



Thank you for asking me to speak briefly on the History of the Osborn Farmhouse and the Osborn Barn.

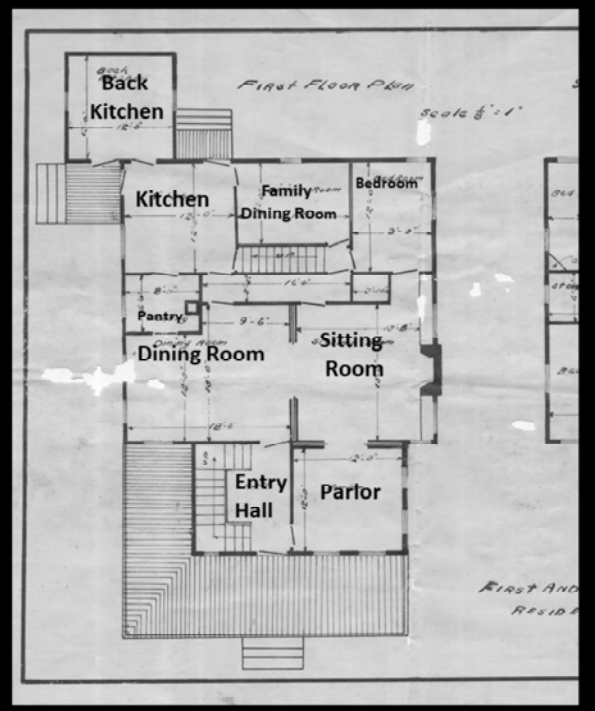
I would first like to thank the Town Board and Ronald Lauder for making the preservation of this property possible.



How did the farmhouse come to be? Louisa Edwards Osborn, who was barely 5 feet tall, is pictured here with three of her daughters. She lived in this saltbox for 29 years, raising 6 children. By the 1900's, she realized it was time for a change. The saltbox, after all, was 275 years old!



It was a bold decision for a 53 year old widow to build a new home in the early 1900's. Her granddaughter Amy Hunter wrote Louisa was aware the New York City folk were discovering the seaside charms of Wainscott. She decided to start a boarding house.



Louisa's son Thomas, a civil engineer, designed the boarding house. The house had two dining rooms, a small one for family, and a large one for the boarders, a sitting room, and a parlor.

The small downstairs bedroom served as a refuge for Louisa from the upstairs borders.



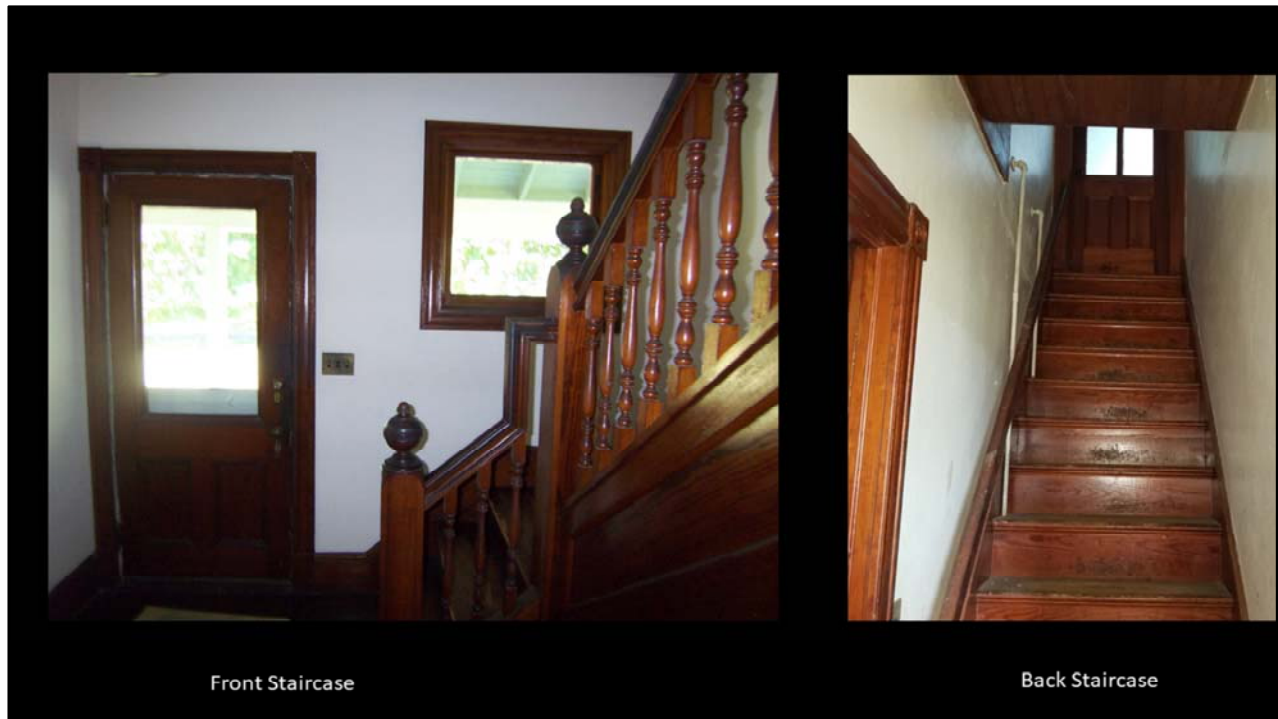
When originally built, the house had two kitchens, a summer kitchen and a winter kitchen. The summer kitchen, with its single story design, would keep the heat, generated from cooking, from rising up into the main home.



