

BR: This recording is the property of The Tales of Cape Cod, Incorporated, and it cannot be reproduced without the written consent of The Tales of Cape Cod, Incorporated. February 28, 1978, visiting with Emma Louise Marshall in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Can you give me your full name?

EM: It's Emma. You want my maiden name or the name I go by now?

BR: Your name now.

EM: Yeah. Emma L. Marshall.

BR: What was your maiden name?

EM: Smith.

BR: What was the date of your birth?

EM: July 20, 1893.

BR: And, Mrs. Marshall, what are your earliest memories?

EM: Well, I don't know. I think probably being down in the store with my father was my earliest memories.

BR: How old were you then?

EM: Oh, I was about five years old.

BR: So that would be 18 –

EM: '98.

BR: And what do you remember about that?

EM: Well, I remember I used to be with my father in his store quite a bit while he was grinding corn and making crack corn and cornmeal, which he used to sell and deliver around to the different houses. In those days, they had quite a number of pigs, and there was a lot of cornmeal sold at those times.

BR: And what did they use the cracked corn for?

EM: The hens and chickens – mostly hens, I guess.

BR: Did he crack this by hand?

EM: No. He had a boiler down in the basement that he used to get ready and that would make the meal and also the cracked corn.

BR: A boiler?

EM: Yeah. It was a boiler.

BR: And what else do you remember about those times with your father?

EM: Well, I used to go down to the – we had a barn with two horses, and I used to go down there every day with him, every morning when he got the horses up but went to feed them. At night when he went to bed them down, I'd go with him always. Even in the snowy weather, I'd go.

BR: Did he make you a doll one time?

EM: Yes. I was a little bit, well, lonesome down there because I was alone, in a way, and I said, "I wish I had a doll, Pa, to play with." So he said, "I'll make you one." So he carved this one, I don't know, [inaudible] or something like that, and he made it look like a doll and put on the eyes and nose and mouth, and I played with it. I thought it was really something. I had a doll at home, but that was my favorite at the time.

BR: Did you always leave it there?

EM: No. It went home with me every night, the same as the chair that he made for me. And that would go down with me in the morning and come home with me at night, always.

BR: How big is that doll?

EM: What?

BR: How big is it?

EM: Oh, about five inches tall. Yeah.

BR: And you still have it.

EM: I still have it. It went with me to Boston when I went there to work, and I've kept it all this time. Somehow it's stayed with me. I don't know why.

BR: And what else do you remember when you were very young?

EM: Well, I remember they were talking about the Spanish American War. I was five years old, and I remember when the [USS] *Maine* sunk. My father took me down to see the ram [USS] *Katahdin* that was part of the fleet. Many called it the cheese box on a raft because that's what it

looked like. The old-fashioned wooden cheese boxes and sort of a plank, it looked like, so they called it a cheese box on a raft.

BR: It was round.

EM: Yes. The wooden box was round, but this was just stretched out like that. It was right probably in the center of it, maybe a little [inaudible]. It was interesting. Yeah. He took me down to the *Katahdin* [inaudible] see it.

BR: And do you remember the song that they used to sing about the sinking of the *Maine*?

EM: Yes. I remember the song. Don't ask me to repeat it. [inaudible] to me.

BR: Can you describe Provincetown in around 1910, the streets, for instance?

EM: The streets? Well, 1910, they were about the same as they are now. I don't remember just when the sidewalks were put in. They had the plank sidewalks before that. At least they had them when I was a little girl.

BR: Perhaps before 1910, then.

EM: Yeah. Before 1910.

BR: Can you describe them to me?

EM: Well, they were just planks laid down. They had, of course, supports along the edge, underneath them, I guess. That's the way it was. I don't quite remember. But I know we used to go skating on them, wear out our shoes.

BR: And did you have plank sidewalks coming into your house from the street?

EM: Well, they weren't exactly planks, not like these. They were small [inaudible] then.

BR: The ones on the street were much wider.

EM: Oh, yes, much wider. I don't know. The others were about – well, maybe thirty inches wide.

BR: Did most of the houses have picket fences?

EM: Yes. Picket fences and arbors. A lot of them had arbors. Some of them, of course, didn't. They had ivy growing on them. Some had roses. But I think most of the rose gardens were later.

