

# 9 Layton Street, Roslyn, NY

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## *A Historic Report*



*TKS Historic Resources, Inc.*

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## History

As early as 1896 the beginnings of this neighborhood were apparent on a historic map of Roslyn from that year. Located west of Hempstead Harbor and West Shore Drive, the first houses were on the north side of the Old Northern Boulevard. By 1906, Mott Avenue was laid out defining the northern edge of the neighborhood and referencing the old Mott Farm to the north, part of which was bought by George Eastman for future development. The majority of the rest of the surrounding land was made up of farms and estates such as the Oakman estate to the south known as Oakdene. Later this would be Waldene owned by Henry D. Walbridge.<sup>1</sup>

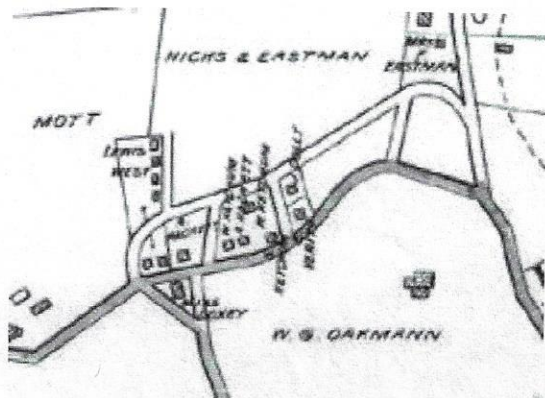


Figure 1 1906 Map  
(www.historicmapworks.com)

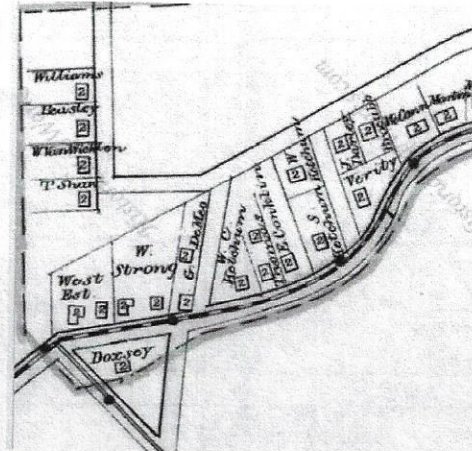


Figure 2 1914 Map  
(www.historicmapworks.com)

Streets were laid between Mott Avenue and Old Northern Boulevard and by 1906 houses began to fill the newly defined plots of land. This trend continued and by 1914 there were more than a dozen two-story wood frame houses scattered about.<sup>2</sup> In looking at the houses today, it is clear that some of the houses dates of construction preceded their appearance on the historic maps as evidenced by their styles. The reason for this discrepancy is that these houses were moved from West Shore Road as a result of the expansion of that thoroughfare.<sup>3</sup> Today this neighborhood is a treasure trove of intact mid-to late nineteenth century vernacular houses. The original street stones are still on Hicks Street which is currently a dead end street but used to connect Mott Avenue and Old Northern Boulevard.

<sup>1</sup> Map of Long Island, Brooklyn, NY: Hyde & Company, 1896; Atlas of Nassau County, Long Island, NY, Brooklyn, NY: E. Belcher-Hyde, 1906, p. 3; Robert D. MacKay, Anthony K. Baker and Carol A. Traynor eds., *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects 1860-1940*, New York: WW Norton & Co, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> 1906 map; Atlas of Nassau County, Long Island, NY, Brooklyn, NY: 1914, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Myrna Sloan, May 8, 2015.

