

**BAYSHORE CENTER AT BIVALVE
DELAWARE BAY MUSEUM**

ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTION

INTERVIEW DATE: July 31, 2013

TIME

SUBJECT: MEMORIES OF MAURICE RIVER, NJ

NARRATOR(S): John Breslin, Jr.

LOCATION: BAYSHORE CENTER AT BIVALVE

INTERVIEWER: Pat Moore, volunteer, Delaware Bay Museum

TRANSCRIPTION

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John Breslin shares his story of growing up in South Jersey. Both parents were raised and worked in the Millville, NJ area. John's background included a teaching position in Port Norris, Deerfield and Seabrook, NJ. He also shared his extensive knowledge of Maurice River, NJ. His grandmother was a manager of a shucking company in Maurice River and was able to provide details of the daily operations of the oyster business on the other side of the Maurice River (Bivalve) oyster businesses.

Moore, Pat ([00:00:08](#)):

Today is July 31st, 2013. We are recording at the Bayshore Center at Bivalve with John Breslin. I am Pat Moore volunteer for Bayshore Center, and we are accompanied by Rachel Dolhanczyk, our Curator of the BCB, Museum. John, thank you very much for, agreeing to do this oral history with us. And, I'd like to start with you first, and if you could give us some background information starting with, if you're not, you know, shy about telling your age, your birth date, <laugh>, where you were born.

Breslin, John ([00:00:53](#)):

Okay. I do a lot of that. Uh, when I got to hospital 7/10/30 was the birthdate and, uh, up in Millville hospital on a July 10th. And it was, they tell me, of course I couldn't remember, but they tell me it was a very stormy night thunderstorms, very hot and all that kind of good stuff. So that, so that's where we saw.

Moore, Pat ([00:01:15](#)):

So you, so you were born in Millville? Yeah.

Breslin, John (00:01:16):

Yeah. So that, so that makes me 83.

Moore, Pat (00:01:19):

Okay. Plus <laugh>, after we get a certain age, we, we do put that plus in there <laugh>, uh,

Breslin, John (00:01:29):

Been married 60 years to lovely Barbara.

Moore, Pat (00:01:34):

Where, where did you go to school, your education?

Breslin, John (00:01:41):

Millville all the way through high school and then Glassboro State Teachers College graduated on February 13th? No, June the third, Friday, June the 13th, 1952. And my brother graduated the same day from high school.

Moore, Pat (00:02:02):

Wow. And where in Millville did you live?

Breslin, John (00:02:05):

Uh, several places during the depression. We moved from here to there and everywhere.

Moore, Pat (00:02:13):

Okay.

Breslin, John (00:02:14):

But, uh, but we we've lived in the same house almost the whole time out on Geisinger Avenue.

Moore, Pat (00:02:20):

Okay. Where, you presently reside?

Breslin, John (00:02:23):

Yeah. Yeah.

Moore, Pat (00:02:26):

And you are married and your wife's name is Barbara. Barbara. What was your maiden name?

Breslin, Barbara (00:02:33):

Wade. And your middle name? Barbara Jean.

Moore, Pat (00:02:38):

Jean Wade. Okay.

Breslin, John (00:02:43):

She, she was from Vineland.

Moore, Pat (00:02:45):

Oh, you kind stole married. You stole a Vineland girl. <laugh> . Now, while you were in, high school, why don't you, you know, tell me about, you know, what life was like when you were in high school and what kind of jobs you had .

Breslin, John (00:03:05):

And okay. Uh, jobs. I worked, uh, had a paper route serving the Millville Daily, Republican, and the, uh, Evening Bulletin and a few evening news at the time, uh, for about two or three years from age 12 on, but in the summertime I worked in Ocean City on the boardwalk for the Bingham family from Millville at the, uh, Bingham Kitty Rides. Six years, six years. I did that 44 through 49. And then I switched from there and worked for Adistaries (sp?) for six summers Ocean City and one summer in, in their big plant in Atlantic city. Hmm. And, uh, in the ice box, it was a nice, cool job. Ah, yes, hard one though.

Breslin, John (00:03:55):

And, um, that's about all I ever did. I mean, besides teach school, I taught school for 40 and a half years, five years here in Port Norris, and the rest of the time in Upper Deerfield over at Seabrook

Moore, Pat (00:04:09):

Over at Seabrook. Oh, um, yes, that was at that's. What I, one of the question I was gonna ask you, you know, was about your teaching experience, what grades

Breslin, John (00:04:18):

Fifth grade here in Port Norris and seventh grade social studies the whole time over in Upper Deerfield.

Moore, Pat (00:04:26):

Okay. And what years were you teaching in Port Norris?

Breslin, John (00:04:30):

September 52 to June 57.

Moore, Pat (00:04:37):

And then you went up to Deerfield and when you were in Deerfield, what were you teaching? Upper Deerfield. Upper Deerfield. What were you teaching there?

Breslin, John ([00:04:44](#)):

Social studies.

Moore, Pat ([00:04:45](#)):

Social studies in

Breslin, John ([00:04:46](#)):

The whole time. Seventh grade.

Moore, Pat ([00:04:47](#)):

Oh, seventh grade.

Breslin, John ([00:04:49](#)):

And again, you know, and I also, when the side played organ and still do, uh, played the organ in the Mauricetown Methodist Church for 10 years and, uh, then other churches in Millville and, uh, ended up over Bridgeton just after I retired for 10 years in the first Baptist Church over there.

Moore, Pat ([00:05:12](#)):

Where did you learn your music? Did you start?

Breslin, John ([00:05:15](#)):

I started with my mother and my mother and father bought a piano and I was so excited. I went up to my room and couldn't come back out for a while. And, uh, I took lessons from Waldon Cox in Millville.

Moore, Pat ([00:05:31](#)):

Yes. I knew Walton.

Breslin, John ([00:05:32](#)):

And, um, then later on I took lessons from a person by the name of Larry DiPasquale, uh, at, uh, by then it was Rowan, uh, for several years to improve my skills. This was after I retired from school <laugh> so, uh, and, um, I still play the organ play at the Broadway Theater in Pitman.