BR: Can you describe a picket fence to me?

EM: Well, I don't know. They were regular pickets that came. Some people made their own. Some put them up. They were just plain pieces of wood, about two or three inches wide, and some of them would put them up that way. And then others would have – well, not carved on the top, but made sort of pointed on the top, and that's about all I can say.

BR: Were they painted?

EM: Oh, yes. Yeah. Ours were a very light green. It looks as though they were stained, but they were very smooth, the pickets we had. So there were some that my grandfather had put there. That's really the only description I can give.

BR: You had dirt roads then.

EM: Yes.

BR: And you told me that they were watered down.

EM: Yes. Along the front street. They didn't go on the back street. But on the front street, they did, to keep the dust down. They had places at certain points where they would fill the cart up.

BR: The water cart.

EM: And then, when they got ready, they'd go along and sprinkle streets.

BR: And they did this how often?

EM: Oh, they did it every day, practically, in dry weather.

BR: And was it drawn by horse? Was it drawn by a horse?

EM: Yes.

BR: And what did the tank look like? Do you remember?

EM: Well, it was just a big, round tank that – well, it wasn't standing, of course. It went from – I don't know what you call it. A tank that was laid down, almost, on wheels.

BR: And what else do you remember about Provincetown? Was there lamplighters?

EM: Oh, the lamplighters.

BR: Can you tell me about that?

EM: Yes. They used to go around at dusk and light the lamps, and they had had one at home to be trimmed, ready to light. And they'd take this little ladder, probably, oh, maybe thirty-six

inches or a little bit better, and go up to the light and light it. And they would burn probably all night. And then they'd take them home again in the morning.

BR: Come around and collect them in the morning.

EM: Yeah.

BR: Can you tell me about the town crier?

EM: Yes. He used to – well, whenever they had anything special that they wanted to tell people about, the town crier used to go around with his bell, and he'd holler notice and pause a few minutes, and then he'd describe whatever there was to sell or whatever meeting there was going to be of the different societies. He'd go through town, all the way through town, and holler.

BR: Would the people come out to their front door and listen to him?

EM: Sometimes, yes. Or sometimes, they could hear it inside. They didn't have to come to the door. Yes. We had one that was very loud, and he could – certainly, his voice could carry.

BR: Did he carry a bell with him?

EM: Yes. And he'd ring his bell before he'd start to announce whatever he had.

BR: Did he have a uniform?

EM: No. No. He was dressed in ordinary clothes. I can remember one of them that used to wear a bandana around his neck. He'd probably have overalls on and his bandana around his neck and probably a hat on. Any kind of a hat.

BR: Nothing special.

EM: Nothing special. No.

BR: The modern ones had the pilgrim hat, didn't they?

EM: Yes.

BR: And uniform?

EM: Yes. [inaudible] show piece.

BR: What was the last year that you had a town crier?

EM: Well, I can't remember. I just don't remember. [inaudible] we were in high school.

BR: And you had a lot of wharves in those days, didn't you?

EM: Yes. And many of them were carried away in the November gale when the *Portland* was lost.

BR: Do you have any idea how many wharves there might have been then?

EM: Well, I'm not really sure, but I think there were around twenty-five or thirty.

BR: Can you name some of them?

EM: Yes. There was [inaudible].

BR: Lumber wharves?

EM: Yes. Lewis and Brown's was a lumber and coal wharf. The lumber used to come in from Maine for building, things like that. There was one up in the west end, but I really don't know the name of it. We always called it Andrew Williams' wharf because he had a store right there. It was always called Williams' wharf. And they had Central Wharf down here, which was obviously at Central Street. And BH. Dyer's Wharf. That was a business wharf. And then, at the foot of Cook Street, there was Steamboat Wharf, had a steamer from Boston used to come in. And then there was this Lewis and Brown that we spoke of.

BR: There was a lot of activity down there.

EM: Oh, yes, a lot of activity. Up to the west end, [inaudible] Paine's Wharf. [inaudible] Paine, in her book [inaudible], tells about the activity there, how much activity there was because she was one that was always with her father, too. Yeah.

