

Marstons Mills Historical Society
Interview with
Jane Pittendreigh Smith
(by Jim Gould & David Martin)
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On May 11, 2011 Jim Gould and David Martin interviewed Jane P. Smith of 71 Rosa Lane, Marstons Mills. Jane did her best to relay some information regarding the houses situated on Rosa Lane.

The oldest house is at 109 Rosa Lane. It was occupied by her Great Grandparents, Joseph Domingos, Gracie Rosa and Frances Gloria Rosa. They purchased the property, consisting of about 27 acres, from Henry D. Hamblin, on October 5, 1905. No records of deeds about this property can be found before 1814. It was owned by Joseph Lawrence of Sandwich at that time. He sold it to Cornelius Jones, a Yeoman, on November 24, 1814. On March 16, 1833 Cornelius sold it to Silas F. Jones, a wheelwright. Silas then sold it to David Jones, a Mariner, in December, 1846. When David Jones died in 1892, his daughter Betsey and husband James Fish received the homestead comprising of about 27 acres together with house, barn, and outbuildings valued at \$517. On July 23, 1892 Henry Hodges bought it from Betsey Fish for \$200. On June 25, 1896 Mr. Hodges sold it to Henry D. Hamblin for \$350. It is not clear how much the Rosa's paid for the property.

The Rosas lived there for many years. Family tradition says that this house was built before 1800. Frances Gloria Rosa claimed 1749, but it is not known on what she based this statement. Jane has a photo of the house that has the date 1743 written in pen on the back. Truth is, the house is OLD. There is still bark on the rafter boards; old square-headed nails were used, and some of the boards in the roof and attic floor are 23 inches wide and 12 feet long. The house faces southeast; it does not face the dirt road that cuts through the property between the house and garage. Upon the death of Joseph Rosa, Frances Gloria received his estate, and then at her death on February 11, 1948, her son, John Gracie Rosa inherited the property. At some time, Jane thinks 1939, her mom, Frances Elizabeth Rosa, the only grandchild of Frances Gloria Rosa, received the section of property on Middle Pond as a gift. John Rosa sold the rest of the property including the house, etc. to Manuel Moniz on March 3, 1952. Mr. Moniz was a landscape gardener and used a large portion of the property to strip for topsoil. On February 27, 1953 Manuel Moniz sold a small portion of the property to Leslie and Olga Millerd -- approximately .86 acres on which the house and buildings sat. On January 13, 1959 the Millerds sold the same property to James and Doris Barry.

Irving and Grace Audrey Weymouth (Jane's godmother) bought the property as a summer home in December 1961 from the Barry's. In 1972 the Weymouths retired and moved from Medford, MA to Marstons Mills and made this old house their permanent residence. They made many improvements: an enclosed porch became a front entry; new bathroom and upgraded bedrooms were done. The house, for many years was painted brick red. They put white vinyl siding on in 1985. Richard C. Weymouth, their son, inherited 109 Rosa Lane at their deaths and has since sold it to Tom and Kathy Faline of Marstons Mills. The Falines are the present owners. Jane does not know too much about 90 Rosa Lane other than that John G. Rosa, her mother's uncle, lived there. She mostly remembers when the Barry's lived there. Glenn Barry is Jane's 2nd cousin; their grandmothers were sisters. The Barry's had a big German shepherd. One day it bit Jane in the back of the leg as she was running between two houses. She was about 7 years old. Since then, Jane has not been a big fan of big dogs!!! The present owners of 90 Rosa

Lane are Timothy and Sharon Welsh. (They have a small dog named Sarah!).

The homestead at 70 Rosa Lane is most familiar to Jane. Deeds of record begin on February 11, 1811 when Seth Backus, a Mariner, sold the property (about 16 acres) to Abner Jones. On June 15, 1818, Abner Jones, a Yeoman, sold it to Stephen and Harvey Jones for \$700. On May 22, 1821 Stephen sold his half to his brother Harvey Jones. On February 24, 1871 the heirs of Harvey Jones sold the property to Nathan A. Jones. And on July 28, 1919, Lucy Jones, wife of deceased Nathan Jones, sold it to Domingos Gracie Rosa who is Jane's grandfather. Domingos (known mostly as Grade Rosa) was born in Fayal, Azores about August 13, 1889. (Jane is not sure of this date of birth). He was the son of Joseph Domingos Gracie Rosa and Frances Gloria Rosa who occupied 109 Rosa Lane from 1905-1948. He was John Rosa's brother. It is not clear to Jane when the Rosa family came to America, but it was after Gracie was born. Jane's recollection of her grandfather comes from stories from her mother and photos. He died of a heart attack on December 9, 1943, two years before she was born. She says he was a "Jack of all trades!" - carpenter, farmer, landscaper, mason. He sold loam, sand, gravel, and cement blocks that he made. He was an avid fisherman.

