

## THE STORY OF 79 CIRCUIT AVENUE

The story of any building is the story of the people who lived, loved, passed time, passed by . . . it's the story of lives shared.

So it is for 79 Circuit, a Victorian cottage perched at the entrance to the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association (lovingly known as The Campgrounds) in Oak Bluffs. Just a short walk to beaches, parks, the harbor, and all the glorious attractions of a seaside town on this magical Island, 79 is ideally located at the edge of the quieter residential area of Circuit Avenue. Like so many cottages built in the heyday of Victorian construction, it is sturdy, filled with light, airy and charming.

79 Circuit has been home to families (three generations and two branches of one family at the same time), young children, elderly ladies, and babies. It has been home to a tea room, the iconic Good Dog Goods store, college students working on the Island for the summer, puppies and dogs, a family of bunnies who live under the shed every summer, working professionals, and the tenant who was here when I bought the building in 1999 and is still here. For several years, landscaper cousins lived here, leaving behind a host of monarch butterflies and bumblebees in our organic gardens. Birds flock to the ivy on our building, arriving at dusk in large numbers, enjoying the extraordinary hospitality offered here.

Two elderly special friends of former owners lived in the apartments for many years, so happy to be together as they aged. 79 Circuit was my nephew's first home and first workplace.

79 Circuit has hosted many joyous occasions—the wedding of our neighbors the Leonardos, visits by the grand and great-grandchildren of the Norton and Sylvia families—beloved residents for decades. We hold political meetings and campaign parties and, every summer, Norman Bridwell and Clifford the Big Red Dog hosted luncheons in the garden for folks who support the Possible Dreams Auction, fundraiser for Martha's Vineyard Community Services.

We've hosted dog training sessions by the Monks of New Skete principal trainers, puppy play sessions, passersby who read their newspapers and enjoy their coffee in the garden, and friends of friends of friends.

Impromptu musical events have sprung up, reminding me of the glory days when our then-neighbors Val and his brother Sonny Rollins, Mrs. Alice Coutinho, and David Crohan filled our corner of Oak Bluffs with music.

The Victorians of Oak Bluffs graced their homes with porches, and they have been an alluring part of our society for 150 years. On one special occasion, two school chums who hadn't seen each other in more than seventy years (until they were both on the porch at 79 Circuit at the same time) burst into song, spontaneously singing their elementary school song with great enthusiasm.

The day I came home with the keys to 79 Circuit in June of 1999, I found Mrs. Freitas, Mrs. Alley, and Mrs. Rose on the porch, so excited their dear friend Betty Sylvia's home was 'back in the family' and belonged to another friend's

granddaughter They brightened my days for years with their visits to “the best porch in town.” My fabulous college classmates were also on the porch that day to celebrate with me. Truly, the porch culture of Oak Bluffs is a wondrous thing!

I treasure the moments when complete strangers became friends after spending time on this porch together. Oh, how we have loved our porch parties, launched when friend Rick Lee realized there is nothing quite like the 79 Circuit porch and inspired us to gather every Friday evening for lively conversation and some very happy socializing.

My beloved honorary Aunt Libby, a family friend who grew up with my grandparents, rented one of the apartments every summer for many years, long before I became its steward. How she loved that porch!

While I mostly rented to year-round Islanders, for the last two years of the pandemic, I held one apartment for use only by family seeking refuge from Covid. Then this winter, we shared our space for a while with a writer who tells us her time here was a huge help to her craft as she found herself writing volumes.

Good Dog Goods was born at 79 Circuit twenty-two years ago, a celebration of dogs and the human-animal bond. We’ll move on from here with deep gratitude for all that we accomplished—and with thanks to all our customers and friends for sharing their beloved animals with us. It has been a privilege and, while we’ll continue our work in other places, there’ll never be another place quite like this. It’s been perfect!

The beauty of this lovely home is that it wraps its arms around all who come, whether to rest and recharge, play, work, live, or shop.

Breezes, friendly faces, lively conversation—the problems of the world are solved on our porch, troubles falling away as we relax, breathe deeply, and celebrate the solace of this beautiful place.

My fervent wish for 79 Circuit is that it will continue to provide a warm welcome to all who gather here, just as it always has under the stewardship of the families who made it theirs—a place where people come together and share the special encounters that enrich, enliven, and encourage.

This is our story—the story of Good Dog Goods, the story of 79 Circuit, and a tiny taste of the stories of all the wonderful people who’ve lived here before us and cherished this wonderful property.