

Patchogue's "Four Sisters"

Honoring Women's History Month (March, 2019)

Charlotte Goldsmith Smith Keech, 1823-1887

Betsy Ann Smith Roberts, 1828-1897

Augusta Josephine Smith Weeks, 1831-1901

Ruth Newey Smith, 1835-1917

Patchogue's "Four Sisters" (Augusta Josephine Smith Weeks (1831-1901), Betsy Ann Smith Roberts (1828-1897), Charlotte Goldsmith Smith Keech (1823-1887) and Ruth Newey Smith (1835-1917)) were born and raised in a house built in 1812 on South Ocean Avenue. The sisters, trained tailors and seamstresses, took their skills to Manhattan to first work for others and then open their own successful cloak business, becoming successful businesswomen.

On their return to Patchogue in later life, the Smith sisters owned various properties in Patchogue, and became local philanthropists of great note for their kindness and practical help to the poor and needy. Ruth Smith, an international literary and ice skating figure of some fame, donated land to the Episcopalian Church for Lakeview Cemetery, and a park where the Village pool is located on Great South Bay. She also took over the Smithport Hotel from their father and built the Mascot II Hotel where today's Lombardi's Restaurant stands. Augusta Smith owned the Ocean Avenue Hotel at the foot of Ocean Avenue, and, today, part of her property is Patchogue's Shorefront Park.

Betsy Ann Smith was one of Long Island's few 19th century women poets to produce a book, [*Original Poems*](#).

The sisters also famously left their legacy in Lakeview Cemetery, which is dominated by four 20-foot high memorial columns and a large monument erected by Ruth to honor her family. The twenty-two foot tall, five ton monument has four life size statues representing Faith, Hope, Charity and Liberty. They also arranged for burial in Lakeview Cemetery for the deceased sailors of the wreck of the schooner, *Louis V. Place*, which tragically ran aground on a sandbar on Fire Island in 1895.



Augusta Josephine Smith Weeks
(1831-1901)



Betsey Ann Smith Roberts
(1828-1897)



Three of the sisters beside the graves of the deceased sailors of the *Louis V. Place*

To find out more about the lives of the Smith sisters and about their influence on Patchogue, [contact the Library's Celia M. Hastings Local History Room](#).

Photograph Sources: [Celia M. Hastings Local History Room](#), and [Picturesque Patchogue \("The Argus", 1898\)](#)