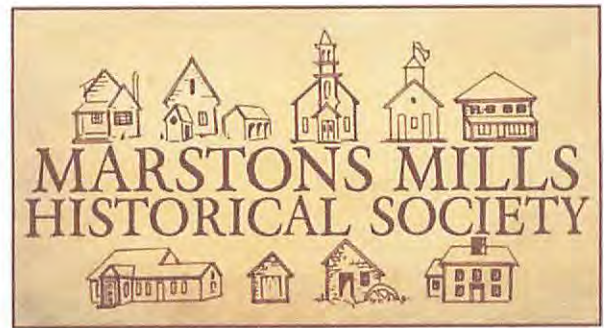


Marstons Mills Historical Society  
Interview with Thomas W. Hadley  
(Dianne Potter & Nancy Wong)  
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I was born on January 3, 1935 at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis, to Ruth and Lloyd R. Hadley. The Hadley family owned and operated the Clear Lake Duck Farm in Marstons Mills from the early 1930s up to its demise in the mid-1950s.

My grandfather was George Parker Hadley. He emigrated from Nova Scotia in the late 1890s. He married my grandmother Genevieve in 1907. My father, Lloyd, was born in 1909 in Dennis where my grandfather worked at a duck farm. They then moved to Wrentham where my grandfather was employed at the Webber Duck Farm & Inn as superintendent.

My grandmother died in 1928. At that time, my father was a boarding student at Tabor Academy in Marion. When he arrived home for the funeral, he told his father he didn't want to go back to Tabor. My grandfather said he could stay but would have to learn the "hard way" and live in the hired hands quarters and earn his keep.

In the early 1930s the Hadleys moved to Marstons Mills. My grandfather had remarried after Genevieve's death; his second wife was Isabelle. They bought 100 acres of land abutting Clear Lake (now called Hamblin's Pond) from Lorenzo Gifford.

Mr. Gifford owned a large area of the village, from the entire length of Lovell's Lane to River Road and over to the Crawford Hollidge property and down to the Burgess property, ending at the cemetery. Grandma Gifford was the Marstons Mills postmistress around 1940. The post office was then in front of the Gifford Barn (now gone) on 149 and it later became the Gifford slaughterhouse. The building is still standing, just to the right of the Gifford farmhouse.

George and Lloyd established the Clear Lake Duck Farm. They first built their colonial house on West Barnstable Road (now Route 149), and then next door the cape for Lloyd and my mother Ruth, who was from Rockland. These two houses are on either side of what is now the Mystic Drive entrance to Indian Lakes.

About Cape Cod Hospital: My wife Laurie (Campbell) from Cotuit was born there in 1935, 10 months after my birth there; delivered by Dr. Don Higgins. Laurie was his first white baby delivery; he had delivered some Indian babies over in Mashpee previously. Dr. Don's father had a big house over by Mill Pond and donated the land for Cape Cod Hospital. He was a great big man with a crew cut and he drove a Ford Oldsmobile. Dr. Gleason donated his home to the hospital.

I went to elementary school in Marstons Mills. The schoolhouse at that time was right off of Route 28 (in front of where the newer elementary school was built). The schoolhouse was later moved down to where the funeral home presently is situated on Route 28. Mrs. Moore was the principal, who was always watching to see if I was "behaving". There were only six of us in the 6th grade so it was easy to

see who was misbehaving. After that, I went to the Barnstable High School in Hyannis from 7th to 12th grade. That high school building is now Pope John Paul II Catholic High School.

The Duck Farm did very well through the end of WWII. In the summers, it employed 20-25 workers, coming from Marstons Mills, Mashpee, and West Barnstable. There were three main buildings: the incubator, the brooder houses, and the killing house. Feathers were stored in the attic pending their sale, and grain was stored in the basement. Peking ducks didn't fly and at 21 weeks, were considered old enough for eating. We also raised turkeys; their wings were nipped so they couldn't fly away. There was fencing all around the duck farm to keep out foxes and other predators; Mystic Drive was unpaved. I recall that Burgess had an aviary in which they raised exotic birds.

I started working at the duck farm as a delivery boy (I was driving by age 12). We delivered to the First National and A&P stores all around, and to the Steamship Authority for our customers on the islands. Due to the food shortages during the war years, sometimes there would be hijackings, and we would need to have someone ride shotgun.

We started raising turkeys in the early 1940s, just for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. There were two duck farms on the Cape at that time. We had ducks and turkeys. The Mayo Duck Farm in Orleans had chickens and ducks. There was a No Poaching agreement between us. We did business from Wareham to Harwich, and Mayo reached out from Harwich to Provincetown.

Post WWII, the duck farm business started to decline. Beef had been heavily rationed during the war, resulting in poultry becoming the main source of protein for most people. By the end of the war, people were tired of poultry. It was the beginning of the end. By the mid-1950's we were out of business. The grain companies foreclosed on the duck farm. My father tried to keep the turkey farm going, but ended up going to work for Bob Hayden.

I went into the service in 1953 as soon as I graduated from Barnstable High School. The Korean War was going on and the possibility of being drafted into the Army was very real. Two of my buddies and I decided to volunteer, and took the train from West Barnstable up to Boston where we enlisted in the Marine Corps. I was with the Marines for 10 years. After training at Paris Island, South Carolina and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, I landed in London as a corporal. Laurie and I were married there in 1956, and the wedding reception was held at our barracks in Kensington. Our oldest daughter Suzanne was born in London. We were also stationed in Quantico, Virginia and San Diego during those years.

After my discharge from the Marines in 1963, I immediately re-enlisted, this time with the Air Force. For the next 10 years I was stationed at Andrews AFB in Virginia, and in Thailand and Vietnam. The kids went to school in Quonset huts at Kadena AFB in Okinawa. All in all during those two enlistments, we moved 23 times in 18 years of service.

After I retired from the service, I had a military pension, but I was unemployed. I worked over at Otis AFB, then as a summer policeman at the Barnstable Police Department, and then worked at the Barnstable Airport in Hyannis for 20 years, retiring in 1996. Finally, I bought the Crosby Boat Launch Service in Cotuit and ran it for 7 years. The 80-hour workweeks were too much and I sold the business to a young couple. Now I work for them, at my own time and pace. I am enjoying retirement and my hobbies of jewelry making and hand crafted rope doorstops.