Moore, Pat ([00:06:00](#)):

Oh, do you?

Breslin, John ([00:06:01](#)):

When they have, when they have their Broadway shows and, uh, it would be on Saturday nights, maybe about 20 times a year. There's a picture of that book of, of the shows, (the organ John holds up a picture).

Moore, Pat ([00:06:12](#)):

Oh, good. Good, good, good. So now you have something about school days here, then you, you brought a picture.

Breslin, John ([00:06:21](#)):

This is my first class

Moore, Pat ([00:06:24](#)):

That you taught?

Breslin, John ([00:06:25](#)):

Ever. Oh. And here it is, and there's that room that was the, uh, chairs were desk bolted down chairs and desks, of course at that time. And

Moore, Pat ([00:06:37](#)):

They were, I sat in desks like that. <laugh>

Breslin, John ([00:06:40](#)):

Four rows, 10 deep. I had 36 in that class. Wow. And the next, the next year I had 43. I remember that.

Moore, Pat ([00:06:52](#)):

And this is you in the background?

Breslin, John ([00:06:54](#)):

Yes it is one of the, one of the people in the class ended up being a Brigadier General in the, uh, United States, Army. He flew helicopter, Stan Cherry,

Moore, Pat ([00:07:06](#)):

I knew Stan. Uh, he was a very close friend. Yeah.

Breslin, Barbara ([00:07:10](#)):

Oh neat.

Breslin, John ([00:07:11](#)):

And, um, others I had to

Moore, Pat ([00:07:14](#)):

Stan is in here?

Breslin, John ([00:07:15](#)):

Yes, he is.

Moore, Pat ([00:07:16](#)):

Which one is Stan?

Breslin, John (00:07:17):

Uh, I'll show you

Moore, Pat (00:07:18):

Yes,

Breslin, John (00:07:23):

Right back here with the arms.

Moore, Pat (00:07:24):

Well, you know, I was looking at that and I'm saying, God, that face looks very familiar.

Breslin, John (00:07:30):

And Joan, Joan Garrison is in there also.

Moore, Pat (00:07:33):

Yes.

Breslin, John (00:07:34):

She's over on the left hand side.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:07:38):

I love how all the students sign their name. Yes. That's really special. Yes. Yeah.

Moore, Pat (00:07:43):

We, we're looking at a, black and white photo of the interior of, his classroom. And, this was in, May 12th, 1953. And we have autographs of, all of the kids that were in the class,

Breslin, John (00:08:09):

Joe Dagastine.

Moore, Pat (00:08:10):

Oh God. Yeah. Look at all the names we know <laugh> .

Breslin, John (00:08:13):

And, and the, and the Garrison family, they owned the Port Norris Express, I think.

Moore, Pat (00:08:20):

Reagan, Reagan Robbins. I had forgotten Stan, lived in Port Norris.. Well, that's a treasure.

Breslin, John (00:08:36):

Yeah. I have it. Give it up. <laugh>

Moore, Pat (00:08:41):

Oh, what brought you to wanting to be a teacher?

Breslin, John (00:08:47):

I had a fifth grade teacher, by the name of Bessy Nathan. I thought she was about the best one. All, you know, all a time. She was really good. And I just made up my mind. I thought that was what I wanted to do. That was just as simple really. And, I think I was the first one in the family to go through college too.

Moore, Pat (00:09:07):

Now, your, your parents, are they born and raised in Millville? And could I have their names?

Breslin, John (00:09:19):

My mother was Helen R Rebecca, R E B E K a Rebecca, the old pronounce spelling, uh, Holt. Her name was Holt. And, uh, my father, John J Breslin, Sr. They are of Irish descent from Donegal, Ireland, and we have been over there to walk the streets of Donagal, and we took a 12 day tour over there, in Ireland. So we have, we're still we're part Irish, at least I am <laugh> .

Moore, Pat (00:09:54):

Now. So were your mother and father born in Millville?

Breslin, John (00:09:57):

Yep yeah,

Moore, Pat (00:09:58):

Both born and raised in Millville. Yeah. And, what did, were there occupations? Did mom work and, what did dad do?

Breslin, John (00:10:05):

She didn't for a while, but, uh, she later on, uh, finished up her college degree. She started out in, uh, Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania as a, as an Organ major. And, uh, so that was her also also global music. And, uh, she later on became a music teacher in Millville

Moore, Pat (00:10:32):

In, in the Millville School System?

Breslin, John (00:10:33):

In the Millville School system. Yeah.

Moore, Pat (00:10:37):

I don't remember her.

Breslin, John (00:10:39):
She taught in Wood School.

Moore, Pat (00:10:41):
Okay. Third ward.

Breslin, John (00:10:46):
And my father had a gas station on, uh, for had a gas station at High and Oak streets, of course, keep in mind, this was all depression time and the thing things were pretty tough really, He worked for the Atlantic Refining Company and, uh, later on, he went to work 1938- 39 for Whitall Tatum glass company. They were still in business. And then later on, they were bought out by Armstrong Cork and he worked for them for quite a while. And then he, uh,

Moore, Pat (00:11:24):
And that was the, plant located on south second street.

Breslin, John (00:11:28):
He had, but he also started out over behind glass tower, works behind, uh, uh, over on Buck Street.

Moore, Pat (00:11:33):
Okay, good. I, I wanted you to pinpoint those two locations

Breslin, John (00:11:36):
And, uh, he, um, he worked there for a while and then he worked later on and for Millville National Bank and then went worked for later on for Camden Trust and retired and, um, that is it for them.

Moore, Pat (00:11:54):
Let's see, we, let's now start talking about your experiences working, in Morris River. First of all, can you start telling us about, uh, the Maurice River community where, you know, it's location and, uh, what it was like, what kind of buildings were there and, and note it with the years that you know, that you started.

Breslin, John (00:12:30):
Okay. All right. first of all, we're, in Maurice River Township, and I can remember going down to there to just... my grandmother would take me down and I would spend the day with her and, go through the whole go back and forth, back and forth, go out on the, docks out there, just to watch.

