



WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Patricia Bruhn:
Share Your Windsor Story

August 28, 2021
Windsor High School, Windsor, CT

Interviewer: Sulema DePeyster
Interviewee: Patricia Bruhn
Transcriber: Sulema DePeyster

Sulema DePeyster

Can you start by introducing yourself?

Patricia Bruhn

Yes, I am Patricia Bruhn. I have lived in Windsor for probably three quarters of my life. Alumnus of Windsor High School. Class of '83. Best there ever was. What else can I tell you?

Sulema DePeyster

So, tell me about your Windsor story.

Patricia Bruhn

I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

Sulema DePeyster

Tell me about your Windsor story.

Patricia Bruhn

My Windsor story. Wow, let's see. Windsor was a great place to grow up. Had a lot of fun. We lived in Wilson growing up, so I was a minute walk from Dairy Queen and McDonald's both, which were treasures back in the day, and then I also lived within close enough distance that I could walk to the shopping center by myself. I could go down to Goslee pool by myself, ride my bike down there. I spent most of my summers at Goslee pool [00:01:00] growing up when we were in school. So, after spending most of my summers in Goslee pool, in junior high school, you're old enough to work on tobacco. So, I worked on Brown's tobacco fields, as a leafer. Worthwhile experience getting out there. It was a hard summer with long days. Definitely worth it. Definitely a lot of fun. Then into high school, I started working. I worked at Sage Allen, which used to be down in the Wilson Shopping Center. So, I worked there for several years in the Jewelry department. Made a lot of good friends there.

Patricia Bruhn

A lot of Windsor High School students worked there as well at times. And then [I] moved on to college. I ended up staying local and going to Central [Connecticut State University]. So, I was home, living at home in Windsor for part of that. At one point, we – the family moved from Wilson, and we moved down to Mountain Road, [00:02:00] so we're down in the center now. Actually, I forgot we originally started out in the Deerfield section. We were originally in Deerfield. I forgot about that one. That was when I was little, little. That was even preschool, and I remembered that one specifically because I had this huge room, what I thought was a huge room because I was so tiny. And also, I remember because my grandparents came out and there was a big parade. And I don't remember if it was a Memorial Day parade, or if it was a Shad Derby parade. I have a feeling it was Shad Derby. Forgot about that. Yes, we can never forget Shad Derby. Shad Derby growing up is a place where you all gather together on Saturday.

Patricia Bruhn

Even now, as an adult, if you want to see somebody that you haven't seen in a long time and just [inaudible], just go to the Beer Garden and you will find somebody from school and you can catch up and have a beer with them and sit and hang out. I still have a lot of good friends from high school. I still keep in touch with a lot of them. I've also ran a couple [00:03:00] of our reunions that we've had. We have a 40th coming up. Don't tell anybody I said that. But 40 years coming up soon, I'm looking forward to that. And so, it was good. It was all in all good. Windsor was a great town. It was easygoing. It's changed a lot through the years, but not remarkably, as you might see in some other towns. You can still see some subtle changes depending on which part of town you're in. It's easy to get through town. I mean, you can get from one end of town to the other. We spent a lot of time at the Plaza Movie Theater. I used to walk everywhere. I walked from Wilson down to the center. I was involved in Girl Scouts, which was over at Grace Church.

Patricia Bruhn

We met in the basement there, so I was able to meet people, make friends with other ones that went to either Sage Park, even though I went to LP Wilson. Oh, yeah, we can't forget that. At the time that I was in junior high, there were two junior highs. [00:04:00] We had Sage Park, which is now the middle school, and we have L.P Wilson, which was the other junior high school. And then the year that my brother went into ninth grade is when ninth grade moved to the high school and we gained the middle school thing, and the high school has changed a lot. I remember it from the beginning being much smaller than it was and being one building. Had a lot of great teachers. Ms. Lorretta Costa is probably one of the younger ones that I had that's my English teacher. Still keep in touch with her. Mrs. VanAusdall – great history teacher. Can't forget our principal, Mr. Shea, and vice principal Mr. Martin. Or did I get that wrong? It might be reversed. Is that right? And then we were very fortunate, I mean we had a lot of fun. A lot of fun growing up in town. All right, what else?

Sulema DePeyster

Do you have a teacher in particular that you would say was your favorite? [00:05:00]

Patricia Bruhn 00:05:01

That was my absolute favorite? There's so many. I'm going to, actually – I've almost forgotten until recently about Mrs. Barnett, who recently passed. She was our Home Ec[onomics] teacher. She was wonderful. She was very kind and very easy-going and we had a great time with her class. I loved Home Ec. It was a lot of fun. I love sewing, so I used to sew a lot too. It was so hard though. Junior high, though, we can't forget Mrs. Marconi. I think about her quite often because the fact of how she kind of pushed me for certain things. The only thing I didn't like is that she used to give crossword puzzles for practice and to this day, I don't like crosswords. [laughs] They're not my favorite thing to do. They just never have been, which is so funny. But that's what she liked to do, but we had a lot of fun doing that. She was a great teacher. Oh, there's so many things. Some of them I can see their faces, but I don't remember their names. [00:06:00]

Age has definitely caught up with me on that respect. What else, what else? What else do you want to know? Let's see.

Sulema DePeyster

So what makes Windsor special to you?

Patricia Bruhn

Oh, what makes Windsor special to me? That's a great question because in my mother doing some genealogy, she has traced her family back to some of the founders of Windsor, which is the first town in the state of Connecticut. So, that's why it's special to me because I can go back to the Thrall's, the Loomis's, I think the Ellsworth's, and still, some of them [we're] still working on proving, but it looks to be true. Who else is there? There's the Phelps family. That was another big one. A lot of the names that you see around town. Holcomb was another one there. They're big ones. They're still farming out in Granby and East Granby, I believe. Then there was a large family called the Case's. I think a few of them might have been at Windsor at one point. [00:07:00] A thing that I'd probably like to point out is that I read this book recently about Windsor and Windsor stretched out quite far. A lot farther than most people realize. I encourage you to go to the Windsor Historical Society and look for that book and see how big it used to be because when you think of all these families and how they moved to Simsbury or Bloomfield, at one point, that was all Windsor. They all really, truly lived in Windsor. So, there's a lot of great history. So that's what makes Windsor really, truly special to me is I can go back to the early, early days of our families.

Jenny Hawran

Great.

Patricia Bruhn

Did I leave out anything? I'm trying to think. Hit it all?

Jenny Hawran

No, I think you hit it all. Good job.

Sulema DePeyster

Thank you.

Patricia Bruhn

Woo hoo.