

Recollections: GLEN MAGNA FARMS in the 1950's by William Lachance

My family and I lived at the end of Dayton Street, and the property adjoined Glen Magna Farms, so when I was old enough and looking for work, I went to the farm and asked for a job. I was hired and soon was working every day after school and on weekends by helping with the milking of the cows. On weekends and during summers, I worked on various tasks as assigned around the property. In total, I worked on the Endicott Estate for six years.

Glen Magna was a large estate, encompassing and across Route 1, over to Hobart Street where St. Mary's Cemetery is now and where Whipple Hill backs up to and includes the land currently occupied by St. Richard's Church on Forest Street.

There were a number of pastures across Route 1, and cows were driven through the cow tunnel under that road. (Use of the pastures was rotated to prevent overgrazing.) There were actually two tunnels. In addition to the one for the cows, there was a smaller tunnel, about 3-4 feet high for water drainage. There was usually water in the smaller tunnel, such that it could not be used for any passage of livestock.

A number of buildings existing in the 50's no longer exist, notably the cow barn near the existing hay barn and the laundry near the mansion. (In 2017, the greenhouse was removed as it had fallen into disrepair and was no longer serving its original function.)

The annual gardens were, as they are today, located between the mansion and the McIntyre Tea House. Beyond the gardens, two man-made brick pools were very close to and flanked the entrance to the Tea House. A fountain in each provided movement to the water to maintain freshness to the pools. The water was about 3 feet deep, and on hot summer days, some farm workers would swim in them. Since Mrs. Endicott did not approve, the swimmers had to be quiet and quick with their swimming.

Mrs. Endicott (Louise (Thoron), wife of William Crowninshield Endicott, Jr. was the last Endicotts to live at Glen Magna. She was generally in residence at Glen Magna in late Spring, Summer and early Fall. The mansion was heated exclusively by wood in boilers beneath the house. Whenever Mrs. Endicott wished to travel away from the estate, her farm clerk, Tom Shepherd, would contact Lyons and Son and they would supply a limousine.

When she was in Boston, she lived in the family home at 163 Marlborough Street. As she moved between homes, the entire household, including the Irish maids, moved with her. When she was in Boston, every 2-3 weeks a farm truck was sent as needed to supply vegetables from the estate root cellar (under the present hay barn). In addition, the truck would carry a supply of wood as that house was also heated solely by wood.

Mrs. Endicott was an aristocratic lady. She did not generally speak with the farm workers. Employees on the grounds were not to talk to her; rather, they were to merely nod as she walked by. She was, however, good to employees; for example, at Thanksgiving time, each family, including part-time workers were provided a turkey and all vegetables needed for the meal.

A number of employees were provided housing on estate property:

Thomas Shepherd, the Estate Clerk, lived above the Carriage House.

Paul Adams, a farm worker, lived above the Laundry, a building located behind the mansion.

Finley Nicholson, the General Foreman, lived on Ingersoll Street in the first house on right off Center Street.

Charles Welsh, the Herdsman, (responsible for livestock), lived in a house near the Route 1 cow tunnel.

John Fleming, a farm worker, lived on Forest Street in the first house on the right after St. Richard's Church.