

Search for:


[Advanced Search](#)Showing postings 1 - 50 of 72 in the thread: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc. [Jump to \[ End of Discussion \]](#)Page: 1 2 [Next](#)

Posting: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 1
Poster: Skipper Barrett	
Date: 1 December 2007 9:17 PM	
<p>When my pop Russell Barrett ran The Capitol Theatre (1943-1960) he used to get all kinds of gifts from Xmas vendors who serviced the theatre -- such as the folks that supplied the candy for the candy vending machines ( before the candy/snack bar was put in the Capitol lobby in 1951), The National Screen Services that gave us the posters that were displayed in the lobby announcing forthcoming films like "The Robe" or maybe "Lassie Comes Home" or "White Christmas."</p> <p>Each Year my pop would get a huge white box of wrapped candy in a gift box -- that perhaps was as wide as 18 inches and 24 inches long -- wrapped in a huge red and gold colored criss-cross ribbon that held the box together. Inside were layers and layers of chocolate candies, everything from Belgian chocolate nougats to white chocolate pieces filled with cocoanut. All of us at the theatre always looked forward to this candy, it was the best anywhere, came out of NYC. My pop used to share this great box of sweets with the Captol gang such as Jim Kilmartin the doorman, Shirley Nadile the candy stand gal, Otis Fairbanks the projectionist, Henry Morrisette the stage manager, George Haddad (he was asst mgr of Capitol 1945-50), Jerry Lussier the projectionist, Ted Reichard asst mgr (1956-60), Millie Potter and Helen Hallhan, the cashiers and others I am probably forgetting right now to name. When that huge box of candy arrived at The Capitol each year, we all knew Christmas was here ! It was s special time at The Capitol. The box was usually empty in a weekend.</p> <p>On some NY Eve's my pop used to host a NYs Eve party for his help after the last movie wrapped at maybe 11:30PM. It was held in the loge area, which was if any of you recall was located upstairs as you entered the balcony. The Loge was fitted with art deco lounge chairs and couches, floor lamps and side tables, ashtrays -- where you could smoke a cigarette if you liked and relax. It was a time when Willimantic was a simpler, fairer place, and so was the world for that matter.</p> <p>Yowza, Yowza, Yowza.</p> <p>Skipper</p>	
Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 2
Poster: J. Richard Phaneuf	
Date: 1 December 2007 9:46 PM	
I seem to remember a little movable window display in what I think was the Boston Store window.	
Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 3
Poster: Skipper Barrett	
Date: 2 December 2007 12:59 AM	
<p>Hi</p> <p>Me too...wasn't it a display with Santa and his workshop elves working on packing up his sleigh?...seems to me it was or am I thinkong of maybe a store in Hartford?.. but I think it was the HC Murray Company/Boston Store, run by the Boucher family of Lewiston and North Sts.</p> <p>And of course we all recall the Nativity scene at the Elks Home lawn...that spelt Xmas had arived too !</p> <p>And was there not a Xmas tree at Lincoln Square a long time too long ago and far way?? ...and Lindy's window near the grille always had a Jack Frost amidst a striped candy cane with a ribbon??</p>	
Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 4
Poster: Ernie Gesner	
Date: 2 December 2007 1:35 AM	
I remember the Christmas train that was in the window of Bills number 7 every year at Christmas time.	
Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 5
Poster: John Tormey	
Date: 2 December 2007 1:14 PM	
<p>Back in The Day ('40s), we students at St. Joseph's School would all go over to the church basement on the last school day before Christmas. There we'd find Father Lynch dressed up as Santa Claus. We'd line up and shake his hand. (We did not sit on his lap.) Then he'd give us an orange and a small box of very hard candy. We'd sing a few songs (Sister Patricia conducting). We did not sing "Away in a Manger" because Martin Luther wrote it, we were told. Then we'd go home. It was a half-day at school, which was nice. I</p>	

think the candy was donated by the Willimantic Dental Association to drum up some business.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 6  
 Poster: John Boudreau  
 Date: 3 December 2007 12:06 AM

One of my many good memories of Christmas in Willi as a kid was the Christmas party for the kids of the members of the K of C . Santa usually Pete Jacobs) was inevitably half loaded by the time it came to receiving our gifts ( which were always very nice and not inexpensive ) but who cared ? Hehe...Those were the days when just about every family had at least 4 kids so the small room they had the party in was packed . Great time ...

