

The History of the Windsor Gardens Writers Group

By Kay Mauser

Windsor Gardens Writers Group will celebrate its 29th year in existence this June 18, 1986. When I joined 1987, there were just six people present at that time. The founder Isabel Farnham, was spending some time in a nursing home, recovering from a hip operation. The others present were Sarah Newton, Jane Pitts, and Gerry Biram. These four were our illustrious leaders. I do not remember the other two persons present at that meeting.

Now a little bio about them.

Isabelle Farnham was born in 1909. A month after her birth her father moved the family from the lush farm they had to the desert areas of west Texas. After nine years with this experiment they moved back to Illinois. She completed her education and became a teacher in 1932. She taught high school English. Not only teaching school, she edited a weekly newspaper, and tried radio. Her education helped me so much in my early days in the group.

Sarah Newton born in 1931, was closer to my age, but she had a very different background than me. She was born in a house her paternal grandfather had built in 1885. Her father was a carpenter, her mother a housewife. Sarah wrote stories of growing up during the dust storms they had had in Kansas.

After graduating from high school, she enrolled in Manhattan Bible College. She met and married one of the other students in 1949 and they began their ministry soon after. They had a daughter and were blessed with two grandchildren.

She received a Master's Degree in Psychology in 1963, having been involved in a school psychologist training program. In 1967 she began a career as a Court Psychologist. In 1969 she and her husband were divorced. Each went on with their own life styles. Later she married John Newton, a minister. After John died she moved to Windsor Gardens helping Isabelle form our Writers Group.

Next we have Jane Pitts. Many of you will remember her as editor of the *Windsor World* before we had the *Windsor Life* newspaper. Jane had a degree in music and played for many groups. She was born in Idaho, I don't remember if she ever discussed the year. Her father was a civil engineer and his work took them to many other cities. They lived two years in Oroville, WA, then in California, where she attended high school.

When the family moved to Denver Jane was able to enroll in Colorado State College where she graduated. At that time Englewood did not hire music teachers for elementary school. She was given the third grade class and told to teach as much music as she could squeeze in. She worked during WWII and as she said there were shortages, paper drives, and lots of tension.

After she married Joseph Pitts she lived in Scarsdale, NY, a lovely suburb of New York City. In 1968, after visiting Denver, they bought into Windsor Gardens, where she and her husband

became involved in all activities. For a long time her picture hung in one of the rooms in the Activities Center honoring all she had done for Windsor Gardens.

Last but not least we have Gerry Biram. Until about four years ago she attended our meetings very faithfully.

Gerry was born on a ranch about 10 miles from Laramie, WY. It was a home delivery attended by a physician and a nurse. She was the second child, her sister being just 21 months older. On the ranch they had electric lights from a Delco battery system her father had made. They had a radio but no telephone and no close neighbors. Opportunities for contact with others came seldom.

She had a very different childhood. During her young years her mother taught her to read, which she loves. Later the family hired a live-in teacher for both girls. After eight years of schooling on the ranch her mother moved with the girls to Laramie for the winter and there the girls attended high school. When high school was completed the girls went on to continue their education at the University of Wyoming. Both majored in Elementary Ed.

After graduating she taught in the small mining community of Superior, WY. She lived in a teacherage with sixteen others. The close togetherness was too much for her and in 1945 she moved to Yakima, WA teaching second grade. She was married in 1946 to George Biram and they moved to Olympia, WA.

In 1950, they had the opportunity to go to Germany with the Occupational Forces. They were fortunate to travel a lot during their stay in Germany. After three years they returned stateside. When George was assigned to go to France in 1960, Gerry made the decision to return to Laramie, WY to be closer to other parents. She spent 22 years teaching in a first grade position until she retired in 1988. She and George had two daughters.

Until about two years ago Gerry was a very busy member of writers group. She has enjoyed living in Windsor Gardens with all the activities which she enjoys so much.

To write this article I used material gathered from a booklet self-published in 1992. It is called "Who's Who In The Windsor Gardens Writers Group." You may be able to find a copy in our Windsor library.