BR: And the fishing boats came into the wharves, too.

EM: Yes. At Railroad Wharf, they used to come in. The New York Yacht Club used to anchor there in the summertime at Railroad Wharf, which is now MacMillan's Wharf.

BR: What was the New York yacht club?

EM: Well, it was a yacht club. Just, I suppose, a regular yacht club.

BR: The boat that came in was a boat then [inaudible] –

EM: Yes. It was a boat. Yeah. And they used to go out from there. That is, I suppose, meandering.

BR: They would just stop here on their trip, then.

EM: Yes. Yeah. They used to have a manager come with them, I suppose, just to take care of boats.

BR: And there was a sailmaker.

EM: Yes. Back of what was Burch's Bakery, Tom Small's bakery. It was the older one, back of Tom Small's bakery and diagonally opposite Adams Pharmacy. There was a [inaudible] there. He had a building where he used to make the sails.

BR: Also, there was a shirt factory.

EM: Yes. That was up on Court Street.

BR: What kind of shirts did they make there?

EM: Well, I think dress shirts and probably work shirts. I was quite young when that was there.

BR: They were men's shirts.

EM: They were men's shirts. Yes. The womenfolk used to go there.

BR: Can you tell me about the fish factory?

EM: Fish factory's at the west end, and they used to make the cod liver oil there. The [inaudible] Company used to make the cod liver oil or refine it there.

BR: And that was probably shipped away.

EM: And shipped away, probably to Gloucester, I imagine, because I think that's where [inaudible] was. Or the canning factory. Have we mentioned that?

BR: No, we didn't mention the [inaudible]. Could you talk about that a little?

EM: Yeah. The canning factory used to can the fish there and ship it away. Of course, mostly, I think, menfolk worked there.

BR: What kind of fish did they pack?

EM: Well, I imagine any kind that was caught around here.

BR: They were taken right from the boat to the factories.

EM: Yes. There was a wharf there where they could unload.

BR: Did you ever go there and watch them can?

EM: No. That was too far down for me to go when I was a kid alone.

BR: Were they packed in small cans?

EM: I don't know.

BR: And you talked about the ropes being stretched in the streets and [inaudible].

EM: Oh, yes.

BR: Can you tell me about that?

EM: In the spring of the year, they used to anchor the rope somewhere near the corner of the street, and then they'd go from our street to Pleasant Street. They'd go up to Bradford Street with that rope on their back, stretching it all the time. It was quite a job because they had to put quite a lot of strength to it in order to stretch it.

BR: They anchored it on –

EM: Well, they anchored it – they fastened it some way at the corner of the street. Yes.

BR: And how long would they let it stay there?

EM: Well, they wouldn't let it stay any length of time. When they got through stretching it, they'd coil it up in a big tub that they had. Of course, the next one attached to it then. No, just the rope itself.

BR: But that was the ropes that contained the – held the nets together.

EM: Yes.

BR: Can you tell me when this street was called Parallel Street? That was many years ago, wasn't it?

EM: It was many years ago. Yes. I know when my grandfather bought his place up there, it was called Parallel Street. Let me see. My father was born in 1863, and it was called Parallel Street then.

BR: This is now Commercial.

EM: Bradford Street.

BR: Bradford was Parallel.

EM: Bradford was Parallel.

BR: And Commercial Street was known as what?

EM: Commercial, so far as I know.

BR: Well, when were they called Back and Front Streets?

EM: Well, the natives always called it The Back Street and The Front Street, but people that come here, that is summer people or visitors, they call it Back Street and Front Street. But it was The Back Street and The Front Street. I don't know. It's hard for them to see. They can't understand it.

BR: Can you tell me about how the people used to dress in those days when they went out on Sundays?

EM: Well, they dressed up. Of course, they had long skirts in those days, and they wore it in the summertime [inaudible], of course. Well, they used to wear their hats when they went down the street. Any time of morning, they'd dress up to go down. Of course, dress up on Sunday, and they wouldn't go out on the street, really, unless they dressed up. They'd have to dress up. And it wasn't until the summer people came, really, that – well, they went around in casual clothes.

BR: Did most people just get dressed up to walk down to the store?

EM: Well, not if the store was near to them, they wouldn't. No.

