

Jos. W. Masters

THE 4TH B.H.Y.C. COMMODORE
1909, '10, '11, '12, '13 & '15

Born in 1852 in Durham, N.J.

Spent his childhood in Greenwich Village, Manhattan attending Thomas Hunter School No. 34
After marriage, he moved to 320 Jefferson Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. and lived there for 36 years.

~ Joseph Masters, at the young age of 18 years old enlisted in the Old 8th Regiment, National Guard where he served of 10 years. He became a member of the Regiment's Veteran Association upon leaving the Regiment.

~ After his service, Joseph worked as a Custom Broker apprenticeship in the family business.

~ Joseph married Josephine Pennington.

~ Later in life, Joseph Masters and family became interest in a new land development in the Rockaway's called Belle Harbor. He and his family were one of the original long time summer residents of Belle Harbor where he became an avid fisherman in Jamaica Bay.

~ Mr. Masters held positions of Chairman, President and was a member in 32 civic organizations.

As a resident, J.W. Masters became a charter member of the BHYC in 1905 and was selected as the liaison between the BHYC and the West Rockaway Land Company. He also was an original member and board member of the Belle Harbor Home Owners Association.

In business, he was Owner & President of the family business ~ J.W. Masters & Co. (Est. 1868), in downtown Manhattan. Began as a clerk, then a broker and eventual an agent and partner of John Trippett & Bros. of Liverpool.

In politics, J.W. Masters was prominent in the affairs of the Democratic Party. He was a life-long Democrat. He was an elector and followed the party to the National Democratic Convention that nominated President Woodrow Wilson in 1912.

After years of declining public office, he agreed to run for N.Y. State Controller in 1916, running against Eugene Travis, Republican. His campaign was against overwhelming odds and was defeated.

With the BHYC, in 1913, 20 years after the invention of the affordable automobile, traffic in the Rockaway's' especially around the club was on the rise. In the 1910's, during his term of office as Commodore and during the several years which have since passed, ex-Commodore Masters labored to straighten out the disputed title and to bring about an adjustment with the City of New York. In 1912, counsel advised him, that there had never been any grant of riparian rights. He didn't believe the club's counsel and his efforts still persisted; and in the summer of 1914, when lawyer services were first time employed, counsel investigated the previous physical conditions of the property, in order to establish a basis of claim irrespective of any affirmative grants by the City or State.

In 1915, his efforts orchestrated the purchase of more land for the Belle Harbor Yacht Club expansion and settled the dispute over riparian rights with the City of New York, in favor of the B.H.Y.C.

While preparing for a fishing expedition, J.W. Masters died of heart failure on August 13th, 1918 at the age of 66 in Belle Harbor, N.Y.