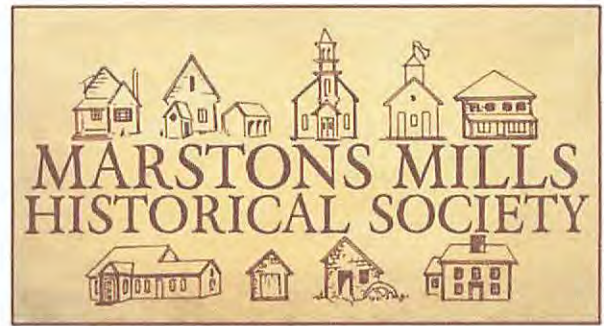


Marstons Mills Historical Society
Interview with Maureen McPhee
(by Jim Gould & David Martin)
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Q: What are some of the characters that you remember in Marstons Mills?

A: Francis Ellis, "the Mayor of Marstons Mills" rode around on his bicycle, with a wire basket on the front. Normally he wore shorts and sneakers all year, but in cold weather had a heavy overcoat. He lived with his mother in the second house on the right on Old Falmouth Road. There was Mary Hall Hamblin, outspoken, a woman ahead of her time, who opened her own business, an antique shop. Her aunt-in-law Mary "Charlie" Hamblin, wife of Charles Hamblin who had the nudist colony. Of Portuguese descent, a gentle woman, a wonderful...

Q: What can you tell us about the nudist camp?

A: Kids would paddle canoes on Long Pond over to see the nudists, but a modesty wall had been built around the area. People would come from out of state and occasionally drive down our road to ask where Sandy Shores was.

Q: How about where you lived?

A: My sister and I were born in Milford, Connecticut during the war when Father was working at Sikorsky helicopters. We moved back to Marstons Mills. The family land on Long Pond and across the road was owned by Loring Jones, Senior, my grandfather. My Father bought a laundry room from the Mass. Military Academy and Bob Hayden moved it in four pieces to Long Pond, for \$150. When he told his father (my grandfather) about it, he said it only cost \$100. The camp was rented to other people in summers, when they'd rent out their own houses, and come here. My parents gave me the Long Pond property after we were married, and I lived there for almost 40 years. We renovated the camp to install plumbing, electricity, and heat. I grew up at 760 River Road, across from Muddy Pond; my Father called "Top of the Hill House". My grandfather owned bogs across the street, and sold them to John Hamblin.

My grandparents also ran the Cash Market. My Father was born there in the back addition in 1915. My Mother bought meat from the Market for many years; if the meat were tough, she didn't blame it on Frank McCluskey. She'd say, "Poor Frank" and blame it on poor quality of meat from New Bedford; she'd say, "Poor Frank" and blame the quality on the distributor in New Bedford. My friends and I would go over to Hyannis, walk up and down Main Street (which was then two-way), and sit and watch the summer people. Great free entertainment.

We swam in Long Pond; my son and daughter ice-skated on it. It always froze in winter, but we skated on the frozen bog at Muddy Pond [opposite what is now Olde Homestead Road] because my Mother was nervous about the thickness of the ice on Muddy Pond. I remember people ice-fishing and ice-boating on Long Pond and Muddy Pond in winter.

Q: What about school?

A: I went to school in the four room elementary school on Main Street at the time. It's the building that's now the John Lawrence Funeral home; in fact, the current rooms are still very much like the four classrooms that we had. When I go to a funeral or a wake, it brings back memories of the school. That was grades 3-4. and 5-6.

Oscar Kearny, a Black man, was a wonderful cook who made great macaroni and cheese. Dorothy Moore, the principal, ruled with an iron hand. We had to decide to either buy lunch for the whole week or bring a brown bag for the whole week. We couldn't just switch back and forth.

Tony Souza of Cotuit drove the bus, which was named the "Donna", probably for his daughter. From our house we could watch the bus coming along Newtown Road across Muddy Pond, and so my mother could hold us in the house until it got close, especially when it rained. A parent had to write a note "Please let Maureen go to the Parkers", to allow the child to go home on a different bus with a friend after school—not like today. When Dorothy Moore retired my mother made a rag doll out of fabrics of her pupils' dresses and gave it to Dot. Ruth Rusher had it later.

Mr. Naylor, 5-6th grade teacher, was my favorite; I liked English, diagramming of sentences in his class. Mrs. Prince was first grade teacher.

I went to junior and senior high (7th and 8th grades) where the Pope John School is now, and then in the first class at the new Barnstable High School for four years, on graduating in the first class of 1961. Then I went to Cape Cod Community College, then where the Town Hall is in Hyannis, and was also in the first graduating class there in 1963. The college was mostly on the top floors, and the President's office in the northwest corner, where later my office was. My former husband, who graduated from University of Mass. in English taught briefly at Falmouth high school and at the community college.

Q: Where did you go to church?

A: I went to Our Lady of Assumption Church in Osterville. My mother's parents in Ireland had both died. When I was in school, the nuns picked us Catholic students up and brought us from school to the Cenacle for catechism class. I think the priest was Father Buckley. My father's family, the Joneses, went to the Methodist church here

Q: How about your jobs?

A: I raised two children first, and then in 1977 I began working as a volunteer library aide, in Marstons Mills School and Cotuit School. Then I was hired as a library aide at the high school. We were divorced in 1982 so I began working in the [Tax] Collector's office in 1982 until 1990. I then became assistant to Paula Maura at the Senior Center. When Paula Packer retired in 1995 as Town Tax Collector . I ran for Collector and won against an opponent. I was re-elected twice, without opposition, and retired in 2007. My office was in what had been the Community College President's office before the college moved to its new location. I became a Town Representative for a year and a half during the final year of the old form of town government. In town meeting things were voted up or down, and that ended it. If you didn't like it, you brought it back at the next meeting or special meeting. Why did we give up Town Meeting? We outgrew it—and apathy. After the Representative form we went to Town Manager (Warren Rutherford) and Town Council.

Q: Any other memories of old Marstons Mills?

A: I remember that my father allowed the land (now the O'Connell's) where the Quonset Hut was built, for the men's group, the Marstons Mills Athletic and Civic Club (the same group that now runs Liberty Hall). They would hold ham-and-bean suppers and have barbecues. There was a house beyond the hut for bog workers—lots of Portuguese. The hut was removed and later O'Connell built on it. The senior Mr. Thew was one of that group.

The Whitcomb farm [above Long Pond] was run by the Childses. Mother and I called on Mary Childs for tea. Her arthritis was so bad that she couldn't tear the wrapping off the lettuce from the store. Kathleen Lovell's old house on River Road was inherited by her two sons Steven and John Farrar.

Bea Latham—What a sweet lady!-- wrote poetry and wrote some for special occasions. She sat in a rocking chair and read to children in the elementary school in the 1970's as a volunteer; they called her "Nana B".

We swam in the ponds, but also in salt water. My grandparents ran the Beach House at Craigville, and we spent the day at the beach sometimes. I got my right index finger caught one time in the wringer that people used to dry out their bathing suits.

My Mother did 4-H in the mid-1950's. In that 1954 snowstorm four of my girl friends got snowed in when they were visiting our house for 4-H. Mother took care of them for four days, and fed them until they were finally able to go home.