BR: But if they were going to be out –

EM: If they were going to be out – if they were really going down street, what they called down street, which would be the center of the town, they'd dress up always. Yeah.

BR: Speaking of the summer people, did they come down by train or boat? How did they get here?

EM: Well, they used to come by train; they used to come by boat. Both ways. Because, of course, the boat – if they came before the boat was running, they would come on the train, of course, because the train ran all the year.

BR: Can you tell me some of the places they stayed? The boarding houses?

EM: Well, some of them stayed at hotels, but not many of them brought their families. They had boarding houses way down at the east end. Emma Atkins. I don't know if you want the names. I don't know if I can tell you the names of some of them. But Emma Atkins. She had a boarding house. And Angie [inaudible] had a boarding house over here at the foot of [inaudible] Street. And Miss (Morey?) had a boarding house. There was several of them. Quite a number of them.

BR: You mentioned the Gifford House.

EM: Yes. There was the Gifford House, of course, and the Central House, where some of them stayed. Some of them that didn't have children used to stay at the hotels. There was a Pilgrim House and the Atlantic House. That was quite a famous place. The drummers used to stay at the Atlantic House when they came. They were salesmen. They called them drummers in those days. Yeah.

BR: And what were they selling?

EM: Groceries, a lot of them. And dry goods. I guess that's about all.

BR: Did they come all the time, or just in the summer?

EM: No, they came periodically all year. They used to have special days once. Well, I know the grocers used to come once every two weeks. That's a thing kind of long gone now.

BR: And when the summer people came, did they bring their luggage – their big trunks with them?

EM: Yes, they brought the trunks.

BR: And they stayed all summer, mostly?

EM: Yes. Of course, some of them used to come to the same place every year, so I imagine they would leave quite a lot of things. Yes, because there were places where they stayed year after year, don't you know?

BR: How were these big trunks transported from the trains and the boats?

EM: The what?

BR: How were the big trunks transported from the trains and the boats?

EM: Well, on jiggers, and then the livery stables used to have carriages that they could cart things in. But I suppose, if they had very many, they used to go on the jiggers.

BR: Can you explain a jigger to me?

EM: Well, it's flat, almost to the ground; you can step up onto it, and it had what looked to be quite high wheels for the height on the platform. It was like a platform, and people used to jump on the jiggers if they saw one coming along [and] wanted a ride downtown. They'd jump on the jigger and ride down. Yeah.

BR: The driver didn't object?

EM: No. Not in those days. No. He didn't object.

BR: Was this jigger drawn by one or two horses?

EM: Well, mostly one horse, I think. Because I know that there was one fellow that had a jigger here, and he used to imbibe, I guess, quite frequently, and he always used to stop me if he saw me on the street and talk to me. And he had one horse on his jigger. But I think sometimes they did have [inaudible] horses or a couple of horses.

BR: Can you tell me about when the United States Navy used to come to Provincetown?

EM: Yes. They used to come – well, between 1906 and 1910, they used to come a lot. Yes. They used to have band concerts on the town hall lawn, and then they used to have – I suppose they were practicing in the harbor, and you could hear it in the town here. It was very enjoyable because they were rated A-1, I guess, those that played in the bands.

BR: And the sailors were the boys that played in the band.

EM: Yes. They were the musicians of the fleet.

BR: And they used to come every summer for four years?

EM: Well, yes. Not so many – not always as many as at other times, you know, but the fleet would come, and there'd be quite a number of ships in here.

BR: Do you remember how many ships there might be – the most at one time?

EM: No. But I know the harbor was full of them. Yeah. Well, I know in 1933, when the Navy came here, we outfitted – from our store, we outfitted seventeen boats.

BR: With their food?

EM: Yes, with their food. Yes. And each ship had to have the ship's cooks – I mean, the ship's officers' mess and the regular ship's mess. We had to keep that supper – and had to go down at different times. You couldn't take them down at the same time.

BR: How would it be separate?

EM: Well, the officers would come into the officers' mess, and then they'd – the different ones would come in – the cook would come in for the regular ships' mess.

BR: Did they have different food?

EM: Yes. They had different food. The officers used to like different gourmet things, probably.