Louisa's granddaughter wrote, with the older children gone, Louisa depended on her two youngest daughters, Amy and Mary, pictured here, to help with the boarders. They assisted in preparing meals, waiting on tables, cleaning, sweating over the hand cranked washing machine set up in the side yard, and feeding the laundry thru wooden wringers. They ironed with heavy irons heated on a wood stove, and cleaned and filled the despised kerosene lamps.

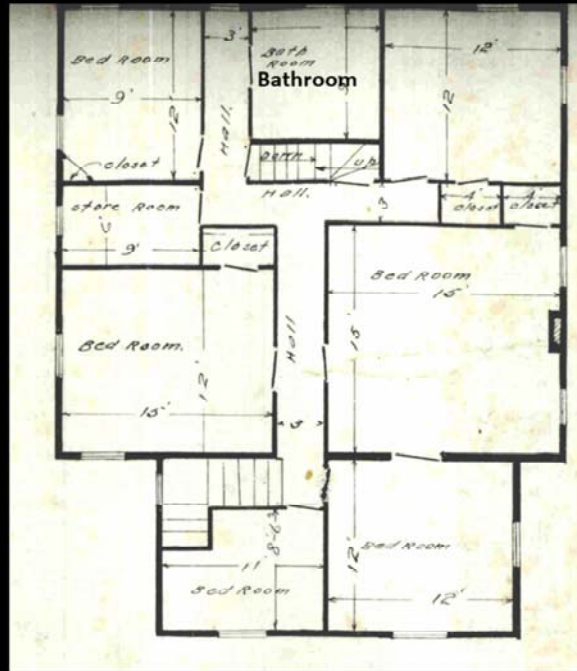


This is a photo of the large dining room in the farmhouse where the boarders were served meals. On the wall were built in pie cupboards.



The large farmhouse had two staircases. The front one used by the Boarders, a smaller back staircase used by the family.

2nd floor plans



The second floor had 6 bedrooms, and the house's only bathroom.

2nd Floor bedroom
c. 1910-1920



This is a photo of an upstairs bedroom. Louisa's granddaughter wrote, the guests had their own choice of rooms, and would sometimes move from room to room as they wished, doubling the work for the family.



*Anne Carroll Moore
(1871-1961)
Pioneering Children's Librarian
@ the New York Public Library*

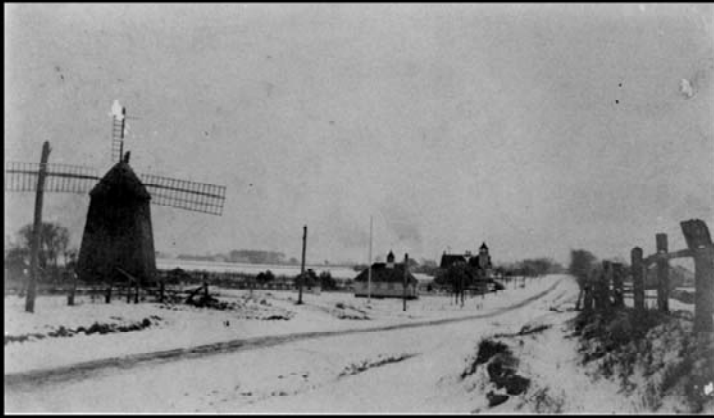


*Amy Osborn Bassford
(1892-1977)
And
Charles Hobby Bassford
(1888-1930)
with children
Ethan and Amy*

