BACK OVER THE YEARS

Reminiscences of Mattituck in the early years of the Twentieth Century

VOLUME II

Friends of the Mattituck Free Library

1986

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MAPS, PICTURES

INTRODUCTION

We must explain where the material contained in these volumes comes from.

In 1978 the Friends of the Mattituck Free Library undertook to record an oral history of Mattituck. The project was carried on under the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). It was begun by Richard Mack and then developed by John Traversa, and it was intended to bring up to date the 1906 History of Mattituck written by the Reverend Charles Craven, Pastor of the Mattituck Presbyterian Church.

The work began with the recording of interviews with Mattituck citizens who recalled life in the early years of the century. Unexpectedly, work had to stop when the local CETA support was terminated.

The Friends were unable to carry on the project, and it became apparent that our goal of a history could not be achieved in the foreseeable future.

Into our files went the taped interviews, unedited and many incomplete, several hundred slides and a series of audio-visual tapes of groups and individuals. Some years later the Friends decided to make the contents of as many of the taped interviews as possible available as background material on the history of the community.

The tapes contain the voices of Mattituck citizens speaking about a time and a place they knew intimately. The authors of the tapes found it pleasant "... to look back and think back over the years", and the Friends are offering these plain spoken, sometimes humorous or touching accounts of 'how it was in those days'.

The material has been transcribed just as it was given to the interviewers with only repetitious and non-pertinent matter omitted. We have added a few notes, some information from conversations with the authors,

and have included several written pieces. Where pictures were available we have reproduced them together with articles from the Suffolk Times.

We express our gratitude to the authors whose interviews are recorded here as well as to those whose interviews we have not yet been able to transcribe. Our thanks to our volunteer proof readers, Nancy Duryee and Mary Flanagan, and to those who graciously loaned or gave us old photographs.

Many thanks go to our typists, Dorothea Delehanty, Kathleen Reeve and Rose Costello, who were dedicated in their efforts to transcribe the sometimes difficult recordings. And heart-felt thanks to the Mattituck Free Library whose Directors and Staff have been consistently helpful and patient as we carried on our work in their midst.

The Friends of the Mattituck Free Library
Katherine Lascelle, Project Co-ordinator

July 1986

MATTITUCK ORAL HISTORY

Contents of Tape No. 31-RWT & IR-1
Oral authors: Ralph W, Tuthill
Irma Reeve

Date: Spring 1978
Interviewer: Richard Mack

Old Houses

Contents

Irma Reeve and Ralph Tuthill were driven around the village by the interviewer so they could point out old Houses which they remembered from the turn of the Century. Two maps were prepared to show the location of houses. In the transcript the Editor has indicated the route they took.

Map I -- Sound Avenue and West Mattituck

Map II -- The village and Tuthilltown

Material from a Mattituck Historical Society brochure on the West Mattituck school house.

Map of Mattituck
Autiobiographical Sketches

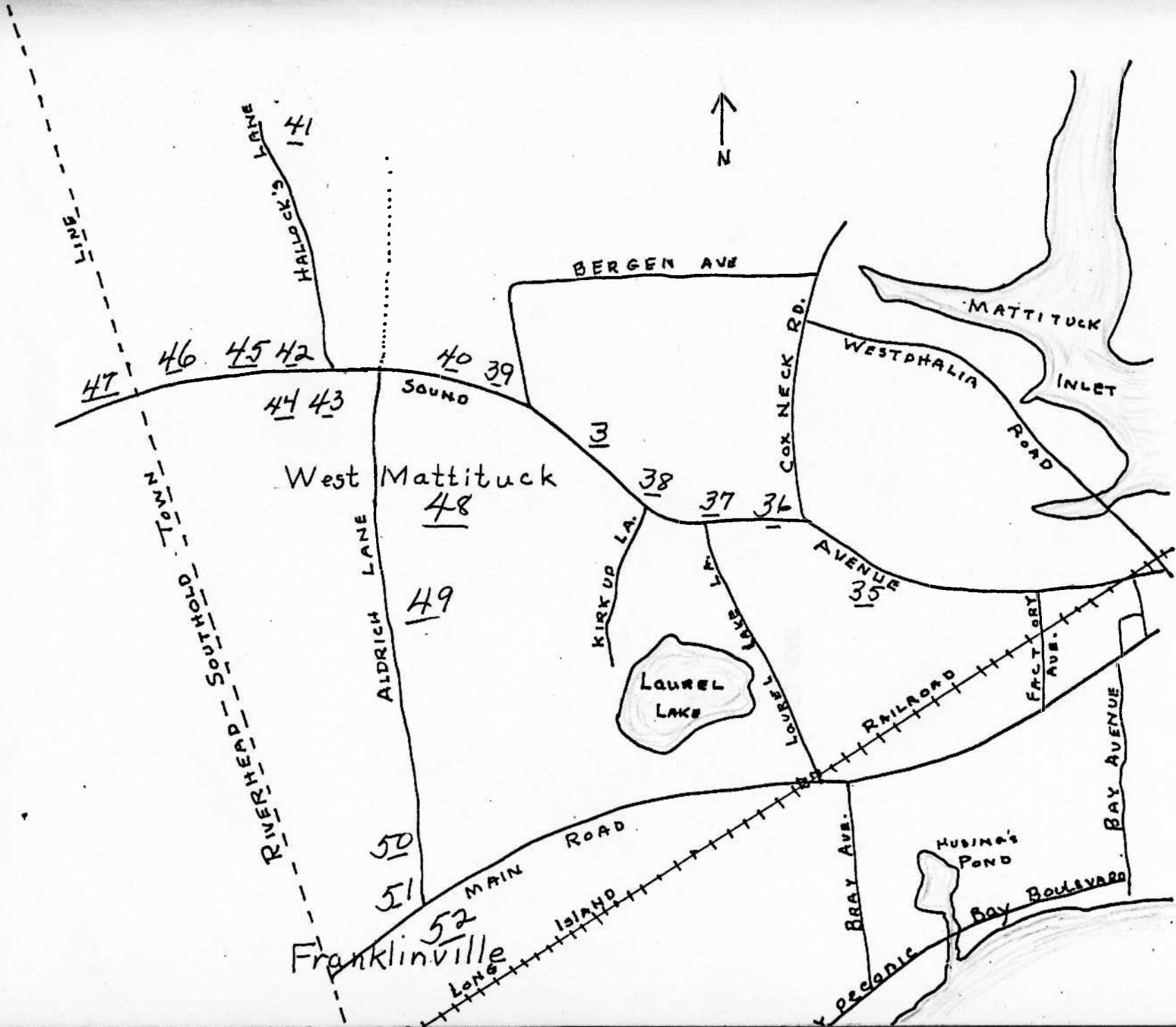
MAPS, PICTURES

The following maps show a mixture of early and present day Mattituck, and are intended only to show the route taken during the interview. At the end of this transcript is a copy of part of a map made in 1940 by H. Wickham.

Map I Sound Avenue and West Mattituck

This list includes some additional information which Irma gave in 1984 and 1985 when we discussed the map.

3. Site of West Mattituck Schoolhouse
35. Lyle Hallock House
36. Site of Downs house
37. Hannah Hallock house
38. Kirkup house
39. Clifford Aldrich house, originally owned by Mayo.
40. In discussing the map with Irma, she said that there was another Aldrich house. This also had originally been owned by Mayos. She remembers going to school with Effie and Harry Aldrich who lived in one of these houses.
41. Omar Hallock house
42. Site of Irma's grandmother's house. A small tenant house still stands on the property (1985). Herbert Reeve wished to move the house, but because of the many brick fireplaces which might be dislodged and damaged, did not do so.
43. Ellis Reeve house. He was a cousin. (1985, Jens Mattituck Greenhouses.)
44. John Reeve house. (1985), Jens Mattituck Greenhouses)
45. Irma Reeves old home (1985, Harbes)
46. Howell house, renovated by Kujawski.
47. Jackson house.
48. West Mattituck
49. Gilbert Aldrich house
50. Cemetery
51. School house, now a dwelling
52. Franklinville


N
TOWN LINE
RIVERHEAD — SOUTHOLD
HALLOCK'S LANE
41
47
46
45
42
44
43
40
39
SOUND
BERGEN AVE
COX NECK RD.
WESTPHALIA ROAD
MATTITUCK INLET
West Mattituck
48
49
ALDRICH LANE
13
38
37
34
KIRK'S LA.
LAUREL LA.
AVENUE
35
LAUREL LAKE
RAILROAD
FACTORY AVE.
BAY AVENUE
BRAY AVE.
HUBING'S POND
Bay Boulevard
50
51
52
MAIN ROAD
Franklinville
LONG ISLAND

MAP I

Tape 31-RWT: IR-1

Map No. II. The village and Tuthilltown

1 and 1-A These two houses belonged to Luptons. (1978-1A, Hardy)
2. Old school house. Moved from I-3 on Sound Avenue in West Mattituck.
4. Museum
5. Miska house
6. Airport
7. Wickham house
8. Lupton house on New Suffolk Avenue
9. Lupton house on the Bay. (1984. Norris)
10. Wood Wickham house (1978 Brooks)
11. Cox Nursing Home; the George Reeve house (1978 Dove)
12. Isiah Reeve House. On the National Registry (1978 Pim)
13. Conklin House. (1984 DeFriest Funeral Home)
14. Glenwood Hotel
15. Site of Mattituck Hotel
16. Octagon House
17. Dolly Bell's house
18. Ralph Cox Ice Cream Parlor
19. Site of old Post Office
20. Approximate site of blacksmith shop
21. Site of Station House
22. Site of Duryee Hardware store
23. Site of Tom Reeve's grocery store--Reeve and Tuthill
24. McMillan house
25. Mattituck Free Library, built on the site of the old school house. The field between the school and Reeve Ave. was a baseball diamond.
26. Site of Gildersleeve store
27. Approximate site of sheds and stables
28. T.J. Maguire's carriage house
30. Pike house. (1978 Barkers)
31. Site of Bohacks. Thomas Reeve house stood there before Bohacks came.
32. 1776 House. Joel Howell lived there.
33. Presbyterian Church
34. Penny's Lumber Co.

MATTITUCK CREEK

N

WESTPHALIA ROAD

WICKHAM AVE

BOULEVARD

MARY'S

HAMILTON AVENUE

ROAD

LOVE LANE

Route 48

17

24

30

26

PIKE STREET

28

27

20

18

14

13

22

21

23

19

16

15

MAIN ROAD

32

31

34

33

SOUND AVENUE

CEMETERY

NEW SUFFOLK

FACTORY AVE

LEGION AVE

PACIFIC STREET

MAIN ROAD

MAP II

ILL LANE

MAIN ROAD

SCHOOL ST.

MAPLE AVE

REEVE AVE.

AVENUE

MARRATOOKA RD.

Cardinal Drive

Elijah's Lane

Tuthill Town

Private Lane

MARRATOOKA

LAKE

1 1A 2 4 5 12 11 10 8 7 6 9

Dm D
1/1/84

MATTITUCK ORAL HISTORY

Contents of Tape No. 31-RWT & IR-1 Date: Spring 1978
Oral authors: Ralph W. Tuthill Interviewer: Richard Mack
Irma Reeve

Old Houses

(Driving east on Route 25, leaving the village.)

IR: This was a Lupton house (II-1A). That must be fairly old* Now wait, go slow, right here. Here is the old school house (II-2) that was moved from West Mattituck (I-29). This is the Museum (II-4) that was built about 1846, the main part, and about 1800 for this east part. The school house was originally about two miles west of here in what was then called West Mattituck (I-3 is the site of the school)

I started school there about 1900 or so. It's been a tenent house, upstairs was in miserable condition. It never had a basement. It was moved down here.

I: Was that the one they want to start restoring, and having the old classes in?

IR: Yes. The house on the corner, that's the Museum.

RT: It was a farm. Where all these houses are, it was a farm.

IR: This section is all new, built up, you can see. The Museum owns this lot.

(Turning south on Cardinal Drive, going over to New Suffolk Avenue and turning right)

RT: I wonder how old the Miska house (II-5) way up to your right in the field up there. That's where Evelyn was born, you know. Evelyn Kirkup Reeve.

* Mrs. Howard Hardy, the present owner, has told us that the house next door, (II-1) was also a Lupton house.

IR: Oh well, now I remember, they lived over....

RT: On Pike Street.

I: There's Maratooka. Is there an airport (II-6) down here?

IR: That belongs to the Wickham family.

RT: That's the Wickham house. (II-7) It was old, but it's been renovated so that it's nothing like it was, but that was an old house.

IR: And now, this one, whose would that have been then Ralph?

RT: This was on the north end of Cy Lupton's farm this house right there. (II-8)

I: Do I see water down there?

RT: Yup, the bay's right down there. There's a big house on the bay. (II-9)

I: Was there a farm connected with that, or was that just an estate?

RT: More or less of an estate, quite a little land to it.

IR: This is where the Brooks' live. (II-10) But you don't know who was here?

RT: Well Wood Wickham was there originally.

IR: Oh, another Wickham?

Now this one, well that was Cox's Nursing Home. (II-11)

RT: The man who used to direct Mattituck's choir lived there, George Reeve. He probably maybe built it, I don't know.

I: Which choir?

IR: Mattituck Presbyterian. This is the one that I wanted you particularly to see. (Isiah Reeve House - Ed.) (II-12)

(Turning north on Reeve Avenue)

IR: Now I see we are coming back on the Main Road. Go left.

Now we're on the Main Road. Now where the Conklin house, (II-13) is that the funeral parlor?

RT: Yes, the funeral parlor, right there.

It was O'Brians' Funeral Home,* before that I don't know.

IR: Wait, this is an old hotel, this one here.

The Glenwood Hotel. (II-14) There was another one across the street there. Where that little Peconic Glass thing is, was the Mattituck Hotel. (II-15) Oh this is one of the very important ones, (II-16) because it is octagonal. Who lived downstairs there?

RT: Herbert Wells and Carrie Wells.

IR: Well they lived upstairs didn't they?

RT: Dolly Bell lived upstairs.

IR: Oh, Oh. For how long?

RT: Twenty five, thirty years.

IR: Dolly Bell was an artist.

I: I saw her paintings in the Library, and she went to Alaska, for awhile.

IR: She was quite a person.

I: Did she ever come back?

IR: Oh yes, yes she died here, but not in this house, she had another house. (II-17)

RT: She had a house of her own.

I: I see, around when was that? (Her death. Ed.)

RT: About two years ago probably.

*or Brian Conklin's Funeral Home? Ed.


HOTEL GLENWO

Also called Mattituck Hotel

(Turning right on Love Lane)

IR: Now go right here. This takes us through the old village part, Ralph Cox's Ice Cream Parlor, (II-18) now wasn't the blacksmith right in there?

RT: Yes. Right on the corner where the Bank is now was the Post Office. (II-19) The blacksmith shop (II-20) was right in there behind where the Love Lane Shop is now. Just back there.

(Turning left on Pike Street)

I: Now the Station House (II-21) itself.

IR: It's gone, the Railroad Station, I almost wept the day I came along here and it was just going down.

I: They took it down for a parking lot or something?

RT: More or less. The passengers got so few. We can go right and come back in the village again.

(Turning right on Westphalia Road)

I: Was this a potato house?

RT: No that was a hardware store (II-22) originally. It wasn't built until 1905 or 06.

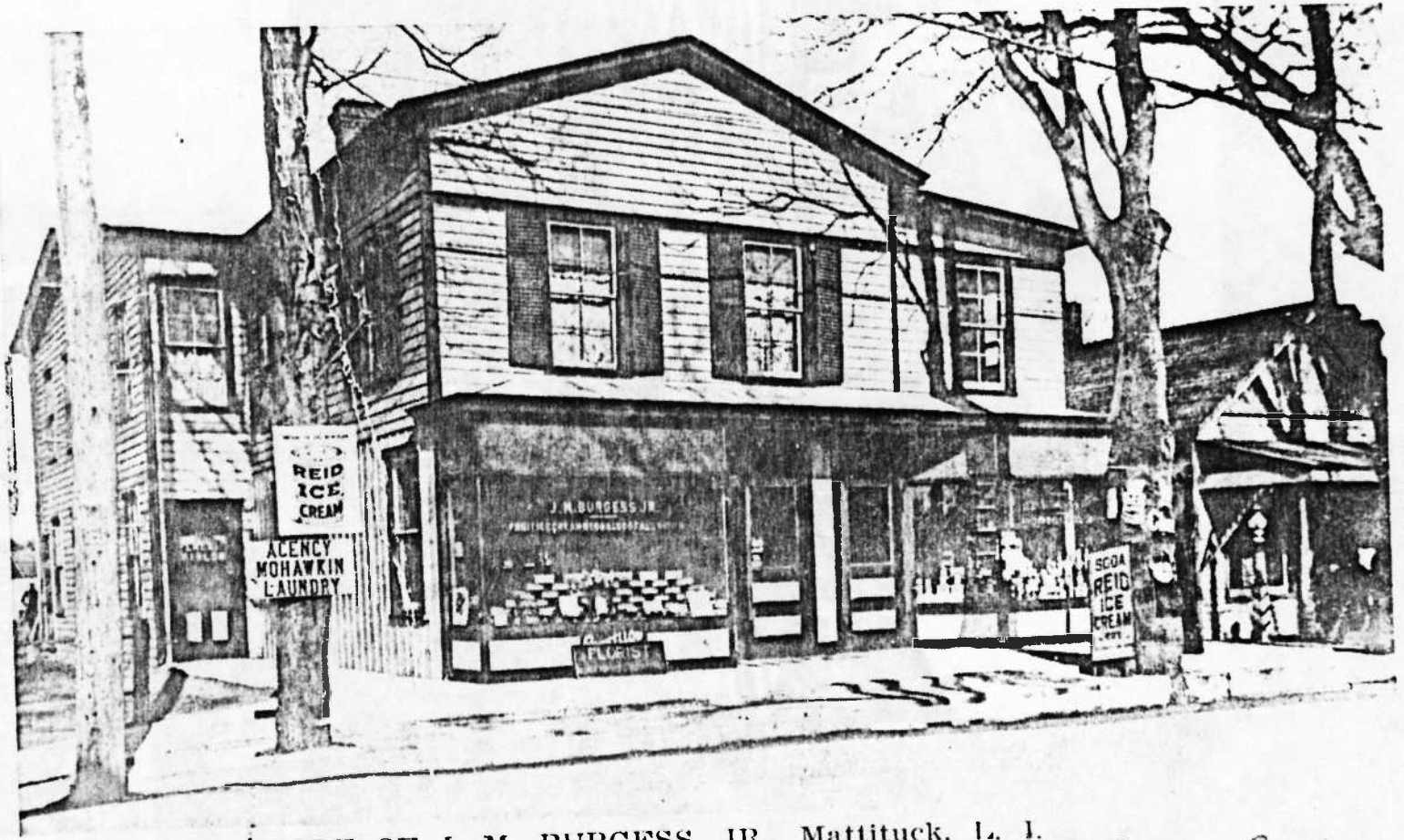
I: Do you know who owned it?

RT: W. D. Duryee.

IR: D-u-r-y-e-e. And let's see, Tom--Thomas Reeve had a grocery store (II-23), didn't he?

(Turning right on Route 48 and then right again on Love Lane.

IR: This is the McMillan house (II-24) to your left. It used to be a Tavern and a Saloon. Also a rooming house. Of course the Saloon was torn down, that was a little bit east of it, the other side. It was attached to it.



STORE OF J. M. BURGESS, JR., Mattituck, L. I.

