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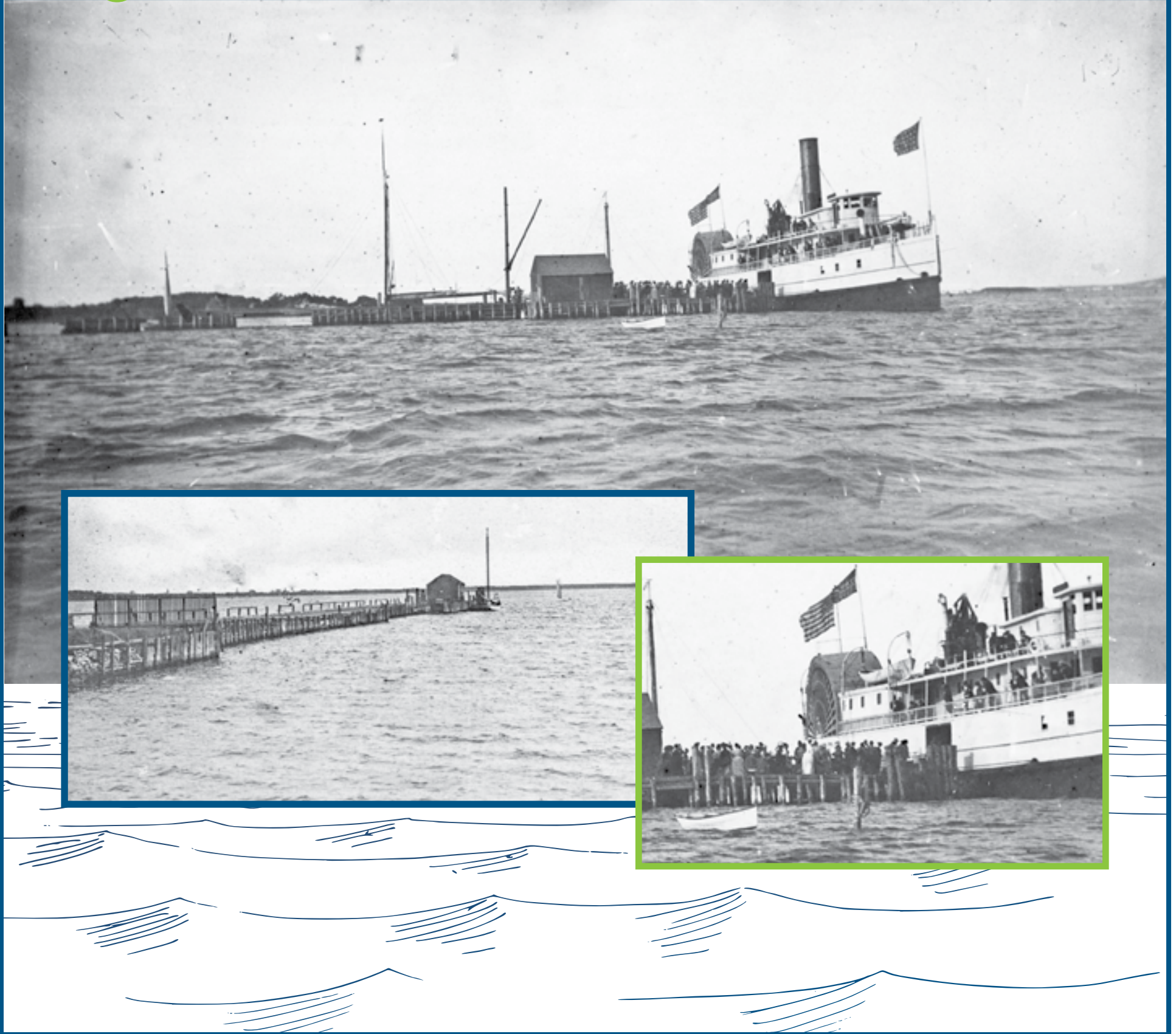


Peconic Bay SHOPPER



August 2020

preserving North Fork history



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

A look at some old local postcards.

TOURIST CENTERFOLD MAP





Peconic Bay SHOPPER

preserving your North Fork history

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On the Cover—

The importance of the Southold Wharf, or Terry's Dock, to the people of the North Fork and Shelter Island is explained in the story "Steamboat Nostalgia" on the following page. This reprint, written by Becky Terry for the *Peconic Bay Shopper* over forty years ago, is brought to light because of the great pictures loaned to the PBS from the Southold Library Whitacker Collection thanks to Melissa Andruski (including the postcards on pages 3 and 5).

The top cover photo was made from a plate taken by D. George Wells Fitz in the 1880s labeled "The New York boat at J.B. Terry's dock at Town Harbor, Southold."

