

SHARING OUR STORIES

VOLUME VII

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

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Photo by Barbara Connors



BOB MEYERS

Bob Meyers first came to Windsor in 1954. He and his wife raised two children while he was employed as caretaker at Mount Pleasant — at that time a summer home for the Crane family (the direct descendants of Senator Winthrop Murray Crane, who built Mount Pleasant in 1904) — in the 60's and 70's. With his mother-in-law, Bertha Estes, living just down the hill, it was "good. We had fun up there." The Meyers are now active on the Green Committee, and provide a home for a menagerie of rescued animals, including one llama, some goats, and chickens.

Arambling farmhouse, and frozen Boy Scouts

"At the time we had the big old farmhouse, it had 21 rooms — and a nice barn across the road. We had some beef animals, we were able to open up the fields and use the hay, we cleared up areas that had overgrown like the tennis courts . . . We had chickens at one time; we had all kinds of gardens, we had some friends who used part of the garden area for their own use."

"We improved the farmhouse, insulating it in places, we were able to actually cut the cost almost in half for the heating fuel. The kids, they got old enough so they were helping, mowing the lawns and everything else. It was a good time up there."

"There was a time when the Boy Scouts had their Camporees there, and that was always fun. One time the weather got so bad — just cold and damp and rainy — that some of the kids were having trouble. So in the middle of the night, here's the counselors rapping on the door and asking if we could open up the big house so they could get the kids inside and get them warmed up. So we went up and got the fire going in the fireplace and fired up the furnace."

Baby bull grows up

"We got one bull, he was a baby, he came from a farm in Cummington that used to show cattle, but he had gotten pneumonia so he came to us. He got over that . . . and of course he kept growing. We had to be careful about where he was."

"This one day, he was in the back field and we had this claw-foot tub (for a water trough), one of the big ones, and it was full of water, right to the top . . . He came charging down across the fields, stopped and picked that thing up and emptied it."

"There were times when I'd be trying to work in the field where he was and he would come over and he would just push against the tractor. He could push it sideways. I would get off and tell him, 'Okay, that's enough,' and he would just put his head up against my leg. He wouldn't even push."

Helping hands, bicentennial float turned sugar shack

"The kids helped getting the hay in, you know, or whatever. And, of course, when they were getting up to the ages where they were wanting to learn how to drive, we'd put them on the lawnmower and let them go. We also had an old Volkswagen Bug, we taught them how to drive

that and they could drive it around the property."

"When they were celebrating the bicentennial here in town, our kids and other kids in town wanted to build a float. So we let them use the barn to build it. Some of the older town people helped to get it started and the kids finished it. It was in the parade and everything. Then, of course, when the parade was done they



Bicentennial Parade, July 31, 1971. (Collection of Windsor Historical Commission)

didn't know what to do with it and they brought it back up."

"There's a cement slab up there, so we put it on that, and I used it for sugaring because it was in the shape of a barn . . . it lasted a few years." ❧



Photo by Barbara Connors

MARGIE KIERSTEAD

Margaret Rose Kierstead returned from Ohio to live in Windsor full-time about four years ago. A classical violinist most recently playing with the Pioneer Valley Orchestra, Margie spent childhood summers at her maternal grandparent's home in the Bush (her mother was Isabelle Bird Kierstead, daughter of Frederick and Dorothy Bird) and lived here briefly as an adult. Her late brother, James Kierstead, is remembered as a good-humored and effective Town Meeting moderator, and as a person with an encyclopedic knowledge of Windsor history.

Summers in an old Windsor farmhouse

"My mother was born in Windsor and lived about a mile up the road from where I am living now, and my father grew up in Pittsfield. They met in Washington, DC. When we were little, my mother used to come here every summer and that was my early experience of living in Windsor."

"Somebody said it was my grandfather's grandfather that built the house . . . So my grandfather lived there, and it was a farm when my mother was growing up. It had pigs, cows, horses, big fields, everything. Little by little, especially as they got older, there was less, and then it was down to just a small cornfield that I remember and some pastureland."

"The house was originally one big room which was the kitchen and then it had two bedrooms and rooms around that. Then an extension was built on the eastern part of house, that was the new kitchen."

"Up until the time I was in high school they used an outhouse. And then my grandfather built a kind of add-on room to make a bathroom . . . He made a bathtub and a shower but you couldn't really use it because there wasn't enough water pressure. Not to mention that there was no insulation around that room and no heat in that room. But I guess it was better than running to the outhouse."

Trying for a ribbon

"We went to the Cummington Fair every single year. It was fun. I've been recently and it's pretty much the same thing that it was then. Of course we would make things to take to the fair and my mother would make a pie, and it was really the only time she ever really baked, she didn't do that in Ohio. She didn't just make pies because she liked making pies — it was the idea, 'Let me see if I can make the best pie and get a ribbon for it.' I don't remember if she ever did."

"I did sewing. Back in Akron, Ohio, Goodwill Industries had something . . . they would take any dolls that had been donated and you could go down and pick up a doll and you had to make clothes to put on it. I have to tell you that sewing a little gathered skirt



Edgar and Alwine Bird, c. 1922, on the porch of the old farmhouse.

for a small doll is very difficult. Then Goodwill would give the dolls to girls that didn't have them. And then I know I also made stuff to bring to the

Cummington Fair to see if I could get a ribbon."


A musical journey

"I learned to play the violin when I was, I think, in third grade . . . then I majored in music when I was at college, and I've played in a whole lot of different orchestras in Ohio and in Massachusetts. I got

"She didn't just make pies because she liked making pies — it was the idea, 'Let me see if I can make the best pie and get a ribbon for it.'"

my undergraduate degree at Kent State and then I went to Smith for graduate school."

"I lived in Boston for 12 years and went to Mexico for three years to play in an orchestra. When I came back I stayed at my grandparent's house with my brother, Jim. Then I moved to Northampton and my son, Peter, was born. Then Kentucky and then Ohio, and, anyways, now I am here."

"My brother, who was a big historian of the town, passed away in the fall of 2016 and the next summer when I came here to try and finish up his estate and looked at his house, I decided I really liked it here and stayed." 

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