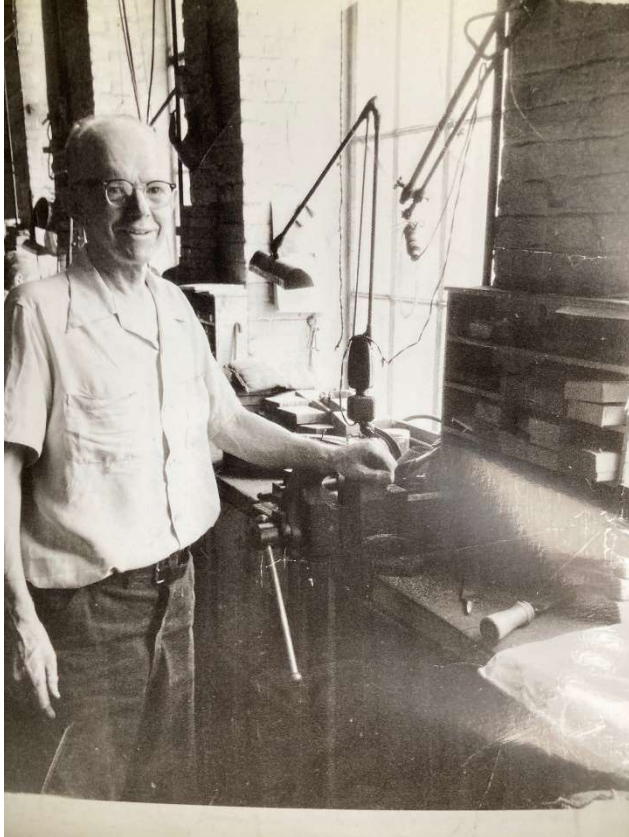




Tell Us Your Story

Heidi Whear



I grew up hearing that my ancestors were Scottish, English and Irish; mostly Scottish and English, although we have never done a formal family tree. Some of my dad's family came down through Nova Scotia. Milton John Sawyer was born in New Sharon, Maine in 1846 and later settled in Lawrence, Mass. My grandfather, Harold Sawyer (picture attached) worked in the textile mills of Lawrence where his job was straightening the little wires on the wheels designed to comb wool to be spun into yarn. Each time he was offered a promotion, he declined exclaiming that he was fully satisfied doing his work in his meditative state. His family was extremely religious and spent any spare pennies building a church there. My grandfather spent his spare time hand digging out a basement of the church to create Sunday School classrooms. My father, Warren Sawyer, was raised in a very modest, top floor of a three family house in Lawrence.

Harold Sawyer in Lawrence Textile Mill

Mom's family came to Swampscott by way of Lanesville – up near Gloucester. Family lore is that they were the Lanes of Lanesville, MA who received land passed to them from the English aristocracy, although the family tree hasn't ever been fully developed. My great grandfather ran a little inn, bowling alley and raised chickens there.

My nana (grandmother), Doris, moved to Swampscott when she was young, by way of Lynn and Marblehead. She attended Swampscott's Hadley school before it became an Elementary School. She married Glen Bartram and raised three children on Prospect Ave in Swampscott.





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My mother was born in Swampscott during a blizzard in February 1934 at the old Nursing Home that was up near Swampscott's water tower when a nursing home was built for women who were actually nursing babies. Like her mother, she also went to Hadley school and graduated Swampscott High. My parents were married at Tedesco Country Club and spent most of their lives here in Swampscott.

Me and my four siblings all attended Hadley Elementary school until we took a little detour when my father joined the Peace Corps. We moved to New Delhi, India for two years and then to Tehran, Iran for three years. For five years we traveled some of the most beautiful parts of the world in a beat-up VW bus. We returned to Swampscott because my parents felt we should have "roots".

Being the third generation of my family to live in Swampscott, I'm also thrilled to share that one of my sons also attended Hadley school. Today I couldn't be happier to serve our aging population as Swampscott's Director of Aging Services, dedicated to making Swampscott a more livable community for all residents to grow up and grow older together.