9 Layton Street was moved to its present location between 1906 and 1914. It rests on a cement foundation as opposed to what was probably originally a brick foundation. The name first associated with the property is seen on the 1914 map, G. DeMeo. Gaetano DeMeo, according to the 1915 New York census, lived here or in the house on the south end of the property with his wife Fillomena and two sons, Tony Conti and James DeMeo. Gaetano immigrated from Italy in 1884 and Fillomena in 1909; Gaetano owned a grocery store. Other people in this neighborhood were also working class with professions ranging from painters to teamsters. The vast majority were US born with some immigrants from Poland and Italy.<sup>4</sup>

The next owner found was Walentina (aka Valentina) Golon. Census information on Walentina was scant but in 1925 she and her husband Steve Golon lived in Oyster Bay with their children Sally, Tessie and Joseph. Walentina (listed as Waltina on the 1925 Census) and Steve immigrated from Poland in 1908 and 1902 respectively and the children were born in the United States. Steve worked as a gardener, Waltina worked as a laundress and Sally, the oldest and 15 at the time worked as a bookkeeper.<sup>5</sup> In 1948, Walentina's heirs which included the three children named above plus an additional son, Stanislaw, sold 9 Layton Street to William and Grace Bedell. It was later inherited by their daughter, Albertia Bedell.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 1915 New York State Census; 1930 US Federal Census.

<sup>5</sup> 1925 New York State Census.

<sup>6</sup> Liber 3610, pages 21-28. Nassau County Land Records, property card for 9 Layton Street, Roslyn, NY.

## Architecture

Built circa 1890, the residence at 9 Layton Street in Roslyn Village is illustrative of late nineteenth century vernacular design. It originated as a simple, one-and-a half story, two-bay side gable structure with a partial shed-roof porch containing decorative brackets, balustrade and newel posts. The house was constructed following an austere hall-and-parlor plan, just two rooms wide and one room deep on the first floor. Architecturally, it can be categorized under the National Folk House style, popular throughout the nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. It has recently been restored and enlarged with the addition of a double roof dormer on the main block and a rear extension which steps down from the original house. The recent extension does not detract from the original appearance or style of the house. All period appropriate materials were utilized in the restoration, including the novelty siding, two-over-two replacement windows, replicated porch brackets and decking, as well as custom made newel posts (saved from a previous restoration effort).<sup>7</sup> Additionally, historic hardware utilized to hold the original shutters on the house was discovered and shutters were replicated for historic accuracy. Attention to architectural details, both past and present, are what makes this charming home significant.

Unlike many of the late nineteenth century architectural high styles such as French Second Empire or Queen Anne, the National Folk House style is more of a simple and economical vernacular form with deep roots in American building tradition. Folk Houses were the product of non-professional builders and the form was determined by local needs and traditions rather than a trend or fashionable mode.<sup>8</sup> In the northeast, Folk Houses can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when early settlers built primarily linear-plan homes with heavy timber framing covered by boards or shingles. These modest, working class houses were built in one or one-and-a-half stories with the single story configured in a hall-and-parlor plan. The house contained only one exterior door which was usually off-center. The hall-and-parlor plan consisted of two rooms, side by side, without a separating central hallway.<sup>9</sup> The hall was not a passageway; it was a multipurpose room that generally contained living space and a kitchen. The parlor was the more private of the two rooms, generally smaller and sometimes used for receiving guests or as sleeping quarters (see figure 3).<sup>10</sup>

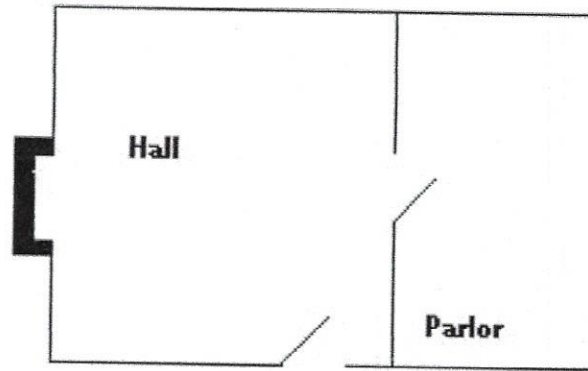
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<sup>7</sup> Phone interview with John Collins by Karen A. Kennedy, May 12, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> *Old House Journal*, August 2006, [www.oldhousejournal.com](http://www.oldhousejournal.com)

<sup>9</sup> John A. Jakle, Robert W. Bastian, and Douglas K. Meyer, *Common Houses in America's Small Towns*, University of Georgia Press: Athens, Georgia, 1989, page 111.

