

Mary Cooper

Introduction to Mary Cooper: Mary and her husband, Dan, moved to Avon in 1972 and bought thirty-four acres on Dan Jones Road, where they established and ran Cooper's Berry Farm for many years. Mary was interviewed by Betty Richmond, a long-time resident of Avon.

Cooper's Berry Farm

Betty: So was it your intention then to farm [the thirty-four acres when you moved here]...?

Mary: Well, I think Dan knew all along what we were going to do [because] we were soon planting strawberries out under the existing apple trees...and, when people found out I had strawberries, they were here wanting another crate before I could get one crate filled.

Betty: So you didn't intend to have a strawberry farm originally?

Mary: I think Dan knew it, but he wasn't telling me.

Betty: How long did it take then before you established Cooper's Berry Farm?

Mary: Oh, probably the next spring when we bought [more] plants and put them out...We hired some young people, high schoolers, to help us...and we took it from there...We'd create a new patch and buy a few thousand or so plants every spring...

Betty: What work did you have to do before the strawberries formed fruit you could sell?

Mary: [We'd] set them out and clip off all the blooms as they came on the first year to strengthen the roots of the plants...Then we had to weed them, which was a big job. That's what the young people helped with. Dan would take them to the fields to work on the different patches of strawberries and he would encourage them by [saying] whoever was last down the row had to bake a cake and bring it the next day for the rest of us to share...

Betty: When did you stop the berry farm business?

Mary: After Dan died in 1995.

Betty: What happened to the rest of the acreage...?

Mary: That's was we sold and is now Beechwood Farms.