

Annisquam Memories

My father who was from New Bedford, was urged to look at a piece of land in Norwood Heights by John Carlson, Deb Jacklin's father. He bought it and then had a cottage built on the land, at number 13. It was meant to look as if it had been built in the late 1700's I remember my father and Harold Dexter who was the contractor and became a great friend of my father's spending days and days traveling around Essex, Gloucester, Rockport, looking for original old paneling that they could buy. They finally found a 250 yr old house that two brothers owned in Essex. The brothers had had a fight and one brother tore his half of the house down. My father and Harold bought all the old paneling including the wide floor boards. Harold's carpenters laid the painted wood out on the bare place in front of the house frame, stripped the paint and refinished it. Then they reassembled it to fit the house my father was building. This was in 1946. I still live in that house and have many memories of Annisquam in the early days.

My parents used to drive down on the spring and fall weekends from Boston where we lived. We would cross the old bridge that is now a foot bridge. I remember how the dog would start howling and my parents would let him out so he could run to the house in Norwood Heights. We spent the summers here from then on.

My cousin would come every summer, mainly to keep me, an only child busy. I remember we would ride our bikes every day to the yacht club, stopping at the Market to buy "devil dogs". We were both in the Junior Program where Freddie Lovejoy was a young counselor. (He later when the chief resident at Children's Hospital took care of my son who had pneumonia). At that time, the yacht club was much more basic. There was only a snack bar as I remember, a room where you could play pool, a lot of sailing and tennis. I don't think there was formal dining in those days.

In the evenings when the light held til 8 or so, all the kids in Annisquam would gather in the pasture for a huge game of "Capture the Flag". My cousin and I would hide, often in the woods where Jackie LittleFields house is now, and that of John Harrington. We would wait and wait quietly all the time filled with fear at being caught. Finally, as the fear got too overwhelming, we would sneak home.

My house was directly opposite that of the Rosses, Nate and Helen and their three boys. (I eventually married and then was divorced from the oldest, Skip). Nate was at the time the

revered football coach of Gloucester High School. His teams had gone on to win championships. And he was reluctant to play his own boys for fear of favoritism. I later learned that Nate had stepped in to father many boys whose fathers were fishermen at sea. I still meet up sometimes with someone in Gloucester who played football for Nate. And when I was married, I only had to say I was Nate Ross' daughter in law and my checks would be accepted all over Gloucester.

What I remember about living across the street from them was how many evenings we would play baseball on the vacant lot, which is still vacant and owned by my children and Skip's son by Amy Bell. We all knew where the makeshift bases were and everyone of us could play, girl boy, good or bad. Sometimes, much later, Nate would yell at the youngest Ross boy, Clark, to not hit the ball so far that it might break the window in the house facing the vacant lot.

When it was time for St. Peter's Fiesta, I remember how Helen and Nate always had the crew from Canada ,who would compete in the seining race, over for dinner. And I remember how Nate's brother, Uncle Don, used to collect Christmas cards and send the pictures to nursing homes in Nova Scotia where the Rosses first came from. Nate's father and mother lived on the Boulevard and his father had been a captain of several schooners before they were motorized.

On Saturday night or maybe it was Friday night, Anne and Warren Babson would come to the Rosses to play bridge. They were all so good and so accustomed to each other that they never seemed to look at their cards. Skip was best friends with Jack Babson. What impresses me now is that Warren Babson, who was an honored doctor in Gloucester, spent free weekend nights with the football coach and his wife.

Another memory that stays with me is the way, each late afternoon I think, Morrill Wiggins who owned that grand house later bought by John and Holly Perry used to bowl on the finely kept grass lot in front of the house . And later on, the house opposite was owned by Ed Crane who was high up in Cambridge politics - he may have been mayor at one time. They were very down to earth people.

I could pull up other memories but for now, let this suffice.

Deborah Gardner
13 Norwood Heights

