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A HISTORY OF  
EARLY SAYVILLE

N. Y.

By Clarissa Edwards



SUFFOLK COUNTY NEWS PRESS  
SAYVILLE, N. Y.

1935

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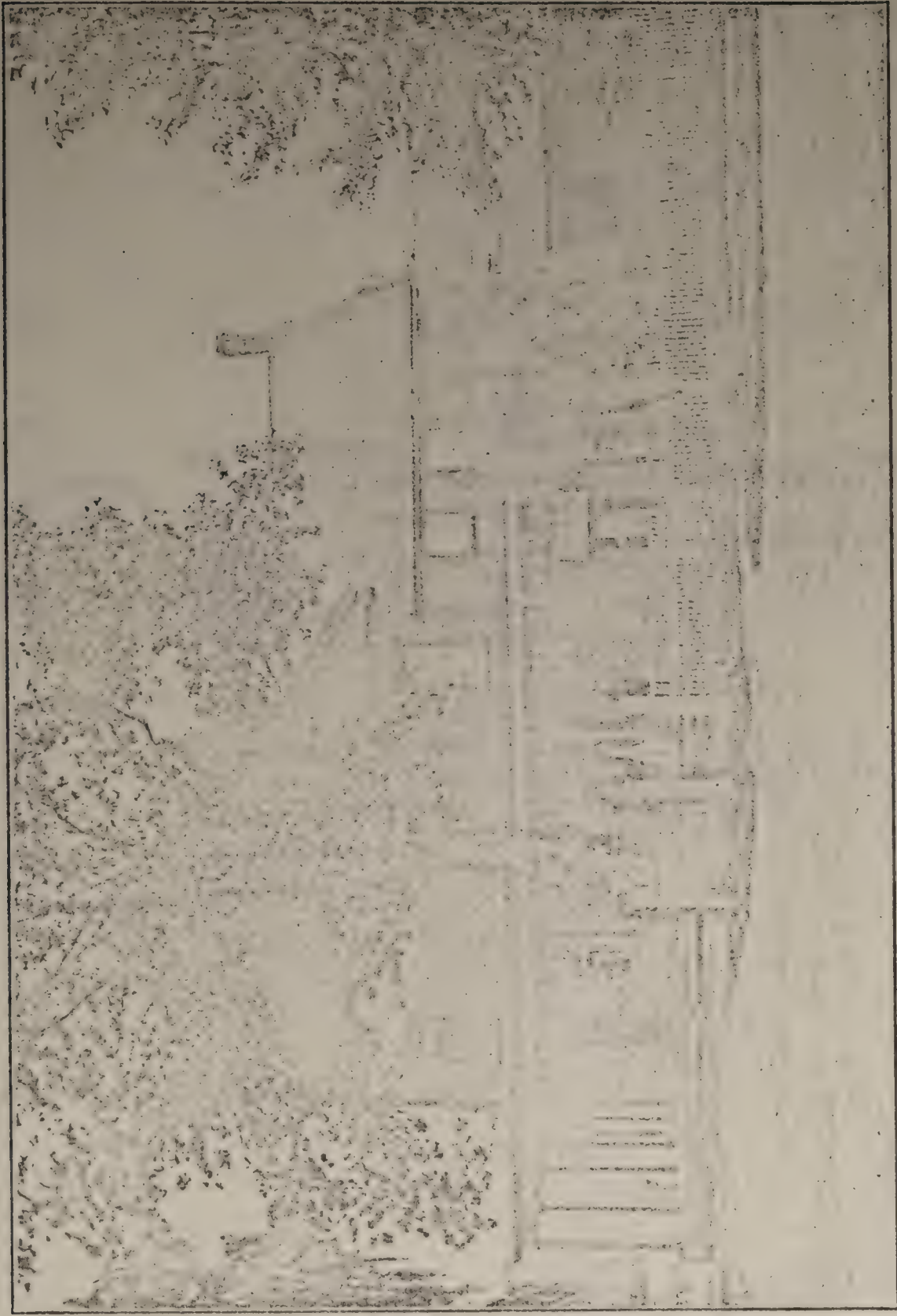
# A HISTORY OF EARLY SAYVILLE



THE OLD BRICK TAVERN WHICH STOOD ON THE SITE OF THE PRESENT HOTEL, KANSASVILLE, MO.  
IT LOOKED IN 1841







THE OLD BEDELL TAVERN WHICH STOOD ON THE SITE OF THE PRESENT HOTEL KENSINGTON, AS IT LOOKED IN 1860.





1.

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## FOREWORD

These facts have been assembled for the purpose of recording historic information of the village of Sayville. It is rarely mentioned in local histories, since there are few outstanding events in its development. Its story is to those of us who live here nonetheless interesting, if unspectacular, and it is with no apologies for their uneventfulness that I present the following facts.





## CHAPTER I.

### Early Grants and Settlements.



THE first European settlers in Suffolk County came from the English colonies in New England. In 1666 Sayville was included within the limits of a patent obtained by the settlers of Setauket. Gov. Richard Nicolls of New York granted them the land occupied by them at that time as well as lands within the bounds of their patent, which they might thereafter purchase from native Indians or other inhabitants.

Some of the early settlements united with the Colony of Connecticut, others with New Haven, for counsel and defense. Little contact was made with the Dutch inhabitants of New York.

Under the terms of its charter Connecticut had claimed Long Island as part of its territory and was exercising full territorial rights over it when in 1664 the Dutch Colony suddenly passed under English rule. Connecticut then imagined it had come into its own, but the influence of Manhattan proved too strong and it was finally determined that the whole of the island was to be a part of the New York Colony. Col. Nicolls, commander of the English expedition in 1664, had claimed the whole island in the name of the Duke of York and thus the greater part of Long Island was torn governmentally from its kindred New England.

The western boundary of this first grant made on Long Island, in which Sayville was included, was a south line from the southeasterly corner of Smithtown to Raconckony Pond (Lake Ronkonkoma) to the ocean. This grant was confirmed in 1686 by another patent from Gov. Dongan in which the boundary of Brookhaven was the same as in the Nicoll patent. The Dongan patent however reserved unto His Majesty, the King of England,





his heirs and successors, all land lying to the south within the limits of the grants that remained unpurchased of the native Indians. This reservation included Eastern Islip, Sayville, Blue Point and Patchogue.

William Nicoll I extinguished the Indian title to a parcel of this land from Winnequaheagh, Sachem of Connetquot tribe in 1683 and 14 years later received a patent from William III, King of England, for an unimproved tract extending from Namkey Creek, westward of Blue Point to Connetquot (Great River) and bounded on the south by the bay. Thus Sayville eventually became part of Islip Town, the bay and beach in front remained in the town of Brookhaven.

This property, purchased by William Nicoll, remained in the family through successive generations, being generally entailed from father to son. About 1785 William Nicoll III of Islip died. All his estate was bequeathed to his eldest son, William IV, with an entailment that 126 pounds he paid his three sisters for ten years and 100 pounds to his brothers for twelve years. The rents from the farms were so low that his income was not sufficient to pay his debts. A number of executions had been issued against him but the executors of the estate argued that if he were forced to leave his property the greater part of his creditors would be ruined. He petitioned the legislature for relief, and an act was passed, 1786, authorizing him to convey property covering the premises in question to three commissioners, Ezra L' Hommedieu, William Floyd, and Selah Strong. They were to sell as much land as necessary to discharge Nicoll's debts. The constitutionality of this act and the legality of the conveyance made by the commissioners were later open to question. When William Nicoll VI came into possession of the estate, he confirmed the deeds made by the commissioners by making quit claim deeds to their grantees in most cases.

John Green, Willett Green and John Edwards were three of the earliest settlers who purchased tracts of this land from the Nicoll grant. The latter two bought the land now known as Sayville, Willett Green taking the western and John Edwards the eastern portion. The price paid by Green was 484 pounds (\$1210) or about three dollars an acre. John Edwards' land extended from the middle of Brown's Creek on the east to an old hedge and ditch now lying between Green and Candee Avenues on the west and north to the Head of the Neck Line.

Willett Green's land extended from the western boundary of the parcel purchased by John Edwards to the eastern boundary of the tract pur-



chased by John Green. The land bought by John Green on May third, 1786, comprised "all that Neck of land commonly called Green's Neck, bounded as follows: Beginning at the southwest corner at the mouth of a creek, called Green's Creek and running up the middle of said creek to the head thereof, from thence north one mile from the South Country Road, from thence extending a due east (undoubtedly a misprint for west) course, until it strikes a brook called Morris Brook, if the said brook extends as far north; from thence down the middle of the said brook to the bay and southerly by the said bay to the mouth of Green's Creek, the place of beginning."

Eight hundred pounds was paid to the Nicoll estate for this land.

It is probable that there were several settlers living upon the land before it was bought from the Nicoll estate, as early Islip Town Records mentioned Jeremiah Terry as collector as early as 1770 and John Edwards as collector in 1779.





## CHAPTER II.

### The Indians.



THE red men of Long Island were probably part of the great family of Algonquins and belonged to the group known, by Dutch pioneers, as the Mohegan Nation. The language was that of the Algonquins. Their money was made of black and white periwinkle shells somewhat like beads, and put upon strings. Wampum was used in Indian deeds, contracts, and treaties and showed the highest evidence of personal wealth, power, and influence. It was made by clipping clam shells to a proper size, drilling a hole through the middle, rubbing them smooth upon a large stone; and placing them upon a string. Seawan or seawant was also the name of Indian shell money, of which there were two kinds—wampum and Suckanhock.

The conduct of the Long Island Indians towards the whites is without parallel in the history of the country. They always showed themselves willing to submit to an impartial investigation and just decision of alleged wrongs. Long Island seems to have afforded the Indians plenty of hunting and its waters abounded with fish, so that the red man had little occasion to cultivate the soil except to scratch its surface here and there to raise enough grain to make bread. He was an adept fisherman, and a canoe formed an important part of his individual wealth. The passing of the Indian was rapid, especially after he gave up his primeval occupation of hunting and tried to settle down as a trader or to follow one of the simple crafts he learned from the white man.