(FORMERLY "DICK" COX ICE CREAM PARLOR

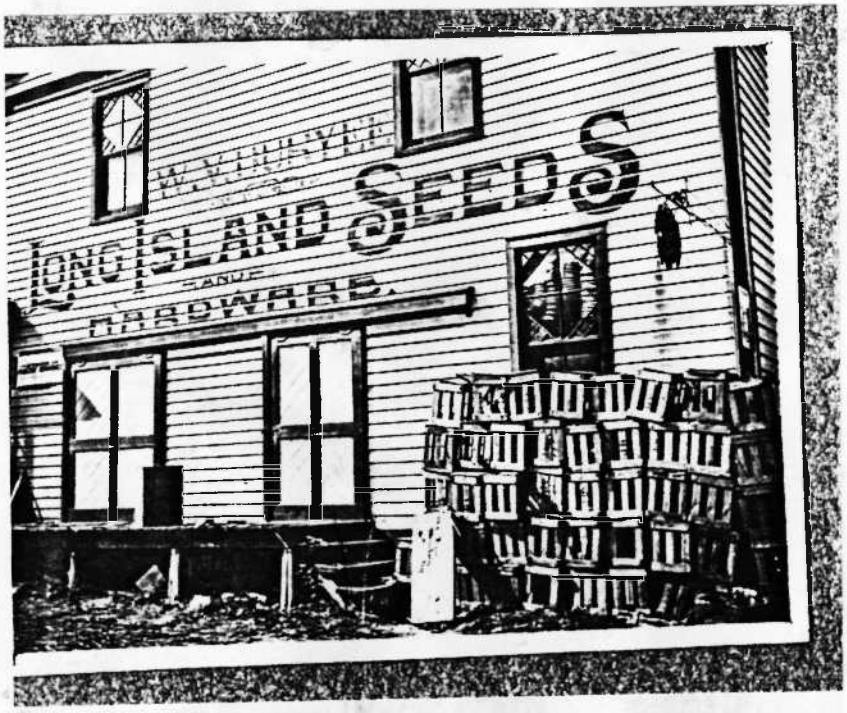
W. V. Duryee's Seed & Merchandise Store

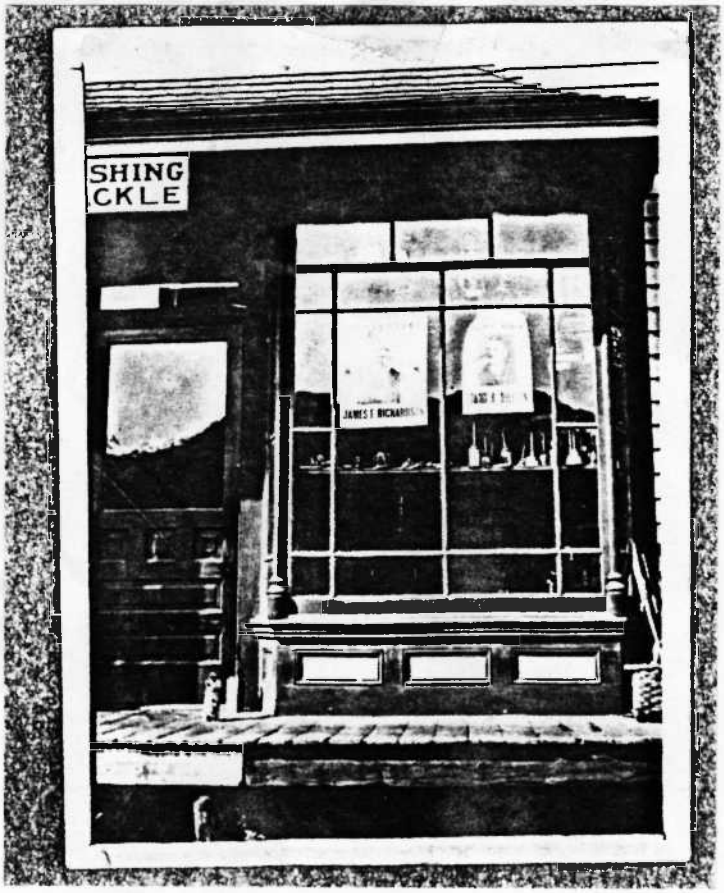
(Photos kindness N. Duryee

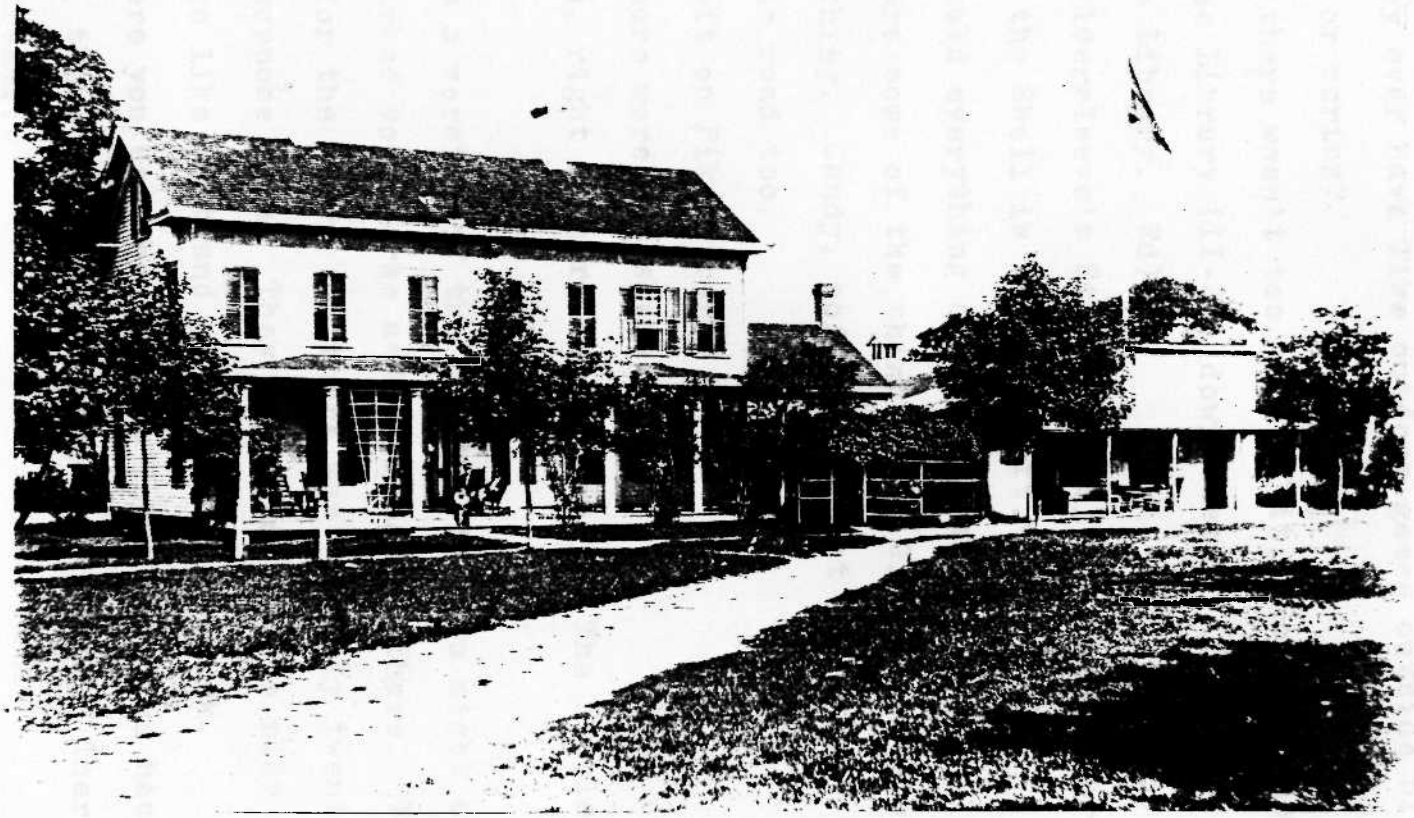
Harvey Duryee

31-RWT:IR-1

(Photo kindness N. Duryee)

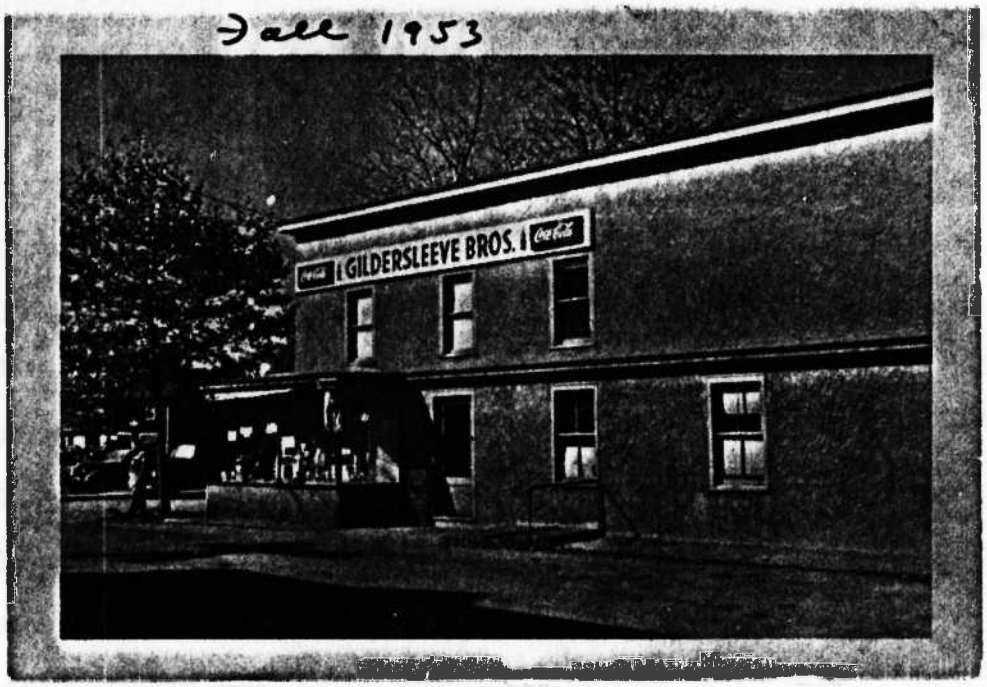






McMillan home Once a boarding house, the Eureka House

Fall 1953



.....

I: Now, who were the first Reeves here?

IR: Well I know that my Great-grandfather, Jessie Reeve was in West Mattituck (Map I). We were West Mattituckers, and I think eventually we should take you up that way too. It's about two miles up.

.....

IR: Well more than likely, now how about Herbert? I haven't seen Herbert for a long time. Herbert Reeve.

RT: He's pretty good. I was talking to him a day or two ago.

IR: Were you? I haven't seen him. He's not, as far as I know, particularly related to me.

I: Your Great-grandfather, his name again?

IR: Jessie, J-e-s-s-i-e Reeve. Then my Grandfather was James Monroe. He came in that presidential era, James Monroe Reeve, but we were up, as I say, in West Mattituck. There were various others. There's a map in the Museum.

I: And then your Father?

IR: My Father was Henry James.

RT: That same house and farm was in the Reeve family for three generations, wasn't it Irma?

IR: Well, no, I don't think my Grandfather was in that house. I think he was in what was my Grandmother's house. But a brother of James Monroe I think owned our house Ralph.

I: A brother of James Monroe?

IR: A brother of James Monroe Reeve.

I: Oh, O.K. I didn't want you to sneak in any presidents on me now.

IR: Oh no, no, no, we hadn't anything like that.

I: What are some of the other families you mentioned, ones that go back from the beginning of the town? Now you mentioned your Great-grandfather. What years would he be, say in his twenties?

IR: Well, when was Monroe president? Because that was his son you see. I can look that up, I can't tell you right off hand.

I: The 1700's?

IR: The late 1700's.

RT: The Gildersleeves go way back pretty well too.

IR: The Gildersleeves go way back, and I guess probably Wells and certainly the Wickhams.

RT: Yes, yes. We are going by what used to be the Pike house (II-30), that's the Barker house now. This yellow house, it stood on the main road at one time, didn't it Irma?

IR: Was it moved? I didn't know that. It was Barkers when I knew it.

RT: The street was named after Pike, and he was a relation to Otis (Otis Pike, Congressman. Ed.)

(Turning right on Wickham Ave. and then right on Route 25

RT: We're coming to the one on the left after Bohacks. (II-31)

IR: Oh yes, that's right, see the little white house. Oh no, you better watch the road. Now this little house here.

RT: 1776 House. (II-32)

IR: The Presbyterian Church (II-33) was .... I don't think this was the 1715 one, but there was a church here back as late as 1715, and this is a very old cemetery.

RT: Do you want to go up to West Mattituck Irma?

IR: Well, we could.

(Going west on Sound Avenue out of the village.)

IR: Penny's Lumber (II-34) is quite old.

(Photo kindness N. Duryee)

Frank Barker's house
Pike Street Millwich

RT: Yes, it goes back two generations.

I: George L. Penny. Do you know what the original Penny's name was? Was it George also?

IR: His grandfather was George, and he has a grandson who is George the fifth.

IR: Now the Lyle Hallock*(I-35) house would be fairly old, wouldn't it?

RT: I think so Irma.

I: Was that a farm?

RT: I'd say a small one. I don't really know. There was quite a little land to it.

IR: She was a very good dressmaker, that's all I know.

RT: I think she was sister to Otto Hallock, was she?

IR: Well, was it Otto? I guess you're right.

I: There's quite a bit of wooded land around.

IR: Almost every farm I would think, correct me if I'm not right, had a woods, and they were cut down.

I: This is Sound Avenue?

IR: It used to be quite a main road. Now this is an old house that was Hallock's (I-37). They remodeled it to quite an extent. I'm sure it did not have that stained glass window on the back.

RT: Hannah still lives, doesn't she?

IR: Hannah still, but she's in a Nursing Home in Riverhead. Elberta (Elberta Hudson Reeve, 18-EHR-1) is there too.

RT: Oh yes, she is still there.

IR: It might be....now this is an old house, the Kirkup house (I-38) here. And right up,.... it's a little hard to tell now. The little old red schoolhouse--right here. Yeah, that's where it was.

-- -- --

*The first name may have been Lyde. Ed.

31-RWT:IR-1

PENNY LUMBER AND FLOORING CENTERS, North Road, Mattituck, 298-8559, and Main Road, Greenport, 477-0400. The Penny family has owned and operated this business since 1890; the Greenport facility was purchased from Greenport Lumber in 1961. Penny's is the oldest lumberyard on long Island under continuous, single-family ownership. George Penny IV and his brother, Geoffroy, are fourth-generation family members active in the business today. Penny operates two full-service yards, offering everything for building a new house or renovating an old one. The company's planning service can draw blueprints for a new home or addition. The carpeting departments in both Greenport and Mattituck offer sales and installation of a wide range of carpeting and vinyl flooring at reasonable prices. Penny's has 33 employees and serves both the North and South Forks, Shelter Island and beyond.

Suffolk Times 3/28/85
1985 Honor Roll

I: O.K. How do you spell Kirkup?

IR: K-i-r-k-u-p.

I: O.K.

IR: This house we're coming to on the right was Clifford Aldrichs' (I-39) It was Mayo's before that. M-A-Y-O.

RT: Wasn't the Mayo's house recently rebuilt?

IR: Well, I think they've added to it now recently.

.....

IR: Now we're looking straight at my old home. (I-45)

I: That white one on the right?

IR: That one there. But in between, that was my Grandmother's, that would have been James M. Reeves'. (I-42) That lane, do you suppose that is open?

RT: I doubt it.

IR: That's Hallocks (I-41) up there.

I: Who had this land across the street here?

IR: Well my Uncle John Reeve (I-44) I guess owned this.

RT: I think so, yes.

I: How big was the average farm? Do you have any idea in acreage?

IR: Well I think my Father's was somewhere around....

RT: What did you say, fifty, sixty acres Irma?

IR: I think between fifty and sixty down there, but I think this was Uncle John's. This was moved from farther west, but this was my Uncle's home here.*

I: Ah, John Reeve.

IR: Now James M. had that one (I-42), and Roy Reeves lived there as a child. Then beyond this is the Howell house (I-46), and that, I was so afraid they were going to tear that one down, because that is I am sure, older than ours was.

* Irma first indicated the Ellis Reeve house (I-43) and then her Uncle's house (I-44).

RT: I think it was, yeah.

IR: And it's still there. Now they have renovated it. It isn't restored, but you would probably say it is changed, but it is very respectable looking. And the outside, I don't think it had shutters like that.

I: When was that house built?

IR: Well, I don't know exactly. It should have been in the 1830's probably, somewhere along in there I think. Between 1830 and 1850.*

I: Has that house been back there for awhile also?

IR: That's old, that's Omar Hallock's house (I-41) and I don't know who predated him, I imagine his Father.

RT: That house was there as long as you remember?

IR: Oh sure, yes indeed.

I: It's all potato farm now, is that....

IR: Oh look, it's the old buggy.

RT: It's the kind I used to galin' in.

I: Well we found our wagon, now all we need is a couple of horses.

IR: That would really....(laughter).

I: Now in those times when you were a little girl growing up in this house how did you pick the tomatoes? Just on the back of a tractor? or a horse drawn...?

IR: A tractor? What are you talking about?

RT: Never did hear tell of such a thing.

I: Well yeah, you don't look that old to me.

* Irma told us that north of the Howell house on the Sound was a shack where people went with their families to picnic and swim and sometimes to stay overnight.

IR: Tomatoes were picked by hand as far as I know, and the potatoes too.

I: Did the family work at that, or did all the families work on each one at a time, or ....

IR: Each on their own.

I: And did you hire extra people at that time?

IR: Yeah.

I: They were migrant workers?

IR: No, this was before the migrant wave, the man who worked with my Father was, well he was somehow related in the family, a Harry Jackson. He worked for my Dad, and then he married my Aunt.

I: So they were more or less local people.

IR: That's right. Later, later the migrant.

RT: Polish.

IR: Well Polish, and then later Puerto - - , no not Puerto Rican, well somewhere, more or less - -

I: But the Poles were first?

IR: Yes, I would think, and they were very good workers.

RT: A lot of them did, which I guess you and your Dad did, you'd build a small house on the place and have a Polish couple, and the wife could put up brussel sprouts.* The Polish people they put up sprouts at night in their house. They used to get two cents a quart.

IR: Here, this is the Howell house. (I-46)

RT: I don't think the structure has changed too much has it Irma?

IR: I don't think the structure has, but the ....

*This refers to packing sprouts in quart containers for market.

RT: The inside ....

I: That chimney looks original.

IR: Inside has a lot, and those Pepperidge trees* up there, see that little clump, they've been there ever since I can remember. And this of course, is about where Lilco is trying its best to build a Nuclear Plant and we're all just fighting it. I think it'll be washed into the Sound, that's my latest theory. Now, as I say, this is the very edge of Riverhead Township. Riverhead Town thinks they all gain so much from the taxes you know, that they're not against it, but everybody else is, and all the farmers even I think, most of them in Riverhead Town are.

I: Where does the Town start right now, just right up the road here?

IR: Well, right up here somewhere. I'm surprised there isn't a marker but there isn't.

I: Those trees out in the middle, those, that's the same old clump of Pepper trees?

IR: Pepperidge, Pepperidge. There's another name for it.

I: Is that a kind of tree?

IR: Yeah. It has nothing to do with Pepperidge Farms that I know of. All we had was an old swamp in there.** Let me tell you this while we're here.

I: Near those trees?

IR: See that clump of trees over there? Well, that was very swampy, I think it's mostly filled itself in in the meantime.

* Gum trees and acacia trees are sometimes called Pepperidge trees.

**1984. The old swamp could not be located exactly. It lay behind, north of Sound Ave.

That's where we got our ice every winter. They would go out there, my Father and his two brothers would go up there and cut the ice, and we had an ice house which was a cellar. This house was a Jackson House. (I-47)

I: This small one here?

