

In 1935 an Oldtimer, Leon C. Moore, wrote down some of his memories of life in Patchogue around the turn of the century.

*Talking about comparison between today and yesterday, I want to refer to the present Patchogue Plymouth Mills array of modern brick buildings with the two small, white frame ones that was known as the Lace Mills in 1897. Counting 83 autos parked near the mill the other day, took me back to the days when I went courting and on rainy or snowy nights when I could get through delivering on my grocery route in time, and maybe you think I did not hustle. I would drive over to the mill at 6 o'clock with the old grocery rig and some extra soap boxes in the rear and drive half a dozen or more girls over west and down River Avenue to their homes. Sometimes I had to drive my brother's girl all the way to Blue Point, which was not so good on a cold winters night. Yes, quite different now with the working hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in place of from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with most everyone walking or riding a bike to work. As I recall it, there were two restaurants in the village those days, George L. Chichester on South Ocean Avenue and Gil Carter on Main Street. And when it came to an oyster stew or a bowl of clam chowder, who could ever forget the kind Gil and his brother Egbert used to serve, and not a few oyster crackers on a little dish or a big plate of 'hard tack' or pilot crackers as they are now called. Today it seems that about every other store is a restaurant or a cafeteria. In 1900 there were two cigar stores with wooden Indians outside their door as symbols of what kind of goods they sold. And they sold only cigars, tobacco and smokers supplies. Today there is a dozen stores where you can buy almost anything, from a cigar, newspaper, etc., to a grand piano or a radio. In 1900 the old Union School on Ocean Avenue took care of the boys and girls of the day, today there are five beautiful schools in Patchogue, equipped with every modern equipment to provide instructions for the children. The Union Savings Bank occupied one room in those days over Swezey and Newins store. Today it has a beautiful white marble front building on the corner of Ocean Avenue and Church Street, where Squire Charles Reilly Smith's home once stood. Many of the older residents of Patchogue will remember the venerable old squire walking along the street with his black cape and inevitable umbrella. Yes, a lot of water has run under the bridges in 35 years.*

*Ye editor asked me what we used to do New Year's eve when I was a young gallant, and so I will briefly outline my memories. Well, in those days we did not have to use 'New Years' for an alibi to go out for a good time, no siree Hiram. Sometimes we used to hold a surprise party that night, and I know many of my school day chums will recall {and now they can not deny it} the invitations usually ended with: "please bring cake" or some other part of the refreshment menu for the night. We did not call on our girls in cars. There just wasn't any; we walked there and back, no matter the conditions of the road. And at the party, (I wish I could see the eyes of some of the girls of those days sparkle when they read this) we used to play Post Office (and, folks, it's a good thing they did not have parcel post in those days, first class mail was plenty good enough). After the games, which included, of course, "Kiss the Pillow", Forfeits, etc. —you old timers remember the games—came the refreshments — lemonade, cake, sandwiches and candy. "Good Night" all around and the walk back home, and often we took the longest way just for the sake of acting as bodyguards for our girls, regardless of how dark the night. (Remember fellows when you saw your girl home and when you were left alone how you whistled your head off as you trudged through the inky darkness towards your home). Don't deny it. And we did not have to wake up the next morning, lemonade was our limit in those days. Forgive me if I seem cynical, but I was asked for a comparison. Truthfully, I think, those old fashioned New Year's Eve parties would be a joke to the young folks of today.*