It seems certain that there were few Indians on this tract of land when the settlers came, about 1761, as no mention has been made of their activities,





save for the fact that Indians were seen picking up oysters and clams along the shore. They belonged to either the Patchogue or Secatogue Tribes.

The Marsapequa or Marsapeaque tribe had its principal settlement at Fort Neck, in Oyster Bay, and from there extended eastward to the bounds of Islip and north to the middle of the island. The Secatogue tribe adjoined the Marsapequas on the west and claimed the country as far east as Patchogue.

The farm of the Willetts at Islip was called Sesatogue Neck, and here is supposed to have been the principal settlement and probably the residence of the sachem, who in 1683 was Winnequaheagh. The Patchogues claimed the land from the vicinity of Patchogue to Canoe Place.



### CHAPTER III.

#### The Revolutionary Period Here, and Excerpts from Washington's Diary.



**S**AYVILLE, and this vicinity in general, seems to have been almost untouched by the disturbing forces of the Revolutionary War.

On June 19, 1776, the armed boats Montgomery and Schuyler lay off Fire Island Inlet. British soldiers then were about and several rode through Sayville looking for spies and also for supplies, such as hay, grain and cattle.

One of our three original settlers, Willett Green, was a Quaker and consequently took no part in the struggle, for reasons of conscience. John Edwards joined the Regiment of Minute Men under Colonel Josiah Smith, who led the Suffolk County Militia.

After the war our section had as its honored guest the great General Washington himself, then President. The following are notes he made in his diary:

"April 21, 1790—We dined at Capt. Zebulon Ketcham's, Huntington South, which had been a public house, but now a private one; that it receives pay for what it furnishes. This house was about fourteen miles from South Hempstead, and a very neat and decent one. After dinner we proceeded to a Squire Thompson's, such a house as the last; that is, one that is not public, but will receive pay for everything it furnishes in the same manner as if it was. The road on which I passed today and the country here is more mixed with sand than yesterday, and the soil is of the inferior quality; yet, with manure, which all the corn ground receives, the land yields on an average





thirty bushels to the acre, often more. Of wheat they do not grow much on account of the fly, but the crops of rye are good.

"April 22—About eight o'clock we left Mr. Thompson's, halted, awhile at one Green's, distance eleven miles, and dined at Hart's Tavern, in Brookhaven township, five miles farther. To this place we traveled on what is called the South Road, but the country through which it passed grew more sandy and barren as we traveled eastward, so as to become very poor indeed; a few miles further eastward the land took a different complexion.

"From Hart's we struck across the island for the north side, passing the east end of bushy plains and Coram, 8 miles; thence to Setauket, seven miles more to the house of Capt. Roe, which is tolerably decent, with obliging people in it. The first five miles of the road is too poor to admit inhabitants or cultivation, being a low, scrubby oak, not more than two feet high, intermixed with small and ill thriving pines. Within two miles of Coram there are farms, but the land is of indifferent quality much mixed with sand. Coram contains but few houses.

"From thence to Setauket the soil improves, especially as you approach the sound, but it is far from being of the first quality, still a good deal being mixed with sand. The road across from the south to the north side is level except a small part south of Coram, but the hills are trifling."

Washington's traveling establishment consisted of two gentlemen on horseback as escort, a coach with four horses in which the President rode, followed by Washington's cook and the cook's wife in an old fashioned chaise, drawn by one horse, with the culinary utensils suspended from the axle.

### Civil War

About thirty young Sayville men enlisted for service in the Civil War. Seventy-five thousand dollars was raised by the Town of Islip for filling quotas and for aiding the families of volunteers.

During this period David M. Edwards was engaged in coastal trade. Many were the experiences he related of fleeing from Confederate ships.

Following is a roll of the men who enlisted at Sayville for Civil War service:

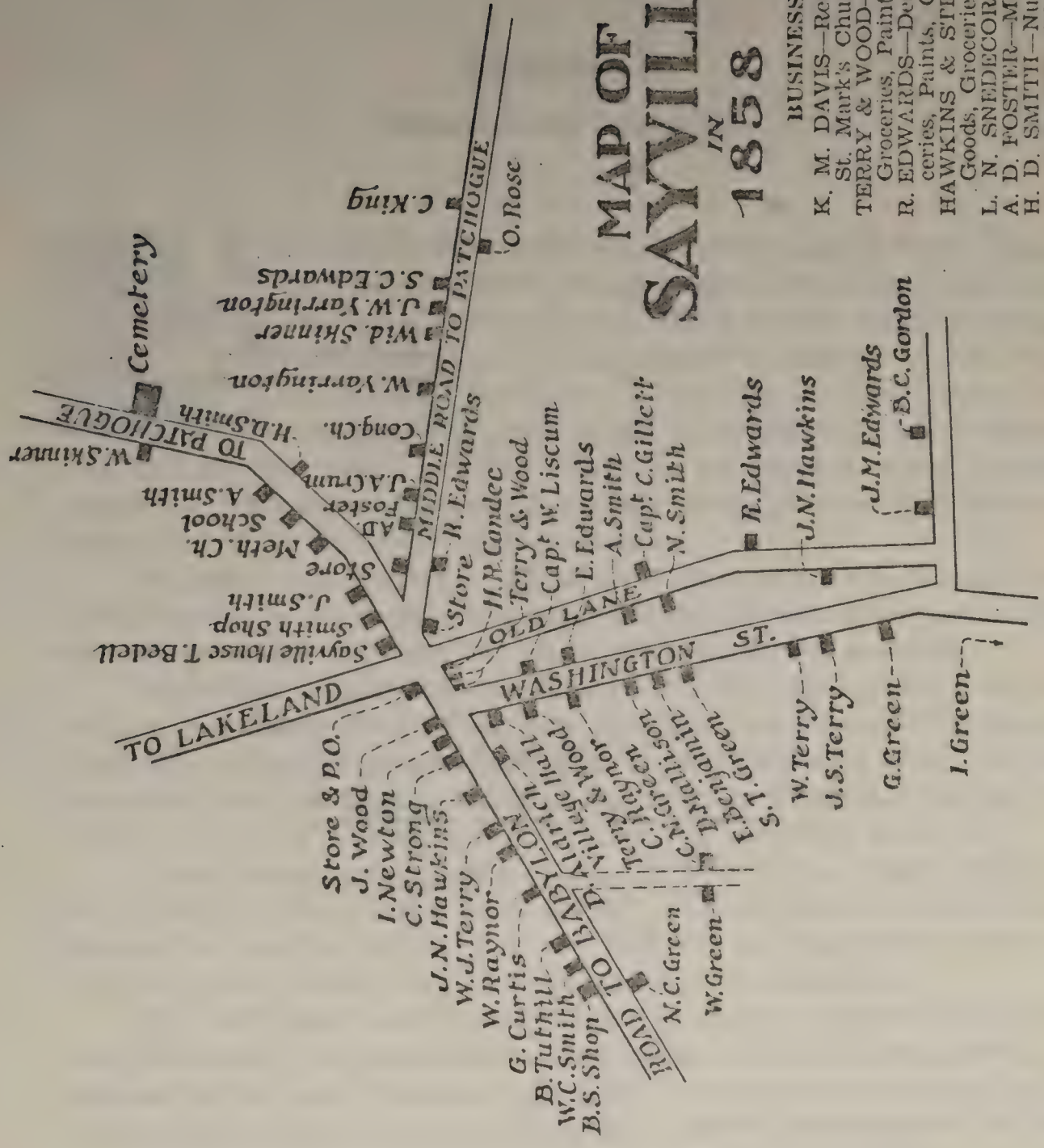




Daniel W. Aldrich	John Longworth
James Baker	William H. Ludlow (colored)
Terry Bedell	William Ludlow, brevet major engineer corps
Dr. George R. Brush, navy	Nicoll Ludlow, navy
Edward J. Carmich	Wilson Moger
Stephen J. Carmich	Smith J. Noe
John A. Crum	Lewis H. Noe, navy
Edmund S. Gerard	William Rhodes
Reuben Gillam	James B. Russell
Isaac L. Gordon	Silas C. Seaman
Obadiah Green	Herman Smith
George W. Haff	Lorenzo D. Smith
Alfred C. Hawkins	Samuel D. Smith
M. Smith Hawkins	George S. Weeks
John G. Homan	William H. Worth, navy
Sylvester Knapp	
	Sylvester Worth, navy



# MAP OF SAYVILLE IN 1858



**BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

K. M. DAVIS—Rector of St. John's and St. Mark's Churches.  
 TERRY & WOOD—Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Paints, Oils, etc.  
 R. EDWARDS—Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Paints, Oils, etc.  
 HAWKINS & STRONG—Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Paints, Oils, etc.  
 L. N. SNEDECOR—Butcher.  
 A. D. FOSTER—Merchant Tailor  
 H. D. SMITH—Nurseyman.  
 W. G. SMITH—Blacksmith





## CHAPTER IV.

### Resources and Occupations.



LONG ISLAND people were entirely isolated from Connecticut by the time Gov. Nicoll gained control over Long Island. The Sound and ocean were less a barrier than the repulsive government and the uncongenial population of New York. Our peculiar geographical conditions, however, made Long Islanders even more self-sufficient than their fellow countrymen, in a day when each section produced its own food, clothing and other necessities. This somewhat undesirable but thoroughly natural state continued until about the middle of the century.

Sayville's soil consists mostly of sand and gravel. The farmers came to the beaches for the various seaweeds, fish and mussels to use for fertilizer. Our soil produced little else but grain, potatoes, turnips and hay.

At the time of the purchases from the Nicoll estate oysters, clams, fish, and great numbers of wild fowl were plentiful here. About 1810, however, the oysters ceased to spawn. From 1825 to 1830 they were scarce and very expensive, often bringing as much as five dollars a hundred. Fabulous tales were told of the great size of those oysters, the last of the old crop.

Their failure was regarded as a major catastrophe. About 1839, however, it was found that a few loads, brought from Virginia, had spawned and increased so rapidly that the bay was found to be bountifully seeded and oystering again became one of the village's chief occupations.

