

## CHAPTER 3

# TOM AND ANN

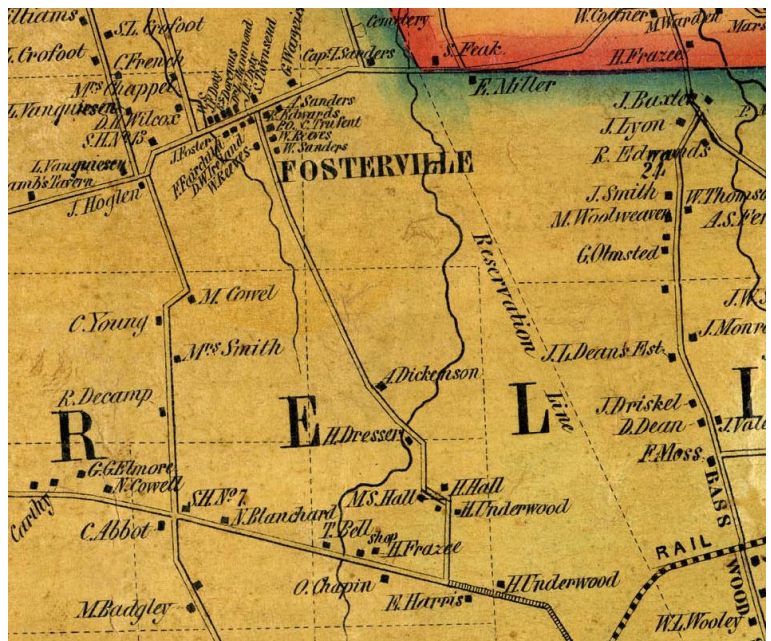
Thomas Bell (1796-1878) and Ann Van Giesen (1797-1875)

### A Good Man

Thomas Bell was born in Ballymenagh, County Tyrone, Ireland, to William and Mary Gilmore Bell in 1796 and immigrated to the United States with his parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins when he was just two years old. His infant brother, Samuel, came along, too. It's all but certain his parents named him after his paternal grandfather and he grew to be the kind of man everyone would call "Tom". He spent his boyhood in New York's Montgomery and Herkimer counties and, from the age of eighteen on, lived in Cayuga County. He was working his own farm in the Town of Mentz by 1820, the year he married Ann Van Giesen (b 1797), who had been born in New Jersey and was related to Abraham, Reynier and William Van Giesen, all of whom had come to farm within a few miles of the Bells.

While in Mentz, Ann gave birth to four daughters between 1821 and 1826: Mary (Gilmore), Rachel (Woodworth), Margaret, and Jane Ann (Shank). Margaret died in 1828 at age four and, then, Rachel in 1845 when she was twenty-four, and they now lie in the Mentz Church Cemetery near a large alabaster headstone. The inscription eventually came to include Tom and Ann, as well as the birth year (1826) of Jane, who died in Michigan in 1904.

After farming within a mile of his parents and brothers for some fifteen years, Tom and Ann moved a few miles south in 1835 to the Town of Aurelius (cf. *bottom center, Map 3A, right*) and began farming the second parcel west of Fosterville Road on what is now U.S. 5 & 20. Some relative of Ann named "L. Van Giesen" (spelled "Vanguisen" by the cartographer) lived a few miles north (*Map 3A, top left*). By 1850, the Bells were cultivating 65 of their 80 acres and owned 14 oxen, 30 cows, 11 sheep, and a few other livestock. Their house remained standing almost 175 years before someone razed it around a decade into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Map 3A: Town of Aurelius – 1853

