The legacy of the members of The Flanders Club exists to this day in the virtually undeveloped parklands of Suffolk County’s Hubbard and Sears Bellows parkland complex.

Another important industry was introduced to the bucolic waterside village, in 1884, when Samuel Griffing first introduced duck farming to the area. Samuel had taken over the family farm at Otter Hole Neck (the colonial place name for the peninsula that is currently home to The Big Duck) that his father John had purchased from the estate of Capt. Charles Smith in 1861. (This property is located at 1040 Flanders Road.)

Samuel Griffing’s enterprise proved to be quite profitable and became even more so under the management of his son-in-law, Thomas I. Havens. In addition to having gained quite a reputation as an owner of thoroughbred trotting horses, Mr. Havens is credited with many acts of good will in the Flanders community. The facility operated by The Flanders Men’s Club (not to be confused with The Flanders Club) is located on a parcel formerly owned by Mr. Havens who gifted it to the organization in 1958.

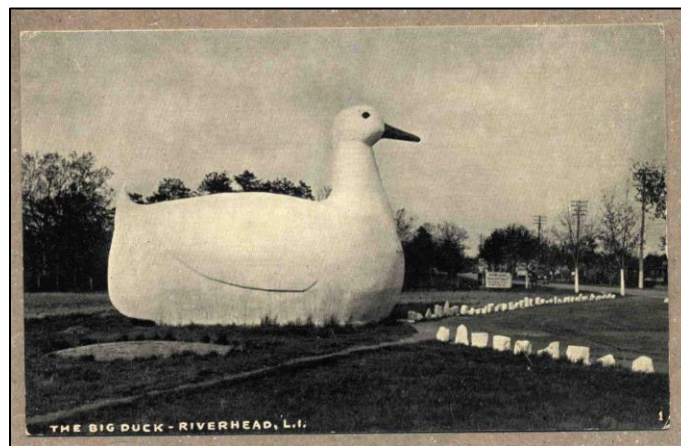
On the heels of the success of the Griffing duck farm, the western portion of Otter Hole Neck would also become home to a duck farm, that of Carl Naber. This is the current site of Long Island's most recognizable landmark, "The Big Duck." The Big Duck (a National and State Historic Landmark) was the brainchild of duck farmer Martin Maurer and it had been constructed on a farm that he leased at Upper Mills, on Riverhead's West Main Street, in 1931. In 1936, The Big Duck's first migration occurred when Maurer purchased the Naber farm and had his trademark Big Duck, from which he sold poultry products, moved from Riverhead to Flanders.



*Postcard of Samuel Griffing Duck Farm. Courtesy Gary A. Cobb.*

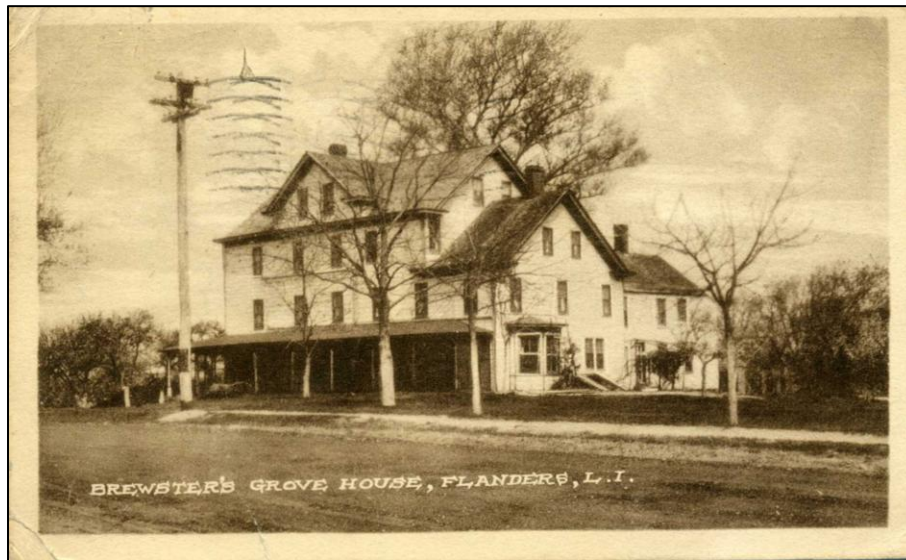
In 1987, when a development was planned for the Duck's nesting spot, the Eshghi family graciously donated the structure to Suffolk County. This required yet another migration along Flanders Road, to a site near the entrance to Sears Bellows County Park. The development plans at the former site were eventually scrapped and Southampton Town acquired the property in 2001.