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 7  
 Poster: Nancy Harrington  
 Date: 3 December 2007 8:26 AM

The Elks had a children's party every year. There was a Santa and gifts and I think the bowling alley was open, but I was too young to bowl.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 8  
 Poster: Ada Kerachsky Albright  
 Date: 3 December 2007 4:58 PM

Those are great memories, Skipper. I hope you have written this down someplace else, too. My mother used to set up a winter display in one of the store (Morris Hardware & Supply) windows. It was a village skating scene--a mirror for the ice, angel hair for snow, etc. She had small figures of people skating, children on sleds, etc. Until the later years, the store also sold toys at Christmas time. Many a Christmas eve my parents closed the store later than usual if there were people doing last-minute shopping. For two or three weeks before Christmas, most stores were open every night until 9 pm. Of course in those days, retail stores were closed on Sundays (Blue laws).

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 9  
 Poster: Skipper Barrett  
 Date: 4 December 2007 2:23 AM

Hi Ada:

Glad you enjoyed the Xmas story from The Capitol. Yes, I really must keep these and print them out. Maybe someone should also do an oral history of the class of WHS 1958 as well !

Hope you can make it to the 50th reunion and maybe to the radio guesting too.

Charles " Skipper" Barrett

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 10  
 Poster: J. Richard Phaneuf  
 Date: 4 December 2007 2:22 PM

Skipper,

I do remember the tree in Lincoln Square and also the parking problems along main street when there were piles of snow lining the streets with icy sidewalks covered with sand. All the stores would have carpets at the doors to wipe our feet. Hot Chocolate was a popular drink at that time of the year and we'd stop at Woolworth's lunch counter for a cup to warm our innards before venturing back out into the cold.

We had about 5000 people in town back then and a new family was easily recognized. We'd go out in the woods and pick that evergreen vine on the ground to make wreaths for our doors at home and little wild holly branches with the red berries. Also some strips of white birch bark as an added wreath decor.

I remember horses and wagons out on Carlson's Pond in Franklin as the men sawed big pieces of ice from the frozen lake and the steam from the horse's breaths as they pulled some the wagons that still came to town then. Little did we know that some of those scenes would be on picture postcards in the years to come.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 11  
 Poster: Skipper Barrett  
 Date: 4 December 2007 9:01 PM

Richard:

Do you live in CA????...wondering cuz you mention it often.

Ventura??

I am in LA and Palm Springs

Skipper

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 12

Poster: Steve Starger  
Date: 5 December 2007 5:08 PM

I might as well add my two cents to these memories: for me, of course, as a kid, it was Hanukkah rather than Christmas. I can recall my grandmother and great-aunt coming to our house from Taunton, Mass., and making "production" latkes for the holiday. Of course, in those days (late forties, early fifties), it seemed as if it snowed a lot more than now. I remember sledding down Ivan Hill St. and through the woods in our back yard on Ardman Drive (in the Halecrest development, off High St., just before Memorial Drive). That was some dangerous stuff, zig-zagging around all those trees over ice-crusting snow. Remember that, Skippah?

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 13  
Poster: Mary Lee Bradley  
Date: 5 December 2007 9:12 PM

I agree that there seemed to be more snow. It seemed we always had a white Christmas. I remember one Christmas during WWII when my mother got it into her head that my brother, in the Air Force, would be coming home. She would not let my father take the tree down until all of the needles had fallen off. I think it was sometime in Feb. It was in a cool room. No central heat. Speaking of sledding, anyone out there remember sledding down the hill at the Oaks School? We could bring our sleds to school to use at recess and the janitor had large pieces of cardboard to use also. What fun!!  
Mary Lee Bradley

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 14  
Poster: Mary Lee Bradley  
Date: 10 December 2007 3:05 PM

Hi I answered this a few days ago, but the post never appeared so will try again.

I remember a Christmas in the early 40's when my brother was in the Air Force overseas and my mother was convinced that he would be home for Christmas. He did not come and my mother would not let my dad take down the tree until Feb. when all of the needles had fallen off.

I lived "over the river" and attended the Oaks School. We used to bring our sleds to school and slide down the hill at recess. The janitor would supply large pieces of card board for kids w/o sleds. On snow days all of us in the neighborhood would show up at school slide all day!

