

Camp Wawokiye

The second oldest house on Nassau Point is owned by Jim and Mary Ellen Duffy.

The Duffy house sits atop the hill on Wunneweta. It is easily identified by the green Duffy name and shamrocks on a large white rock at the top of the driveway.

The house was built c. 1865 for Dr. Benjamin Carpenter, an associate of Edward Burr and John Carrington, the early developers of the Point. In 1872, Carrington sold his holdings in Nassau Point, except for the Carpenter house, to James Wilson for \$7000.

Over the years, much of the property on the Point evolved into Nassau Point Properties and was sold off in pieces. In the mid 30's, Kathleen Pearson Will bought the house and several surrounding parcels, first purchasing the four lots that contain the land to right of the driveway. Will opened up Camp Wawokiye (Wah-wuh-kee-uh) soon after.

In 1946 she bought two lots east of the house, on Nassau Point Road. She continued her buying in the 40's, picking up one more lot, approximately the ball field and the lot north of that. Later she bought a lot across the road from the house. In the end, she owned nine lots or about eight acres. Mrs. Will was described by a 50's camper as a very nice woman, with a military flair. Campers were required to stand at attention as she inspected the cabins each day.

In 1964, the 32 year old Kevin Kist and his wife Maureen bought the camp.

Wawokiye had six "sturdy, spacious" Redwood cabins fully furnished with toilets and running water for use by the 70 campers who attended each session. Two other cabins served as a recreation hall and an arts and crafts center. The recreation cabin is still complete with a large stone fireplace, a moose head, a birch bark canoe and a pool table.

The six bunkhouses were split between the boys and girls and by age group. Two staff members lived in the bunkhouses with the campers. The staff were typically only

three years or so older, mostly college students and it was in later reunions, when everyone was older the campers and staffers realized they were essentially the same generation. The bunkhouses were open bay with a little cubby hole for storing things. The staff slept in the same open areas. But the staff did have access to the house and could socialize there among themselves.

If you go across the road from the house, you can still see the remains of a stone fireplace and the decaying remains of picnic tables.

The camp literature boasted of having one staff member for every four campers, and included a nurse on duty 24 hours a day. The campers ranged in age from five years old or so to 15-16 years of age. The cost for the eight weeks of summer varied from \$700 to \$1000 for the entire period. One former camper reported that he earned \$200 as a dishwasher for the summer in the early 70's and \$350-400 as a counselor a few years later...plus tips.

Everyone ate in the main house, probably 80 people or so. Each bunkhouse ate at their own separate table.

Ross Squires, a camper from 1972-1976 recalled that the camp 's theme was family oriented and strong on family values. Each week, a good camper award was given to those who had acted in a good way, including making up their beds. He said 90% of the campers probably got the award each week and those who didn't felt awful. The awards were given at the weekly campfire and cookout across the road. The cabins had Indian names; names that had some long forgotten meaning...Netab, Ucopa, Missmaha, Adahi, Opelachi.

Kevin Kist earned a doctoral degree as an educator and was a retired professor and administrator for City College of New York. He died in December, 2010. Camp Wawokiye has a Facebook page and Dr. Kist is remembered fondly by the campers.

Wawokiye remained active as a camp until 1979. Jim and Mary Ellen Duffy rented the place in 1980, bought it later that year and moved in in 1981. Over the years, they have made extensive improvements but the layout of the home remains essentially the same.

When the Duffys bought the property they had no use for eight cabins and Kist physically moved four of the bunkhouses from the site. The cabins are used mostly for storage, but the recreation cabin still is used for its original purpose. Later, the Duffys added a pool south of the main house.

Duffy received the property from : Kevin and Maureen Kist in 1981. Kist's lived at 2 Wood Lane in Smithtown. They bought the following lot numbers: 148, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156 and also lot 399 which is the wooded area across the street containing the outdoor fireplace and picnic tables. 148 and 149 were two lots that were on Nassau Point Road. The Duffys did not buy 148 and 149.

Kist bought from Kathleen Pearson Will. Will's address was 33-44 85th St., Jamaica.

It appears that beginning in the 1920's Nassau Point Properties began selling off lots and the above were sold to a series of owners, separately from each other. Will purchased lots 151 to 154 in 1936 after a succession of owners purchased the property from the Nassau Point Properties, Walter Johnson, President. (Liber 1890, p. 528). The above cited lots are the ones you can easily identify as part of the Duffy's property i.e., the house and lands to the right of the driveway In 1946, Will bought lots 148-149, directly east of the main house and located on Nassau Point Rd. (Liber 2531, p. 578). Kist did not include these two lots in the sale to Duffy.

In 1947, Will also bought lot 155, essentially the old ball field to the left of the driveway (Liber 2773, p. 322) and in 1950, lot 156 another lot further north of the ball field. (Liber 3111, p. 1).

In 1947, Will also purchased lot 399 which is across Wunneweta and west of the house. This land contains the outdoor fireplace and picnic tables and was also the site of camp meetings and fires and ceremonies.