Two boarders had a big impact on Louisa's daughters. Anne Moore, a pioneering children's librarian, from the New York Public Library was instrumental in enrolling Amy and Mary Osborn in a professional librarian course. Amy retired as head librarian of the EH Library's Long Island Collection, and Mary became the founder of the Townson, MD library system. Another important boarder, was Attorney Charles Bassford, he become Amy's husband.



The attic is reached behind a door, by climbing a full size staircase. The attic holds this large metal galvanized cistern, it was positioned directly over the second floor bathroom. A small gasoline engine in the basement would be fired up, to pump water to the attic when needed. The water would then flow by gravity to supply the 2nd floor bathroom and the first floor kitchen. Reportedly, the young children of the house when bored, would sneak up in the attic to float boats in the cistern.



Wainscott Library
1918-1925



A little known fact, the farmhouse served as the Wainscott Library, for seven years from 1918 to 1925. Louisa agreed to hold the books, as the Mill's condition was deteriorating. In 1925, the books were moved to new book cases, built for the purpose, in the Wainscott Chapel, where they remain today.



After Louisa's death, the farmhouse was sold to her nephew Raymond Osborn, in 1927. Two weeks later Raymond married Augusta Halsey of Mecox.

Raymond & Augusta would wire the house with electricity and remove the summer kitchen. Heating was provided from a boiler in the basement, that fed radiators throughout the house. Eventually, the first floor back dining room and bedroom were turned into a large office, with a cork floor, from which Raymond and his two sons, Charles and David, ran their potato farming and distribution business. In their older years, they added a

bathroom to the first floor.



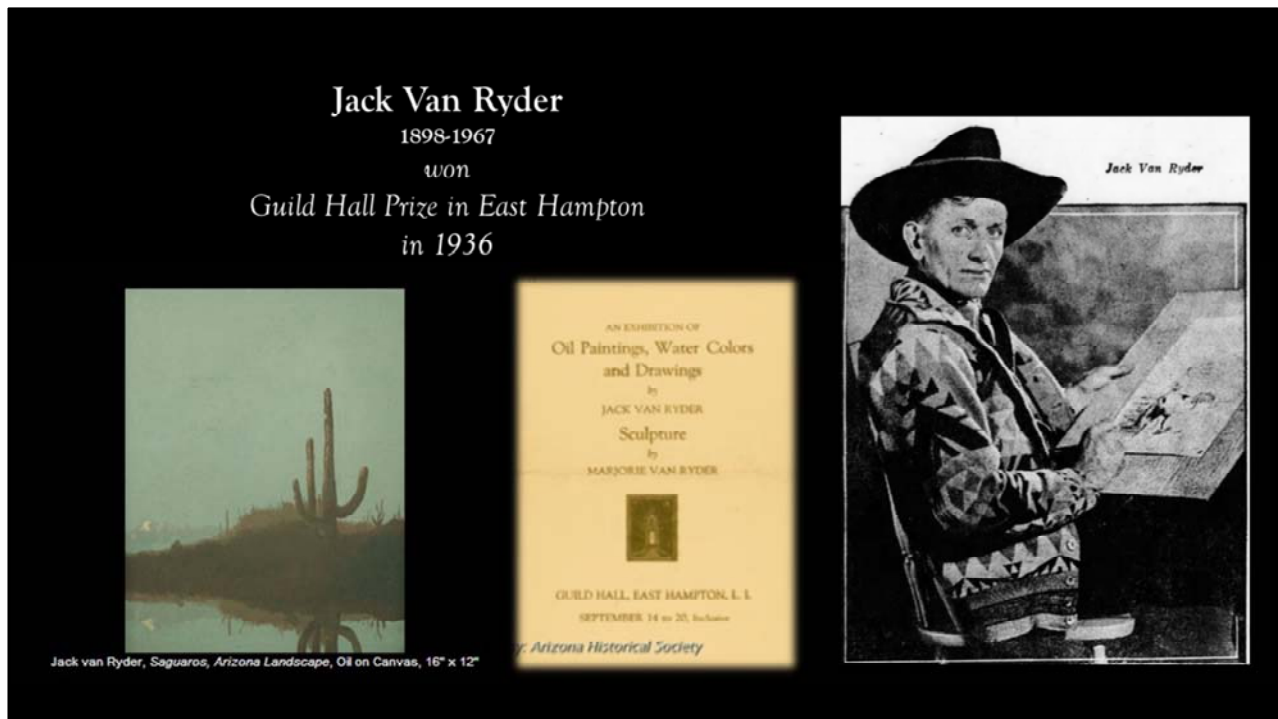
They would live in the farm house, raising three children, *and potatoes*, overlooking Wainscott Pond, for the next 58 years.