Anyone else out there who remembers sledding at the Oaks School ?  
Mary Lee Bradley

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 15  
Poster: Nancy Harrington  
Date: 11 December 2007 7:34 AM

I grew up on Park Street, so Oaks School and Legion Field were our sledding spots. Oaks was great until the chain link fence was installed across the bottom of the hill on the Fairview Street side. Johnny Seretny slid under it feet first and ripped up his shins while a bunch of us were at a Brownie meeting. His mother Virginia was our troop leader. I remember the red snow.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 16  
Poster: Mary Lee Bradley  
Date: 11 December 2007 12:36 AM

Nancy, I lived on Park Street from kindergarten until the end of my freshman yr @WHS, when we moved back to N. Windham in 1951.

I live at #68. Where did you live?

The house at the bottom of the hill and the fence came after left. Some of the older boys would slide down the hill onto Fairview St. and in really snowy winter when the streets had a good pack of snow, could go onto Park St. and down the hill to Windham Rd. Too dangerous for most to try.

We did roller skate down the Park St. hill sidewalk in summer and that was scary. We veered off onto the grounds of the old tavern at the bottom. It was an apartment house then and not too well cared for at the time.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 17  
Poster: John Tormey  
Date: 11 December 2007 7:44 PM

Nancy: The "red snow" in your post got to me. Brought back a long ago Christmas memory:

During the Christmas break, when I was a 10-year-old, my black lab ("Jigger") was killed by a hit-and-run while I was sleigh riding near my home in Conantville. I placed his body on my Flexible Flyer, pulled him home, grabbed a pick and shovel from the garage and buried him alongside of our garage.

The red snow. The red snow. It flashed in my mind for quite awhile, always at the wrong time. I managed to erase it at Windham High by writing a short poem in Mrs. Mahoney's class:

"Jigger"  
Black dog on the red snow,  
Why do you lie so low?

My tears freeze  
As I chip away the gravel  
Hollowing your new home.

She didn't like it. Said it lacked form. Wanted me to re-write it. I told her I wouldn't change a word of it because it was what I meant to say.

Celia and I didn't get along very well.

jt

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 18  
Poster: Nancy Harrington  
Date: 12 December 2007 2:47 PM

Mary,  
I lived at #57, the gray duplex. My aunt and uncle owned it and lived in the other half, #59. (St. Germain)  
You must remember the Smiths next to us in #55.  
And yes, rollerskating down the hill was a bit scary, especially hopping over the uneven spot in front of Gene Donnelly's.  
About 10 years ago, Johnny Seretny and I lived in #62 for a while. The neighborhood has really changed.

John,  
my first dog, who acquired me when I was 27 years old, was a black lab. Best dogs in the world.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 19  
Poster: John Tormey  
Date: 12 December 2007 5:52 PM

Nancy: Yeah. Black labs. The best of the best.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 20  
Poster: Mary Lee Bradley  
Date: 12 December 2007 9:09 PM

Hi Nancy,  
Yes, I remember the St. Germain, Lucille was a few years younger than I and think her little brother was George. Their grandmother and Aunt Cecile lived in the other half at the time.

I was friends with Kathleen Smith and knew the family and Adams' also.  
Was friends with Gail Maganuson. I was a year or two older. I have a picture from my bridal shower with Kathleen, Gail, and Ruth Rivers, she lived at the corner of Park St. and Windham Rd. in a big white house.  
Also Carol Wilmot, she lived on Fairview St.  
I drive through the neighborhood now and again when I go to Willimantic.  
Was Beauregard's store still open when you lived there?  
#68-70 was where the Tremblays lived.  
Mary Lee

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 21  
Poster: Pippin  
Date: 14 December 2007 8:30 AM

One of the things I enjoyed most about Christmases past in Willimantic was Main St. itself – not because of the shopping but, rather, the atmosphere. It was wonderful to see the crowds of people on the street, even at night when the stores were open – something

out of "Silver Bells"! My favorite was to go down North St. and enter Woolworth's from the side door. The place seemed huge and filled with items – at least to my young eyes. After going through the five and ten, it was on to Grants. If my memory serves me correctly, they had all the toys in the lower level and I can remember the lower level having a cement floor painted a dark red.

Best of all were the garlands that were draped across Main St. They were great. Some had a big star in the center, others had other ornaments but I can't remember what they were. At one point, Church St. got some of the garlands too. And who can forget the huge Christmas Tree in Lincoln Square?

