

## *The History of the...* **THE BRUSH HOUSE**

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The Brush House, Northeast Corner of Route 112 and Route 25 (Middle Country Road), Photo Courtesy of Davis Erhardt Collection

**George Sayre Brush**, the owner of the Brush home in Coram from 1902 to 1915 was the son of Jonathan B. Brush and Mary Ann Valentine Brush of Cairo, Greene County, NY. George was born in 1845. His middle name, Sayre, was in honor of the family's Episcopal Minister, Reverend Sayre. Since George's day, an "s" has been added to the name making it Sayres. It continues until this day to be a popular middle name for Brush family members.

By the age of 23, George had moved from upstate New York to Brooklyn where he held a variety of jobs: clerk, warehouse supervisor, butter and produce salesman, and mason and builder. He, together with a partner, Archibald J. Robertson, organized a stock company for the purpose of selling, manufacturing, and inventing

wiring systems for the electric railway. He married Matilda Bergen and they had one daughter, Mary, who was born in 1873 and sadly died that same year at the age of 7 months.

By 1893 George's 1st wife Matilda had also died and George married Elizabeth Norton (always referred to as Lizzie) on July 21st of that year. Together they moved to Jamaica, NY and then to Coram in 1902 where they opened a small country store on the side of their home, which was located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Routes 25 and 112. The house was conveniently located in close proximity to the town pump so business prospered. George and Elizabeth had 4 children: Dorothy, Marjorie, George Sayres, and Edith. When he was old enough George Junior was placed in charge of the candy section of the family store. From what he hear that was the first time this section showed a profit - apparently before he began to



Seated married couple are George Sayres Brush and Elizabeth Norton Brush. The other woman is a nanny. The children are Dorothy, Marjorie and George (Mrs. Henry's Grandfather) and Edith. Photo from the collection of Mrs. Dorothy Henry

watch over it the other children were helping themselves on a regular basis to the selection of penny candies. In addition to keeping a close watch over his father's inventory, young George ran trap lines for muskrat and fox and constructed in the Coram house a crystal radio receiver through which he received signals from as far away as Arlington, VA, an accomplishment for which he was written up in the local newspaper.

In 1915 Lizzie Brush agreed to sell the family home together with a parcel of 18 acres of land on the southwest corner of Routes 112 and 25 to John and Anna Pfundstein. The Brush family moved to Patchogue. George, who was quite a bit older than Lizzie, died in 1930. In her later years, Lizzie traveled a great deal spending time with one of her children, then another. She died in 1965 at the age of 92 and was buried in Selden beside her husband.



*In early November 1923, Babe Ruth and other baseball players played an exhibition game in Riverhead. On their way home one of the cars had an accident and the group went to the Coram Inn, where they enjoyed dinner and "merrymen" One of the men named Scott had an appointment in New York, and hired Jake Baczinsky to take him to the city. Accompanied by Will Wittschack they motored in returning on Saturday. Local tradition claims that the Babe gave them \$100 for the ride. Big money in 1923. Jake and Will spent the night in the city and returned to Coram the following day.*

## BABE RUTH STOPS AT CORAM

On his way from Riverhead, where he had played base ball last week, the great "Bambino" Babe Ruth, stopped at Heene's Coram Inn, and gave a dinner and reception to Miss "Babe" Schein, who was the chief hostess. Miss Schein is also the great batter's secretary.

After some good "eats" prepared by the culinary expert, Mrs. Heene, dancing and merry making were indulged in until the wee early hours, when the guests departed for the Great City, determined to return soon again.

Among those present, besides the mighty Babe and Miss Schein were Jack Scott, Harry Hesse, John Fae, Paul Dietz and wife, Mr. Savage and wife, Miss Lillian Russell, Mr. Press, Miss Helen Russell, Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Hupfel, Carl J. Haysor.

E. Heene had the reception rooms tastily decorated with fall wild flowers and oak leaves, which made a pretty contrast with the latest designs of sport suits worn by the ladies.

-Port Jefferson Echo - November 1923

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Tel. 481-F-12 Selden

**Coram  
Inn**

E. HEENE, Manager

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*When the Babe visited in 1923 Prohibition was still the law of the land. He was known to enjoy an occasional libation. We do not know for sure if alcohol flowed freely that night, but a year later in 1924 the Inn was raided by the Feds, who confiscated a quantity of illegal alcohol.*

*Somehow we can't picture the Babe drinking iced tea.*

*Written by,  
Mrs. Dorothy Henry  
Sept. 2007*

## Site of the Brush House - 2015



All information as published by Longwood journey ["Brush House"](#)

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