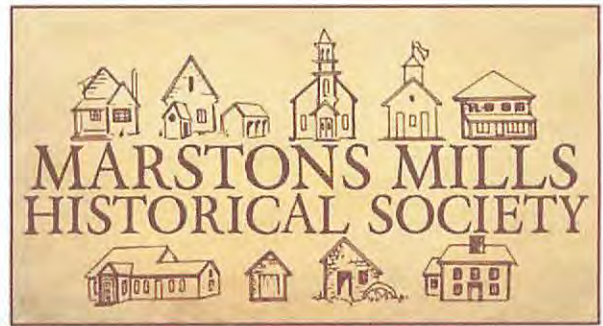


Marstons Mills Historical Society
Interview with
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(by Dianne Kavanagh Potter & David Martin)
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Our father Frank (1917 – 1981) and mother Janet (1917 – 2007) moved to Marstons Mills with their family in 1950 from New Haven, Connecticut. Jeanne was twelve, Judy was ten and Bob was three; David wasn't born until 1953. Dad became a partner with Loring Jones, Jr. ("Junior") in owning the Marstons Mills Cash Market that Junior had inherited from his father. Junior's wife, Adele Pond Jones, is our cousin; her father and our grandmother were brother and sister.

Dad and Junior owned and operated the Cash Market until 1976/77, when they sold it to Don McKeag (who later owned the Asa Bearse House in Hyannis and the Flying Bridge Restaurant in Falmouth). Dad ran the store operation, which was a full service market, including a meat counter (with Dad as butcher) and fresh vegetables and fruit. Junior ran the post office which at that time was at the rear of the store; Dell was a clerk at the post office. Alva Macomber was the first cashier. Frank, Junior, and Alva all worked seven days a week and each of them would get one Sunday off each month!

Bob: we went to the elementary school just up the road. Oscar Kearney was the cook at the school. He made the best macaroni and cheese! Everyone still remembers it as their favorite meal there!

We grew up in this house (the Hamblin – Benson house at 64 Route 149). It's 170 years old and goes back to the 1840s. Now the house is divided in two and we each have our own half.

Judy: The Mills was a wonderful place to grow up. Everyone knew everybody else. You felt protected.

Some of the stories we remember:

- Mrs. Huston had a huge car, may have been a Packard. She had a tough time maneuvering around the circle in front of the store with those big tires. Had to help her get the car off the curb sometimes.
- Mrs. Wainwright had a place on River Road. Another Ziegfeld girl. She wore really big hats. She named her son Wainwright!
- Oscar LaRange (Nancy Condinho's father) lived on River Road and even when he was elderly he would drive down to the store every day for the paper. My father would turn Oscar's car around for him so that he was headed back up River Road towards home.
- Warren Hallett was a substitute mailman in the 50's. He drank a lot of 7-Up and used to lean on the kerosene stove in the store, talking with the other customers. One time there was a snow storm advancing and he waited so long in the store, he couldn't get his truck out. He declined my father's invitation to walk over to our house for the night and instead stayed overnight in the store – the only thing he ate was a box of Pilot Crackers!
- Aunt May Crocker (also River Road) was in her 80's and wouldn't hesitate to call the store to ask my father to come over to help out – things like she couldn't open the mayonnaise jar. He didn't hesitate to help her out, and she'd say "you're a good boy, Frank!"
- Frank Peabody lived right in the square in a little white house. He had a lot of daffodils in his garden. When I was little, I went over and picked some of them as a gift to my mother. My father sent me right

back to Mr. Peabody to give them back! Mr. Peabody said I could keep that bouquet, but never to pick his flowers again.

- Dr. Higgins' house was across the street. His wife and daughter Priscilla stayed on there after he died. We'd go over to the Mill Pond next to their house for ice skating. The two women invited us in to warm up and gave us hot chocolate and molasses cookies.

My first job at the store was to take the bottles out back to a tin shed every day. I got paid a dime a day for that, and used it to buy chips or penny candy. Later, I did yard work and snow shoveling for the neighbors. Then I worked at Curly's Bait Shop and Ice House on Route 28. My hours were 5 AM to 9 AM, and then after school from 5 PM to 7 PM. I also worked for Joe Duarte doing landscaping around the village.

