

Mystic Lake Dairy

Established 1961



Bob Wallace was born December 28, 1917 in Springfield, Missouri. Nellie (Sunny Anderson) Wallace was born June 28, 1918 in Olathe, Kansas. Bob was a Geology Student at the University of Kansas. He invited Sunny to a football game in November, 1937. They were married six weeks later on January 8, 1938.

Bob and Sunny kept their marriage a secret for three months as their parents didn't approve. They went on with their schooling until Bob graduated as a Geologist in 1940. When the U.S. became involved in World War II, Bob enlisted. He was assigned to Sand Point Naval Station on Lake Washington in 1941. Sunny advertised in the newspaper for a traveling companion and "came across from Kansas in an old clunker with an overweight grandma who wanted to visit her grandkids".

Bob and Sunny's first apartment was near Lake Washington during the War years. Afterward, they were stationed in a number of various locations.

After the war, Bob was a buyer for Western Electric which at the time was affiliated with Pacific Bell Telephone. Their first two children were Ron and Gary, who were born in 1945 and 1947. They bought a home in Lake Forest Park in 1949.

In those early years they were restless about where they were living. They

knew they had to find a special, open place to live out their lives. Sunny remembers going to visit what is now known as Mystic Lake with a realtor in 1952. The day was clear and cold and Mystic Lake looked just like a beautiful, sparkling jewel. It covered 12 acres. She told Bob all about it and the whole family came out on the weekend to have a look.



They put a deposit down on the property right away. Bob and Sunny sold their Lake Forest Park house in order to begin the purchase of their 45 acre piece of paradise. The total price for the property at that time was \$5,000.

Loggers had harvested all the old growth – the really valuable timber, in previous years. The stumps that were left were as wide across as a full-grown man. The land was also covered with throw away, rotting timber that had been twisted or wasn't up to logging company standards. In order to be able to make use of the land, they had to dynamite the stumps in order to build roads. Bob did this himself with the help of a friend, Ted Young.

Once in a blow out, a little rock shot up 200 feet and came straight down through the windshield of their car. Up to that point, the dogs and kids failed to pay much attention when Bob would yell, "Powder!" After that happened, all creatures headed for cover without an argument.

In 1955, they rented a little house in Redmond across from Anderson Park. Their new baby, Pam, was born there. The house was heated by a wood burning stove at first and later by oil. Unfortunately the owners had need of the rental house before the Wallace's Mystic Lake house was completed. The owner's daughter was getting married and wanted to live there, so the Wallace's had to make other arrangements on one month's notice.

Their solution was to finish off a lean-to that had been erected to store the tractor and other machinery. They framed it, put a floor in and lived there until their main house was built. Their cabin had three little bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, a dining room and a bathroom. The cabin was not

insulated.

In the early days, before the well was drilled, they had to haul drinking water in ten gallon cans from Redmond. When the roads were too icy, they had to haul water up from the lake. There was a big holding tank for reuse water for their washing machine, which they also used for bathing. Occasionally they carried laundry down to the Laundromat in Redmond as needed.



Their first winter there in 1955, was one of the coldest in the history of this area. The temperature was below zero. To keep their new baby warm, Bob and Sunny had her sleep between them at night. However, she still ended up with a minor case of frost-bite on her little cheeks. During the night, the poles of the roof would frost over. During the day, when they could keep the place warmer, the poles would drip from the melting frost.

They used a wood burning stove to try to fight off the cold during that first winter. But the trees were frozen solid so they stripped the bark off of them and burned the bark to keep warm. The bark was very pitchy and they had to watch for chimney fires, of which they had several that were quite frightening.

The house had electricity and a phone which Bob arranged for himself. He dropped all the trees along where the power lines would go. Then he had to blow the stumps. He set the poles using a gen-pole system he contrived. Then Bob put on homemade spurs, climbed the poles and rigged them so that the power company could bring in the lines.

They tried hand drilling for water on several wells that ended up going dry. Finally they were able to locate a functioning well to which Bob attached pumps and electricity so that they could have running water in their cabin.

It took a whole case of dynamite to clear the stumps away from the site Bob and Sunny chose for their house. By 1966, they finished building their main

house, to an extent that they could live in it.

In the late 50's they bought their first three goats which were intended to be pets for the children. By 1960, the goat herd had grown significantly and it occurred to them that they could probably earn a profit selling goat milk. Bob built a barn for the growing herd. Actually, they had two herds – one herd was for milking, the other was dry. They got their dairy license in 1961.

In 1965, tragedy struck. Western Farmers Grain Company provided grain and feed to numerous farmers and dairies in Western Washington. Somehow, a mistake was made in their processing. A mineral which should only be used only for Chicken feed, was somehow added into feed for other types of animals. The mineral was manganese and was proven deadly to everything but fowl. This particular grain product happened to be the feed they used only for the milking herd. Most of them died a horrible death and any who lived produced deformed babies. Western Farmers Company was sued and it was settled in 1970. All of the farmers and dairies affected were paid for damages. Fortunately, since the Wallace's dry herd had not eaten the same feed, they were able to start rebuilding their milking herd almost immediately.

