



Grand Opening of Historic Davis Town Meeting House in Coram this Sat, April 13, 2024 at 11am

For Immediate Release, April 8, 2024, Coram, NY

After a multi-year renovation, a treasured Brookhaven Town Landmark is ready for its close up – no eclipse glasses needed!

The historic Davis Town Meeting House will celebrate its Grand Opening on Saturday, April 13, 2024 at 11:00am at 263 Middle Country Road in Coram, NY.



While passersby of the circa 1750 Davis House have certainly noticed the exterior improvements, many may have wondered: what about the inside? The Grand Opening is the chance to explore within.

Open to the public and free of charge, the April 13th event will feature re-enactors from the 3rd NY Regiment 1775, docent-led tours of the interior restoration, traditional baked cake tastings, and walks to the adjacent Davis Family burying ground. Festivities will begin on the front porch with a Scout Honor Guard, proclamations and introductions of elected officials and Davis Family members.

Visitors to the Clerk's office, added to the east side of house in 1891 by Daniel Roe Davis, will receive commemorative certificates embossed with the Clerk's official seal. An outdoor petting zoo will be available for youngsters. Local history books, tote bags and mugs will also be for sale.



Long time area residents may remember when grazing cows from the Davis Dairy Farm brought local car traffic to a standstill -- on a daily basis. Mini cow and cowbell souvenirs will be given out, and refreshments and snacks will be served.

Of note is the Town Meeting Exhibit in the Election Room on the second floor. The house served as the seat of Brookhaven Town government for almost a century. Annual town meetings and elections were held at the Davis House each April, beginning in 1800 with tavern proprietor Goldsmith Davis – who'd survived being hung upside down in his well by the British for refusing to divulge military information during the Revolution.



April Town Meetings at the Davis House were day-long, often raucous gatherings. Viewed as “the event of the year,” voters came to the “capital” in Coram in horse-drawn wagons from all over. This practice lasted through the ownership of Captain Lester H. Davis in 1885, when Brookhaven was divided into separate election districts. Under Captain Davis, the homestead also served as the base for a horse artillery company for the State Militia in defense of Suffolk County. Militia officers met regularly here and used the nearby training field still cleared at the Daniel R. Davis Sanctuary, northwest of the home.

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Remarkably, with only a two-year exception, from the time the house was first occupied in the 1750s by Elijah Davis, until its sale to the Town of Brookhaven in 1999, all the owners of the house were direct male descendants of Foulk Davis, who came from Wales to Southampton, Long Island in 1642.

Many Davises were active participants in local politics and, as was the practice, used the home as their office. They held a wide variety of Brookhaven and Suffolk County elected positions including Fence Viewer, Board Member, Justice of the Peace, Clerk and Treasurer.

Though early office-holding and voting were male-dominated, the “Votes For Women” movement will also be addressed at the Grand Opening. Alma Quackenbush Davis (right) was a known suffragist who, according to grandson Randall Davis, “marched down Fifth Avenue in Manhattan in support of the cause. I also recall her saying that it was a windy day and she was holding a flag on a long pole, which caused a male bystander to yell to her: Don’t let it go, girly!” Alma held on.



Randy and other Davis Family descendants will return to Coram for the weekend. They will be on hand this Saturday at what was once their family home to reminisce with attendees. The Davis Family has long supported the restoration efforts undertaken by the volunteers of the Davis Town Meeting House Society, Inc., in conjunction with the Town of Brookhaven, its Parks Department and Historian’s Office. The house has also greatly benefitted from grants and programs from New York State, the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office and SC Legislature, and the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation.

The Davis Town Meeting House Society, Inc. is a 501c3 charitable organization formed to restore and champion the conservancy of the historic Lester H. Davis House. The Society’s volunteers are delighted to welcome the public back inside -- and out. Come see what we’ve been up to!

For additional info, contact Society President Suzanne Johnson, 631-839-0490 suzej222@yahoo.com or Gail Lynch-Bailey, 631-921-6971 gailybaily@aol.com

