

Here's another episode, this time written by me.

GEORGE IN PROVINCETOWN

In 1959 George entered a juried art show and festival in Provincetown, Mass., sponsored by Walter Chrysler, who was a patron of the arts there. His painting was not only accepted, but purchased. (It hadn't been paid for yet.) He was unable to find out who bought it, so we decided to go there for a short vacation and solve the mystery.

The festival was set up as a series of tents surrounded by a temporary wall. There was an entrance with an attendant collecting tickets. When George explained that he had a painting in the show, and introduced himself, it turned out that the so-called "attendant" was Walter Chrysler himself. Not only that, he was the one who had bought George's painting.

George was encouraged to return to Provincetown the next summer. He made a connection with a gallery on Commercial street and was promised a show. So we bit the bullet and rented a house, an oldie, on Mayflower Heights in east Provincetown for the summer of 1960. One of George's former students rented our house. At that time we were living on Apple Road, next to the Matzdorfs.

We still had the Volkswagon bus, and rented a trailer to carry everything we would need. We didn't realize at the time that the bus's motor was under powered. At one point in Connecticut there was a small hill, and we all had to get out so George could get it up to the top. But we made it the rest of the way.

We were unaware at the time of the damage we had done. A year later, we were traveling back from NYC on the Thruway at 2 in the morning when the engine died. No cell phones in those days. After a long wait, a trooper came and radioed for a garage pickup in Monroe, several stops from our New Paltz destination. Thereby hangs another tale. After calling a taxi, we managed to get home. The next day George went to pick up the bus, supposedly installed with a rebuilt motor. He barely managed to get home before the engine died. He took it to our garage and found out it was an old useless thing. We instituted a suit to get our money back but it was too late. They were out of business.

Poor Jamie had the mumps, and we fixed it so he could lie down behind the driver's seat. Needless to say, the trip was long and exhausting, but getting there was the reward. It was a great old house, turn of the century, two stories, with a front veranda, high up overlooking the bay, part of a row of similar houses. In order to get to the beach, we had to go down a long stairway and cross the road. There was a separate building which George used as his studio.

Three young boys were a guarantee of mischief. Somehow, one day, a squirrel got into the house. There were open rafters and many rooms, so trying to capture the squirrel seemed like a lost cause. I can still remember the merry chase, the boys screaming and laughing, and the sight of George with a broom

in one hand and a towel wrapped around his other hand and arm, leaping about. Somehow, the squirrel was eventually trapped and put in a carton outside. (Why, I don't know). Of course, the boys wanted to take a peek and opened a flap. That's all the squirrel needed, and he was gone.

One of the benefits of the house was its library. Jamie had finished with kindergarten. His teacher had given him phonics lessons during nap time because he was unable to settle down. He fell in love with the books, and by the time we left for home, he was able to read.

We made an arrangement with an art student for room and board. She would take care of the children in the mornings and go to school in the afternoons. This left us free (especially me) to work. Meg was from Australia, and very athletic. Sometimes she would take the boys out to the dunes for a hike. Never mind that Dan was barely five. They lost him once, briefly, when he couldn't keep up.

George did well at his show at the gallery. People also came to his studio. So our summer was paid for. But we didn't go back again, except for shorter trips. George preferred to paint in the country. That was his real motivation. His paintings at that time were freely impressionistic, but he was beginning to reevaluate what he wanted to do.

Walter Chrysler was a big influence in Provincetown in the sixties. He established a museum and gallery at a former church in the middle of town, near the art school. There were a good number of artists there at the time, and he bought lots of their work, including George's. He eventually bought six of George's paintings.

Years later, we bought a one-week time share in E. Provincetown, near Mayflower Heights. By that time everything had changed. The artists had left, the galleries had morphed into boutiques, and Provincetown became known as a gay community. We kept that timeshare for twenty years, sometimes having the children use it, sometimes exchanging for other places. After George was gone, I put it on the market through a web-based company and sold it in a week.