With the settlement from the lawsuit, they were able to drill yet another well as the others had gone dry. This well required a permit, as things were starting to get civilized in King County. They finished building their home in 1971.

The children growing up here in those years were wild and free. They all had horses and could ride all over the plateau, from north to south, just following the paths along the power and gas lines – plus all of the logging roads.

In an area north of what is now known as Section # 36 (Soaring Eagle Park), Gary and his friends had ridden down to pick apples for their families. This area was then full of bears, and they came across a mama bear that had become snared in a bear trap set in an apple tree. Gary went to an old cabin and found a double bitted ax. He went back to the tree and swung at the wire holding the trap to free the mama bear, whose cubs were crying for her at the base of the tree. Every time Gary took a swing, the mama bear would take a swing at Gary. Finally he got a clear swing at the wire which cut her free. Since he knew she would have torn him to pieces, he ran off one way and fortunately, the injured mama and cubs ran the opposite way.

There were lots of salmon in the streams in those days. They would come clear up the south branch of Patterson Creek to spawn. One day, Gary

came home reeking to high heaven. He and his friend had felt bad for the poor, dying salmon lying on the embankments and had spent the day trying to put them back in the clear pools they'd jumped out of.

On the way along the power line trail, there was a place known to the kids as Secret Lake. It was spring fed and right in the middle of a cranberry bog. The kids liked to spring off the bog right into the middle of the little lake. It was more than 100 feet deep and very, very cold.

In winter, Mystic Lake could be skated on, once it had about 6 inches of ice. When they skated on it, the lake would "sing", which actually sounded like a musical saw. One side of the lake sounded different than the other because of the varied tension of the ice. Once the ice was thick enough, kids from all around would grab their ice skates and come over for skate parties down at the lake.

In 1980, Bob had some health problems which involved a stroke and major surgery. During that time, Sunny took a fall that frayed the tendons around her ankles. She had to teach herself how to walk all over again. According to Sunny, "It's sort of like walking on stilts which I always enjoyed doing as a child, so it wasn't too hard to adjust." This adjustment in her thinking helped her beat the doctor's prediction that she'd never walk again. Because of their various health problems, they decided to retire and went on a series of vacations: to the Arctic Circle, Mexico, Europe and various National Parks.

In 1990, building began on the developments now known as Deer Park, Deer Field and Autumn Winds. The school district had also started building Christa McAuliffe Elementary School. Sunny remembered the day that her son Gary ran into the house and yelled, "Look what's happening to the Lake!" They hurried down to the lake to see what was going on. A river of silt and mucky sludge was pouring into Mystic Lake. The tiny retention ponds mandated at the time by King County were overflowing during a heavy rain season.

The Wallace's produced a video to record track-hoes used by the developer's crew, to move the mud and silt toward Mystic Lake, under the cover of night. A copy of their video was used by PBS in a documentary called "Paradise Lost", which was created to raise awareness of the destruction of natural resources throughout Washington State during that era.

Mystic Lake, which had been a beautiful, spring-fed Fin, was now covered with a thick slime that could no longer sustain the wild life that had depended on her. The extra drainage altered the level of the lake substantially so that countless bird eggs were suffocated. The Audubon Society had been tracking bird populations for years at Mystic Lake. The loss

of bird populations, as a result of the lake being polluted, was well documented.

The drainage problems were never completely resolved, despite hundreds of hours of meetings logged in by the Wallace Family with various state and county officials. Sunny, Bob and their lawyer, Rick Aramuburu, were overwhelmed repeatedly by an army of lawyers who represented the County, the developers and the School District.

Because of their health issues and lawyer fees, they were running out of funds, so the Wallace's settled in 1994. Despite damages paid to clean up their lake and land, the lake will never be as it once was. Dirty, oily water continues to run into Mystic Lake – sometimes altering the water level by 6 inches.

In November of 2000, Bob Wallace succumbed to Spinal Cancer. Sunny moved to a retirement home in Kirkland and lived out her life there. She passed away in 2007.

As long as her health allowed her to, Sunny continued to testify regarding the need to maintain buffers to protect the wetlands and other natural resources of Sammamish. She and Bob produced numerous videos which they shared with the public to help document the effect of run off on the waterways that existed in Sammamish originally. Sunny and Bob loved the Sammamish community. Their presence substantially influenced safe guards now in place to protect wetlands and wild life in our area today.

Revised and Edited by Vicki Baggette (2010)

(Original Text was taken from tape recordings of Sunny telling her story during interviews that took place in her kitchen in 1999 - 2000.