## Cast of Characters - Chapter Three

<b>Thomas Bell</b>	(1796-1878)	m	<b>Ann Van Giesen</b> (1797-1875)
❖ Mary Bell	(1821-1915)	m	John Gilmore, Jr.(1811-1887)
• Jane Ann Gilmore	(1842-1895)	m	Robert Sinclair (1840-1920)
✓ John G. Sinclair	(1877-____>		
✓ Robert E. Sinclair	(1878-____>		
✓ <u>Belle</u> P. Sinclair	(1883-1980)	m (1900)	William R. Wright (1877-1969)
• Maggie Gilmore	(1844-1929)		
• Anna Gilmore	<____-____>		
❖ Rachel Bell	(1822-1845)	m	Stephen Woodworth
• Thomas <b>Bell</b> Woodworth	(1840-1904)	m	Mary Gertrude Smith
✓ Philip Bell Woodworth	(1866-____>	m	Lucy Clute
○ Paul Woodworth	<____-____>		
✓ John Bell Woodworth	( 1867-1867)		Died in NY
✓ Paul O. Woodworth	<____-1944)	m	Margaret Carolan
○ Philip Woodworth	(1918-1978)	m	Florence R. Russ
➤ James Woodworth	(1947-2015)		Never married?
➤ Paul Woodworth		m	Constance _____
○ James F. Woodworth	(1921-1980)	m	Adeline Renz
➤ Robert Woodworth			
➤ Tami Woodworth		m	Walter Salens
➤ Tim Woodworth			
➤ Carolan Woodworth		m	_____ O'Keefe
<b>Then</b> Carolan		m	_____Hammond
○ Margaret Woodworth			(d 1929 in infancy)
✓ Robert S. Woodworth	<____-1895)		
✓ Frederick L. Woodworth	(1877-____>	m	Gertrude Lowe
○ Clara G. Woodworth			
○ Elizabeth Woodworth			
○ Thomas <b>Bell</b> Woodworth	(1908-1993)	m	Mary J. _____(1909-1999)
○ Mary Lowe Woodworth			
✓ Gertrude Eliz. Woodworth	(1878-1945)		Never married
❖ Margaret Bell	(1824-1828)		
❖ Jane Ann Bell	(1826-1904)	m	Robert Shank (1817-1851)

**Mary:** Mary spent most of her childhood on her parents' first farm near the Mentz Church, which her extended family took the lead in erecting in 1825, when she was four years old. She, her parents and siblings continued attending there after they moved to the farm in Aurelius around 1835 and, because of that, Mary knew and remained close to John Gilmore, Jr., her father's first cousin, who was ten years older than she was. They married around 1841, when she was about twenty, and farmed in southwest Mentz (later Throop) the rest of their lives. They reared at least three children there, all of whom, as in Mary's birth family, were daughters: Jane Ann, Maggie, and Anna.

By 1853, Mary and John Jr. owned two separate farms along Northrup Road south of Rice Road (cf. "*J. Gilmore Jr.*", *Map 3B*). They leased one to tenants and worked the other themselves. John Jr.'s sister, Nancy, and her husband, John Wright, lived just west of there on the south side of Rice Road, in what had been the original Gilmore homestead. Both that and their tenant house across the road are marked "J. Wright" on Map 3B. John Jr. and Nancy had grown up there, after which she and her husband bought it from the elder Gilmores, who moved across the road. The farm just *south* of Mary and John Jr., marked "*Jos. Wright*" in error, belonged to Margaret Gilmore Wright – another sister of John Jr. and Nancy – whose husband, Robert, had died in 1846. It was complicated. For more on the tangle of Gilmores and Wrights, see Chapter 8.

Jane Anne, the eldest daughter of Mary and John Jr., married Robert Sinclair in the mid-1880s and had three children of her own. The youngest of those, Belle, went on to marry her second cousin, William R. Wright (b 1877), whose childhood traumas are detailed in Chapter 8. Mary's husband, John Gilmore, Jr., then died in 1887 at age 76, and Jane Anne, died in 1895, after which Mary and her daughter, Maggie, moved in with Robert Sinclair. Mary herself died in 1915, at age 94, and lies next to John Jr. in the Mentz Church Cemetery. The lives of Maggie and Anna are more difficult to trace, although we know Maggie was still single when she died in 1929 at age 85.



Map 3B: Southwest Portion of Throop – 1853

**Rachel:** The Bells' second daughter, Rachel, attended the Auburn Female Seminary, where, in the winter of 1839, she committed her life to God. She then married a local farmer named Stephen E. Woodworth who, at some point, was a member of the Throopsville Baptist Church (*cf. 'S.E.' and 'Stevens' Woodworth in Census listings; cf. also Throopsville Baptist Church Membership Records 1818-1884*). On October 2, 1840, while living in Wayne County northwest of Montezuma, Rachel gave birth to a son, Thomas Bell Woodworth. In early 1845, after they had moved a few miles south to Seneca Falls, Rachel contracted measles. Her overall health continued to decline until, in mid-July, she moved back with her parents in Aurelius, hoping her mother's care might help her to get better within a week or two. Her condition grew steadily worse though and, after just two weeks, she died. Rachel was just twenty-four at the time, but as her obituary makes clear, her remarkable faith enabled her to face death with grace and assurance (*cf. Northern Christian Advocate, right*).

