

QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Oral History

Meredith Mace

June 4, 2019

This document is a transcript of an oral history that is available in the QHS Archive Center. The policy for the use of this copywritten material can be obtained by contacting the Quonochontaug Historical Society (archivist@quonniehistory.org).

The Taluna, where "Oasis" now stands, is the cottage that started it all. My family history in Quonnie goes back five generations and today I'm going to tell you the bits of our story that I know. Growing up I always thought that Quonnie was the Mase's home, but I recently learned that our story is a bit more well-rounded than I first thought. Here in Quonnie there has been so much more for my family than just beach days; our family was made here, and this is our story.

Many members of our family have grown up spending their summers in Quonnie, the first though, were my great gramma Edith Mort Fallows (b. 1894 d. 1980.) and her brother my great great uncle Hary W. Fallows (b. 1909 d. 1961). Edith Mort and Harry W's parents were Harry Mort Fallows (b. 1870 d. 1940) and Edith Ashworth Fallows (b. 1871 d. 1954). Harry Mort and Edith Ashworth were both born in England and came to the U.S. in their childhoods. At some point in time they met and were then married around 1890 or '93. In 1894 they had baby Edith Mort and then later in 1909 they had Harry W. If my sources are correct, Harry Mort and Edith Ashworth had [another] son named Harry W. in 1892 or 1893 who later died around the age of one. Anyway, Edith Mort and Hary W. (b. 1909) spent some of their summers staying here in Quonnie at a cottage named the Taluna. Before the sea wall was built after the 38' hurricane, the Taluna sat as close to the water as it could before the grass gradually led to the rocks. Sadly, the 38' hurricane took the Taluna away and left nothing but the spot where it used to stand, remembered by the remaining pipes that led to the Taluna's well that was set back from the oceanfront closer to where West Beach Rd. is today. Even though the summer home they rented was gone, Edith Ashworth and Harry Mort bought the Taluna lot, as well as the lot next to the Taluna's well. Due to having fears of their new home getting swept away, Edith Ashworth and Harry Mort built their own summer home next to the well. They called this cottage the Sandpiper. After being finished around 1940, Harry Mort died and the cottage was left to his wife Edith Ashworth. By this time Edith was a grandmother. Edith Mort Fallows and new husband Kenneth Mase married around 1918 and had two sons, my grandfather, Robert Kenneth Mase (b. 1920 d. 1999) and his brother who was born just nine months later, Fredric Fallows Mase (b. 1921 d. 1994). These gentlemen went by the names of Bob and Bud. Edith Mort and Kenneth Mase had a home of their own in Quonnie. Where 15 Surfside is today, there was once a cottage called the Mistleblo. I don't know when Kenneth and DeeDee (Edith Mort) bought or built the Mistleblo, but I do know that Kenneth had a garden across the street where 5 Ocean View is today. I do know that my dad, Laurence (Laurie) Mase has memories of the Mistleblo. He was born in 1953 and has a strong feeling that Sefiroth (5 Ocean View) started being built in 1958. My dad also said that DeeDee and Kenneth were not double homeowners so

he believes that his grandparents sold the Mistleblo when Sefiroth was finished. My gramma Jean and Grandpa Bob moved into what my sister and I grew up hearing called "the big house" in 1981. (The "big house" was simply 5 Ocean View. I didn't know the name of 5 Ocean View was Sefiroth until just a few years ago).

Now let's get back to the family story. In the early 1950s Bob and Bud had both served their time in the war effort and Bud married a woman by the name of Sara (Sally) Gerrish. Sally Gerrish was one of the three Gerrish kids who grew up spending their summers further down "Nun's" beach, closer to the Breechway. Sally and sister Ann and brother Scott were the children of George Gerrish and Tillie Barrows. Tillie (who everyone called Grib because Robin couldn't say gramma when he was learning to talk) was born and raised in Spencer Massachusetts. George Gerrish was born and raised in Ashaway, RI. The two cottages that George and Tillie owned were destroyed in the '38 so they moved down the beach closer to Ashaway Colony. After their homes were destroyed, the Gerrishes stayed at the Quonnie Inn and that is how my great uncle Bud met my great aunt Sally. After they were married and had their first child Robert (Robin) Mase, around 1952 or '53, Edith Ashworth sold the Taluna lot to Bud and Sally. After the '54 hurricane Bud and Sally build Mase's Oasis out of cinder blocks. Mase's Oasis was built right next to Sally's parents new home which was built between 1948 and 1949. After Edith Ashworth died around 1954, the Sandpiper went to either Jean and bob, Edith and Kenneth, or Harry W.. I believe though, that Harry W. and his wife Jane used the Sandpiper as a summer home for a while. During those years I believe that DeeDee and Kenneth stayed in the Mistleblo.

Along the way my dad Laurie and his older brother Robbie spent their summers at the Sandpiper. These summers were filled with adventures and memories that they made with the Law kids across the street. Sally's sister Ann had Sherry, Sandy, Suzi, and Scott; Sally had Robin, Cindy, and Georgie; and Jean and Bob had Robbie and Laurie. While this generation of kids grew up in the 60s and 70s, my gramma Jean had an idea: George Gerrish was from Ashaway, the Briggs [a couple houses down] were from Ashaway too, so she thought we should name the street Ashaway Colony Ln. So they did!

As I said at the beginning of this story, our family was made here, and so I have two more stories for you. The summer of 1947 or '48 made life changing history! Jean Adelaide Raynor had had quite the run: born on July 11, 1919, she graduated from Cornell University [1940] (as her sister previously did, their father, his father, and his father did too). She then became a Lt. (jg) in the U.S. Navy from ['44-'47]. And then came 1947. Her aunt had a friend who was going to a party one weekend and wanted Jean to take some needed time off. So Jean agreed and she found herself in a place called Quonnie. At this party were the Mase's! [It was actually a party *at the Mase's house the Mistleblo*]. There she met Robert Kenneth Mase and the next weekend she was invited back by DeeDee and the rest is history.

But still, our story is not finished yet. There were more than two love stories here in Quonnie. ... Tina Stanton grew up in Brimfield, MA. Robin Mase's uncle Scott was Tina's Sunday School teacher. Scott asked Tina to babysit his three kids (Scott, Jamie, and Shephard). After putting the kids to bed Tina sat on the porch of the Gerrish's cottage and Robin walked by and asked Tina out on a date and they've been together ever since.

OH2019.010.012

Laurie, his wife Joyce, and Robbie Mase sold the Sandpiper in 2002. This was an interesting time. . . Going back to the Taluna's land, the pipers were still there so Bud and Sally had an agreement with DeeDee and Kenneth that they would share the well. In 2009 Robin and Tina (Mase's Oasis care takers) were pushed to sell Mase's oasis because they were previously sued fry the new owners of the Sandpiper for rights to the well. Rich and Denise Mulcahy (Denise grew up in Quonnie with Robbie and Laurie and the Gerrish/Law kids) bough Mase's Oasis and won the lawsuit last year [2017] because Robin and Tina found old pictures after the '38 that showed that the Taluna well pipes proved rightful ownership of the well to Oasis. This summer on July 11, 2019 my gram will turn 100. Even though my memories from my childhood Quonnie days are from the Sandpiper, the past three summers have given me a new Quonnie life! one that I will have vivid memories of forever.

Even though Our Quonnie line ends with the sale of my gram's home, that se has made her place of peace for the last 40 years, Quonnie will always be the Mase-Fallows-Gerrish-Law home. <3