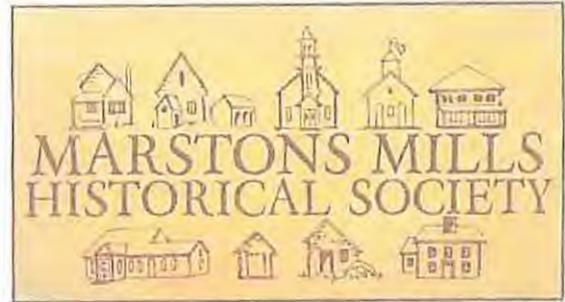


Marstons Mills Historical Society
Interview with Audrey Duchesny
(by David Martin)
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Audrey Lapham Duchesney was born in 1959 and grew up together with five siblings in Marstons Mills, on Main Street. Her father was George “Buddy” Lapham and her mother was Grace Pierce (see interview elsewhere in this collection). Her grandmother, Beatrice Lapham, produced two books of poetry, entitled “Buzz Along with Bea”, and “Buzz Along with Bea Again.” Her father, George (Buddy) Lapham, was one of 6 children of Frank and Beatrice Lapham. Her mother was one of 12 children of William and Helen Pierce. Both families were from Marstons Mills. The Lapham siblings were Hazel (Aittainemi) Frances (Hinckley) Dana, Buddy, Paul, and Janice (Nickerson). Only Paul and Janice are still alive.

Her mother’s siblings were Ruth(Gifford), Jack, Gertrude (Thew), George, William, Emmy (Philbrick) Alan, Jane, Phillis (Thifault), Esther (Hamblin), and Molly (Burrows). Only Molly and Esther are still alive.

Buddy and Grace had 5 children: Beverly (O’Connell) Susan (Laaksonen), Frank, Curt, and Audrey (Duchesney). Beverly, Curt, and Audrey still live in Marstons Mills.

The Lapham family first lived in the house of Kay and Frank Dick; then her father built the house at 2161 Main Street in the Mills. She attended school at the Marstons Mills Elementary School from kindergarten through grade 6, then attended grades 7 and 8 in the building that is now The Pope St. Paul School. She attended Barnstable High School on West Main Street in Hyannis. Her aunt, Esther Hamblin, lived in the house across the road from the Verkade residence on Newtown-Santuit Road. Her mother was one of 12 siblings in the Pierce family, and when she grew up, she lived in a residence which is currently the Morning Glory café on Route 149. Her father was born in the house which is currently at the corner of Race Lane and Osterville-West Barnstable Road. Her father’s sister, Janice Lapham , married Edmund Nickerson and lived next to the Community Church, along with Beatrice Lapham, Janice Nickerson’s mother.

For clarification, the order of the houses and their occupants, starting with the Community Church and going to the right, was: Nickerson, Lapham (Audrey’s house), Jones, Stewart, Dick, the Old Post House (now the Butterfly Tree shop), McCluskey, and Sherman(Mo and Claire) behind the McCluskey residence. The Post Office was where the Sweet Repeats shop is today.

Her reflections of life in the Village growing up are that no one there wanted to leave –it was “home” and in effect people were “wrapped in a bubble”. Food was available at the Cash Market, run jointly by butcher Frank McCluskey and Loring (Junior) Jones. Life in a sense began at Route 28 and went northward; a number of summer people lived south of Rt. 28 and so were less identified with the Village. She recalls vividly as a child when the Methodist Church on Main Street had to close and people then went to the Osterville Methodist Church; she never fully felt a part of the Osterville parish, even though members of the older generation participated in it. People from elsewhere in Barnstable tended to identify the Mills as the location of the “Dump”, and not much else.

Childhood memories include bike-riding and swimming at Prince Cove, followed by fresh-water swimming at Hamblin's Pond; lifeguards and swimming lessons were available; and horseback riding along the many stretches of open space underneath the power lines. A true community spirit of cooperation involved the Library, Liberty Hall, and the Church together—people from each institution offering to help the others with construction projects, etc. A barn for horses was located at the site of the current Post Office. She also recalls ice-skating on Prince Cove and the Duck Pond, including on one occasion when Route 149 iced over. Bonfires were sometimes lit after the skating was over.

When the Methodist Church closed in the mid-1960's, Audrey took dancing lessons in the vacated building. The church building became the Ruth Feeley Studio of Dance. Then in 1980, Rev. Sherman reopened the church, after which an addition for the current large sanctuary was built in 1992.

In her own words, Audrey expresses the strong sentiment of cohesion in Marstons Mills.

"Marstons Mills has been my home for 56 years. After marriage, we lived in Osterville; I worked in Osterville, but Marstons Mills has called me always. When we bought our first home in the Mills, I knew this would be where I would live forever! When I die I want to have my ashes spread at my parents' home, 2161 Main Street, my own home, 24 Hartford Ave, and my church--MM Community Church!

Everything I need is right here in this Village. I appreciate all that people do to continue with the unity of this Village, and I look forward to the renovations of the Village center."



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