**Jane:** Three to four years later, in 1848 or 49, Tom and Ann's youngest daughter, Jane Ann, married Robert Shank (b Feb. 5, 1817), a farmer from a large family in the Town of Springport, immediately south of Aurelius. Robert and his brother, John B. Shank, had bought neighboring farms at the south end of Aurelius in 1843, with Robert's 89-acres in Lot 67 four and half miles directly south of the Bells' farm. A schoolhouse stood at the western end of the parcel and a Methodist Episcopal church was across the road in Springport.

Robert apparently had a good reputation in the local community because, on February 26, 1850, Daniel Johnson, who had moved to Lansing, Michigan, gave him power of attorney with full authority to sell all Johnson's property in Cayuga County as he saw fit.

For the Northern Christian Advocate.

### Mrs. Rachel Woodworth.

† Died on the 20th inst., at the residence of her father, Thomas Bell, Esq. in Aurelius, Mrs. RACHEL WOODWORTH, in the 24th year of her age.

Sister Woodworth's health had been declining gradually for some months, but even those whose anxious solicitude had induced the most careful observation, had hardly anticipated so speedy a realization of their fears. She had left her residence at Seneca Falls, to spend a week or two with her parents. Soon after her arrival her symptoms assumed an unfavorable aspect, and after about two weeks the measles, joining in with other complicated disorders, terminated her earthly career.

Our departed sister was converted to God while attending school at the Auburn Female Seminary, in the winter of 1839-40, and immediately attached herself to the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which she continued a most worthy and exemplary member until her death.

Her parents desiring an expression of her feelings upon the momentous subject of changing worlds while her speech and reason continued, she was asked, about three days before her death, whether she felt herself prepared to die. She replied, "Yes; I have expected for some time that my end was near, and have been striving, by the assistance of God, to be ready. I feel unworthy, but my confidence is in Christ. I desire that the will of the Lord be done, but it is my choice to die."

She thanked her parents for all their kindness, and especially for their attention to her early religious instruction, for which she feared she had not been sufficiently grateful. She exhorted her husband to lie devoted to God, saying there is nothing worthy of attention in this beggarly world.

She frequently told her sorrowing friends they need not weep, for, said she, 'all is well with me.'

During her illness not a murmur escaped her lips, nor even a cloud rested on her brow, but always the same expression of calm resignation, and unwavering confidence in the Savior, and when the summons came, peacefully and triumphantly she passed away.

Like him who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

WM. N. COBB.

July 30, 1845.

In April the following year, Robert and Jane sold the 89-acre parcel in Lot 67 to his brother, John, and moved to a much larger farm on the Turnpike Road, immediately west of Jane's parents. The property Deed doesn't specify the number of acres, but the parcel comprised around two-thirds of the eastern end of Lot 39 and also included a separate field on the south side of the road.

Just a few months after moving in, though, Robert became seriously ill with what the attending physician called "congestion of the brain". That usually referred to what the medical community of the 21<sup>st</sup> century calls hydrocephalus, an excessive accumulation of fluid in the brain. The symptoms could include severe headaches, blurred vision, disorientation, and progressive mental impairment. As his condition deteriorated, Jane moved Robert next door to her parents' home. They were people of deep faith who already had nursed two daughters through their final days, and they took care of Robert until he died on October 20, leaving Jane a childless widow just two years into their marriage.

This obituary appeared in the *Auburn Daily Advertiser* of October 28, 1851:

SHANK, ROBERT. d. Aurelius Oct. 20 at res. of his fa-in-law, THOMAS BELL, Esq. in 35<sup>th</sup> yr.; Congestion of the brain. A young man of promise, bright hopes and noble aspirations suddenly blasted forever; a true Gentleman, an honest man, kind neighbor, affectionate husb. and bro. and a true friend. Has left a young wife to mourn his loss. Died in the hope of a joyous immortality beyond the grave. 'Green the turf above thee; Friend of my early days.' W.H.P.

The illness must have come on suddenly and incapacitated him because he never drew up a Last Will and Testament. Dying intestate meant the farm he and Jane had just bought had to be sold, with the proceeds divided between Jane, Robert's four brothers, and a sister. As a group, they sold the property on March 31 the following year to Nathaniel and Mercy Blanchard (*cf. 1853 Map 3A, above*). Jane then remained with her parents while retaining personal property valued at \$2,400 in 1860 and \$4,000 by the end of that decade. In 1882, years after her parents had died, she was boarding at 63 E. Genesee Street in the city of Auburn and, in 1895, at 111 South Street. Both addresses were near the center of the city.

