



"Where we love is home, home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts." ~Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., Homesick in Heaven

My Old Wildwood Crest House

By Kirk Hastings



Our "Old Wildwood House" the way it looked when we first moved into it, in May of 1962.

Have you ever lived in a place that, no matter where else you might live afterwards, or how many times you move, that place always remains the place you think of when you think of "home"?

I have such a place.

A medium-sized, two-bedroom T-shaped ranch house located between Stanton and Farragut Roads on New Jersey Avenue in Wildwood Crest, right across from Sunset Lake. I lived there, and grew up there, between 1962 and 1969.

The old house isn't there anymore -- it was replaced by a 3-story mansion in 1986. But the memories of that Old Wildwood House remain, as real and vivid as ever, even 50 years later.

We bought the house from an old widow who had lived there alone for many years. According to borough tax records, Mrs. Theda Sheward bought the prop-

erty from the Borough of Wildwood Crest on June 29, 1945, and she built the ranch house on it in 1947.

We moved in on May 26th, 1962, after taking out a mortgage in the amount of \$16,000 with Crest Savings & Loan for the property. (That's right -- \$16,000!). We had previously lived just outside of Baltimore, Maryland, and had moved to Wildwood Crest in January of 1961 (renting a house located on Cresse Avenue from a friend

of my father's). But now we owned a house of our own! And right across the street from a lake, too!

The next seven years were crammed with many new and exciting experiences: exploring the local beach and boardwalk, marveling at the many "Doo Wop" motels dotted across the island, shopping at F.W. Woolworth's and G.C. Murphy's downtown, going to Philip P. Baker Elementary School and the Crest Memorial School (the latter in 1963, the very first year it opened), eating at the lunch counters in Snuffy's and Anderson's Variety Store. And enjoying the magical way the sun glistened off the waves on Sunset Lake on early summer evenings ...

"Those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end" (Gene Raskin, 1968).

Unfortunately, some things must come to



A typical summer day on Sunset Lake in Wildwood Crest in the 1960s

an end. My mother passed away prematurely at age 46 in July of 1969, and due to financial difficulties we had to sell the old house and move out of town. I ended up living the next few years in Pennsylvania.

But I returned to Wildwood in October of 1973, and in 1995 I became the President of the Wildwood Crest Historical Society -- a position I still hold today.

Judy Garland once said, "There's No Place Like Home." A writer once said,

"Home Is Where the Heart Is." Thomas Wolfe said, "You Can't Go Home Again."

But today, whenever I pass by the old property across from Sunset Lake, all those vivid memories of growing up there, come flooding back again. The "Old Wildwood House" itself may no longer be there, but it's tug on the heart and the mind and the soul still remains, as strong as it ever was.

Who said you can't go home again?

SEASIDERS

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