

# Life & Times Of 'Charles & Mary Curran'



Charles Curran & Mary Wortman met each other in a College of Puget Sound accounting class. Mary received a degree in Business Administration with a minor in economics & psychology, while Charles received a degree in Business Administration as well.

The couple were married at St. Patrick's Church in Tacoma on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1938 & took a boat trip to Victoria, B. C. for their honeymoon.

The Currans came to University Place in 1950 from their rental home in Tacoma. They built 'Curran Cottage' at 3734 Olympic Blvd. on a lot won in 'Soundview Addition' in an essay contest. The H.A. Briggs Co. was a silent agent for this new addition & advertised in the 'Tacoma News Tribune' for contestants who would like to live in 'Soundview' addition.

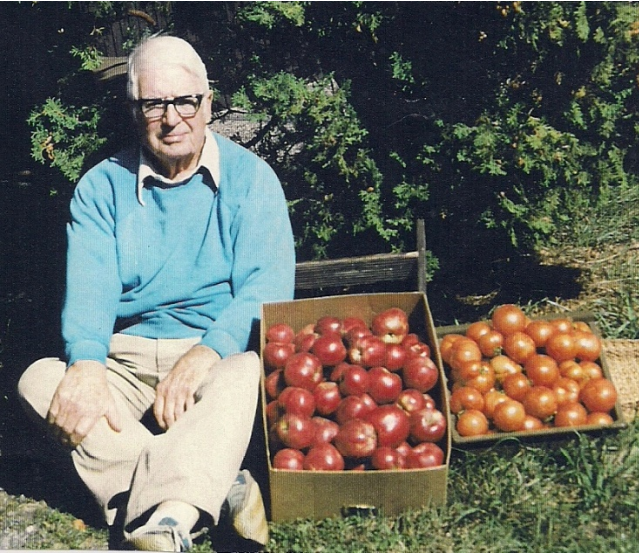
The first prize lot had a \$600.00 value & the Currans borrowed money to build their first home. The Currans later sold the cottage & built a new home for themselves & their three children on a 7.33 acre lot on Grandview Drive & Rock Road around 1955.

However, Charles had a vision for the rest of his land. Chuck was interested in growing apples having visited briefly in Eastern Washington en route to Tacoma to see his uncles, said Mary. Charles felt the orchard would make an enjoyable hobby but also hoped to earn enough in apple sales to pay for some of their costs.

Transforming the land into an orchard though, took quite a bit of work since blackberries & trees covered most of the land. After felling some of the trees, Charles did dynamite some of the large stumps, Mary said. The dynamite was a bit difficult to obtain.

When he was asked his vocation (at the store), he stated he was a teamster and there was some hesitancy in selling him the dynamite. But he eventually got what he needed & pulled the remaining stumps with the help of an old army jeep he had purchased.

After the land was cleared, Charles planted '250 Gravenstein, McIntosh & Golden Delicious' apple trees. 'Gravenstein' apples were our most popular apples at first & we would have calls from some distances to save several boxes for friends & those who favored that apple.



Chuck did all the care necessary & harvesting. He also boxed the apples & sold them or gave them away from under the garage area. We treated friends to the cider & once tried to bottle it, hoping it would turn 'hard.' This was not a successful attempt at fermentation.

People weren't the only ones who loved the apples. The Curran's horses (first 'Scout & 'Back Interest,' then 'Brewster & Christopher) also enjoyed eating apples.

The horses loved the apples so much that we needed to fence the horses as the trees produced. The horses also loved having the mash from the cider press & would come running when they heard that process underway.

The Curran horses were quite the neighborhood attraction as well. When the Curtis Band would practice, the horses thought it was time for a parade & they would gallop around the pasture, Mary said. Many young neighbors also came to watch the horses & a few asked for rides.

One year, Mary was giving a talk at Puyallup High School & was notified by phone that the horses had left the orchard & were prancing past Curtis High School. The Curran's son, Charles, herded them back home using the army jeep.

The Currans also raised their own beef & had one steer who was called 'George R. Curtis' as he was so good looking, Mary said. We also had several dogs & two Siamese cats.

The University Place community was quite different back in the 1960s and '70s, said Mary. Back then, there was quite a shallow stream at the lower end of the property & deer would cross Grandview to come down. At least three were killed by cars at the corner of Rock & Grandview.

The Curran's children, (Susan, Charles Jr. & Catherine) all attended University Place Elementary School. Susan needed to attend Clover Park High School since there was no local high school at the time. Our first bus was to the gas station at 27th & Grandview.

The first grocery was at the corner & owned by the 'Thomas Brothers.' Our school district had the reputation of always passing its school's mileage and attendance was always good at athletic games. People were also active in many community groups as well. Girls joined 'Rainbows' & boys joined 'DeMolay.'



Women participated in the 'Eastern Star' while men were in the 'Masons, Rotary and Kiwanis.' Mrs. Curran was also active in preschool & PTA in the district. Our preschools & PTA were active in helping establish a kindergarten. Another successful activity was the production of an old fashioned melodrama.

In the meantime, Mrs. Curran worked at the 'University of Puget Sound,' first in 'Admissions' and 'Student Affairs' & later as 'Director of Personnel,' retiring in the mid 1970's.

Mr. Curran worked for 'Continental Baking' driving a 'Hostess Cake Truck,' then as 'Secretary-Treasurer of Local # 567-Teamsters' until his retirement. He was a member of the 'University Place Rotary' & served on the 'UP School Board' for 28 years. During the early 1990's, a developer who owned the land west of the orchard put in a private road & christened it 'Curran Lane.'