BR: Yes. Were these just staples that you'd sell them or –?

EM: We sold them everything, really.

BR: Fresh meats, too?

EM: Oh, yes. Fresh meats. They used to buy those, and they used to buy groceries, canned, and fruits and vegetables, too. We used to have a great big chart, and I used to have to keep each one separate, each ship separate, and the officers' mess and the others separate. It was quite a job.

BR: That must have taken a lot of your supplies.

EM: It did. My husband used to have to get up and go to [inaudible]. Get up at five o'clock and go [inaudible] and come back and work the day. I didn't have a chance to go down and see them at all. I didn't leave the store. They were here three weeks at that time, and I didn't have a chance to leave the store.

BR: Were they on maneuvers?

EM: Well, yes, somewhat. They'd come and go, but they were mostly in the harbor. As I said, I didn't get a chance to see them until after three o'clock in the morning. We'd be open until two and three o'clock in the morning, and then we'd take a ride out around the [inaudible] road then. That was my exercise for the day.

BR: Getting back to when the Navy came in during 1906 to 1910, they were known as the Atlantic Fleet then.

EM: Yes.

BR: And were they involved –?

EM: What's that?

BR: The North Atlantic Fleet.

EM: Yeah.

BR: And they were involved in maneuvers then?

EM: Yes, I think they were training. Yes, training. Yeah. They were training.

BR: You saw a lot of sailors dressed in white suits then.

EM: Oh, yes. Yes. And they used to wear their white caps if they were on short leave. But if they were on longer leave, they could wear the colored caps and round sailors' caps. And they used to play – they used to go up Sunday and play baseball on – they call it Evans Field, back of the town.

BR: They had their own teams then from each ship?

EM: Oh, yes. Of course, Provincetown people used to go out and watch them until – well, there was a little bit of controversy. They didn't want them to march through the streets on Sunday, so I guess suspended it.

BR: I see. Did they have parades while they were here?

EM: No, not to speak of. Well, if you call it a parade from the wharf up to where they used to play.

BR: What else did they do for recreation besides play baseball and make music?

EM: [inaudible].

BR: And can you tell me about the poor house?

EM: They called it the alms house in those days.

BR: And your grandfather –

EM: Yes, my grandfather, at one time, was overseer of the poor there. I should tell you the story about the woman what – he asked her what she wanted, and she said she thought if she had a quarter of a pound of cheese. She was one of the regular ones. She wasn't at the poor house, but they went around to visit those that got help from the town. And they thought – she thought if she had a quarter of a pound of cheese, she could get along, which is some different from today because today they demand [inaudible] and get it. Yeah.

BR: Did they have people living in the poor house?

EM: Oh, yes. They had the regular ones living there. Some of them lived there for years until they died. And then some of them stayed for a while, and I don't know whether they took [inaudible]. I remember one girl there that – a man they called "Happy Jack" – his name was (LeCount?), and he had taken this girl from the home to give her a home. But they finally, I guess, put her in the poor house, and she stayed there, I guess until she went. They had all gone. That is, the people that brought her here had gone. And she stayed there until she passed away.

BR: They had a lot of widows there, you know. Husbands had been lost at sea. How did they take care of those people?

EM: Well, they used to give them something, nowhere near what they give them today. But they gave them, I guess, hardly enough to live on, seems to me. But they worked. They went out to work, the widows did. They had children.

BR: The children were allowed to work?

EM: Well, most of them were small. They were small. They couldn't go. But their mothers did, and some of them took in work. They had kind of a hard time of it.

BR: What do you mean, they took in work?

EM: Washings and things like that. Washings and ironings, and some of them did dressmaking. I don't remember what the others did, really.

BR: Do you remember when President [Theodore] Roosevelt came to the Cape for the dedication of the [inaudible]?

EM: Yes, I remember that.

BR: [inaudible]

EM: That's 1907. The 20<sup>th</sup> of August when the cornerstone was laid in 1907. Yes, and there was quite a parade through town up to the monument from the horse to the monument. Of course, he gave this delivery speech.

BR: How did he come there?

EM: Came on the Navy or the government boat.

BR: Presidential yacht?

EM: Yes.