Tom Bell was an example to his descendants and younger brothers (Samuel, William, and John), not only because of his abiding faith and gentle demeanor, but also because of his political activism, which began in his twenties. The *Auburn Free Press* lists him as one of six Mentz delegates (out of 76 overall) to the 1826 Cayuga County Republican Convention. The Convention's purpose seems to have been limited to nominating someone named Archibald Green to the office of County Sheriff, which it did unanimously (*Auburn Free Press, August 23, 1826*). Tom himself eventually became a justice of the peace in Aurelius, for which he received the handsome sum of \$10.00 in 1842. In that capacity, he officiated over the sale of the John and Jane Gilmore farm to their daughter and son-in-law in 1844 (*cf. "Mary", above, and "All the Wright Moves", Chapter 8*). He also served as president in January 1846 of a group called the "Friends of Constitutional and Legal Reform," which advocated for greater accountability in government and the direct election of "judicial officers." Tom published the record of the group's proceedings in the local newspapers, including this resolution: "That those members of the bar have elicited our warmest admiration and praise, who have put faith in man's capacity for self-government, and who have had the honesty and boldness to write and speak in defence (*sic*) of popular liberty." (*Auburn Journal and Advertiser, January 14, 1846*)

The Bell brothers also upheld their Methodist principles by taking active roles in local Temperance efforts. The Aurelius “Friends of Temperance” elected Tom as its Chair in December 1851 and he also served on its resolutions committee. The resolutions, however, reveal that the group was a lot friendlier to the idea of outright prohibition than to Temperance. They contended that the State’s License Law had proved ineffectual because “...we cannot suppress the evil by a law to sell,” and they therefore resolved, “From our long acquaintance with alcohol, and our full convictions of its destructive influence as a beverage, we are prepared to aid in its banishment from our land” (*Cayuga Chief, December 1851*).

As America’s Prohibition Era would demonstrate seventy years later, trying to “banish” the sale and consumption of alcohol was doomed to failure. Many of those who pressed for its abolition did so out of a prudish desire to control the lives of other people, but at least some advocates – perhaps Tom among them – were authentically concerned for the welfare of neighbors and friends afflicted by alcoholism. The problem, hence the “evil”, from their perspective, was neither alcohol itself nor the people who imbibed it; the problem was the dreadful impact of alcoholism as a chronic condition on the lives of the drinkers and their families: impaired thinking, destructive behavior, loss of income, dissolution of family, and even death. In their naïve view of human behavior, the solution was both obvious and simple: get rid of the drink.

Tom also served as the Town’s “Overseer of the Poor” in 1851, a job that entailed visiting especially impoverished individuals and families and ensuring that they received whatever meager assistance was available. “Outdoor” assistance was help provided to people in their own homes; “Indoor” assistance involved moving impoverished individuals and families to poor houses and “county farms”, which required them to work in return for food, clothing and shelter. Outdoor assistance usually was limited to: a) well-meaning, but irrelevant and ineffectual, advice on moral responsibility and, b) in-kind donations, such as food and clothing from neighbors and churches. The relative kindness or severity of such efforts depended largely upon the personal views and character of the Overseer, and Tom was widely regarded as a gentle, caring, and upright man of faith. Even kind and well-meaning overseers were doomed to fail, though, because the programs were based on the false assumption that social ills, such as poverty and alcoholism, were due to individual character flaws when, in fact, most such problems are inherently rooted in the structure and operation of the larger society.

The most divisive social ill of the time was slavery, and it would be gratifying to find that Tom and the other Bells put their well-ordered lives at risk to work on behalf of its abolition. Frederick Douglass lived in nearby Rochester, New York, and was one of many abolitionists to visit Cayuga County, where Quakers and other anti-slavery activists had stations on the Underground Railroad, shuttling escaped slaves from the South up to Canada. Harriet Tubman, the “Moses” of pre-war slavery even lived out her post-Civil War life in Auburn. The moral universe of Tom and other Bells, however, appears to have been somewhat less inclusive and revolutionary. There simply is no evidence that any of them took a specific stand against slavery other than to support a limited federal government and the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln for President.

