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'Home Sweet Patio Home'



As Mayflower nears its 75th anniversary, you will undoubtedly hear many stories about its history.

Here are a few! This article uses stories to examine one tiny piece of Mayflower history—the 1986 decision to build separate homes, then called “cottages,” now called “patio homes.”

Before 1986, the residents of Mayflower lived in apartments, in Buckley, Pearson, Altemeier, Montgomery, and Edwards. After 1986, Mayflower built a number of patio homes—on Park Street, First Avenue, Mayflower Lane, Broad Street, and State Street—before returning to

building apartments with the 2015 opening of Watertower Square.

The first cottages were the triplex on Park Street just north of the Health Center: 626, 628, and 630 Park. The stories connected with the building of these “cottages” give us interesting glimpses into Mayflower history.

The story of the advocates

Don Lambie tells the story of how he and his wife persuaded Mayflower to build the houses in the first place. His account appears in an essay in the 2000 collection of essays *Journey in Faith*,

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published for the 50th anniversary of Mayflower. Lambie describes how he and his wife, Candace, advocated to Dennis Acrea, then executive director of the Mayflower Community, that Mayflower think about building separate homes, whose residents would be members of the retirement community.

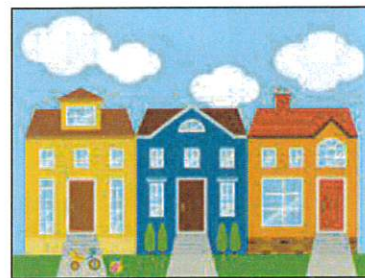
A story that Lambie does not tell, but that has echoed around the halls of Mayflower, is that Lambie said to Acrea, "Candace and I would like to assure that we have support as we age, so we would like to be connected to Mayflower. But we don't want to live with a bunch of old people. What do you suggest?"

By 1986, Don and Candace Lambie had been influential members of the Grinnell Community for many years. Lambie had retired from being the treasurer of Grinnell College, and Candace was active locally, statewide, and nationally in the League of Women Voters. Lambie had also been involved with Mayflower in the years before 1986—he had helped manage the Human Needs Fund, and he had helped lead Mayflower's first-ever capital fund campaign in 1983.

In his account, Lambie describes his "sales pitch" to Acrea: noting that such homes were popular in Arizona and California, he and Candace took Acrea to Washington, Iowa, to show him some duplexes that had been built there.

The Lambies also contributed \$50,000 to purchase the land on which the buildings would sit. There were two houses on that lot; one was demolished and the other donated to Habitat for Humanity and moved to a new location in southeast Grinnell.

Lambie also says that he suggested the name "Harwich" for the units, a port in England from which the original Mayflower ship sailed. (Wikipedia suggests it may have been the port where the ship was constructed.)



The story of the advertising Mayflower used to sell the houses

Looking at the advertising Mayflower used to attract buyers for the houses reveals much about the climate of the times and what Mayflower expected would appeal to new residents. The ads for the new buildings boasted of "A New Dimension of Gracious Living" and "A New Dimension in Independent Retirement Living."

Certainly the advertising stressed that the new home dwellers would have independence and privacy but also lots of support. The ads described the large

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private back yards, but noted that lawn care was provided. They mentioned the short distance to downtown shopping, library, parks and churches, but also noted that Mayflower meals were available in the dining room across the street. The homes would have private garages with garage door openers, and clarified that Mayflower provided security while people travelled. Overall, the ads could be seen as offering more advantages over what the Mayflower apartment dwellers had: "Mail delivered to front door," "attached garage and full basement," and "each unit has a private patio."

In addition, the ads noted that those who were building the units were all local contractors, including Beck Construction, Blom and Criswell Painting, German Plumbing and Heating, and S&S Electrical.

The story of moving the existing house and the watchers

An article in the May 1, 1968, Grinnell Herald Register reports that moving the house to clear the plot of land was not only a feat of engineering, but also a social event! Residents who lived in Buckley had a direct view of the site from which the house was moved. In the 1986 column, Mayflower resident Edith Appleby described the scene: "By 8:30 a.m. Wednesday the cheering section was beginning to gather in Buckley lounges. Those lucky enough to have

east facing apartments invited friends to sit out on their balconies and watch."

