

# TURKEM'S REST PRESERVE



## Property Description

The Town and Suffolk County purchased the 5.99-acre property on South Midway Road in 2006 from the Sposato Family. The parcel is bordered by Fresh Pond on the north and by South Midway Road and Dickerson Creek on the south. Approximately 40 percent of the property is tidal wetlands consisting of spartina grass and other vegetation. The remaining portion is upland woods with wild cherry, oak and black locust trees.

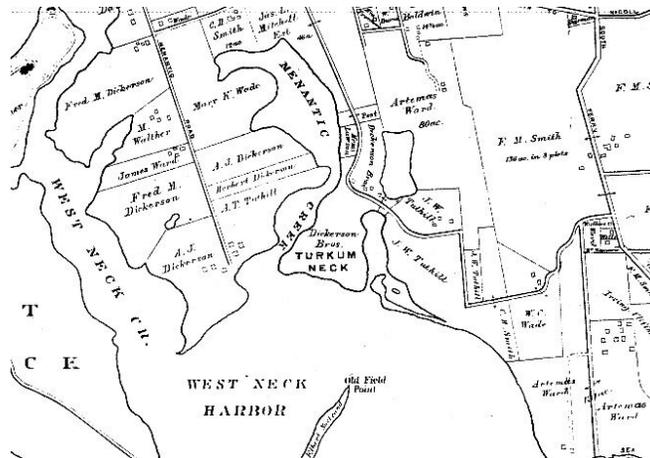
A Manhasset medicine man, “The Turkey Man,” was known to have lived in this area, hence the Turkem’s Rest name for the Preserve. (“Turkem” has a varied spelling of “Turkum” on some old maps.)

## Access

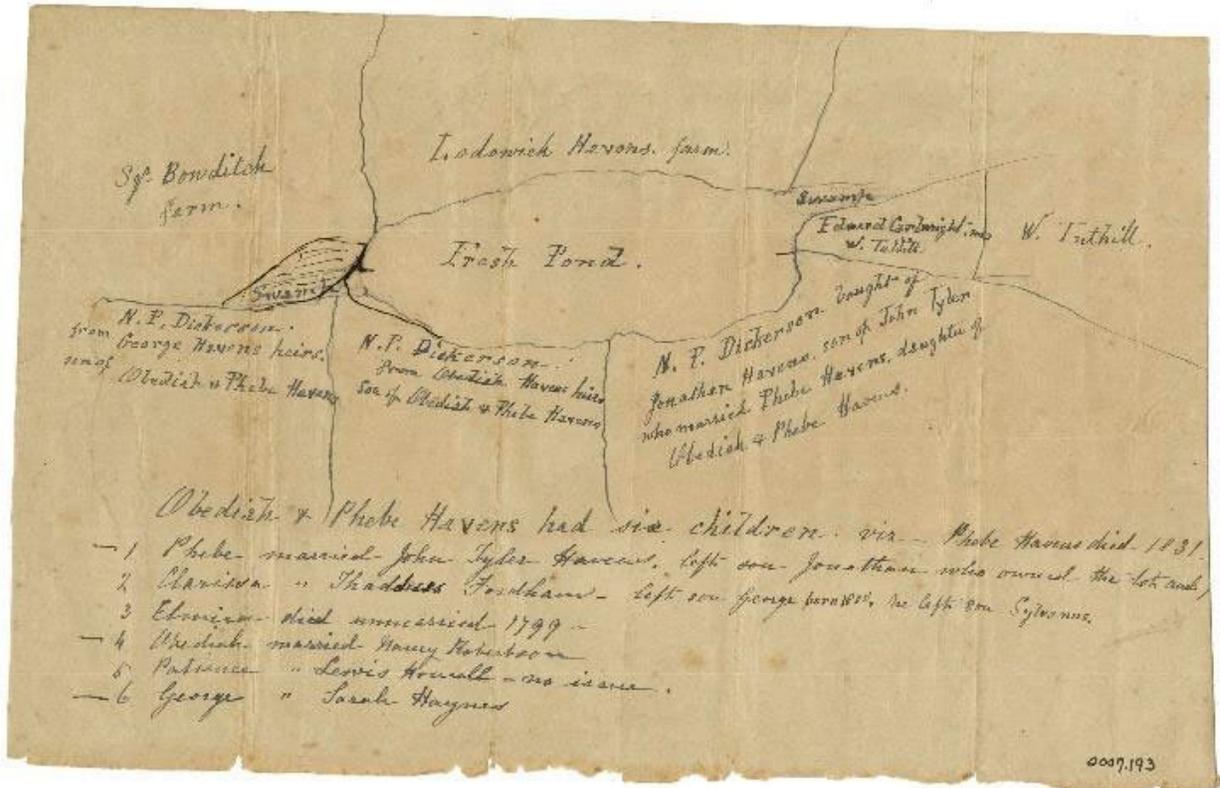
Access is from Midway Road. A circular trail winds around the preserve; on either side are two tidal wetlands that are nominally part of Dickerson Creek. A bench has been provided for the contemplation of the beauty and serenity that can be absorbed by even the most casual observer. Once the migratory resident geese leave, you will be treated to the sight of blue herons, snowy egrets and cormorants. At the trail’s midpoint, you’ll come upon the Island’s largest body of fresh water, Fresh Pond.