The sitting room, seen here for a family portrait in 1947, had large sliding pocket doors , a large single fireplace, built in bookcases and a window seat.



This is a view of the house with potatoes growing on the back field. The large driveway was at one time covered in broken clamshells. As I child on arriving, about 30 farm cats, would come out of hiding to greet you. My grandfather enjoyed caring for apple and pear trees he planted around the house.



My grandparents also took in boarders. One boarder was a western cowboy and artist Jack Van Ryder. In 1936, he won the Guild Hall Prize. There is a museum dedicated to his work in Arizona.

Van Ryder's wife Marjorie Swain, a sculptor, was a regular summer boarder at the Osborn Farmhouse. Mrs. Van Ryder had a whole table full of exotic perfumes and potions, in the families only bathroom. She left a lasting impression on my Aunt Ruth, a young girl at the time, she never forgot waiting and waiting for Mrs. Van Ryder to finish with her make up, and free up the bathroom.



Louisa Edwards Osborn
1904
Main Street, Wainscott



Martha Osborn & Herbert Hedges
1906
Parsonage Lane at Town Line



Ruth Hedges & Oliver Osborn
1912
Main Street, Wainscott

Louisa Osborn started a trend in farmhouse construction. Her daughter Martha, married Herbert Hedges, and they moved from his families colonial saltbox into a new home on Parsonage Lane in 1906, Ruth & Oliver Osborn built a new house across from Louisa on Main Street in 1912.



There is a family story about this hatch on the roof. My grandfather Raymond was a tall thin agile man, rarely sick, he lived till the age of 91. Underneath this hatch, inside the attic, a small wooden platform was constructed, a rope hanging ominously nearby. Reportedly my grandfather would swing on the rope, hook his feet onto the platform, pull himself up, and pop the roof hatch open to look for whales. Raymond was 16 when the last Wainscott whale was caught by his father in 1907, and apparently, he was always hoping for another.



The Wainscott Attic held some treasures, a 1899 washing machine, Richard Barrons helped identify a Dominy Cot bedstead from 1833, and Glen Purcell and Charles Keller came in and identified 3 Dominy beds. A flail for threshing wheat and a flax hackle marked 1834 were also found.



My Uncle David said the grapes on this arbor are one of the oldest plants in Wainscott, coming from the 1675 saltbox that stood right in front of the arbor. This 1901 NY Historical Society photo seems to show a grape arbor behind the saltbox. Jelly has been made from these concord grapes for generations.

