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"Meels" in Motion — The Summer of 1897

Installment Four of Miss Mayme Tanner's Primary Class The Mattituck Public School · September 1897 – June 1898

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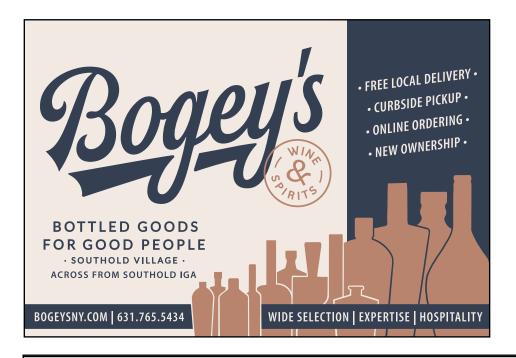
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In our cover –

The Bicycle Show at Madison Square Garden in 1896. See story on page 3.

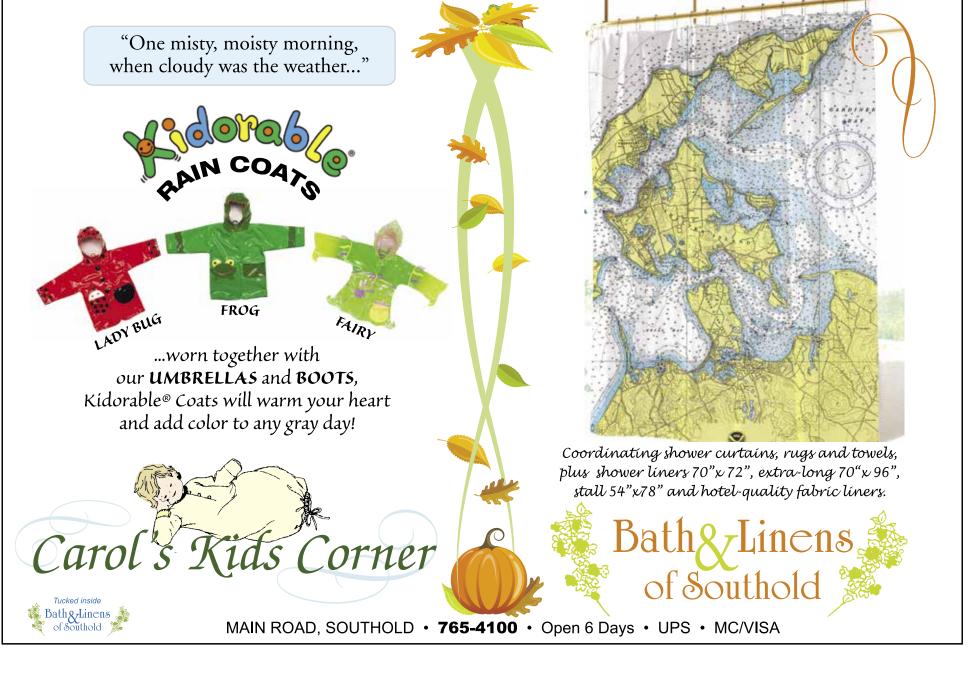
OCTOBER ISSUE CORRECTIONS:



The boy in the classroom photo on our cover was described as Frank P. Greeves, but Frank's middle name is Robert.



The cousin listed with Mary and Frank Greeves on page 9 is Mary Stewart and not Helen Ellwood. (correction thanks to Jim Ellwood)





Wheels" in Motion — The Summer of 1897

Installment Four of Miss Mayme Tanner's Primary Class
The Mattituck Public School · September 1897 – June 1898

by Jerry Matovcik, Reference Librarian, Mattituck-Laurel Library, and Joe O'Brien, Researcher

(Note to our readers: On the website of Mattituck-Laurel Library under the "Research" link is the selection "Local History and Genealogy" which contains a collection of oral histories entitled Back Over the Years. You might be interested in reading some of these oral histories from which we have drawn information for this article.)

The Elopement. c. 1897

Some observers met the bicycle craze at the turn of the century with a discerning sense of humor as seen in this illustration of a couple eloping on a tricycle while the upset father trails on his bike.

By the summer of 1897, bicycle wheels in Mattituck and Laurel had been set in motion. The Long Island Traveler reported extensive sales in bicycles at the Mattituck businesses of the wheelwright, E.V. Knipe; the harness maker, Bert Reeve; and the blacksmith, Conrad Grabie, who had a new shop built exclusively for the latest "wheels" (at the time, a popular tag for bicycles). Road Commissioner Cox had installed a new bicycle path and side paths up Mattituck Hill en route to Riverhead, and the citizens of both hamlets petitioned for additional paths.

