

Reminiscence: Teschek & Cassidy

By Brian Murphy
For the Beacon

In last month's Beacon, Brian wrote about the friendship of Ed Cassidy and Donald Teschek from 1938 in Boston through World War II in the South Pacific. This month he picks up the story on the home front.

On The Home Front

While Don and Ed served overseas, Eleanor [Teschek] sacrificed at home. Shortly after the outbreak of war at the age of 17, she had begun work at the Employer's Group, which had changed its name to the Commercial Union. It was a time of sacrifice and scarcity. She recalls ration tickets, Victory Gardens, war bonds, brown-outs, and not having any nylons to wear. (The armed forces

After the war, Ed Cassidy, his wife Kay, and Don Teschek eventually returned to the Boston area and resumed work at the Commercial Union. When Eleanor first caught sight of Don strolling into the office – tall and dressed sharply in a beige suit, but yellow-skinned from malaria pills and bad diet – she wasn't so impressed.

"Over the years I had heard about him because he worked in my department," Eleanor says. "I can remember the first thing I said was, 'I don't think he was so hot.'"

Nevertheless, the pair began dating and eventually married in 1946. Both families settled down and began raising families in the post-war years. Ed and Kay had four sons; Don and Eleanor three daughters.

Ed and Don didn't talk about the war much, though they'd occasionally share a memory that stuck with them. Ed says it wasn't the horrors of war or the grand sweep of the world-wide conflict they had participated in that prompted their conversations, but most often the small things. "We'd remember how bad the food was," says Ed, recalling that the ice cream and fresh-baked Australian bread were manna from heaven in comparison.

The Andover Connection

In 1953 and 1954, Ed and Don began looking at summer property in New Hampshire. They initially considered a campground on Webster Lake, but that proved too expensive. Ed was alone when he first saw the Maple Street property in June, 1954. It was a former orchard, and a few apple trees remained on the long, sloping hill down to the lakefront, along with a small beach that caught Ed's eye.

"The scoop was the woman that owned it had bought it, and her boys would use it, but because of the war, they had circulated around the country just like all of us did," he says. "They met gals they ended up marrying and were out of state. So this place was not being utilized like she thought it would be, and she decided to sell."

Ed called Don and told him about



In front of the Cassidy cottage in 1982, two years before Don Teschek died. (L-r) Eleanor Teschek; Joyce Bourdon of Andover (Don and Eleanor's youngest daughter) holding her son Greg; Ed Teschek; Don Cassidy; and Patrick Cassidy.

– sheet rocking, plastering, and insulation were about the extent of it, Ed says – but that didn't stop them. They drove up on the weekends and worked hard.

Some of the materials were new and others, including the windows, were second-hand or refurbished. Three windows in the Teschek place were hand-me-downs from Anderson—not the noted window manufacturer, but Eleanor's boss Bob, who had made it through the war unscathed.

They built a pump house by the water's edge and ran a couple of lines up the hill for a water supply. Ed recalls that they tried to drive a point for a well, but the rocky Andover soil wouldn't oblige.

They started on the Cassidy cottage first. To speed things up, the two men took a working vacation, pitching a 9' x 12' white sidewall tent and cooking their meals on a gasoline camp stove. Don slept in his car. Though quite different in their approaches to construction, the two men nevertheless made an efficient tag team.

"Ed is very deliberate in everything he does, and Don was more apt to go ahead and get it done whether or not it was perfect all the time," Eleanor recalls. "All of our couple friends knew these traits, and we used to have a saying that if Ed built the cottage himself, he would still be building, and if Don

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Brian Murphy wrote this month to let us know that Ed Cassidy passed away on October 19, at the age of 93. Ed will be cremated and his remains interred in Andover alongside his wife, Kay.

needed the material for parachutes, she recalls.) Her boss, 38-year-old Bob Anderson, was drafted into the service despite having two children at home. "It was such a long war and on so many fronts, they literally were running out of manpower," she says.

She also remembers casualty lists. One of her friends, Red Slack, a young man with whom she used to dance, was killed in combat in Germany.

When V-E Day (Victory in Europe) and V-J Day (Victory in Japan) occurred, cities across the US erupted in a wild celebration. The Commercial Union and all the rest of businesses in Boston emptied their workers – mostly females and older men past the age of military service – into the streets.

"It was great – we threw all the adding machine tapes and rolls of toilet paper out the windows like streamers and went out and danced all around Post Office Square when it was over," Eleanor says.

the property, and the latter gave him the okay to tie it up. At the time, the price seemed high, and it was a struggle for the two families to make payments.

"A lot of people thought we paid too much because a lot of land was going for cheaper, but not necessarily waterfront," Ed recalls. "Land in general was very reasonable at that time in this area."

Don and Ed soon set to work building cottages. Between the two of them they had minimal building experience



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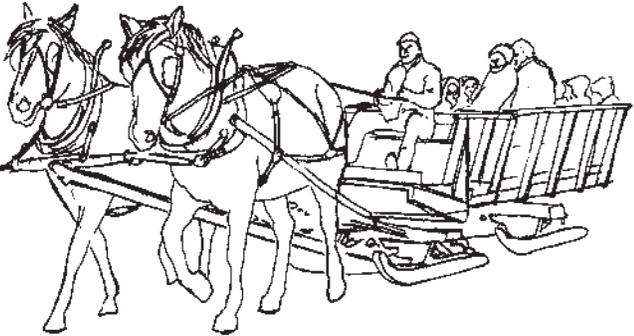


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