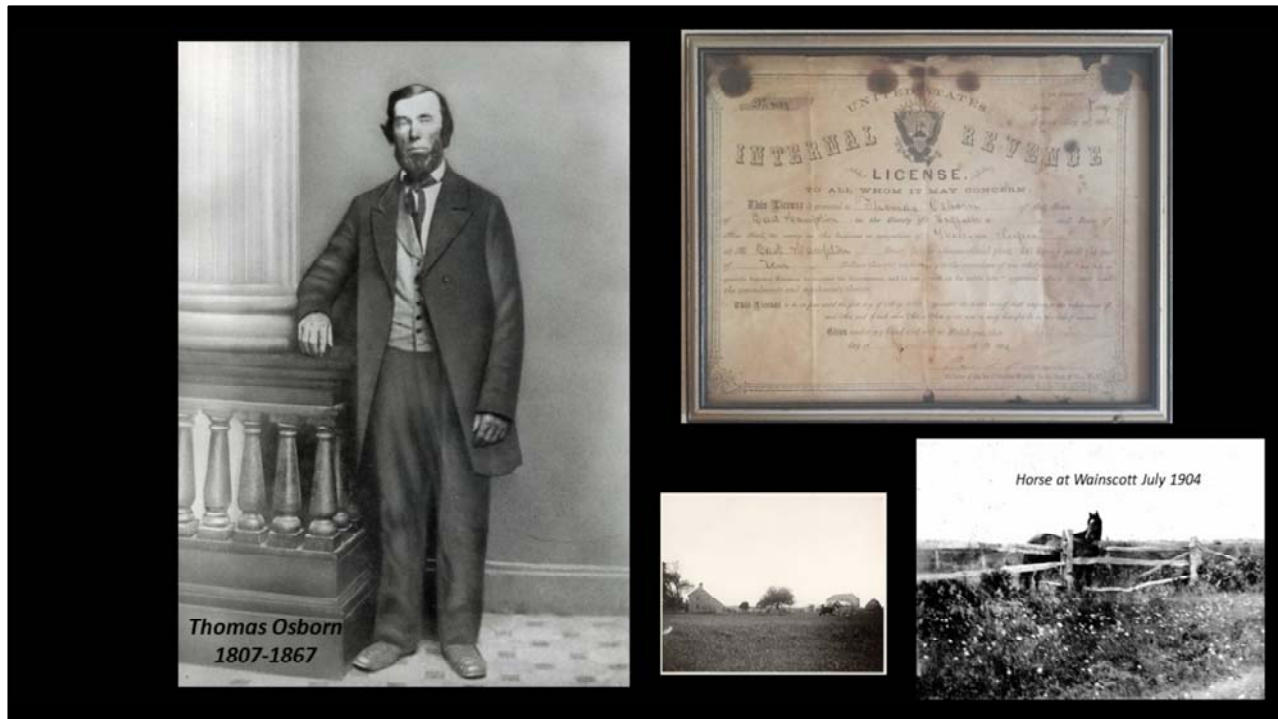
The remains of the well to the old saltbox is under this arbor.



This small house we call the playhouse, My father Charles and his brother David grew potatoes from Bridgehampton to Amagansett. They farmed a field on Further Lane. This building reportedly housed a family of 4, working on a Further Lane estate. It was one room with no electricity or running water. At some point there was a fire in it, and the estate owner wanted the building removed. The building was moved to Wainscott to serve as a playhouse for the growing number of grandchildren that would come to visit. It has hardwood floors, plaster walls, and a built in cabinet on which we stored our children's tea set.



The Osborn barn originally stood to the east of the farmhouse. This is the earliest photo of the barn taken in 1891. We do not know how old the barn is. Amy Osborn Bassford in her remembrances, estimated it was built in 1816. Other guesses are as early as the 1700's. It will be interesting to see, if in the future, a true date can be determined by studying the timbers.