BR: Was that decorated?

EM: Everything was decorated. Everything was decorated. The yacht, too, I guess. Yeah.

BR: Can you describe the streets, how they were decorated?

EM: Well, they were decorated in flags. The houses had flags on them. [inaudible] Well, I don't know. They were draped on the houses. But mostly, I think, through the path where the parade was taken from the wharf up to the monument.

BR: Every house had a flag on it.

EM: Well, they were draped like this. Draped big flags. They weren't straight flags.

BR: Right. Flags in a semicircle?

EM: No. Well, I think in that picture of the bank there, it showed how they were draped. I'm not sure.

BR: Can you describe how it looked on that street that day? The sailors –

EM: You couldn't see much of the street with the sailors lined on the shoreside, and then, of course, the sidewalks were filled with people. Even the houses, if they had porches, they had it right on the porches and the bank. They had a little porch up there, and people were up high where they could look down on the parade.

BR: And who was leading the parade?

EM: Well, Sergeant (Banister?). He was a native Provincetown boy, but he was a sergeant on the Boston police force. So they got him to lead the parade.

BR: He was picked for that?

EM: He was picked for that. Yes. His mother lived up here on [inaudible] Street, and his sister.

BR: And did they have bands playing?

EM: Bands?

BR: Yes.

EM: Oh, yes, they had the ship's band that were playing.

BR: Did they have a banquet?

EM: Yes, I think they did, but I don't know just where it was held, whether it was held in the town hall or one of the hotels. I don't know. I don't dare say.

BR: You're talking about the actual laying of the cornerstone. They had the granite on the [inaudible].

EM: Yes. Of course, they had stuff that was collected from different places, you know, that they put down below. Well, for future reference for posterity, I suppose.

BR: What was put in the –

EM: Put in a little case or something and sealed and put way down at the bottom of the cornerstone. Yeah.

BR: Were those historical papers or something?

EM: Yes, historical papers and things that were of interest to the town – happened to have. But it was a great day, a great day that we'll never see again, I don't think, because there'll never be anything as historic as that.

BR: Did you watch the progress as it was being built?

EM: Oh, yes. I watched it from the time it was being built until it was dedicated because I was in high school from 1906 to 1910.

BR: The cornerstone was laid in – what was the date?

EM: August 20, 1907, and it was dedicated August 5, 1910.

BR: Do you know where the granite came from?

EM: No, but I do know that some of the granite was given to us from up the Cape. Different places in the – on the inside of the monument, it tells different stones that came. But as for knowing where [inaudible], I don't.

BR: They had a thundershower that day.

EM: Well, at one time during the building of the monument, yes, we had a thundershower in the summertime, and the cart that took the pieces of granite up to the monument was struck by lightning, or the [inaudible] was struck by lightning, and the car came down with the granite on it and killed a woman, Mrs. (Baines?), and that was a very important name in Provincetown – (Baines?).

BR: Was she a prominent woman in Provincetown?

EM: Well, she wasn't exactly prominent, but her family –

BR: The whole family?

EM: – were extensive, and they knew a lot about the Cape and Provincetown. I'll show you a picture of her and her rich family magazine that they sent out [inaudible].

BR: Can you tell me about the Research Club? The Research Club?

EM: Yes. The Research Club. That was held at the museum.

BR: How did it get started?

EM: Well, it was started by these women that were really interested. They were Mayflower descendants, and then they looked around and found people that could join that were descendants of the Mayflower, and they formed the club. It was really amusing, too, because MacMillan had an exhibit up on the top floor, and then they had different articles from the homes of people whose ancestors had [inaudible] and furniture and things of that sort that they wanted exhibited.

BR: Is that still in effect today, the Research Club?

EM: No. That all went up to the monument on the hill, and there are, of course, still some of the things that were in the Research Club. Because I saw a doll that belonged to this friend of my – this aunt of this friend of mine had a doll named Kate (Schaefer?), and that is up in the museum up there because I saw it when I was there. I said, “There’s Kate (Schaefer?).” So some of them left things there, and some took them out when they went up on the hill.

BR: Were you here for the dedication of the monument?

EM: No. I didn’t go. My mother and father went. We had company, so they took the company.

