

Interview of Betsy Schoonover by Jean Bubriski, July 4th weekend, 2016

Betsy Schoonover's family has been on Rustic Ridge for 100 years. Betsy, who is in her mid-seventies, remembers the several swimming places in Northfield from Wanamaker Lake, Schell Pond, and The Northfield Inn Pool. She also remembered many details of past places and activities, which she described to me at the Rustic Ridge Fourth of July Picnic 2016.

Betsy also remembers the Chateau. It was so beautifully and richly decorated with marble floors and counters, brocade silk drapery, silk wallpaper, and chandeliers. The Chateau had a chapel with an organ, a circular spiral staircase, a large ballroom, and even a basketball court. Betsy also recalls the sets of two facing mirrors, where you could see your image seemingly into infinity.

Betsy has some detailed memories of The Northfield Inn since she worked at the Inn as a waitress when she was young. She had access to the banquet halls at both the Inn and the Chateau. Betsy said that the Inn dining room was very elegant with fancy cutlery, crystal glasses and fine china plates. The Inn had a lovely veranda which wrapped around the building.

The Inn had some lively events for its guests. In the winter, there was a New Year's Eve Party at the Inn. She also remembers the toboggan run and ice skating on the pond. In the summer, the Inn always had a Lobster Night. On the fourth of July, there was a bomb fire (Spelling) bonfire, and a scarecrow was burned. Betsy thought we should consider resurrecting some of these activities.

Betsy told me about several buildings that burned down and others which are no longer in Northfield. A grocery store and hardware store used to be on the east end of Main Street (near where Turners Services is now). Betsy recalled that the Trinitarian Congregational Church also burned down. She mentioned that there was a good restaurant at the Bernardston Inn, a building which dates back to the 1890s, but burned down. There were rumors that this building was a speak-easy during Prohibition. Betsy remembers other places that are no longer used, like the Schell Bridge and the Northfield Train Station. A Ford car dealership was where the Cameron Winery is in 2016. There was a drugstore where Rooster's was on Main Street., next to the IGA Northfield Mart.

Betsy's mother was Betty Boeve Schoonover. Her very good friends in Northfield were Duncan and Bernice Campbell who worked at businesses that are now closed. Duncan ran Campbell's Auto Shop, and Bernice worked at the Northfield School Book Store on Moody Street. Betsy's younger sister, Martha, and her buddy, the author here Jean Bubriski, loved going to the Bookstore for ice cream, getting the mail from the East Northfield Post Office, and hanging from the railing bars around the building, which is still on Moody Street.