

The
SEA  **GULL**
PATCHOGUE SHORES

September 1950



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ?

by Dolores Messemer

Great South Bay



BASE ALL DIAMOND

Litt Home



ROSE GARDENS



LAGOON

SARAGE



STABLES

FARM LANDSE



FARM LANDSE



GREEN HOUSES



FARM HOUSE

STORAGE bins

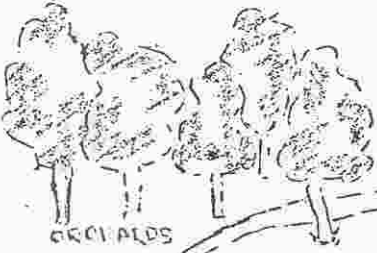
WINDMILL



BARN

COASTALERS CUTAGE

Stream



ORCHARDS

BRIDGE



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED?

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Have you ever wondered what happened here - where you live, where your neighbor lives? Have you ever thought of others living in our Clubhouse, only calling it "home"? Have you ever asked yourself what the old stone wall along the beach was for, or when the bridge by the stream was built?

Almost everyone wonders once in a while about some of these things, and although legends about a few have been passed on through the years, it is doubtful if many know the whole story.

The tale of Patchogue Shores as a community begins in 1936, but the history of the land, and it's a colorful history, filled with exciting and interesting events, can be traced back as far as 1664 when it was still Indian territory.

The Unkechang Indians were the first to settle here and Chief Tobaccus Sachem owned and controlled all the south side of the town from the Brookhaven-Islip town line, from Namkes Creek between Bayport and Blue Point to the Southampton line at Eastport. A grant of this land on which Patchogue Shores is now located was given by Chief Sachem to a governor of His Majesty's colony of Connecticut, John Winthrop Esq., in 1664.

A patent from the king, confirming the Indian deed and releasing the king's title to the land except for rule and authority, was given to the late governor's heirs and the eastern part of this land remained in the Winthrop families until 1749.

In 1749 the Winthrops sold the part of the land that was then known as Francis' neck to Thomas Gron, and although for about twenty years there is a break in title due to a lack of recorded deeds, for the century between 1749 and 1843 the land passed through a succession of many owners.

In 1843 Jeremiah Thorn Bell owned the land and built the first house on the property, a lovely fourteen-room colonial farmhouse where he lived until his death in 1861. Mr. Bell, brother of the Captain Thomas Bell who named and settled the neighboring town of Bellport, built his home on Princeton Place where it stood for almost a century before it had to be torn down. Part of the original foundation still remains and is being used as a cellar beneath the Gill home.

In 1903 Pauline Secor bought the property from the Bartholemews who owned it at that time and for three years operated the Hotel Secor in the old farmhouse.

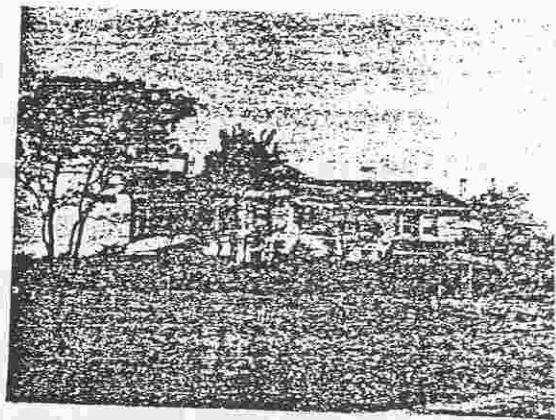
In 1906 Mrs. Ruth Litt, widow of Jacob Litt, bought the property which contained 125 acres and for two years she and her sons, Jack and Willard, lived in Mr. Bell's old homestead while a mansion overlooking the bay was being built.

There were two entrances to the property then, one near Oak Park Nursery which was later closed when the property was sold, and the other several yards from the present entrance where a keen observer can still see today the old path and the hedges that bordered it.