Another Christmas tradition, if your parent(s) worked at American Thread (or you were lucky enough to get tickets from someone who did) was the Christmas party at the theatre (was it Capitol or Gem?). There was an afternoon of movies and then each child got a stocking or bag filled with candy.

Oh – and not so much a Christmas thing but who remembers the huge machine that the city used to get rid of the snow along the sides of the streets? I used to love watching that. It was probably 12 feet high and had a series of (for lack of a better word) troughs that were on a chain. The thing was driven backwards along the piles of snow and the troughs gobbled up the snow, brought it to a chute on top and the snow was dumped into trucks that would back up along with the machine.

As an aside – long after Willimantic tossed out the Main St. garlands, one reappeared in the Ballouville section of Killingly at Whipple's Winter Wonderland but that too is now a thing of the past.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 22  
 Poster: Ada Kerachsky Albright  
 Date: 14 December 2007 3:24 PM

John,  
 For what it's worth, I love your poem about Jigger. My class had Celia Mahoney only briefly. I believe it was October of my senior year that she retired and remarried. Shirley Baldwin took over and was still teaching senior English when my sister was a senior, eight or nine years later.  
 I am a dog lover and also think that labs (black in particular) are very special.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 23  
 Poster: John Tormey  
 Date: 14 December 2007 7:11 PM

Ada: Great reading your entry.  
 Shirley Baldwin was on my side in all things.  
 She's the one who clued me in on her alma mater, Boston University -- which I later attended. Windham's Drama Club was my domain.  
 Shirley once told me I could have a good life in the theatrical community -- which I am still enjoying.  
 Loved that very special lady.  
 Her memory floats like a friend on the soup of my brain waves.

Celia refused to accept the Beat Poets !!!! and preferred to read Chaucer to us with pursed lips, speaking with a dazed expression, in a very strange language. Once she finished a piece and I said "What?"  
 She said "What what?"  
 "What was that?"  
 "That's poetry."  
 "Poetry? Could we get a translation?"  
 "It loses something in the translation."  
 "I see," I said.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 24  
 Poster: John Boudreau  
 Date: 14 December 2007 9:02 PM

Pippin ,

>>>>Oh – and not so much a Christmas thing but who remembers the huge machine that the city used to get rid of the snow along the sides of the streets? I used to love watching that. It was probably 12 feet high and had a series of (for lack of a better word) troughs that were on a chain. The thing was driven backwards along the piles of snow and the troughs gobbled up the snow, brought it to a chute on top and the snow was dumped into trucks that would back up along with the machine.>>>>

I do and like you watched that thing ! The things we remember .

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 25  
 Poster: Ada Kerachsky Albright  
 Date: 18 December 2007 11:28 AM

I did not know that Shirley Baldwin went to BU. When I was a senior at WHS, Mrs. Grady (Guidance) tried very hard to get me to apply to BU. She insisted that I could get a scholarship. I could not get her to understand that BU did not have the major I wanted (dietetics). I was perfectly content to go to UConn until a professional in the field told me that Cornell had the best program. I applied, sure that I would not get in (that major was in what was then Home Economics--one of the NYState statutory colleges, accepting no more than 10% from out-of-state). To my surprise, I did get in and figured out that it would cost me about the same as attending UConn. The rest is history (for better or worse!).

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 26

Poster: Francis Sellars  
Date: 18 December 2007 12:51 AM

Yes I remember the decorations downtown,they were all great. The one thing that sticks in my mind is the very large white star on top of the hospital. Do they still put this star on top of the hospital today. I have been away from Willi for almost twelve years,and never up there during the winter to cold.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 27  
Poster: Dick Donovan  
Date: 18 December 2007 3:05 PM

Francis, thanks I remember the star on top of the hospital too. Main Street was great with all the garland and lights strung up over the road and the big christmas tree at the intersection of Union and Main. I think one of the big record hits at the time was a (78rpm) recording by Phil Harris called the "The Thing". It was a novelty recording but popular at the time. I got a copy for Xmas.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 28  
Poster: Ada Kerachsky Albright  
Date: 18 December 2007 4:23 PM

Thinking of Phil Harris (what a character!), the song I remember most that he did with his wife, Alice Faye, is "In the cool, cool, cool of the evening."