BR: Do you remember anything about the dedication [inaudible]?

EM: No. I didn’t see it, but I know that [President William Howard] Taft was here at the dedication.

BR: He came on the presidential yacht again?

EM: Yes.

BR: Was it the same thing? Was it a parade, and as it was –?

EM: Yes, there was a parade.

BR: [inaudible] dinner and everything?

EM: Yes.

BR: Talk about the S-4 submarine that sank off Provincetown in 1927.

EM: Yes. I know it was a bitter cold night, the night it sank. The town was really in mourning. Yes, because that’s all they talked about, was the submarine that sank.

BR: How long had it been here?

EM: Well, I don’t remember. Not very long. Not too long.

BR: And what was it doing here?

EM: Well, it was testing it. It was supposed to submerge and then come up, but it finally submerged and didn’t come up.

BR: Do you know how many people were on it?

EM: I did know, but I can’t really recall right now.

BR: Can you tell me anything about the Depression?

EM: Well, no. Of course, we had the store then, but I don't really remember too much of the Depression. I was talking about it the other day, and I really don't remember that much of the Depression.

BR: Did you feel that Provincetown didn't suffer because [inaudible] able to eat?

EM: No, I don't think so.

BR: Do you remember your early school days?

EM: Yes. I went to school up here where the [inaudible] is now. Let me see. There was a school – it was a double building on Conant Street and Montello Street, and I went to the Conant Street School. It was all one building, but just divided, and it was in the first grade, and I stayed there only, I guess, a half a year, and then I went up to the Western School, which is now gone, to prepare for the second grade.

BR: Prepare for the second grade?

EM: Prepare for the second grade. Yes.

BR: What do you mean, prepare for the second grade?

EM: Well, they wanted me to prepare for the third grade; really, it was because I was supposed to skip the second grade. And Miss (Dolan?), who was the teacher, had me up there at the Western School. And when I went down to the Bradford School, I went into the first grade there. And then, of course, I went back up to the Western School for fourth grade and back down to the Bradford school for the fourth grade, or fifth grade, I guess. Yes. We went back and forth from one school to another.

BR: Why was that?

EM: I don't know. And there was quite a controversy about it. Some of the girls that went to the Western School and were supposed to go there had quite a fuss about that.

BR: Do you remember World War II? Do you remember World War I, rather?

EM: Yes, I was up in Boston working.

BR: You weren't in Provincetown.

EM: I wasn't in Provincetown then, no.

BR: Did you ever come down?

EM: Well, I used to come down. Well, I went up in September 1910, and I didn't come down until Thanksgiving that time. But I used to come down after I got working at different times. Yes.

BR: What was it like here during World War I? Were a lot of ships here?

EM: Well, I suppose so. I really don't remember it here. My husband was on the [USS] *Covington* that was sunk off Brest, France, and he was, of course, one of the survivors. Yeah. He went back and forth to France. I think he went four different times.

BR: You said he was one of the survivors. Were there many Provincetown boys on that ship?

EM: Well, there was another survivor. Yes, there were quite a few. Well, I say quite a few. I don't know how many there were. I think he told me.

BR: Well, what about World War II? What was it like down here during World War II?

EM: Well, that was in 1938 or '40, wasn't it?

BR: 1941.

EM: Yeah. Well, we were – I was busy at the store.

BR: Did you have blackouts here?

EM: Oh, yes, we did. Yes. Because I got reprimanded. [laughter] Yes, one of the men that was supervising there saw a light in the back store, I think it was. I had the curtains down, but he could see a light. So I was reprimanded for that.

BR: You kept your curtains closed at night, then.

EM: Yes. Yes, we shut everything out and turned the lights out in the store.

BR: Were the harbors in darkness too?

EM: What?

BR: Were the harbors in darkness too?

EM: The harbor?

BR: Mm-hmm [to indicate yes].

EM: I think so. I don't quite remember, to tell you the truth. I was in the store so much that I don't remember.

BR: Tell us about the store because you had rationing then, didn't you?

EM: Yes, we did. And people had so many coupons for meat. My husband used to go to Boston to buy his meat and then come back. We had a car that was loaded with the meats and things, and it was really kind of tough going in those days to keep track of the different coupons. Because some of them would leave their coupons at the store and some of them would bring them when they came. And that just kind of forgotten my – I haven't refreshed my memory on that for quite a while.

