

Cape Codder's Flair for Food and Flowers Turns Her Hobby Into Profit

By Harriet B. Blackburn Staff Writer of The Christian Science Monitor

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Marion Woods Shares Fun With Eagle Farm Guests

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It could be another Cape Cod legend—the story about a great, little-known, fresh-water pond back of Bourne, and a single family living on a peninsula that's like an island—running a surpassingly fine restaurant in a bower of flowers and wild birds. Fiction and fact are so cheerfully combined on the Cape!

But, if you want to check on the tale, you'll take the highway along the west side of Cape Cod Canal toward Sagamore bridge till you come to Great Herring Pond Road. You'll follow that to the Eagle Hill Farm sign.

The entrance coincides with a neck of land extending into the lake and swelling to 11 acres of high-perched flower and bird sanctuary. There, in a modest yet extraordinarily attractive home, with its many additions, you'll probably find Mrs. Marion Woods waiting to welcome you.

Not that Mrs. Woods does much waiting around. It would hardly be in character for her, a woman who says she needs three pairs of roller skates to get her jobs done. That is, unless her daughter and four sons are at home helping out. Then one pair is enough.

True Family Enterprise

It's all a true family enterprise, built on a high standard of hospitality, one soon discovers. "We had to settle here on Great Herring pond," Mrs. Woods explains, "because it was the farm we loved most, and both our Cohasset home and our big boat had become such a financial load we decided to give them up."

"So this has been home for 15 years, and now it's our hobby, too. Mr. Woods is in the insurance business in Boston and he commutes to the city summer and winter."

At first Mrs. Woods was dubious about educational advantages for her children in so remote a spot. Eagles nested in their pine trees and deer and beaver came closer than human beings in winter, when they were the only family on three-mile-long Great Herring Pond.

The ice would be 22 inches deep, and often they were nearly snowed in; but somehow Mr. Woods managed to get out to his train and the public school bus got through to pick up the youngsters. They made good friends and kept up scholastically with their former mates in the city.

After a few years the eldest son was entered at Tabor Academy, 15 miles away. There he distinguished himself in crew in 1939, the year he graduated. He was to go to the Henley races in England,

and he invited his mother to go along, too.

She gave it long thought but finally, said no, and used the money such a trip would have cost to launch herself in the home restaurant business, a vigorous enough hobby to seem to her worth while. She let friends and acquaintances know that the same superior table for which she had always been famous would be ready for them every day of the week, but at a price. No other advertising started her off.