The article describes how the house moved only a few feet before it stopped and workers began to "crawl around under it again. One of the Mayflower men went across the street for a closer look and reported that one of the wheels had gone off the planks used to create a roadway and they were trying to get it back on track."

Appleby reported that "The Mayflower cheering section was patient with the delays, with several people offering unexpert opinions on what should be done or not done."

Finally, the house was moved and Appleby reported: "Now that the site is cleared, building of the cottages will start as soon as the ground is prepared to provide more entertainment for curious Mayflowerites."



The house that was moved from Park Street, now sits at 423 State Street.

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The story of Jack Morrison

Jack Morrison, recently retired from many years of working at the Mayflower, recalls details of the building of the triplex, a process with which he was involved.

Morrison began working at Mayflower in 1984, in charge of managing and maintaining the 175 units of the Grinnell Area Housing, which Mayflower then oversaw. As the son of a carpenter, he knew quite a bit about maintaining houses. Each morning and evening, he checked into work at the Mayflower site.

At that time, Dwight George was the maintenance director for Mayflower, overseeing a staff of three. They took care of painting and other odds and ends of maintenance at the Mayflower apartments. In 1986, as the plans were being made to build the first three houses on the site north of the Health Center, the folks hired to oversee the building included a construction manager from Ames and an architect out of Des Moines.

One day when Morrison was driving by the site of the new buildings, he noticed that the holes had begun to be dug.

But something was wrong. The hole that had been dug to prepare for the building nearest the Health Center, a hole that was already beginning to be filled with masonry blocks, seemed very far away

from the street. Morrison brought Acrea to look at the hole. He pointed out that you would need to install a 50-foot driveway, given where the hole was dug.

It turned out that there was a mistake on the plans. While the rendering showed the house set back about 25 feet from the road, there were mistaken measurements in the plan that resulted in the hole being dug too far to the east.

As a result of this error, the house nearest to the Health Center, the one the Lambies had built, has an unplanned sunroom at the rear of the building, complete with basement underneath. In other words, the house became larger because of where the hole had originally been dug.

Another result of the error was that Acrea realized that Mayflower needed someone to represent its interest during the building project. He hired Morrison to fill that role.

And Morrison, seeing that the builders were having trouble hiring workers, began to work on the buildings himself. For example, he installed the granite floor in the Lambie's sun room and entryway.

Looking back on his experience with these houses, Morrison notes that many of the local contractors who worked on the buildings, including S&S Electrical, German Plumbing and Heating, and Griffith Contractors, still exist in the

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community today, often overseen by a second or third generation of the family.

Morrison also notes that these buildings were “overengineered.” For example, they have twelve-inch masonry blocks, which is a standard for commercial buildings. He also notes that from then on in the process of Mayflower building houses, the design work was done in house, in collaboration with the people buying the houses. As Morrison says, “Mayflower builds things the way people want.”

The story of the data collector

More stories about the growth of Mayflower and its residents will flow from the work of current resident Joan Baker, who has embarked on a quest to trace the history of Mayflower by tracking down records of who lived in which buildings and for how long; she hopes to create a history of who has lived in each of Mayflower’s houses and apartments.

According to her research, from city directories, Mayflower directories, and other printed sources, those first three patio homes have sheltered 11 individuals and families so far.

630 Park: George Harbison; Peg Keeney; Warner Renaud; Shane and Robin Estes; Richard Adams

628 Park: Carrie and Ivan McDonough; Gordon and Alicemary Borthwick; Stan and Janaan Swann

626 Park: Don and Candace Lambie; Merle Zerkle; Harold Kasimow and Lolya Lipchitz

More stories to come in future LOG issues!

Judy Hunter



Stan Swann enjoys the patio at his home, at 628 Park.