By 1830 New York City's growth had created a market for the pine wood with which the forests at that time abounded. The cutting, carting and shipping of pine soon became an extremely important part of Sayville's life. The growth of the wood did not keep pace with its consumption and since



anthracite coal was coming into use the price of wood did not increase in proportion as the supply diminished.

The wood was cut in the winter when the weather was too rough for sailing, and was piled up along the shore. Trips to the city were usually made between March and December. At one time the supply of wood was so scarce in New York that it was carted in sledges from Nicoll's Point, Great River, and brought a good price when it finally reached Manhattan after three or four days of travel.

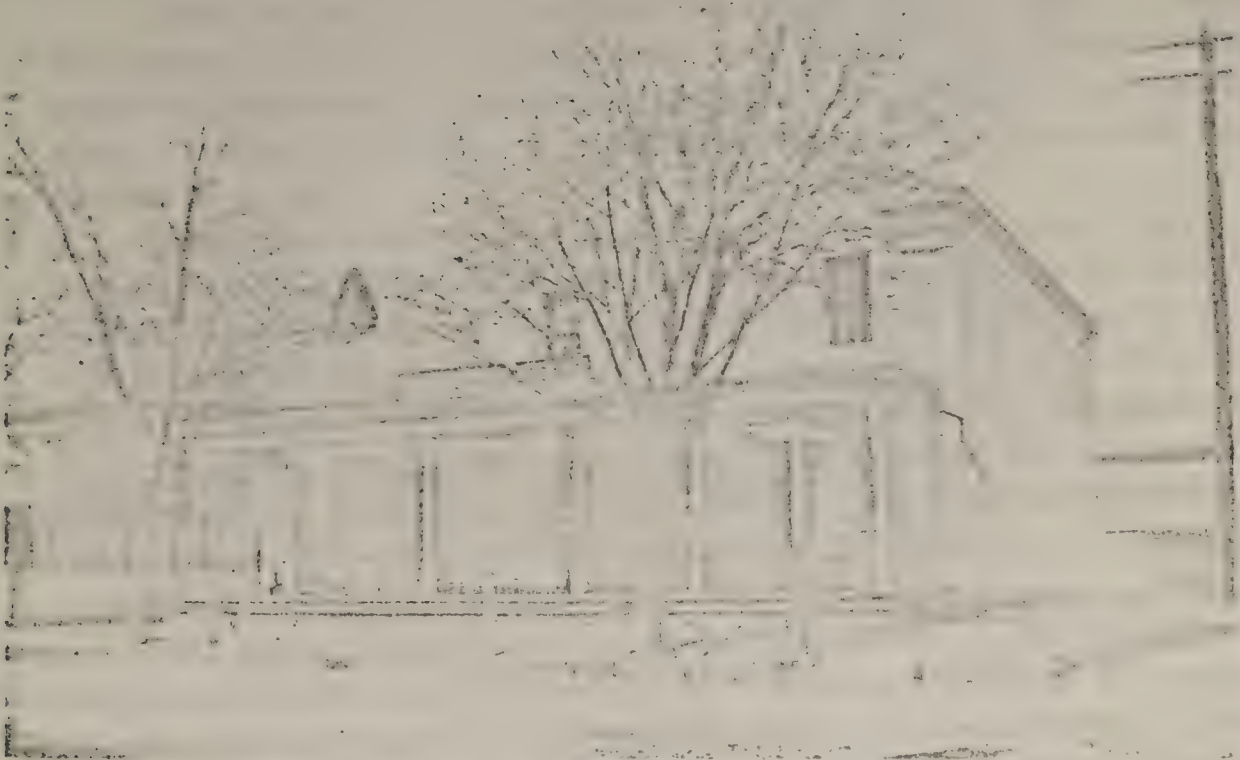
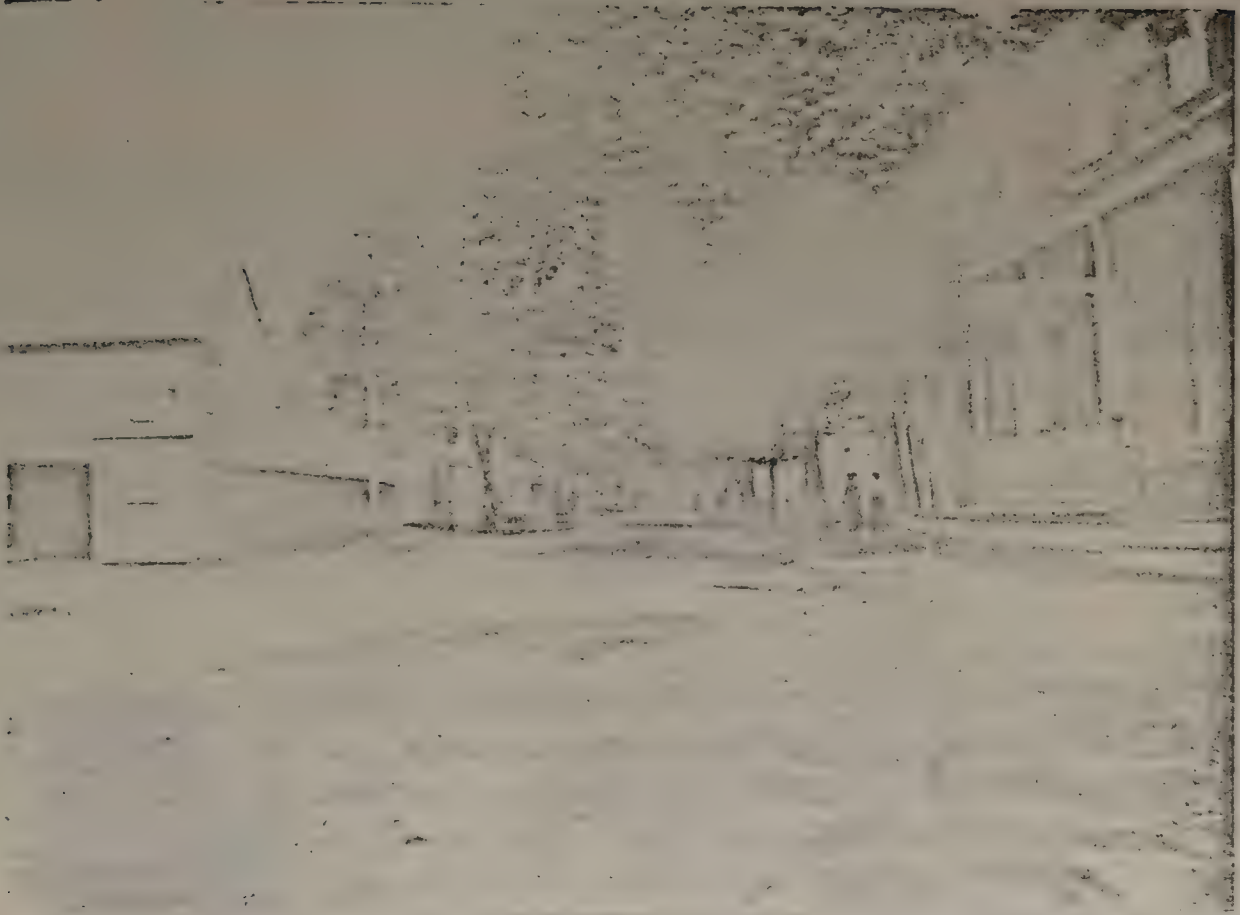
The yellow or pitch pines were very abundant around the middle of the 18th century and measured from twenty to thirty-six inches in diameter. There were forests of tall trees with the ground under them so clear that a deer could be seen at forty rods.

Elias Lewis says that in 1883 there were eighty-three species of forest trees on Long Island. The most prolific of these was the locust, specimens of which were brought from Virginia. It spread rapidly and the quality of its lumber was regarded as better than in the trees left behind in its parent state. Nowhere did it flourish as on Long Island.

The manufacture of oil from menhaden, or bunkers, was an industry about 1863, became very profitable during the Civil War, and continued until after 1876. Samuel W. Green owned a factory built on the land near the bay between Green's Creek and Handsome Avenue. The trees near the creek known as "Factory Clump," were a landmark for the fishermen. Sloops and catboats with tow boats caught bunkers in the ocean and one frequently brought a cargo of 5,000 fish to the factory. A five hundred foot dock extended into the bay on which cars ran on tracks to the boats. The factory had about eight tanks each of which held 15,000 fish. These fish were cooked and the oil pressed from them by steam power. Fifty-gallon barrels of oil were shipped to New York to be used in paint and codliver oil. The pressed fish were used for fertilizer and sold for \$40 per ton. This fertilizer was very light in weight. Later the fish factory was located on Fire Island Beach.







TOP — RAILROAD AVENUE IN THE OLD DAYS.  
BOTTOM—THE STORE OF W. J. TERRY AND JOHN WOOD, Established 1849



## CHAPTER V.

### The Growth of Sayville 1735 to 1885



**I**N 1836 residents of this section began to wish for the dignity of a name for their dwelling place. Until then it had been referred to casually by residents of the middle of the island as "Over South." Our people wished to establish a village, however, and to have a post office. Consequently a meeting of the inhabitants was duly called to consider the propriety of naming the village and of petitioning the proper department.

The meeting was held at the Old Bedell Tavern, which according to the custom of the day was both store and tavern. After much thought the names of Edwardsville, Greenville and Judea were discussed and ballots prepared. To the utter confusion of the gathering, each name received the same number of votes.

John Wood, one of Sayville's first schoolmasters, wrote that the name Seville, from the Spanish city, had a majority on the count of the next ballots. Joseph Wood, his son, was of the opinion that the intention was to name the village Seaville and that the first syllable was written "Say", which spelling is not infrequent in old records referring to the sea. Very old Bible records show the name Saville. This explanation is the simplest and seems the most probable of any. The proximity of our village to the water and the dependence of the people upon coastal trade necessitated the centering of their interests upon the sea and thus influenced the selection of the name.

