



Suffolk  
County  
Historical  
Society

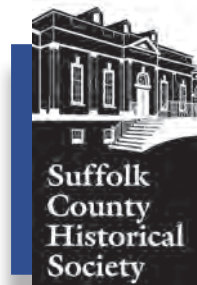
300 West Main Street  
Riverhead, NY 11901

*Past, Present, and Future, We Unite Them*

See inside  
for news  
about our  
exciting new  
exhibit:

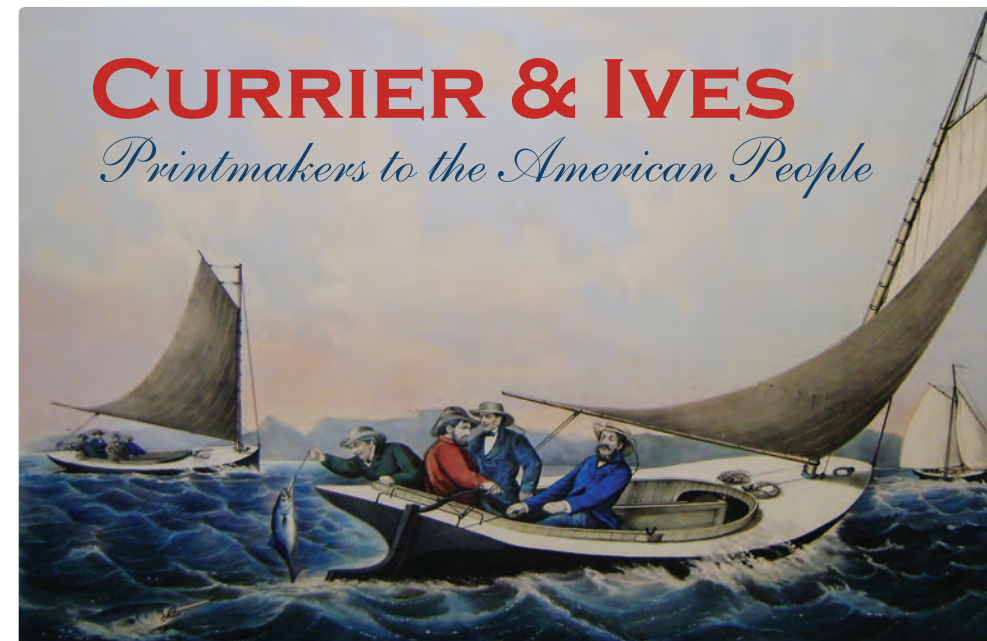
**CURRIER  
& IVES:**  
*Printmakers  
to the  
American  
People*

Non-Profit Org.  
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Riverhead  
NY 11901



*Newsletter* of the **SUFFOLK COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

300 WEST MAIN STREET • RIVERHEAD, NEW YORK 11901 • (631) 727-2881 • SUMMER/FALL 2012



**CURRIER & IVES**  
*Printmakers to the American People*

SCHS Welcomes New  
Suffolk County Historian  
Peter F. Cohalan



SCHS Director Kathryn Curran and Peter Cohalan

This remarkable new exhibit transforms the Suffolk County Historical Society's main gallery and exhibition spaces with iconic *Currier & Ives* images, celebrating the activities, events and every-day lives of 19th century Americans. More than 200 hand-colored lithographs from a private Long Island collection are on display throughout the SCHS in what very well may be the largest exhibit of *Currier & Ives* prints in the country!



*Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People* will be on display through the end of January. See box below on special events to be presented in connection with the exhibit – and read more about the exhibit and the history of *Currier & Ives* inside!

Images: Above - *Trolling for Bluefish*, Left - detail from *The Grasshopper Strut*

**Save-the-Date for these Currier & Ives Events**

**Print Appraisal Day with Robert K. Newman  
of The Old Print Shop**

**Saturday, October 6, 1-3 p.m.**

*New York City's The Old Print Shop, Inc., was founded in 1898. This historic art gallery specializes in American graphic arts, maps, atlases, artist books (livres d'artist), and art reference books. (Appraisals: \$10 per print.)*

**Wine Tasting & Gallery Talk with Martha Clara Vineyards  
and John Zak, Currier & Ives expert**

**Friday, November 9, 6-8 p.m.**

*Join us for a fun and informative evening as we sample wines and enjoy an informative talk on Currier & Ives. (\$20 per person.)*



Look for us  
on Facebook  
for all our  
latest news!

**SCHS Acquires New Mobile Museum for Educational Outreach Programs • Sponsorship Available!**

A "Mobile Museum," has been donated to the Suffolk County Historical Society by the American Museum of Natural History.

The vehicle is a 37-foot Winnebago, retrofitted as a traveling, walk-in 250 square foot exhibition space. The SCHS will utilize the Mobile Museum in our educational outreach programs at schools and at public community events.