Moore, Pat (00:13:01):

So it was your grandmother that worked down there.

Breslin, John ([00:13:04](#)):

Yes. For FF East (inaudible). Right now, as far as the village, uh, of Maurice River itself was really on a map there. It had been on the old older maps of New Jersey will find the dot, Maurice River. One of those little dots that had indicated about 500 people. And of course in the summertime, there weren't very many people around. There was a school there, elementary school,

Moore, Pat ([00:13:27](#)):

There was a school there?

Breslin, John ([00:13:29](#)):

Jeanie Lewis was the, uh, teacher there. I can't remember anybody else, but, uh, she later taught in the Shell Pile school and she lives in Millville and she is a retired teacher. I see her a couple times a year at the, um, Cumberland County, Retired Teachers meetings. Anyway,, there was a small chapel there, small church, the store that the people used was up on the dock, just be just below, uh, the FF East, property and Stoweman Brothers in between. It, it also served as a railway express office too. Uh, Bob Reeves was the railway express man. And as an aside right now, he later became my school board president while I was down here. Anyway, um, there, the buildings were more like, uh, two, uh, like a present day, if you will. Um, two story motel, but not to the same type of construction. It was, I think it was, there were no, uh, no paved roads. If it rained, it was messy. And, uh, they, they just lived in under those conditions. I, I don't know how he did it, but they did.

Moore, Pat ([00:14:53](#)):

The housing for the shuckers. what kind of housing was there for them?

Breslin, John ([00:14:59](#)):

That was like a dormitory type of thing, long, a long row, couple wrong rows of, uh, houses.

Moore, Pat ([00:15:04](#)):

Okay.

Breslin, John ([00:15:05](#)):

Like a row house and of course, no indoor plumbing and all that kind of stuff.

Moore, Pat ([00:15:12](#)):

And, and were there any, migrant workers that, you know wintered over and stayed through the summer?

Breslin, John ([00:15:21](#)):

Not many in the summer. Of course the oysters were around in the summertime. Right. But, uh, but in the winter times there were, there were quite a few, I mean, there were quite a few people

there and I think some of 'em were also didn't just work for FF East. They also worked for Stoweman Brothers. I mean,, it was a that's, that's just how it was, but the school I was never in the school, never in the chapel. Never of course, in any of their homes. because my grandmother would tell me if I ever took pictures, don't take pictures of their faces because some of 'em might be wanted for crimes down south.

Moore, Pat ([00:15:58](#)):

Interesting. Interesting.

Breslin, John ([00:16:00](#)):

She said be very careful. I would still walk through the shucking house anyway. <laugh>

Moore, Pat ([00:16:06](#)):

Yeah. How old were you when you first started going there?

Breslin, John ([00:16:10](#)):

Uh, let's say in, around in my teens and, I got to know of course the, railroad people. I,

Moore, Pat ([00:16:21](#)):

And what railroad was that?

Breslin, John ([00:16:22](#)):

It was the Pennsylvania Reading Sea Shore Line. And a couple of the railway expresss cars and it was a passenger stop on their, on their schedule.

Moore, Pat ([00:16:33](#)):

Oh, it was a passenger stop. Just wasn't free.

Breslin, John ([00:16:36](#)):

That's right. Yeah, because that's the only way some of the people had had, could get to, you know, up the road to even Leesburg Dorchester and then finally Millville.

Moore, Pat ([00:16:47](#)):

Oh, okay. And, now when you were there, do you remember what year shucking houses were built there?

Breslin, John ([00:16:58](#)):

No, I don't. It got there because, I'm not, I wasn't, you know, in on that, from the beginning, but I do remember several times being down there having, and going out and watching 'em unload the oysters from the boat. Now, they, they did not have their own boats. They were independent. Somebody would come in, I think in the, in the, in a dairy, they would be like a, what they call em a jobber in, in the dairy. We had some down Ocean City, but I working down there and they,

they would come in, buy the milk for Abbots and have Abbots trucks and go off and do their thing. Um,

Moore, Pat ([00:17:41](#)):

So they, they would buy in large large quantities. And then, yeah,

Breslin, John ([00:17:45](#)):

Yeah,

Moore, Pat ([00:17:46](#)):

Shuck them somewhere else or

Breslin, John ([00:17:48](#)):

No, they would, they would be shucked right there.

Moore, Pat ([00:17:51](#)):

Okay.

Breslin, John ([00:17:52](#)):

They would bring them in, uh, the person's name that I remember was Captain Spence and he was lived on 13th street in Millville, and I, she was in contact with him quite often at night, or during, even during the day, the weekends, she would be in contact with him because he was the one that was, uh, kind of, uh, made sure that the oysters got there.

Breslin, John ([00:18:15](#)):

I can, remember, uh, a lot of times going out in the end of the dock and, uh, feasting on oysters right off the boat, they would open up for me. So I got the like oysters a lot,.

Moore, Pat ([00:18:31](#)):

I guess, so, well, when get 'em that fresh? They're delicious.

Breslin, John ([00:18:34](#)):

I still do. I still do. And, uh, let's see, what else, uh,

Moore, Pat ([00:18:41](#)):

How many... Now during that period, most of the boats were motorized. They weren't under sale during the period you were working there. No,

Breslin, John ([00:18:54](#)):

No, not at all.

Moore, Pat ([00:18:55](#)):

And about how many boats were associated with the, the shucking houses? were there two shucking houses or just one?

Breslin, John (00:19:04):

There were, there were two, there was F F East. And then on the same side, on the same side of river, further down was, uh, Stoweman Brothers.

Moore, Pat (00:19:11):

Oh. Uh, and they had a shucking house besides the boat building,

Breslin, John (00:19:14):

In between, was the Railway Express and the store. Oh. And I can remember going down there for lunch, getting the baloney sandwich. Yay. So thick <laugh> And, and thought it was, I died and gone to heaven maybe, but

Moore, Pat (00:19:33):

Oh yeah. I mean, thick fried baloney sandwich was my, was my staple lunch,

Breslin, John (00:19:40):

But, back to the railway, uh, once, in a while, they let me, uh, ride up in the cabin of the engine when they were switching back and forth, because it was, there was more than one track coming in by the dock, by the, uh, wharf, the pier, whatever. And, um, they let me ride back and forth.

