



Belle Terre Times

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE INCORPORATED VILLAGE

Vol. VI- Issue 2

www.belleterre.us

JULY 2020

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY



Mayor Bob Sandak

As I was researching the answer to a resident's question about a historical survey, I realized, not for the first time, what a rich trove of historical documents and photographs we have stored in the Historian's office in the Gatehouse. Through the efforts of volunteers such as Nancy Orth, Wolf Shaefer and Jon Hiz, the fascinating history of our wonderful Village has been catalogued in the greatest of detail.

I also realized that with so many new Village residents moving in and with many children at home, it might be an interesting time to look back to the turn of the 20th century and see how our Village was conceived, marketed and developed.

Prior to the 1600's, Belle Terre's 1300 acres were inhabited by Native Americans. They called the land Nonowantuc, "the Stream That Dries Up." In 1689 they deeded their land to three Englishmen (Smith, Floyd, and Woodhull) who called it Mt. Misery, probably because of the many shipwrecks in the area.

In the 1700's Mt. Misery passed to the Strong family of Strong's Neck in whose possession it remained for over a hundred years. Near the east end of Old Homestead Road, one member of the Strong family built a house.



Old Homestead

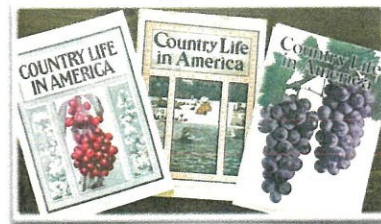
The main thoroughfare between Port Jefferson Harbor and Mt. Sinai Harbor began at Saint's Orchard Road (There was indeed a man named Saint who had an orchard.) and ran into a path that led to Mount Sinai harbor. When the path became a road, it was named Old Homestead in memory of the long-standing Strong residence.

Other than a driftwood shack, on the harbor, built in the 1800's by an African-American man known as Uncle Mott, no other dwellings are known to have existed. Uncle Mott's cabin was located, of course, at the end of Mott's Hollow Road.



Club House - Belle Terre Lodge

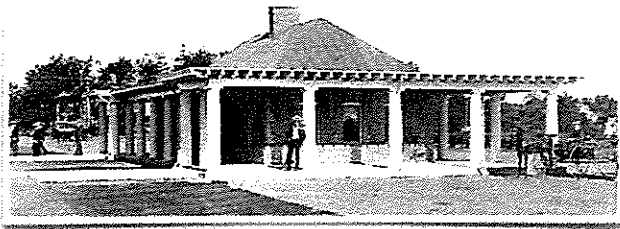
The modern history of Belle Terre began in 1902 when the "Port Jefferson Company" was formed by Dean Alvord (creator of Prospect Park South in Brooklyn) and Ralph Peters (president of the Long Island Railroad) to "attract well-heeled New Yorkers to the Belle Terre Club." Charter members included families such as the Whitneys, the Vanderbilts, the Astors and the Belmonts. Sales brochures claimed that Belle Terre was a place where one could achieve a "perfect home in the perfect surroundings."



The September 1903 issue of "Country Life in America" magazine described Belle Terre (in the language and societal references of that time) as follows:

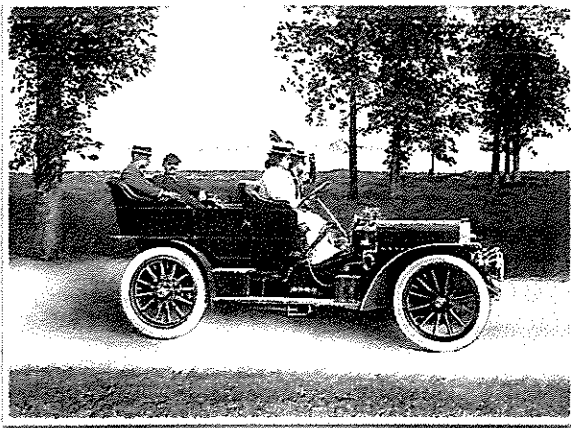
"Belle Terre is situated a distance from New York sufficient to remove it from the intrusions of the excursion element, which has proved such an annoyance to summer residents at points nearer to the city."