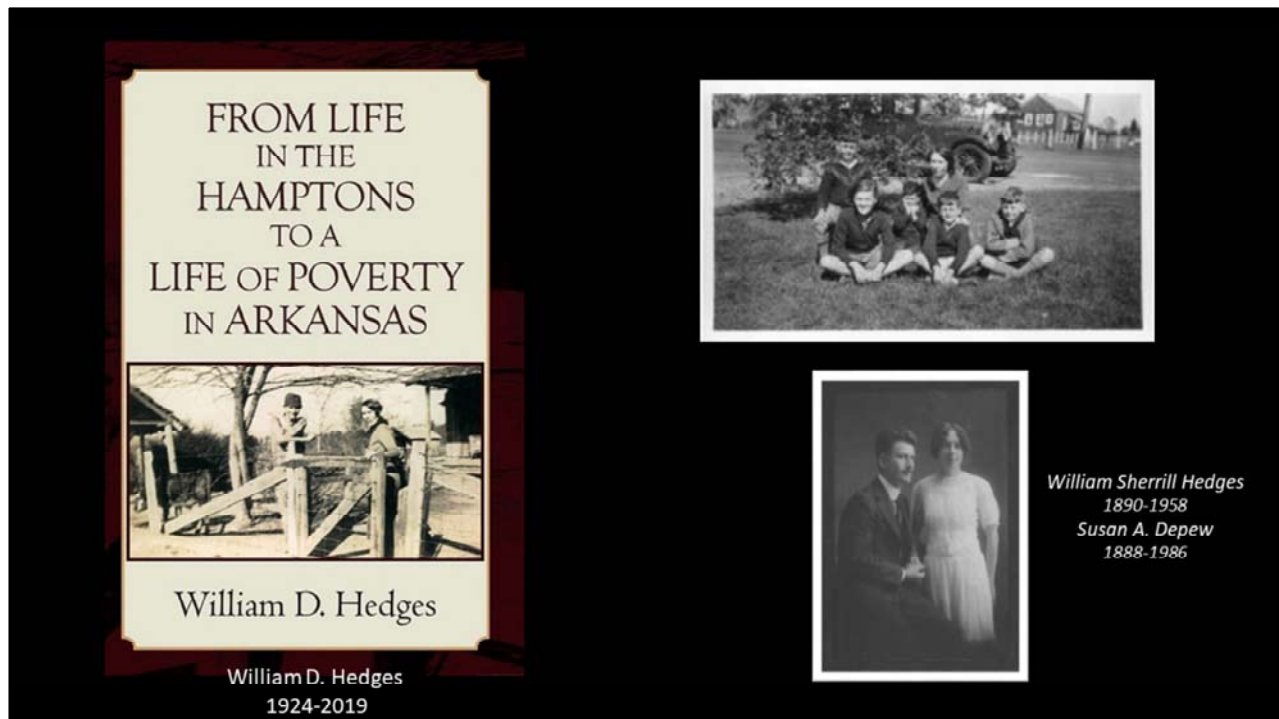


Thomas Osborn is pictured here, with his 1862 US Internal Revenue License to be a stallion Keeper. He raised horses.

My Uncle Bob once told me Thomas raised horses in this barn to send to support the Civil War effort.



In 1926 the barn was moved by Sherrill Hedges to its current location.



In 1926, Sherrill Hedges moved the barn to its current location and transformed the second floor into a spacious apartment for his family of seven. The apartment featured four bedrooms, a large living room, a dining room, a kitchen, and a single bathroom. The family is pictured here with the Wainscott School visible in the background. On the first floor, Sherrill ran a garage business, repairing cars and tractors.

Unfortunately, the Hedges family's fortunes declined during the Great Depression, and within a few years they relocated to Arkansas. Sherrill's son, William D. Hedges, later wrote a biography, recounting his childhood in the Wainscott barn. He fondly remembered the modern bathroom his father had installed there, especially since their new house in Arkansas had

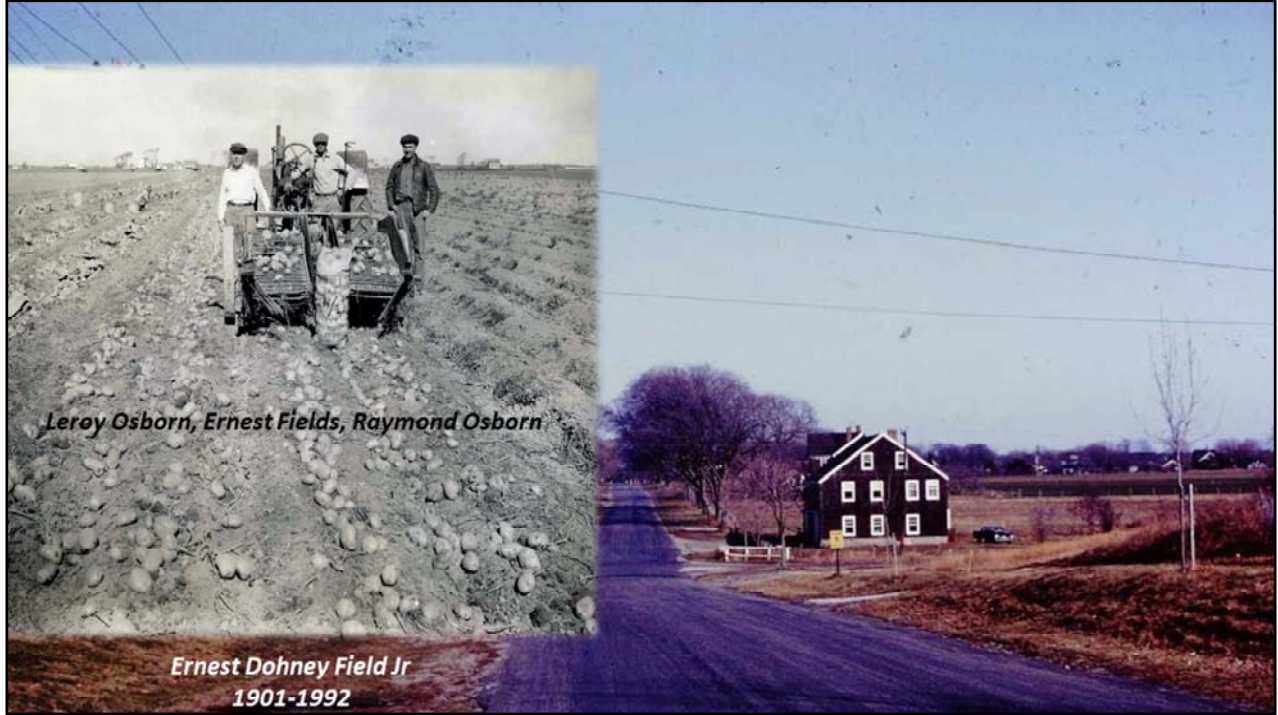
only outdoor plumbing.