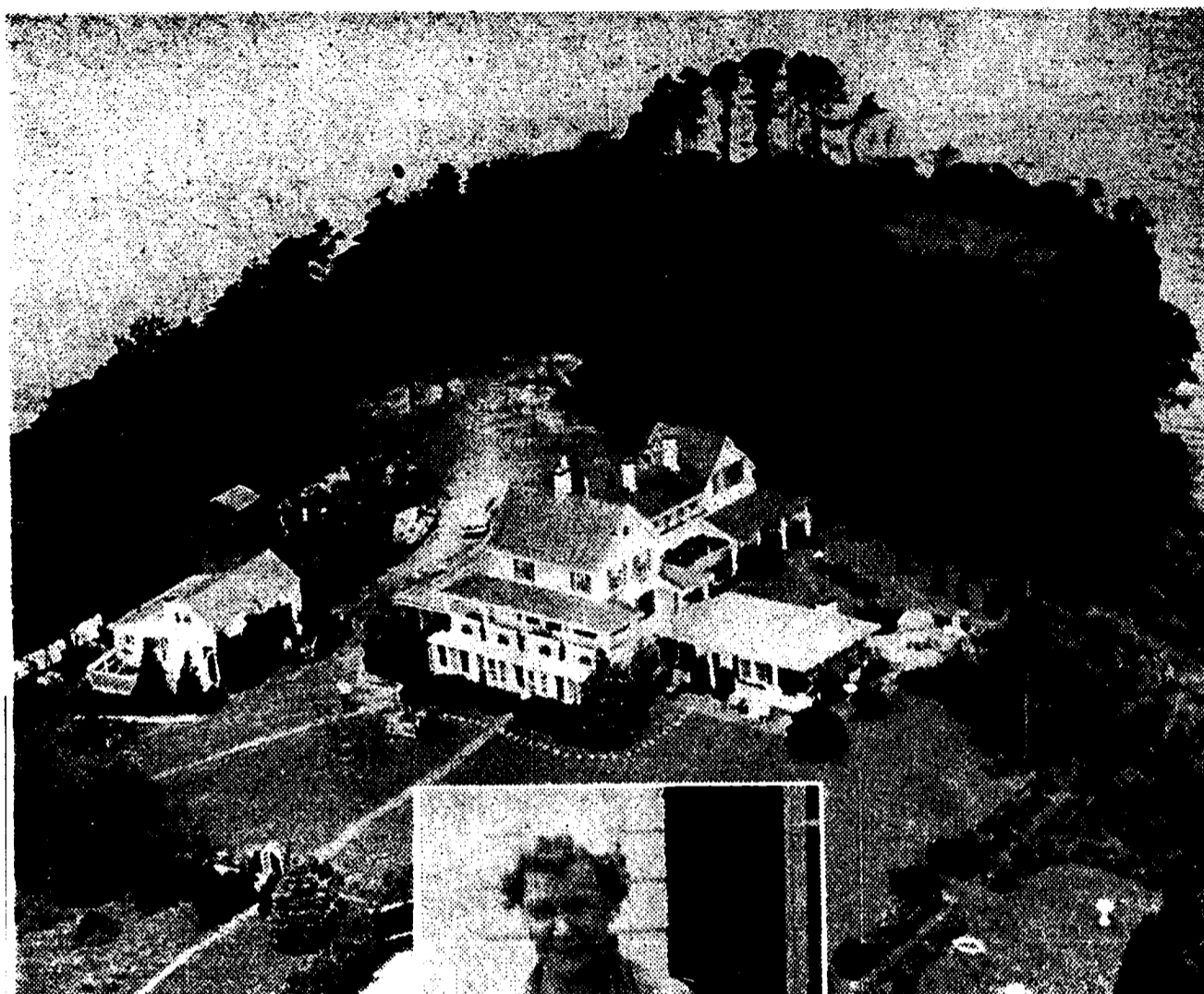
Catering Was Usual

Mrs. Woods was used to catering for an undetermined 14 to 24 diners, including all her husband's and children's friends. Now she never knows whether there will be 35 or 135, except that all whom she serves must make reservations in advance.

The same competent cook who has been with the Woods family since Cohasset days is still a stand-by for the present business, making most of the pastry and rolls. Mrs. Woods superintends the meats herself.

"My children have been a tremendous help—honors going to Ted, the youngest, for the way he has stood by this summer. They are proficient with the three lawn mowers and filling our 50 to 60 flower containers, and they are experts in the kitchen."

"For instance, one of the boys and Sis are a perfect team for



Paul Stiles, Hyannis

Pictured above is aerial view of Eagle Hill Farm, showing the attractive old house with its many additions and inviting, well-kept grounds. At left is Mrs. Marion Woods, arms full of freshly cut flowers, which will decorate the guest rooms of the hospitable farmhouse.



birthday cakes. Sometimes a guest will take one of us aside and say, 'In my party there's a Mr. Blank. If we'd known it was an anniversary day for him, we'd have ordered a special cake. Can you give us something at dessert time with a candle on it?'

"That's all that Son and Sis need to send them into action. He mixes up the batter and she makes a pink frosting. In a matter of minutes the cake is in the oven, and it's out and iced by the time the guests are ready for dessert—with a candle in the center and a covering of tiny blossoms quickly plucked from the garden."

When Mother Does It

But when the children don't happen to be at home? "Well, I guess Mother has to do it then," confesses Mrs. Woods, who forgets to credit herself for the dramatic little triumphs in which she specializes all day long.

To be sure, she does remember, it was at 2 a.m. the morning a house guest was due to arrive for several days that she thought of a way to give a fresh warm touch to the small guest chamber she had made available. It was quaint, but not distinctive enough, she thought, with its abundance of pretty, flowered chintz. Ruffles of solid scarlet would give it more zip, she was sure; and, by 5 a.m., the scarlet ruffles were in place, edging the draperies and the skirt of the dressing table.

Now Eagle Hill Farm has a number of these carefully

thought-out rooms ready for occasional over-night guests. Visitors are tucked in, in utmost comfort, just as the Woodses constantly make room for a few more jugs of flowers inside, or a few more birdhouses outside. And the house opens outdoors both downstairs and upstairs, on account of the terrain, so that one never forgets earth and sky and wind and water.

There are so many hummingbirds around, it's a wonder, Mrs. Woods thinks, that they don't fly right into the house. Flash, the 22-year-old pony and family pet, had one such day of adventure when he stepped right into the kitchen, and was on his way to the dining room just as a big Cadillac drove up, with distinguished guests who could hardly be expected to understand! Fortunately Flash backed out through the kitchen before his indiscretion was observed.

Six to eight college girls and boys help Mrs. Woods now with the housework, the flower arrangements, and the waiting on table. "I give them a good stiff training course, too," says Mrs.

Woods with kindly amusement. "They're free to take at least one swim every afternoon between work hours, but I'm a bit fussy how they come into the dining room. They must look attractive and tidy."

"I wouldn't care if my business never made a cent," Mrs. Woods sums up the feeling she has about Eagle Hill Farm, "just so long as my children keep wanting to get back whenever they can, and the guests who come to us find happiness and peace here."