

WINCHESTER ENTERS THE SPACE AGE

By Ellen Knight¹

On July 20, 1969, millions of people across the globe were fixed in front of their television sets and even telescopes to watch history in the making, the first moon landing.

It evoked mixed reactions. "Exactly on time, at 9:32 a.m. Wednesday, the astronauts were off, taking with them the hopes, dreams and prayers of all America and leaving behind the poverty and problems on the homefront to conquer new areas of space," Nancy Neelans Bishop, editor of *The Winchester Star*, wrote.

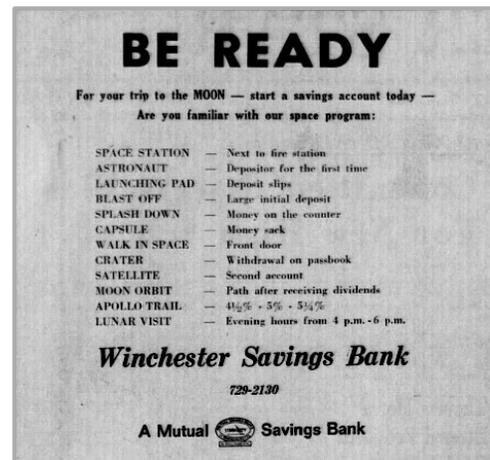
"On Monday the Sputnik era, begun over a decade ago, will reach its culminations with man setting foot on the moon for the first time....Perhaps after conquering this area it might be well to return our attention to earth and to solving the problems of hunger, poverty, racial conflict and war that plague us here."²

Her opinion was shared by a large percentage of the American population—the vast cost of the program was misdirected. And yet, the country was firmly into the Space Age. Many could not help being caught up in the adventure of conquering space and feel satisfaction in the Cold-War achievement.

The Winchester Young Republican Club, for example, was among those who sent congratulatory telegrams, saying "Your efforts are a testament to the dedication and abilities of the people of our Nation, and to the Free Enterprise System which made this achievement possible. Your work has made us prouder than ever to be Americans, and we support your further ventures on man's pathway to the stars."³

One resident composed a "Moon Poem," saying "To Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins...applause, for they came forward in this great cause."⁴

One young Winchester man got more closely involved in the event. Paul Sanborn of Black Horse Terrace was serving aboard the aircraft carrier, USS *Hornet*, which recovered the astronauts after their command module splashed down in the Pacific on July 24. A member of the ship's photo lab, he was posted to the navigation bridge's wing to take whatever photographs might come his way.



Not only headlines but also advertising copy reflected the impact of the moon landing in 1969.

ASTRONAUTS

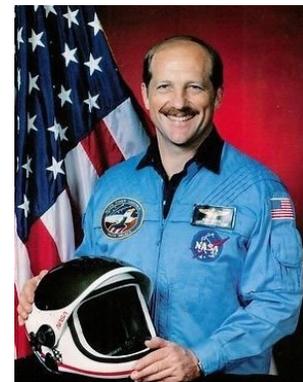
Astronauts became America's new heroes. "Several astronauts," the second volume of the *History of Winchester* states, "lived in the duplex development off Cross Street while they took courses at MIT."⁵

One of these was Russell Louis "Rusty" Schweickart (b. 1935). A graduate of Manasquan High School (1952), he earned a B.S. in aeronautical engineering (1956) and an M.S. in aeronautics and astronautics (1963) from MIT. Selected in 1963 for NASA's third astronaut group, he was the Lunar Module Pilot on the 1969 Apollo 9 mission. But Schweickart's contact with Winchester was brief.⁶

Even less so was that of John Lawrence Finley (1935-2006). Though every biography correctly identifies Winchester as the birth place of this selectee for the first group of astronauts to be assigned to the Manned Orbiting Laboratory program (1965), his family left town when he was about 2 and by age 5 he was in Houston.

However, there was one astronaut who lived in Winchester long enough to be considered one of its own, Rick Hauck (b. 1941). Born in Long Beach, California, Hauck lived in Winchester for much of his youth. "I lived in Winchester first very briefly in 1942-43 when my father was assigned to the commissioning detail of the USS *Bennett* at the Boston Navy Yard," he wrote to Winchester's archivist in 2006.