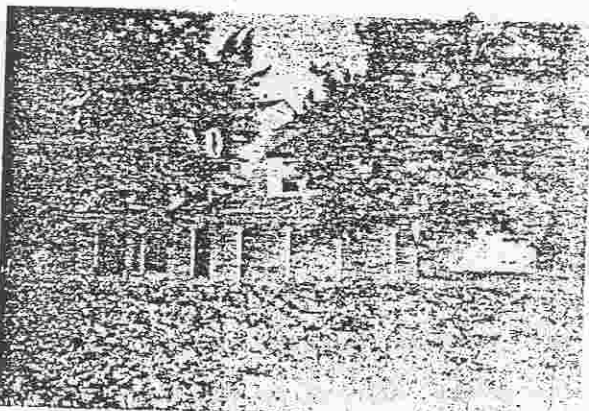
Across the road stood the Hoffmann Farm with its old New England farmhouse, while a bit further on an active little brook where trout and perch could be caught, fed into the bay. Later on the Demarre family, who still live there, dammed it and made it a stream. Patchogue itself was still a small town then and outside of a few stores and an occasional private home the land was mostly a wooded area filled with game. Squirrels, pheasant, quail, fox, rabbits, muskrats, and even a deer once in a while roamed through the countryside. One of the favorite pastimes of the neighborhood boys was trapping the muskrats and selling their fur.



Above left - The Litt
home in 1911, with Jack
and Willard on the lawn.



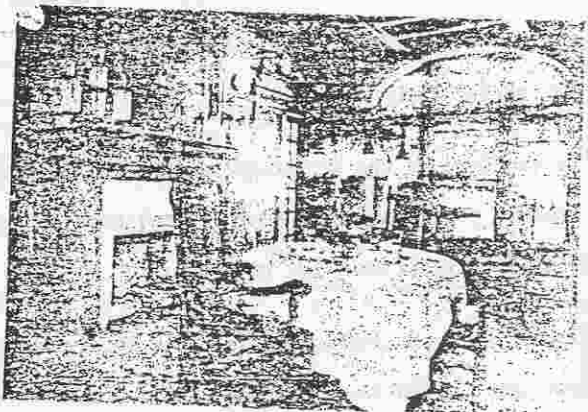
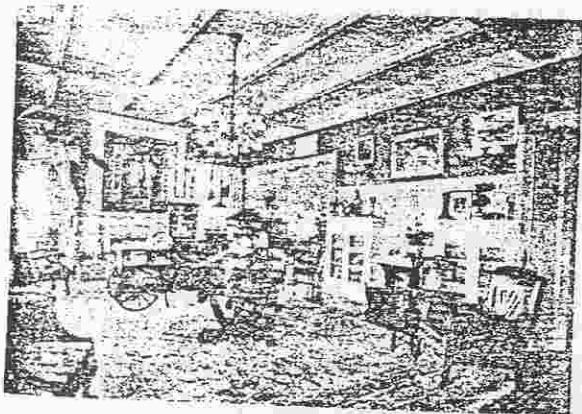
Above right - A full
view of the house.



Center - The old farm
house on Princeton Place.

Below left - the
spacious living room
where today's dances
are held.

Below right - The
dining room presently
used as a bar.



The land near the entrance on Louis Fuoco's property was formerly the home of the noted George King who now operates the George King Hospital in Bay Shore. When the land was sold, Dr. King's house was moved and it is standing today on the Old Country Road in East Patchogue.

Mrs. Litt named the property Jackwill Farm for her two sons, Jack and Willard, and for many years it was one of the outstanding show-places on Long Island.