IR: That may be, that's been changed more than the Howells. (Turning around to go back along Sound Ave.)

.....

I: O.K. Where were you in the hurricane of '38?

IR: I was in New Haven.

RT: I was shovelling potatoes down in Tuthill town.

I: Where is Tuthill town?

RT: Well, Elijah's Lane. It's a mile and a half east of the Library.

I: What is Tuthilltown?

RT: Well, it used to be oh, probably ten families of Tuthills, but now there's only one left.

IR: Now wait a minute Ralph, you asked me about the Ellis Reeve house that was moved from one of the Hallock places about a half mile or mile or west. (I-43)

RT: That so?

IR: And how they moved it, it must have been on some kind of a flat thing, I've forgotten how.

RT: Skids probably.

IR: Probably skids. Helen, my cousin and I, they pulled us, we sat on it. I can't remember how old we were, but that was kind of exciting.

I: You pulled it on horses and skids? About how many horses do you think there were?

IR: I don't know.

RT: They had a windlass I think, and the horse just went around.

IR: Was that it? I can't remember that part of it.

I: A windlass? What's that?

RT: It had a wheel and had a rope go around it, and gradually it gave a lot of leverage.

I: Like a pulley?

RT: Ummm---that's right.

(Turning south on Aldrich Lane)

IR: This was another Aldrich house. (I- 49) Gilbert Aldrich lived there. Now it's Kujawski. Their grandfather was one of the first of the Polish to buy his own house.

I: What street is this?

IR: This is, let's see this is Aldrich Lane I think they call it. It seems to me we used to call all of this Laurel Lane, but it goes into Laurel. I think it's Aldrich Lane now. This was a little schoolhouse (I-51) on the next corner here. My sister taught school there for a year or so.

I: Is this an old cemetery (I-50)? It looks like some pretty old stones in there.

IR: Yes. They called this part Franklinville (I-52) at one time. Franklinville went along here and down toward the Bay.

RT: That was the schoolhouse wasn't it?

I: That blue house?

IR: Yes, but the Mattituck one was older, in West Mattituck.* This is the little hamlet of Laurel.

(Turning east on Route 25 and going back into the village)

IR: Mrs. McNulty's, now there's another old one.**

I: Now that's Irish, huh?

IR: Uh huh, and well, John was a little younger than I. Was he in your class in Mattituck Ralph?

RT: No, he was a little ahead of me. I used to play with him around a lot, but he was a little ahead of me.

I: When did you graduate from High School?

RT: Never did.

I: Grammar school?

RT: Two years of high.

IR: That was as far as the Mattituck School went. (I-25) I had to go to Riverhead. I commuted to Riverhead to high school. I left at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, and I got back at 6:00 at night.

I: Do you remember what the fare was?

IR: No, I don't know. It's about eight, no ten miles I guess.

I: Did you pick potatoes through the storm Ralph?

RT: Well, we were shovelling, up in a barn.

I: Did anything blow down, or --

*Both schoolhouses are found on a map dated 1858.
**This house is on the southeast corner of Laurel Lane and Route 25 in Laurel.

RT: Oh yes.

I: Did you lose anything?

RT: The barn on each side of me blew down. The barn I was in didn't blow down but the telephone service was cut, some of the wires were down.

I: Did you have any flooding?

RT: Yes, right down to the bridge. (The old Grand Avenue bridge. Ed.).....

IR: We're heading back to the Library now.

RT: Before the Library there was a school here, it's torn down now. (I-25)

I: How large was it?

RT: Eight rooms, I guess. Eventually it was a high school.

End of Tape

From a brochure printed by the Mattituck Historical Society

1846

WEST MATTITUCK'S "LITTLE EGYPT" SCHOOLHOUSE

On March 16, 1846, the following Board of Trustees approved the raising of $400.00 to build a new schoolhouse in West Mattituck, on Sound Avenue, to replace the one on Manor Lane built in 1792. Sylvester Howell taught there in 1820, Miss Mary A. Gildersleeve 1876-1880, Miss Julia Barber 1880-1883, Miss Annie Clark 1884-1892.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN 1846

Stephen Cox
Sylvester Cooper
Bethuel Hallock
Irad Downs
Laurens Hallock
John Reeve
Thomas Hallock
Daniel Downs
Hiram Simons
John Aldrich
Stephen Aldrich
Elisha Aldrich
Benjamin S. Hallock
Sylvester Howell
David Hallock
Lewis Goldsmith
Martin L. Robinson
Gilbert Davis
Tuthill Horton

This 131 year old building is a typical one room schoolhouse with a vestibule, which is classical in design, of the Greek Revival Period.

We have learned from a former pupil, Fred Silkworth (now 79) that a school day was from 9:00 to 4:00, with an hour for lunch. Wood was passed along an assembly line of boys, from the woodpile through the right rear window, right up to the stove which sat in the center of the room. Drinking water was in a bucket with a ladle, on a table in the front vestibule. The water pump was out front.

It was not uncommon to be allowed an hour and a half to go ice skating. If you broke a window, you fixed it. The bluestone in the front retaining wall was part of the original foundation, and was brought over from Connecticut on Clipper Ships as ballast. Mr. Silkworth says his fondest memories are of the happy days he and his classmates spent in this schoolhouse.

The attendance of 26 pupils in the class of 1900-1905 was as follows:-

TEACHERS:- J. Addison Wells,
Miss Lucy Swezey

PUPILS:-

Aldrich, Effie
Flora
Gilbert
Harry
twins { Millie / Minnie
Russell

Bennett, Lizzie

Bergen, Frank
Mabel
Margaret
Tom

Boston, Mabel

Brazier, Lester
George

Cox, Gladys
Mildred

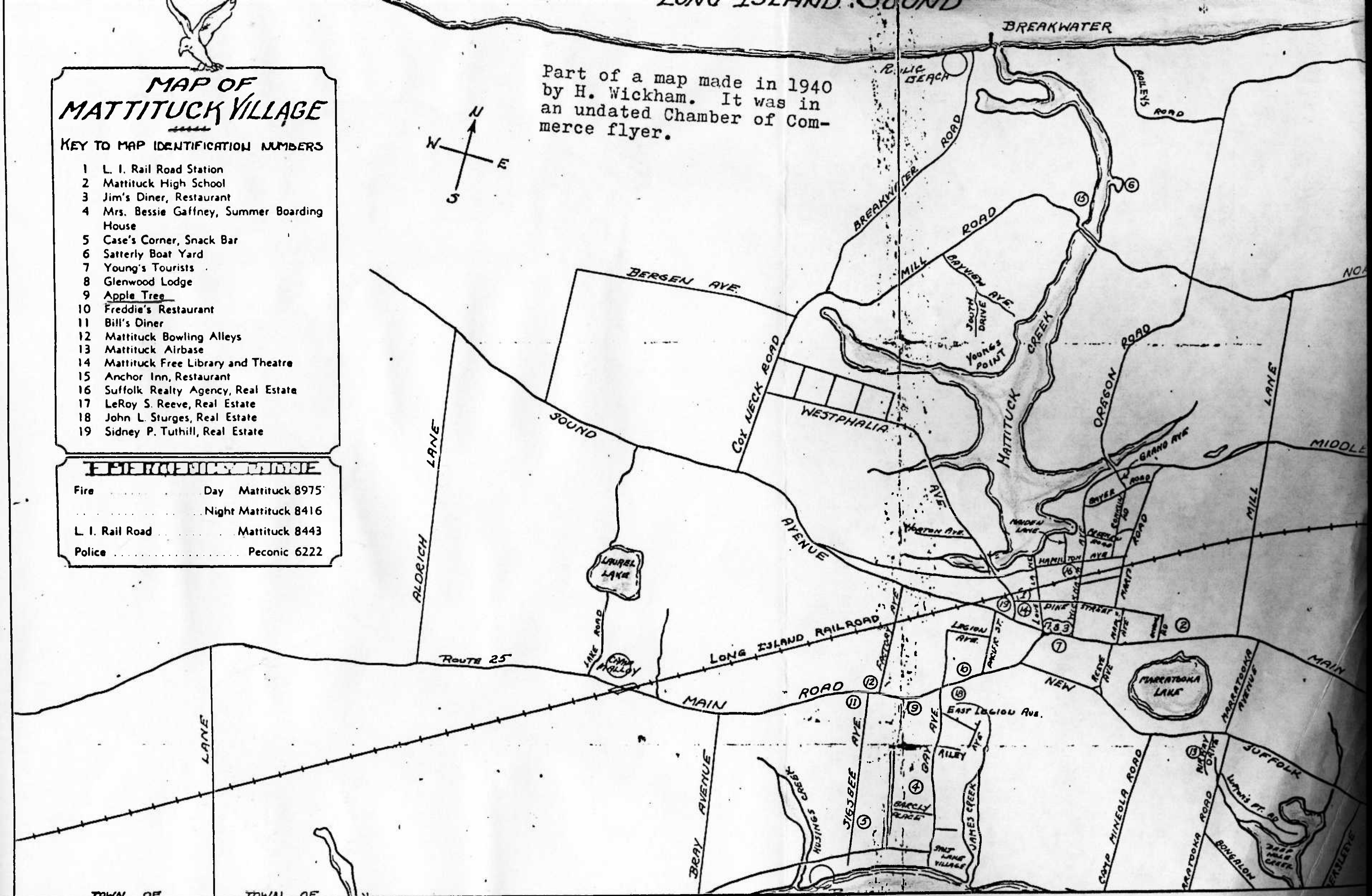
Hallock, Hannah

Jones, Ella

Reeve, Beulah
(Mrs. Geo. Penny)
Helen
(Mrs. Leslie Wells)
Irma

Silkworth, Albert
Fred
Walter

Wells, Addison



Part of a map made in 1940 by H. Wickham. It was in an undated Chamber of Commerce flyer.

THE APPLE TREE

Jericho Turnpike

MATTITUCK, L. I., N. Y.

(90 Miles from New York City) 1929

DINNERS SERVED

Toasted Sandwiches

Hot Roast Beef	.35
Hot Pastrami on Rye	.20
Frankfurter and Sauerkraut	.10
Hamburger, Spanish Onion	.10
Hamburger, Butter-fried Onions	.15
Hamburger DeLuxe	.20
Ham	.15
Egg	.10
Peanut Butter and Bacon	.20
Ham and Peanut Butter	.20
Lettuce and Tomato	.15
Ham, Lettuce and Tomato	.20
Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato	.30
Western	.20
Grilled Bacon	.15
American or Swiss Cheese	.15
Cream Cheese and Jelly	.20
Grilled Olde English Cheese	.15
Olde English Cheese and Ham	.20
Olde English Cheese and Tomato	.20
Olde English Cheese and Bacon	.25

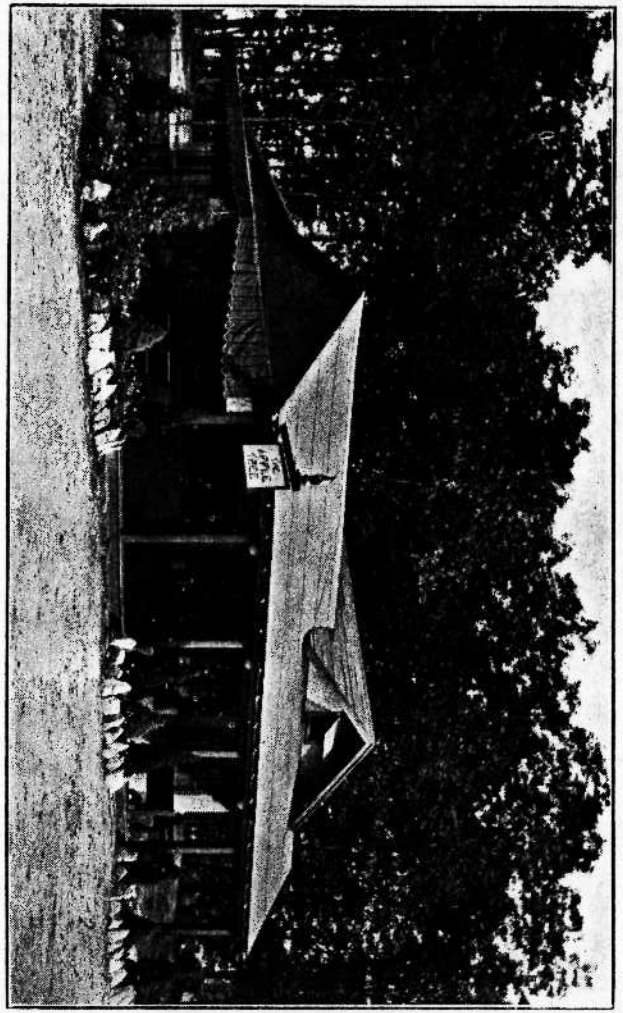
PIE FROM OUR OWN OVENS

Reid's Ice Cream

Coffee (pure cream) .05 Tea .10 Milk .10

Coffee Served in Cars .10

SCHLITZ ON DRAUGHT



THE APPLE TREE, ROUTE 25, MATTITUCK, L. I., N. Y.

31-RWT:IR-1
45-IR:HW-1
46-IR:HW-2

18

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

name Irma Reeve

birth date Nov. 1894 place Family home, West Mattituck

father's name Henry James Reeve

mother's name Caroline Belle Robinson (Carrie to the family)

childhood Chores: help with dusting, washing, lamp chimneys etc
Recreation: games, toys, swimming, picnics, camping picking berries, sliding on snow, paper dolls, other dolls, reading

education West Mattituck one-room school, Mattituck High School, second year, Riverhead High School, two years, Cornell University, College of Arts & Sciences A.B. 1916. Phi Beta Kappa

job training Massachusetts General Hospital School of Nursing. Part time classes, Columbia Teachers College, M.A. 1928

work Public Health Nursing, New York City 1920-23. Charge of Tuberculosis Clinic, New Haven Hospital Dispensary with teaching of Yale nursing students 1930. New Haven Visiting Nurse Association, teaching, Associate Director, 1951-1962. Director Public Health Nursing, Columbia County Department of Health, New York State.

official positions

member of Volunteer with Tuberculosis & Public Health Association and Suffolk County Mental Health Association -- Member of both Boards of Directors. Board of Directors Mattituck Free Library and Mattituck Historical Society. Officer North Fork Audubon

special activities, projects, hobbies Travel, three months in Europe, 1927 with visits to schools of nursing. Scandinavian Nature Field trip 1964, Isle of Jamaica, California National Audubon Society, 1966, Florida 1963. Bird watching, Columbia Country and on the North Fork.

spouse's name

children's names

major turning points in:

Mattituck	my life	my field of interest
1	1 College --nursing at beginning of World War I	
2	2 Public Health Nursing	
3	3 Retirement, opportunity for travel, activity	
4	4 withAudubon Society. Volunteer activities,	
5	5 mostly in Public Health	

for me, Mattituck was Home

Mattituck is Home and opportunity to be close to my young relatives

I'd like Mattituck to become More conscious of health problems, their causes and prevention. More interest in environment and need for protecting it.

(Comment on any of the above; your opinions are welcome!)

MATTITUCK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Contents of Tape No.45-IR:HW-1
Oral authors: Irma Reeve
Helen Wells

Early Mattituck

Table of Contents

Persons and places mentioned: Otto Dohm, The Grange, Dr. Morton, Elmer Ruland, Raymond Tuthill, Donald Gildersleeve, Dr. Craven, Gertrude Reeve Raynor, Julia Craven Penny, Elberta Hudson Reeve, Reeve, the butcher.

Autobiographical Sketches

MAPS, PICTURES

MATTITUCK ORAL HISTORY

Tape No. 45-IR:HW-1 Date of Interview: Spring 1978
Authors: Irma Reeve Interviewer: Richard Mack
Helen Wells
Estelle Wells,
daughter of Helen

Early Mattituck

There were a number of interruptions in making this tape. Some material not pertinent to the subject was included, and there were many unclear passages. We have transcribed the parts that deal with early Mattituck, indicating where the tape was not clear enough to be understood. The interview began apparently, after a discussion of the Iron Pier.

IR: (Unclear) he would know about the Iron Pier up at the Sound. It's about three or four miles west of Mattituck.

HW: Yes, that was going to be for the farmers, supposed to be for the farmers of the eastern end of Long Island.

I: Did that pier get blown away in a storm?

HW: It got cut off by ice. The ice was terrible that winter.

I: What size ships could it accommodate?

HW: Well, they were schooners. They were going to bring in seed potatoes and take out potatoes. That was what it was. To make our sales of crops easier, in transporting the crop.

I: So that way you could use the trains and the boats? And would they go all the way into New York City from here?

HW: Yes.

I: How big would you estimate the pier to be? The size of a football field maybe, that long?

HW: Oh, wait a minute. I don't think so. We have some history. I don't know how far out into the water it went.

I: But it was iron. It wasn't wood, it was iron?

HW: Yes. All iron. Pilings, they just cut right off like you cut it with a knife.

I: Was there a street that went down to that?

HW: Oh yes, there was a public road.

I: Is the road still there?

HW: Yes. Pier Avenue.

I: You say it's slightly west of the Mattituck border?

HW: Yes. Quite a ways.

I: Is it west of your house, Irma?

IR: Quite a bit.

Tape interrupted

I: It says here, "In the winter of 1903-04 the cold was intense and the Sound had been a solid cake of ice from three to five feet thick. During a weekend of warmer weather the shore ice softened and high north winds and strong tides shifted the ice so the pier was crushed and broken off and cast up on the beach. This was the end of the venture and came on February 13, 1904." So, the pier was only in operation for three years, three or four years.

HW: That's right.

I: And at that time it cost $10,000. It was built by Northville Pier and Land Improvement Company. I wonder who paid for it. There was a group of farmers?

HW: They had stock in it.

I: Well that gives us that story. I've got several photographs which people have lent us of that big freeze in 1904. Ice just piled stories high along the shore from breaking up. These were pictures on the bay.

HW: Oh, it was like big houses built up.

Tape interrupted

I: You wanted me to mention -

HW: The County Fair.

I: Now, that went on in Riverhead, right?

HW: Yes, it sure did.

I: When did they stop doing that? In the 30's?

IR: Yes. We looked that up. It was in the 30's.

HW: It doesn't seem that long ago.

I: Do you remember going there? What kind of activities went on?

HW: Everything that goes on at a fair. Merry-go-rounds and all kinds of things to get--

I: Horse races?

HW: Yes, horse races, and I guess they had a car race towards the last, didn't they?

IR: They probably did.

HW: We had a car race around here. You've heard about that?

I: Otto Dohm won one year. I interviewed him last week.

IR: Oh really.

I: Otto Dohm. He's 93.

HW: Why, the Dohm's live right near to you, don't they?

IR: Walter does, his son.

I: He was a mechanic, an automobile mechanic mostly.

IR: To go back to the fair. It was either four or five days. Almost a week long. And it must have been in September. I know as children, we had one day off from school when we could go to the County fair and we were always afraid it would rain.

HW: One week it rained every day. It rained and rained.

IR: Of course, there were no cars. This was before the car race even, and we drove up there. It usually took about an hour, I think, almost an hour to get to Riverhead.

I: Horse and wagon?

IR: Horse and wagon.

I: What was your favorite thing?

IR: There were all kinds of exhibits. Cattle and other animals, chickens --

HW: And they always had some special show, someone jumping off the top of a wall or some crazy thing like that, you know.

IR: And then the horse racing. There must have been - it was a circular course, wasn't it?

HW: Well, each farmer, they could enter their animals and get prizes.

I: Cattle, pigs, chickens, horses?

IR: Well, I don't remember there were horses ....