On April first, 1735, the South Country Road was laid out throughout Islip township. It extended through the southern portion of the town at an average distance of nearly a mile from the shore. Any inhabitants of European descent then residing in Eastern Islip were either squatters or tenants of





the proprietor of the Nicoll estate, as no sales of land were made by him or his successors until after the Revolution.

In 1764 the main roads, particularly those on the shore lines, acquired importance as the routes over which the mail was transported. The bi-monthly passage of the mail-carrier on horseback was an event, and a somewhat irregular one since in the winter the mail service could not be maintained with anything like regularity.

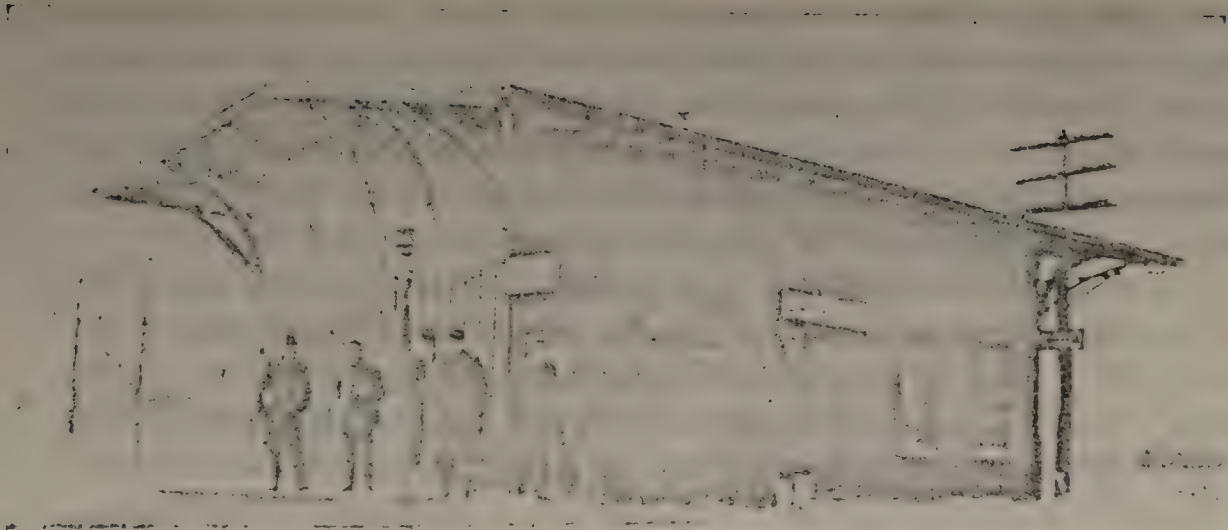
Furman tells us that while the Revolution was in progress and for some years after its close "a respectable old Scotchman named Dunbar was in the habit of riding a voluntary post between the city of New York, along the south road to Babylon, and from thence a few miles to the east and then across the island to Brookhaven. He thus brought the inhabitants of the central portions of the island their letters and newspapers about once a week or once a fortnight, depending upon the weather." Until almost the beginning of the nineteenth century there was not a single post office on the island.

Following is a list of Sayville Postmasters to 1885.

Postmaster	Date Appointed
Daniel Howell	March 22, 1837 (Established)
Alfred Hawkins	April 3, 1840
Wilson J. Terry	December 19, 1840
Philetus S. Gerard	January 19, 1842
Daniel Howell	June 7, 1842
John T. Howell	December 28, 1848
John Wood	September 22, 1849
Wilson J. Terry	August 24, 1853
John Wood	April 27, 1861
Samuel W. Green	December 26, 1861
Charles Z. Gillette	June 13, 1864
Wilson J. Terry	October 18, 1866
Charles Z. Gillette	June 15, 1869
Morris J. Terry	June 16, 1885

Previous to the appointment of a postmaster letters were left at the home of Wilson J. Terry, on the west corner of Main Street and Gillette Avenue. A table placed in the hallway of the home was a depository for the mail. Very early each morning the mail carrier rode his horse from Patchogue to Babylon, connecting in each place with carriers of other routes. He collected





THE SAYVILLE DEPOT, BUILT ABOUT 1870



"GUS" TREADWELL DRIVING JOHN WELLS' STAGE WHICH FOR 30 YEARS  
MET ALL TRAINS AT SAYVILLE STATION





the letters from Mr. Terry's hall table and distributed them along the route. A ten cent tax was required on each letter. In the afternoon he brought mail from the west. Only once a week did mail come out from the city and that for the entire south side of the island was contained in one pouch. Frequently this sack would be overhauled without one letter for Sayville appearing.

In 1834 a new road was opened, the Middle Road, across the meadow and creek which separated what is now Sayville from Bayport.

John Wood came to this village in 1838, as a school teacher. He compiled a history which he read at a celebration here on July 4, 1876. He wrote that the simplicity of fare and dress of that early time can hardly be realized. There were but four dwellings on the Main Road between the school house on the North Main Road at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Green's Brook. In one of those was a tavern, store and post office. There was no church building within the bounds of the school district, no Sunday School, nor any public cemetery or burial ground. Religious meetings were held weekly in the school house. All the books in the district, aside from the Bibles, hymn books and school books, could easily have been carried under one arm. One newspaper came to the post office, a single copy of "The Republican Watchman," a Democratic paper published at Sag Harbor.

A sawmill was built at the south end of the Mill Pond in the early part of the nineteenth century. From this mill the pond received its name.

In 1841 the first store building was erected by Reuben Edwards on the easterly corner of Main Street and Gillette Avenue.

The main line of the Long Island Railroad was completed in 1844. Our village was of so little importance at this time that when the mail route on the South Country Road was discontinued and replaced by that on the main railroad the post office at Sayville was nearly discontinued. This calamity was averted by the liberality of a few public spirited citizens, who commenced running a stage to carry the mail and passengers to and from the Lakeland station.

Another important milestone in Sayville's development came in 1868 when the South Shore Rail Road was extended to Patchogue.

Our first ticket office was located in the west room of Woodhull Raynor's hotel on the north side of the track. Tickets were sold from a small window in the room. This house is now owned by Paul Groh. The first real station was built about 1870.

Sayville's first highways were mere winding paths or lanes, until about



1850. In 1868 Gordon Lane was widened by the town and became known as Foster Avenue. Upper Green Avenue was improved by the town in the same year. Washington Avenue, now Candee, which was laid out in 1851, was extended through Henry Green's farm to the bay in 1873. Richard Hawkins and Homer F. Candee were instrumental in accomplishing this. Handsome Avenue was recorded Hansom in 1889, although it was laid out some sixteen years earlier. Lower Green Avenue was known as Stumpy Road.

In 1845 it took Mr. Wood just one day to take the census of this entire election district, including the agricultural and other statistics.

In 1876 a census of Sayville and West Sayville showed a population of 1200. At that time there were 215 dwellings, six stores, four churches and a public school. There was one doctor resident, and two undertakers.

The beauty of our bay and the simplicity of our village began to attract people of New York City as early as 1880. Three hotels were in Sayville at that time.

Early in the spring of 1878 fire partially destroyed a barber shop on South Main Street, proving the immediate need of a fire fighting organization. On October 14th, 1878 the charter of the Sayville Hook and Ladder Company was signed on the top of a grand piano on the second floor of Columbia Hall. This was the first incorporated company in the southern portion of Suffolk County. There were nineteen charter members whose names are in the first roll call of 1878.

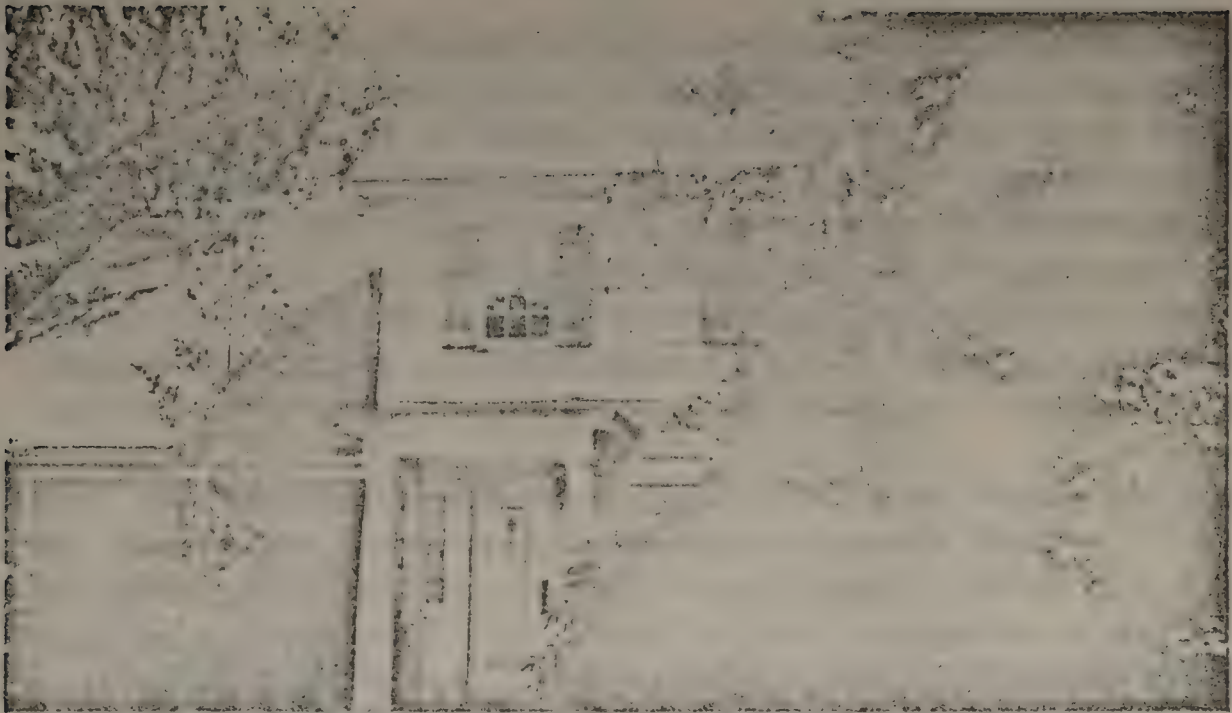
#### First Roll Call of Hook and Ladder Co.