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 29  
Poster: John Tormey  
Date: 18 December 2007 6:50 PM

Ada: I'm with you as a Phil Harris fan. "That's What I Like About The South" was his big song. Also, his quote "I can't die until the government finds a safe place to bury my liver." Guy lived into his nineties. Must have been on the wagon for the last fifty years or so.  
jt

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 30  
Poster: Skipper Barrett  
Date: 19 December 2007 12:06 AM

Ada:

Re: Phil Harris

I am in Rancho Mirage, CA right now, near Palm Springs for the holidays. This place is famous for its celebrities arriving at Xmas time, and Phil Harris and Der Binge ( Bing Crosby) along with Lucy & Desi, etc., -- all had vacation homes just about 3 blocks over from us at a place called Bue SKies Village. In fact, they have a statue of Phil near the Thunderbird Country Club all decked out with lites, red Xmas bows, etc. There is a station here that plays just 40s & 50s oldies like "White Christmas" from Der Bingle and last nite "That's What I like About the South" from PH.

Groucho Marx lived in a rancho right across the street from our place and it was just sold to an inventor from Oregon who put a Xmas tree in the front yard with Rudolph the red nosed reindeer. When you walk by the Xmas display there ....a snowman sings the hit song from Gene Autry.

Frank Sinatra's Palm Springs compound is just over a few more blocks, at the end of the Tamarisk Country Club that he and the Marx Bros created due to the discrimination is "white" Palm Springs in those days. The current owner of the Sinatra estate last year had a huge blown up and lit LP cover from FS' Capitol Christmas album hits on top of the gate.

The CA desert area here is a lovely site at Xmas...it is framed with snow capped montains while in your yard you have fruit trees ripe with CA oranges, and grapefruits...road runners ("meep," "meep") come by our place everyday for a meal of ground turkey. It is colder here than LA in winter, and well, in summer, all that you have heard is true...its HOT., HOT, Hot, sometimes 118f

It is a great spot to mark the holidays....even if you are far from ole New England there are traces of it here and there with all the transplanted New ENglanders like me

Skipper

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 31  
Poster: John Tormey  
Date: 19 December 2007 1:10 PM

Great post, Skipper! Thanks.  
jt

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 32  
Poster: Harold Michaud  
Date: 19 December 2007 4:04 PM

Francis,I drove by the hospital today. There is no star.But there are some lights on the roof.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 33  
 Poster: Francis Sellars  
 Date: 19 December 2007 6:51 PM

Harold,  
 Thanks for the info, on the star on the hospital.  
 By the way are you related to a Beverly Michaud? Let me know okay.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 34  
 Poster: Harold Michaud  
 Date: 20 December 2007 8:34 AM

Beverly was my youngest sister. She passed away in 1991.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 35  
 Poster: Steve Starger  
 Date: 20 December 2007 12:35 AM

John T,

We don't know each other, but I know you know Skipper Barret. He and I were best friends from around 4th grade through high school and college, after which we went our separate ways. We've reconnected wonderfully in the past couple of years. I'm a tad younger than you -- WHS class of 1959, but re Shirley Baldwin, she was the best teacher I had in all four years of high school. She encouraged me to write and was open to checking out stuff that wasn't strictly on the English curriculum. I remember once I had a copy of "The Catcher in the Rye" on my desk during one exam in her class. She wandered by, looked at the cover and picked it up and started reading. She laughed quietly to herself at some passage while I toiled over an essay question. I remember her reading and singing "Sumer is a-cumin' in" in Olde English. Shirley encouraged you to pursue theater as she encouraged me to pursue writing. Guess they both worked out. I think teachers like Shirley Baldwin may be rare these days -- ones who take the time to understand their students and encourage potential when they see it. I hope there are more Shirley Baldwins out there. She's a hero, as far as I'm concerned, and made a big difference in my life way back then.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 36  
 Poster: Ada Kerachsky Albright  
 Date: 20 December 2007 12:53 AM

Interesting post, Skipper. Thanks.  
 I wonder what Groucho would think about a Xmas tree and Rudolph in his front yard.  
 Phil Harris decked out in lights: a red light at the end of his nose?  
 Bing's White Christmas: no one can come even close to that classic.  
 Frank Sinatra: I once heard someone say that he was responsible for two generations. Probably true!  
 New Englanders in CA: When we lived in Davis, winter was rain and wind and tumbleweed blowing down the street. One of the two winters we were there, it actually snowed a couple of inches. Believe it or not, my first experience driving on snow!  
 Back to the original subject of this thread. Back when I was in Miss Donnelly's first grade class at Natchaug (do I sound like my father yet?), one of the Christmas carols we learned was a couple of verses of Christmas Bells. It seems rarely sung any more, but it was my favorite. A while back I learned that it was a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that had been set to music. Last year, as I was reading this poem in a Longfellow collection, I realized that subsequent verses were a war protest. A few minutes of research confirmed my suspicion. Here it is, with wishes for a peaceful New Year.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)  
 Christmas Bells

