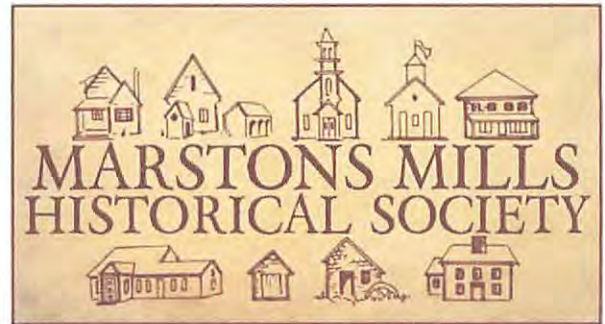


Marstons Mills Historical Society
Interview with
Barbara Hill
“Origins of MMHS”
(by Jim Gould and David Martin)
March 2017



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(In Barbara's words):

The main movers for the starting of an historical society were the Joneses, Vivian and Wilbur Cushing, and Bob McCluskey; Bob was the first president. Wilbur and Bob decided not to join the proposed more formal society because apparently Wilbur liked to do history "in the field", but didn't much like meetings. When Wilbur and Bob discontinued, Adele Jones got the Society started; she became the Secretary, and Vivian Cushing was the Treasurer. There are multiple volumes of written history kept by Wilbur, in Vivian's possession. I was President of the Society also, later.

Bunny Zenowich became a member of the Society. She and her husband retired to the Cape and bought the Joseph Crocker house on Race Lane. Bunny eventually became President of the Cape Cod Antiques Association and found the Crocker barn to be a good place to store antiques. She also filled her home with antiques. When the Society disbanded for a time, the several members remaining met each Christmas at Bunny's home to record any worthwhile events, with Del Jones taking minutes, and all of us enjoying refreshments.

Ted Pierce was a born raconteur. He drove the village store delivery truck, taking in gossip at the store and on the route. Eventually his father, a shoemaker, moved the family to Osterville, but as a boy Ted spent most of his time at the Higgins' home across the street (Route 149, formerly Cotuit Road) from his home. His house has been demolished now. Ted enjoyed the company of the Higgins children, the good meals, the hot baths, and various excursions. Dr. Higgins was one of the first car owners on the Cape and treated the children to a trip to Provincetown in the car. Priscilla Higgins took over the doctor's office when family members moved away or died. She was rather a recluse; however, she always kept Ted as a friend. He persuaded her to allow us to visit her. The desk of her father and all of his notes and records were never disturbed by her, so we never were able to enjoy their information.

Frank McCluskey and Junior Jones owned the grocery store. Frank also had a small butcher shop in the store and a back extension where he sold liquor, but only during the summer. To cut up pieces of meat, Frank had a marble slab. Eventually a state inspector came by, claiming that marble was unsanitary. The inspector did not know that marble isn't porous.

Del Jones enjoyed riding with her father when he delivered the village mail. When Spring came, the roads, being dirt, became a quagmire. Hattie Mecarta was postmistress. When the Joneses returned to Hattie's store, she always told Del to help herself to a piece of candy.

Joel Davis, whose brother Holbrook owned the hardware store in Osterville, offered to give me information about his father's estate and the dairy which his father had. Joel had a milk bottle from the dairy which he promised to give to the Society before he moved to Maine, but that never happened.

Nora Gifford enjoyed cooking. In winter when the little pond down the hill from the butcher shed was frozen, Nora (who always arose at 4am) would bake cookies and gingerbread to feed to the children after the skating on the frozen pond. She also enjoyed storing the vegetables and fruits in the long building that was attached to the house.

Hilda Hord met her husband Norman at a dinner party—he as a butler, and she as a maid, from the Cape. They fell in love and married. He gave up the job in Boston and bought the land on Race Lane. He had intended to do farming and planting an orchard. But a state farm inspector suggested that he buy cows and start a dairy since the land was not conducive to farming. They became good dairymen. Hilda would drive to Wellfleet late in the afternoon if a customer called, wanting milk and cream for an unexpected party. Off would go Hilda with the required products. She seemed hard-bitten to us, and her hard work as a younger person was probably the explanation. Hilda was a no-nonsense lady. She had grown up on a farm in Sweden. Her family died when she was in her teens. Not being capable of managing a farm at age eighteen, she sold it and took the money to sail to America. Determination and courage followed her. At age 87 she was still riding her electric mower, keeping her lawn in perfect condition.

My neighbor, Eddie Thew, a carpenter, built a lot of houses in the area. His daughter Nancy had a horse on the property. Her sister was a hairdresser. The front house was rented to a French couple, maybe named Savage. They had a lovely flower garden out front. Now there's a lot of trucks.

There is an empty house near the corner of Route 28 and Route 149; it is gradually deteriorating. It was owned by the Perry's, and was sold by one of the Perry children to someone who does not seem to be caring for it. The Perry's sold Christmas trees for many years, and saved a small one for me.

The Butlers lived in a house at Route 28 and Prince Road (before there was a Route 28). They swam in the river there before the dam was built and held the water back. They invited us for afternoon tea to the tiny house, which was no more than a couple of closets put together. He hung bags or pockets over the chairs where he stored needed things.

Dr. Leach was a veterinarian in town, and was much respected. He had white hands, perhaps due to being exposed to some chemical. The Lilly family built the barn for their daughter, and Dr. Leach then used it as his office. Caroline Kennedy kept her horse "Macaroni" in that barn, which had a fireplace, and later burned. Dr. Leach's daughter is a veterinarian in Falmouth.

The woodworking class at Barnstable High School built a house on the northeast corner of Barnstable-Osterville Road and Race Lane, in the 1930's. They also planted pine trees on Old Stage Road.

When the Fairgrounds closed, Al Fuller bought the ticket booth; later it was burned. The Fairgrounds became the current Golf Course. The Fullers' barn was about to fall down, and Al said the next storm would bring it down--it did. His wife Barbara had a fine vegetable garden by the road. They were active in the Grange in Sandwich. Junior Jones's mother was born in their house.

The town-meeting form of government preceded the current Town Council form. Mr. Bryant from this development was a Representative, and head of the Village Association. Our development, called Santuit Shores, used to have a Fourth of July picnic at the beach. Esther Murray was also active in the

Village, and talked a lot. When they wanted to put the post office up in the new shopping center on 28, she said: "We don't want our village to be stretched out -- We want it close to the Library, the church and store." A high school teacher who lived at the end of Lovell's Lane was also active in the Village Association, and donated the land for the post office. His daughter lives on River Road. Her mother worked at the post office.