I: Horses were probably just raced?

IR: I think so.

I: Were there any baking contests?

IR: Oh yes, there were baking contests of all kinds. Fancy work and flowers. The Grange always had an exhibit.

HW: Oh yes, all the Granges.

IR: I remember even when I was in college helping my father with the Mattituck exhibit. This was a Grange exhibit....potatoes.

I: How would you exhibit potatoes?

IR: Well, each one had a little booth of its own, sort of. Each Grange, I mean. They would arrange it as they saw fit. I guess one Grange got a prize.

HW: First, second, third, fourth, and sometimes fifth prizes.

IR: Well, even individual people could enter things.

HW: Well yes, but I was thinking for the moment of the Grange exhibits. The Grange exhibit was all one place. Fancied up, fixed up nice.

I: Was Mattituck a Grange all of its own?

HW: A Grange all of its own.

EW: They just disbanded oh maybe six or seven years ago, or so. (unclear) fast dwindling away.

HW: It's gone downhill.

EW: They used to be...well about agricultural laws for things like gas taxes for farmers and so on, you know. But

anyway they were really a farmers', an agricultural organization.

IR: (Unclear) an active organization.

I: I wonder if anything took its place when it disbanded.

IR: It's hard to say that anything takes it place. Now Mattituck had the Village Improvement Society, and that died. Now it is being revived. It would be all that kind of thing but, of course, farming has changed too and the automobile, the possibility of more travel. Interests have broadened so that the farmers maybe don't have (unclear). And then there is the Farm Bureau and the Extension Service.

I: Let me ask you, Mrs. Wells, how long have you lived in Mattituck?

HW: All my life.

IR: Helen lived across the street from me.

I: Did you grow up together?

HW: Sure. More like twins than anything else.

I: Where were you born, right on the farm?

HW: Well, sure. Everybody was in those days.

I: I see. Did the family doctor come out?

HW: Why, of course. You could get a doctor anytime you wanted.

I: Do you remember who the doctor was at that time?

HW: Dr. Morton.

IR: Now whether he took care of the babies, I guess so, I don't remember.

I: What kinds of things would a doctor treat in those times? What were the common diseases?

IR: Well, let me see. We had measles and mumps. I fell out of the hammock and broke this arm. There were no x-rays in those days.

I: How old were you?

IR: Oh, I don't know, seven or eight. I was showing off in the hammock and it turned over.

I: Did he ride out in his horse and carriage?

IR: Well, I've forgotten whether they took me into his office or whether he came out. He was in Mattituck village, two miles away.

I: Now if he made a prescription for you, who would fill the prescription? They had a drug store, didn't they?

IR: I think so. Oh yes, they must have had (unclear). They might have gone to Riverhead to get the prescription filled.

HW: As long as I remember, they had a drug store.

I: The doctor might have had his own pills. That's what I was thinking.

EW: Very possible.

I: Okay. So you went to grammar school together?

IR: We went to the little red schoolhouse for four or five years.

I: Was it the first one or the second one?

IR: The second one. Then we went in to Mattituck village, where the Library is now.

I: So you actually changed in the middle? Do you remember what grade you were in at that time?

IR: I think, the fifth. I've got the record of it.

I: Okay. You grew up together. Did you play out in that little groove of trees in the middle of the field that you showed me?

IR: Oh no. Because that was the next farm. But I also pointed out the swamp out to the east of that. I was quite likely to go up there by myself occasionally.

HW: (Unclear) in the trees above the water, to see how near we could get without getting wet. We had a lot of fun.

I: That was where they cut the ice?

HW: Yes.

IR: Now, just remember we didn't put this in the water that we were going to drink. This was for the ice box. You call it a refrigerator.

I: Where was the pond?

IR: Well, I showed you the trees and then to the right of that, east of it was the swamp. (north of Sound Ave., behind Irma's house. It appears to be filled in now 1984).

I: Did you ever go together to a dance? Did you double date or anything like that?

HW: No. I don't think anybody did in those days.

I: How did you get...

HW: I don't know. The fellows came around.

I: You went to the Literary?

IR: Well, yes.

HW: Yes, uh huh. They had a beautiful hall in Mattituck. Do you remember?

IR: Yeah, wasn't that beautiful?

HW: Goodness, I cried when they took that down. It was such a well-built thing, you know.

I: Why did they take it down?

IR: Oh, they had to have room for parking.

I: Was that the reason? There is a parking lot there now?

HW: Just take it away. Elmer Ruland said, "Oh that was some building to take down." He went over when they were taking it to pieces. The beautiful timber that was in that. He said they had two big trucks, not trucks but big engines up on top of that second floor, and (unclear) break. It was built so it would hold most anything.

IR: I was away at that time. I often wondered why they had to take that down.

HW: Of course, it wasn't in a good place, well in that corner on the street. You know, no room around it. Sitting right in the street. I don't know. They have to use that bulldozer on everything.

I: Who was responsible for taking it down?

HW: Well, I don't know if the village voted to have it taken down or not. I doubt it. I don't know how it got down.

IR: Well, I know we danced there when it was....before I went away.

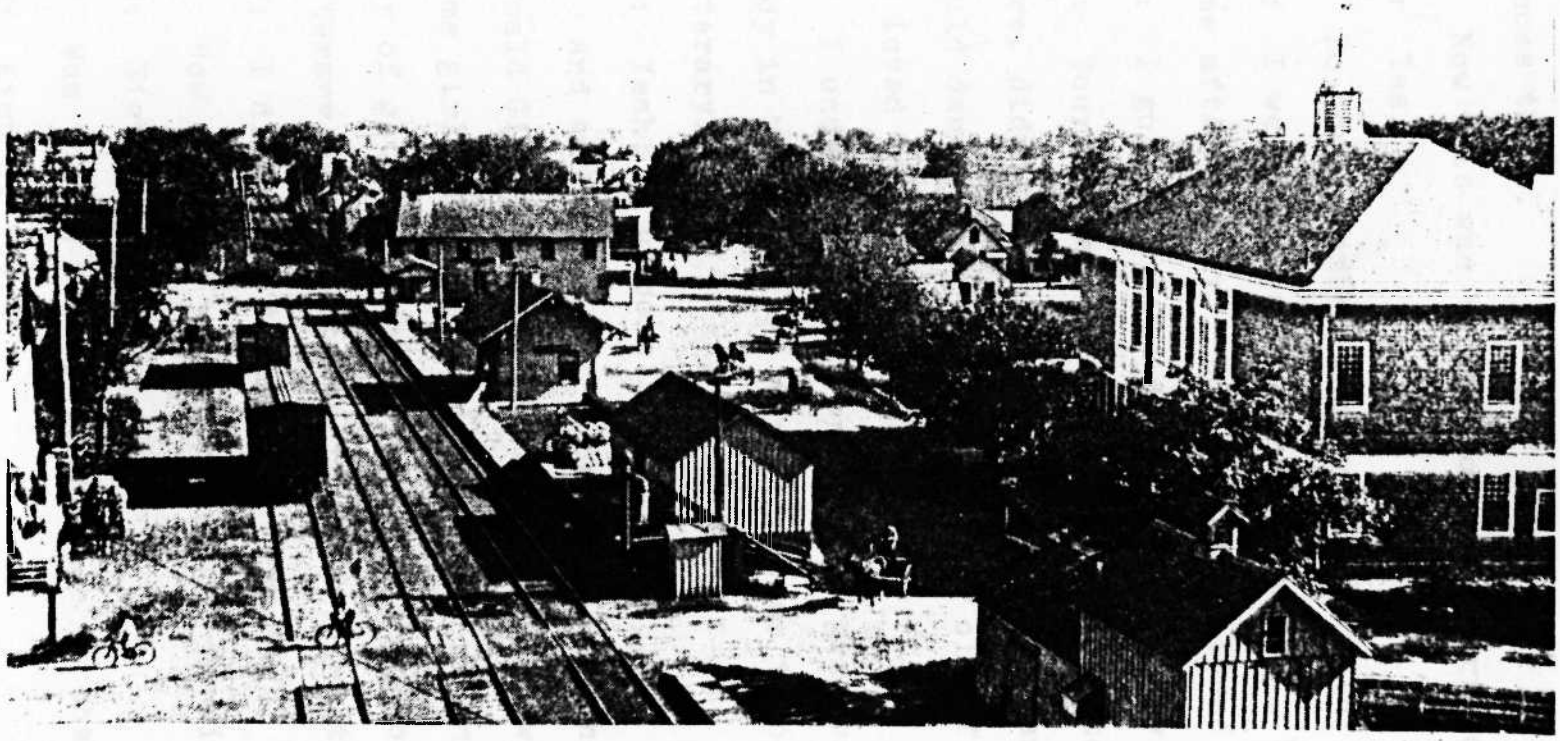
HW: Oh, they had a beautiful hall upstairs.

I: Was that part of the Literary?

IR: Well, the Literary used it.

I: Who sponsored the dances?

HW: The men's lodge had a dance every year and a supper.



d's-eye View of Mattituck, Showing the Station in the Centre and Lupton Hall and Library Building to the right

Then they had a dance that stayed till midnight. I thought I was real smart to sit up to midnight. And the Literary had dances there.

I: Now this was before you were married?

HW: Yes.

I: Do you remember whom you went with?

HW: I went with my father and mother, but my mother went home after supper. But my father loved to dance.

IR: I guess he did, didn't he. But my father didn't so....

HW: Your father and mother went home together. They didn't care, didn't care anything about the dance. But my father could dance when he was 90 years old if anybody asked him to. He loved it.

I: I understand that one of the greatest things for a young lady in Mattituck at that time was to be invited to the Literary.

IR: Yeah, I suppose.

I: And according to, I believe, Raymond Tuthill or Donald Gildersleeve, I don't remember which, if there was some girl that they had their eye on and they wanted a sure-fire way of getting a date with her, they would invite her to the Literary because it was the big thing to go to that.

HW: I didn't go to Literary very much.

I: How old were you when you got married?

HW: Eighteen.

I: Was that a pretty common age at that time?

HW: Kind of young.

I: You don't remember any of your courting? I'm trying to find out what people did when they went out for entertainment.

HW: We didn't have to go every night or every day somewhere to be happy. (Laughter) We'd stay home.

I: Courting? How about Friday night or Saturday night?

HW: Well, if he was a farmer, he'd come when he could, when he wasn't too tired.

I: So it was pretty much, you just sort of stayed at home and, you know talked?

HW: We went out to different things.

I: What kinds of things?

HW: Well, if there was anything that we thought that would be interesting.

I: Do you remember anything?

HW: I don't think it was Literary, but there were a series, do you remember Irma, travel lectures?

I: Movies?

HW: Yes. They had movies in that hall too?

Tape interrupted

IR: No. We had two years in high school in Mattituck.

I: That was after the eighth grade?

IR: Let's see. I was in Riverhead for senior and junior. So I had freshman and sophomore in Mattituck. I went to Riverhead in 1910, and graduated in 1912. Then I went to college the next fall for four years. Then I went that next fall into the school of nursing. And you see, I was away all that time and I really didn't come back. I mean I was working elsewhere.

HW: I missed her. We used to ride our bicycles to school together many many times.

IR: We used to walk to school too.

HW: Sometimes I walked, yes I walked from my house to Mattituck many many times.

IR: Did you? I don't remember walking to Mattituck very often but, of course, we always walked back and forth to school.

HW: Oh, I did. If the wind was blowing hard I'd rather walk than ride a bicycle against that wind.

I: Now did you get married when Irma was away?

HW: Yes.

I: Was the ceremony held in Mattituck?

HW: It was held in my house.

I: In your house? Do you remember what minister was there?

HW: It was Dr. Craven

I: Did you have the reception there also?

HW: The immediate family.

I: Just immediate family?

HW: Well, there were too many young people. I couldn't invite them all. Our house was small. So I just invited uncles and aunts.

I: Do you remember the hurricane of 1938 at all?

HW: Sure, I do.

I: Where were you when that occurred?

HW: I was here, I guess. Everything was blowing down.

IR: I was here getting ready to go back to Cornell. The next day I was supposed to take a train out of Riverhead, and there were no trains running.

I: You got to Riverhead? Did you make it that far?

IR: No, we didn't.

I: Do you remember the actual point that you figured out that this was more than just an ordinary storm?

EW: Yes, I do.

I: Tell me about it.

EW: Well, my sister, Ann, who was ten years younger than I, was in high school at that time, and she was still in school. This was about two o'clock in the afternoon. It had been blowing like the old Harry but we didn't think much about it, and then all of a sudden it just got like a vacuum, just deathly quiet. You can't describe it. Like something is different, you know.

It was so scary. I said, "Well now is the time" and I got in the car, and I went and got Ann and brought her home at that particular moment. And then, it turned around and came from the other way. My father said, "Well, the wind is going to blow real hard and you've got to get some boards on the windows of the east side of the house." So he says, "There are some doors up in the attic. You go up in the attic and get those doors and bring them down and put them against those windows." So I started to the attic. It's on the east. It's the other side to that room and I went up those stairs and as -- We had a hickory tree in front of the house that was an old one -- and as I got up to that window there were kind of three big branches of that tree. Each one was going around in a circle of its own. (Unclear) Oh what's going to keep this house, you know, when that tree hits going like that. But I got on up into the attic to get

the doors and I came down with one, and I got it right into the window that is on the east side, and that window exploded. It just went POW! and it went into millions of, you know, just little slivers. I got some down inside but it didn't hit me anywhere that was really serious.

I: You were on the inside? Did you have the door in front of you?

EW: Yes.

I: So that saved you?

EW: That probably did, you know. The darn thing exploded. But then after that all that happened was branches blowing into the windows. Everything went down.

HW: At least twenty-five big trees.

EW: Yes. We had around twenty-five trees that went down. But the problem there was, of course, that it had rained ten days ahead, and that was what made it so bad. The funny thing about it is many of them actually could have been saved if we'd had the right equipment, block and tackle. We did save a couple here. Dad pulled back some and wired them up (unclear) if they told us about it. (Unclear) knew it was going to be very bad.

HW: Oh, nobody knew it, no.

HW: Now they keep telling you (unclear)

EW: It was when the pressure changed, of course. The wind came from the other direction.

I: So, that means that the eye actually did pass over Mattituck?

EW: Yes. Yes, yes!

I: Do you remember what the sky looked like when that vacuum hit?

HW: We weren't looking at the sky much.

EW: It was just dark. I remember I sat right in that chair right there. It's hard to remember what I was thinking of because they were worrying about Ann being in school. That was the problem. And we had no public transportation then. You had to take care of your own family. So I sat right there wondering, pondering whether to .... Then it got dark. That's the only thing, you know, that I remember.

I: It got dark? This is after it had been raging for a little while.

EW: Yes. It got darker. But the interesting thing to me was that sometime later after we were married and we were interested in rocks and minerals we went up to Massachusetts to a place near Northampton, Massachusetts, in Goshen where he wanted to look for a mineral they had up there. But their sugar bush in Goshen had been hit. This thing came right up in 1938, right up through the middle of here and went straight up there. That sugar bush had been no good since 1938. The trees were taken down by the wind. That was really like a movie set. The wooden buckets were sitting right where they had been left. There was a sugar house that was just like they'd walked out and left everything there.

(Unclear)

Yes, yes. The trees went in every direction so they couldn't do anything in there anymore. But it was full of

big white quartz boulders. That's where our white quartz came from during the glacial period. It came down and deposited white quartz here for Long Island. But all we see are small white quartz pieces. We seldom find a large one. But that was part of the 1938 hurricane that was interesting to me.

Tape interrupted

IR: You know I got thinking about the old time peddlers.

I: Tell me about the peddlers.

IR: There was one peddler who came around with aluminum. Helen, do you remember that? When aluminum was first used, I'm sure there was one peddler who came around with aluminum utensils. But now - well I'm pretty sure it was before I went to college.

IR: We had tinware then also -

Tape interrupted

I: Was it a local person with all the tin?

HW: Well, he didn't live very far away. He lived on the east end of the island. He lived somewhere down in Cutchogue or Orient. He used to come in time for dinner. And then he would give us something, you know. (Unclear) Of course, we had the threshers in our yard, threshing wheat and rye. (Unclear) that first burned wood, I think, in the engine to make the power.

I: They were steam-powered?

HW: (Unclear) steam engine.

I: And you had these out in your fields?

HW: Well. they would bring the grain into the barn, and then pitch it out of the barn into the thresher machine and --

I: So the thresher was stationary?

HW: Yes. It would stay there. Well, they could pull it around. It was on wheels, but (unclear) He and another man generally came and stayed for dinner. Oh, that was always a big event. They would thresh your farm when it came your turn. And they'd bring the threshing machine, and all the men who helped. They'd pitch in. It was sort of like a house-raising, you know. They'd take turns, going from place to place and doing it for somebody else. So when they came to your house, they you fed everybody that was there depending on how much you had, a day or two.

I: Was that usually how long it would last for about a day or two?

EW: Well, here it did. I don't know about - I can just remember when the threshing machine had to come here to do the job.

HW: Oh, they only stayed, generally one day, did it up in one day. If they didn't they'd come back the next.

EW: That's what I mean, a day or two.

I: Would all the farmers help each other also?

EW: Well, yes. Every farmer doesn't have a combine. We rent it from somebody.

I: Oh I see, so everyone got together and rented the machine, maybe one man from the company attending it?

EW: Well, you had to have somebody who was used to it, somebody who would stay with it all the time. Somebody who

knew what its quirks were, I guess...kick it in the side to get it to go....I was so little, I was so young, I didn't worry about how it worked. I remember seeing it come in.

I: Did it make a lot of noise?

EW: Yes.

I: Now, this would be around harvest time? In the fall?

EW: Yes.

I: And this was separating the grain from the wheat?

EW: Yes. From the straw.

I: The grain from the straw. I just wanted to ask you one other thing. Do you recall around that same time any kind of harvest celebration or something like that?

HW: The County Fair, I guess.

EW: That was more it than anything. That was another place that -- I was thinking when she said she couldn't remember where they dated. That, I'm sure, was a place that everybody met everybody else. That was a big thing to get to the Fair. Then you went around on the Ferris Wheel or you stayed for a night show or something. That was the big deal for dating, having fun at the fair.

I: Do you recall any clam bakes in the summertime?

IR: Oh sure. But they were usually family affairs, I think.

EW: We used to have Grange picnics. They were really nice.

HW: First one tent, then two tents, then part of a little building, then a tent. (Unclear) the Jamesport campground --

I: At one of those Grange picnics, what would you do? Would you eat hotdogs?

H: Oh, we all brought a dish. That was the big thing. You know, we didn't have to do much. I keep thinking about how fancy or elaborate, I should say, that we go into picnics, a lot of folks do nowadays. But we used to take a blanket and a dish to pass, and our dishes, and sit down and pass the dish around. Everybody took some of everybody else's. We sat right on the blanket and ate. We didn't have to have chairs or tables or anything else, you know. It was so much simpler.

Tape interrupted

I: Did you plant the walnut trees yourself?

HW: Oh well, yes. My husband's father was given little, well they were about, maybe like that.

I: How big are they now?

HW: They're taller than that building.

I: They're taller than that?

IR: Helen, you remember our black walnut tree in the backyard?

HW: Yes, we have them too.

I: Has walnut ever really been an industry in Mattituck or just a personal family thing?

HW: Yes. Everybody had their walnut tree.

I: These are better than anything that you'd buy. I saw them out on the porch. They looked like they were homegrown, you know.

HW: They're not as polished. We didn't wash them. What I mean is, the ones you buy they put them through a wash so they look different.

Interruption

I: (Unclear) peanuts, they grow on the ground?