## Prior Owners/History

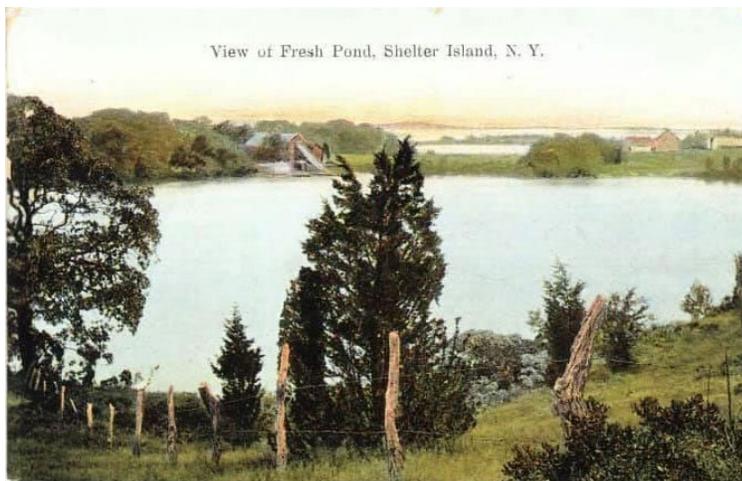
Turkem’s Rest Preserve’s history reaches back centuries. In 1999 one of the previous owners commissioned an archeological survey. The survey concluded that aboriginal populations lived on or near the site from 500 to 1500 A.D. The survey found and catalogued evidence of such habitation. Later, a community of Native Americans, part of the Algonkian-speaking clan called Manhasset, lived on the shores of the Pond.



In the 1700s George Havens purchased 1,000 acres from Nathaniel Sylvester II and later gave his son Johnathan Havens 200 acres which included the Preserve area. The property came down through the family to Obediah Havens and was sold to N.P. Dickerson in the 1850s.



The Dickerson family owned and farmed most of Turkem's Neck. The hand drawn map c. 1830 indicates the "Dickerson Brothers" still owned much of the property around Fresh Pond.



Fresh Pond is described as a "kettle hole" because of its shape. Spring fed, the pond depends solely on rainwater and the underlying aquifer to maintain its level. The post card view from 1906 looks across Fresh Pond to the seaside farms of Kemah (meaning "in the face of the wind") built between 1740 and 1750 and Nathaniel Dickerson's home where an icehouse can be seen in the background. In the winter remnants of the foundation from the icehouse can be found along the shoreline of the Preserve.



During the winter months, men would harvest ice from ponds around the Island. They would mark off squares, saw them out and haul them with horses. These ice blocks would be stored in layers as high as 40 feet, covered in straw for the summer months to be sold to the resort hotels.

**Stories**

Amie Tuthill Wallace reminisces in 1924 that, “In my early childhood, I had the pleasure of knowing the last Queen of the Montauks [Maria Pharoah]. I often walked with her, in the shady paths between our home and Fresh Pond, and it was she who took me in thought to the days of her people, and taught me the beauties of nature, as the Indians knew it.”





According to Giles Sylvester’s 1680 account book, the south side of the Island is “...where the Hot House Cellar and Indian canals are located...[it] was named after Turkeyman, a Manhasset Indian medicine man.”

“There are two Indian canals still in good condition, one across West Neck and another from Tuthill’s Creek [now Dickerson Creek] to Fresh Pond, where [they] kept their canoes.” Amie Tuthill Wallace, 1924.