Jacob Smith	Frank Jindra
A. D. Foster	Isaac H. Green Jr.
J. H. Prescott	Joseph Jedlicka
Walter L. Suydam	W. N. Raynor
Francis Gerber	H. F. Wheeler
William Darkow	H. E. C. Oleson
Albert Ketcham	Lewis H. Noe
Morris J. Terry	H. Treadwell Rogers
Fred Munkelwitz	James Nohowec
Jeremiah S. Terry	Sidney B. Smith
Moses Da Silva	Edward E. Munkelwitz
Philip Habberman	Charles H. Woodhull
Edward C. Gillette	Homer F. Candee

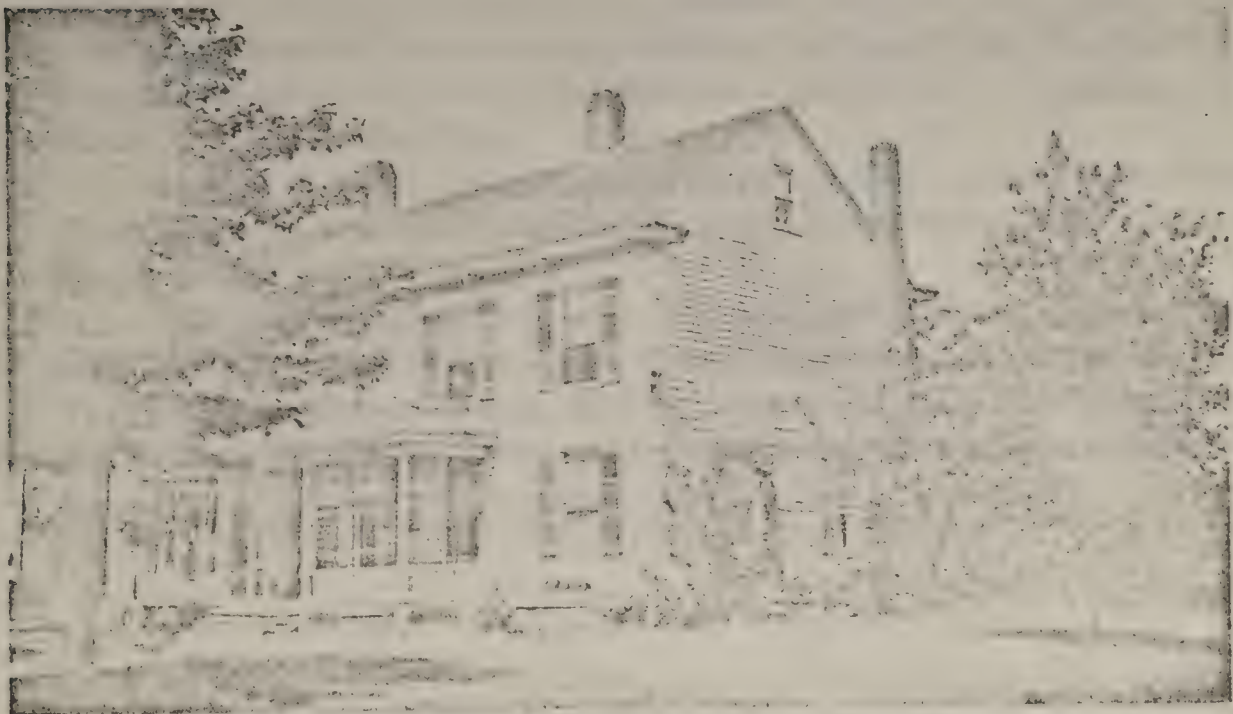
Mr. I. H. Green is the only surviving charter member.







WILSON J. TERRY'S HOUSE. SAYVILLE'S FIRST POST OFFICE.  
Letters were left on a table in the hall for the mail carrier.



This building, which was formerly the Sayville school house, on the corner of North Main Street and Lincoln Avenue, took the place of the little red schoolhouse.



Our first schoolhouse, the typical little red building of song and story, was built on the westerly corner of North Main Street and Lincoln Avenue. The older pupils sat on benches built around the sides of the one room, facing the wall. They bent over wide shelves built out from the wall. Those next younger were in the next row and the smallest children sat in a circle around the stove. The teacher's desk was at the back of the room and the pupils sat with their backs to him while they wrote. The room held a large stove and quantities of split wood piled against the wall. There were only four windows in the building—three on the east and one opposite the door behind the teacher.

The first teacher came here about 1825. A short session was held during three winter months and the teachers frequently changed. When John Wood arrived in 1838, however, there were enough children to make a ten month's session practical. Mr. Wood was paid the munificent sum of \$12 a month and "boarded around." He stayed one week with families having one child in school and six weeks with the parents of six children.

Miss Harriet Ophelia Haff, John Wood's step-sister, taught a private school in the Wood home in 1856. Later she conducted a school in the basement of the Congregational Church, probably while the new school was being built. Miss Rachel Edwards at the time of her death was the possessor of a book of poems given her by Miss Haff as a reward for "committing," a much valued practise of the time.

Homer F. Candee also taught a private school, situated in the Wilson J. Terry house, where the Thornhill drug store now stands. Mr. Candee later taught in the public school.

The one-room building became inadequate with the growth of the village and about 1860 a two-story frame structure was erected in its place. That later was outgrown also, and made into a dwelling. By 1875 three teachers were employed constantly and a fourth during the winter months. The amount paid annually for teachers' salaries was about \$2000.





## CHAPTER VI.

### The First Churches.



THERE is some doubt about which of Sayville's churches was first established. The first Methodist meetings in this vicinity were held in the home of Jonas Newton, of Oakdale, about 1833. A preacher from Patchogue made that one of his appointments. The Methodist Church of Sayville was organized about 1838 by a class of fifteen men with Silas Hulse as leader. Services were held on alternate Sabbath afternoons in the red school house until 1847. At that time the society increased to about forty members. A house of worship 20 x 40 feet was erected, at a cost of \$1,000, and services were thereafter held each Sunday afternoon, with Sunday School in the morning. The pulpit was supplied from Patchogue. In 1861 an addition 12 x 20 feet with a gallery and basement was added to the rear of the church.

Five years later, the membership having increased to about a hundred, Sayville became a separate charge. In 1882 the church was enlarged again, a new tower built on the front, and the interior rebuilt. The church continued to grow and the present site, the southwest corner of Greene Avenue and Main Street was bought in 1892. The new church was dedicated on August 20th, 1893.

For many years before the organization of the Sayville Congregational Church it was customary for those who had teams to drive to Patchogue for the morning service there, to bring the minister home with them for the afternoon service here and then to take him back. This was continued until the first resident pastor was settled in Sayville in 1864. The first Congregational building was erected in 1849 on land bought of Reuben Edwards and Baldwin C. Gordon. Francis and Charles A. Woodhull contracted to build it for \$956.





THIS BUILDING, NOW THE MASONIC TEMPLE, WAS  
ORIGINALLY THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
BUILT IN 1847.



THE OLD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ERECTED 1849.







### ST. ANN'S CHURCH

Autumn of 1887, just before the wooden building was moved to the north to make room for the new stone church. S. W. Penny, in doorway, hammer in hand.

Charles LeCluse Sr., in wagon.



The building, dedicated on February 14th, 1849, was 26 x 40 feet, set on brick walls about five feet high, with a basement under the whole building and a square latticed belfry about 15 feet high over the south end of the church. This held a bell presented by the young men of the congregation. There was one aisle through the middle of the room and seats on either side. When it was time to put up the stove, two of the seats were moved to make room for it.

This old church was sold to W. J. Terry and Sons in 1888 and moved to its present site on Railroad Avenue. The corner stone of the new church, built on the same place, was laid October 11th, 1888 and the church dedicated on January 2, 1890.

The St. Ann's Protestant Episcopal Church was formerly a mission of St. John's Church at Oakdale. The land was purchased March 14, 1866 by the Rev. Charles Douglas, Rector of St. John's Church, and John R. Suydam. A wooden building erected in 1866 was named St. John's Academy. This was used as a day school and on Sunday for divine service. In 1867 the name was changed to St. Barnabas Chapel. The Rev. John H. Prescott was sent by the Bishop of Long Island to this parish together with that of St. Paul's, Patchogue, on July 13, 1873.

At the request of John R. Suydam the name was changed to St. Ann's Church and so appears in the Certificate of Incorporation dated April 30, 1874. The Parish was admitted into union with the convention of the Diocese of Long Island in 1875. The Rev. John H. Prescott was called and the church consecrated October 27, 1878. The old building was moved to the north in the autumn of 1887, and a stone church built upon the original site, the gift to the parish of Walter L. Suydam and Helen Suydam Cutting.

The organization of St. John's Lutheran and St. Lawrence's churches came too late to fall within this period. The Catholic Church was organized in 1895 and celebrated its 40th anniversary this year. In 1904 the Lutheran Church was formed here. It celebrated its 30th anniversary last year.





## CHAPTER VII.

### The Growth of West Sayville



**I**T WAS in 1849 when the first Hollanders set sail from the Netherlands to settle in this part of Long Island. Cornelius Hage and Cornelius De Waal, brothers-in-law, were among the very first to come here. They settled in what is now known as Oakdale, just west of the old Ludlow estate. For several years they were the only Hollanders pioneering here. Soon after that Sebastian Broere arrived. Then came Jacob De Waal, whose descendants are still in West Sayville. After this the Westerbeke family arrived from Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, and also settled in Oakdale. The sturdy Hollanders soon made a good living here. As it was with the Pilgrims, their first interest was the establishment of a church, and the church has always been a particularly vital part of that community.

Services in Dutch were at first held in what was known as the Davis house, just west of the present St. John's Episcopal Church, Oakdale. An elder Mr. Koppejan, read the ritual. About 1860 the services were held in the Sayville schoolhouse on Main Street. The Board of Domestic Missions heard of the settlement and sent the Rev. Mr. Jongeneel to do mission work among the Hollanders in and around Sayville. He arrived in 1864.