Moore, Pat (00:20:00):

Now, did they, did that train come in daily and take out oysters?

Breslin, John (00:20:04):

Every day, Monday through Friday during the, during the season.

Moore, Pat (00:20:07):

And how many carloads would you say were taken out daily?

Breslin, John (00:20:11):

Maybe one or two, at least one, maybe two. Okay. But because, because they would Ship Stowman Brothers also not just FF East. They would ship Stoweman Brothers also and then they would, uh, run 'em up to, uh, the line would run from there and connect with the main line that ran from a Camden to Wildwood. And, uh, they would connect there and then run up to run 'em up to Camden and put 'em off any, any, wherever they needed to go from there.

Moore, Pat (00:20:40):

Oh, okay. How did they, um, pack the oysters?

Breslin, John (00:20:45):

They were in big wooden, big wooden barrels. Okay. With ice, in the cans., I don't ever remember any raw oysters in shell going out. Uh, but, they packed them in these huge, big barrels, uh, with ice now, the FF East had an ice machine and it was really fascinating because the water would come in on one side and the ice would go right out the other side.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:21:14](#)):

Oh, that's awesome.

Breslin, John ([00:21:15](#)):

And very thin shaved, uh, almost like a shaved ice. That was good stuff too. Especially on a, on a kind of warm day in September or whatever, but, um, um, there were two or three people in the office. My grandmother managed it. I can, can I tell you about that now? Yes.

Moore, Pat ([00:21:38](#)):

Give us, give us her name.

Breslin, John ([00:21:40](#)):

All right. Mabel B. Holt Banks..

Moore, Pat ([00:21:44](#)):

Her maiden name is Banks,

Breslin, John ([00:21:45](#)):

Banks. Uh, they, and they were a family from, Maurice River Township out in Cumberland, quite a, quite a big family.

Moore, Pat ([00:21:55](#)):

Do you have, an estimated year of her birth?

Breslin, John ([00:21:59](#)):

Eighteen ninety. I can't remember the month. I think it was May, but, uh, Are you now, if you go out route 49 in Cumberland pond?

Breslin, John ([00:22:13](#)):

Yes. Okay. They, they had a saw mill on the other side, over there, on, on the pond side. And as you go around that big curve, that big house on the right hand side was, was where she, uh, was born, I think, and lived, it was called the mansion house. And I have, uh, the, um, architectural plot for that. And it was a huge property. Mm-hmm, <affirmative> it extended all the way down to the next road. And, and we we've been in there. And the, uh, original part of the house was built 1750 and there was a walk in oven and a beehive oven. Mm. And the, in the main house, the, uh, walls are paneled with white Cedar that they got evidently got from the, uh, you know, from the, uh, marsh and the.....

Moore, Pat ([00:23:00](#)):

Over when it was still here. <laugh>

Breslin, John (00:23:01):

Yeah. Right. Yeah. And it floors the same way. And that house served as a Methodist preaching station, White Station. Also served during the, uh, during prohibition as a speak easy. And I understand it also served as a, uh, how should I put it, a house of ill repute of course.

Moore, Pat (00:23:30):

Is the building still there?

Breslin, John (00:23:31):

Oh yeah. The whole place is still there. Yeah, I have.

Moore, Pat (00:23:34):

And it's back, back it's road, not

Breslin, John (00:23:37):

The road it's right on the road. It's right on the road. It's right on the road. Yeah. Is, has a white picket fence across the front. Oh. And, uh, they they've kind of cleaned it up whoever lives there now. I have pictures of my grandmother in a one horse sleigh, right. In the middle of what's route 49. Now, during the wintertime with her father, uh, uh, holding the, uh, horse that she's, she and her mother are in the sleigh.

Moore, Pat (00:24:04):

Was her, were, was her father involved in the oyster industry?

Breslin, John (00:24:08):

Not at all, not at

Moore, Pat (00:24:09):

All. He, how did she, how did she get,

Breslin, John (00:24:11):

Uh, I, that I can't, I can't help you with, but she did work for real estate and it real estate and with a real estate person. And, uh, she was down in Florida with, during the real estate boom in the twenties down in Florida. And then she switched over to the oyster business. Then....

Moore, Pat (00:24:36):

And, this was all before she was married or while she was married?

Breslin, John (00:24:40):

Let's see, 1890, 1910. Yes she had to be married. Yeah. There are several things that I don't know because my mother would always say, I'll tell you later. Oh and later is still later yes. And that's not gonna happen now. Um, what else? Uh,

Moore, Pat ([00:25:06](#)):

The, the, FF East, the owner was Frederick

Breslin, John ([00:25:20](#)):

Frederick F East. I don't know what his middle initial was. Um, and he, um, when he first came to Millville or came up this way, he was involved with someone else, uh, in another oyster business. Then, then they, then they established this when I built got, you know, got it going themselves. Did

Moore, Pat ([00:25:39](#)):

He come from Maryland?

Breslin, John ([00:25:40](#)):

Yeah. I think so. Yeah and he lived with, us for a while where our house was at, uh, 3 14, 312 North Second Street in Millville. And it was a real nice place, not so much now. Um, anyway, uh, I would practice the piano and he would come in, he was a cigar smoker. I, anyway, I would be practicing and he would pay me to not practice.

Moore, Pat ([00:26:24](#)):

<laugh>.

Breslin, John ([00:26:26](#)):

And so I learned very quickly that even the 25 cents that I was given for not practicing during the depression, the early, late, late, late thirties, early forties was worthwhile because tasty cake was only 5 cents a pack. And I could, that was worth five packs of Tasty Cakeace <laugh>. Oh, that's a good way to <laugh>. It was a little, you learned your lesson. It was a little corner store right up the street, uh, that I could, uh, get across since traffic wasn't so bad then. Right. Uh, anyway,

Moore, Pat ([00:27:01](#)):

Do you remember what year he started? Uh, the shucking house?