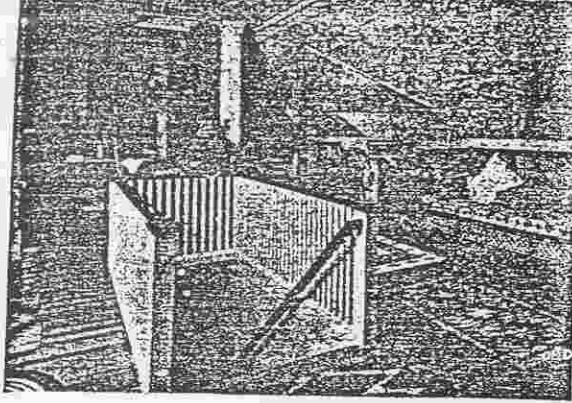
The land along Ocean Avenue beginning with the Daly and Langdon homes was the main part of a field on which the fruits and vegetables of the farm were grown. A small orchard stood further up the road while across from the farm house, where the Kurz family lives, were the greenhouses to furnish cut flowers for the house and plants for the flowerbeds. A caretaker's cottage stood near the barn on that part of Litt Street where the Greenans live. Next to the barn was a windmill which pumped the necessary 50,000 gallons of water for the estate.

A staff headed by William Miskosky was responsible for the magnificent landscaping of the spacious grounds including the many beautiful flowerbeds along the road.

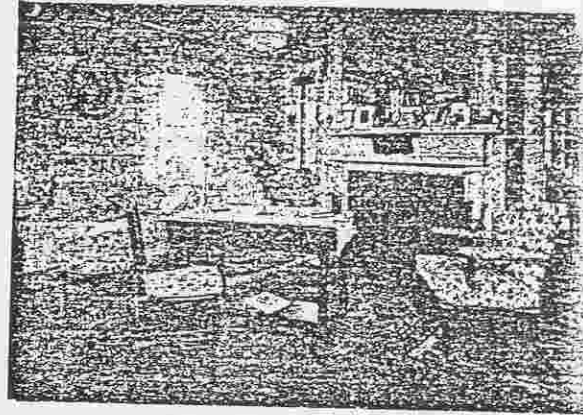
Ocean Avenue was then called Oyster Shell Road and the stately Linden trees which bordered it, contrary to popular belief, were only imported from as far as Oak Park Nursery.

To the West of the Clubhouse, in the area now used as a picnic grove, once stood a proud and resplendent formal rose garden that some of the earlier residents still remember with awe.

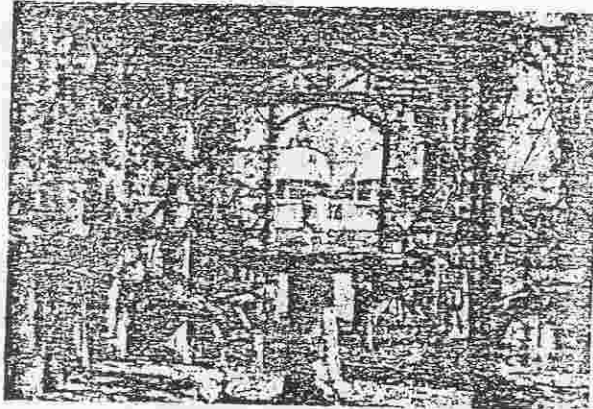
A pool with shimmering goldfish and dainty water lillies sparkled in the sunlight on the lawn in front of the Clubhouse while over towards the channel was a tennis court bordered by a pergola. The channel was dredged for the



above left - The stair-
way to the study - where
the Swan Yacht Club holds
its meetings.