In 2007, the big bird migrated back to its old Flanders roost, where hopefully the beloved icon will remain. Called "The Big Duck Ranch," its property and buildings are listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places and locally designated as a town landmark.



*The Big Duck at 1012 Flanders Road. Courtesy of Eric Woodward.*

With the exception of losses that resulted from the historically repetitive forest fires, the quaint village continued to prosper into the first decades of the 20th century. In 1912, the Flanders Yacht Club was formed, conducting their affairs from a newly built clubhouse (at the time located on present-day Bay Avenue), and in 1922, the Brewster Family bought Captain Penney's hotel and converted it into a boarding house. It was at this time that the old headquarters of The Flanders Club was moved to the rear of, and attached to, the hotel (where it survives to this day), to be utilized as the boarding house's kitchen. Electricity became available in 1924. But as the 1920s "roared" towards a close in Flanders, so too did the period of prosperity that had existed for more than a century.



*Postcard circa 1925 of Grove House (later Brewster's). Courtesy Eric Woodward.*



*Kitchen addition on the north side of the Brewster House, originally the Flanders Club Headquarters built in 1891. Courtesy of Gary A. Cobb.*

There are rumors extant that the Flanders area remained a destination throughout the days of Prohibition (1920-1933). Considering the social status of the area's regular visitors and the fact that Flanders was accessible by boat (convenient for "rum-runners") these rumors may have merit. Regardless, the Stock Market Crash of October 29, 1929, and the lean years of "The Great Depression" that followed, marked the end of an era in Flanders.

On November 30, 1929, in the wake of "The Crash" and after 95 years in operation, the Flanders Post Office was permanently closed. The following year, the widening and straightening of Flanders Road (a government attempt to bolster the area's sagging economy) only succeeded in turning the old Main Street into an expressway to points further east on the South fork. The yacht club soon disbanded and the enactment of federal migratory game bird laws marked the beginning of the end for most of the exclusive sportsmen's clubs of the day. One by one, most of the old hotels and boarding houses fell into disrepair, were demolished, or were lost to fire. Flanders heyday had sadly come to an end.

### **The Bungalow Era of the 1930s – 1950s**

The socio-economic collapse suffered in the 1930s could not however diminish any of the geographic attributes that had been attracting visitors to the Flanders area for centuries. The post-war years of the late 1940s and early 1950s would see yet another generation of families flock to the area in search of rest and relaxation along the shores of the Peconic Estuary. It was during this period that the residential developments of Bay View Pines, Waters Edge and Silver Brook were realized.

Spending the summer at a little cottage on the beach, also referred to as a camp or bungalow, was a trend that began in Southampton around the turn-of-the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues today. Other than the occasional and temporary whaling or fishing shack haphazardly strewn about the common beach land in earlier years, homes were not generally found too close to the ocean because of the perceived ferocity and thundering nature of its shoreline. As of about 1875 however various places around the Hamptons, such as Quogue, Southampton Village, and East Hampton, began to see cottages (mansions really) erected along the ocean dunes, largely by non-year-round residents. The expansion of the Long Island Rail Road's Sag Harbor branch in 1870 inevitably enabled this blossoming of "summer cottages," literally paving the way at the same time for the founding of the various summer colonies.

The trend of building bungalows was wholly different, however, than building a summer cottage near the ocean, for the two trends are about as similar as an apple and an orange. Small, semi-permanent structures, bungalows, were usually one-story in height and little more than a simple box, with an eat-in kitchen, living room, a couple of bedrooms, and a bathroom. The main

purpose of these structures was to provide seasonal shelter while its owners/visitors spent as much time outside as possible.