A year and a half earlier, in January 1896, Joseph Hudson of the Hudson Canning Co. of Mattituck had spent nearly an entire week at the Bicycle Show in Madison Square Garden. (See cover photo.) Conrad Grabie had also attended the exhibition, as well as Ernest D. Terry who had a display booth where his new invention of "The Pathlight" bicycle lamp was advertised. Like many towns in the New York and Long Island area, the hamlets of Mattituck-Laurel had found their "wheels."

At the end of the summer of 1897, Mattituck-Laurel celebrated its fascination with bicycles on Friday evening, August 13th, on the "brilliantly illuminated"

athletic grounds east of the school (the present location of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church and the church parking lot), with an open air concert and bicycle carnival. Delegations of riders from Riverhead, Aquebogue, Jamesport, Franklinville, Oregon, Cutchogue, New Suffolk, Peconic, Southold and Greenport had been invited. Cake and ice cream were served to the weary, heated riders on their arrival, then a splendid musical program under the direction of Professor George B. Reeve was offered. Following the concert was a bicycle parade after which awards were given for the finest decorated ladies' and gentlemen's bicycles. Mrs. Leon Hall won first prize for Best Decorated Ladies' Wheels; Arthur Grabie won second prize for Best Decorated Gentlemen's Wheels.

Our readers can imagine all the familiar names that would have been in attendance at the bicycle carnival on the athletic grounds that evening. Many of the children that would attend Miss Mayme Tanner's primary class that September would have been there with their families, families such as the Conklins, Cravens, Grabies, and Greeveses, which we have described in our previous installments, and families such as the Howells, Hudsons, Hulses, Husings, and Jacksons that we now sketch in this article.





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The historic 1776 House was, in 1905, the home of Joel C. Howell, the father of Joel Ernest Howell. The house is still located on the south side of Main Road just west of the Roy H. Reeve Insurance Agency.

The Howell Siblings

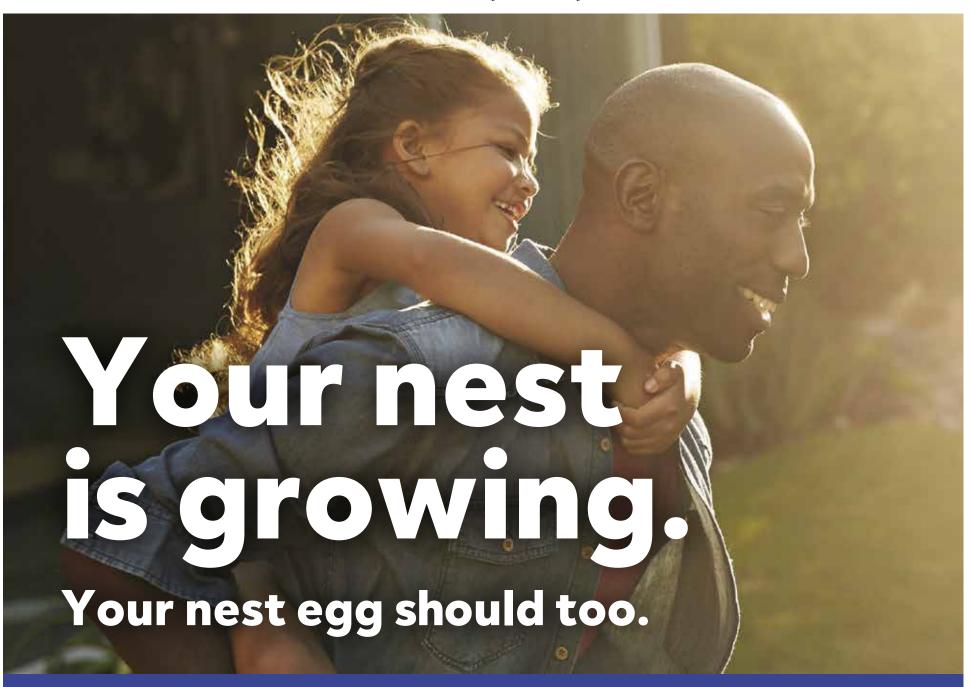
Ernestine and William Howell were the two eldest children of Joel Ernest Howell and Sidney Rebekah Burgess. Their father grew up in the historic 1776 House located on the south side of Main Road, near the village center in Mattituck (presently 13250 Main Road). The house is also known as the Wells-Lyon House, but might be more appropriately named the Wells – Howell – Lyons House after more than a hundred years of continuous occupancy by people named Howell. The house was built by the 5th William Wells (1743-1825), grandfather of Joseph Wells, of Laurel, before his voluntary exile in Connecticut during the British occupation of Long Island (*The History of Mattituck*, p. 85.) Joel Ernest Howell was a grocery salesman when the children were born but he eventually gravitated to insurance and real estate sales.