I HEARD the bells on Christmas Day  
 Their old, familiar carols play,  
 And wild and sweet  
 The words repeat  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,  
 The belfries of all Christendom  
 Had rolled along  
 The unbroken song  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,  
 The world revolved from night to day,  
 A voice, a chime,  
 A chant sublime  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth  
 The cannon thundered in the South,  
 And with the sound  
 The carols drowned  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent

The hearth-stones of a continent,  
And made forlorn  
The households born  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;  
"There is no peace on earth," I said;  
"For hate is strong,  
And mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
The Wrong shall fail,  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good-will to men."

Written during the American Civil war, the above poem can be found in:

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. The Complete Poetical Works of Longfellow. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1893.  
Stevenson, Burton Egbert, ed. The Home Book of Verse for Young Folks. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915

Posting:	Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 37
Poster:	John Tormey	
Date:	20 December 2007 5:54 PM	

Steve: We were lucky, you and I, to have crossed paths with Shirley B. Once, in '65 or so I was Action in a W.S. Story tour that played the Minneola Playhouse on Long Island. Alberghetti was the star and she put together some fine folks for her package. Michael Bennettt choreographed it. Shirley B. sent a note backstage at the intermission telling me that she was in the audience. I looked for her after the show but could not find her. One of the big disappointments in my life. I'm still hoping she liked what she saw. That's the last contact I had with her. Allabest, Steve.  
jt

Posting:	Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 38
Poster:	John Boudreau	
Date:	20 December 2007 8:01 PM	

I graduated in 1970 and Shirley Baldwin was my English teacher for one year at Windham . She was one of my favorites and inspired me to study English with a passion . Thank God she did ; I don't think I'd be teaching in Japan now without her inspiration .

My fave teacher was a young woman ( 24 ? ) named Dorothy Minch , who taught Family Sociology in my senior year . I was a shy boy , but in the first class of the year when she asked what we did during summer vacation , I promptly and proudly raised my hand , stood up and answered , " I slept in the mud for three days " , meaning I went to the Woodstock Music Festival . Everybody in the class ( mainly made up of the elite , jocks and prom queens ) understood the cryptic answer , and disgusted , moaned in harmony , " Uggghh , WOODSTOCK ." I shrunk in dejection and sat back down .

The next day I got a slip from the office saying that I was being switched from the 2nd period FS class to the 7th period class . What she did was weed out all the kids who for one reason or another didn't " fit in " , so to speak , and it was a blessing that she did . I ended up in the same class as my best buddy Ralph , the guy I hitch-hiked to Woodstock with , and about 12 other kids who were like us or sympathetic , and it turned out to be a great class that I got 90's in . She encouraged us to speak up and speak out . Ralph and I actually gave an oral report on our experiences with marijuana and LSD , and we both got As . If she had kept me in that second period class I probably would never had said a word . Changed my life she did . She and Shirley Baldwin were the only WHS teachers I ever went back to see after graduation . I know that she is no longer at Windham , but I must contact WHS to see if they know where she is . I want to thank her ...again .

Posting:	Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc	Posting 39
Poster:	Steve Starger	
Date:	21 December 2007 1:09 PM	

jt and jb:

I saw Shirley B. in the early '80s, when I returned east after six or so years living in L.A. While I was getting my Northeast sea legs together, I sub taught for a while at WHS -- on High St. I ran into Shirley there; she was in her final year of teaching, nearing retirement, but she remembered me and I of course remembered her. She was very gracious, as always. We had a nice, short catch-up conversation, then we had to go to our respective classes. I never saw her again; I hope she's still with us. Anyone know?

jb: Woodstock. Of course you hitched there as a teen. I was there as a mid-twenties reporter on vacation with a couple of friends. I even called the Courant offering to cover it and look for Connecticut angles, but they went with wire copy. No problem. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute, including the monsoons and the mud. (Well, maybe not every minute.) People of a certain age can't believe I heard Hendrix play the National Anthem as we were making our way to find my car. The myth is just too big for them to wrap their minds around. At the time, I thought it was the most audacious, brilliant music of the period I'd heard this side of Miles Davis' "Bitches Brew" and the first Weather Report album.

