



WINDSOR  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Margaret Quigley: Share Your Windsor Story

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Brown's Harvest, Windsor, CT

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**Randy McKinney**

Whenever you're ready.

**Michelle Tom**

OK. What is your name?

**Margaret Quigley**

I am Margaret Quigley and I live here in Windsor.

**Michelle Tom**

Right and what do you want to tell us about today?

**Margaret Quigley**

Well, I would like to tell you a little about a raft race up at the reservoir that my husband started in 1983 with other gentlemen, Lon Pelton being one of the primary people that worked with him, and a couple of the other men, I think their names are on my poster that we can get later.

**Michelle Tom**

What is your husband's name?

**Margaret Quigley**

John Quigley. And in any case, they got all the permissions that they were supposed to get from the state and the health department and everyone. And, in fact, one of the doctors in town who is no longer with us, he, every year, went out and placed the markers where the rafts were supposed to, you know, make sure [00:01:00] and go around in order before they came in for the final – whoever won the race. So, in any case, it was a fun event. It was really lots of fun and we had good participation. A lot of the clubs, what do you call them? The clubs, you know? Johnny help me out.

**Michelle Tom**

Community organizations?

**Margaret Quigley**

The organizations, like Civitan and Kiwanis, those type of clubs, participated. And so you had to build your own raft, and then you had to follow the course, and John would get up, and every time he would, you know, the course would pretty much be the same every year. But we'd give them good information about where they were supposed to go and where their markers were. And it was –

**Michelle Tom**

What was one of the courses? Where did the course go approximately?

**Margaret Quigley**

Well, it was right off the boat ramp. The boat launching area at the reservoir, and it wasn't that far at all. You know, it was within maybe [00:02:00] a quarter mile. They just went around in a circle. I mean, it was really a fun event. Although, supposedly it was for, you know, whoever could come in first. Whoever built the best raft with the best team to get them in first, so we really had a good time. And as I say, it was very well organized, and it was very well participated in until about '88. It kind of petered out. But it was lots of fun while we held it and it was nice to have something that we can say, "Ah, that's what we did."

**Michelle Tom**

And when would you do these races? What time of year would you do the races?

**Margaret Quigley**

Oh, it was usually during August. It was during August and there wasn't any cost to participate, and anyone could come. As I say, the civic organizations [00:03:00] were the ones that mostly participated and friends of, and what else can I say about it?

**Michelle Tom**

What was the first year you did it?

**Margaret Quigley**

We first did it 1983. 1983.

**Michelle Tom**

Was it part of Windsor's 350th anniversary?

**Margaret Quigley**

Was it part of the 350th anniversary? I'm not sure of that.

**John Quigley**

No, it was part of the Northwest Park startup. Country fairs.

**Margaret Quigley**

Oh, the Country Fair Startups. Thank you, John.

**Liz Burke**

Did the water conditions vary from year to year?

**Margaret Quigley**

No, it was held in August, and it was mostly – we had good weather. We lucked out. We really did, and it just was lots of fun. You'll see if you look at the photos on the poster that I brought, you know, the fun that everyone had. There was a lot of participation.

**Michelle Tom**

What kind of rafts were they? How did they work and how many people were on them?

**Margaret Quigley**

Well, usually the rafts went from about 8 people on them to maybe 10 [00:04:00] or 12 or maybe even more. But one particular one was they had bicycles, actually, on them. And they were biking. It was attached to something underneath. I'm not very much of an engineer in my own mind, but I remembered that one, and then there were some that were paddlers on it, and can you remember any others, honey? The mechanism that –

**John Quigley**

Murph Brown had, from farms, he brought up a pump that we felt may have been illegal. He was pumping heavy waters that would tilt over many, many of the rafts.

**Margaret Quigley**

That's right, oh, it was fun.

**John Quigley**

The women had special gear on where they had the rain gear.

**Margaret Quigley**

Oh, that's right. My group that I was in was women. We were the only raft that was all women, and we had some crazy names from the Oil City Slickers. I don't know if you knew, Windsor [00:05:00] was called the Oil City at one time. Supposedly someone found oil up in them there hills.

**Michelle Tom**

He didn't really, it was a scam.

**Margaret Quigley**

Yeah, it was a scam. And then Oil City Slickers and Tubal Ligation was one group of us and one time we were dressed like "Mary had a little lamb." I don't know what we were called. I can't recall. I'm sorry, the names, but every – yeah, we had bloomers. White bloomers and the girls always had good costumes. It was lots of fun. I'm sorry I can't recall all of it.

**Michelle Tom**

Are there any particular races that stand out to you or any incidents that happened that were funny or scary?

**Margaret Quigley**

No, no, it was all fun. I think the part where Murph Brown had his something connected. He had a hose that was [00:06:00] out there spraying people. That was kind of fun, and we were trying to stay away from him, you know? And I don't know what else to say.

**Michelle Tom**

That's enough, that's great. Thank you so much. We really appreciate it.

**Margaret Quigley**

Thank you for doing it.

**Jenny Hawran**

Well, that's a great story.

**Margaret Quigley**

Thank you.

**Michelle Tom**

Yeah, thank you. So, was everybody in costume or just you guys liked costumes?

**Margaret Quigley**

I think it was the ladies mostly.