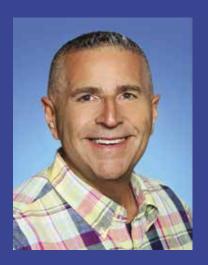
On the right: This is a three-generation photograph taken at the front door of the 1776 House, still standing on the south side of Main Road. Ernestine is on bottom left, her sister Marguerite on bottom right. The gentleman in the bottom row is William Hagen, Ernestine's husband from Oslo. The middle row are Joel C. Howell and his wife Phoebe. The top row (left to right): Nellie (née Howell) Hallock of Petaluma, California; Joel Ernest Howell and his wife Sydney.





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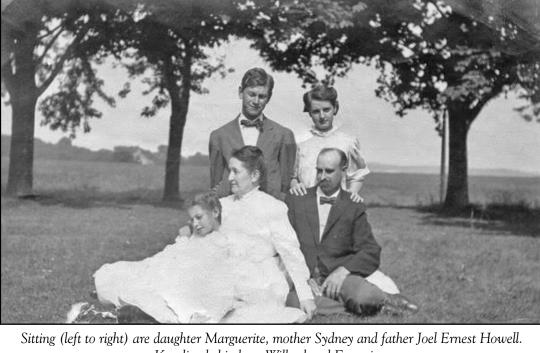
Chris Manfredi 631-765-4666 Southold cmanfredi@allstate.com



Ernestine Howell (Age 7)

Phoebe Ernestine Howell was born August 4, 1890 at Mattituck. She completed two years of college. She married William Lille Hagen in July 1916 at her home in Southold village. Husband William was born Wilhelm Lillehagen, December 16, 1883 at Sandvika, Barum, Norway, a section of Greater Oslo. William arrived in New York in 1906, followed by his mother Marie and sister Kari in 1909. His father appears to have remained in Norway.

William was an Industrial Arts and Arts & Crafts instructor. He taught at private businesses and later at schools in Hartford, Connecticut, and from 1930 to 1950 at Springfield, Massachusetts. He was later active in leather and craftsman work in Southold. For her part, Ernestine owned and operated Hagen's Handicrafts, a store front "retail supplier" in 1940 at Springfield. It's not clear when this business started and how long it lasted. William and Ernestine retired to Cutchogue about 1950. Ernestine died July 14, 1963 at North Road Nursing in Greenport and is buried with her husband and parents at Willow Hill Cemetery, Southold. Ernestine and William had two children: Jean Ernesta who married Kenneth Tiedke and Barbara who married Roy. J. Britten.



Kneeling behind are Willard and Ernestine.



Willard Henry Howell (Age 9)

Willard, who was born August 20, 1888 at Mattituck, attended Mattituck Public School and completed one year of high school. He married Margaret Mansir, daughter of Peter James Mansir and Fannie E. Bennet, October 21, 1914, at East Hampton. Unfortunately, Margaret died in 1918 possibly from the flu, leaving three-year old daughter Dorothy.

Willard married a second time to Louise Fitz, the daughter of Henry Giles Fitz and Mary L. Richmond of Peconic. Louise's paternal grandfather, Henry (Jr.) Fitz (1808-1863), was America's first great telescope maker. Among the many telescopes Fitz produced for observatories around the country, the largest was the 13 inch refractor telescope for the Allegheny Observatory in Pittsburgh. Louise's father had ground the lenses for the Vassar College and Harvard University Telescopes. He was a charter member of Custer Institute in Southold and served as the president of that organization during its second year.

Willard was a grocery store manager in 1920 and a coal hardware store manager in 1930. He ran his own retail General Store by 1940. Louise died November 28, 1968 and Willard died in January 1971 (possibly 1972).













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Above is a photo of the Physical Science Exhibit that opened in 1959 in the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institute. The exhibit was a recreation of the workshop of Henry Fitz, this country's first commercial telescope maker. The exhibit represented the New York City shop of a 19th-century instrument maker. In it may be seen the crude foot-powered lens grinder and polisher, the simple testing apparatus, and a number of telescopes under construction. An animated figure in the background, working patiently at polishing a lens, helped to illustrate the methods by which Yankee ingenuity had contributed to science as well as to the invention of gadgets. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

To Dedicate Workshop of Henry Fitz Aug. 6

Mr. and Mrs. Willard H. Howell received a formal invitation to attend "The Workshop of Henry Fitz," a new exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., on Thursday morning, August 6th.

The equipment in this replica of the original workshop was used by Henry Fitz, called "the first commercial telescope maker in the United States" by the Smithsonian in the official invitation to the dedication.

Mr. Fitz had his shop in New York City from 1845 until his death in 1863, after which his widow, Julia Ann Wells Fitz, bought a farm in Peconic, Long Island, near her birthplace, where her son, Henry Giles Fitz, carried on the telescope work until 1880.

