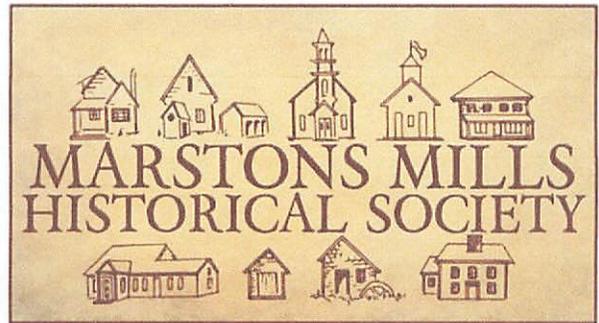


Marstons Mills Historical Society
Interview with Dianne Kavanagh Potter
(by David Martin & Nancy Wong)
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On the day I was born in Boston in May 1945, my father was not at the hospital, but was down here on the Cape at the closing on the purchase of our summer house (Bayberry Bend) at 370 Mystic Drive. Our family lived in Waban, and this was to be our summer home.

In the 1920's, our house was originally a fishing shack overlooking Middle Pond (at one time it was called Middle Lake). There was only a one-lane dirt road which ran alongside the Duck Farm out to Route 149. I remember the kitchen sink with a hand pump and a propane tank outside to operate the gas refrigerator. Besides the kitchen, the downstairs had a combined living room and dining area, a bathroom, and a screened in porch. There were four small bedrooms upstairs. The pump house outside contained the generator that supplied electricity; it was shut down by 9:00 in the evening and then we used kerosene lamps until it was bedtime. There was no telephone and we would go to the Cash Market if we needed to use a telephone.

We would come down in June; and my mother, my four older brothers and sisters and I would stay for the summer. My father was in the food business and he would take the train from Boston on Fridays for the weekend; we'd wait for him at the West Barnstable train station. My mother's friends worried about her and five small children staying in such an isolated area.

The only other house in this neighborhood was right next to ours and was owned by the Phelans (later owned by the McHenrys). It had formal gardens. Jackie Phelan had a beautiful horse named Lady. During the hurricanes (Carol in 1954; Diane in 1955), our two houses were the only ones in the area to have electricity because we had generators.

Our house was remodeled in 1965 by George Lapham, the builder. Once the house was finished, Manuel Gomes and his masons built a brick patio that ran the length of the house. My parents moved here full time about 1970, but they also had a second home in Florida.

We knew the O'Neills, especially Billy and Inez, who lived across from what is now McCook's (corner of Route 149 and Mystic). Laura O'Neill's husband was Les Ryan, a professional wrestler. They had ponies and we would go there for pony rides and take riding lessons.

We knew Charlie Thifault, and Jane and Tom Pittendreigh, and other kids in the neighborhood because they all came to swim at the public beach on Middle Pond. Cookie Thifault would babysit us. Cop Moe (Maurice) Hinckley was a well known character around town. When I got married in 1968, my parents had the wedding reception at Bayberry Bend, and Moe took care of all the parking; Jeannette Bowes from Osterville catered the wedding. Other kids we knew were Teddy Duarte, Trafton Hinckley, Linda Parker, and Tommy and Nora Gifford; Tommy would ride his horse up to our place.

The Hadley family started the Duck Farm in the 1920's. We knew Parker Hadley and Tommy Hadley; they were cousins. Parker's horse was named Midnight. Both families lived on Falmouth Road, on either side of what is now Mystic Drive. Crawford Hollidge lived right in between Middle Pond and

Hamblin Pond. He loved to hunt and shoot, and we would go target shooting at his shooting range. That is now known as Hollidge Hill.

The only public buildings I remember in the Mills were the Cash Market, the Post Office, the Library, and Liberty Hall. The Cash Market was owned by Frank McClusky and the only place that had a telephone. The post office was in the back of the Cash Market building. "Junior" Jones was the youngest postmaster in the country. Kay Dick was the assistant postmistress (perhaps unofficially). The Library was very small and open only a few days a week.

We went to Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Osterville, or sometimes to St. Jude's in Santuit, or Our Lady of Hope in West Barnstable. We shopped for groceries in Osterville. In the 1950's, Osterville had three grocery stores. The A & P and the First National were both on Main Street on either side of the Cape Cod Bank & Trust building (now TD Bank). Swift's Market (now Fancy's) was further down on Main Street. Both my brothers, Jack and Kevin, worked at the A&P, and Janie Pittendreigh was a meat wrapper there. I worked as a clerk at Catherine's in Osterville (owned by Catherine Hansberry), a small store that sold children's and women's clothing as well as jewelry, linens, and what we used to call Notions (sewing supplies, etc.).

I remember that Burgess House was on the front cover of the Boston Globe magazine every year as the quintessential Cape Cod house. We often went to Craigville Beach or Dowses Beach, and recall going to Sandy Neck in my mother's Essex where we climbed huge dunes. There was a movie theater in Osterville (where Designer's Walk is now). We went to the Osterville library that was originally located in the building that is now Oyster Island Emporium. Miss Hinckley (known as Miss Kathy) was the librarian. We'd go to the Osterville News Stand to buy comic books. The House & Garden was the only hardware store around. Dr. Leach was the veterinarian in the town and he had a big farm where the Sheriff's Youth Farm is now. We'd go to the Barnstable County Fair, which was held on Route 149 across from the airport. We either walked or biked to get around, but our dirt road was bumpy and wide enough for only one car.

Phinney's egg farm was on the corner of Route 28 (where Pennycress Drive is today). What is now the White Hen convenience store was Mr. Hansen's Sunoco Station, where we would stop on the way home from church on Sundays to get gasoline for the generator and to pick up eggs at Mr. Phinney's. "The Roost" was a motel / camping ground next to the White Hen, and the rooster on the sign was to let Cape Verdeans know that they could stay there. There was an icehouse on Route 28 between White Hen and Main Street, and we'd go there for blocks of ice when we had company. For ice cream we'd go to Four Seas in Centerville or Turner's in Hyannis. There weren't many restaurants in those days, but Wimpy's and the East Bay Lodge in Osterville were popular.