Breslin, John ([00:27:05](#)):

I have, no, I can't remember. But, I do remember him coming. He was like kind of, kind of gruff, you know, and, didn't, didn't want to get in his way for sure. You know, and then I took, I would take my quarters and go someplace else, you know, and make sure anyway,

Moore, Pat ([00:27:26](#)):

Was he married?

Breslin, John ([00:27:28](#)):

Yeah. Uh, I can't remember his wife's name, but his son, uh, is Fred East (sp?) Junior and he had a daughter, Anna, and then they, when he finally got a house in Millville was on Caloris Avenue with it, which is off of Wheaton Avenue. And, the son worked in the business also. Now nobody knew about it, but in the will, his, he made sure that his son did not take control. This was that 10 year period. Now I'm gonna, I can talk about that. During this 10 year period in his will he named my grandmother, the manager of the whole business. And it was for a 10 year period and if during any one of the 10 years, the business lost money, she was out of a job. And so the 10 year period, she made money all those 10 years. I think that's why she's in that magazine there.

Moore, Pat ([00:28:33](#)):

Wow. Yes.

Breslin, John ([00:28:35](#)):

Uh, the family contested the will. I can remember her spending much time in court in Atlantic city. Uh, and she would come home, uh, because she was living, we were, you know, all living together and she would come home and be just exhausted because she was putting up with this and it was, you know, take, taken a lot of time and money away from the business. But uh, she persevered. I mean, she was real good at that. And um, kept on going with, uh, with the business for the 10 years. Uh, now

Moore, Pat ([00:29:18](#)):

How many people were, were working there? Do you have any idea?

Breslin, Barbara ([00:29:22](#)):

I have no idea, but there were quite a few, I mean the from the pictures there were, there were quite a few of them in the shucking house and there were, the son worked in the packing end of it.

Moore, Pat ([00:29:37](#)):

Oh, okay.

Breslin, John ([00:29:39](#)):

Uh, I can remember, him kind of tall kind of lanky and I think, uh, old man old man, the old oyster man, which is what he was called, uh, East was right in probably not letting his son manage the place because after the 10 years, the business, of course the, uh, problems with the oysters anyway, down here he, the business, he let the business run down and it changed from oystering to clams. Oh, okay. And uh, then the whole place burned down.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:30:18](#)):

And when was 1950s?

Breslin, John ([00:30:21](#)):

I can't remember when that was because I don't,, I was, you know,, by that time I was just out of it and didn't pursue anything more. And of course you can't get down that road because if there's

no road there anymore,. We were down the other week to take a little ride through that area. I can remember as many times during the road would be flooded that she would have to come down to Port Norris over here to Bivalve and take a ferry across to the business because she could not get that road was just flooded out.

Moore, Pat ([00:30:59](#)):

During high tides and things like that.

Breslin, John ([00:31:01](#)):

Yep storms and things like that. Yeah. One of my classes at, uh, Glassboro was New Jersey geography <laugh> anyway. Uh, so I proposed to the, uh, professor that, uh, that we all come down to take a trip down to here. So one Saturday morning we came down and this was in 19 50 or 1951, uh, came down and Saturday was usually an off day and the shuckers could do whatever they wanted, which was usually get, uh, little bit under the weather <laugh> and, um, she had some of 'em come in to Shuck out oysters just to show, and then somebody in the packing house, just the show, what, what it took. And everybody got a point of oysters. I have no idea what they did with 'em, but, I don't what I did with mine. And of course we had oysters an awful lot at home anyway, too. But, uh, she, she did that and, uh, and then I can remember after she left FF East, she went over to Peterson Packing.

Moore, Pat ([00:32:28](#)):

Now, where was Peterson Packing? Was it on, uh, the Bivalve side?

Breslin, John ([00:32:32](#)):

On the Bivalve side, Yeah. And, um, I can remember when I had off, when I had noon time off at school, I'd come down and head over to Peterson and pay a little visit already, but then she move be going back that night. Uh, and, uh, that was, let's see. So that, that had to be 1952 - 1954, sometime in there where she was working in there.

Moore, Pat ([00:33:06](#)):

Doing the same thing, managing...

Breslin, John ([00:33:08](#)):

In the office. Yeah. I have no, exactly what it was and, you know, I was off on my own, really by that time doing my own thing and, uh, getting married and all that..

Moore, Pat ([00:33:28](#)):

Well, you you've given us some, um, uh, photographs, uh, copies of photographs. Uh, where did these come from?

Breslin, John ([00:33:36](#)):

I took them.

Moore, Pat ([00:33:36](#)):

You took them? Yeah.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:33:37](#)):

Was that during your class visit? Well, this was just some other time was just one of the times I was down there and I thought I'd, you know, do that. And probably I did use them in, in, um, in, in the class at the Glassborough anyway. I mean, I can't, you know,

Moore, Pat ([00:33:56](#)):

Well looking at some of these, if you can kind of explain the activities that are going on, um, this one photograph, I definitely see that as, uh, an oyster pile. I mean, are these the shells after they've been shucked?

Breslin, John ([00:34:17](#)):

Okay. All right. I think that was where they had, uh, the oysters ready to be shucked. They, they would like, like a little warehouse type of room and, uh, they would get 'em from there and somebody would take, take the wheelbarrows in and, uh, dump 'em on the, uh, shuckers, uh, stand and they'd go 'em from there, uh, stand and then go from there. And, um, I think this would be the same one, same thing. And of course this is the, these are all the shuckers that I was warned not to take pictures of their face. Mm. So, and there were, there were, there was at least two rows of these face to face and then face to face again on the other side

Moore, Pat ([00:35:03](#)):

Now

Breslin, John ([00:35:03](#)):

The shuckers would of course, when they began opening the oysters they would sort the oysters by size and fill the correct can. They were sorted by standards counts, counts, extra select, select whatever, etc.

Moore, Pat ([00:35:15](#)):

Now did you work in the, in the shucking house?