Domingos Gracie Rosa married Grace Adelaide Sinnett on December 25, 1912. Grace was born in Boston, MA on May 8, 1891. She was one of the ten children born to Thomas F. Sinnett and Jemima Elizabeth, both from Bristol, England. The Sinnett history is as follows: Thomas was the 2nd of three sons by George and Jane Putt Sinnett. Thomas was born January 31, 1854 in Bristol. The family came to America in 1855 when he was less than one year old. Evidently, George was not the best of fathers or providers. Upon arrival in this country, he went off to do business with the Cherokees. He was gone for three years, and with no word from him, his wife, Jane, assumed he was dead. Since the money to live on was about gone, she took her boys back to England in 1858. At the end of five years the "widow" was about to marry an old friend and provide the boys with a father, when George appeared in England. Upon receiving some life insurance money after a sister's death, George then packed his family back to America in 1864. He was in business in Boston when the Civil War began. George enlisted as a quartermaster on the "Little Ada" which supplied ammunition to the Monitor. He served one year; got injured on board ship; was discharged; and was never in good health again. He died at age 49.

Thomas F. Sinnett was a much better father and provider than his dad. He worked in Boston as an upholsterer. In July 1874 he married Jemima Elizabeth Hall (born 1858). They had many children: Jennie born 1875; Thomas born 1880; Raymond born 1882; Harold born 1884; Clifton born 1888; Grace born 1891 (Jane's grandmother... she called her Nana); John born 1893; Dorothy born 1895; Gladys born 1898; and Robert born 1902. It is not clear if and when the Sinnett family moved from the Boston area to the Cape. Jane knows that her Nana (Grace) worked as a telephone operator in Boston at the time of her marriage to Domingos Grade Rosa.

Gracie and Grace made 70 Rosa Lane their home around 1913. Jane's mother, Frances Elizabeth Rosa, was born November 25, 1916; born and raised on this homestead; she was the only surviving child of Grace and Gracie Rosa. Their first born, Dorothy, died at age 6 of whooping cough. Twin boys died at birth. Frances grew up on Rosa Lane. She attended elementary school in the building now known as the John Lawrence Funeral Home. She went to Barnstable High School and was active in sports. On the basketball court Frannie was known as "Roughhouse Rosa" for her quickness and tenacity. Upon graduation, Frances attended Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School in Boston. She became a secretary for Cecil I. Goodspeed Insurance Company of Osterville. Jane recalls some of her mom's favorite stories of

growing up here. Frances and friends would drive out to Race Lane near what is now the Marstons Mills airport. They parked their autos; turned up the radios; and danced and drank until all hours. Growing up, Fran had a German shepherd named Flash who followed her everywhere and protected her as best as he COULD. When Frannie went swimming down at Middle Pond on the property then owned by her grandmother, Flash would jump in after her and swim out to her in an effort to "save" her. He was a great friend. There is a cement slab on the Rosa Lane property, and although it is now covered with grass, it is his resting place.

Frances met her husband to be, Lorrin Malcolm Pittendreigh, while he was installing water pipe in Osterville. Fran drove by the construction every day on her way to work at Cecil Goodspeed's office. Malcolm noticed her every day and made it his mission to meet her.

Lorrin Malcolm Pittendreigh, Jane's father, was born March 27, 1911. He was the 2nd child of William Alexander Pittendreigh and Ninita Towle Ferdinand. The elder William Pittendreigh (Lorrin's grandfather), came to America from Aberdeen, Scotland in March 1871. Sometime between 1871 and 1881, William met and married Jane Smith (not the interviewee), born in Worcester, MA in 1851. She was the daughter of Scottish immigrants - John E. Smith and Isabella Buchan. William worked as a gardener at the Whitin Estate in Linwood, MA. William and Jane Pittendreigh had twin boys – William Alexander and John Malcolm; and a daughter named Charlotte Helen, but fondly called Lottie. William Pittendreigh stayed and worked at the Whitin Estate until 1927. Even though he had stopped working, he continued to direct the work at the Estate. He died there on March 4, 1931. He was 82 years old.

William Alexander Pittendreigh (one of the twin boys) was born March 7, 1881. He was called Alex. After graduating from High School in Linwood, then continuing his education, he joined the faculty of the New Bedford Vocational High School in 1917. He was head of the Machine Shop Department and later organized a department of automobile mechanics.

Alex's Mom worked for a seamstress who was the mother of Ninita Towle Ferdinand. Alex's sister Lottie and Ninita became friends. Eventually Ninita met Lottie's older brother Alex and the two married on October 2, 1907. Ninita and Alex had 4 children: Janet Pittendreigh b. Nov. 6, 1908, d. Nov. 23, 2008; Lorrin Malcolm Pittendreigh b. March 27, 1911, d. April 21, 1988; William Alexander, Jr. b. Sept. 12, 1912, d. May 2, 1913; William Wallace Pittendreigh b. February 7, 1916 d. April 25, 1996. Alex worked at the school for 36 years and retired April 2, 1951. He enjoyed gardening; walking his dog; and camping in Dolly Copp Campground in New Hampshire. He died April 19, 1960, and Ninita died in 1975.