From high school teachers to a gathering of music freaks in the Catskills -- funny the things that make us who we are.



Merry Christmas (or whatever you profess) and Happy New Year to both of you.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 40  
 Poster: John Tormey  
 Date: 21 December 2007 1:45 PM

Steve: Thanks for the update on Shirley B.  
 And a big "Merry Christmas" right back to ya!

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 41  
 Poster: John Tormey  
 Date: 21 December 2007 1:48 PM

John B.: If you come up with Shirley B.'s whereabouts, please post it. Merry Christmas.  
 jt

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 42  
 Poster: John Boudreau  
 Date: 22 December 2007 9:19 AM

John T ,

According to Zabasearch , there is a Shirley E . Baldwin in Middletown , CT .

[http://www.zabasearch.com/query1\\_zaba.php?sname=shirley%20baldwin&state=CT&ref=&se=&doby=&city=&name\\_style=1](http://www.zabasearch.com/query1_zaba.php?sname=shirley%20baldwin&state=CT&ref=&se=&doby=&city=&name_style=1)

Born 1919 . She would be about 88 ...

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 43  
 Poster: John Tormey  
 Date: 22 December 2007 1:45 PM

John: Thanks. I tried USA People Search and came across 100 Shirley Baldwins. It boggles the mind. A lot of them are guys. There's a Shirley E. Baldwin with a Real Estate site. Her picture proves it's not OUR Shirley. I wonder if Shirley logs onto this threadcity site and smiles.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 44  
 Poster: John Boudreau  
 Date: 22 December 2007 6:11 PM

Steve ,

You are right next door to Middletown in Portland . If the Middletown Shirley E is OUR Shirley , you could easily cruise on over and see her in person . Why not ring the number given on the Zabasearch site ?

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 45  
 Poster: John Tormey  
 Date: 23 December 2007 7:53 PM

John B.: Ernie Gesner gave me a nice lead in Florida. I got the street address and mailed a Christmas card mentioning you and Steve.  
 We'll soon see if we've struck gold.  
 jt

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 46  
 Poster: John Boudreau  
 Date: 24 December 2007 4:51 AM

Great John , keep us informed .

No reason why she should remember me , but maybe she kept all the yearbooks and can look me up in the 1970 one .

Happy Christmas !

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 47  
 Poster: Steve Starger  
 Date: 24 December 2007 4:49 PM

Guys,

Thanks for your efforts to locate Shirley B. John B., got your e-mail with the Middletown number. I'm going to call after Christmas. WOuldn't that be a mind-blower?? But, maybe she is in FLorida. WHerever, it would be great to know she's alive and her mind is as sharp as always.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc Posting 48  
 Poster: John Boudreau  
 Date: 24 December 2007 5:40 PM

Steve ,

As I mentioned in my email to you , she always reminded me a little of Bette Davis not only in looks , but also the way she spoke , you know , that clipped way of talking with the Boston accent . Bette Davis was born in Lowell , Mass .

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc  
Poster: Steve Starger  
Date: 26 December 2007 10:59 AM

Posting 49

John,

Now that you mention it, I can conjure her voice, and her affect in class, which I remember as a combination of a sharp insight into her individual students, a wry sense of humor, and a no-nonsense belief in the importance of literature and writing (not that a lot of us cared about that at the time, except writing geeks like me, I suppose). As I'd said previously, she was also open to reading writers new to her. I gave her ON THE ROAD and THE SUBTERRANEANS when I was still in her class, because I had just read them in paperback and they excited me on all kinds of levels. I remember she was kind about Kerouac but maybe a little put off by the whole jazz and kicks stuff in the books. But she was never close-minded or stuffy or puritan about such things. That was rare back then.

Posting: Re: Past Christmas Times in Wmtc  
Poster: John Boudreau  
Date: 26 December 2007 7:43 PM

Posting 50

Very cool that she was open-minded about the Beats and Kerouac . Speaking of Jack ( once again ! ) , I'd be interested to hear your thoughts about ON THE ROAD : The Original Scroll book . I'm about 3/4 of the way through it , and am deeply digging it .

Less punctuation and editing gives the book a wilder , jazzier riff blowing kind of feel ; and you get the sensation of actually being in the backseat of the car zooming & criss-crossing heartland America . Yass !