Tom again was a delegate to the County Republican Convention in 1859 and, the next year, was active as a vice-president of the Aurelius Lincoln and Hamlin Republican Club during Lincoln's presidential campaign. Lincoln himself, of course, had a mixed record on slavery and social equality, being far more concerned with the preservation of the Union than with the freedom and equality of enslaved people of color, but battle field events, along with the continuing support of prominent citizens like Tom Bell, enabled him, at last, to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Civil War dominated American life during the first half of the 1860s, but Tom and Ann still had to deal with personal transitions. Tom's father, William Sr., and stepmother/aunt, Margaret, moved in with them in about 1859, the year William Sr. recorded his Last Will and Testament and named Tom and John Bell as co-executors. By 1860, the Bell household also included their daughter Jane Shank, their 18 year old grandson, Thomas Bell Woodworth, a 20 year old "servant" from Ireland named Catherine Folley, and an 18 year old farm laborer named Charles H. Dresser or "Desser", one of six children of the Bell's neighbors, Harvey and Sally Ann Desser (Dresser). Twenty-first century owners razed the house after 2010, but the stone foundation was visible as of 2018 on the north side of Route 20/5 between Fosterville Road and Blanchard Road.

Tom and Ann retired from farming shortly after the deaths of his father (1863) and stepmother (1867), whereupon they moved with Jane to the hamlet of Sennett, just a few miles northeast of Auburn. Dr. Sylvester Willard built their white two-story house near the center of the village in 1823 and it is now on the national register of historic places. It sat on three acres in 1870, next to the home of Dr. C.C. Cady, a long-time resident and justice of the peace, and each parcel of land appears to have the same basic configuration now as it did 150 years ago. It also remains occupied today (*cf. photo*), looking much as it must have when the Bells lived there. Sennett was part of the Weedsport postal district in 1870, but had its own post office by 1875, the year Ann died at age 77 or 78. Tom was 83 when he died on June 11, 1878, almost three years to the day after Ann died. As in Ann's case, the funeral was at their home, after which a vast number of mourners made their way in horse-drawn buggies some nine miles to the Mentz Church Cemetery for his interment. Tom's obituary by an anonymous writer portrays him as a kindly, well-liked and respected man of great character:



There were over fifty carriages in the funeral procession. Standing on the roadside, as the procession passed, this question naturally arose, why have so many from neighboring towns quit their business and are now following him to the grave, when they cannot get home till late at night. The answer had but a short time before been given. Some one had remarked that the Rev. Dr. Reddy would have a great deal to say about him, to which the reply was made, "All he can say is, he was a good man." There was much, very much, in those two words "all" and "can." Of how few can the remark – "he was a good man" be made with entire enthusiasm. Nothing derogatory of him, to mar or deface his character could be said.

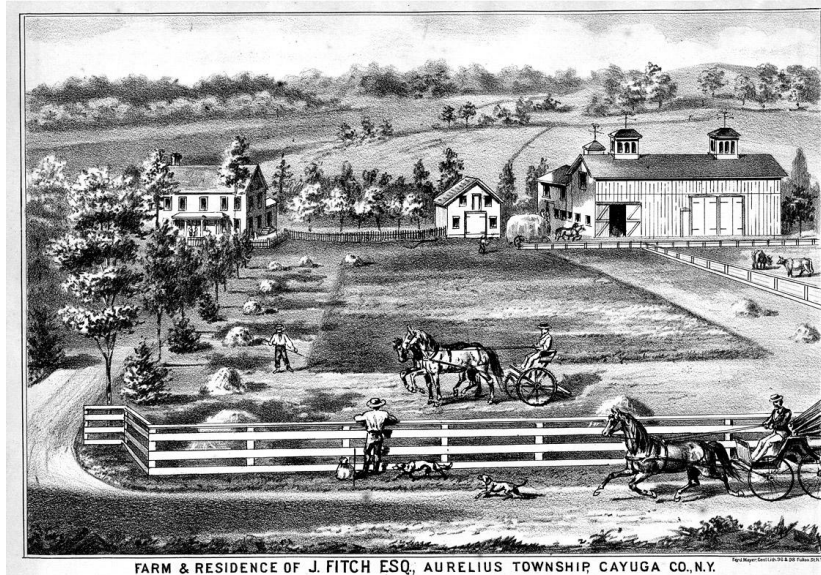
A friend once said to the writer, no one ever conversed with the Rev. Mr. Curie of Sterling, without being better for it. The same might be said of Mr. Bell. Such men are a blessing. The good results of their lives are seen in their families and the neighborhood, and the respect entertained for them while

living shows itself, as in the case of Mr. Bell and Mr. Curie, by the respect shown for them at their funerals.

Mr. Bell was in his eighty-third year.

Kindness received, and respect for his family and friends, requires at least this imperfect tribute to his memory.