Lorrin Malcolm grew up and was schooled in New Bedford and attended Northeastern University. He was a civil engineer with Whitman and Howard for 35 years. Then he worked for Dufresne and Henry in Springfield, VT. "Mac", as he was known, married Frances Rosa in the garden of the Rosa Homestead on October 9, 1939. They lived in Boston in their early years of marriage. Lorrin Thomas Pittendreigh was born May 29, 1942 in Exeter, NH, where Mac was putting in water for that town. Shortly after Tom's birth, Mac was drafted and worked as a sanitary engineer in Ft. Leavenworth, KS and later at Jefferson Barracks, MO. Jane Pittendreigh was born in St. Louis on June 6, 1945. After the war, Mac and Fran made their home in Melrose, MA – convenient for Mac to work in Boston and easy access to the Cape Cod home in summer. Jane considers herself a "summer brat" of Marstons Mills. Her dad turned the outbuilding where Grade dried his cement blocks into a summer cottage for the family and then called it "The HideAway" since it was attached to the 2-car garage, but was built on the lower road so it could

barely be seen from Rosa Lane. The living space was one room, but it had a separate bathroom and dividers of homemade bookcases and hanging bedspreads. It was fun and simple living and easy walking distance to the family property on Middle Pond. Jane remembers her father's boat and how he gave the Mills kids waterskiing rides, etc. Jane worked summers as a meat wrapper at the A&P in Osterville; as a babysitter; and later as a sales clerk at Catherine's, owned by Catherine Hansberry of Osterville. Her Nana, Grace Rosa, worked at Craigville Beach in the summer checking baskets of clothes for beach goers at wonderful Craigville Beach. Her mom, Fran, made sure Nana was well-fed and cared for each day at supertime. Summer times were pleasant times. Fran and Mac didn't move to Cape Cod permanently until Mac retired around 1977.

On September 23, 1957, Lori Pittendreigh was born. Jane was twelve years old and brother Tom 15. It was kind of a wonderful surprise for the whole family. Both Jane and Tom went through school in Melrose. After graduation, Jane attended Keuka College in Keuka Park, NY. While at Keuka, she met and dated Donald Davies Smith, born April 13, 1942 in Irondequoit, NY. Don had graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and was an assistant director of Residence Halls at the University of Rochester, Rochester, NY. It was love at first sight! Don proposed to Jane at the HideAway the summer of 1966. They were married on June 24, 1967, just weeks after Jane's graduation from Keuka. They lived in Kingston, RI that first year. Jane taught grade one in Westerly, and Don worked at URI. When the Director of Residence Halls position became available at U of R, Jane and Don headed to Rochester. Don got the job and Jane taught grade one in Pittsford, NY. They lived in one of the resident apartments on campus.

In the summer of 1969 Jane and Don camped out west in the Tetons and travelled through parts of the West. They fell in love with that part of the country. When a position for Director of the Student Center at Colorado College in Colorado Springs became available, Don applied. They moved there in June of 1970. In July 1970 they purchased 20 acres of land just west of Pikes Peak. They had hoped to build a cabin there, but the birth of their two children and the changes in building codes in the area put their hopes on hold. Kirsten Neill Smith was born October 14, 1970 and Tod Thoreau Smith was born April 12, 1973.

Jane, Don, and family lived in Colorado for six years. They enjoyed camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, and living at the college. Although they had always wanted a more simple life with a chance to grow their own food, etc., their middle class values kept them in limbo. That chance came in July of 1976. Don's job plan was shifting, and it wasn't working for the family. They sold all possessions (except the land) and moved to Cape Cod. They lived in the HideAway where life was very simple. Both found part-time work to share care of the children. They even started a window-washing business and called it The WindowSmiths. They insulated the HideAway; built sleeping areas in the rafters for Tod and Kirsten; heated and cooked with wood; and even heated their bath water on the woodstove. They grew their own food and had their parents nearby at 70 Rosa Lane for support and good times.

In 1982 Jane got a half-time teaching position in kindergarten at Hyannis East Elementary. They decided it was time to add a second story onto the HideAway. A local friend built it for them, and now The HideAway is 71 Rosa Lane - a 3-bedroom cottage on 2.68 acres right next to the Marstons Mills River. Jane moved into the first grade position the next school year and taught at Hy East for 25 years. She retired in 2007. Don coached cross country at BHS for 15 years. He did substitute teaching and was their Energy Officer, too. He retired in 2005. Both Kirsten and Tod attended Barnstable schools. Kirsten went on to Cornell for her BS and then Boston University for her MS. She is a Project Scientist at SEA Consultants in Cambridge. Kirsten and husband Henry Scott Ryan were married at the Rosa Homestead June 28, 2003. They reside in Brighton, MA with two dogs and two cats. Tod graduated

from Syracuse University in 1990. He married Kim Squaglia, an artist from Sacramento, CA on September 21, 2003 at Lake Tahoe. Tod and Kim reside in Sacramento where he is a licensed contractor and runs Smith Builders. They have two children - Benjamin Davies Smith born January 12, 2006 and Alyson Frances Smith born November 17, 2007.

Jane and Don are moving to California as of the time of this interview, in order to be near their grandchildren.