BR: Gasoline and sugar were rationed.

EM: Yes, they were rationed.

BR: Your husband didn't have any problem getting gas to go to Boston for supplies.

EM: No. No.

BR: Can you tell me about the gale of 1898?

EM: Yes. On Saturday night, it started. I don't remember. Only hearing people tell about it, how it blew and blew, and then Sunday, we were right in the eye of the storm. Of course, it calmed down at noontime, and then about one o'clock, the wind came up again, and it was a real gale. I remember my father coming home and telling my mother that he had to take the horses out in the barn because he thought the barn was going. It was quite near the water, and he did. He took them up there. The barn didn't go, fortunately. But the streets were flooded up at Kelley's Corner, and the basements were filled in the houses up there.

BR: That was the west end?

EM: Yes. Up near Kelley's Corner, the west end. Yeah. I remember going up with my mother. Well, I don't know if it was the next morning because there were boats going around in the streets there. But we went up shortly after that.

BR: In the flooded streets, there were small boats [inaudible]

EM: Yes. Small rowboats. We went up to Gull Hill, what is called Gull Hill, and we could look across to Wood End and see them cutting the men that were lashed to the rigging. They were frozen to there. They were cutting them out. Yeah, I remember that very plainly. I was five.

BR: Was there a lot of property lost, too?

EM: No, not too much that I remember. Some of the wharves were lost in the gale. Some of them survived. I know it was the drummer came down from – Mr. Gilmore from [inaudible]. They were paper dealers, bags, wrapping paper, and things like that. My father took him out in what was a farm wagon. It had wheels with [inaudible] iron over the tires, but they were iron on the wheels instead of regular tires. He could come out and showed him all around and do that

because he wanted to see and record it and take pictures, too, because he was sort of a photographer, amateur photographer in a way. That's really all that I remember about the Portland gale.

BR: The [inaudible] wagons. Was that type of wagon they used on the beaches?

EM: Well, farm wagons, mostly. They had tires like the farm wagons had, that had soft sand. This was a farm wagon that we had. It was a high wagon and just a platform, and a seat in the front, a high seat in the front. Yes. It was something like the jiggers, only higher.

BR: I see.

EM: Yeah.

BR: Can you tell me about your father buying pews in the church?

EM: Oh, my grandfather bought a pew in the Universalist church. It was bought from an estate, and it was – well, I don't know – on the side, it was a side pew. It was the side of the pulpit. But there weren't very many of them. Probably five on each side of the pulpit. I don't know how much he paid for it at the time. It wasn't too much.

BR: You had a deed to this.

EM: Yes, I have a deed to that pew.

BR: Did these deeds have to be recorded?

EM: Well, this one was given from the [inaudible]. Of course, it may have been to settle the estate. I don't know. It may not be on account of the pew, exactly. Yeah. But I don't know. I don't believe they were recorded. I don't know exactly.

BR: If you didn't own a pew, where would you sit?

EM: Anywhere you happened to want to sit. If it belonged to somebody that came and sat in a pew, why, it was all right. They weren't critical that way of people sitting there in their pew.

BR: Do you know how many years that was in effect? When did they discontinue that, owning pews in a church?

EM: Well, I don't know. It's really been – I think the people have just died, and it's just – well, [inaudible] forgotten, probably, because I never hear anybody. Although I do remember people sitting in the pews that they probably owned at the time. Of course, I was small then. Yes, there were the Nickersons and the Dyers probably, and the Fullers. Angie Fuller always sat down front, and they owned that pew. And then the Rosenthals owned their pew, I think. And the (Cowans?). But I think that was really forgotten when the older people died.

BR: Rosenthal is not a Cape name, is it?

EM: No. He was in the Civil War, Mr. Rosenthal. He was from [inaudible]. That's the furniture place. But he was German. And he married a Provincetown woman – Freeman, her name was – and my father's cousin married this woman's father. So his second wife. No, she was his second wife, and he [inaudible].

BR: I'll turn it off.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Molly Graham 10/5/2022