WELCOME JANICE LOGAN

Janice Logan grew up in northern Iowa on a farm near Meservey, 20 miles south of Clear Lake. She was a farm girl, the oldest of three children. Her father

raised cattle and hogs, along with crops, and her mother was a busy homemaker. Janice liked farm life—but she didn’t want to marry a farmer. *(continued on page 6)*

Janice Logan

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After high school, Janice took a job as secretary for the school superintendent in Meservey, where, in 1959, her soon-to-be husband Bill came to teach math and industrial arts. Following their marriage, the couple moved to Grinnell, where Bill started teaching in the middle school, which is now the Hotel Grinnell. Soon, Janice and Bill had three girls—Diane (now deceased), Judy, and Sheryl. In addition to taking care of her family, Janice became the manager of food service at the middle school, with the advantage that she and Bill had the same schedule.

All three girls graduated from Grinnell High School and went on to college. After teaching for 35 years, Bill retired in 1994. He died in 2007.

On June 30 of this year, Janice moved to the Mayflower, into her attractive, roomy apartment in Edwards. She says she

chose to move here—it was not her children's idea. She was already familiar with the apartment and was happy to work with Jack Morrison on the remodeling. When Janice asked if he had been one of Bill's students, Jack said, "Yes!"

Janice says that after the "sorting, and giving away, and throwing away," the move was easy for her. Her daughter Judy, who lives in West Des Moines, helped along the way, and Sheryl came from North Carolina the last week to assist with finishing up. Janice is pleased that her furniture fit neatly into the apartment.

Now, Janice enjoys reading and 'a little sewing.' She loves to bake and shares what comes out of her oven, and she is active in the Presbyterian church. She recalls that she and Bill did a lot of traveling—initially by car and then by bus, and particularly enjoyed a trip to Martha's Vineyard.

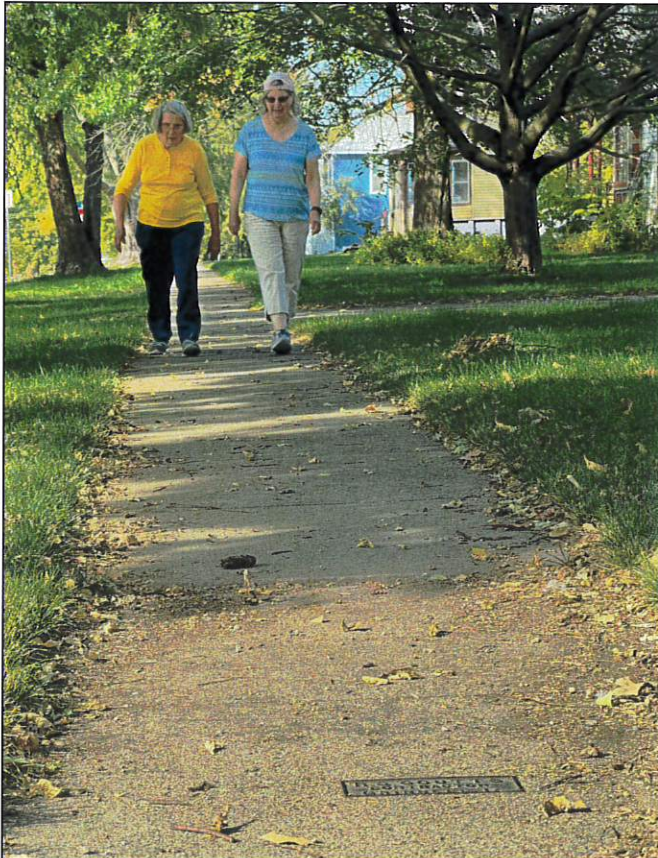
Janice says she appreciates the friendliness at the Mayflower. She already knew many people from town and has enjoyed seeing new faces at chapel, movies, and neighborhood lunches. In fact, for Janice, the Mayflower already feels like home.

We welcome Janice Logan to the Mayflower community.

Betty Moffett



Beneath Their Feet



**Marvel LaCasse and Martha Voyles
look for Grinnell history.**

Two Mayflower residents turned their daily walks together into a treasure hunt of sorts. The walks also yielded a lesson in local history.