Breslin, John ([00:35:18](#)):

Never in, in it? Never. What, what, what kind of work did you do when you were down there?

Breslin, John ([00:35:22](#)):

I didn't do anything. I, I just, I just, uh, went down.

Moore, Pat ([00:35:25](#)):

Oh, you just visited? You didn't have a job there. Anything at, at oh, okay.

Breslin, John ([00:35:29](#)):

Not at all, Uhuh? No, because, uh, uh, wintertime, uh, couple winters, uh, I worked for Daltons Jewelry and Gift store in Millville.

Moore, Pat ([00:35:40](#)):

Yes

Breslin, John ([00:35:41](#)):

And, uh, when their son was off to world war II, I worked over there.

Moore, Pat ([00:35:47](#)):

Oh.

Breslin, John ([00:35:50](#)):

I also played in the high school band. So, uh, I was kind of busy in the winter time.

Moore, Pat ([00:35:56](#)):

Now here are some, we see some more photographs that, yeah, that would be easier. Yeah.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:36:01](#)):

We just had them yeah. Clipped together here. So we go, okay. There,

Breslin, John ([00:36:13](#)):

I still have the negatives for these.

Moore, Pat ([00:36:15](#)):

Do you?

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:36:16](#)):

Oh, great.

Breslin, John ([00:36:19](#)):

Okay.

Moore, Pat ([00:36:22](#)):

So these were taken during the early fifties?

Breslin, John ([00:36:27](#)):

Uh, I would say so. Yeah, because I got the camera, sometime after high school graduation,,
Yep.

Moore, Pat ([00:36:39](#)):

What year did you graduate

Breslin, John (00:36:40):

From high school?

Moore, Pat (00:36:41):

1948

Breslin, John (00:36:43):

College 1952. Now, see, here's that here? This, this one shows that pile of oysters in the, in the background.

Moore, Pat (00:36:52):

Okay.

Breslin, John (00:36:53):

That, uh, you were asking about there and, uh, then, uh, they would fill up their gallon cans and come over to the opening into the packing house and, uh, pour 'em here and they would be kind of, uh, sorted out there and then, uh, sent it through the washer, the big, a big tub that would airate and, um, get rid of all the dirt and so forth and make the oysters tasteless <laugh> as far as I'm consumed. Right. Uh, and, uh, then,

Moore, Pat (00:37:26):

Uh, so it kind of took him out of their own liquor.

Breslin, John (00:37:28):

Yeah. Yeah. They, um, they were, it was required for three minutes and they did 'em for 10 to make sure. So there was a, you know, the quality was there. And that's what these pictures show here. And I can't tell you who any of these people are, but the, she, her, the foreman here was a man by the name of Hickman. I can't remember his first name because he was called Hick. And that's what everybody knew him as and her foreman in the, um, shucking house was a, uh, black guy by the name of, um, baby face. That's all I knew him was and she even had trouble rousing him up. She would go over to the, to these door, the houses and, and bag on the door and get him out because they, otherwise, they wouldn't have been able to stand on their own two feet and work. I can't, I really can't remember who any of these people were. That's a long time ago.

Moore, Pat (00:38:26):

Yeah. And then on the back of,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:38:28):

Oh, that's the, um, the blowers there. Yeah. Yeah. That's they,

Breslin, John (00:38:32):

They're the, yeah. Where they, where they did the airating and, uh, uh, then they would pack 'em and then there, there was a, uh, this, this one shows the, uh, Canner the, the one that would put,

would put the lids on, and these are probably where they have been already sorted out into the various grades.

Moore, Pat ([00:38:52](#)):

Now we have some of these don't we, these state, because these look like the metal. Um, (referring to picture showing the oyster cans.)

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:38:58](#)):

Yeah. I don't know if we have one that size though. Do he? Yeah,

Breslin, Barbara ([00:39:02](#)):

Didn't Hickman live down here.

Breslin, John ([00:39:04](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Hickman lived, in Port Norris

Breslin, Barbara ([00:39:07](#)):

Have a look.

Breslin, John ([00:39:08](#)):

His son was, uh, when I worked at, uh, when I worked on the boardwalk for Bingham's, uh, he worked there one summer Leonard Hickman.

Moore, Pat ([00:39:18](#)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Breslin, John ([00:39:21](#)):

And, uh, Don't wanna get these messed up. Oh

Breslin, Barbara ([00:39:25](#)):

Yeah, you're good.

Breslin, John ([00:39:28](#)):

Anyway, there's the, uh, the other end of it.

Moore, Pat ([00:39:31](#)):

Okay. There's the barrels with the shaved ice.

Breslin, John ([00:39:34](#)):

And they would put the burlap over 'em and put the, put the, uh, the big hoop around it and push it down. And of course, there's the express car, and this is the end result that the, Of course the, the shells had to be saved. They'd be put back out in the bay mm-hmm

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:39:50):

<affirmative>

Breslin, John (00:39:53):

And, uh, Of course this is, this is where we are over here now, across the river from there. And I dunno why I took pictures of these, but they're there they are. Anyway. Uh it's cuz it it's a part of the whole thing,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:40:09):

The marsh and the,

Breslin, John (00:40:10):

Yeah. And of course the east

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:40:12):

East Point Lighthouse

Breslin, John (00:40:13):

The East Point Lighthouse, But it was, it was a messy place. I'll tell you <laugh>

Moore, Pat (00:40:26):

Now when they were shipped, um, They, uh, there was, there was no refrigeration with the, um,

Speaker 2 (00:40:37):

Railway xpress Cars. No, that's how,

Breslin, John (00:40:39):

That's how they had to be, they had to be re-iced someplace.

Moore, Pat (00:40:43):

Yeah.

Breslin, John (00:40:45):

And she shipped them all over the country. One summer, um, she, uh, took my father. He drove her, she had a nice big Packard <laugh>, which are no longer in existence, but she had a nice big Packard. And uh, she took him on, uh, uh, she, she took a trip to visit all of the brokers in that they could visit to, uh, and uh, he took home movies and I have those home movies. One of 'em in our, the Mississippi with a big paddle boat going down to Mississippi. And, uh, there aren't many of them, but uh, I I've got whatever but, uh, that was, she took a trip all over the Eastern part of the Country,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:41:36):

What were some of the other places that she, that you said Mississippi?