*(Auburn Daily Bulletin, June 18, 1878)*



Sketch: J. Fitch farm – 5 miles from Thos. Bell farm in the Town of Aurelius



## The Woodworth Saga

### High Achievers

**Thomas Bell Woodworth:** Historical records and news columns provide only a faint outline of Tom and Ann Bell as real people, but their impact on the world is evident in the lives of their descendents. The Bells and their surviving daughter, Jane Shank, reared Thomas Bell Woodworth, their grandson by Rachel, from age three onward, and he grew to become a man of great character and accomplishment.

The younger Thomas also remained close to his father, Steven (“S.E.”) Woodworth, whose family had a notable history of its own. After emigrating from England in 1638, the Woodworth family settled in Scituate, Massachusetts.

The family record gives authoritative data to the services of its representatives as valiant officers and private soldiers in the war of the Revolution, as well as in the early Indian wars of the colonial era. It is most pleasing to record in this connection that Samuel Woodworth, a kinsman ... was the author of that loved a classical song, “The Old Oaken Bucket,” and that this same ancient bucket that gave title to the gentle ode is still hanging in the historic old well of the Woodworth homestead in New England.<sup>1</sup>

After Rachel’s death in 1845, Stephen Woodworth remarried, started a second family, and became a merchant in Montezuma, then moved to Michigan in 1866 and was living in Detroit as of 1870. His son, Thomas, meanwhile, passed through childhood on the Bells’ farm in Aurelius before pursuing a more advanced education at the Methodist seminary in Cazenovia, New York, about 40 miles east of Auburn. Unlike seminaries today that focus on preparation for ministry, the Cazenovia school offered basic, higher education for young people of faith.

When it opened in 1824, the Oneida Conference Seminary was just the second Methodist Episcopal Church divinity school in the United States. The Church changed its name to “Central New York Conference Seminary” sometime before Thomas arrived in the 1850s, and then, to “Cazenovia Seminary” in 1894. “Although sponsored by the Methodists, the seminary was nonsectarian, and its trustees were a mixture of clergy and laymen. ... [It also] was a pioneer in coeducation. From the beginning it welcomed both men and women who wanted to prepare for college or complete their education in Cazenovia.” Leland Stanford, President of the Central Pacific Railroad, Governor of California, and founder of Stanford University, was a graduate of the school’s early years. Its 1875 record of graduates from the first fifty years places Thomas in the class of 1858, meaning he finished at the age of sixteen. An 1877 article about him in the Auburn Citizen mentions his time at Cazenovia, but says he graduated in 1860, which implies he stayed an additional two years after high school to complete the college program.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas married Mary Gertrude Smith of Clear Creek, New York, on October 6, 1864. She, too, was a graduate of Cazenovia, finishing with the class of 1860, and the high value she and Thomas placed on education is evident in the even more substantial academic achievements of their children. Mary gave birth to their first two, Philip Bell Woodworth and John Woodworth, before she and Thomas followed

the example of Stephen Woodworth and several Bell relatives by moving to Michigan in June 1867. Three years later, on April 4, 1870, they purchased 107.35 acres near Caseville in Huron County.<sup>3</sup>

[Thomas] maintained his home at Caseville, Huron County, for many years and was one of the leading members of the bar of [that] section of the state, besides which he represented Huron county in the state legislature for two terms. He continued active work in his profession at Caseville, until his death, which occurred on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 1904, his age at the time of his demise having been sixty-two years. He was a man of fine attainments and sterling character and his name and memory are held in enduring honor in the county that so long represented his home. He was a valued member of the Huron County Bar Association and, as an effective exponent of the principles of the Republican party, he was specially active in campaign work in his county and district, being of his party's strong campaign speakers in Michigan. He was affiliated with the lodge and chapter bodies of York Rite Masonry. His widow still maintains her home at Caseville and is held in affectionate regard by all who have come within the compass of her gracious influence.<sup>4</sup>

