

Now and Then: The Beaumont

Driving along Rte 122 from South Grafton into the village of Rockdale, part of Northbridge, almost immediately the eye wanders up to the large white home high upon a knoll overlooking the meandering Blackstone River and an old brick mill complex. Though we know the sign says Beaumont Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, what stories live in its past?

The Beaumont was designed and built in 1909 by Paul Whitin IV to house his new bride, Rebecca Dulaney Carter of Upperville, Virginia. This home was built to be comfortable and livable, quite appropriate for the five children who were born and raised by the Whitins. Until Beaumont was built, the more prominent "Wayside" had been home to the Whitin generations. The Wayside, torn down several decades ago, had been built in 1824 by Sylvanus Holbrook, who owned the mills in the area until they passed to the Whitins in 1850. Rockdale and Riverdale were previously known as Holbrooks' Upper and Lower Villages.

According to research by Spaulding Aldrich, the Beaumont home was a very happy place to live. The Whitin mills had escaped the troubling economic times that other area mills faced at much earlier times. After raising their five children and not needing such a large home with spacious grounds, Paul Whitin IV and his wife, Rebecca, moved to Whitinsville in 1955.

In 1952, in Northborough, another family with five children were setting a new course in their lives. Helen and Daniel Salmon purchased the Adora Restaurant and converted it into a nursing home that truly started a legacy of "families caring for families". In 1960, the Salmons purchased the Beaumont Nursing Home and moved right in to provide personal care for their 28 patients. The five children lived in the attic and each had a serious responsibility to handle specific daily chores at the nursing facility. Dan Salmon, was deeply influenced by this experience, and became a Registered Nurse.

In 1965, Dan Salmon married Dorothy "Dottie" McLaughlin, also an R.N.. As they became the second generation to manage the Beaumont facility, they also committed to a series of expansions that increased the number of beds to 154 from 28. By 1980, s, they also responded to a community need of Adult Day Care, devoting the entire first floor to this rising need. Their vision did not stop there as they founded a site in Westborough, opening a second Beaumont Nursing Home in 1983, followed by The Willows in 1987, a premier retirement community for 202 active seniors. Whitney Suites, assisted living residences, were also built in Westborough, Natick, Northborough.

The home today has gone through many changes, yet still retains the "homey" comfortable feeling and authenticity it had when it was a family home. Though the front entrance was added, the foyer and grand fireplace immediately bring back the feel of yesteryear. The executive office staff and third generation administrator Matt Salmon are located in the former spacious living room with elaborately handcarved mantle over the handsome fireplace. The sunporch, with its many handsome windows and dark

woodwork also offers additional office and conference room space.

The foyer and large staircase provide a welcoming presence and reception area. Three generations of the Salmon family have been involved with the multi-faceted services offered h

Shortly thereafter, their family home became a nursing home.