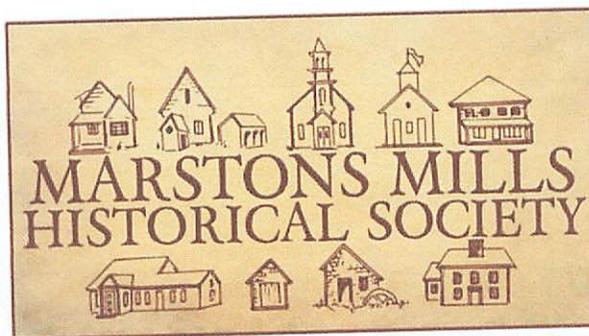


Marstons Mills Historical Society  
Interview with Susan Leach  
(by Jim Gould)



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Susan Leach's father, Daniel Friel Leach, the first veterinarian on Cape Cod (1938), was born 31 Jan. 1903 in PA. He died Hyannis 28 Jan. 1986. His father Ernest R. Leach came from England as an indentured servant to the Forbes Family, and drove a milk wagon (where?). In England he had been a 100-pound steeplechase jockey. He married Susan Friel. 3 sons: Daniel, James and Thomas, all of whom he sent to college.

Daniel at age 17 got a job caring for horses of Forbeses of Nantucket. There he met Eileen Glidden, born there 1914, daughter of Walter Glidden & Sarah Lally. Glidden owned Charlie Glidden's fish market there. Sarah came to US from Ireland during the potato famine, earning her way by sewing shirts.

Daniel went to U. of Pa., where he studied architecture, an interest he put into the redesign of the house and barn in Marstons Mills. He earned the degree of VMD c. 1935. His first work was in Plymouth for a year (ask for article about this). He then came to the Cape, looked at the Kennedy's farm in north Osterville, but lacked \$500 of the price. In 1938 bought the house and barn on 20 acres on Race Lane and Osterville-W. Barnstable Road (Deed 538/500 from Harry C. Lane with \$7500 mortgage from seller). The nearby Plains School had disappeared before World War II, but Susan visited Hattie Blossom Fritze in her home just north of the Leaches, "a nice old lady".

Daniel established a large animal veterinarian practice, doing surgery, artificial insemination, inoculation, etc. He remodeled both house and barn. The entrance to the barn was opposite the house leading into a waiting room; behind to the left was the operating room; his office was to the right, and behind it by 1945 the x-ray room. As his family grew, he added dormers to the house to create four bedrooms upstairs (about 1939-40).

7 children (dates from VR):

1. "Judy" Judith Anne b. 28 Jan. 1937, res. Goshen NY, tax collector
2. "Danny" Daniel Friel Jr. b. 5 Sept 1939
3. Susan Mary b. 29 Dec. 1940, m (1) 17 Sept. 1960 -Arthur Johnson; (2) 20 Oct. 1967 Phillip Sheridan Butler; 3 children.
4. David Glidden b. 25 Feb. 1943 m. 18 Aug. 1962 Phyllis Jean Traynor
5. Paula Jane b. 24 May 1945 res. Telluride CO
6. "Jon" Jonathan Hayward b. 15 April 1950, m. 21 Oct. 1977 Susan Margaret Fanjoy of Dighton; veterinarian N. Falmouth and Hyannis.
7. Christopher Charles b. 13 Oct. 1952, died age 22 after Army service 22 June 1975 Craigville; thrown from back of motorcycle of his friend Mike Demas, band leader.

During World War II Dr. Leach served in the Coast Guard, using sentry dogs that patrolled the shores against German landings. His younger brother, James Hayward Leach (1910-70), was also in the service, and joined him after graduating from Cornell veterinary school. James was a dark-haired

handsome, fun-loving man, loud and boisterous in contrast to Daniel, the light-complexioned quiet gentle man who never raised his voice, very much the likes of James Herriot, the hero of "All Creatures Great and Small".

In 1950 James started his own practice in Eastham, on 37 acres the Gunn house at Fort Hill. He never had any children, but his house was filled with exotic pets, including a monkey that slept with them, goats, a golden eagle, etc. His second wife, Frances Sheals, owned a pet shop at the west end of Hyannis, off the south side of Main St. James died young, at 59, a heavy smoker.

Daniel's practice included small animals, as well as cows, horses, goats, and pigs. After operating in the morning, afternoon he did house calls in a station wagon with "Cape Cod Animal Hospital" lettered on the side. He often came home late at night. Among his customers were E. K. Davis who got rid of his horses in 1954, including his carriage horses. Others were the Manchesters, Danforths, and Oyster Harbors stable. He served the pig farms on Lumbert Mill Rd. and next to the dump. Also sheep and Welsh ponies at Mrs. Ingersoll's Grazing Fields on Buzzard's Bay, which is now a riding school..

Dr. Leach had his own herd of 20 cows, pastured on the Lawrence farm on the northeast corner of W. Barnstable Rd. and Race Lane, on which he had a 100-year lease. On the opposite (NW) corner he grew his own hay, cut twice a year by Alfred Fuller of Marstons Mills, a harvest that won state awards. The kids were not supposed to go in the hayfield, but it was a wonderful place! He had his horses shod by another Fuller of Bell Farm in Cotuit, who had an anvil at the Leaches, and made his own horseshoes. Dr. Leach had a thoroughbred horse, whose dam was "Relic Queen" of the McGanns and another Wianno horse.

Susan loved the work on the farm, starting at age 14 at 25¢ an hour in 1963, later raised to a dollar, but enticed away by Walcott Ames's offer of \$45 a week. She would have loved to be a vet, but women were not encouraged to go into the profession, and even her parents discouraged it.

The business was sold about 1973 to Bill Laughlin, then to Dr. Munson who now has it. The barn/hospital burned down in 2010, but Dr. Leach's operating table was saved, and is still used. The family built a house across the street about 1977.