Marvel LaCasse and Martha Voyles began walking several years ago as part of the Walking Warriors, a Mayflower-organized group that walked regularly for exercise. When the group disbanded because of the pandemic, Marvel and Martha continued walking together.

The two of them knew of each other before the walking started because of their mutual connection to education. Marvel taught and subbed in the Grinnell schools, and Martha was in the Education Department at Grinnell College. The Walking Warriors officially introduced them, and a friendship developed.

During their walks last year, Marvel and Martha became intrigued by markings they noticed on some sidewalks in the oldest parts of town. They were so intrigued, in fact, that they decided to find out more. With a little investigation, they learned that the names they saw were the contractors who had put in the particular sidewalk slab. Martha began to research the lives and businesses of the contractors, using online records and the archives of the Drake Community Library.

She learned that sidewalk stamps - as the markers are called - were first used in the United States in the late 1800s, when the development of Portland cement made concrete possible.

In Grinnell, Marvel and Martha found sidewalk stamps in the 500 block of High Street, 700 block of East Street, 600 block of First Avenue, and 1300 block of Elm Street. Some of the stamps are metal plaques embedded in the concrete,

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Beneath Their Feet

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others are pressed into the surface. They likely date from the 1890s through the early part of the twentieth century.

They found the names of three different contractors: R.G. Coutts, George Sampson, and Jacob Brothers.

Martha posted their findings on a group Facebook site called "Grinnell, Iowa, 1854 to Present."

R.G. Coutts is the best-known name. He was a prominent stone and brick mason who built several college buildings (the original parts of Mears, Goodnow and Alumni Hall), the Herald Building at the southwest corner of Fifth and Broad, and the old high school and junior high (now Hotel Grinnell). His name can be seen on the outside of another of his downtown buildings now Saint's Rest.



When Marvel and Martha are both in town, they typically walk for about an hour in the late afternoon, "after we get done what we need to do during the day," Marvel explained.

They take a different route every time, almost always with a destination in mind—something they have recently heard or read about.

Along the way, they pay attention to their surroundings. "Marvel is usually the one who spots things," Martha said. "She has a good eye."

In their two-plus years of walking together, Marvel and Martha have walked to almost every corner of Grinnell. Look for them on a sidewalk near you. They are sure to be on the trail of something new.

Mary Schuchmann



Marvel and Martha find interesting things around every corner.



AUTUMN

AUTUMN'S PROMISE

We've raced through summer into fall.
And find the calendar full!
Suddenly, we're surviving the crowd
Of Holidays—no week is dull!

We have Veterans' Day to remind us
We've lost grandpas—our own "Uncle Sam";
After that, we fly into harvest
And the Pilgrim's first "Thanksgiving yam"!

Then Christmas trees are everywhere
And grandmas are knitting away!
Some of us try to send holiday cards
And that takes more than a day!

Our busy schedule has one bright spot!
We hardly notice that green turned to white!
Our orange days went so very fast
It's New Year's by now, don't you know it!

*Patricia H. (Pasha) Buck
Fall, 2021*



Samantha has a spider friend
who knows she'll let him be.
He often hides in web filled holes
so deep she cannot see.

Now you might think Samantha
would show a lot of fear,
knowing a big black spider
was hiding very near.

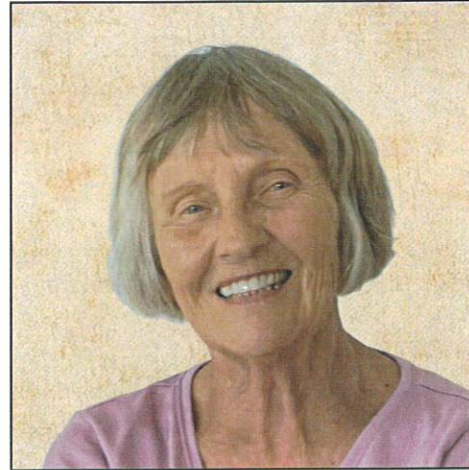
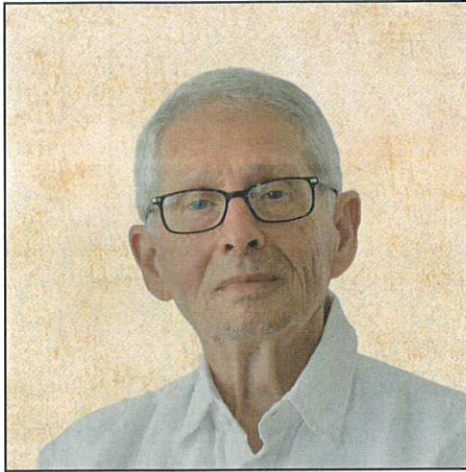
Yet this suggestion is not true,
Samantha knows for sure
her spider friend eats only bugs,
and does not bother her.