"Prospective buyers are invited to ride from New York on a private railroad car..."

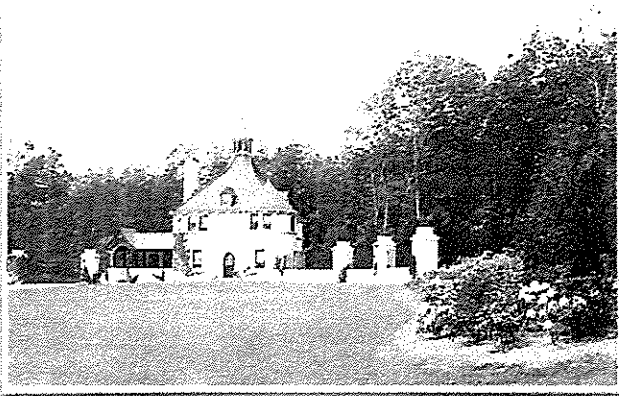


Railroad Station - Matches Pergola Design

"Leaving the handsome station, a drive over a smooth road less than a mile in length leads to the picturesque white chateau which marks the entrance to Belle Terre. This road, lying at an elevation of over two hundred feet above the water, affords a magnificent panorama at every step."

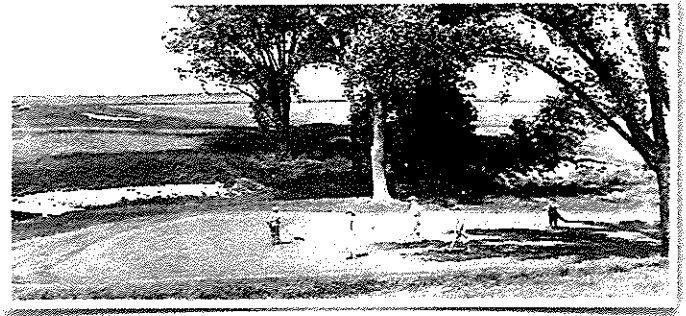


On the way to Belle Terre

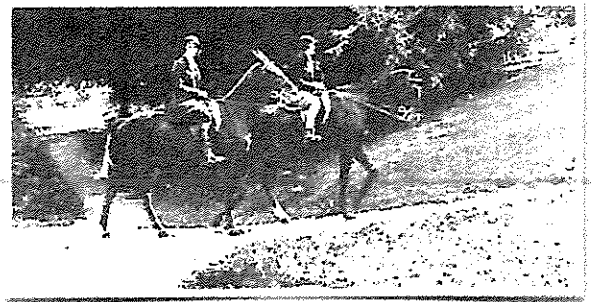


Entrance Lodge to Belle Terre

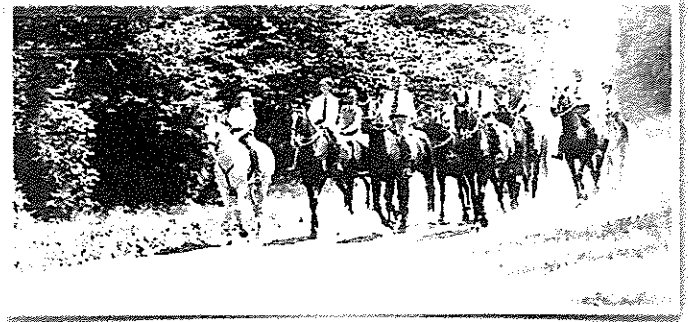
"About four hundred acres of rolling meadow are available for golf, polo, tennis and other outdoor sports which form so large a part of country life."



Golf

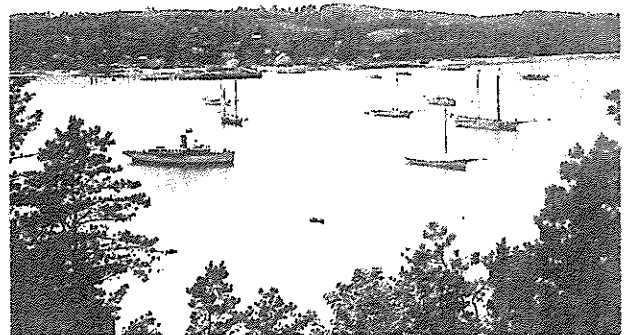


Equestrian



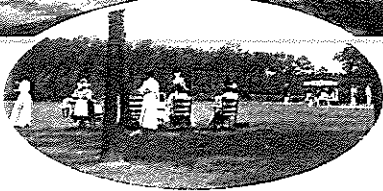
Country Life

"Belle Terre has a shore front of more than two miles on Port Jefferson Harbor, the deepest, safest and best harbor on Long Island. It is a yachtsman's paradise."



