

A Piece Of GREENS FARMS HISTORY

CENTER STREET AND FAMILY HISTORY

By Mary Maynard, A Greens Farms resident

I saw demolition signs on three old houses on Center Street and felt sad about another trace of old Westport leaving us to be replaced by a McMansion.

Even though the demolition sign states that one of the houses is 300 years old and another is nearly as old, I know that they have served their purpose and no longer are useful in the 21st century. Modified many times to fit the needs of each generation, they look shabby and ready to rest.

The brown shingle house (Number 21) (1770) was part of a 30-acre tract owned by Samuel Mills. It was sold in 1840 to Walter Sherwood and then to George Avery in 1891.

I lived next to the Averys for nearly 30 years and, though I knew the houses were old, I never knew their history. I learned a bit about the family, though.

Over the years, I learned from my neighbors that the Averys' forefathers fought the British in Pound Ridge, New York. The earliest Avery is buried in the Col. Enoch Avery Cemetery in Pound Ridge. Ann Avery, who married into the family, was descended from Daniel Boone!

In the 19th and early 20th century, boys in the family worked with E. T. Bedford's horses at Wynfromere Farm, a quarter-mile track off West Parish Road, now mostly buried except for the backstretch that is Wynfromere Lane. The Avery family had a vegetable garden, raised chickens and pigs. No one ever had time to learn to swim at the beach.

For 35 years Joe Avery was the Huntsman at Fairfield County Hunt Club and taught dressage, carrying on the training with horses he had as a young man.

From the '40s through the '80s, many members of the Avery family worked at Klein's, the much-lamented and missed bookstore on Main Street.



Mary Boyle Mills Avery in front of 25 Center Street, date unknown. She lived there for 70 years.

We lived quietly near each other all those years, the Avery children growing up and marrying. Grandchildren came and grew up, too.

One afternoon, as I was working in my garden, I heard a beautiful soprano voice floating across the field from the Averys. I ran over in my bare feet to find out who it was and found the voice came from a tenth generation Avery!

Christina Holms has sung at the White House, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Madison Square Garden and many other venues. Now she gives private vocal lessons and has a ballet studio, the Norwalk Metropolitan Youth Ballet. Good families keep contributing.

Do you have a story to tell? We want to hear them! Please send to Julaine.Davis@npub.com.