

SHARING OUR STORIES

VOLUME III

Excerpts from Conversations with Some of Windsor's Long-Time Residents

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Photo by Kate Ewald



CHARLES STURTEVANT

Charles Sturtevant, born in Windsor in 1951, grew up on Route 9, in the house his mother and sister still live in across the road from Friendly Fred's store. Charles served on Windsor's Select Board for 27 years and has also served on a variety of town committees and organizations, including the finance committee and fire department. He recounts his childhood memories of the quintessential Windsor experience: winter!

Deep, long Windsor winters . . .
“When I was a kid, it was a pretty good bet that winter snow would start by Veterans’ Day, November 11, and continue through April. . . . We had maybe a week of what we would call ‘January thaw,’ but other than that it was pretty much deep snow cover all winter.”



Windsor winter of the past, circa 1945. (Photo from the collection of the Windsor Historical Commission. Notation on back: “Dion and Joan.”)

Made for adventurous treks. . .
“I would do a lot of snowshoeing, especially with my brother who is eighteen months younger than I. . . . On Sundays, after Sunday School, we’d go home, put on our snowshoes, grab a sandwich, and start hiking. Often [Route 1 on map at right], we’d go from the house over to what was known as the Zink farm on Back Dalton Road. From there we would take our compasses, take a bearing, and hike up to Mount Pleasant, where Tim and Patty Crane currently live. Then we would go to Iwanowicz’s farm on Peru Road. From there, we would go to my

uncle’s house on Route 9, just beyond the fire station. By then it would be dark and we would call home and mom or dad would come get us.”

“On Sundays, after Sunday School, we’d go home, put on our snowshoes, grab a sandwich, and start hiking.”

“On another Sunday [Route 2 on map at right], we would go from our house up to the top of North Street where my great-uncle had a farm, and then hike from there down to the end of Route 9 and back home. We were all over town. There were no cellphones and it was expected that we would find our way back home. . . . That was 56 years ago, and a lot of the land was more open than nowadays.”

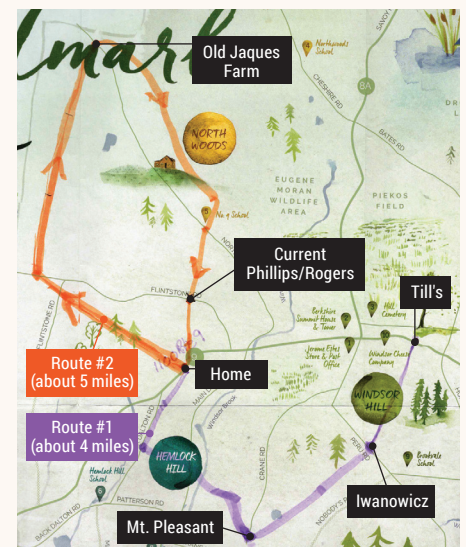
A warming break from plowing snow . . .

“We had blizzards and my father . . . would be called in to plow for the town. As a kid, it was nothing during a blizzard to wake up and hear strange voices in the house. It was a pretty established procedure that if one of the other town trucks were coming by and they saw a light on at my mother’s house, they’d stop in for breakfast, whether dad was in or not. And dad would stop in at so-and-so’s house down on East Windsor Road. . . . You would stop

in and have breakfast and then continue on your plow route. I think at the time they probably had three people plowing full-time, with just two trucks and a grader.”

And hot syrup on snow!

“April-ish here in town we always had what were known as sugar-eats, . . . a town gathering in the town hall for hot syrup on snow. As a kid, one of our jobs was to go out and pack the pans full of snow and bring them in. . . . Easily you would have a drift of snow up to the top of the windows right outside the Town Hall.”



The Sturtevant boys’ snowshoeing expedition routes, courtesy of Charles Sturtevant.

Photo by Barbara Connors



JOYCE TIRRELL

Joyce Tirrell, born in Becket, Massachusetts, moved to Windsor with her family when she was three years old. One of her fondest memories is the annual town Christmas party that was held in the Town Hall, sponsored by the town and the Windsor Church for more than 35 years. Her mother was one of the original organizers, a role that Joyce later took on when she had her own children.

Childhood memories of the gifts . . . “My mom and her sister were the shoppers. Plus all the children aged 6 and up got a cardboard box of hard candies with a ribbon on it so you could hang it on your tree at home. . . . And every kid got a navel orange. They also shopped for the adults. Everyone got something.”

And an enormous tree.

“The Town Hall was decorated beautifully by people from the church and the town. . . . In the corner, there was a huge, live Christmas tree, almost up to the ceiling. . . . We were all in awe of this tree. . . . And there were hundreds of people, kids and their parents.”



Larger group of kids - Singing for Santa, 1981. (Photo courtesy of Joyce Tirrell)

Carrying on the tradition . . .

“After moving back to town as an adult with my husband, Michael, and our daughter, Tracy, I took over the orga-

nizing with Michael’s cousin Sharon Tilton Lloyd. Our kids were old enough to enjoy it. . . . We did all the shopping like my mom and her sister had done. J.J. Newberry’s on North Street in Pittsfield was where we did most of the shopping. . . . maybe a Golden Book, a ball, or a yo-yo. . . . And, for the parents we’d get a small can of nuts or box of chocolates.”

“In the corner of the Town Hall, there was a huge, live Christmas tree, almost up to the ceiling.”

With a play and Santa . . .

“Sharon was very good at picking out a play. We would go to Crane Community School, where all the kids attended, and see who wanted to be in it. . . . We had rehearsals after school every day for a couple of weeks.”

“On the night of the party, the kids were eager to go up on the stage and perform. Then Michael would play the guitar and lead singing of Jingle Bells and Frosty the Snowman, and the last song would be Must Be Santa. As soon as we got singing, Santa would come in through the back door dancing and saying ‘Ho, ho, ho.’ It was such a joy to see the kids so excited. Santa would say, “What did you do that was good?”

“I cleaned my room’, ‘I helped mommy and set the table’, ‘I shoveled snow with daddy’ — it was fun to hear their answers. . . . Santa would say, “Oh, I’ve got something for a 5-year-old girl. Are there any 5-year-old girls here?” And one would raise her hand and say, “I’m five.” . . . Hugh Ferry was Santa most of the time. Then he’d say, “Okay, I need the parents to come down ‘cuz I’ve got things for you, as long as you’ve all been good.”



The Christmas Party play, 1981. (Photo courtesy of Joyce Tirrell)

“The Town Hall was packed. . . . There were probably a couple hundred people. When it was over, Sharon and I looked at each other and would say, ‘Are we going to do this next year?’ We always did because it was just fun.”

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