



## Myron H. Luke

Myron H. Luke died on July 7, 2000, in his 95th year. His name has been synonymous with Long Island history for decades as the pre-eminent local historian—the Dean of Long Island history.

Myron's father was a Congregational minister in Pennsylvania, and Myron was born on Christmas Day in 1905, weighing in at only two pounds. He grew up in Seneca Falls in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, received his A.B. from Oberlin College in Ohio, and an M.A. in Political Science from Syracuse University (1933).

Myron came to Long Island in 1937 to teach economics at the State Institute of Applied Agriculture on Long Island, Farmingdale (now SUNY College of Technology). Soon after he arrived, the daughter of his landlord asked him, "If you're teaching agricultural history, what do you know of Long Island history?" When he said he didn't know anything, she introduced him to Jesse Merritt who was the Farmingdale Village and Nassau County Historian (1936-1957). Merritt took Myron on numerous drives exploring Long Island and sharing his wealth of knowledge about its history. (See Luke's article, "Portrait of a Long Island Historian: Jesse Merritt," in the 1993 issue of the *Nassau County Historical Society Journal*.)

In 1945, Myron Luke began teaching at Hofstra College. He completed his Ph.D. in American history at New York University in 1950, writing his dissertation on "The Port of New York, 1800-1810: The Foreign Trade and Business Community." In 1963, Dr. Luke accepted an appointment at C.W. Post College as Professor of History and Chairman of the History Department and the Division of Social Sciences. He became Professor Emeritus of History on his retirement in 1973.

Many generations of students studied with Dr. Luke, and invariably they speak of him fondly as a wonderful teacher whose courses inspired them. One student, who wrote him in 1971, summed it up well: "You are positively delightful as a professor. Your approach is so refreshing and downright marvelous. You relate history so that there is a feeling for the period and a feeling for the excitement of the period. You give history meaning. You lecture the way I hope someday I can do half as well. I am truly pleased to have you as one of my professors." He cared about his students and was interested in them. He was delighted in 1999, when one of his former students published work which he had begun in his Master's studies at C.W. Post. Dr. Luke wrote an enthusiastic endorsement for the book jacket of Richard A. Winsche's *The History of Nassau County Community Place-Names*.

When he was preparing for his French language examination for the doctorate, Myron asked Juliet Geymet, who was teaching French at Hofstra, to tutor him. They