



Walter Granville Smith, watercolor, Summer in Bellport, 1923

The Peat Hole

Known as the Ice Pond in the late 1800's and as Edey's Pond after Birdsall Otis Edey in the early 1900's, the Peat Hole has been a special place for Bellport/Brookhaven residents and visitors for many generations." Now a partially protected sanctuary, this "natural pond within the Village of Bellport" (Post-Morrow Foundation, Newsletter) has been the subject of painted works for over a century.

In the late 19th c. and early 20th c. (before the addition of a sluice-way on the bay side) the Peat Hole was a fresh water pond fed from the north by a fresh stream. As such the area was rich with riparian vegetation and a diversity of trees. It also served as a watering hole for an impressive variety of small animals and birds. During this time the pond was a part of the Edey property. It was accessible for rowboating from the Edey's small dock to the west and, after 1900, from the Osborne Bluffs golf links to the east. Walter Granville Smith and Walter Clark both painted here. Working close to the tonalist style of his teacher, George Inness (NY), Smith responded to the pale pastel hues and warm tones created by summer light filtering through the pond's lush surrounding growth and reflecting off it's surface. In contrast the Great South Bay offered an expanded, cooler hued, vista just beyond the shore. Smith often executed his images in watercolor later translating these studies into the richer tones of oil painting on canvas. Both Walter Granville Smith and Walter Clark were influenced by European impressionism, a style which privileged a broad pallet and sketchy manner of painting over the romantic and dramatic light favored by earlier Hudson River School painters.

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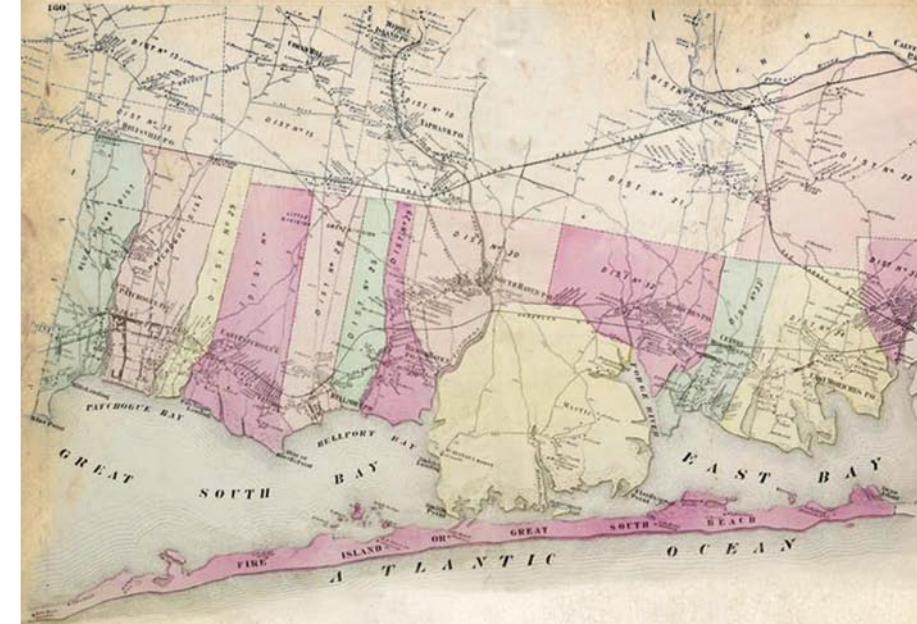
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BELLPORT/ BROOKHAVEN

- Then and Now -

AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS,
AND PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 1871 TO THE PRESENT

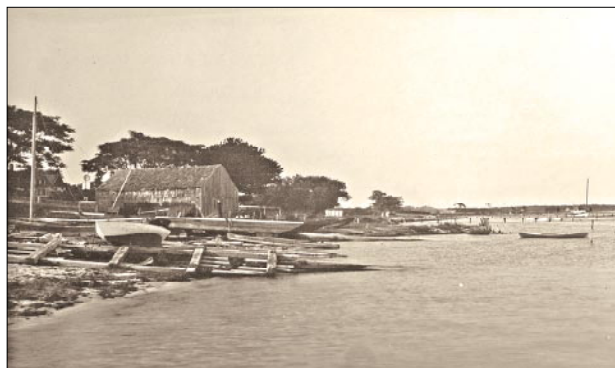
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F.O.C. Darley, watercolor, Bellport, L.I., 1871