By the 1920s, coupled with the fact that the demand of these affordable structures far outweighed the availability of ocean-side property, bungalow communities began to be developed along the north shore of Long Island's south fork, along Peconic Bay. The "Pine Neck" bungalow community was created by North Sea Developments Inc. in 1925. By 1934 it contained over 100 bungalows which were rented and/or owned by locals and non-locals alike.

Next came the area known as "Scotts Landing" and the "Wickatuck" development along the south side of Noyac Road. Going to Noyac or North Sea, however, was not an attractive alternative for everyone. Therefore bungalow communities elsewhere, such as in Flanders, were developed.

Not every structure in a bungalow community was new. While house plans could be purchased and builders would often construct several structures using the same basic formula, existing structures would also be relocated to these communities and adaptively reused (such as 276 Long Neck Boulevard). The practice of moving buildings was one of significant frequency in Southampton from its founding.



Ad Advertisement in the *County Review*, July 28, 1949

Surviving bungalow communities in the hamlet of Flanders represent a significant era in the hamlet's overall development. While the majority of them have since been winterized and expanded for the area's predominately working-class families, these neighborhoods now provide year-round community life within the Town of Southampton where seasonal residences have become dominant within the overall physical make-up of its built environment.

Bungalows are not often placed at the top of historic preservation efforts, usually due to their "young" age. However, they are deserving of more awareness, appreciation and safeguarding. Many bungalows in Flanders, such as 35 West Lane, 40 Evergreen Road, 65 Point Road, 100 Flanders Boulevard, 116 Riverside Avenue, and 479 Pleasure Drive continue to physically narrate the area's developmental history and contribute to its historic character.

Thankfully there is a strong appreciation for historic architecture in the Hamptons and we are blessed to be surrounded by it on a daily basis. One would be hard-pressed to make a trip through the hamlet, which will become clear in subsequent pages, without passing a dozen or more historic structures along the way, such as the Methodist Church, the Flanders schoolhouse, and Priest Nathaniel Fanning's property. Without the collective inventory of the hamlet's overall historic structures, its unique character and identity becomes diluted.

## **Conclusion**

To date, with few exceptions, Flanders has been spared the "McMansion" invasion that has plagued many of the East End's historic hamlets. Currently, lacking commercial zoning and in consideration of its proximity to strictly protected open-space preserves, Flanders seems destined to remain perhaps the best kept secret in Southampton Town's history.

Although much has been lost since the days when Josiah Goodale and James Benjamin shared the meadows and woodlots in the vicinity of Pleasure Drive, we are fortunate that much still remains. Owing to the environmental stewardship previously provided by the Flanders Club, a few thousand acres of Pines Barrens, cedar swamp, marsh and upland still exist in nearly pristine condition within the boundaries of today's Hamlet of Flanders. Additionally, many late 19th and early 20th century structures have survived, along with a handful from earlier times. With few exceptions, these historically significant structures are all located along Flanders Road between Chauncey Road and Goose Creek, or what was historically known as Main Street in Flanders Village.