The smaller photo on the left is a 1907 view of the dock looking toward Shelter Island.

On the right is a blowup of the larger picture showing the human cargo boarding.



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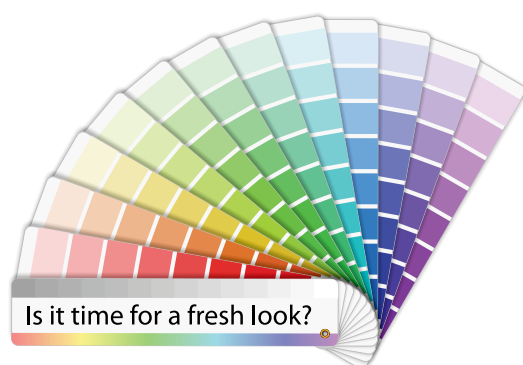


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Steamboat Nostalgia

Founder's Landing at Southold was a busy commercial and shipping area during the latter 1800's-- the center of activity being the Terry Wharf. In 1856 Jonathan B. Terry, to accommodate his produce and commission business, built the wharf and established a steamboat line to New York City. The steamers *Cygnnet*, *Manhanset* and *W.W. Coit* all called at Southold, the first stop by *Coit* on June 7, 1876. A competition of sorts developed among the personnel of the steamboats, the Traveler reporting, "The rival steamboats keep up a hot contest; it seems the Frances gets the passengers, the *Coit* gets the freight." Capt. George C. Gibbs was skipper of the *Coit* owned by the Montauk and New York Steamboat Co., leaving New York City thrice weekly for Orient, Greenport, Shelter Island, Sag Harbor and Southold.

Charles Ledyard, a produce merchant, had trained his horse to meet the early morning boat. Baldwin Payne, a neighbor, would harness the horse and send him on his way to the harbor. On the driverless wagon he put a sign:

Don't stop this horse, but let him go it

To meet his boss who's on the *Coit*.

Besides the humor of steamboat days, there was also tragedy. In July 1882 as the *Coit* approached the coast of Huntington, the cry of "man overboard" was heard. James Cleveland, en route to Southold to spend the Fourth with his family, was seen to either fall or jump into the Sound. All attempts at rescue failed being hampered by the darkness of the evening.

At its height the Terry Wharf area included a lumberyard, coal pocket, ship's chandlery and ice house. Also at the site was Buckley's store, selling flour, feed, grain and family groceries for cash or barter. Old timers recall the rail car which carried farm products to the end of the wharf. Many a



child would hitch a ride on the car which was pushed by good-natured dock workers.

Perhaps one of the most elegant steamers was the *Shelter Island*. Described as the latest in modern construction, she made her maiden voyage to Southold in July, 1880. She "behaved splendidly, causing hardly a tremor" with 44 commodious staterooms for passenger comfort. Summer visitors returning to the city from the East End much preferred the clean cool steamer trip to the (especially then) hot, sooty atmosphere of a Long Island Railroad car.

Other steamboats of that period included the *Montauk* and the

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Shinnecock. The *Montauk* ran out of New London, stopping at Sag Harbor, Southold and Greenport. (During World War I the *Shinnecock* was used as a hospital ship, carrying wounded soldiers from port to port along the Atlantic coast.)

On Dec. 10, 1886 the sale of the J.B. Terry business at Town Wharf to William Buell of Orient was reported. Mr. Buell was to conduct the new business. A grand testimonial and farewell supper was held at Temperance Hall in honor of the man who had brought the steamboats to Southold. A sumptuous buffet featuring oysters, complete with speeches of appreciation helped speed J.B. Terry and his family on their way to a Florida vacation.

As to the Wharf -- its ownership in 1908 passed from the L.I.R.R. to the Southold Park District, where it gave many years of pleasure to boatmen and fishermen and kids who first learned to dive off its wooden planks! The hurricane of 1954 brought such damage that a meeting of the voters determined (not without much soul-searching) that the old wharf should be demolished. Today, descendants of those who flocked to the Terry Wharf to see the exciting arrival of the steamboats now enjoy another form of boat watching at the Orient Point ferry. Perhaps this too will some day be viewed with nostalgia!



The postcard above shows the pier off the south of the Wharf House at Founders' Landing.



Left is the Wharf House as it stands today, beautifully restored and maintained by the Southold Park District.

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Postcard of Southold Town Beach published by Hawkin's Stationery Store, Southold; printed by the Albertype Co., Brooklyn NY, date unknown.



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Postcard of Goose Bay Estates, Southold, also published by Hawkin's Stationery Store.

The view today on the right shows the opposite shore with several homes along the water's edge.



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