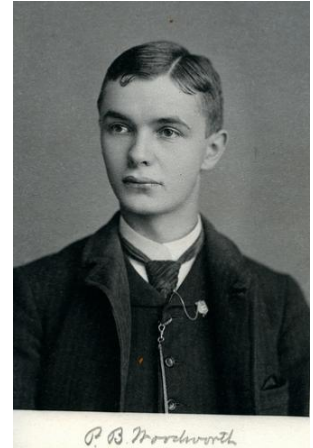
Quoting the *Detroit Free Press*, this *Auburn Citizen* article from 1877 adds that Thomas had been the Caseville Township Supervisor from 1868-1876 and County Surveyor in 1870 and 1871. Then, in January 1874, he became the founding editor of the *Caseville Advertiser*, which merged two years later into the *Huron County News*. The Cazenovia Seminary record of 1875 confirms that he was the editor of the *Advertiser* that year. The main purpose of this particular article, though, was to announce his election to the Michigan State Legislature. In 1896, he also served as a Presidential Elector for Michigan.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas's enduring closeness to his childhood family (the Bells) is evident in the fact that, toward the end of her life, his maternal aunt, Jane Bell Shank, came from New York to live with him and his family, sharing their home in Caseville by 1900. Although Jane was fifteen years older (b. May 2, 1826), they both died in 1904 (Jane on October 29) and were buried near one another in the Woodworth family site at Caseville Township Cemetery (*cf. side-by-side photos, below*). Thomas's wife, Mary Smith Woodworth, then died in 1913 at the age of 69 or 70.



**Philip:** Philip Bell Woodworth, the eldest of Thomas and Mary's six children, was born in Auburn, New York, November 17, 1866, raised in Caseville, and graduated in 1886 from the Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University). He then returned to New York and completed a degree in engineering from Cornell College (at the southern tip of Cayuga Lake) in 1888 before heading to Germany, where he completed a two-year post-graduate course at the University of Berlin. From

there, he returned to MAC, where he served as a professor of physics, married Lucy Clute, the daughter of the college's president, and had at least one son, Paul. After twelve years, Philip became a professor of electrical engineering at the Lewis Institute of Chicago (founded 1895), which merged in 1940 with the Armour Institute of Technology to become the Illinois Institute of Technology, one of a group of independent technical institutes that includes MIT, Caltech, and Carnegie Mellon. He also managed to serve simultaneously as a member of a law firm, *Rumler, Woodworth & Rumler*, that focused on electrical patents and he was in demand across the nation as a lecturer on "scientific subjects."<sup>6</sup> (Photo: Philip Bell Woodworth, Album, Class of 1886, Michigan Agricultural College, Cassey & Whitney, Lansing, Michigan)



"UNDER FOUR FLAGS," the official war film sent out by the Bureau of Public Information which was shown at the College during Farmers' Week, has a particular interest for a group of M. A. C. people. In that part of the picture where General Pershing is being decorated by General Bliss, standing in the line at attention in front of the camera is an M. A. C. man, Paul Woodworth, w'16, son of Prof. and Mrs. P. B. Woodworth, '86 and '93, respectively. Prof. Woodworth who is now business manager on the staff of the War Plans Division of the War Department, saw the picture one evening in Washington, and thinking he recognized his son, he waited for a second performance and made sure of it. Within a few days a letter from Paul told that he had just been transferred to the staff of General Pershing and was present at the ceremonies when the General was decorated. Paul Woodworth is in the Meteorological Section of the Signal Corps. Another son of Prof. and Mrs. Woodworth, Robert, seventeen years old, is in France with the American Red Cross.

The MAC Record, February 21, 1919  
Michigan Agricultural College

**John:** Thomas and Mary's second child, John, was born in New York in 1867 shortly before they left for Michigan, but he died the next year. Their third son, Paul O., grew up in Caseville and completed three years of study at MAC before obtaining a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Michigan in 1893. He then practiced law with his father for four years before striking out for Alaska, where he spent two years prospecting for gold. "He made the trip to the famous Chilcott Pass with dog sleighs, and provender was transported to sustain life for eighteen months. He was meeting with

appreciable success in the gold fields but was attacked with typhoid fever, which forced him to return to civilization.”<sup>7</sup>

**Paul:** Back in Michigan, Paul resumed work with his father’s law practice until he won election in January 1900 to the first of four terms as Huron County prosecuting attorney, whereupon he moved to Bad Axe, the county seat. Afterwards, he served again as a trial lawyer, established a large law firm, and took at least one case before the Supreme Court of the United States. He was a prominent member of the Republican Party, served as a delegate to the 1924 Republican National Convention, and belonged to the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. He was a member of both the Huron County and Michigan bar associations and enjoyed hunting, fishing and sports, in which “...he made a splendid record during his student days in the agricultural college and the university.”<sup>8</sup>

He remained a bachelor until at least 1914 before marrying Margaret C. Carolan, with whom he had two sons, Philip (1918-1978) and James Fred (1921-1980), and a daughter, Margaret (d. in infancy in 1929). Margaret Carolan Woodworth herself was elected to the Republican State Central Committee in 1939 and was an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1944, the year Paul died.<sup>9</sup> Their son, Philip (*cf. 1938 photo, right*), earned a law degree from the University of Michigan before serving as a captain in the U.S. Army during World War II. His post-war employment is unknown but, in 1942, he married Florence R. Russ, who had been born in Texas and was teaching school in Bay City, Michigan. They had two children, James Nelson (1947-2015) who was an attorney, and Paul, who, as of 2018, was living in Wilmington, North Carolina, with his wife, Constance.