HW: Oh yes, yes. You should see them grow. They are the most fascinating things. They bloom on top of the ground, and then the blossom goes down in and produces the fruit. They bury themselves in the ground and produce the peanut. It's tremendous. They are pretty. They are a lovely green plant, and then they have bright yellow blossoms. It's usually way along in the summer when they bloom. You can't dig 'em until oh, September, October I guess, about October.

Interruption

I: At that time, did you used to get your tea from Gildersleeve's?

HW: Tea? Everything.

I: Your meat, you would get from the butcher? Who was the butcher then?

HW: That was Mr. Reeve.

HW: Do you ever see Gertrude (Gertrude Reeve Raynor) anymore?

IR: Not recently, I haven't, no.

HW: We were over there this past fall. We went to Julia's birthday party. This is Dr. Craven's daughter, Julia Craven Penny.

HW: Julia never married but until quite late in life.

IR: She was a second wife to Mr. Penny.

I: Elberta Hudson Reeve?

IR: She's in the nursing home in Riverhead.

HW: She and I used to be pretty good friends.

IR: It's a great shame. She has a very nice house down on the Bay, but she couldn't find anyone to stay with her and take care of her.

Interruption.

I: You're talking about dressmaking?

IR: That was something that was important in those days.

I: (Unclear)

IR: Well, sure we had (unclear) She'd come and usually I think she'd spend two days with us. She'd stay overnight.

HW: Oh yes.

I: And she would fit you and make the dress right in your own home?

HW: Yes.

I: She brought her own sewing machine?

IR: Oh no, we had a machine.

I: What kind of materials would she make a dress out of?

HW: Anything you wanted. She was wonderful.

I: What would she charge for a dress?

IR: Not for a dress. This would be by the day, so much a day.

I: How long would it take to make a dress?

IR: I don't know really. But usually, some member of the family, in my case it would have been my Aunt Nell who lived with us, would work along with her.

HW: You know, I can see that just as plain, Aunt Nell and your mother (unclear) working along with her in your west room there. You had a fire in the fireplace, and oh it was so nice. We kids were all over there just having a wonderful time looking at them. I remember they were making your mother a blue foulard dress, foulard silk. It was very soft.

Interruption

HW: But one of the things in Mom's house, down at Grandpa Reeve's, that always impressed me as a youngster was that you had electricity down there before we had it here.

IR: Oh really. Uh huh.

HW: So, as a child I always had to shine the lamp chimneys. We'd go down to Grandpa Reeve's and push that light button. We'd push the button and the light would go on.

I: Was that the first electric light you ever saw?

HW: Yeah.

I: What was your impression?

HW: (Unclear) it was just magical. That was really great of course, they lived without electricity and without central heating.

IR: Oh, I loved that old coal stove (unclear).

I: Would that coal stove in the living room be enough to heat up the whole living room?

IR: Well, sure. Well, the living room, yes, but no more.

I: How did you heat up the bedrooms?

IR: It was awfully cold. You might take something up to warm the bed.

I: Were there bedwarmers?

IR: Soapstone I can't remember, but I'm sure maybe even a wrapped brick. I wouldn't be surprised.

HW: Well we used soapstones then.

I: Where did the electricity come from?

IR: From the Lighting Company. We didn't call it LILCO then.

I: But you had telephones before you had electricity? Is that right?

HW: I don't know which came first.

IR: Probably about the same time, well it was before I went to college certainly.

HW: I know the first one I talked to on the phone was Beulah. I rang Beulah up right away as soon as we got our phone. My sister .

I: So you're not sure which came first.

IR: It seems like the telephone did.

HW: I think so, but I'm not sure.

I: Okay, you had the lights. Did they come out of the ceiling?

IR: Yeah, I think so. Probably hanging down.

I: Do you remember the first electrical appliance after the lights?

HW: I don't remember.

IR: I would guess toasters, but I don't know.

HW: In fact, I don't remember my mother having any electrical kitchenware at all, not even a washing machine, or ....

I: A vacuum cleaner?

HW: No. Nor an iron or anything like that.

I: How did you iron?

HW: Why you heated them on the stove, big heavy things.

I: Did you have to sprinkle water on the clothes?

IR: Well, yes, do yet too.

HW: I like to have it lay awhile and get all evenly damp, you know.

I: Your waffle iron ...?

IR: I don't think we made waffles. We made plenty of pancakes with the grill heated on the stove.

HW: They were good too.

IR: Sure they were. You might carry over some of the stuff from your grill cakes and then use them again, sort of as a ....

I: The batter?

IR: Yeah. Use it again as starter. (Unclear) leavening

I: Did most everybody make their own bread at that time?

IR: Oh yes.

HW: And finally, we did get a bread mixer.

IR: Not the electric one.

HW: No.

HW: My (unclear) always said, "Now is the time to mix the bread, Mom, before we go to bed. Let me mix it for you." He'd mix that thing.

I: Would you let it sit overnight?

HW: Yes.

I: You'd throw it in the oven the next day?

IR: Oh no, we didn't throw it in.

HW: We'd make it up in whatever shape we wanted and size, loaves, and put it in greased pans.

I: What were different kinds of bread in those days?

HW: Well, I don't know.

IR: But some, whole wheat, I would say.

HW: Yes. We made a graham bread, what we would call a graham bread. (Unclear) nearly went crazy over it. (Unclear) if you've got any graham bread, I've got to have it."

I: Now how did you get the oven to the right temperature?

IR: You can tell after you've used it a few years.

HW: Well, some of them had a little thing in the front, not too many.

I: Was your kitchen stove a wood stove or a coal stove?

IR: Wood. And usually you'd have a galvanized water tank, which I don't know how many gallons it would hold, but with an arrangement so that the water circulated through the stove you see. We had a galvanized tank and it went up almost to the ceiling. There must have been some way of having the water circulate through some part of the stove.

I: That's how you heated your water?

IR: Yeah. Of course, for cooking you didn't heat. You just did that on top of the stove.

I: Then you would take hot water out of there for what purpose?

IR: Well, dishwashing, bath.

I: Bath. Would you have to carry it to the tub?

IR: Well, I remember we brought the tub for a small child, and frankly I don't know what the adults did. But I can

remember having a bath in a wooden tub about so high on a table top.

I: Up on a table top?

HW: We used to have a galvanized tub that sat on the floor, and you took a bath in.

IR: Well, this was, I guess, before the galvanized tubs came in. I haven't the ghost of an idea of how old I was.

I: You must have been pretty small to take a bath on the kitchen table.

IR: It was a washtub actually.

HW: You didn't ever have a real bathtub, shape of a bathtub. We did have a tub just always sat in the kitchen in front of the stove where it was warm.

I: Did the hot water heater have a faucet on it?

IR: I can't seem to remember. Can you remember? How did we get the water out of the tank?

HW: I can't think how we did.

I: How often did you take a bath?

IR: Well, not too often.

I: Once a week?

HW: Oh, at least. Yes.

I: Twice a week.

IR: Oh, don't pin me down. I just don't know. It was all according to what we had been doing, how hot it was, how dirty we got. I think we were moderately clean. Our mothers both thought we were clean anyway. They tried to keep us clean.

I: Did you used to help out with the chores?
HW: Oh sure. Whip the eggs, feed the chickens, feed the horses sometimes and the cows, cut up some carrots for the cows.
IR: Shell the corn sometimes.
HW: Oh yes, we had an old corn sheller.
I: Corn sheller?
IR: Yeah. To get it off the cobs.
I: And that's what you fed the chickens? Did you have any pigs?
HW: Oh yes. Sure. And of course in the fall we killed a couple of pigs. Oh, you should see all our packing, grinding up and doing one thing and another.
I: Did you have a smokehouse?
IR: Well, we used one, the neighbor's smokehouse. We had pigs. But I don't think we had a smokehouse.
HW: Oh, I think you probably did. We did.
IR: You did? We had a root cellar. And I always loved that cellar where we raised the little chickens and hatched them in incubators. See those little chickens coming out of the shell. Oh, was that fun.
I: What did they use to keep the incubator warm at that time?
HW: Kerosene. My brother's (unclear) burned up one night, chickens and all. He had a small one out in the orchard. It was new, almost new. Something happened to the stove, couldn't do anything to stop it. I felt terrible to burn the chickens.

I: Did you have your own meat? What did you buy from the butcher?

IR: In those days, we bought everything from the butcher.

HW: (Unclear) pigs but I can't remember they're ever butchering a cow. But pigs, yes. Sausage? I think they may have taken that in and have Reeves make it up.

HW: He had (unclear) wagon when he came around and he'd ring his bell when he'd get to the house so we'd know he was there.

I: Do you recall any prices?

HW: Prices, I don't know. I think you could probably get a whole steak enough for the family for two dollars.

IR: We didn't have any hamburger. I don't think we very often had it ground. Do you think so?

HW: No.

I: What about hotdogs?

IR: Oh no, they came later.

HW: I think hardly anybody would make them. I mean you couldn't buy the cases then. You had to make them. You had to clean the guts, you know and put the meat in. They put anything they want to in a hotdog.

I: What kind of meal would you have on a very special occasion?

IR & HW: Chicken!

IR: Chicken or turkey once in a while. Chicken mostly, I guess. Roast chicken.

HW: Chicken and dumplings.

I: Did your husband hunt?

HW: No.

I: Did you eat seafood fairly often?

HW: Yes, anything we could get.

I: Would you go clamming?

HW: Yes, yes.

IR: Oh, whenever they were down at the bay and it was good weather so they could, (unclear) oysters. The best oysters I have ever eaten were from Mattituck Creek. Now the water is so polluted that you can't trust anything. The flavor is not there. Don't enjoy it like you used it. Interruption.

I: Do you recall any fires in the area?

HW: My husband had to go rushing out to the fires. So many barns (unclear) that burned. Almost everybody's had a barn burn up sometime.

I: Did you ever go on a hayride?

IR: Yeah, once in a while. Even a sleigh ride.

HW: Yes. A sleigh ride in a big sled. Not too often. Not very often that the snow was right.

I: How many people would that fit in it?

HW: Ten or fifteen, I don't know, whatever you could push in.

I: Did most of the hay rides occur in the summer or the fall?

HW: Oh, they were so much fun when Harold Reeve was along and George Penny.

I: Harold Reeve?

HW: Oh, he was full of fun. Made us laugh all the time.

I: Would the hay ride last for a couple of hours?

HW: I don't know. I don't remember. They probably did. Till we got too cold, I guess.

End of tape

31-RWT:IR-1
45-IR:HW-1

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

name Irma Reeve

birth date November 1894 place West Mattituck family home

father Henry James Reeve

mother Caroline Belle Robinson (Carrie, to the family)

childhood Chores -- help with dusting, washing - lamp chimneys etc. Recreation -- games, toys, swimming, picnics, camping, picking berries, sliding on snow, paper dolls, other dolls, reading

education West Mattituck one-room school. Mattituck school through second year high school. Two years Riverhead High School. Cornell University College of Arts and Sciences, B.A. 1916, Phi Beta Kappa. Massachusetts General Hospital School of Nursing and Columbia University Teachers College, M.A. 1928.

work Public Health Nursing administration, New York City 1920 - 1923. In 1924 in charge of Tuberculosis Clinic at New Haven Hospital Dispensary, with teaching of Yale University nursing students. In 1930 New Haven Visiting Nurses Association teaching and Associate Director. 1951-1962 Director of Public Health Nursing, Columbia County, N.Y. Department of Health.

activities, projects, hobbies Volunteer activities, Tuberculosis and Public Health Association (now Lung Assoc.) and Suffolk County Mental Health Association: member of both Boards of Directors. Board of Directors and active, Mattituck Free Library and Mattituck Historical Society. Officer and active North Fork Audubon Society. Member League of Women Voters.

Travel: Three months in Europe 1927 including visits to Schools of Nursing. After retirement, Scandinavian Nature Field Trip, 1964. 1963 visit Isle of Jamaica and Florida, bird watching. California National Audubon Society trip 1966. Bird watcher from way back.

major turning points in my life college and nursing at beginning of World War I. After Master's Degree, the field of Public Health Nursing. Retirement with opportunities to travel and to work as volunteer with public health group.

for me Mattituck was Home. Now the opportunity to be closer to my younger relatives.

I'd like Mattituck to become more conscious of health problems, their causes and prevention: more interested in environment, the beauty of nature and the need for protecting it.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

name Helen Reeve Wells

birth date Jan. 1895 place West Mattituck

father's name John Reeve

mother's name Hattie

childhood On a farm -- choressuch as cleaning lamp chimneys, help-in the home, picking berries. For recreation there was reading, dolls, later picnics, swimming.

education Mattituck High School, two years.

job training

work

official positions

member of

special activities, projects, hobbies

spouse's name Leslie Wells

children's names Estelle

major turning points in:

Mattituck	my life	my field of interest
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5

for me, Mattituck was

Mattituck is

I'd like Mattituck to become

MATTITUCK ORAL HISTORY

Contents of Tape 8-EW-1 July 12, 1978
Oral Author: Eva Woodward Interviewer: John Traversa
Place of Interview: Author's home on Wickham Ave.

Family Life and Gardens

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MAPS, PICTURES

MATTITUCK ORAL HISTORY

Contents of Tape 8-EW-1
Oral Author: Eva Woodward
Place of Interview: Her home on Wickham Avenue

Date of Interview: July 12, 1978
Interviewer: John Traversa

"Family Life & Gardens"

I: Tell me where you came from before you came to Mattituck?

EW: I came from Riverhead to Mattituck. I came from Northport to Staten Island to Riverhead to Mattituck.

I: Why did you move from Northport?

EW: That is such a long story.

I: Can you tell me in a couple of words?

EW: Our father disappeared, and, of course, he was the editor and the owner of the paper. He was thrown into bankruptcy, and my husband didn't want to work for the partner. The partner took over, and he didn't want to work for the partner, so we moved to Staten Island, and got work there. Through the War the work was scarce, and he couldn't really make a living. That's why we wanted to get back on the Island. So we came back to Riverhead to the County Review...1915...

I: So you were in Riverhead until 1919?

EW: Yes. October of 1919, and then we moved down here.

I: Why did you decide to move to Mattituck?

EW: Because Hegen and Lee, his bosses, dissolved partnership. Mr. Hegen opened up a place here in Mattituck and brought my husband with him. Mr. Lee kept the other place there.

I: What was the place in Mattituck called?

EW: It wasn't a paper, it was a printing office. They printed books and different things. Do you know where that Garden Center is there, well, it was right on the side of that, just west of that. It burned down, that's why it isn't there now. It was where the wrecking company was. The wrecking company wasn't there when we moved here. There wasn't even street lights when we moved here to Mattituck.

I: Tell me where you moved in Mattituck.

EW: Right here in this house. This is the only house in Mattituck.....

I: But you rented then...

EW: We rented the whole thing clear to the corner of Pike Street.

I: Tell us a little bit about what you did with the property. You were gardening? What kind of crops did you raise, vegetables?

EW: All kinds of vegetables, just about everything. There were beans and peas and beets and okra and lettuce and lima beans, just practically all vegetables, cabbage.

I: What did you do with the vegetables?

EW: Ate 'em. Fed 'em to the family. I don't think we sold very much of anything until my husband had the property over here, the Wines', and we raised lima beans. And those we shipped into New York to market, because you see I canned vegetables for the winter, and that took a lot.

I: How did you can them?

EW: Same as anybody else would, glass jars. We had practically enough of everything for a winter. We didn't raise potatoes, but all the rest we did.

I: You had enough for yourself, your husband, and seven children?

EW: Well no. You see, the time we had seven, we didn't have that big garden. It's too complicated, really, to go into, offhand. Because there was twenty years difference between my first one and the last one. My first one was in college when the last one was born. This house was here before my last one was born. This one Mr. Young bought. He built it, he bought the land and built it. But then we got some ground over here, and planted that. We always raised all we could for the family. With a family like we had, we didn't have very much to sell. We used it ourselves. The surplus we canned for winter.

I: Did you have any problems with gardening?

EW: I don't remember any.

I: Insects or blights or anything?

EW: We used to have those aphids once in a while, but in those days we didn't have the bugs like we do today.

I: There were not so many bugs?

EW: Oh no, not back then. Bugs didn't bother us so much. Of course, you had flies, but they don't bother a garden very much.

I: Do you have any idea why things are different now with the bugs?

EW: No, I don't know. Well, once in awhile, in these last twenty years, maybe, there's been a year when we had....Now one year we had an awful lot of Japenese beetles. Everything was covered with them and then other years you only have a few. So I don't remember. I can't tell just when or how long anything like that occurred. I think you can get more information from some of the farmers and people like that, that have lived here for years.

I: Well, I'm talking to you as a gardener, and I want to know how you use the garden today differently from how you used it back then?

EW: Well, I don't have much of a vegetable garden anymore, I raise a few beans and tomatoes, and sometimes squash. But most of it is berries today. Years ago we used to have strawberries, but I haven't had any strawberries for three years now. I didn't have much ground for them. There's a lot to gardening besides just reaping your produce and when a bed gets real old, your young plants should be taken up and moved somewhere. And I didn't have the ground with just this back yard to do that and the plants kind of peetered out and I didn't buy any more, that's all. They just gave out.

I: What do you do with the raspberries? Do you move the raspberries?

EW: No, but I take one out, now and then, a plant, and put a new one in. I can't move them because I only have so much land. If I had acres, I could move them from here, over to

some other place and plant this with something else, but I don't have that, so I just let it be. Then the plant isn't doing good or is real old. 'Course with raspberries a stalk comes up each year, cane, as they call it, and that gives you the berries for the next year. And sometimes your root gets this big, and they're not much good when they're like that. So I take it out and put a new plant in there and then you got better berries for a few years.

I: Where do you get the new plants?

EW: From these. The roots go through the ground and they spring up here and there.

I: What do you do with the raspberries?

EW: Sell them. That's all.

I: Do you sell all of them?

EW: I sell them all except a few that we just use ourselves. But I don't use many.

I: So when you first came to Mattituck did your husband help with the vegetables?

EW: He did most of the garden work. I used to help pick. In those days I didn't do any of the hoeing, or anything like that, because I had enough to do in the house. I helped.

I: What did you have to do in the house?

EW: (Laughing) Cook, wash clothes, iron, ordinary housework. In those days, housework was different than it is today because we had to iron nearly everything that was washed. Today they have clothes that don't require any ironing. And we had to heat our iron on a stove, and when it was cooled off you put it back and took another one. You probably haven't any idea, have you? Today you

have material that requires very little pressing, some of them none. And they have dishwashers and clothes washers. In my day I heated the water on the stove and washed in the wash tub.

I: Where did you get the water in the first place?

EW: Out the back door, with a chain pump, and then after a few years, I don't remember just the year, we had a pump, a hand pump, put in the kitchen. But we had no hot water, we didn't have any hot water until somewhere around 1930, I don't remember just the exact year.

I: So you had to heat your water. How?

EW: On the cook stove. We burned wood and coal, in the summertime we burned oil. We had an oil stove. There was no gas, no electric. We didn't have electricity in the house or anything. Everything's been done since we have been here. The walls have been put on since we have been here. They had regular plaster walls, when we came here. Now we have hot and cold running water, and a bathroom, and electricity, all of which we didn't have for a good many years.

I: Tell me more about washing the clothes. After you heated the water...

EW: You washed them in the tub, on the wash board. You carried your water outdoors and dumped it, and in the summertime we used to wash outdoors a lot. But still your water had to be heated on the stove and taken out to the tub.

I: How did you wash your clothes with the hot water?

EW: By hand, on the board. I didn't have a washer until we got the electricity in and that was about 1925.

I: So you got your first washer after that?

EW: Then we got a washing machine.

I: Were you glad to get a washer?

EW: Oh sure!

I: Did that save a lot of time?