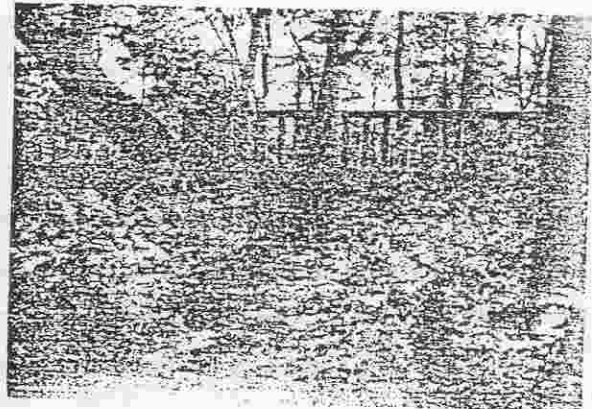
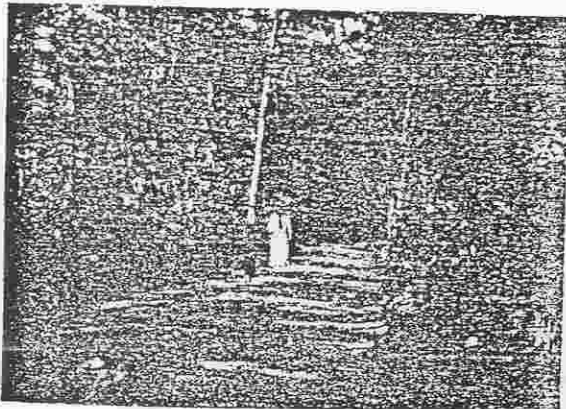
above right - Mrs. Litt's
site on the second floor,
with a scene of Women's
Club activities.



Center - The formal rose
gardens that stood where
the picnic grove is now.

Below left - The long,
shady drive that led to
the bay.

Below right - The brook
in the woods.



yacht, "Ruwijsa", a combination of Ruth, Willard and Jack, to be moored. A cement wall was erected along the waterfront to preserve the beach, but one bitter winter the ice ripped away at the Shore and tore the wall down, piling ice twenty-five feet high along the beach.

Inside, the home was exquisitely furnished. The entrance and stairway were made of marble, imported from Mexico, and a bubbling fountain greeted you as you entered the doorway. The bedrooms on the second floor each had a fireplace and the main dining room contained furnishings brought over from a castle in Italy. The family crest can still be seen over the window facing the bay. There was a large stone oven in the cellar that handled all the baking for the farm.

A garage, which is still standing on the Wakefield property, housed the Pierce Arrow, a Rolls Royce, and a French Mercedes which Pete Peterson, the Swedish chauffeur operated. Beyond the garage was a stable for the horses as riding was a favorite sport for the whole family and a game of polo was often in progress on the lawn.

Dogs of all sizes roamed about the grounds and the first job a visitor to Jackwill Farm had was making friends with these thoroughbreds.

Mrs. Litt, who was formerly known as Ruth Carpenter, appeared on the stage for a short time as a contemporary of Anna Held and a large portrait of Miss Held was hung in the Litt home. However, in the years that she lived in Patchogue, Mrs. Litt was better known for her political work. It was during this time that several revisions were made in the tax laws that she felt were particularly unfair. Being especially indignant because women landowners were not represented by vote, she conducted a vigorous campaign for Women's Suffrage and later held several important political offices.

Mrs. Litt was an extremely charitable woman, active in the town's social activities, a member of the Sorosis Society, and a very civic-minded person. A plaque in the hall of Patchogue High School commemorates the event of her donation of an athletic field to the school which was called Litt Park.

One of the many outstanding achievements in Mrs. Litt's life was the maintenance of a summer camp for the neighborhood boys, companions to her young sons. A cinder track for racing was built, part of the bay netted off for swimming, and a baseball diamond was made for the boys. An organized team was formed and christened the Jackwill Farm Baseball Team which received quite a lot of publicity. Members of the original team included Leroy and Charles Smith (Smith Brother's Dairy in Patchogue), Norman King (Norman King & Son on Medford Avenue), David Hiscox (Hiscox Greenhouses in East Patchogue), Humphery Avery (Swan River Nursery in East Patchogue), Ira Still (of Medford), George Kridtittle (of Jamaica) and Jack Litt (of Locust Valley), Willard Litt, Ernest Terry, Richard Smith and Percy Bennett are no longer living.

The boys were treated royally, furnished with new uniforms each year and all the bats, balls, gloves and other equipment they needed. Frank Sillman was hired as a coach and Andy Coakly, a frequent visitor to the Litt home, helped put the boys through their paces. They played according to rules and they learned the meaning of fair play. It was a wonderful opportunity for most of the boys and a training that lasted throughout the years. Many of them became interested in Boy Scouting, Y.M.C.A. work or other youth organizations through Mrs. Litt's lasting example of good will and spirit.