Many of the timber beams and cross supports are still visible in the barn.



This in the interior view of the garage.



Ernest Field worked on the Osborn Farm and lived in the Wainscott Garage apartment for many years after becoming widowed at a young age. Each room in the apartment has a door; a long hallway runs down the center of the building. The wood stove was in the kitchen. Doors would be opened and closed to direct heat to the place where it was most needed. On dark winter nights, it's said that you could walk down Main Street and see a single light shining from the garage kitchen window. Through it, you'd find Ernest sitting at the table, reading his

newspaper by the warmth of the stove.



Over the years, the barn wasn't just home to farm hands—it was also rented out to various artists. One artist installed lights in the spacious attic to display their work. Another, as I recently learned, requested a large wall on the first floor to hang canvases. Interestingly, the large white wall you see here, was reportedly installed by Frank Serpico. Serpico, was a New York Police Detective famous for exposing widespread police corruption. He went into hiding after an attempt on his life, reportedly, living in this area at the time and assisting the artist in constructing this wall. Serpico's story inspired the 1973 film *Serpico*, starring Al Pacino in the lead role.



The barn has two sliding doors. In my lifetime farm equipment and tractors were stored and serviced on the first floor. A water spout extended from the front of the building to fill the potato sprayer. In the attic is evidence of the a long ago hay hook and tracks to haul heavy bales of hay into the upper loft. The front was dirt, not grass, from all the tractor traffic. Two Gulf brand gas pumps stood near where the electric boxes are today. The farm tractors and trucks were filled with gas here, as was our family station wagon, and from what I have only recently learned, apparently every teenager in Wainscott snuck over to fill their car's gas tanks too, back when gas was 35 cents a gallon. In the 1920's, and 30 's, different folks rented the garage, to run it as a service station and repair shop. Once the family potato business was well underway, the apartment was used for farm workers and the garage for farm tractor repairs. My cousin recalls excitedly running over after the Wainscott School was let out, to meet his father and uncle, and work on tractors, with the wood stove going on winter days.



There are two staircases that lead to the apartment, one from the porch in back, and one from inside the garage.



The view from the second floor of the garage is stunning. My Aunt Ruth, who was raised in the farmhouse, and her family summured here in the garage apartment for over twenty years. Every year, cousin Donald arrived with the latest Estes rockets for our annual rocket launch in the Wainscott field.



There were treasures to be found in the garage as well, an old hay fork, multiple sickles and pitch forks.



Louisa's granddaughter Amy Hunter wrote: of all the houses she has lived in, her favorite view was from the small window at the top of the farmhouse stairs, where when life was still, the view was like a nineteenth century landscape painting. When she looked across the long front yard to the street, she could watch the comings and goings of the still tiny farming village. Boys headed up the hill to pick up the mail, chatting girls strolling by, a neighbor in their porch hammock, her Aunt across the street busy baking a coconut cake, a farmer stopping his truck in the middle of the road to talk to a neighbor, with no threat of oncoming traffic

She wrote she would sit with her elbow on the windowsill and dream of Wainscott, where her family had lived for nearly three hundred years, wrestling a living from its fertile soil and occasionally turbulent sea.

Our family is thrilled this slice of Wainscott's history will be preserved for

future generations.