



WINDSOR  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Kathi Brown Martin: Share Your Windsor Story

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Brown's Harvest, Windsor, CT

Interviewer: Michelle Tom

Interviewee: Kathi Brown Martin

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**Michelle Tom**

OK, so, could we – you can look at me. Could you tell us your name and who you are?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

OK, yes, my name is Kathi Brown Martin. Our family arrived in the 1850s and purchased – the first piece is by the Poquonock Firehouse on Poquonock Ave in Windsor, and we started out with tobacco and grew tobacco up until about five years ago, so 2017 I think we stopped growing. But we still leased the land to other tobacco growers and using the tobacco sheds. My great, great grandfather bought the property by the Firehouse. Well, it wasn't the Firehouse, but bought the property by the Firehouse and he manufactured cigars and, by horse and buggy, he took it and sold the cigars in Hartford. [00:01:00]

**Michelle Tom**

And what was his name?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

And his name was James Brown. Not the famous James Brown. [laughs]

**Michelle Tom**

And you have a photo that you would like to share?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

And I have a photo. Yep. So initially, they grew the tobacco on the same plot that they also made the cigars. So, my great grandfather is here looking quite dapper, and then his brother, Eugene, is upper center, and these are the workers that helped them with rolling cigars and getting them ready for sale. And then years later, this turned into our asparagus shed. The family grew asparagus back in the 40s and 50s, and we still grow asparagus today. So up at our Rainbow Farm off Rainbow Road, we have asparagus and other vegetables, fruits, strawberries, etc. So, we're still in farming. Six generations and we hope to continue. [00:02:00] Jenny, are you laughing?

**Jenny Hawran**

No, I'm like so happy. [laughs]

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah. That's awesome.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

All right, so you're going to edit this?

**Jenny Hawran**

Yeah, yeah.

**Michelle Tom**

Yes. And could you tell us again, where was this shed?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

OK, so on Poquonock Avenue, there's the farmhouse, and then the Poquonock Firehouse is on the corner, which I guess years ago the family donated for the town hall that was on that corner, and then it turned into the Firehouse. So, this would be in the back corner behind the farmhouse.

**Michelle Tom**

Very cool.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

And it is no longer there.

**Liz Burke**

How many children did your grandfather have? Your great grandfather.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

My great, great grandfather? [whispers] I have no idea. My great grandfather had five. My grandfather had three sons, and then my dad had four. [00:03:00]

**Liz Burke**

And most stayed in Windsor or?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Nope. [laughs] Nope, they didn't. Which generation are you asking about?

**Liz Burke**

Just sort of [in general].

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Well, we still have the farm in the family, so we have 6 generations that we're still, you know, adapting to the 21st century, hosting more events and family, the focus getting the families out to the farm and enjoy the open space and fresh air. And fresh vegetables.

**Michelle Tom**

And we do enjoy that.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Michelle, are we done?

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, we are done.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

This is like torture.

**Jenny Hawran**

Could you just hold it up?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jenny Hawran**

Perfect. A little, just a teeny bit higher. There's going to be a glare, so, but you have the original anyway.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, yeah.

**Jenny Hawran**

Perfect.

**Michelle Tom**

Thank you so much. We really appreciate it.

**Jenny Hawran**

That's awesome.

**Michelle Tom**

And I love that you brought this out here.

**Jenny Hawran**

You did a great job. [00:04:00]

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Oh, you're very kind, Jenny. It's like the last thing I want to do. No offense, no offense.

**Liz Burke**

It's so important. It's just great

**Kathi Brown Martin**

No, you know I was thinking about that the other day, like last week. All the generations are passing away. I'm like, "Oh!" Like my dad passed a couple years ago and I'm like, and I don't know, like they're no longer here to ask anymore.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, I know.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

You know? Like how many kids did my great, great grandfather have. I could go look it up, but I don't, we don't think that far back.

**Jenny Hawran**

Right.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

So yeah. So my great grandfather was a State Rep from Windsor and he was also a judge. So, when we were cleaning out that house –

**Michelle Tom**

Was it Stanton Brown?

**Kathi Brown Martin** 00:05:24

Yes! Oh, good for you, Michelle, I'm so proud of you!

**Liz Burke**

Stanton is the name?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Of my great grandfather, and then my father was named Stanton as well.

**Michelle Tom**

Oh, OK. OK.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

So, we found some really cool things in that house. [00:05:00]

**Michelle Tom**

Nice.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

In 1799, it was built. And it's haunted, just so you know.