"We lived on the second floor of a home on Church Street. Our family moved back to Winchester in 1952 when my father became Executive Officer of USS *Worcester*, based at the Navy yard. We bought a house at 41 Canterbury Road. I attended 7th, 8th, and 9th grades in Winchester, the latter in the old Wadleigh building, and moved to Washington in 1955. My mother later moved back to the Canterbury Road home and lived there until her death in 1989."



Former Winchester resident, Frederick "Rick" Hauck

Thus, through age 14, the early dreams and ambitions which led to Hauck's travels into space were being formed in Winchester.

After an advanced education in nuclear engineering and ten years as a Navy pilot, in 1978 NASA selected Hauck as an astronaut candidate. He was pilot for STS-7, the seventh flight of the Space Shuttle, launched on June 18, 1983, and spacecraft commander for the second mission of Discovery on mission STS 51-A, which launched on November 8, 1984. Skipping ahead, Hauck was spacecraft commander of Discovery on STS-26, launched in 1988, the first flight to be flown after the Challenger accident. When Captain Hauck left military active duty in 1990, he had logged over 5500 flight hours, 436 in space.

Hauck's honors include two Department of Defense Distinguished Service Medals, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, the NASA Medal for Outstanding Leadership; the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Navy Commendation Medal with Gold Star and Combat V, the NASA Space Flight Medal (3); and the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame.

TECHNOLOGY

Winchester was also the home of scientists and engineers whose work aided aerospace programs, such as Prof. Richard Henry Frazier (1900-1991). "Working with engineers at M.I.T.'s Instrumentation Laboratory in recent years, he has contributed to development of tiny but vital electromechanical control elements that go into the guidance three American astronauts will use to steer their Apollo spacecraft to the moon and back."⁷

A space-age industry also located in Winchester, though it had left by the time of the moon landing. In 1958, a *Boston Globe* headline proclaimed, "Winchester Firm Key Factor in Launching of Satellites, Rockets."⁸ The firm was the Calidyne Company.

Begun in 1948 by Robert C. Lewis and Philip C. Efromson, the company's name was formed from "calibration" and "dynamics." It designed, developed, and manufactured vibration test equipment. In 1953, after operating in "various obsolete buildings," it consolidated operations in a new "modern, streamlined, sunlit structure" (quoting its own advertising) built in 1952 at 120 Cross Street.



The Calidyne Co. operated in a "modern, streamlined, sunlit structure" built in 1952 at 120 Cross St. Behind it was the old Whitten gelatin factory, contrasting heavy and light industry in town. Both sites are now owed by the Soccer Club.

The company's vibration test equipment, particularly its electro-mechanical transducer known as a Shaker, simulated conditions experienced by satellites reaching their orbits, thus helping engineers to design and develop satellites and carrier rockets in their laboratories so as to prevent failure imposed by speed and vibration.

"Vibration is the most critical and singular problem affecting missile reliability," Lewis said. "Electrical circuits could give out," the *Globe* explained. "Climatic conditions could bring the whole attempt to earth in a crashing crescendo."

Not having sufficient area in Winchester to expand, in 1957, the company purchased a 12.5-acre lot at 369 Washington Street in Woburn to build another production plant and broke ground in October. But, after merging with Ling Electronics of Culver City, CA, in 1958, it sold the Woburn lot (to W. R. Grace in 1960) and built an addition to the Winchester building. By 1962, the founders

had moved out of Winchester. In 1967, Andrew Alford, a pioneer in microwave technology, took over the Winchester site.

However, the story of Calidyne and the contributions of residents active in aerospace design, engineering, and education demonstrate that even a quiet suburban town could play a role in historic events, including the advancements of the Space Age.

¹ This article © 2021 by the author is a revision of an earlier article by Ellen Knight published in the *Daily Times Chronicle* on July 15, 2019. This revision supersedes all previous articles.

² *The Winchester Star*, July 16, 1969.

³ *The Winchester Star*, July 31, 1969.

⁴ Joe Figucia, "Moon Poem," *The Winchester Star*, July 24, 1969.

⁵ Bruce Winchester Stone, *History of Winchester*, Vol. II, 1975.

⁶ "Former Resident Heads to Moon," *The Winchester Star*, Feb 20, 1969.

⁷ *The Winchester Star* July 8, 1965.

⁸ *The Boston Globe*, Nov. 2, 1958.