Breslin, John (00:41:41):

I really can't say. If that were the Mississippi River it could have been maybe like Missouri on one side and Illinois, places like.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:41:51):

That's neat.

Moore, Pat (00:41:55):

When did, do you know when operations stopped in, um, Maurice River? Was it, I mean, was it because the railroad pulled out or

Breslin, John (00:42:07):

No, it was, I, shouldn't be quoted directly on this, but it was because the son took over the business and just ran it right on down. I mean, it, it was gone in, a couple years and turned into that clamming business, the American Claming Company or somebody like that. I can't remember, who, because see, I was really out of it by then. Even, I mean, even though I was teaching over here in Port Norris, and she was working for Peterson Packing. I, just don't know. I think it was a, in some respects, a kind of a 10 year troublesome time, but she did make it through the 10 years.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:42:59):

What I have a extra question. What, do you remember at all? What, some of the, the duties that your grandmother had being the manager? I mean, I can kind of imagine all the paperwork and things like that, but do you recall?

Breslin, John (00:43:10):

Well, I, can remember in the office, the, of course the ticker tape, the, uh, the 4-runner, like, like a telex or something, you know, within, she would get in orders and send out, whatever messages and stuff like that to the, to the, brokers and, prices for oysters because of course they fluctuated.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:43:35):

Right. Okay.

Breslin, John (00:43:37):

And, um, Hm.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:43:41):

So she'd had to make sure, I mean,

Breslin, John (00:43:44):

Oh, had the order sent, I mean yeah. Put the order, make sure things shipped. Oh yeah. The, I mean the, the, Hickman, Hick would come up to the office and, she would give orders to him to how many gallons to this place. So many gallons to there, you know, and, uh,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:44:04):

Whatever. So they would know what to pack

Breslin, John (00:44:06):

Yeah. What, what to pack yet. Right. Yeah. And of course what grade too.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:44:10):

Right, right. That makes sense. Yeah. So someone had placed an order from <laugh> Chicago or something. They were, yeah,

Breslin, John (00:44:16):

Well, yeah. And there, and there were, I can remember she had brokers all over the place

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:44:22):

And the brokers would then sell to restaurants or stores or private....

Breslin, John (00:44:27):

And in fact to wholesalers.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:44:28):

Oh right. Huh. That was a very important job, stressful, I guess, too.

Breslin, John (00:44:37):

And she had to keep you know, that she did satisfy them and make sure that they were happy or else, they would go to somebody else.

Moore, Pat (00:44:48):

What, kind of workers were kept on during the off season?

Breslin, John (00:44:54):

Well, Hick was there the whole time. Uh, of course, summertime I was at the shore. I don't know. We were there.

Moore, Pat (00:45:04):

I mean, yeah. I was just wondering if they closed completely down during the summer. Oh no,

Breslin, John (00:45:09):

No. They were there, the office, people were still there and, of course the shuckers were all gone. They were offl doing whatever they do in the summer.

Moore, Pat (00:45:17):

Did they do other kind of business, like, you know, fishing or, or anything like that?

Breslin, John (00:45:22):

No, I can remember fishing myself off them, all of those things and catching a lots of eels. And they went over to the village <laugh>

Moore, Pat (00:45:36):

Now, um, I, I know on this side, the railroad company, you know, built these, these sheds, but on, in Maurice River, everything was done by the individuals. The Pennsylvania railroad didn't do anything like that. Didn't do anything like that. No, they just came in and, and hauled the oysters.

Breslin, John (00:45:59):

Yep. They did that. Yep. It was a part of that branch that came down through, Leesburg, Dorchester. I don't know about Delmont. I think that was a little too far, but of course there was on this side, there was a sand business too, that the, no, the other side, that the sand business was a part of their not and including the oyster business.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:46:28):

Okay. That was interesting too, that you mentioned about the passenger service.

Breslin, John (00:46:34):

Think, yeah, I have a, there was a magazine called South Jersey Magazine. Oh, I can't think of who,

Moore, Pat (00:46:40):

Shirley Bailey,

Breslin, John (00:46:40):

That's it. That's it. Shirley Bailey and Don Wetzel (sp?) he had, I knew him real well.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:46:51):

Did you?

Breslin, John (00:46:51):

You, he, had a newspaper route business in Holly City News, and I worked for him early in the morning. Once in a while he would call me up and say, can you do the route that day? Right. Okay. Anyway, he was involved in, railroading too. And, that's where some of these articles come from in the Shirley Bailey magazine.

Moore, Pat (00:47:19):

Okay. And

Breslin, John (00:47:20):

I've, I've saved them that apply to this area.

Moore, Pat ([00:47:25](#)):

Oh, really?

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:47:26](#)):

We should. I think we have those in our library.

Breslin, John ([00:47:28](#)):

See, I taught history, so I, I guess I'm still involved in history.

Moore, Pat ([00:47:31](#)):

and well, that's why I'm here.

Breslin, John ([00:47:38](#)):

You did also,

Moore, Pat ([00:47:39](#)):

Pardon?

Breslin, John ([00:47:40](#)):

You did also, you taught?

Moore, Pat ([00:47:42](#)):

No. My husband was, was a teacher. I worked in corporate world. And, but have always been, and now I know a lot, I've studied and done a lot of lecturing on Girl Scout history, so.

Breslin, John ([00:47:59](#)):

Okay. <laugh>

Moore, Pat ([00:48:02](#)):

Do you have any idea of where the migrant workers were coming from? Were they coming from Maryland, Virginia,....

Breslin, John ([00:48:13](#)):

North Carolina. In that area? North,

Moore, Pat ([00:48:15](#)):

North Carolina, Virginia, yeah. Delaware or,

Breslin, John ([00:48:19](#)):

Yeah, not that that's a little too close. I think it was down at North Carolina. I can remember that.