EW: It saves you the work. It saves you the work. When I got that I only had the hand pump in the kitchen. We didn't have running water until a number of years after that, I forget just when it was.

I: So what did you do beside ironing and washing?

EW: Everything! Cooking, cleaning, everything!

I: Tell me about cooking.

EW: I made six big loaves of bread every other day - five loaves.

I: How big, a pound, two pounds?

EW: Oh no. Big loaves! These big loaves of bread every other day, and we made all our own cakes and pies and everything in those days.

I: Where did you get the ingredients?

EW: In the store.

I: What store?

EW: I don't remember. I think it was Roulstons in those days that we bought from.

I: Where was that?

EW: Down on Love Lane.

I: Is that where you got most of your supplies, food and cooking things?

EW: Our grocery stores were there, on Love Lane where the Post Office is. Along that stretch we had A&P and Roulston. I don't remember whether there was another one in there or not. And then Gildersleeve up at the corner there, where the beauty parlor is. That used to be Gildersleeve's General Store. We traded there too, a lot. But we didn't have any particular store. We bought where we wanted to, that's all.

I: Tell me some of the preparations you had to do for cooking around 1920. You said that you had a large oil stove that you cooked on, or a wood stove.

EW: We had an oil stove with a separate oven that you put over your flames. In summer, that's the way we cooked. In winter, we had a cook stove, a range, that burned wood and coal, and that has an oven with the stove, and your fire box full of coals, hot coals, heats your oven.

I: Can you tell me what a typical meal was like in those days, a typical lunch, or a typical dinner?

EW: We didn't have a typical lunch. I don't remember, whatever we had on the table. In those days, most days we had our dinner at noon. And it was a regular cooked dinner, meat and potatoes and vegetables, the same as anybody else would have. Suppers, we called them. Today they have lunch and dinner but in those days we had dinner and supper and in

those days, too, we had a cooked breakfast. They don't have that anymore.

I: Tell me what you usually had for breakfast.

EW: My husband was a southerner, and we had either hominy or cornmeal mush with bacon or ham or, he was a great fish eater, especially smoked fish, finnan haddie, all kinds of smoked fish in those days. Or we had bacon and eggs with our cereal, hominy or cornmeal.

I: What would be a typical supper?

EW: Well, sometimes it was left-overs with fruit and cake afterwards, baked beans or maybe sliced ham and potato salad or something, but I couldn't tell you. Just anything that I could pick up.

I: Did you have dinner with the whole family around one table?

EW: Yes, uh uh.

I: Did you used to say grace before you ate?

EW: Well no, not way back in those days we didn't. We do today, but in those days we didn't.

I: What would you say you spent most of your day doing, cooking or taking care of children, or washing?

EW: There was a little of everything, everyday. I did washing when you have to do it by hand. Practically everyday I had to wash with a big family. Too many clothes to wash, you couldn't do them in a day by hand. The ironing had to be done at the evening, at night, there

wasn't time enough in the day, take care of children and cook and wash your own dishes and everything like that. There isn't time, so the ironing was mostly done at night. Saturday was the bake day, always a bake day and we made pies and cakes besides the bread and everything like that, besides trying to keep your house clean with a broom. We didn't have vacuum cleaners in those days. You haven't any idea what it was to live in those times. You try getting up in the morning and cooking and clear away the meals, washing the dishes, putting them away, washing your children, keep them clean, and wash the clothes. And you didn't have very much time to do anything else.

I: Do you have more time now?

EW: Well, you have just so much time. But my time is spent in a different way today. I don't have anyone to wait on today. It's only a couple of years my son has been with me. I was alone after my husband died a good many years. He died in 1958 and my time was spent in either painting, or gardening, or cleaning up the yard. For years I did my own painting, all the walls and everything, my porch, I've always painted that myself. I had to hire a man to do the outside. I was a regular handyman. For years I did all the painting. The last couple of times that this has been painted, my son did it for me, but up until then, up until about three years ago, I did all the painting, every bit of it, ceilings and all.

I: Back in the 1920's you didn't have rollers, so you had to do it all by brush?

EW: Yes.

I: Would you say the things you did, and the things that you learned to do were pretty typical of the average housewife in those days?

EW: Yes, I think so. 'Course people who lived in town didn't probably have....although most people have a little backyard garden anyway. But I think we were typical of the average family.

I: What about raising children, tell me a little bit about that.

EW: Oh goodness, I don't know how to tell you.

I: Tell me one, two or three of the most important things you tried to teach your children.

EW: Well, I don't really know just how to put it. Of course in those days, too, the children, most of them had homework, and I always helped them with that. But so far as teaching them other things, I tried to teach 'em to help and to live as they should live. I don't know how to put it.

I: If I were your son right now, what would you teach me?

EW: I don't know, I might put you to work feeding the chickens.

I: Is that what you did with your children, did you assign chores to them?

EW: Oh yes. In those days they had plenty of chores. There were ashes to take out from the stove, and wood and coal to bring in, and chickens to be fed. I can't say, one day I teach them this, and the next day I teach them that, because you get up and you go through a day and when

there is something for them to do, you give it to them to do. They always had to do those things, like feeding the chickens and taking the ashes out and bringing in the wood and coal which takes longer to do it than it does to tell it.

I: How did they learn to do it, from you or from their older brothers and sisters or their father?

EW: How did they learn? From me, their mother, not from their father, he was never home. He went to work early in the morning and he wasn't home until suppertime or after suppertime. So there was many a night we were all through with supper when he would get home. Especially when he worked in Riverhead, he was always late getting home at night. The bulk of everything fell to me, because they had to go to work early in those days. When we were first married, he had to be to work at seven o'clock in the morning. He had to get up half past five or a quarter to six, I guess it was never later than half past five 'cause he wanted a cooked breakfast. He was used to it, and he wanted it, and to cook it and sit down and eat it and then walk to work, it took time. There was no cars and he had to be to work at seven o'clock, so you know we had to get up early. The children were usually up too to sit down and have their breakfast with us. Very, very seldom there might be one that would be a little late getting down to breakfast. But they would all get up and have breakfast with us.

I: What time did you have supper?

EW: Around six o'clock.

I: What time did you usually go to bed?

EW: Two o'clock in the morning.

I: Are you serious?

EW: My ironing had to be done at night, and there was a lot of ironing. I had five boys going to school that wore white shirts to school and a necktie. They didn't go to school looking like they do today.

I: Were those the rules then, about the tie? Were they school rules?

EW: No. I don't know if they were the school rules, but just everybody's child dressed pretty good in those days. Mine wore white shirts. They never had a colored shirt while they were growing up to go to school in. My husband wore white shirts, too, up until the last maybe twenty years of his life. But there was always plenty to do. You were to clean, to sweep with a broom, then everything was covered with dust. You had to dust everything because when you sweep with a broom everyday, everytime you sweep there's dust. It makes a big difference. We don't have that today because you use a vacuum cleaner. It pulls the dirt out, but you don't do that with a broom, you sweep it off. Then when it's house cleaning time you take the carpets out, and the rugs, and you clean them outdoors, and then put them back again. But in those days there was nothing but a broom to clean with. It was altogether different than it is today, and unless people have lived like that, they don't know anything about it. They have all that today, and they don't realize they don't know how to wash dishes today. This generation isn't going to know how to do anything, because

you can go buy all your meals cooked for you, and all you gotta do is stick 'em in the oven.

I: What do you think we should do? What do you think people should do?

EW: (Laughing) I don't know what people should do, but I think their children should be taught a lot more. Teach them how to cook. They can't do the simplest thing today. I was only eleven years old when I learned how to make bread.

I: What else would you teach your children today?

EW: Well, as I say, everything. Cooking, making beds, washing dishes, scrubbing floors, washing windows, everything. Everything in combination with housework and my boys, everyone but the last one, cooked. The boy that's out back there now, he's made many a pie and biscuit and everything. The youngest one went into the Air Force soon as he was out of high school, and didn't do much cooking. I guess ordinary cooking, like cooking meat and potatoes, he could do now, but I don't think he learned how to do any baking; but all the rest of mine learned how to bake. Did most anything.

I: Tell me why you think that's important.

EW: The home should be the central attraction. And children should learn how to run a home. They should learn the cooking and the taking care and the buying of things, and everything else. I had a neighbor, and her husband couldn't even make himself a cup of coffee. If that isn't the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of. He wouldn't try to cook anything. It was in our family though, our father, in his

younger days was a cook on a boat and he was a pretty good cook. He was a printer, yes, but when he was younger, I guess in his late teens or maybe early twenties, he was cook on a boat. And my husband's father could cook a meal. They liked to. And my husband too. He never tried to bake anything, but he could cook meat and vegetables and things like that. So cooking kind of run in the family. They didn't any of them find it hard to help me with cooking and all.

I: So you think that it's important for children to help their parents?

EW: Oh yes, I think they ought to help in anyway that they need it. They should learn how to do things, help get meals and clear them away. Now they have dishwashers, they don't need to know how but they should know how. But there's something more to dishwashing than what a lot of people think.

I: Did you have any problem with discipline with your children?

EW: Very little, because from the time that they were this high they were taught to obey and mine all came home from school, unless there was a ball game or something like that. I never allowed mine to go down and hang around the streets, things like that. Discipline is very important. They could all bring their friends here. I had very little trouble with any of them.

I: How did you teach them discipline? How did you teach them to obey?

EW: (Laughing) Well, they knew when I spoke, I meant it. But they got a stick on them if they didn't mind. They got punished. I never was anyone to fool around with any coaxing and so forth. When I told them to do something, they did it and if you start young enough they form a habit, you don't have to be fierce with them. They know whether you mean it or not and when they're told to do something, they do it. If you start young enough it isn't an awful job to make children obey. It's when you allow them 'til they are five, six, seven maybe, to do pretty near as they please, then they don't want to and they talk back to you, and that I never would take. Parents should be parents, there's a lot of responsibility on their shoulders. But if children are taught when they're real young that they have to do as you want them to, you don't have an awful lot of trouble. Oh, sometimes there's something, but never had anything serious to put up with, never, with any of them.

I: Did you take care of the discipline? Or did your husband?

EW: My husband very seldom was around enough to discipline any of them.

I: Would you say that was pretty typical, too, in those days the mother had to take care of the discipline?

EW: I think, as a rule, a mother has more responsibility than the father does because the father is away from home so much. Still of course they have their share, but I think it's mostly up to the mother, because the mother has them all day.

I: As your children grew up, did they help you with the younger children?

EW: Well, mine were so spread out that there wasn't too much taking care of any of them. The first two were quite close together; I guess sometimes they had to help look after the others, out in the yard, or something. I don't remember. You see, I never went and left my children either.

I: You were always at home with them?

EW: I was always home. I never went out and left my children by themselves, never.

I: Did the whole family ever go out together, for a picnic or ...?

EW: Well, we used to go on picnics and things like that, but there wasn't any place, really, to go in those days. You went to school and you went to church. There might be a ballgame or the movie, but that's all. Sometimes I would take the oldest ones and go to the movie, and the father would be home with them. I never had a babysitter in my life, never for any of them.

I: Do you think it was bad to have a babysitter?

EW: No, but in those days, I don't think people did have them. I guess most mothers stayed home with the children, or they didn't look after them at all. Some people let their children run and do as they like. They did in those days too. I don't know whether anyone hired a babysitter. I never did. There was too much to do, anyway, to go out.

I: Did you ever go to Library Hall?

EW: Yes. I went to Library Hall when they used to have movies there. A good many years they had movies.

I: Did you ever go there for dances?

EW: I never went to a dance in my life.

I: Why?

EW: I just didn't. I wasn't brought up to dance, and we didn't go to anything like that. Once in awhile we went to a movie. They used to have vaudevilles come around once in awhile way back, but there wasn't any place to go. But we had our fun, picnics, something like that, a gathering at the house.

I: Did you have visitors come to the house?

EW: Neighbors?

I: Yes.

EW: Well, years ago when we first came here, our neighbors were quite neighborly, but that kind of fell off. People are not neighborly today.

I: Tell me why.

EW: I don't know, I suppose just like anything else, changes. And you don't know how nor why. But they're not neighborly today. The people that used to live next door here, they moved out just a few weeks ago, she was very neighborly. Donald Gildersleeve and his wife, they were very neighborly.

I: Who were your first neighbors?

EW: His name was James, Mr. and Mrs. James Young. I don't know what her name was, other than Mrs. Young. But of course

all my neighbors the first ten or fifteen years that I lived here, maybe twenty years, they're all dead and gone. We had nice neighbors across the track. They're gone, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Bond. And the Kirkuns that lived around on Pike Street. They were very good neighbors. But I don't know, things changed. We wouldn't know we had any neighbors if we didn't go out on the street and see 'em once in awhile.

I: What happened?

EW: I don't know what happened. People just don't call like they used to. People used to run in and sit and talk with you for fifteen, twenty minutes, but they don't do it today. I don't know why. I guess they're too busy going here and there. They have cars today, they jump in them and they go and in those days we didn't have any place to go. I don't know why things change the way they do, but ....

I: Would you say that change happened when people started using cars?

EW: I don't know whether the car has much to do with it or not. I think it does. People don't seem to have time. And then with all the new gadgets they have, so that housework is easier, and they haven't time for other things.

I: Would you say that that changed kind of gradually?

EW: Yes, I think it comes gradually. You don't notice it until it's ....

I: When did you first notice it?

EW: I can't tell you. I guess after my old-time neighbors were gone.

I: Was that around the fifties or sixties?

EW: The Barkers and the Kirkups and the Bonds. New people moved in and they're not so friendly. None of the old-timers are here, all the Gildersleeves that were down here are gone, the whole family. There were several families of them, but they're all gone. You really don't notice it until it's upon you. It's so all over, I don't know, maybe it's because we have so many different kinds of people, too, today. Different nationalities. I imagine it's kind of hard for, take for instance, the Polish or Germans, or anything, especially if they don't speak good English to mingle with their neighbors, you know. I don't know why it's the way it is, they'll speak to you on the street and all, they're friendly in that way, but they don't come in your house, and sit down and chat for a little while. People used to do that. In my mother's time, and in our early marriage, probably up until the thirties people were very friendly around here.

I: Did you do that too, stop at people's houses and visit for awhile?

EW: Yes, I did. 'Course I didn't go as much as I would like to because I had too much of a family to take care of at that time. I used to call; I had several good friends that I used to call upon, up the road and around the corner. They're all gone now. I'm the last one.

I: Do you have any young friends?

EW: Well, I have a lot of acquaintances, and I suppose, in a way, you can call them friends, but no pals; I have no pal at all. The nearest to pals, is in the Church. We have a group in the Church that meets, except for summer, every week. I don't always get there every week, but I do go quite a lot and that way I get recreation, you know, and friendly...I used to have, years ago....be quite chummy with some people, but as I say, they're all gone. I think maybe it's hard for young people to go call on older people. I think it's hard for young people to get to be real friendly with somebody as old as I am.

I: How come?

EW: (Laughing). I don't know how come, but I think they prefer young people to be with.

I: When you were young, in your twenties and thirties, did you have older friends?

EW: I was only in my thirties when I first came here. I had several very dear older friends. There were the Barkers, over here, and Mrs. Kirkup that lived next door to her. And one in particular, a Mrs. Wells--we called her Auntie--Auntie Wells, and my children called her Auntie Wells. But she was very much older than I was. I used to call on her a lot. But I think, as a rule, young people like younger friends. I don't know, maybe they don't, but that's my opinion.

I: What was Mrs. Wells first name?

EW: Her first name was Addie, A-d-d-i-e. I don't know what her husband's first name was. They lived two houses up the road.

I: You got to be good friends with her?

EW: Oh yes, yes, very good.

I: How much older than you was she?

EW: She was thirty-some years older than I was. She was an old lady in those days when I lived here. She might have been in her early seventies at that time. Mrs. Kirkup was older, too. She called on me very early, after I moved here. She was my first caller. She was quite a bit older than I am, twenty or thirty years.

I: Did Addie Wells used to invite you over, or did you just drop in on her?

EW: I could drop in on her, yes. We did that in those days. They didn't mind. Now you have to call someone up on the phone to see if it's all right for you to come, or something like that.

I: Did you like it better the old way?

EW: Yes. You don't need somebody to come in and stay hours, but it is nice for people to come in and just chat with you for awhile. Just to be neighborly, that's all.

I: Do you know any young people in town that you like?

EW: I don't have any of them come here, no.

I: Nobody stops in to say "Hello"?

EW: If I'm in the yard, yes, they'll stop, but if I'm in the house, they don't come in.

I: Did you tell anybody that they would be welcome to come in for a few minutes?

EW: Not especially, I have no way to do it. I'm always giving people invitations to come in when I'm on the street talking to them and all, but I don't know. Everybody has their own affairs today.

I: Tell me a little bit about your health. You look healthy.

EW: My health has been very good.

I: How did you manage to keep yourself so healthy?

EW: (Laughing). Worked hard, I guess. Well, I do think that the more you move around, the better you are. But I don't know what to attribute my good health to. The Good Lord, I guess, He showered His grace on me.

I: Anything else besides that?

EW: There isn't much to tell about this family, because the children just grew up and got married, left home the same as most people do. We stayed behind. And now they're scattered all over.

I: You went to visit some relatives. This last time you were gone for several months?

EW: The last time I went visiting to Mobile, Alabama. I have a son there. He had lived in Oklahoma and his company opened up a new plant in Mobile, and sent him down there. Now they have closed that plant up, and he is back in Oklahoma and while he was in Oklahoma, I had visited him several times and my daughter is in Phoenix, Arizona. I have been out there several times. And her oldest daughter lives up in Oregon, and I've been up there twice now. I

went there last winter. I have two sons in Tennesee, and I stopped and visited with one, but I didn't visit with the other one this time.

I: It seems to be a lot different from the older days when the families used to stick pretty close.

EW: Yes, you know most families settled near by. Your children, they got married and settled in the village or near by. But today they just go off here and there. My sister's family's the same. Her grandchildren, her son and her daughter, she only has the two, live near enough. She lives with her daughter. They live near enough so they can see them real often. Her daughter's children are getting scattered. One of her children has gone to Maine, and one to Vermont. But today, the young people around here, when they get out of school, and as a rule, most of them go to college. And that seems to settle things. Then they don't come back to the village to make a living. They couldn't, probably, with what they take up; they would have to go somewhere else.

I: How do you feel about that?

EW: How do I feel about it? It's all right. I never tried to stop mine from doing whatever they wanted to do, but I don't like it much.

I: Do you think it would be better for the town, if the younger generation stayed around?

EW: No, maybe, sometimes maybe it's a good thing to go into a strange town to get your job.

I: Why?

EW: Well, I think, sometimes you do better with a stranger than you would do with people you know, not always, but sometimes. There's exceptions to all rules. Sometimes people in business will take their children in with them. They get along alright but it's nothing you can control. They do what they want to, and you must expect them to. You can't keep them tied to home, you know. But I would like to have them a little nearer. It's a long way to go to see them. Of course, we have the telephone. You can talk, now and then with them.

I: Do you write much?

EW: Quite a bit, yes. Correspond with the family? Oh yes, a lot.

I: Did you do a lot of corresponding back when you were younger, with your parents?

EW: Since we have been away we have always corresponded frequently.

I: With your parents?

EW: Several years after I was married they lived close by. I always corresponded with any of the family that was far away.

I: I wonder if you have experienced any kind of tension between the religious groups in town?

EW: I wouldn't know whether there is or not.

I: What about visitors, or people from outside coming into Mattituck? Do you feel there's a division between the native people and the outsiders? There are people like you

who come from Northport and Riverhead, and people who come from New York City--summer people.

EW: I don't know. I don't think so. I really don't think so.

