

THOMAS HOWARD WICKENDEN FAMILY

A Supplement By
Thomas Howard Wickenden II

The chapter in the *Memoirs* authored by Thomas Howard Wickenden mentions his two children, Thomas Clinton Wickenden, and Mary Dee Schmonsees as well as his grandchildren. So, we, the grandchildren, will tell here the story of our two families. While underscoring the importance of family and the struggles and joys of life as it is lived, these stories continue two themes from the *Memoirs*: first, the strong drive of the Wickenden families to educate their children and see them through to useful occupations and happy families of their own and, second, the lure of opportunities and occupations that leads to dispersal of family members around this country.

Short Hills

Like so many of his siblings, Thomas Howard worked his way through classes at Dennison College in Granville, Ohio. After education in chemical engineering, he took a job with the Studebaker Car Company at their wagon and automobile plant in South Bend, Indiana. He was so proud when he bought a new Studebaker and drove it to Covington to court his sweetheart Dee Shuman in one of the first cars the town had even seen. Then took a job with the Willys Corporation in Elizabeth, NJ. It was at that point the family relocated from the Midwest to the East, living in north central New Jersey, within commuting distance of Manhattan. When they settled at 1 Twin Oaks Road in Short Hills, NJ, that village became the location of the extended family, including those of both Thomas Clinton Wickenden and Mary Dee Schmonsees.

Willys made the Jeep, but had trouble during the depression, so Thomas' engineering team switched to Chrysler. I remember that he had a Chrysler along with a large workbench of tools in his garage in Short Hills. The morning walk to the train station and the commute on the Lackawanna Railway to Hoboken and then across the Hudson river to Manhattan, first by ferry and later by tube, was quite pleasant. Although Thomas made another career move to the International Nickel Company, the family did not need to relocate because while the company headquarters were in Canada, Thomas oversaw the Development and Research Division, located in Manhattan. My grandfather took me with him on the train to Manhattan several times. Once, for my fourteenth birthday in 1958, we attended the premier of the first widescreen feature film, *The Windjammer*. On another trip, we had lunch amidst all the stuffed animals and hunting trophies at the Explorer's Club. I was suitably impressed.

Medford Leas

Late in life, after Dee fell down the stairs several times (fortunately without breaking a hip), my grandparents moved, somewhat reluctantly, to a retirement community called Medford Leas, where they lived happily for several years. Grandmother continued to enjoy playing bridge with new friends and grandfather loved singing with the Meadowlarks. They passed away within a month of each other in 1977, a testament to the closeness of their relationship.