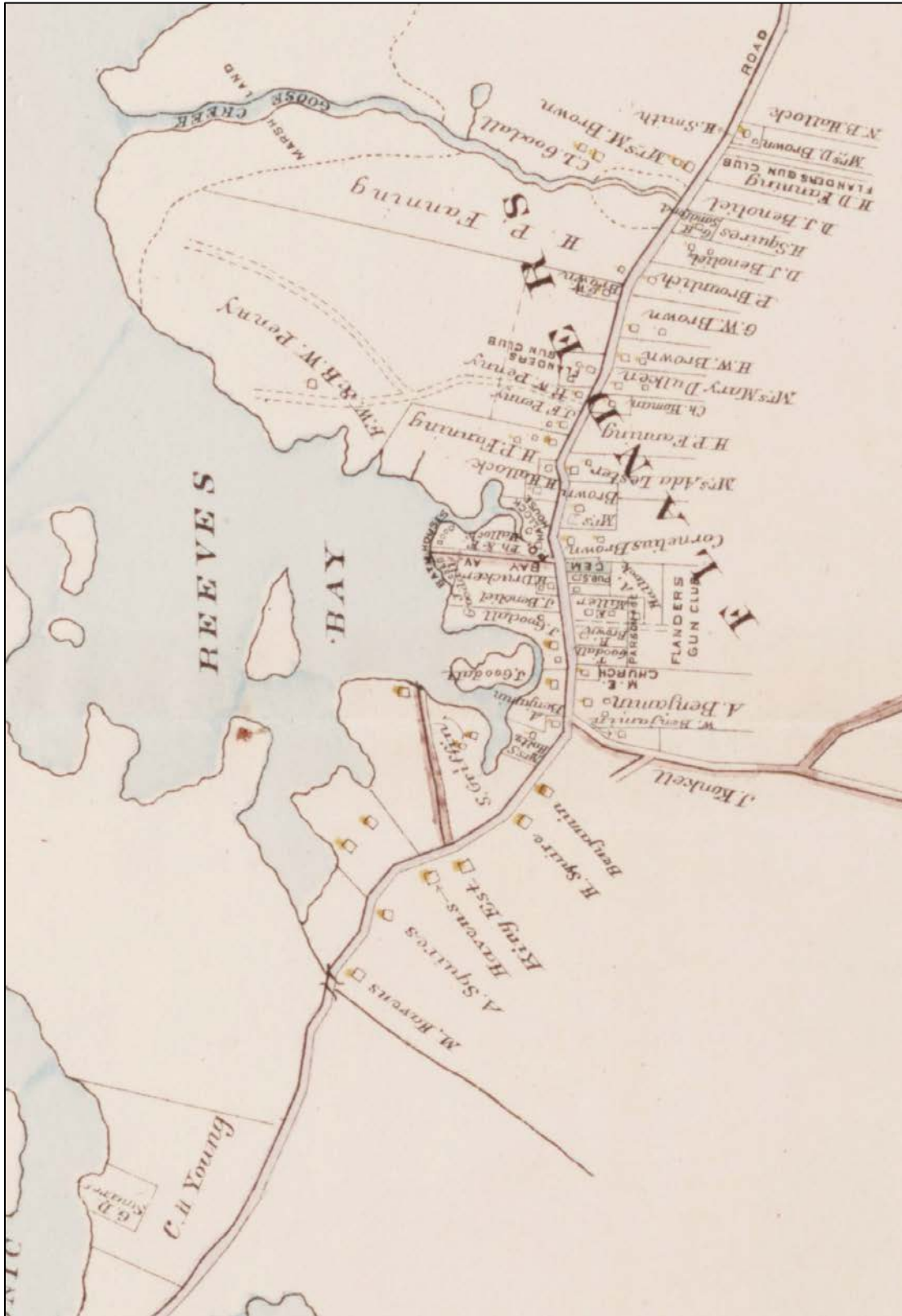
The acknowledgement of Flanders as a Hamlet Heritage Area will help to make current and future generations of area residents, visitors and the public at large aware of the variety of historic architectural styles that survive in the hamlet while also bringing attention to the important role that the area played in the early days of Southampton Town's overall historic evolution.