For two years he worked with success. According to old records, which were imperfectly kept, Isaabelle Wilhelmina Tucker was the first person to be baptized by the Rev. Mr. Jongeneel.

The members were not satisfied, however, to hold services in the schoolhouse and wished to have a place of their own in which to worship. In 1876 one hundred and twenty dollars was collected and a church built on





CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, WEST SAYVILLE.  
ERECTED 1873



THE OLD DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH, MAIN STREET, WEST SAYVILLE, 1867





a piece of property on Main Street, West Sayville. The building is now owned by Emerson Peppard.

The organization of the Dutch Reformed Church took place on December 19th, 1866. Mr. Jongeneel was called and installed as the first pastor of the church. He worked successfully from 1866 to 1871. The first Consistory consisted of the following members: Elders—John Westerbeke and H. J. Hiddink; Deacons—Marinus Boot and John Otto. The settlement at that time was called Tuckertown.

The Rev. G. Van Emmerik was the second pastor. He filled the pulpit from 1872 to 1886. Descendants of Mr. Van Emmerik are still in and around Sayville. He chose to occupy a house just west of West Avenue, Oakdale. He is still lovingly remembered by some of the older residents of today, particularly for his faithfulness in catechizing. Besides the catechism he required that the catechumens memorize a stanza per week of the old Dutch psalms. Mrs. Mary Buys still has in her possession one of the coveted prizes for memorizing.

During the ministry of the Rev. Schilstra in 1906 property was bought from Samuel Green on Cherry Avenue and a new structure built and dedicated in 1908. This was the building that burned on November 18th, 1933. Its successor was erected and the cornerstone laid and the church dedicated on October 28th, 1934, with appropriate services led by the pastor, the Rev. J. H. Joldersma.

#### Christian Reformed Church.

In 1876 a few brethren decided to petition the Classis of Michigan of the True Dutch Reformed Church, now the Christian Reformed, to organize a congregation in Sayville. The Classis appointed a committee which met with the men at the home of Arie Bibbe, on September 13th, 1876. The meeting continued the next day in the Congregational Church, conducted by the Rev. K. Vanden Bosch. The name "True Holland Reformed Church of Sayville, N. Y." was adopted.

On October 3, 1876, the Consistory met to plan for a place of worship. A suitable parcel of ground was purchased in April 1878 and the church dedicated July 25th and 26th, 1878. During the same year the church was incorporated and became legally known as the "True Holland Reformed Church of Greenville, N. Y.," which was another of West Sayville's aliases. The name



was later changed to "Holland Christian Reformed Church," and was recorded in the County Clerk's office on July 30th, 1884.

These thrifty Dutch people found the oyster and fish industries so profitable that they have pursued these occupations for many years. During the Civil War the southern oysters were shut out of the northern market and the price was high until 1873. Then the crop was so poor that the government investigated the failure in 1879-80. This marked the end of the era of natural beds or "commons" and inaugurated the planted beds.

The first oyster house was built on the shore of Great River from which barrels of oysters were carted to the Oakdale station. Sebastian Broere was the first dealer to ship bivalves to England. Derrick Van Wyen also engaged in this foreign trade in 1885. Later, oyster houses were built on the shore of the Ludlow property, Oakdale, and eventually the business became established in West Sayville.







## CHAPTER VIII.

### The Old Families.



**J**OHN GREENE, the first of the name in New England, was known as Surgeon John Greene. He was a native of the parish of Gillingham, County Dorset, England, and was born about 1590, the son of Richard and Mary (Hooker) Greene. Surgeon John Greene moved from the parish of Gillingham to Sarum (Salisbury), where he followed the medical profession until April 1635, when he sailed on the ship "James" for New England with his wife and five children. They arrived in Boston May 3, 1635, and settled in Salem, Massachusetts, where he became associated with Roger Williams. Dr. Greene followed Williams to Providence in 1638, was baptized, and became one of the twelve original members of the first Baptist Church on the continent, organized at Providence. His children were John, Peter, Richard, James, Thomas, Joan, and Mary. James Greene had three children, John, Joseph and Benjamin.

John, the son of James, born 1656, traveled on horseback to Horse-neck, now Greenwich, in the town of Stamford, Connecticut. The Huntington town records show that John Greene purchased land May 18, 1672, from Samuel Messenger. He had moved to Long Island in 1694, and was the owner of one-half of a rich neck of land at Huntington, know as Josiah's Neck. Many members of his family dropped the final "e" from the spelling of the name. Later generations have returned to the original spelling of the name. His son, John, born on the farm in 1694, purchased from the Nicoll estate the land between Green's Creek and Morris Brook, extending one mile north from the South Country Road. Samuel P. Greene holds the original deed. This land was divided be-



tween his three sons, William, Thomas, and John, and large portions of it sold. William Green became the owner of the east farm upon which stands the village of West Sayville, formerly known as Greenville, and upon this he built the homestead now owned by Samuel P. Greene

William Green was a man of excellent character and prominent in local affairs. He married Mary, the daughter of William Terry, and died in 1824. His wife died in 1869. Their children were Angelina, Tredwell, William, Eliza, Ann, Samuel T., Mary, Charles, George Anson, John D., and Silas.

Samuel T. Greene was born in his family homestead October 20, 1811, and was reared upon the farm. He was a progressive public spirited man, and for more than thirty years served as a school trustee. He was an active adherent of the Democratic party and was frequently a delegate to county and state conventions. He attended St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church and his wife the Presbyterian. He contributed to both churches. Samuel T. Greene married Elizabeth Pettit, a granddaughter of Judge John Pettit. Their children were Phoebe A., born June 19, 1846, who married John H. Akley, and Samuel P. Greene, born July 12, 1851.

The old family burying ground was located about 300 ft., a little to the west of south from the house. When the land was sold the stones were removed to St. John's Cemetery in Oakdale.

Willett Green, son of John Green, born in 1757, built his home upon land purchased from the Nicoll Land Grant, situated east from Green's Creek. Willett was a follower of George Fox, an exemplary member of the Society of Friends, and a farmer by occupation. He married Johanna Terry and they became the parents of five children. Of these, two daughters, Rachel and Johanna, were married in turn to Samuel Willis. The three sons were Isaac, Willett, and Obadiah. The father and mother died respectively on August 24, 1833 and June 23, 1814. Willett Green willed his property to his son Isaac and then to all the male heirs.

Isaac, eldest son of Willett Green, was born in Sayville January 3, 1787, became a farmer and affiliated in religious belief with the Protestant Episcopal Church. Politically he was a Democrat until the outbreak of the Civil War, when he became a Republican. He married Charity, the daughter of Caleb Newton, and they became the parents of the following children: Deborah Ann, who married James M. Edwards; Caleb N., Sarah, who married Wilson J. Terry; Nathaniel C.; Elizabeth, married to Nehemiah Smith; Willett; Glorianna, married to Charles Woodhull; Isaac Henry; Johanna,





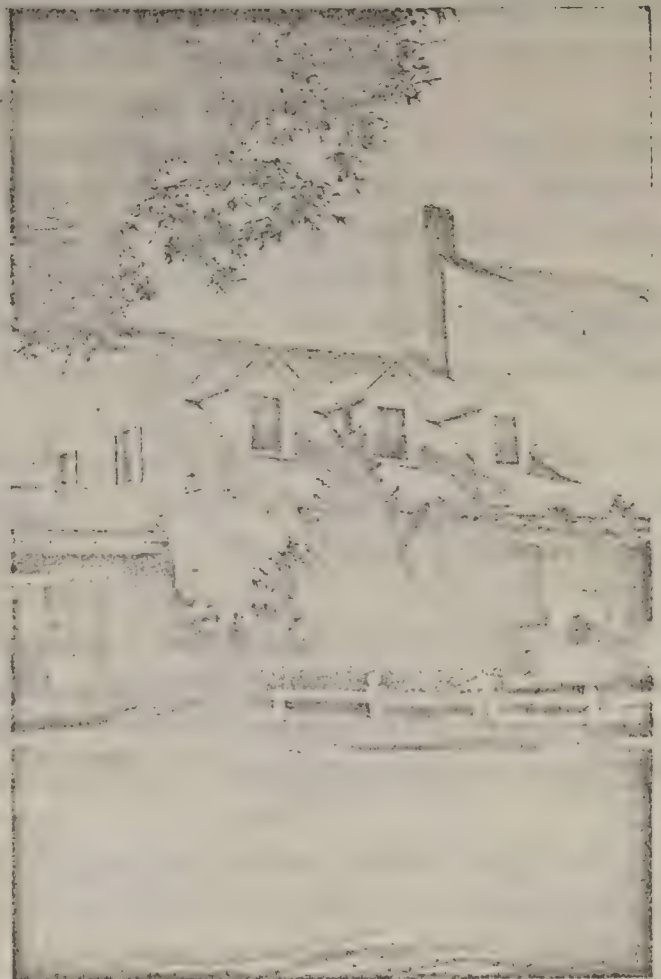


(Top) — This house was originally owned by William Greene, first land holder of West Sayville.



(Bottom) — The portion of the Country Club shown here was the home of Willett Green. It originally stood on the west side of Candee Avenue, somewhat south of Maple Street.

Both houses were built the latter part of the 18th century.





who married Franklin Wheeler; Samuel W.; Israel who died in his youth; and Rachel who married King Benjamin.

Isaac Henry was born at Sayville, December 18, 1827, where he received his education and worked on the home farm. Later he engaged in the fish business. In the early seventies he went out to Salem, Ohio, but because of ill health he returned to the Green homestead in Sayville and spent the rest of his life on his portion of the Green farm. He was a Democrat in his early life, later became a Republican and was assessor of the town of Islip for 12 years. He was a member of St. Ann's Episcopal Church and served as vestryman and warden. He married Sarah Amelia Snedecor, and has two surviving children, Ralph C. and Lila.

#### Will of Willett Green, Who Died 1833.

I, Willett Green, of the Town of Islip, County of Suffolk and State of New York, this day considering the uncertainty of this mortal life and being of sound mind and memory, do make and publish this my last will and Testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First. I give and bequeath unto my wife the sum of One hundred dollars, also the choice of one room in my house with a plentiful living out of what my farm produce, together with the interest of Five hundred dollars during her life in lieu of her right of dower in my estate.