<sup>10</sup> New Hampshire Architectural Survey Manual, [www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/documents/appendix\\_domesticstyles.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/documents/appendix_domesticstyles.pdf)



Front door

### Hall and Parlor Plan

Figure 3 Photo Credit: [www.preservationgreensboro.typepad.com](http://www.preservationgreensboro.typepad.com)

With the coming of the railroad between 1850 and 1890, the availability of cheap lumber and the invention of balloon frame construction significantly changed the nature of National Folk House production. Former materials and labor intensive construction techniques such as hand hewn framing could only be found in remote areas where there was no access to rail service. As construction techniques advanced and changed, the plan of the hall-and-parlor folk house remained much the same for economical reasons. What differentiated the pre-and post-railroad forms was the porch. Earlier, pre-railroad examples contain full-width porches, while later examples have smaller entry porches (Figure 4) or in some cases, no porch at all (Figure 5).<sup>11</sup>



Figure 4 Photo Credit: [www.flickr.com/photos/jenwaller](http://www.flickr.com/photos/jenwaller)

<sup>11</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1984, pages 78, 89, 94, 98.

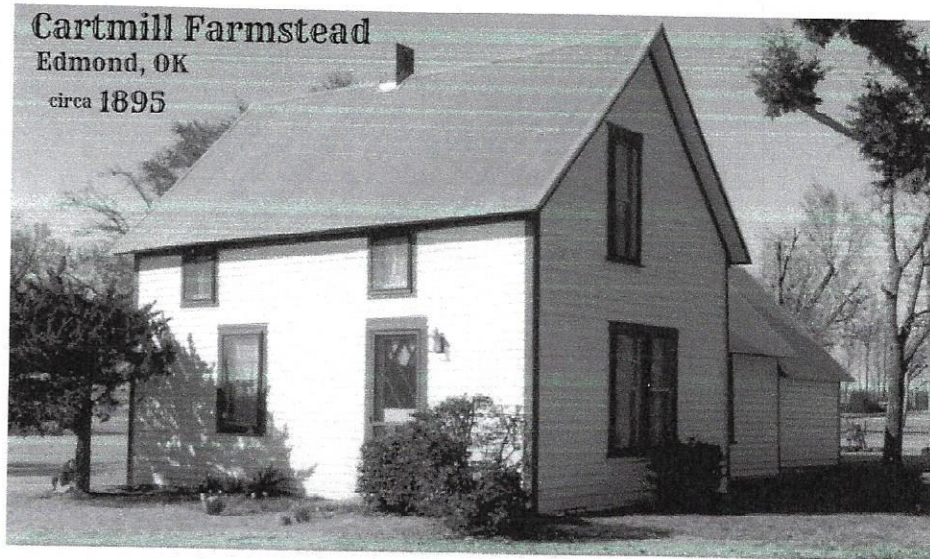


Figure 5 Photo Credit: [www.eastfallshouse.com](http://www.eastfallshouse.com)

Light roof framing did allow for the creation of new homes to be constructed with varied and flexible floor plans. However, expanded house plans also meant increased construction costs and many working class families could not afford to build anything that would be larger or more expensive. Much like the early hall-and-parlor plans, the house at 9 Layton Street was built with just two rooms, side by side, on the first floor. Today, the interior dividing wall on the first floor has been removed to create one large room, adapting it to more contemporary use.

## Bibliography

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*Old House Journal*. August 2006. [www.oldhousejournal.com](http://www.oldhousejournal.com)

### Deeds

Liber 3610, Page 21, June 5, 1948

Liber 3610, Page 25, June 10, 1948

### Censuses

1915 New York State Census

1925 New York State Census

1930 United States Federal Census

### Interviews

Myrna Sloan by Sarah Bean Apmann, May 8, 2015.

John Collins by Karen A. Kennedy, May 12, 2015.

### Maps

Atlas of Nassau County, Long Island, NY. Brooklyn, NY: E. Belcher-Hyde. 1906.

Atlas of Nassau County, Long Island, NY. Brooklyn, NY: E. Belcher-Hyde. 1914.

Map of Long Island. Brooklyn, NY: Hyde and Company. 1896.

Websites

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