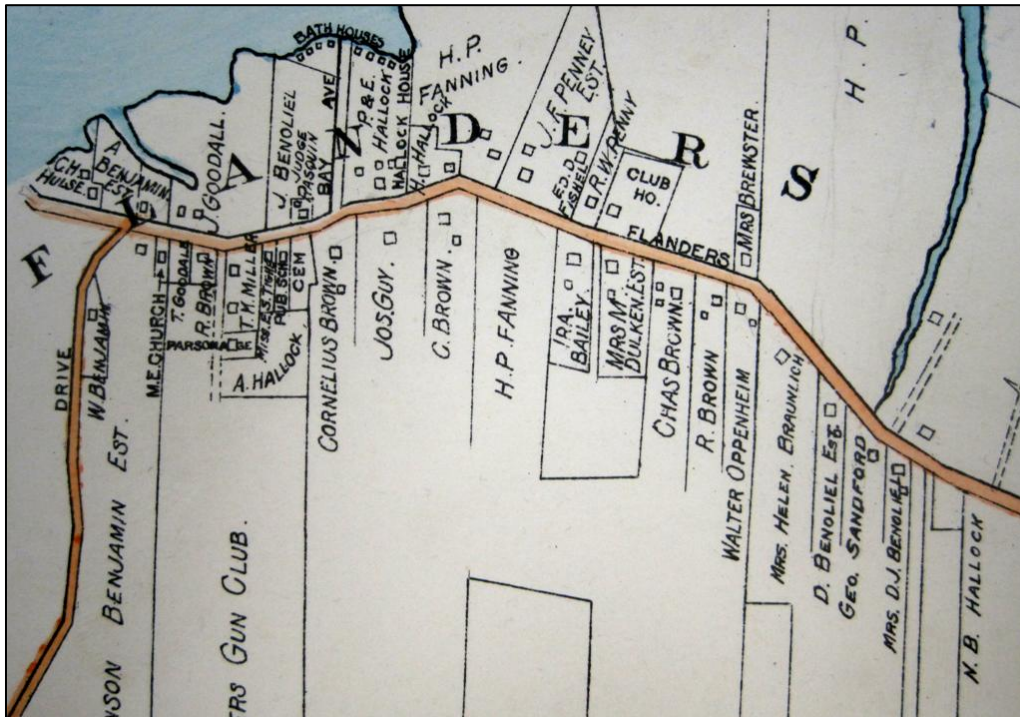
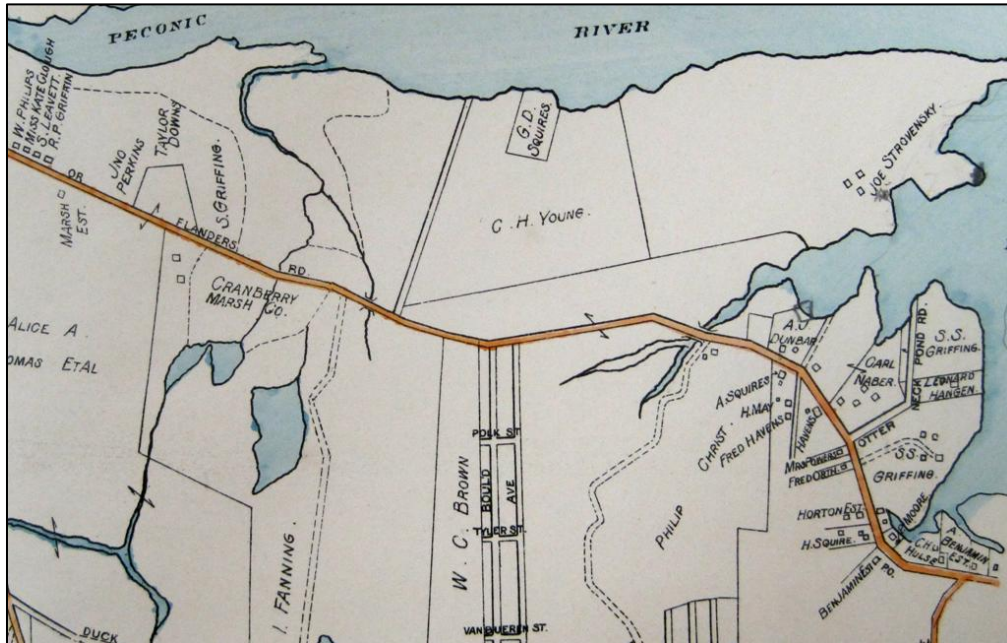


HISTORIC MAP REFERENCES

Detail of 1902 Map by E. Belcher Hyde



## HISTORIC MAP REFERENCES



Detail of Plates 2 (above) and 4 (below), 1916 Map by E. Belcher Hyde

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