

# CRAB CREEK PRESERVE

## Property Description

The Town and Suffolk County each purchased 50% interests in the Preserve's 12.8 acres in 2000 to protect the sensitive headwaters of Crab Creek.

One third of the property had previously been farmed and has been kept in open meadow by seasonal mowing. The other two-thirds of the property is undisturbed oak woodland, a coastal low forest, interspersed with beech. The property includes considerable frontage on Crab Creek, part of the Peconic Estuary system.



## Access

The preserve is bounded on the north by a private residence, on the east by Brander Parkway, on the south by a private residence and on the west by Crab Creek. The only entrance to the property is from Brander Parkway, on the south side of the property. Visitors to the preserve should park at the clearing just inside the entrance. There are no formal trails, but the undergrowth is open enough to allow passage and deer trails run from field to water in several places. One can look for birds, rest and enjoy the view across the wetlands of Crab Creek and the vista on to Southold Bay.

Vehicles are not permitted past the parking area. Crab Creek is very shallow and not suitable for motorized boating or swimming. Use of the property for boating and swimming is not contemplated. The Preserve does not include the beachfront on the Bay that is owned by the Silver Beach Shelter Island Association.



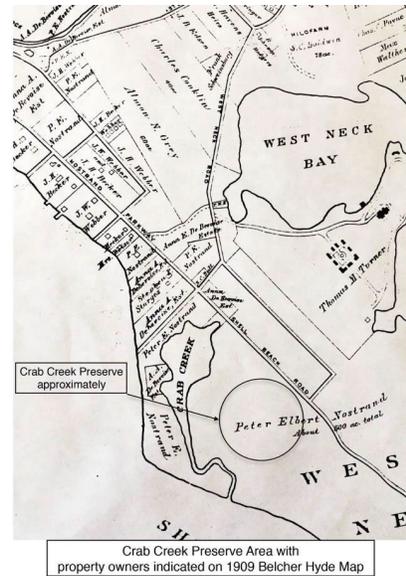
## Prior Owners & History

The property was part of West Neck Farm, an agricultural partnership established in the mid-1730s that owned the west side of the Island from the Heights to Shell Beach. West Neck Farm had about 23 partners, a number from Southold, in 1739. Upon its partition in 1806, it had eleven partners, mostly Island people; interests had been

transferred by sale and inheritance. It was managed as a stock farm; wood was sold, flax and wheat raised and pasture hired out for livestock both winter and summer.

Upon the 1806 partition of the Farm, the 398.5-acre parcel allocated to Samuel B. Nicoll (owner of Sachem’s Neck (Mashomack)) contained the property, and that parcel passed to his son Richard F. Nicoll, then to Richard’s daughter Charity Antoinette Nicoll Gavitt by 1863, then to others.

John L. Nostrand acquired that parcel in 1885 but did not include it in his 1888 230-villa West Neck Park subdivision running from Rocky Point Avenue to Crab Creek; and on his death it passed to his son Peter E. Nostrand and others (see West Neck Preserve page for owners from West Neck Farm to Peter Nostrand).



In 1943, Asa D. Clark purchased the property and later passed it to his daughter Judy and her husband



*Judy Brandenstein 2021*

Howard Brandenstein. The Brandensteins subdivided the property and sold the southerly section to the Town and County and retained the remainder with the family residence.

For years the meadow was farmed and/or occasionally mowed to maintain an open field; the woodland provided habitat and wood; and the Creek provided fish and shellfish. The Brandensteins have maintained a residence in the retained section and access Crab Creek from that location.

## Stories

Ten years after the 1806 partition, Samuel Nicoll offered to sell his West Neck farm. At that time he also owned Sachem’s Neck (Mashomack). Here is his description of that property (Long-Island Star, Feb. 21, 1816, p. 4):

The location of the “good dwelling-house and new barn” in 1816 was probably south of the Preserve.

