

The History of the...

Coram Community Club

As with most casually documented history in small towns, there often is contradiction with dates and the precise order of occurrence. That said, what follows are two versions of the origination of the Coram Community Club...or was it the Coram Community Hall or House? Or were there possibly two separate buildings? We'll look into that further in subsequent postings.

Version #1

In July 1922, a site just west of the Methodist Parsonage (site of the Coram smoke shop) was chosen as the site for the Coram Community House. Work was started in October by a spirited group of Coram residents. Using lumber purchased from the demobilized Camp Upton, the building was completed five months later. Many of the members contributed freely of their labor and funds to complete the building by holding minstrel shows, card parties and other fundraising events.



Picture of the Coram Community House taken from a video. The Coram Methodist Parsonage is right next to it.

In March, 1923, the Community House held a formal opening. Seventy Five people were treated to a “bountiful supper”, which was provided by the Ladies’ Aid, as well as the entertainment. There were recitations by Reverend Gray of the Coram Methodist Church and songs were sung by the Community Chorus.

The building served as a meeting place for various groups for civic, organizational and social purposes. Political meetings were also held by members of both political parties.

A sweet sixteen party was held in 1954 (I guess they had them even then). In 1923 a well-advertised hot dog social was held. Hot dogs were first introduced at the Polo grounds in 1903, so it took some time for this treat make its way to Coram.

In 1955 the Community House was moved to the Old Middle Country Road (the street just north of Friendly’s). The land was deeded to the organization through the heirs of the late Capt. Henry B. Smith, to carry out his wishes that the one acre parcel be used for civic purposes. It was decided by the membership that it be known as the Capt. Henry B. Smith Park. A boulder in the front of the building has a plaque marking this designation.



Picture of the Coram Community Center as it appears today (it is now a private residence, but it does have the commemorative plaque).



BY DEED OCTOBER 1954

THIS SITE WAS DEEDED TO
THE CORAM COMMUNITY CLUB
BY THE HEIRS OF
CAPT. HENRY SMITH
OF CORAM
TO FULFILL HIS DESIRE THAT IT BE GIVEN
TO THE COMMUNITY OF CORAM FOR ITS USE
IT IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
TO HIS MEMORY

The Community House remained in use until at least 1977, afterwards it was sold.

UPDATE: The building still stands at 33 Old Middle Country Road in Coram, but now is owned by Suffolk Transportation as it resides right next to their bus yard off of Old Town Road. Because of major renovations to the property (the building remains) and the stone monument had to be moved. Suffolk Transportation was kind enough to contact the Coram Civic who notified the Davis Town Meeting House Society who, along with the assistance of TOB Supervisor Ed Romaine, arranged for the shipping of the stone monument to the grounds of the Davis Town Meeting House (a/k/a Lester H. Davis House) in Coram on November 19, 2015 where it now resides.



Version #2

(Taken from an account written by Gladys Vunck and published by the Brooklyn Eagle on November 6, 1939 and as posted on the Longwood Journey website).

Coram Community Hall Is Gift of Harold Davis

It is Open Day and Night to All the Residents

By Gladys Vunck
Brooklyn Eagle
November 6, 1939

Coram, Nov. 6—When Omar Khayyam wrote "There was the door to which I found no key," he might had he been a Harold F. Davis contemporary, have been referring to the door of the Community Hall here. That has no key.

It is open all day and night to anyone who cares to use it. That's the way Harold Davis wants it...with the door on the latch. It's been open day and night for more than a year...ever since Harold Davis saw the need for a recreational center for Coram and the surrounding rural

communities and provided one at his own expense. He equipped it, unlocked the door and threw away the key.

“Come on in neighbors,” he said in effect, and the neighbors came in and made themselves at home.

The hall itself is but a stone’s throw from the old Davis homestead and is on the Davis acres, where it was moved after Davis bought it at Yaphank in the government sale at Camp Union buildings.



Picture of the entrance to the Coram Community House from a video.

It was used at one time earlier in Mr. Davis’ incumbency in office as Brookhaven Town superintendent of highways for storing town machinery. When the erection of a fireproof shed on town property left the building idle, he conceived the idea of converting it into a community hall.

He had a handsome new front designed and built; he had a new floor laid and the ceiling lowered; he had the interior finished in waxed pine, and then he went about equipping it—all at his own expense.

The wide bay windows were brightly curtained and outfitted with cushioned seats. A huge fireplace, a pool table and a standard ping pong table were put in, and battleship linoleum laid. A shower room was installed. A kitchen was set up with a shining smooth topped.

Gas range and a silver metaled sink built into a generous unit of enameled utility cabinets. The hall was ready.

Mr. Davis’s original thought was that the place would provide a center for the youth of the community but no limitations were set and the building has been in daily use ever since by boys from 6 to 60. Women, too, are welcome and drift in occasionally to occupy the comfortable lounge chairs, watch a spirited game of darts or kibitz over the shoulders of checker players doing a bit of skilled jumping at the inlaid checker table.

About the entire place there is that general casual air that assures male comfort but here and there are touches that that betray a woman’s hand.

Mrs. Davis confessed to selecting the curtains and placing the growing plants in sunny spots. “Other than that,” she said, “I had nothing to do.”

“When the pool table was put in, I planned to learn the game but I haven’t got around to it yet” she said.

The pantry contains a supply of edibles including boxes of pancake makings, and the dish closet plenty of dishes and a griddle. Pancake making, Mrs. Davis revealed, is one of the favorite indoor winter sports. A carefully dried wishbone, however, gave proof of more versatile culinary skill.

From the time frost sets in, there's a fire in the fireplace. Ornamenting the chimney breast and in the place of honor is a huge golden trophy. It's the trophy one lot of Harold Davis' "boys"—the Brookhaven Town Highway Department baseball team—won as champions in the Brookhaven Town Firemen's League this summer.