I: It seems to me that you're really a member of this town.

EW: Yes. Personally I like Mattituck very much. I like a small town. You know when we came here we knew practically every person. But we have a lot of new people in Mattituck now, it's different. 'Course there are some people, too, that are into everything and I'm not. I've never been a hand to belong to this and belong to that and in some ways that's a hindrance, and in some ways it's a good thing. But except for the Church, I don't have a chance to meet other people. For the past ten years or so, we have had a lot of newcomers.

I: How do you feel about it?

EW: It's all right...I came in from outside, too, years ago.

I: I feel that you were welcome back then. But people that come in now don't seem to have that kind of welcome. There isn't that sense of neighborliness that you were talking about. If a new person moves in a couple of doors down from you, very likely the people who live here wouldn't go to their house and visit them, say hello, meet them and so forth. They would leave them alone, right?

EW: That's true, yes.

I: When you came here, things were different, neighbors came

to call on you and all. People don't know each other, they don't learn to know each other.

EW: Still, if anybody moved next door to me, I would make it a point to get acquainted with them...I think as neighbors you should. It might make a difference, if it were some people, but I don't think it would. I think I'd treat any neighbor the same way. 'Course, I knew these people before they moved here, these last people. Brigham, Timothy Brigham who lives there now and Donald of course. We lived here when Donald bought that house, and moved in there, but we had known Donald for twenty years. He was no newcomer, and these people, we have known Timothy since he was a child. But if it was a stranger, I would make it a point to speak to them and make myself known to them. I think people should do that. It's different in the City, so many foreigners, you know, different nationalities and sometimes the language is a barrier if they can't speak English. But out here we don't have that trouble.

I: I heard that you tamed a squirrel. Tell me about that.

EW: (Laughing) I don't know if there is anything to tell. Just that the squirrels first came here as little babies, on our back porch and I went to the door, and there were three of them. So we fed them. I guess when I found the three there wasn't anyone with me. And the next day...each day there was one more squirrel until there were five of them. We fed them. And a couple of them got very tame, especially one and that one would come right in the house and go upstairs -

we had nuts upstairs - and help himself. He was very cute. But he got hit by a car, I think. We have a couple now. One of them is quite tame but not like the other one.

I: Did he have a name?

EW: Herman...Arthur named him, I don't know where he ever got the name. He would get on his lap. When I would hang up clothes, he would jump right on me, he was that tame. You would have hard work, sometimes, to get in the house without letting him in. So two or three of them got hit by a car out here. But Herman, he was almost human, he was so cute.

I: Do you have any other animals?

EW: No, I used to go away to Florida in the winter-time, five years I went, and I had a beautiful cat, and Donald Gildersleeve used to take care of him for me. The last year I went away, they didn't want to take care of him, and I couldn't afford the boarding down at the Vets. I couldn't find anyone to take him. So I had him done away with. So I don't have anymore because it hinders me if I want to go away, especially the winter. I have the couple of squirrels that come around.

I: Tell me one more thing. Why did you decide to stay in Mattituck?

EW: One reason I have never gone to a town where my children have moved is because I might get there and get settled, and they might take a notion to pick up and go somewhere else, which they have a right to do. Then I'd be just as bad off. And I like my little house, it's old, but

I like it. It's been home for so many years. And I'm acquainted still with a good many people and through the church I do meet new people.

End of tape.

Mattituck History Project

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

name Woodward, Eva 8-EW-1

birth date Jan.12,1887 place Northport

father's name Daniel A. Arthur. Northport Journal owner and publisher

mother's name Netty Nichols

childhood Northport, Long Island

education Northport, 3rd year high

job training set type by hand

work some practical nursing

official positions

member of Presbyterian Church (raised Methodist)

special activities, projects, hobbies Gardening, esp. Raspberries

spouse's name William W. Woodward (Died 1958) Married April 15, 1906.

children's names William, Arthur, Arnold, Stuart, Richard, Eva, Robert

major turning points in:

Mattituck	my life	my field of interest
1	1 Marriage	1 Sewing
2	2	2 Gardening
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5

for me, Mattituck was

Mattituck is

I'd like Mattituck to become

The Suffolk Times

May 26, 1983

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ward, the 'Raspberry Lady'

EVA WOODWARD

Photo by Judy Ahrens

north fork oral history

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mattituck's Eva Woodward, 96, is well known locally for the vegetables and berries grown in her large summer garden. The mother of seven, Mrs. Woodward had 38 grandchildren and 48 great-grandchildren at last count. She was interviewed by staff writer Maria Parson.)

I was born in Northport on January 12, 1887. I was 96 last January.

My father was the owner and publisher of The Northport Journal. After I left school, I worked in my father's office running the presses and setting type. We had to set each letter by hand, line for line. I met my husband there. He was a printer.

My husband and I were married in 1906 and we moved to Mattituck in 1919. This is the only house I've ever lived in in Mattituck and it was already 100 years old when we got here. My husband worked at the Riverhead Review. When we moved here we didn't even have a hand pump in the kitchen. No improvements. In those days you washed and ironed by hand. We heated our irons on the stove and we lived here six years before we got electricity. We pumped water outside, brought it in and washed clothes on a board in the tub. If you don't think that's hard work, you should try it.

We had seven children, all born at home. Everybody had babies at home in those days. They weren't forced to go to the hospital like they are now. When my first one was born, I had an aunt, and she was a midwife and could deliver a baby as good as any doctor. 'Course, if there was an emergency, your doctor would come to the house. Now, they won't come, no matter what's the matter.

White Shirts, Every Day

There was so much to do when I was raising my family that in the evening I didn't get to bed until way after midnight. The ironing was tremendous. And my boys, they had a name here in Mattituck. They all wore white shirts to school everyday. So the ironing was very heavy and besides that I baked five loaves of bread every other day.

I don't believe in women working outside the home unless they have to. 'Course, sometimes they have to, but I think that parents today have changed more than children. They're not parents anymore – some of them, anyway. Now, with all I had to do, I took the time after supper with my children to read them stories. With the older ones we played games – card games and monopoly.

I tell you, I could write a book about some of the things that have happened over the years. My father, for instance, disappeared in 1911. He not only had the newspaper, he had a store, and his Christmas goods hadn't come in. So he went to New York to find out why and he never reached the city, and nobody ever heard from him. My mother took it hard at the time, but she got over it. Then he came back in 1925. Don't any of us know exactly where he was all that time, and he said he couldn't remember.

I've always been well but last Christmastime I was sick and I just lost all my strength. I doctored myself 'till I was getting better and then they all made such a fuss that I should go to the doctor. So I went, but what he gave me didn't do any more good than what I was doing for myself. I went down to eighty-something pounds before I started to get better, but I'm still not very steady on my feet.

I work in my garden every day. How do I do it? Just faith that I'll be able to do as much as possible. I always was ambitious. It never agreed with me to sit around. At the beginning of the season I couldn't work too long in the garden because over the winter you get rusty, as they say. Now I come out in the morning at eight-and-a half past and stay 'till noon. I don't do much in the afternoon – just a little bit.

Slowing the Pace

I haven't planted much yet this year. I put out some tomatoes but it was too cold. I usually have two or three dozen tomato plants and some beans and squash. I used to have a great big garden. Now I have currant bushes and sell currants to people who like to make currant jelly. And raspberries -- I'm known as the raspberry lady. I could sell more, but I've slowed down so.

These are my raspberries. I cut them back, but not too much. If you do, you cut all your raspberries off. I fertilize them with dehydrated cow manure and the regular 10-5. See those wild onions? When I pull them up, instead of throwing them down where they're going to grow again next season, I put them in bags and send them off to the dump. I planted those lilacs several years ago and this is the first time they've had a blossom. Do I plant by the full moon? I plant when I'm ready to. Talking to plants? Well, I've never tried it, but I don't know. I'm afraid they wouldn't understand me. I'm very fond of all outdoor work. I painted the porch four years ago and I used to do all the painting in the house.

I like to watch the evening news on TV. As far as the world situation goes, I don't know what to say. I think we're headed for Armageddon. I think it's shaping up. May be quite awhile before it comes to a climax, but we're going to get the last war someday. I don't know why nations can't agree to stay home and mind their own business. Life is too short for the individual. It's been too short for me, in a way. You know, when you look ahead, 50 years seems to be a long time. But when you look back, it's a very short time. And the older you get, the faster time seems to go.

Mrs. Eva Woodward

. . . practically everyday I had to wash . . . it was a big family . . . There were too many clothes to wash, you couldn't do them in a day by hand. You had to take care of children, cook, and wash your own dishes . . . there wasn't time, so the ironing was mostly done at night. Saturday was the bake day—always . . . We made pies and cakes besides the bread. Plus you had to keep your house clean with a broom—we didn't have vacuum cleaners in those days. You don't have any idea what it was to live in those times. You'd try getting up in the morning and cooking and clearing away meals, washing the dishes, putting them away, washing the children, and keeping them clean, and washing the clothes, and you didn't have very much time to do anything else. . . . And the children had homework, and I always helped them with that . . . but as far as teaching them other things, I tried to help . . .

. . . I can't say, one day I taught them this, and the next day I taught them that; because you get up and go through a day and, when there is something for them to do, you give it to them to do. They always had to do those things, like feeding the chickens and taking the ashes out and bringing to wood and coal in . . .

. . . they knew when I spoke, I meant it. They got a stick on them if they didn't mind. They got punished. I was never one to fool around with any coaxing and so forth. When I told them to do something, they did it. If you start when they're young they form a habit, you don't have to be fierce with them; they know whether or not you mean it.

Eva Woodward
Pike Street

Peconic Shopper

MATTITUCK HISTORY PROJECT

Tape Number 30-RWT-6
Oral Author: Ralph W. Tuthill

Pike Street and Love Lane

Table of Contents

Persons and places mentioned: Library Hall, Ernest Corwin, Abraham and Strauss, Phillips Department Store, Con Grabie, Wood Wickham, Riley's Livery Stable, Post Office, Walgo the tailor, George Fischer, Sears and Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, J.R. Reeves Grocery Store, Herbert Klein, Thomas Reeve, Gildersleeve Store, Charlie Gildersleeve, Jimmy Gildersleeve, Nat Tuthill, Mather Dairy, Parkins Dairy, Mrs. MacMillan, George Rau, Roy Tuthill, Austin Tuthill, Phillip Tuthill, Chinese laundry, Rudy Armbrust, Reeve and Hall, L and L Market, Walter Grabie, Hansen's Garage, Kelsey, Walter Robinson, Reeve (the builder), blacksmith shop, bicycle shop, horse sheds, Harry DePetris, A & P, Roulston, Octagon Building, Dolly Bell,

Herb Corcoran, Andrew Gildersleeve, Silkworth, Sidor's potato house, Edward Jones, Presbyterian Churchyard, St. Agnes Church in Greenport.

MAPS, PICTURES

MATTITUCK HISTORY PROJECT

Contents of Tape No. 30-RWT-6 Date of Interview: 3/10/78
Oral Author: Ralph W. Tuthill Interviewer: John Traversa

Pike Street and Love Lane

This tape seems to have been made as the Author and Interviewer walked along Pike Street beginning near the station, down to Love Lane and then down Love Lane to the Main Road. There were frequent interruptions in the taping.

I: It seems that the town, the businesses, clustered here on Pike Street are close to the train stop.
A: Originally the town was going to be further east, but when the railroad came through here, this was the logical place to have a station.
I: Further east?
A: A mile further east on the Main Road, down near the Historical Society.
I: Why would it be down there?
A: Well, there was two stores down there, a grocery store and a candy store and what not, and they figured that that was going to be it. But then in forty-four (1844) when the train came through, why the train didn't go there. It went by up here and

they started to build up here. The railroad was a big help to the economy, and service for everything, people getting around and going to Riverhead cheaper, New York cheaper.

I: Before the railroad, what was there, a stage coach?

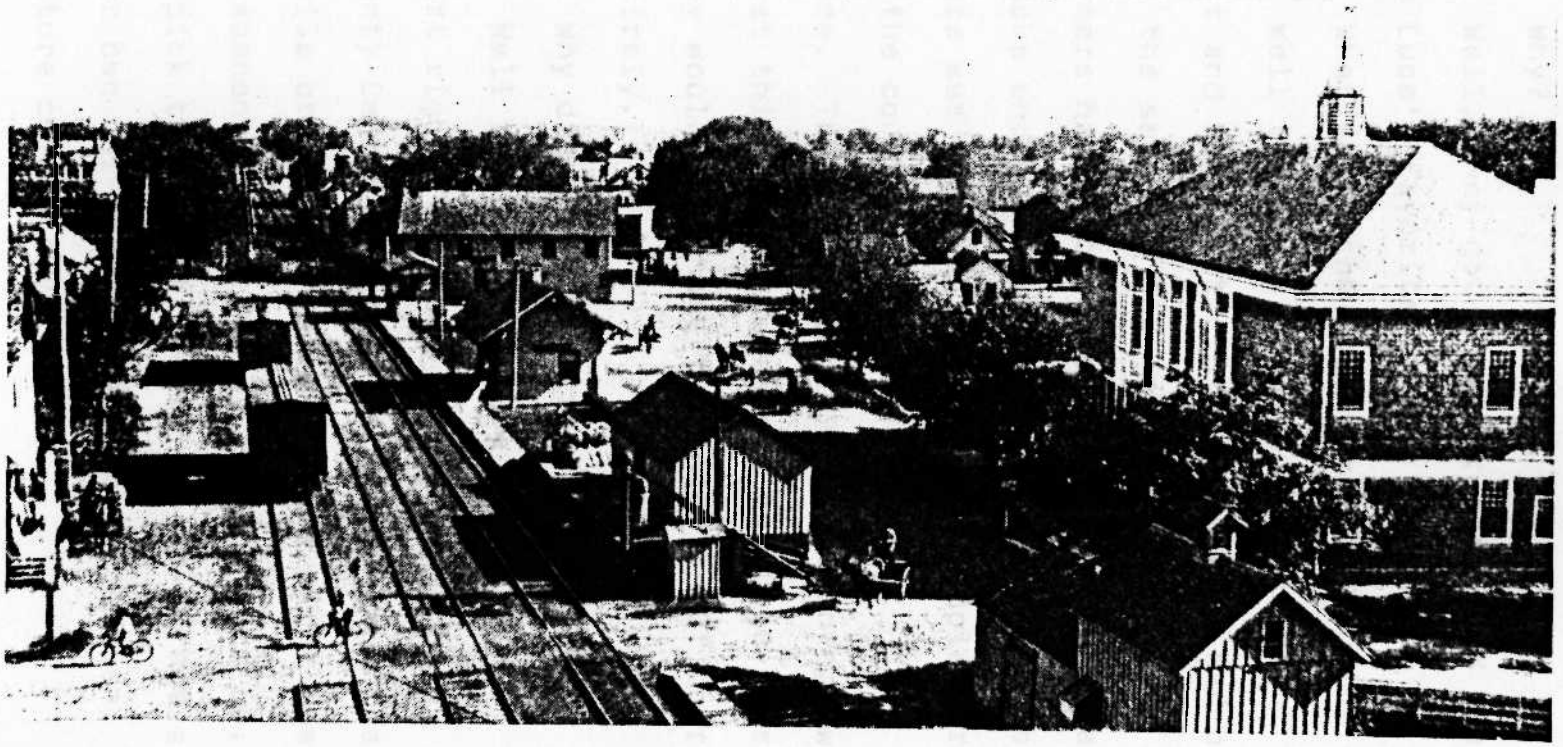
A: Yes.

I: Did the railroad stop here because of the Creek? There was the harbor here and a little movement around the CreeK?

A: Oh yes. They came across the Sound and landed some stuff here, produce probably and vice-versa.

I: These warehouses here (since burned down. 1984), these have been here quite awhile. This red one, it used to be Rambo's right?

A: Right. Right about across from the station (across the tracks) Rambo had a feed store, which is now grain and potatoes, and a little to the west of that was the first hardware store in town. Eventually it turned into a potato house. They'd take the potatoes and grade them. Then there was just to the east of that a little building where Duryee used to grade corn, and he'd take corn and ship it upstate. For two or three years they had an acreage of corn around here that they called Luce's Favorite, for upstate ensilage (silage). It seemed to be the proper kind of corn, so we'd ship carloads of it upstate. It didn't last too long.



d's-eye View of Mattituck, Showing the Station in the Centre and Lupton Hall and Library Building to the right

I: Why?

A: Well, they got a better corn, and they shifted away from the Luce's Favorite.

I: What about the train traffic in the early 1900's?

A: Well there was probably six or eight trains daily, four east and four west. Of course they had big freight trains. All the seed and the fertilizer came out by freight car. The farmers had to come to the freight cars and cart it with their trucks and teams, which made a lot of business, of course. There was quite a lot of young people working up in Riverhead at the county offices at the time. They took the train up there. There'd probably be fifteen or twenty people up here first thing in the morning, take the first train up, and then they would come home that night. Of course, that's changed now entirely.

I: Why did the train traffic die down?

A: Well the primary cause is because of the automobile. They start right from home in the automobile, and go right to the County Center, whereas here they would have to bring up the car a mile or two and leave it here right near the station probably. Or someone in the family brought them up, and then they'd have to pick them up at night. Which is not as convenient as having your own car and go right to the office. And it changed the picture completely.

I: It seems that trucks made a big difference too.

A: Well fifty years ago they used to bring up the sprouts right to the station for the first train, probably a hundred crates of sprouts. And they went all over the state more or less, and there's no refrigeration. Then the trucks came in and had refrigeration and took over. They would pick them right up at the door. It made it much nicer and easier and safer. The stuff arrived at their destination with refrigeration a lot better.

I: Speaking of farmers loading their crops, particularly potatoes, I noticed that farmers have their own warehouses on the farm.

A: Yes, a few farmers, not too many. Of course the outlay for graders and so forth is quite expensive. Farmers that raise a couple of hundred acres of potatoes, they will have their own graders, and loading trucks and ship themselves direct. But it's not too much that way.

I: Do the farmers hold on to the potatoes until the price is good?

A: Well usually with a big acreage, if they should force them on the market during September and October, they'd glut the market. So in order to relieve that they'll store and piece it out. Then they cart in winter and get more of a uniform flow of potatoes to the market. Because if they did cart them all in a couple of months they would flood the market, and the price would be ruinous for them. It makes it much better to store potatoes. And

sometimes they'll make a lot of money and sometimes they'll just break even. But it does make for uniform flow of potatoes to market.

(Tape interruption)

I: I know the Library Hall used to be right where the parking lot is now.

A: Yes, it was built in 1905. They had a big dance hall. They also played basketball there. There was a drug store in there, and the doctors had offices in there, and the second Library in Mattituck was there. And the Bank was there that started about the same year. One teller, Ernest Corwin, he used to ride a bicycle up from Peconic. On rainy days he came on a train, which he lived right near the train station, but good weather he rode a bicycle. I used to see him a lot of times.

I: Did many people use bikes back then?

A: Well, of course, children all came to school on bikes. And the older people usually they'd drive a horse and buggy. But they had bicycles, sure, and all the children a bike. There was no transportation to school except by bike or walk.

I: Next to Library Hall there was a luncheon place, like a bakery and sort of lunch room?

A: About where the Coffee Pot is. That was right to the east of Library Hall.

I: And there was a Abraham and Strauss store here?

A: Yes, wholesalers. (Wholesalers? Other people report going there to send orders for goods. Ed.)

I: And that burned down?

A: Well, there was a plumbing shop right where Phillips Department Store is, and that burned down around 1907. (Phillips was the first store west of the Bank. Ed.)

I: And was that Con Grabie's?