Secondly. I give and devise unto my only son Issac Green, all my landed property with everything I leave on it to him and his male heirs forever.

Thirdly. I give and bequeath unto my grandson Israel Green, Two thousand Dollars, also a compass and chair and all the books and instruments that were his Uncle Israel's and that he have the interest of the said sum to bring him up, and also that he be well educated.

Fourthly. I give and bequeath unto my two daughters, Johanna and Rachel, Twelve hundred dollars each, considering that Rachel has already received five hundred of hers, also each of them three beds and bedding, and everything in the house that was their mother's, and that Johanna have a right to live in the house until married.

Fifthly. Whatsoever money should be left not above disposed of, I give and bequeath unto all my children and grandchildren to be divided equally between them.

Lastly. I hereby appoint my son Isaac Green and my friend William





Beale, Executors to this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all former Wills by me made.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the tenth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-three.

(Willett Green L.S.)

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the said Willett Green to be his last Will and Testament in presence of us who at his request became

Hannah Beale of Brookhaven	}	Witnesses
David Beale of Brookhaven		





NOTE for Clarissa Edward's "History of early Sayville...1935.  
p.29. According to information received by Mrs. John S.  
Loomis from Mr. M. Pennypacker, an historian of Long Island;

"See East Hampton Town Records, v.5, p.478 for the birth  
of John Edwards. He married Sarah Norris, daughter of  
John and Sarah Norris. See abstract of Willis, County  
Clerk's Office, Riverhead, L.I., Liber A."

Mrs. Loomis adds: "Mr. M. Pennypacker wrote me on paper  
having the East Hampton Free Library letter head. I have  
also read about him in "Discovering Long Island"... by W.O.  
Stevens.."

-June 1939.





John Edwards was born in East Hampton in 1738. He was a direct descendant of William Edwards, who with his wife, Ann, and one child, John, came from Maidstone, County of Kent, England. He settled in East Hampton before 1651. He seems to have been a man of intelligence, good heart, and means.

During the French and Indian War John Edwards volunteered under Capt. Jonathan Baker and took an active part in skirmishes near Ticonderoga. The New York State Historian Annual Report Colonial Series records his enlistment at East Hampton on April 26, 1760. He was aged 21, of dark complexion, in stature 5 feet 6½ inches, and his trade was that of a tailor. It is probable that on his way back at the close of the war he learned of this country lying along the beautiful South Bay and settled here soon after.

About 1761 he and his wife, Sarah, built their house in the center of their land at a point now located on the northwest corner of Foster Avenue and Edwards Street. A part of the original house stood until March 1913, when it was destroyed by fire.

John Edwards was a private soldier in Capt. David Pierson's Company of Minute Men. This regiment was commanded by Col. Josiah Smith, who led the Suffolk County Militia in the Revolutionary War. His enlistment has entitled his direct descendants to become Sons or Daughters of the American Revolution.

He had six children who lived to maturity, Sarah, Matthew, Stephen, Catherine, John Jr., and Mary. He died in 1826 and was buried in the old family burying ground in the southwest corner of the lot in front of his house, about fifty rods south of Edwards Street, with a ditch to the west and a ditch to the south of it. His wife was buried beside him and his son, John, lies near them. Matthew's oldest son, Jeremiah, and others of the family and even some who are not members of the family lie buried there. As his sons grew to manhood and married the father gave each of them a portion of the farm. To Matthew he gave a strip along the west side and adjoining Willett Green's land extending from the bay to the Head of the Neck line. To Stephen he gave the northeast corner from Matthew's east line on the west to the brook (where Roosevelt's pond now is) on the east, and from the Head of the Neck on the north to the middle of the muddy run now lying on the north of St. Ann's Cemetery, as the south line. He retained for himself and his son, John, the southeast corner, the line between



his and Matthew's land crossing the South Road at the point where the line between Dr. Robinson's and Reuben Edwards' property was in 1897 and following the ditch to the bay.

After the death of John Edwards in 1826 his farm continued in the possession of the family for several years but was finally sold to Baldwin C. Gordon. At his death it was divided among his numerous children. Gordon Lane (Foster Avenue) was laid out running from South Main Street to the bay, cutting through the whole length of the farm, which thus lost its identity.

Matthew Edwards built a house just west of his father's in the lot which is now the northeast corner of Gillette Avenue (Old Lane) and Edwards Street. He died in 1838.

James M. Edwards, his son, born in 1808, acquired his education in the common school of his native town. In early life he engaged in seafaring and continued in this line of work until he was thirty years old. He was master of a vessel that carried cargoes to the New York markets and made the unusual number of fourteen trips in one season. After the death of his father, he abandoned this occupation and pursued that of farming, having inherited a portion of his father's estate. He moved the old house to the east and remodeled it on the site where it stands at the present time on Edwards Street.

James married Deborah Ann Green, the eldest daughter of Isaac and Charity (Newton) Green, thus uniting two of the oldest families. Their children were David M., Jeremiah M., Caleb M. (who was lost at sea), Charity E., Rachel A., John S., and Sophia. He was a loyal member of the Democratic party but never sought nor held public office. He united with the Congregational Church at Patchogue, where he was a deacon for many years. At the formation of the Congregational Church at Sayville he continued to act in the same capacity.

Rachel A. Edwards, a descendant of both families, was born in 1848. She lived almost her entire life of eighty-seven years in the Edwards Homestead.

(These family histories and genealogies are given to acquaint us with the type of early settler, to show some of his characteristics and habits. It is impossible to record all branches of the families and also to give the later generations. The facts concerning the early genealogy of the Greene family are found in *American Families of Historic Lineage* by Pelletreau and Brown).







THE FIRST EDWARDS HOUSE IN SAYVILLE.

The west end of the above house was built by John Edwards about 1761. It stood on the northwest corner of Edwards Street and Foster Avenue.



The part of the above house without a porch was built by Mathew Edwards about 1785. It stood on the northeast corner of Edwards Street and Gillette Avenue. In 1838 it was moved by James M. Edwards, to its present location on Edwards Street.



## CHAPTER IX.

### A Sea Tragedy.



CAPT. CALEB M. EDWARDS sailed the three-masted schooner, R. A. Edwards, carrying cargoes along the eastern seaboard. In February, 1872, he set sail from Hartford for a southern port. Capt. Charles Floyd Terry of Sayville was at the dock with his schooner and remembers talking with Capt. Edwards and his crew before they sailed. The following facts were printed by a newspaper a few weeks later.

"Capt. Edwards wrote to his friends at Sayville on Friday, 16th and next day, Saturday, sailed from Hatteras Inlet with a fair southerly wind. Near night the wind changed to the north suddenly and increased to a gale. After reefing close they passed the night very comfortably. On Sunday the wind still blowing heavy they tacked leeward. Sunday night the gale increased in fury and they lay to on the off shore tack and up to about midnight they were manageable. The short irregular heavy sea there informed them of their approach to the Gulf Stream. Later finding the vessel would not lay to safely and after consulting they decided it an imperative duty to scud and cross the Gulf Stream to the comparatively smooth water beyond and succeeded well in squaring her off and for three hours made good weather and felt they were nearly out of harm when a heavy sea rolled up to and broke upon the vessel's stern, breaking rudder, smashing the cabin completely, washing decks, etc. After a vain effort to patch up the hole in the deck they were again compelled to lay the vessel to, but having taken in so much water she continued to ship more, which settled to leeward, and she careened over on her beam ends and the crew took to the rigging, the heavy sea soon broke out the masts and spars, and the crew were entirely swept away except John





S. Edwards, second mate of the schooner and brother of the captain. He hung to the chain plate of the main rigging. The mate, J. M. Eagan, of Brooklyn was washed upon the deck but perished soon. The gale continued until Tuesday night and on Wednesday morning, John tore off the tops of his hip boots and securing them to a board made a signal of distress. Early in the afternoon a schooner passed by, so near that he could see their faces and the men watching the wreck and him, but passed by rendering no assistance. About five o'clock on Wednesday 21st, the brig Ella, Capt. Jones, took him from the wreck and administered to his wants in a very kindly manner, arriving at Baltimore on Friday, March 1st. John arrived at Sayville, Saturday, March 2nd, badly but not seriously bruised and swollen past recognition. The brig, Experience, during the same gale had very heavy weather, split sails, stove bulwarks and leaking, required four men at the pump until they made smooth water. The four schooners which sailed in company with the R. A. Edwards on that eventful Saturday (viz. the Dick Williams, Adelaide Fundell, Mary L. Vaucurk and James A. Haid, three for Philadelphia and one for New York) have not been reported as having arrived or been spoken since the gale."

Funeral services of Capt. C. M. Edwards and Humphrey, son of Warren Hawkins, Sayville, were preached in the Congregational Church on Sunday, March 10.

Lost at sea, Capt. C. M. Edwards, Feb. 18, aged 29 years.

Humphrey Hawkins, age 21.

John M. Eagan of Brooklyn, age 40 years.

Two hands before the mast.

John Edwards said that the schooner was loaded with lumber, lashed down. When the sea broke upon the deck the cargo loosened and became unmanageable. Boards were blown into the air and whirled about by the severe wind.





**SAYVILLE'S LEADING CITIZENS AND RETIRED SEA CAPTAINS TWO GENERATIONS AGO**

(From a photograph made at Capt. W. J. Terry's birthday party in 1889 by the late John Z. O'Brien)

Left to right, upper row: Jerome Downs, Capt. Wilson J. Terry, Capt. Charles T. Strong. Lower row: Capt. Noah Smith, Deacon James Morris Edwards, Capt. Jacob Smith.





## CHAPTER X

### Aunt Rachel Reminisces.

(Scraps of miscellany told by a well-known member of the Edwards family)



DAN'L ALDRICH and Uncle Charles Woodhull were Sayville's carpenters. Mr. Aldrich split logs and planed them level for building. A sawmill was located on the stream in East Patchogue. The nails, latches and hinges were made by the blacksmith.

