

GLOUCESTER  
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OUR PEOPLE, OUR STORIES  
1623 | 2023



**400  
STORIES  
PROJECT**

Hello, Lanesville - 1995

by Sara Collins

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# Hello, Lanesville - 1995

BY SARA COLLINS

Our first day in Lanesville:

Between the sheets of Gloucester Times, two elderly pairs  
Of eyes cast our way, smiles, giggles, even  
With hands that shook, from the silliness of the shaded view they'd picked  
To welcome new neighbors with a glance or two,  
Perched on webbed folding lawn chairs, one set up in rattily grip by Aili who lived directly across,  
The other carried, purposefully, in two tiny hands down the street to join her pal,  
Nisu would follow in a day or two, and apologies that it had taken her so long to bake.  
As we unloaded box after box from friends cars that had journeyed to move us  
From downtown Gloucester to the outskirts of Lanesville.

It took a full day to move in, emptying those friendly cars,  
with movers even, eight strong sets of hands that did this professionally,  
Pausing to wipe brows in the September sun, and later shadows past the glow  
Of deep amber afternoon. "We moved someone with 20 rooms that didn't have as much stuff as you  
two have",  
Dismay joining the sweat as night fell before truck's doors  
closed in defeat.

We'd had a tiny house, behind the downtown railway tracks, with a garden filled to every nook  
With vegetables, herbs, and flowers,  
The home in front, filled with books on shelves, boxes, corners, and spiraling the staircase  
We'd added to climb and lift toward loft and deck, filled, full, we spread out to another  
Village of Gloucester and met each of you in Lanesville:

Sister in law to our next door right hand side, you announced all that,  
I only retained the Sunshine on your face, Susan, glowing  
All these years later, with many a Lanesville Music Festival, bringing your path and mine closer  
together  
Til I can hardly remember when we weren't friends, dancing on your lawn,  
and holding off the wintery setting  
with afternoons of tea to fool the coming winds.

Dancer down the street, MaryBeth, your children outnumber my only by many, but our houses feel like extensions of each other's, separated by few feet, fewer houses, and pie pans, coffee mugs, yard chats,  
and the rush of busy days that has not slowed the beat of friends and family.

I met a couple down the street that first week too, Deb, Ed, you were both coaches to our son, and yours. The years of fields, and games, wins and losses, are carried by mourning doves with bands of others, greeting our days, and releasing to twilight.

Our jam making neighbor on the right; Walter's heart was always bigger than ours and gave way a Pie Day morning, we still gathered to bake together before giving Thanks and remembering, each hand carrying pies to many homes that night.  
We eat every Lemon Square in your name, Fred, too, never as good as those you baked with that irreplaceable grin.

With a zigzag across, the tree we called by Harriet's name is gone now.  
It lingered in scarlet glory, with a pause the year she passed, but  
Many glows and outstretched leaves of flame drew us all for years to pause and laugh,  
At the fragrance of life, and beauty,  
While we held its brilliant leaves in our hands.

Your sweet friend, the Sunflower gardener,  
Would be on our left for years, and Doris' garden towered , almost seeming to be mine,  
Stretched over the fence like we did, sharing rhubarb, and raspberries, and  
And piecing together stories, your quilts of joys and sorrow,  
Art of the finest kind that lives on, even as your hands have left  
The work of furrows, and seams, and brows.

So many Hellos, that first day,  
to the young woman with the big dog, who pulled Patty like an anchor,  
on the Monsey way to Langsford,  
We'd run out to help when the pull was too much, we didn't know  
The riptide that was holding you under it all, til you left.

New dogs came, some are walking themselves, with leashes in mouth,  
Legal, but independent, so there.  
Others run through yards like they were just released on lesser charges,  
But many bring their people, walking to the cove morning and night, meeting up  
With the four legged and two legged neighbors for chats,  
no need to text, if many are walking quickly at days end,  
it is sure to be a spectacular sunset.

I have never met so many people in one day that greeted me,  
talked about life, gardens, music, art, light, and made me feel at home.

Hello, still, and welcome all,  
New children with your voices in homes behind,  
on the swings, the bikes down the lane, your glee in the snow,  
greeting this day, this time, with exultation.  
Welcome teens and 20's, returning like the tide,  
For music festivals, ice cream socials, cove walks, caroling,  
Beach picnics, and seeing those who are still here, in story or form,  
Welcome memories, those made, and those to come,  
Gathering for cookies, celebrating, grieving, and  
And sending our voices to each other,  
In the dusking sky.

## **ABOUT THE COVER PHOTO**

Pie Day (the day before Thanksgiving) at Sara and Bill's house, November 2022

Left to right: Sara Collins, Tammy Leland, Lexie Pereira, Ellen Pereira, Karl Deckert, Rose Deckert, Noah Stevens,  
Ali Holden, Albert Pereira, Willow Phoenix, Susan Maza, MaryBeth Pereira



Left to right: Bill Stevens (husband of Sara), Sara, and their son, Noah, 2020.



Susan Maza (seated), Sara Collins, MaryBeth Pereira, June 2021.