Currently outfitted with an exhibition on Nomadic Cultures, the Mobile Museum program will be used as a supplemental education tool to expose school children to anthropologist's techniques and methods for understanding different cultures. The interactive displays and activities are designed to engage and inspire the imaginations of children of varying skill levels and ages.

The Mobile Museum vehicle will travel to schools throughout the county, offering two-day programs at each site. The Suffolk County Historical Society has hired Associate Professor Lisa Cordani-Stevenson as a part-time educator to manage the new Mobile Museum program.

Kathryn Curran, Executive Director of the Suffolk County Historical Society, stated, "We're thrilled with this generous gift from the American Museum of Natural History. The new SCHS Mobile Museum program will allow us to bring educational programming from the SCHS out to the community in a fun, interactive and instructive manner."



*The SCHS is seeking sponsors for this exciting new educational program! Sponsors are asked to contact Kathryn Curran, at (631) 727-2881 x101.*

## Letter from the Director, Kathryn M. Curran

CELEBRATING OUR 126TH YEAR, the Suffolk County Historical Society is embarking on a new and exciting path. As our stewardship of art, artifacts and archives continues and our collections grow, we are mounting fresh and innovated offerings. In the next few months look for SCHS children's programs, educational outreach to schools, collaborative events and off-site exhibitions where our collections will be shared.



Noel Gish, Bob Barauskas, Kathy Curran, John Zak, and Bob Anrig at the opening reception of the Currier & Ives exhibit

Moving forward into this exhilarating phase we are honored that the office of the newly appointed Suffolk County Historian can be found at the Suffolk County Historical Society.

The SCHS is beginning a capital campaign to add a new ADA compliant wing and a handicap parking area to our historic structure. We are very lucky to have our vision and goals supported by Riverhead Town and the Suffolk County legislature.

We continue preserving history while bringing it to the present. Come to the Suffolk County Historical Society: discover yourself, uncover the past, and learn something new!

## SCHS Receives NYSCA Grants

The SCHS has been awarded two NYSCA grants. Sponsored by the New York State Council on the Arts and administered by Museumwise, the grants are *Get Ready!* for planning and *Go!* for professional development.

The *Get Ready!* grant provides a way for organizations to learn about the processes available to aid them in creating a strategic plan. This grant provided SCHS with consultant Jackie Day, CEO of *The Long Island Museums of American Art, History and Carriages* to lead a half-day workshop with the SCHS Board of Trustees and Executive Director, focusing on interactive exercises introducing strategic and long-range planning concepts. A follow-up report on the workshop has since been submitted to the Board and Staff. This grant activity will help in initiating a framework for strategic planning.

The purpose of the *Go!* grant is to advance NY State institutions and to encourage individual development. Toward this goal, NYSCA advocates professional travel. *GO!* grants provide museum staff members and volunteers the opportunity to expand their horizons through the support of travel to other museums or professional conferences and workshops. This September, SCHS Executive Director Kathy Curran will be traveling to *The Museum Institute at Sagamore* in the Adirondacks for a four-day workshop. SCHS is grateful to be recognized by Museumwise and NYSCA for these two grants.

## Upcoming Events

### September 2012

**Dr. Sherman Mills: Health Care Instruments Past and Present from the Collection of the Suffolk County Historical Society**

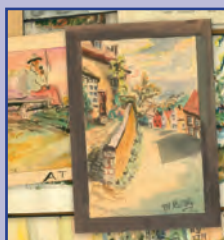


A new exhibit presented in partnership with *Stony Brook University Health Sciences Library*, featuring the antique surgical instruments of Roswell Sherman Mills, M.D. (1914-2009), *Family Practitioner and Collector of Americana*.

On view Sept 14, 2012 – June 30, 2013.  
(at the Level 3 Health Sciences Tower)  
Visit: [www.hscl.sunysb.edu](http://www.hscl.sunysb.edu) for Library hours.

### November 13, 1pm

**Tea & Talk in Honor of Veteran's Day with speaker Maggie Rice: "The War Years through the Eyes of an Artist"**

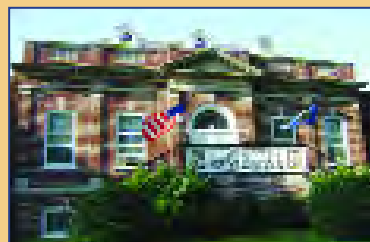


Ms. Rice will speak about her father, WWII veteran PFC Michael Reilly, tracing his journey and telling his story through the collection of artwork and writing he created in the midst of the war.

**Save-the-Date: Friday, November 30 SCHS Holiday Party "Celebrating a Winter Evening" with Currier & Ives**

Details to be announced soon - look for your mailed invitation!

## SUFFOLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



300 West Main Street  
Riverhead, NY 11901  
(631)727-2881

[www.suffolkcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.suffolkcountyhistoricalsociety.org)

### HOURS:

MUSEUM  
Tues. through Sat., 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
LIBRARY  
Wed. through Sat., 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Membership is open to everyone.  
Individual yearly dues are \$35,  
family dues are \$40.

### STAFF

Kathryn M. Curran, Director  
Lee G. Thumser,  
Gift Shop and Volunteer Coordinator  
Edward H.L. Smith, III, Librarian  
Emma Ballou, Curator  
Missy Mickens, Development Associate  
Ruth Vosburgh, Administrative Assistant  
Mary Beth Finnegan, Bookkeeper  
Doris Punzi, Receptionist  
Walter Bross, Receptionist  
Amy Folk, Collections Manager

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Georgette Grier-Key

*The Suffolk County Historical Society is a private, non-profit organization, and an Authorized Agency of Suffolk County, that receives partial funding from Suffolk County, Steve Bellone, County Executive.*

# CURRIER & IVES: Printmakers to the American People



Nathaniel Currier James Merritt Ives



Part of the exhibit in the main gallery

The firm Currier & Ives billed itself as selling "Works of art to brighten the home," "Fine Colored Prints" and as "The Grand Central Depot for Cheap & Popular Prints." Little did they know these images would play an important role in shaping the identity of the Nation.

Currier & Ives celebrated the activities, events and everyday life of 19th century Americans. Images included domestic life, historical events, city and country views, religious scenes, scenic wonders, city maps, westward expansion, trains, ships, winter scenes and hunting and fishing. Each print was titled and most were hand-colored by women who worked for the firm. The prints were sold in the New York City shop, distributed through mail-order and were offered by peddlers and by agents

Working at a time when newspapers did not have pictures, the public was interested in depictions of noteworthy events. In 1840 Nathaniel Currier (1813-1888) produced the lithograph "Awful Conflagration of the Steamboat Lexington in Long Island Sound on Monday Evening, January 13th, 1840, By Which Melancholy Occurrence One Hundred Persons Perished." The print was a resounding success and Currier's print became a sensation.

Partnering with James Merritt Ives (1824-1895) in 1834 the firm sought to sell lithographs to ordinary people, and its works hung on the walls of America's homes stores, barbershops, firehouses barrooms, out houses and barns. The firm was the most prolific and successful company of lithographers working at the time. It is estimated that the company created more than 7,400 different images and produced more than a million prints before it closed in 1907.

Below - detail from the prints: *Peytona and Fashion, 1845; Central Park Winter, 1862; Preparing for Market, 1856.*



## The Long Island Connection: Collector Harry Twyford Peters Popularized Currier & Ives

Harry Twyford Peters (1881 - 1948) is largely responsible for making the American public aware of the historical and artistic importance of Currier & Ives prints. Born into wealth from the coal business, Peter's family owned Windholme on 250 acres, the largest estate of waterfront property on the South Shore of Long Island. This gentleman's working farm in Islip Hamlet consisted of a dairy, horse and cow stables, wagon rooms, chicken coop, kennels and a piggery. The stables housed Peter's polo ponies and the kennels for his foxhounds.

A lifelong student and collector of Americana, Peters began acquiring inexpensive Currier & Ives prints as a child. Living in New York he would go to the printmakers shop on Spruce Street, where he made friends with some of the artists. When in Islip Peters met the Currier & Ives artist Thomas Worth. Worth had married Louise Stellenwerf whose father owned the Stellenworth Lake House (now the site of Brookwood Hall in East Islip). Peters became a particularly close friend to Worth and attributed his enthusiasm as a collector of Currier & Ives to "Uncle Tommy" as he called Worth. Peters was to become an expert on Currier & Ives.

In 1929 Harry T. Peters completed and published his first volume of the works of the lithographers, *Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People*. In 1932 he completed the second volume. Peters then published *America on Stone, the Other Printmakers to the American People*.

During the travails of the Great Depression, Americans had a renewed interest in the halcyon days of the past. 1932 a group of twelve prominent collectors gathered in New York City to judge what they considered would represent the best large folios produced by Currier & Ives. The late Harry Shaw Newman, proprietor of The Old Print Shop, headed the endeavor and was backed by Harry T. Peters, who furnished part of his extensive collection for the viewing.

One of the participants in this project was Charles Messer Stow, antiques editor of the *New York Sun*. Sensing a story he decided to cover this selection of the Best 50 Large Folio Currier & Ives prints. The *New York Sun* published the selected large folio print per day for 50 consecutive days. This attention sparked a renewed interest in Currier & Ives prints. Harry T. Peters was the "pioneer rediscovered" of Currier & Ives images of American life.

This first undertaking was so successful that it was repeated the following year with the small folio prints. The same group of collectors, for the most part, was asked to choose the best 50 small folio prints. In this final selection there are four medium folio prints. The prints from these two first selections of prints are now referred to as "The Old Best 50."