The flour and grist mill was on the stream in West Patchogue, where grain was taken in wagons to be ground.

To get a new pair of shoes it was necessary to go to the shoemaker, Smith Hammond, in Patchogue. He would trace around the foot to get the size for shoes or boots. He soaked the raw hides in the brook before tanning the skin.

On the farm the women skimmed ten or fifteen pans of milk each day, then put the cream down the well to cool. The churning was done twice a week. They spun and wove their own cloth for their homemade garments.

"Squaw's Ears" a popular dish of the day, was an Indian concoction made of chopped clams, thickened with flour, and fried in the grease of sliced pork.

Our grandfather had a piece of woodland extending from John Newton's house to Church Street. He bought this woodland for ten shillings an acre from Alfred Brown, the Misses Foster's grandfather. The Greens, Uncle Reuben Edwards and grandfather's sons cut wood and carted it to the bay during the winter. From March to November boats carried this fuel to New York and on returning brought home household articles such as mahogany tables, highboys and merchandise for the store. James Edwards' sloop, Time Piece, made fourteen trips one season.



Father left our flock of sheep down in the bay lot one bright, starry night in December. A big snowstorm came up and the sheep were covered. In the morning he found holes in the snow made by their breath. Only a few survived. This lot extended from the foot of Edwards Avenue to the old hedge rows on the east and north.

In the winter Grandfather Green and Father would kill a cow, cut it in quarters and each take part. We killed five or six hogs each year in December and January. Later John Bell, the butcher, come from Patchogue twice a week. He drove around in a wagon and rang a bell to announce his approach.

The mail was brought on horseback from New York to Sayville in three days and two nights. The path led through marshy lowlands, thick woods and over sandy hills. High tides and fallen trees often hindered the rider as he traveled from tavern to tavern. He usually carried a gun strapped to his back. Jerome Downs was one of these dependable carriers over this route.

If some one were ill it was necessary to walk or drive to Patchogue for the doctor. Often he would put his horse in the barn and remain all night.

Before mother married she frequently walked to St. John's church services in Oakdale. At that time there was no bridge over the brook between Sayville and West Sayville. Large tree trunks and stones afforded the only means of crossing. Once in a while the water was so high it was necessary for her to take off her shoes and stockings and wade to the other side before she could continue—a highly unladylike procedure for those days!

When the ship, Tamarack, came on the beach, father went over to help the wrecking master, Reuben Edwards. As Mother was afraid to be alone with her baby son David, Indian Jake, a boy who worked for father, slept on the floor by the door. This Indian helped on the farm for several years. Father gave him a suit of clothes and some money when he left to join his people.

In summer my sisters, Charity, Sophie and I, liked to go to the bay for a bath. Often on Saturday afternoon, father would drive us to the shore in a cart. Sometimes we hung our calico dresses and sunbonnets on beach plum bushes and used old dresses for bathing suits. Other times father drove into the bay and pulled the chain which tipped back the cart so that we were plunged into the water. This was great fun. While we were bathing father loaded the cart with sea weed. After a while he would say "Come now,





girls." Then we climbed into the cart and rode home on the sea weed.

The Sunday School picnic was a merry time for us children. Young folks and old went to the beach in a sloop. When we came to the flats we rowed ashore or slid over the side of the boat and waded. Mrs. Gerard always took a big kettle of green string beans and corn. Baked beans and pie were aplenty. Clams were baked on the beach. When it was time to go home there were only empty dishes to be carried across the beach to the boat. We always enjoyed the sail home.

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## CHAPTER XI

### True Stories.



JAMES M. EDWARDS heard many tales told by his grandfather, John Edwards. His older brothers, Jeremiah and Reuben, took pleasure in annoying this old man, thus causing incidents which have been told and retold. James often related interesting tales to his grandsons, Charles and William, as they hoed corn in the field or sat by the fireplace in the living room.

#### Near Fort Ticonderoga.

John Edwards took part in the French and Indian War at Crown Point and Ticonderoga. He was often required to go down to Albany with other soldiers for meat, flour, and other provisions for the army at Fort Ticonderoga. These supplies were put in barrels on sleds drawn by horses. The men would get behind these barrels to protect themselves when Indians made an attack. At such times the drivers in the sleds nearest the place where the Indians appeared to be would urge on their horses and load their guns while those behind would hesitate as to what they should do. If the men in one of the sleds were killed, the Indians would sneak up when the other drivers were gone, take the horses, sled, and provisions. If the horses were killed then it was likely the men would be killed and the provisions taken.

At one time John Edwards was a driver and covered the sides of his sleigh and horses with branches of trees. His trip was so successful that, at the close of the war, he was given the team of black horses and his gun. On the way home, one horse died, so he arrived with only "Black Buck."

Alfred C. Edwards, his great-great grandson is the proud possessor of the gun.





### The Indian in the Pig's Skin.

Each night a picket on duty near the woods by the fort was found dead. Fear gripped the post. Volunteers were called. One evening John Edwards stood on duty, his gun loaded, determined to shoot anything suspicious. As darkness came he heard a crackling in the bushes and saw a pig nosing about for acorns. When the animal grunted and slowly came nearer John did not hesitate to shoot. The pig sprang up, uttered a loud whoop and fell dead.

### A Spy.

One day as John Edward's wife, Sarah, was spreading clothes on the grass, a woman came hurrying to her. She said that she was a spy and that soldiers were searching for her. When they appeared in the distance, Sarah in fear and trembling told her to lie down quickly, covered her with a sheet and was calmly sprinkling the clothes as the men arrived. They searched the house and barn and then left, while Sarah continued to work over her laundry.

### Aunt Polly's Gold Coins.

On a clear calm morning a small boat came through the inlet and crossed the bay to our shore. This news traveled quickly and it was not long before the cry, "The British! The British!" reached Aunt Polly at the Green Inn. She thought immediately of her gold coins. Where could she hide them? Under each bedpost on the floor she placed a precious piece of gold.

The soldiers came to the inn and demanded food and drink. They roamed about, searching the cellar, attic, and barn. When at last they departed Aunt Polly hurried upstairs. Alas! The coins were gone.

This story was told by Isaac Henry Green to his children, Ralph and Lila, descendants of Willett Green. The inn stood on the main road just east of Rollestone Avenue.

### The Capture of a Boy.

During the war of 1812, the British came through Sayville. They seized a four-year-old boy and rode to Aunt Molly Morris' house, opposite St. John's Church, Oakdale. Aunt Molly was sweeping her house when she heard the horses hoofs. "The Britishers are coming," she exclaimed as she hurried to the door. When Aunt Molly saw the little boy, she cried, "Where are you going with my Moddy (Morris)?" She shook the broom fiercely as she spoke. After some arguing the soldiers took the boy from the horse. Then Aunt



Molly walked with little Moddy to his home in Sayville. The little boy was James Morris Edwards.

#### **Powder in the Pipe.**

One cold winter evening as Grandfa sat by the fire, he called, "Jerry, my pipe; Reube, a light!" Jerry who was always up to mischief of all sorts, put a little powder with the tobacco and handed the pipe innocently to his grandfather. Reube brought a twisted piece of paper to light the tobacco. The boys kept their eyes and ears open, as the old man puffed away at his pipe. He occasionally took it from his mouth as he talked to them. Suddenly, there was a bang! The pipe flew up into the air, and the old man's head flew back. The boys scrambled to their feet with Grandfa after them. Out into the snow the boys ran in their stocking feet. "I'll cane ye! I'll cane ye!" cried Grandfa as he closed the door. The boys' feet become very cold.

"Grandfa, Grandfa, we want to come in!" they called.

"I'll cane ye when I catch ye, I'll cane ye!" shouted the old man.

However, their mother had heard the noise and came to the window. She motioned to the boys to climb in and they hurriedly crept up into the open chamber to bed. Powder was never again put into a pipe.

#### **Buck on the Bars.**

Grandfa had two fine oxen, Buck and Bright. They were often turned into a rail-fenced yard at the barn. When Buck felt unusually fine, he would break through the fence or get caught on the bars. To tease their grandfather Jerry and Reuben would say, "Grandfa, Grandfa, Buck's on the bars!"

When the old man with his cane had laborously reached the barn and found the oxen quietly chewing their cuds, he would threaten the boys with a caning.

One day, when Buck felt unusually fine, the boys urged him to jump the bars and finally got him upon them. Then they ran to Grandfa saying, "Buck's on the bars, Grandfa."

Of course their grandfather did not believe them, and would not come out. Consequently the boys were obliged to get Buck off the bars themselves, and never again did they say, "Buck's on the bars."

John Edwards was the Grandfa referred to in these stories.





## CHAPTER XII

### Fire Island.



**B**ENJAMIN F. THOMPSON records in *The History of Long Island* that John Arthur, an old man, had been told, when a boy, that Fire Island Inlet broke through after the purchase made by Mr. Nicoll, in 1683, and was at that time called the New Gut. Col. Floyd stated that about 1754 there were seven inlets east of Fire Island, each of which was from a quarter to a half mile wide. Dr. Udall, an aged and intelligent physician, (whose death at the age of ninety years, occurred Oct. 6, 1841), said when he was a boy and first knew Fire Island, it was only a sand bar, and that he never knew it called by that name before 1781. The Indians, he said, called it Seal Island. It was also named the Great Gut, Nicoll's Gut, and sometimes Nine Mile Gut, because when the sea first broke through the inlet was nine miles wide. This event happened in the winter of 1690, '91, during a violent storm; and at the same time a great number of whale boats, kept upon the south beach, were destroyed. As late as 1773 the Fire Island, (or as some say the Five Islands, that being the original number first formed), were a mere sandspit, producing only a few patches of coarse grass. Seal Islands were so called from the number of seals that used to bask upon them. Oldmixon and other historians agree that seals were once very abundant on the south shores of Long Island.

It is said that Fire Island Inlet was so near the lighthouse about seventy years ago that a stone could be thrown from the building into the water. The beach has been built up gradually in a westerly direction so that the inlet is now four and one-half miles from its former location.



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