Felix Octavius Carr Darley

Felix Darley, or as he is more commonly known, F.O.C. Darley, was born in Philadelphia, PA in 1822. He is considered by most art historians to be “Victorian Americas most famous illustrator” (www.illustratorsbook-case.com). Best known for popularizing romantic and fierce depictions of Native Americans for print in Harpers Weekly, Darley’s images also adorned important works of literature, hung on parlor walls, and illustrated banknotes of the mid 19th century. An extremely prolific artist, Darley’s work serves as a form of idyllic visual record of this period in American history. Working in watercolor and lithography, much of Darley’s subject matter involves the labor of individuals working on the land. In this exhibit are two Darley watercolors, one signed “Bellport LI,” is a charming representation of the shoreline with dwellings in the distance. In the foreground are a beached sailboat and a laborer in a straw hat dragging wood planks to a waiting horse drawn cart. Below is a photograph of the same site thirty years later.



Photograph, view of the boat basin east of current Bellport dock, 1902

Artists Summer on Long Island

Newly accessible by train from New York City, Long Island with its water saturated atmosphere, diversity of landscape, and bucolic summers began luring artists to its hamlets and villages in the later 19th century. As plein air painting became more fashionable, the beginnings of an identifiable American movement in art progressed. Long Island was fresh territory for the countryside images so favored by a growing class of wealthy industrialists who were purchasing American paintings with increasing enthusiasm. In addition to the production of their own work, artists from the 1880’s onward provided instruction in open-air painting on the island’s private estates and in their own summer schools. These summer schools and the enthusiasm they generated helped to establish a tradition of landscape painting on Long Island that continues to this day. Among the more well known of these were: William Merrit Chase’s school in Shinnecock, Douglas Connah’s in Hampton Pines, Robert Henri’s in Bayport (1914), and Marshal Fry’s in Southampton (1907-1916). Known as an unspoiled village with a delightful waterfront, Bellport, and by extension Brookhaven, provided artists the opportunity to paint undisturbed by tourists. Artists of this period were drawn to the



Frederick Kost, Carmen’s River, circa 1890’s

and on the North Shore were popular for “sketching artists,” Bellport and Brookhaven retained a serene simplicity that appealed to the artists represented in our exhibition. Walter Clark began painting in East Hampton in 1881, then seeking a quieter environment, moved to Brookhaven for his summers in 1891. Frederick Kost, perhaps influenced by Clark who exhibited his Brookhaven paintings in New York, purchased a home in the hamlet in 1906. Walter Granville Smith bought a home in Bellport in 1910. William Glackens was in Bellport as were F. O.C. Darley, Everett Shinn, Maurice Prendergast, and the female photographer Frances Toms among others.

elemental beauty of the areas landscape and water-ways and to the “painterly subjects of vacationers enjoying the peaceful outdoor life of the country” (Pisano, L.I. Landscape Painting).



W. Glackens, pencil drawing of the rear of the “cottage” he rented, 1915

William J. Glackens

For six summers, during some of the most ground breaking years in his artistic career, William J. Glackens spent his days painting in and around the village of Bellport. In 1911 he and his small family rented what was known as the Petty cottage on ‘Bellport Avenue.’ From 1912 – 1915 they rented the Carmen cottage (now 28 Bellport Lane), and in 1916, seeking to escape an outbreak of infantile paralysis, the family moved to the Cook house in Brookhaven.

Glackens took extreme pleasure from painting in the outdoors. His responsiveness to the subtle changes in nature – the color of the sky, the texture of the water and vibrant light, are apparent in his paintings of these seashore days. His rich canvases of this period mark a distinct departure from his earlier more somber work and demonstrate his development into a signal painter of the American impressionist period.

As R. Wattenmaker wrote for the Smithsonian Studies in American Art (1988): “There is a fullness of life in these seashore pictures ... lithe figures



Cara Phillips, photograph Glackens Cottage, 2007

swim, sunbath, frolic and converse while a rainbow spectrum of sand, sea and salt air surrounds them in uncrowded spaciousness ...The energetic but sure lines of his drawings are effortlessly translated into the movement and form of these painted surfaces.”