A: No, that was Wood Wickham's. And, of course, where the Bank is now on the corner, that's where the Post Office was for years. For a while it moved just a little bit south on the same side, north of Riley's Livery Stable, and then it did move over on the east side of Love Lane where it is now. But there used to be a tailor shop right in there on the west side of Love Lane.

I: Do you remember who the tailor was?

A: Well, also there was a tailor in that building on the corner.

I: The Octagon House?

A: Yes, there was a tailor in there for years, Walgo was his name, several sons around Mattituck now. He was there for probably thirty years. The other fellow didn't last too long. East of the hardware store now, there was horse sheds, probably twenty sheds, George Fischer owned 'em and local people rented 'em by the year. Lots of farmers in the afternoon would drive to town and they would put the horses in a shed. Then they would do the shopping. Of course, in place of clothing stores most of them sent to Sears & Roebuck or Mongomery Ward for their clothes pretty much. Except to Riverhead there were no clothing stores in here to speak of at all. So when they came up, they put their horses in the shed there, and at night if they came up, well they

also had the same sheds. Which took the place of parking lots for automobiles.

I: Is there any part of that left?

A: No, that's where the shoe store is now, the repair shop. No, nothing left. Right where we are now (alongside the railroad, Ed.) was the first drug store in Mattituck, right about where that tree is. On this side is where J.R. Reeves grocery store was (north west corner of Pike and Love Lane). And on this side where that tree is, was the druggist, run by Hubert Klein right near the tracks. The drug store was a small building on this side of the grocery store.

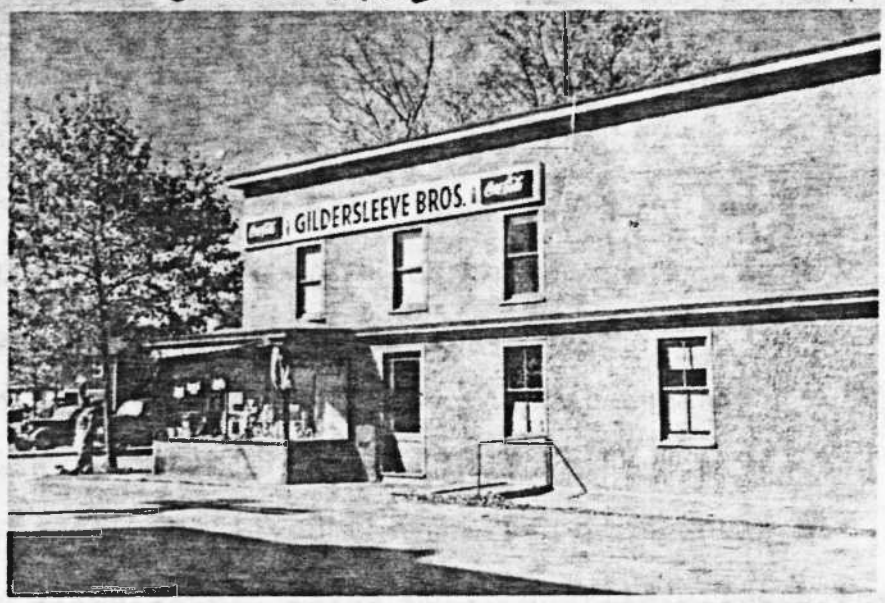
I: Then on the corner of Love and Pike (northeast corner) was the Gildersleeve store.

A: Yes. He sold everything; clothing, groceries, shoes, candy, molasses, vinegar. Had a coffee grinder and he had a barrel in the back side where you drew your molasses for a jug. And he had an upstairs where you go up and all the clothes, shoes, boots, overalls, ladies materials for dresses. He was practically a complete outfit then.

I: But they went out of business.

A: The only thing they didn't realize is that in ten or fifteen years an antique store like that would be worth a million dollars, with all those things in it. But at that time one of the Gildersleeve boys wanted to take over, but he couldn't swing it with the money, so they just had to tear it down. Now a store like

Fall 1953



that, with antiques and the store itself would be a valuable asset to the town.

I: By antiques you mean furniture they had in the store, the counters and the icebox?

A: The old pot belly stove, you know, and they also had a candy counter in there. The school kids came in and bought the school supplies, tablets, pencils.

I: And that house just to the east, the Fischer house?

A: Yes, and next to it, that's Charlie Gildersleeve. He used to be the station agent. He lived there. And it's where his grandnephew, Jimmy Gildersleeve lives now. Charlie Gildersleeve was a station agent for about forty years over there. He never got married, but he was a valuable man in town. He was interested in everything.

I: The Gildersleeve house?

A: It was right north of the store. It was almost next to the store, and in between the store and the house, they had an old fashioned pitcher pump where I used to go get a drink at lunch time. A lot of people used it. In the Gildersleeve store they also sold milk at the time. There was no deliveries, and they probably sold twenty-five quarts of milk a day. It was brought to them by Nat Tuthill. He had a few cows and they kept it in the store there.

I: When you had a dairy farm, did you sell any milk in town?

A: No, it was all wholesale. I had a dealer's license. I

didn't have a retail license. I sold to Mather Dairy. He's passed away. Then it was Parkin's Dairy and I don't know whose it is now.

I: Was it in Riverhead?

A: Well, at that time it was like in my place there. He used to pick it up right there, but now I guess it's Riverhead.

I: What about that white house over there? (east of Love Lane and north of the tracks)

A: That's the Glenwood Hotel -- no not the Glenwood. It's the MacMillans. Here comes the lady now.

.....

I: Would you like to tell us something about your house?

Mrs. MacM: Well, I lived here for fifty years. My husband was born here, in 1898, so the family has owned it for all those years. But I can't tell you when it was built. It was a boarding house.

I: How long has your family owned it?

Mrs. MacM.: Say 1890, maybe, That's a rough guess.

I: Is it still a boarding house?

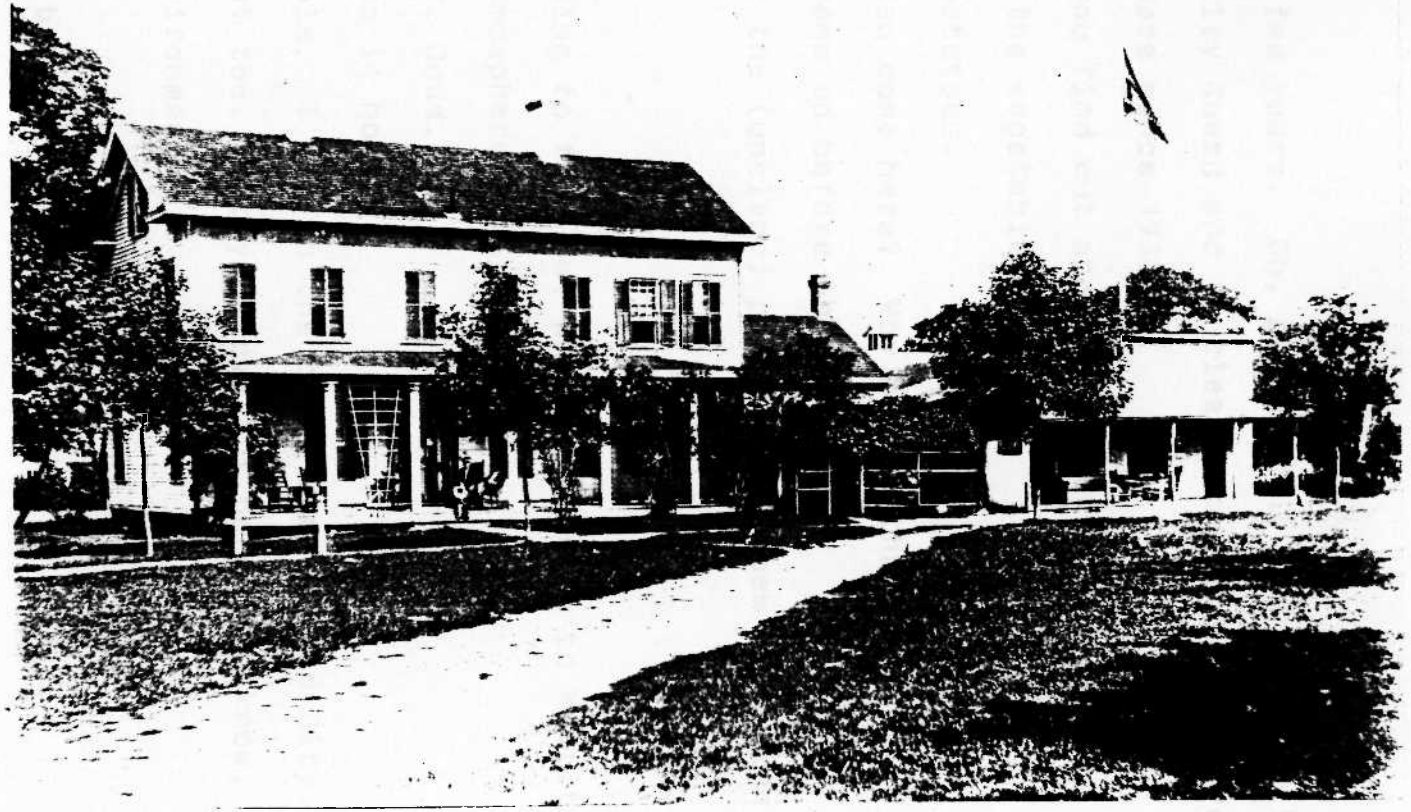
Mrs. MacM: No. Not since sometime in the late twenties.

.....(A passer-by began to chat with the Author)

I: My name's John Traversa. I work for the library. What's your name?

GR: Rau. R-a-u. George Rau.

I: You've lived in Mattituck a long time?



McMillans -- Once a boarding house called Eureka House

GR: Quite a few years. Oh, permanently for the last fourteen years. Security Guard and (unclear) operator in the Post Office. Been coming here since 1932.

I: How did you find out about Mattituck?

A: He liked the vegetables here.

GR: And the potatoes.

I: Why did you come here? Why not Southampton?

GR: Had to come up before the Judge.

A: He bought the (unclear) place. You knew him, didn't you in the city?

GR: Yeah.

I: We're trying to find out why people came to Mattituck.

GR: Homey atmosphere.

A: That's it. Good.

I: What makes it homey?

GR: The people. I was in the city, Long Island City. Astoria. It was alright too. But you come out here, you know, it's a different environment.

.....

I: Did your brother work in the Bank?

A: Well, my brother, Ray, was a cashier at Cutchogue, and my nephew Austin is here now, vice-president. Phillip Tuthill, that really started the Bank was a distant cousin of mine. (unclear). It's very beneficial, it's been a help to the town. It's helped the economy, a lot of people have stock in it, and

it's paying dividends in good shape. It expanded and it has several smaller Banks around, but this is the headquarters, the main Bank, right here in Mattituck.

I: Beside employing people, how else do you think it's beneficial to have a bank locally? Why not have a bank in Riverhead?

A: Well, there are a lot of people who wish to borrow money, and so forth. The Bank in here and they know them personally, whereas if it was ten miles away they wouldn't know them so well. And also deposit money. It's handy.

I: Going South on Love Lane from Pike Street there used to be the Post Office where the Bank is now. What was next to the Post Office?

A: A tailor shop. There was also a harness shop there where they repaired and mended harnesses.

I: And then what was next?

A: Riley had a livery stable. He rented out horses and carriages to salesmen. He also would buy a couple of carloads of horses, come out here from Iowa in March, and unload them at the station and then he would sell to the farmers -- regular farm horses, heavy horses. And he did quite a good business that way.

I: What about the Mattituck Variety Shop, next to Barkers there. That looks like a pretty old building.

A: At one time the Post Office was in there. It was a barber shop forty years ago. And across the street, the fabric shop. It used to be a laundry. It was run by a couple of Chinese people

back in 1910. Then for years it was a gas station run by Rudy Armbrust -- Tydol, and then it was vacant quite a few years. Now it's a fabric shop.

I: And next where the Love Lane Shop is was Reeve and Hall Butcher Shop? And then the L & L Food Market was built in the twenties?

A: Yes. Right between the Love Lane Shop and where the L & L Market is now, there was the old blacksmith's shop, run by Conrad Grabie for a good many years. In front of that was the old bicycle shop that was built later on for his son Walter Grabie who eventually built the Mattituck Garage where Hansen's Garage is now on the Main Road. Which was the first garage around here.

I: All these buildings here, the Love Lane Shop, the L & L Market, the old Post Office and so forth, do you know who built them? I know it was called Kelsey's Block.

A: Kelsey owned it, but he didn't build. His son is an assessor right now. I don't think he owns anything now, but it was local carpenters pretty much. I would say Reeve maybe, Walter Robinson. I don't know who else, local people.

I: What about the building which is now the Garden Shop on the Main Road?

A: The house where the Garden Shop is, this Con Grabie that had the blacksmith shop, that was where he lived.

(unclear)

I: Was it ice cream and vegetables?

A: Yes. It was Harry DePetris.

I: Now tell me where the A & P was.

A: I think it was right across the street where Harry DePetris built a restaurant afterwards. (At the bend, south and east side of Route 25)

I: What's there now?

A: Well, it's a General Electric sales and services -- Grabie Appliances. Where the sporting goods shop is, Roulston was in there.

I: The Octagon Building, there was a liquor store in there?

A: Yep. And before that was where Walgo had the tailor shop.

I: Did the Octagon House have that front section originally?

A: I think the frontsection has been built on later. Dolly Bell lived in the above apartment for years and years, she and her mother. She was a painter. She did a lot of pictures of Mattituck, different scenic places, the Lakes and the Bay. Also in the front office years ago they had a .... sold clams and oysters and so forth. Herb Conklin, he had (unclear) oysters and clams for several years.

I: This is the building that Andrew Gildersleeve, Donald's grandfather or great-grandfather built, right?

A: I guess, yes, that's correct.

I: I noticed there's Silkworth's Real Estate and Insurance. I think that's one of the oldest real estate companies in the

town. Did you know the Silkworths?

A: Yes. I went to school with the four boys. Yes, and the sister. His real estate office originally was where Sidor's potato house is, across the railroad, this is the second one. Where that office is now was a home where Reeve, who ran the hot houses, lived. It's been torn down and been gone.

(Unclear, confused discussion about houses and churches)

A: (Unclear) They spent the last days there.

I: Do you have any relatives of yours in this church yard?

A: Not too much, there's some . .

I: Was there a Hansen's garage across from the Methodist Church on Sound Avenue?

A: Edward Jones built that garage, then Hansen took it over later on. It was probably a garage for twenty-five years I imagine.

I: What happened to the building?

A: Well, it's still there,I don't know. It's just houses. This Hansen then moved on to the Main Road.

(Talk about the Presbyterian Churchyard)

A: Mmmm (unclear) big chestnut tree here. Used to climb it, get chestnuts. I went to school there when our school was being added on to in 1910. I went to school in the Presbyterian Church for a whole year.

I: Tell me, if some of these people could come back today, people from one hundred or two hundred years ago, tell me how

you think they would feel?

A: They would want to go right back in the ground again.

I: Why?

A: Well, maybe I wouldn't say that, they might like it here, everything is a lot easier. Working conditions, living conditions, kitchens and so forth, are so much better equipped. Maybe they would like it.

I: Do you think that they would miss the peace and quiet?

A: Probably would. They'd get used to it. Yes, it's different entirely, with the automobiles and everything. The old horses didn't make much noise. But they would be amazed. No question about that, with the planes flying overhead. They just wouldn't know what it was all about.

I: What do you think would be the biggest surprise or the biggest change to them?

A: Well I imagine almost the automobile.

I: Would you include the tractor?

A: Yes, yes the farming equipment is so different, they would never recognize 'em.

I: I remember you said once that the tractor was probably the biggest single factor in changing the farm.

A: Ah yes. I would say it made so you could work a much larger acreage, and it was also easier. It was a lot more fun to ride a tractor than it was to walk behind a team of horses.

I: You say that even though you love horses?

A: Yes, I liked horses but I ... well, when you're young walking is good for you, probably.

I: It seems to me that one of the big changes is people, the population has changed a lot.

A: I started school in 1903. There was one Polish family in school, and now when you look at the paper, the athletes and so forth, it's hardly any of the original names in school. They're all good athletes and a lot of different nationalities. They're good farmers and good business men. It's certainly changed entirely. I think a lot of younger people ... there's a lot more mixing going on, no doubt which is good.

I: Why?

A: Well you're more likely to live in harmony ... unless you try to separate yourself all the times. Mixing into community affairs, you're a lot better that way.

(Interruption)

A: Well, the young people can't find work very easily because there isn't any industry like in the city. So they have to leave. Senior Citizens are a big population out here now and they are doing a lot for them. At St. Agnes Church in Greenport there are free dinners.* Probably a hundred people go there everyday, Senior Citizens. And the young people, as you say, the jobs aren't here. But there are a lot more jobs now than there used to be. And in the village there is quite a local employment, but not enough to take care of the young people

* See next page for note.

growing up.

I: And fewer jobs for young people on the farm.

A: That's true. With the mechanized farming, there's not a need for the year round labor, but there is an influx of migrant labor along in July for three, four months for the harvest. They leave in the winter time and go to Florida, probably to pick oranges. But the young people aren't too much interested in farming. It's a lot of hard work and

Note

*Not free. These are good lunches at a very reasonable price. The program is run by the County in the Church Hall.

recently the prices haven't been too good, they don't get paid too much. But if they sell their farm, they get a tremendous price for it.

I: Well the population has changed but one thing that hasn't changed seems to be politics. It seems for a long time the town has been Republican.

A: Of course, for the last several years, a good many years, the Republicans do out-number the Democrats.

I: So it seems as if there has been a one-party system in effect as far back as anyone seems to remember.

A: Well, you don't want too much of a one-party system. They got that in Russia. I would say the foreign element here partially is more Democrats but there's a good many of Republicans too. I guess all the different people here, they pretty much vote

about the way they want to.

I: I know you went to Russia with a United States Department of Agriculture group representing American farmers. Do you think that's helped you see Mattituck in a different way from someone who's just lived here all his life?

A: I thought it was very helpful. When I came out of the service, I said that young fellows should either go to college or go into the service. You see more of the world. Sometimes if a person is used to being secluded always in his home town, the possiblility of newcomers coming is a little more frightening. They tend to be a little more cautious. Whereas, if you've been exposed to other people and different beliefs, you don't tend to be afraid. I think that TV and radio have helped these people that have not been anywhere. They hear about events that happen abroad, politically and everyway.

END OF TAPE.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

419

name Ralph Welles Tuthill

birth date 5/20/1896 place Elijah's Lane, Mattituck (Tuthilltown)

father's name George Bryden Tuthill

mother's name Carrie Case Tuthill

childhood Farm life with chores for all the children

education Mattituck School through the second year High School.

job training At sixteen, he was his father's main man on the farm after a childhood on the farm.

work 1917-1919 in the Navy, nineteen round trip Atlantic crossings on a transport. 1919 to 1938, he and brother Clarence rented and ran his father's farm. Partnership dissolved and 1938 to 1948 Ralph ran another rented farm. In 1948 purchased Nat Tuthill's dairy farm.

official positions 1948 - 1969 Justice of the Peace for Southold Town.

member of Was on the School Board, for both the old and, after 1934, the new school. Library Trustee, served as president, and was a Trustee for many years.

special activities, projects, hobbies

spouse's name Laura Hoogland Fanning

children's names Ralph W. Jr.: Dean Fanning: Lois Marjory, (now in Carbondale, Ill.): Shirley, (Mrs. Bean in Washington, D.C.) Twelve grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

major turning points in:

Mattituck	my life	my field of interest
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5

1 to 5-RWT-1 to 5
30-RWT-6
31-RT:IR-1

for me, Mattituck was

Mattituck is

I'd like Mattituck to become