Philip’s brother, James, also attended the University of Michigan, then served as a Marine Platoon Sergeant during World War II and eventually became the district attorney in Bad Axe. He later married Adeline Renze and had four children: Robert, Tami, Tim, and Carolan, all four of whom married. Robert eventually moved to Ypsilanti, Michigan, and Carolan to Belleville, Michigan, but Tami, and Tim were still in Bad Axe as of 2008. In fact, they were the only Woodworths still listed in the Huron County telephone directory. Tami became an attorney and, in 2008, was living with her husband, Walter Salens (yet another attorney), and three children in the large Victorian house on Huron Street once owned by her grandparents, Paul and Margaret.

An enduring reminder of the Woodworth’s historical prominence in Bad Axe is Woodworth Street, which runs parallel to, and one block north of, Huron Street, the primary east-west route through downtown. Another street in town is called “Carolan”. Margaret Carolan Woodworth’s birth family was Irish Catholic and it appears that Paul Woodworth converted from Methodism to Catholicism when they married because they and all their descendents who have died now lie in St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in Bad Axe, as does Margaret’s mother, Mary Carolan.

**Robert:** Thomas and Mary Woodworth’s fourth son was Robert S., who completed his degree at MAC in 1894 before dying on July 17 of the following year. His younger brother, Frederick (Fred) Langdon, was born either January 8 or 18, 1877, in Caseville, graduated from MAC in 1893, and became “one of

the most successful and thoroughly scientific representatives of the agricultural industry in Huron county,” raising Jersey cattle, thoroughbred horses, and swine on a “show place” farm in Chandler township.<sup>10</sup>

**Frederick:** Fred married Gertrude Lowe, a college classmate from Jackson, Michigan, on March 12, 1902, and they had four children: Clara G., Elizabeth, Thomas Bell, and Mary Lowe. Continuing the family tradition of public service, Fred eventually served two terms as a state representative before becoming a state senator, and was a recognized leader in each house. At some point, Fred and Gertrude moved to Wayne County, Michigan, where Detroit is located, and he ran unsuccessfully for Lieutenant Governor of Michigan in 1928 before serving as Chair of the Wayne County Republican Party in 1934-35. Fred and Gertrude evidently remained in the Detroit area until their deaths. Kestenbaum lists their son as “Thomas Bell Woodworth” in the Caseville cemetery, but the headstone there reads “Thomas L. Woodworth” (1908-1993) and lies next to that of his wife, Mary J. Woodworth (1909-1999).

**Gertrude:** Gertrude Elizabeth Woodworth, the sixth and only female child of Thomas Bell Woodworth (1840-1904) and Gertrude Smith Woodworth, was born in 1878 and “received special courses of instruction” at both MAC and the Lewis Institute, which may reflect the limitations imposed on women’s academic pursuits during that era. The book, History of Michigan, moreover, offers glowing reviews of her father’s career and those of her brothers, but provides no clue as to whatever career Gertrude may have had, saying only that she resided with her widowed mother in Caseville. She died in 1945 and lies near her parents at the Caseville Township Cemetery.

## ENDNOTES – CHAPTER 3

- <sup>1</sup> History of Michigan, 1914, p. 839.
- <sup>2</sup> First Fifty Years of Cazenovia Seminary 1825-1875, Cazenovia College Website, <http://www.cazenovia.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=104>
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.; See also, The Auburn Citizen, Jan. 24, 1877, and General Land Office Records of Huron County.
- <sup>4</sup> Op.Cit., p. 839.
- <sup>5</sup> Lawrence Kestenbaum, “*The Political Graveyard*,” <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/woodworth.html> – 2008.
- <sup>6</sup> History of Michigan, 1914, p. 839.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 840.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 841; cf. also Kestenbaum, 2008.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## Maps

- 3A: Sub-section, Town of Aurelius, 1853. “T. Bell”, bottom center, is Thomas Bell. Full map available through Cayuga County Historian’s Office. Note also: “J. Hoglen”, top left, was the farm of John and Mary Hoagland (Cf. Chp 4).
- 3B: Southwest Portion of Throop – 1859