Harbor View from "Pine Top"

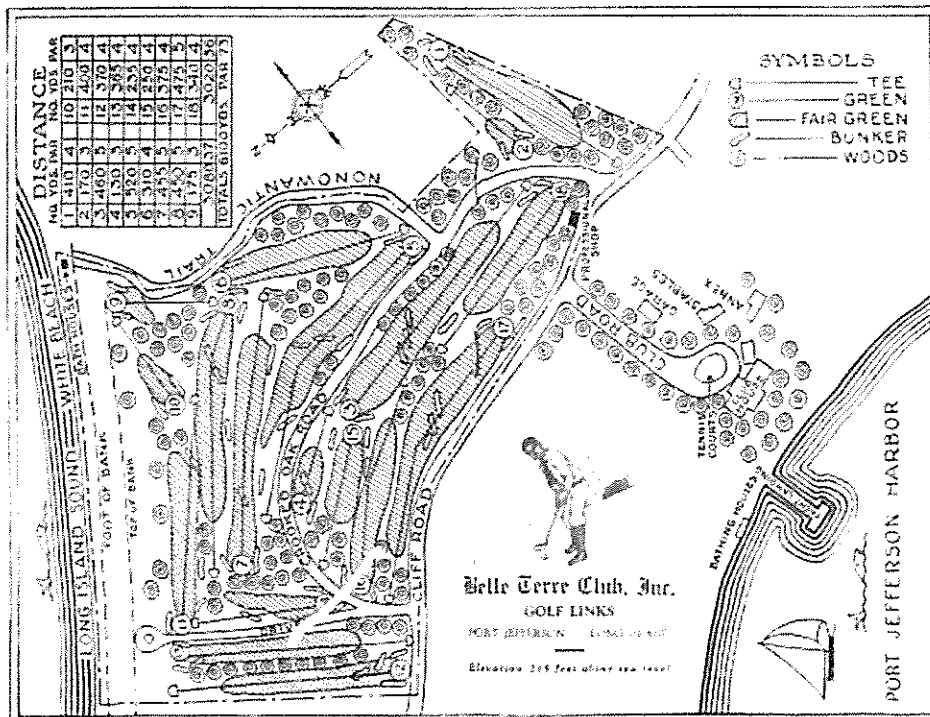
"The topography of Belle Terre is so diverse that the demands of purchasers of every variety are met. He who seeks the seclusion of a one, two or three-hundred-acre plot with its private woods, deer park, golf links, boat-house etc., or he who desires a ten or twenty-acre plot, with gardens and lawn-tennis court, can alike be satisfied."



The Pergolas at the Terminus of Cliff Road

By 1913 the economy changed dramatically forcing Dean Alvord and his company into receivership. In the 1920's the Belle Terre Club and much of its land was bought by the Fallon brothers, one of whom lived on Cliff Road opposite Club Road. The Fallons, almost immediately, sold half of their land to the Seaboard Sand and Gravel

Belle Terre Club ~ Golf Links



Company. This sale included 100 acres at the Belle Terre Point (now known as McAllister Park and Pirates' Cove.) At the time 9 holes of the 18 hole golf course were included in the sale. The Fallons hired Devereaux Emmet, brother-in-law of Stanford White (one of America's most famous architects), to design a course similar to those he had designed throughout New York State, Bermuda and Cuba. The new 9 holes were located within the area enclosed by Cliff and Crooked Oak Roads and together with the original modified holes formed the Belle Terre Club Golf Links.

In the next issue...Sand mining, the creation of Pirate's Cove, incorporation of the Village, the United States Supreme Court and more.