

Let There Be Light!
By Melissa Andruski

In January 1903, a group of women were agitating the subject of lighting the streets. It was time for Southold, walking in darkness since 1640, to shed some light on the matter. The Long Island Traveler printed an earnest invitation for Southold women to meet at the home of Mrs. Joseph M. Hartranft for the purpose of forming a Ladies Village Improvement Society and to bring pencils for the purpose of electing officers by ballot. A Constitution and twelve By-Laws were agreed upon for the association, officers were elected, and a lighting committee was formed.

Over the next twenty-two years the L.V.I.S. instilled a sense of good citizenship and pride in the community by tackling the laying of cement sidewalks, making sure the dirt roads were oiled and the shade trees along the streets trimmed. They added maintenance of the cemeteries to their list. They then went on to help secure the purchase of land from the Long Island Railroad at what would become, and still is today, Founder's Park or Landing. This act, the purchase of a piece of waterfront property, helped to establish the Southold Park District.

The L.V.I.S. furnished the WW I honor roll located on the Main Road lawn of the Southold Free Library. Cast in bronze and set in a substantial granite stone, it's a reminder of the brave men and women from Southold who answered the call to defend freedom in the world. The women of the L.V.I.S displayed their vigor and strength one last time by seeing through the construction of the Memorial Gateway to South Harbor Park which bears the names of William H. Griswold, Milton R. Terry, and Graham F. Glover; three men who died in WWI while in service to their country. With the completion of the South Harbor Park Gateway, the L.V.I.S. members decided it was time to retire.

In their twenty-two years of service, the Ladies had worked tirelessly circulating petitions for community projects, met with officials, and held a wide variety of entertainments and celebrations to raise money for these projects to benefit everyone in Southold. It was time for others to step forward and roll up their sleeves for there is ALWAYS work to be done!