— The Suffolk Times, August 6, 1959

NEW!

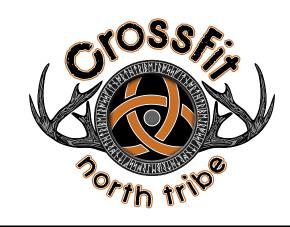


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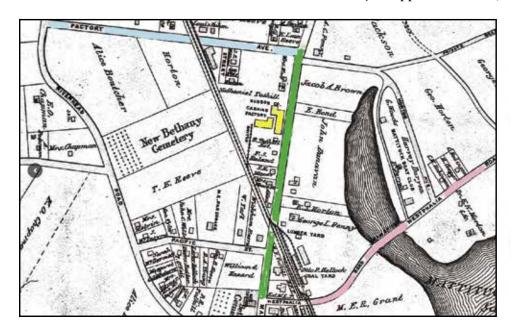


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Dec. 24, 1910

Joseph B. Hudson of Holley, N. Y. is visiting his brother and partner, William M. Hudson of Mattituck. As Hudson & Co., these two wide-awake canners have had a fine season, their total output being 125,000 cans of asparagus, 480,000 cans of tomatoes, 360,000 cans of peas, 192,000 cans of string beans, 100,000 cans of apples, 50,000 cans of strawberries, 25,000 cans of raspberries – a total of 13,320,000 cans, all sold and contracted for. This year they have hired the entire farm of Fred W. Hallock at Laurel for growing tomatoes. Their Long Island brand of this vegetable is said to beat the world for flavor and coloring.

Gildersleeve Scrapbook, Vol. 22, p. 10.

In this 1909 map from the U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918 for Nathaniel Tuthill, one can see the site of the Hudson Canning Factory (highlighted in yellow), located on the south side of Sound Avenue (in green), and just east of Factory Avenue (light blue). Westphalia Road is highlighted in pink.

George Hudson (Age 6)

George Sylvester Hudson was born February 5, 1891 at Glen Cove, NY, the eldest of the Hudson boys, of William Merritt Hudson and Mary Woodbury Gray. George's grandfather, William Henry Hudson, had worked in Maine where he packed beef for the Union Army (Back Over the Years, p. 602). George's father, William, was a principal with Hudson & Co, vegetable canners. William's brother, Joseph B. Hudson, managed a canning factory in Murray, Orleans County, New York, northeast of Buffalo on Lake Ontario. The Hudsons typically built and operated their factories. William Merritt and Joseph B. Hudson opened their first Long Island plant in Long Island City, their next plant in Glen Cove. In May 1888, they opened their Mattituck factory on the south side of Sound Avenue, Mattituck, in the present location of Kolb Mechanical Corporation (Gildersleeve Scrapbook, Vol. 1, p.22).

Canning became an important industry for Mattituck, giving employment to a large number of workers, both men and women, and providing a market for local farmers. Two of the chief crops packed were tomatoes and asparagus. When farmers began to concentrate on planting potatoes, the Hudsons were left with only tomatoes to can. As a result, about 1916, they discontinued their Mattituck plant and carried on in a larger plant in Holley, N.Y., where they canned tomatoes, asparagus, corn, cauliflower and apples. In 1920, Joseph B. Hudson retired from business, and with his wife, Alice Fleet, and his daughter, Elberta, returned to Mattituck at Maratooka Park. In his later years, Joseph served several years as director of the Mattituck National Bank & Trust.

George's education was complete after three years of high school. In the early 1910's, George moved to Murray, New York, and worked as bookkeeper at his Uncle Joseph Hudson's canning operation there. During World War I, George served overseas in Ambulance Company 106. After the war, in 1921, he married Madeleine Isabelle MacNish in Cutchogue. Madeleine probably met George through her aunt, Agnes MacNish Acker. Aunt Agnes's sister-in-law, Sarah Acker, was a good friend of the Hudson families, often visiting them in upstate New York. Coincidentally, Mad-

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Candlelight Tour & Tree Lighting: Fri.. Nov. 26

3-6pm at the Maple Lane Complex, 55200 Main Rd, Southold. Enjoy holiday decorations, meet Santa, historic demonstrations, games, tree-lighting, live music! Free.

Dinner for Two by Maroni Southold: Fri., Dec. 3 \$50. Purchase online before Nov. 26 and pick-up dinner for two to go, 3-6:30pm.

Holiday Fair: Sat., Dec. 4

At Peconic Lane Community Center, 9-4pm. Vendors, local artisans, bake sale, kids' fun, holiday auction, visit with Santa! Free.



Southold Historical Museum

For more information: SoutholdHistorical.org or call 631-765-5500.