



WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Agnes Pier:
Share Your Windsor Story

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L.P. Wilson Community Center, Windsor, CT

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Interviewee: Agnes Pier

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Michelle Tom

Okay, tell us your name [and] how long you've lived in Windsor.

Agnes Pier

Okay, all right. [laughs] Hi, my name is Agnes Pier. I moved to Windsor in 1971. I raised all my children here. I lived on Route 159 on Windsor Avenue and then on [_____] my entire life here except for 7 short years when we first moved into town. All my kids went through school here. After I walked away from corporate America after 20 years, I became town clerk. And while I was town clerk, I received a very interesting story from Dan Mack that I think is very important that we preserve. Dan Mack was a local doctor here and basically delivered most of the babies in [00:01:00] town. He was an obstetrician and we loved Dan Mack. In his later years, after he retired, what he did was he went into painting. Now his family was one of the major brickyards in the town of Windsor. At one point in time, we had 47 brickyards in the town of Windsor. Mack Brickyard was the one that was right down on Mack Street.

Agnes Pier

The story I want to tell about the Mack Brickyard, though, has to do with the town hall. What Dan did was Dan painted an entire painting of the Brickyard in three panels. He donated these to the town hall. They are in the first foyer of the town hall. We had a reception for him. When we had a reception for him, he and I were standing [00:02:00] together afterwards and he was telling me, "I have a story that I want to relay to you that most people don't know because it was a big mistake and nobody realized it." At the point in time that the town hall was built, the town planner and the town engineer got together and determined exactly how many bricks they needed for this building. They wanted to have it all done by Mack [Brickyard]. So they went to the Mack Brickyard [and] they made the order. Now this was back in [the] 1960s, the early 1960s – '61, '62, something like that – and the Mack Brickyard at that point in time was going out of business. I don't know whether this was the last order, but it was probably the last biggest order that they were having. So they made their order. They did it, they started building the building.

Agnes Pier

As they got going and they were getting up [00:03:00] through it, they realized they made a calculation problem. They were two feet short of brick. They were two feet short and brick for the top of the town hall. Dan looked at me and he said, "Yep, they made one big mistake." They didn't know what to do, so they decided to go back to the Brickyard. They went to Dan's brother, who was running the Brickyard at the time, and they said, "We made a mistake. We're sorry, but we're two feet short of brick." And he said, "Well, we're shutting down. We aren't making any brick." And they said, "Well, what are we going to do?" And he said, "So my brother sat there and thought for a few minutes," and he said, "Well wait a minute we're shutting down!" Now the Mack Brickyard, and if you go to town hall and you look at the pictures, if you go to Carmen Funeral Home, you'll also see them at Carmen Funeral Home. But if you go to the town hall and you look at the pictures, you can see that they had these large buildings that were the kilns.

[00:04:00] So his brother said, “Wait a minute. I know what we do.” Because those kills are built on three feet of brick and then sand. So what they did was they tore down the building, they uncovered all that brick, and that brick on the bottom of those kilns were the last two feet of town hall. So now we've ended up putting that away for posterity. Thanks everybody.

Michelle Tom

That's wonderful. So, is it like the two top feet all the way around?

Agnes Pier

The two top feet. Isn't that an interesting story? Yes, and Dan's not here anymore. But if you want to see what the Mack Brickyard looks like, and actually on our photos, we have a Mack brick. And you can see their name on it, and you can see how they actually made the bricks themselves. So brick building was very, very big in this town. Another interesting story about bricks, and then [00:05:00] I'll stop is my husband and I bought a house, 1788 house, on Windsor Avenue. It's 1006 and 1004 Windsor Ave. So Bob Silliman happens to be the executive director of the Historical Society, sorry, and he's writing an article and doing research on the brickyards in Windsor. He comes to find out that there was a Brickyard in Windsor that supplied all of the bricks for the Mark Twain House. So he wants to know where the owners were.

Agnes Pier

He finds out who the owners were – Walter Willard Loomis. So he's going all up and down Windsor Avenue trying to [00:06:00] determine who it was because there are Queen Anne houses, so he's sure they're there. Come to find out, he comes and knocks on our door. Comes to find out that Walter Willard Loomis did not live in a brick house. He lived in the house that my husband and I had bought, and he had married Abigail, who was the daughter of [pause] I cannot pull up the name of the person that built the house. She was the daughter of the house that I was living in. She married Walter Willard and they were the ones that owned the brickyards. If you go and look there now, you can see there's a deep indentation next to 1006 Windsor Avenue. That's where they [pulled] out all the clay because it's all clay there. That's why we have bricks in this town [00:07:00] is because we have such good clay. And so he was shocked because it's a 1788 house that Walter Willard Loomis did. And so I ended up with a picture. I think I still might have it because I got mad at the people that bought my house and I think I took it with me. But maybe I did leave it there, so I'd have to call him and find out. [The picture is] of the house when they lived there. Abigail and Walter Willard are at the gate. So that was interesting. So Windsor bricks also supplied all of the bricks for the Mark Twain House in Hartford.

Michelle Tom

And this came out of your backyard?

Agnes Pier

Mhmm.

Colette Yeich

And there were still houses on Mack Street that were Mack houses.

Agnes Pier

Yes. Yes, there are houses on Mack Street. Mack Brick is all over this town.

Colette Yeich

My brother lives in one of the houses.

Agnes Pier

Just across the street, and wasn't it the family home?

Colette Yeich

No.

Agnes Pier

Nope, it wasn't the family home.

Colette Yeich

So I can tell a story.

Agnes Pier

So that's the one you need to tell. So Colette needs to tell the story on that.

Colette Yeich

Well, this is very brief though. It's a very, very brief story.