The team took its playing seriously and played actively for seven years. One of those years they ended the season with a record of winning 42 consecutive games. During that time they entered a three-year competition series against Dr. Petit's Pinebluff Team on the North Shore and won a trophy presented by

Julius Erlanger of theatrical fame.

The highlight of the team's career came when they were asked to play an exhibition game at the Polo Grounds in New York against George M. Cohen's Yankees. It was a benefit game for the New York Home for Crippled Children. The big thrill for the boys was the privilege of meeting such famous men as John McGraw, Christy Mathewson, Mell Shepard, Louis Sheridan as well as Terry McGraw of the boxing world.

The Fourth of July was always a big night at the farm when no less than \$2,000.00 worth of fireworks were set off and the sky was ablaze of enchantment for the night.

Christmas was a very special occasion too and many a member of the former Jackwill Farm Baseball Team still remembers his invitation to a magnificent feast one Christmas when their eyes popped at the sight of the laden table with stuffed roast pig in the center.

The Litts did quite a bit of travelling too. In 1915 they visited the Panama Exposition on the Pacific Coast and during the two preceding years while they were touring Europe, Bernard Baruch and his family rented the estate. The Baruchs also found it a lovely place and soon after bought a home of their own in East Patchogue. Mr. Baruch was a great lover of horses and also enjoyed golfing. He was one of the founders of the Bellport Golf Club.

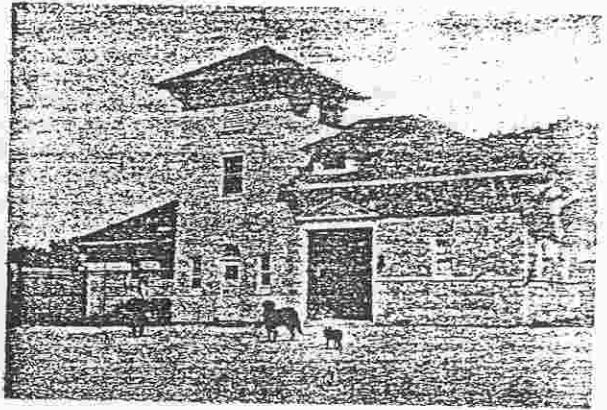
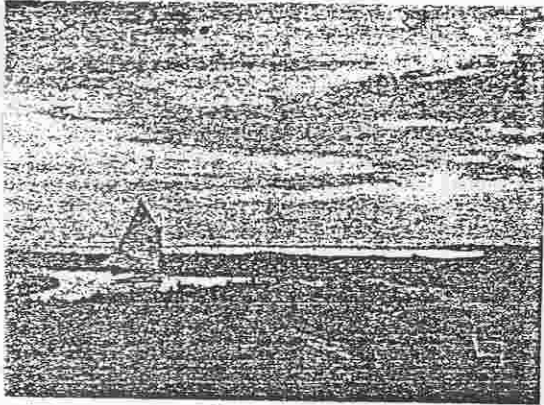
And so the years passed pleasantly for the Litts on Jackwill Farm and soon it was time for the boys to be off to college. Business followed and it was then that the decision to sell the property was made. Daily travelling to the city was a long and uncomfortable trip.

In 1926 The Mosca Realty Company bought the land plus the extra territory now called Roosevelt Boulevard, with the intention of developing a summer community. They surveyed the property and built and named the roads. Litt Street, of course, was named for Mrs. Litt while Jackwill Road was in memory of the farm. William Street was called after William Miskosky, the gardener who now operates a florist shop in East Patchogue.