My father really enjoyed his customers and the people he did business with. He always looked for the good in people. Sometimes he would say, "I'm going to make that person smile some day!"

Junior was the postmaster for the village, and in 1941 when he was 21, he was the youngest one in the United States. He had wanted to serve in the military, but couldn't because of a childhood accident that injured his leg. Our father served in the Army in World War II; Judy remembers his homecoming in 1945.

There was a cottage behind the Mill Pond, known as the Eldridge homestead. Judy and her husband Mickey lived there when they were first married. It burned down this past January; it was quite a fire! <http://capecodfd.com/PAGES%20Special/COMM%20WF%20Off%20Acadia%20Dr%20011214.htm>

By the age of 15, you could get a firearms permit (even though you couldn't get a driver's license until 16). In the 1960s, we'd walk up Route 149 on our way to the (abandoned) duck farm to go bird hunting, guns in our arms. You wouldn't see that today.

Allen Pierce lived on River Road (next to Arthur Tiffault's). He had a large farm with all sorts of produce, and raised chickens as well. Allen used a golf cart to get around the property. We also went ice skating at Allen Pierce's. He had a mud hole that he'd fill with water to use for watering his crops. In the winter, we went skating on the mud hole; it was all frozen over and very safe.

Charlie Eldridge had a dog that would wander over to the Pierce property to go after the chickens. Allen warned Charlie that he'd shoot the dog if he caught him again. Sure enough, Allen and I were playing cribbage one night at his house and we heard the chickens all agitated. Allen had buckshot in his gun and hit the dog's rump and the dog ran off, whimpering. Before long, Allen's doorbell rang; Charlie was at that door with Mr. Silva, head man at the Centerville MSPCA. Mr. Silva told Allen that he had every right to kill an animal that was attacking his livestock, but he did not have the right to maim the animal! Allen responded, "Well, just bring that dog back here and I'll kill it!"

Lots of big families back then. The Pierce's had twelve children. The Gifford's had eleven.

Verl Setler was a sergeant with the Barnstable police, he married Lucille Gifford. In the 70's Allen and I had an idea to raise some chickens for a family barbeque. Don Melix had a plucking machine he'd gotten from his father-in-law Bob Parker who had raised ducks and chickens. Verl was from West Virginia and knew how to slaughter the chickens. Then we took the machine over to Allen's and he put

the dead chicken into the plucking machine and they came out without any feathers and the skin unharmed. Really amazing.

Every Christmas there would be lights on the locust tree outside the store. Junior's brother Lolly was an electrician and took care of the hook-ups, and Braddock Childs was a tree surgeon so we could use his truck. Dell Jones was very artistic and every year did a display using a glass-fronted box that was about 3'x 6' x 3'. One year there was a nativity scene in it; another year Dell found some dark blue aluminum foil and made a winter night scene with stars and snow. Judy remembers caroling around the village with the choir from the Methodist church.

Dell's house was always decorated for whatever the season or holiday. At Christmas-time, they had a huge Santa Clause propped on plywood in the yard.

One Christmas morning, my mother was about to make breakfast and had forgotten to buy eggs, so she sent Dad over to the store to get some. That was at 7:00 AM. Soon the villagers saw the lights in the store and came by to pick up whatever they had also forgotten. Dad didn't get back home until 11:00 AM. He explained to my mother that he couldn't turn his customers away!

In first grade, the other boys figured out that my Dad owned the Cash Market and they started to demand that I bring them candy every day. I could handle one or two of them, but not ten or more ganging up on me. So I started to bring them penny candy. Judy was in Junior High by this time and one day there was a big rainstorm and her bus stopped at the grammar school. Judy heard the boys yelling at me to not forget the candy tomorrow. She got off the bus and started cracking their heads together. They never bothered me again.

Judy: Speaking of school busses, I remember when we used to where those long scarves with tassels on our coats. One day on the bus while I was talking to my friends, a boy who was sitting in back of me tied the tassels on my scarf to the bar on the back of my seat. I went to get up and was stuck! I wriggled out of it and I guess I beat him up! Mutt McGoff was the bus driver then.