**Michelle Tom**

I have a picture of Stanton Brown as a teacher at Rainbow School.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Maybe. Yeah, maybe. Down? Oh, up here.

**Michelle Tom**

I can't remember what school, but he's like leaning and looking cool.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Oh, really?

**Michelle Tom**

There's like an 1890s Mustang.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Oh, I should come visit.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah! Yeah, yeah.

**Liz Burke**

I'm wondering if he's smoking a cigar in that picture.

**Michelle Tom**

I think he was not born for this picture.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

No, no. He passed away. He was only like 55 or something when he passed, so he was younger, yeah. He was gone before I was born.

**Michelle Tom**

Wow. Yeah, and then I have this other picture that I think Stanton Brown –

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Senior.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, is in. It's not labeled, but it looks just like the guy [00:06:00] who's labeled Stanton Brown in this other picture of the teacher, so as a younger person.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

OK.

**Michelle Tom**

We have old pictures of him as an older person because he was very involved in the town.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Yeah, in politics and he was the judge, so we'd find old paperwork, you know, so and so was for drunkenness or whatever. What they called it back then. They had a word for it.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

So that's interesting. Yeah, so, and then my great, great grandmother was Flavia Thrall.

**Michelle Tom**

Oh, no way!

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Yeah!

**Michelle Tom**

I did not know that!

**Kathi Brown Martin**

I'd like to learn more about her.

**Michelle Tom**

So would I. You know, it's on my list of things to write an article about her because –

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Are you running the film?

**Jenny Hawran**

It's still on, yeah. But I can turn it off. Because sometimes, when you're chatting afterwards, you can get a little bit of a story.

**Kathi Brown Martin** 00:07:23

Yeah, OK. All right.

**Jenny Hawran**

I could shut it off if you want me to.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

I don't care.

**Jenny Hawran**

I don't want you to even think about it because you're giving more information to her right now.  
[laughs]

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Yeah, so she was a famous clairvoyant, [00:07:00] and so there's some really cool stories.

**Michelle Tom**

Yes, and I've read that she's this famous like world famous clairvoyant. Not just famous but world famous.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Yep. Yes.

**Michelle Tom**

But I've been dying to find out like who in the world knew who she was outside of Windsor. Like who was she famous to outside?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

So she –

**Michelle Tom**

But it's always like, oh her clients were secret, and you couldn't know who they were.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Yeah, so I think it was even presidents. But she was my grandmother's grandmother.

**Michelle Tom**

Wow!

**Kathi Brown Martin**

And she had this back room with all these herbs, and they would call them potions, but she was an herbalist.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, and we have one or two her recipes.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Really? I gotta come visit you!

**Michelle Tom**

And a little bottle with her name on the label.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Really?

**Michelle Tom**

Yes, yes. I wonder who gave them to us, then.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

It could have been, it could have come from my Aunt Charlotte who lived in that house for quite a long time. And then –

**Michelle Tom**

Wait, your Aunt Charlotte?

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Charlotte Brown. So, John Solomon was quite involved [00:08:00] in collecting artifacts and stuff, so he was able to get her to donate some of the things.

**Michelle Tom**

Oh, OK.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

So, it could have come from her.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, that makes sense.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Along with maybe a picture like this.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah. Yep.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

So yeah. So, Bob would come and chat. I mean her house was like a – I wish we didn't have to change it because it could have been a museum. Because from those mid-1800s, especially, you know, the pantry, the porch because they – and they put in plumbing after a while, of course. But it was just, I don't know, it's just a neat house.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

A neat house that's not as neat as it used to be. That's what happens. But it is haunted. [laughs]

**Michelle Tom**

It's got the ghost of Flavia.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

No, I don't think so. But they're not like unhappy spirits, just – maybe [00:09:00] I'm part clairvoyant because of my great, great grandmother.

**Michelle Tom**

Well, you know we've named, we've got this this wooden cow in our like hands-on learning center that has an udder that kids can milk, and we've named her Flavia after Flavia Thrall.

**Kathi Brown Martin**

Oh, really? [laughs] Yeah, I wish I knew more about her. She passed, I don't know, a long time ago. So even the other generations, you know? I wonder. I have another family picture that has that generation and has Stanton Brown in it. But he was sick and that's why he died young. So, he was obviously sick in that picture. But it's one of those cool family photos. You know, it's probably a summer, in the summer, and they've got their straw hats on. And they're all, you know, so stoic, and they're sitting.