Life was filled with uncertainties then and so for a while plans for a new development were temporarily postponed. Prohibition was in effect and the deserted estate right on the waterfront was an ideal hideout for bootleggers, so for the next few years the land was the scene of a rum runner's retreat. They entered by way of the beach and converted the beautiful old farmhouse on Princeton Place into a still with a 250 gallon tank. Inquisitive young boys roamed along the shore occasionally had a few pot shots taken at them as a warning not to get any more inquisitive. Deputy Sheriff John Stephani discovered the smugglers and led the raid on the still. The thirty-eight hogshead of liquor in the attic were chopped apart as well as other portions of the house which made it necessary to tear the entire house down as it was almost completely destroyed.

Then in 1936 Mr. Mosca sold the property to William Wingerath, the founder of Patchogue Shores, and on February, 1937, Mrs. Elma Ross purchased property and built the first home on Castle Street. Others quickly followed suit and today, in 1950, the growing community has reached almost 200 families, many of them all year round residents.

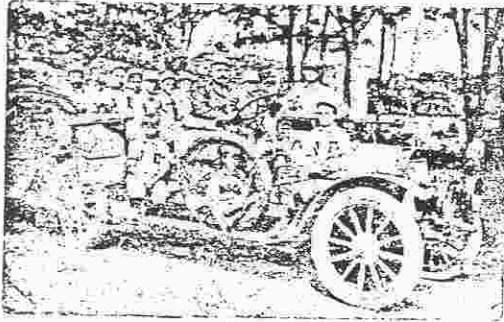
Dances and clambakes and the never-to-be-forgotten shows are only a few of the things that will long linger in the memory of anyone who has ever spent any time in Patchogue Shores, and should Mr. Litt return for a little while he'd find many changes have been made on the property, but somehow we feel that as he looked around and saw the well-kept homes and caught the spirit of happiness and friendliness in the air, he'd agree that the changes were all for the better.



Above left - sailing
into the lagoon at
sunset.

Above right - The
stable located east
of the main road.

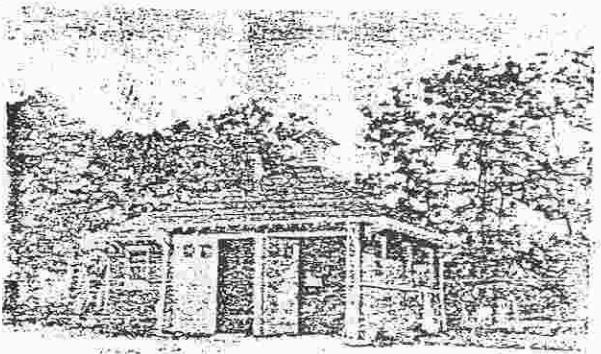
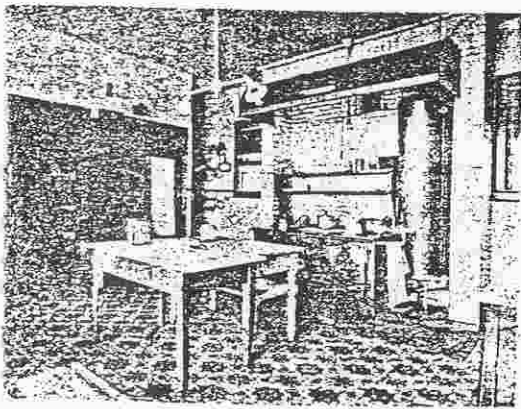
Center - The Jackwill
arm baseball team



and Pets, the
chauffeur.

Below left - The
large kitchen in the
Litt home.

Below right - The
garage which is
still standing.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many heartfelt thanks are expressed to all those who aided in publishing this booklet. We hope that it has been a stimulating source of information to everyone who has ever wondered.....

TO:

Mr. Norman King who provided the inspiration for the story.

Mr. Jack Litt who generously gave permission to use the pictures in the Litt Family Album.

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Mr. William Miskosky, Mr. Osborn Shaw, Mr. Leroy Smith, and Mr. John

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A limited number of additional copies of this booklet are available for 25¢.

If you are interested, please call Patchogue 2794J.