She often slips a quite dead fly
next to his sticky lair.
Up darts her friend to drag it down,
thanks to Samantha's care.

*Sue Drake
Lyrical Iowa, 2012*



Welcome Dennis and Jean Perri



After many years living in Grinnell, Jean and Dennis Perri are moving to a patio home at 721 Park.

Dennis, born in Wisconsin, came to Grinnell College in 1967 as a leave replacement in the Department of Spanish. He commuted to the University of Iowa to obtain his PhD, defending his dissertation in 1970. He continued as a member of the Grinnell College Spanish Department until his retirement.

Jean, born in Dubuque, graduated with a French degree from Rockford College. She spent two years in the Peace Corps in Turkey, where she taught English in middle school. Returning to Iowa, she attended the U of I where she earned an MA in French. Jean and Dennis met at the U of I on a blind date.

Unable to find a high school teaching position near Grinnell, Jean pursued another interest: medicine. She

graduated with an RN degree from the Marshalltown School of Nursing and became a Head Start nurse for MICA. Five years later she earned a nurse practitioner degree focusing on women's health. For a number of years, she was the nurse practitioner at the family planning center in Grinnell.

After retiring, Jean was a part-time volunteer GED tutor at the women's prison in Mitchellville for 10 years. She was a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for many years. She belongs to several state and national conservation organizations and was appointed an assistant Soil and Water Commissioner in Poweshiek County. She is also active in the county Democratic Party.

Dennis occupies his time with cooking, gardening, and mystery novels. Both Jean and Dennis are active walkers, each striving to put in 8,000 steps daily.

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Dennis and Jean Perri*(continued from page 10)*

The Perris have two children: Gina, trained in facilities management and in real estate, lives with her husband and two children in Wisconsin; Adam, a freelance photographer and videographer, lives in Massachusetts with his wife and dog.

Asked why they chose Mayflower, Jean and Dennis point to the community. They have lived a long time in Grinnell, and they have family ties in the Midwest

that go back generations. Jean traces her family back to German settlers in the Iowa Territory near Dubuque, and Dennis traces his to Italian immigrants to Wisconsin in the 1930's. While the couple considered moving closer to their children, they chose the Mayflower, where they will be a welcome addition.

Judy Hunter

The MRA - "Taking Part" at Mayflower

As a retirement community the Mayflower is truly a unique place. The primary reason is that residents take an active role in the creation of a lively and stimulating environment.

Unlike many similar communities there is no administrative social director. Here the residents construct a fulfilling environment through their participation in various programs and committees. That participation has understandably waned during the pandemic and it's time to renew it.

Your October billing included a survey for anyone to express their willingness to serve on a broad range of committees. It could include anything from helping plan social events, chapel services, the MRA budget, our green environment, games, musical performances, and more. Additionally, it is an opportunity to suggest new activities for our new normal.

If you have already filled out the survey, thank you! If not, please reconsider. Giving back to the Mayflower we so deeply appreciate is a tradition that has served us well in the past and will endure well into the future....with your help.

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Photos by Bill Pollak

Nightly Visitors

A clothes chute leading up
from basement haunts.

A closet with descending stairs
ushering down attic ghosts.

A porch window where
werewolves scratch

Three unguarded entrances
into my bedroom,
stalking my imagination nightly.

My older siblings just laughed
and refused to trade rooms.

*Sue Drake
Lyrical Iowa, 2018*



HAPPY HALLOWEEN