

In the Beginning of Northbridge Terrace...  
Reflections by Betty Parks

When the bridge was built over the Ashley, circa 1955, it opened up a new area for residential homes. Northbridge Terrace was started in June of 1956 by three partners from Aiken, South Carolina. They were Richard McDonald, Andrew Combs and Alton Parks. Alton was sent to clear the land for roadways, and to survey for lots. He set up a card table by Highway 7 and what is now Northbride Drive. He placed a big sign "Lots for Sale" in front of the table. Many interested people did buy lots from that "outdoor office."

The first house was built on Northbridge Drive at Sharon Avenue. An office was set up in the Parks' home. Before long, as more and more families had moved into their new homes, a Civic Club was formed. Also, by 1957, the Northbridge Garden Club was organized.

One of our first concerns was to get the United States Postal Service to allow us to have our mail delivered in our neighborhood. At first, our boxes had to be placed on the then unpaved Orange Grove Road. There were some houses on Orange Grove Road, and WTMA radio station was at the end of the road at this time. By the time we had thirty mailboxes, we were given permission to move them to Northbridge Drive, where the Reeves' home is today. Finally, the Civic Club received permission for our mailboxes to be in front on the houses.

Next, our club members discussed the need for recreation for our children. There were no movie theaters or fast food places at the time. Mr. Clayton Perreault, Director of the American Red Cross, was living on Afton Avenue. We had a meeting at Clayton and Doris' home to talk about building a swimming pool. Forty families put up \$400.00 each and were given stock certificates. These were dated April 28, 1959. A contractor was hired and the pool was ready within the year. We needed volunteers to sign up and take the Red Cross Water Safety classes. Many residents were eager to help. Alton Parks was so willing to assist, he became one of Charleston's first "Instructor" instructors and later taught cadets at the Citadel. All of this effort was volunteer work. Many of the moms were certified to teach the children to swim. This effort was successful because of caring parents.

Before long, the children wanted to organize a swim team and have racing events with other neighborhoods. Our first novice swim meet was at Hobcaw Creek Subdivision in Mt. Pleasant in June of 1961, and what an exciting event for our girls and boys! That was the beginning of the great Northbridge Swim Team. If we could have seen the future, the swimming pool would have been bigger.

Northbridge Terrace was developed in four sections. The first was Northbridge Drive, to Somerset Circle, around to Southgate Drive. The center streets were laid out also, Sharon and Afton. Next was Dartmoor Circle, Woodhaven and Mim. Then the land was purchased to extend Northbridge Drive to the marsh. That area had no trees, and was an

asparagus farm at one time. A family named Stoney had a vacation home on the marsh. Alton planted most of the trees in that farm area; some oaks trees were along the marsh, and lots of blackberries grew there. Deer and rabbits were plentiful, also.

Mrs. Fernando Waring owned the land where Carterett and Vassar are now, and Charlestowne Landing is today. She was a gracious lady who welcomed us to the area. Alton was responsible for having water pipes installed at her chicken farm. When Northbridge Terrace went into the city, he had to put the pipes in for city water, starting where Highway 171 joined Highway 61, and as Wespawnee, Lenevar, Charlestowne I and II were developed, the developers paid tap-in fees to Charleston Public Works (CPW). The older Old Towne houses on Highway 171 were built before 1956. They used wells for water.

This is just a little news of the last 44 years, telling you some of the events as I remember what took place. The naming of the streets might be interesting to some of you. Sharon was the name of Joan and Dick McDonald's daughter. Weston Avenue was named after Julian Weston, a gentleman who worked for the CPW. Somerset, Chelwood, Dunbarton and Dartmoor Circle were named after golf courses in England.

Northbridge Terrace is one of the finest neighborhoods in Charleston, a wonderful place to live and raise a family.

Betty Parks  
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