Moore, Pat ([00:48:23](#)):

Okay. How would they get up here? Do you know?

Breslin, John (00:48:29):

Well, they didn't go down after 'em that's for sure. But, I suppose, well, they had cars. Okay. Some of 'em had cars and, they would come on buses.

Moore, Pat (00:48:43):

And they would bring their families.

Breslin, John (00:48:44):

Oh yeah. Some would bring their families because of the schools. That's why the school was there in the village.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:48:51):

Did your grandma recruit workers or how would, or how would she....

Breslin, John (00:48:55):

I don't know how that happened.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:48:58):

Cause I kind of would imagine you'd probably get the same people year after year.

Breslin, John (00:49:01):

Yeah. She, yeah, they did because her performance all through these years was that person by the name of Baby Face. I cannot remember his

Dolhanczyk, Rachel (00:49:11):

<laugh> nobody ever does.

Breslin, John (00:49:12):

He was tall, lean and lanky. And if she made sure that, oh, one other thing, if they were gonna work on Saturday, instead of getting paid on Friday, that's when they got paid on Saturday instead.

Moore, Pat (00:49:27):

Oh, okay. So they had to come in.

Breslin, John (00:49:30):

There was, there had to be a "speak easy" over there someplace.

Moore, Pat (00:49:34):

<laugh> No question. <laugh>

Breslin, John ([00:49:37](#)):

And of course I never got back into the village. She said, don't go back over there. so, uh,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:49:46](#)):

So perhaps maybe the, with the foreman, Baby Face, he could have probably helped secure, workers.

Breslin, John ([00:49:53](#)):

Yeah. I think so. Yeah. Case connections that that could be too, you know, they, whatever, you know, you just had to know your contacts,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:50:01](#)):

But your, but your grandmother would, so she was in charge of the payroll

Breslin, John ([00:50:05](#)):

Then. Oh, she was in charge of everything,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:50:06](#)):

Everything. So, okay.

Moore, Pat ([00:50:08](#)):

All the hiring

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:50:09](#)):

Human resources,

Breslin, John ([00:50:10](#)):

All the hiring. Yeah. I suppose the, shucking house foreman would come to her and say, I've got the, or she would go, to him and say, I need so many people today to work. and that's, that's how he probably did it.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:50:29](#)):

Right. because he maybe didn't always need a full compliment. Huh.

Breslin, John ([00:50:37](#)):

But there were some women that, shucked oysters also.

Moore, Pat ([00:50:43](#)):

Yes. Do you have any idea what the, the ratio was as far as you know, blacks to white over in Maurice River,

Breslin, John ([00:50:54](#)):

There weren't any white people back in the shucking house that I can remember. Okay. And, the village the same way. Jane Lewis is a real fine person. Uh, she is Afro American and she moved when she was of course, very young when she was over in the village. And then when everything closed down, then she moved over to Commercial Township and was teaching there when I was there. But she was in the Shell Pile School, which is now that restaurant over here.

Moore, Pat ([00:51:29](#)):

I wanted to ask two questions. What kind of educational background did your grandmother have?

Breslin, John ([00:51:41](#)):

She went to business school. I can't tell you where, but, but probably Philadelphia or something like Banks Business School got that's what it was Banks Business School, same name, but it had no,

Moore, Pat ([00:51:54](#)):

Now did she have siblings or was she an only child?

Breslin, John ([00:51:59](#)):

She was an, oh, she had two sisters who died very young.

Moore, Pat ([00:52:03](#)):

Okay. Beause it was very unusual to educate the daughter as opposed to, you know, the sons in the family.

Breslin, John ([00:52:19](#)):

Well, her father was the, um, railway express general store and all that kind of thing.

Moore, Pat ([00:52:25](#)):

Oh, he owned all that,

Breslin, John ([00:52:27](#)):

In Manumuskum there was a, station there at one time,

Moore, Pat ([00:52:36](#)):

A railway station.

Breslin, John ([00:52:38](#)):

Right. We have a quilt. Now this is an aside. We have a quilt that is big and very heavy that is made out of salesman, samples of material, little, it looks like a brick wall and he would have these samples. You go to him, um, I need a suit. He would measure you up. You pick out the material, the traveling salesman would come back and he would give him the order. The salesman would leave when the suit was ready, he would come back. And

Moore, Pat ([00:53:16](#)):
Where was his tailor shop?

Breslin, John ([00:53:18](#)):
He didn't have one.

Moore, Pat ([00:53:19](#)):
He'd worked out of his home.

Breslin, John ([00:53:20](#)):
No.. He, no, I don't know about the tailor. He was, he, he went off someplace else and then came back and then, and had the finished product with him.

Moore, Pat ([00:53:28](#)):
Oh, okay.

Breslin, John ([00:53:30](#)):
And, you would come back and get your suit and

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:53:33](#)):
<laugh> something.

Breslin, John ([00:53:34](#)):
And these were all the salesman samples. And I, we, took it down to Washington, to the Antique Road Show.

Moore, Pat ([00:53:42](#)):
Oh, you did?

Breslin, John ([00:53:43](#)):
Yeah. And, we got a nice, estimate. what they say it was worth.

Moore, Pat ([00:53:50](#)):
Oh, that's cool.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:53:52](#)):
And this would've been your great grandfather?

Breslin, John ([00:53:55](#)):
My great grandfather and his Cornelius H Banks. Yep.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:54:05](#)):

Oh, that's something else.

Breslin, John ([00:54:07](#)):

What was the thing valued at about \$500 and I don't, I think that's what it was. Of course that's not much, but anyway, I, I don't care.

Moore, Pat ([00:54:15](#)):

Yeah. It sure is. It sure is worth absolutely. Uh,

Breslin, John ([00:54:20](#)):

We, we can't use it on the beds. It's too heavy.

Moore, Pat ([00:54:23](#)):

Because it's all wool and

Breslin, John ([00:54:25](#)):

Oh yeah. I mean it is heavy. All the samples are wool.

Moore, Pat ([00:54:28](#)):

Wow. That would be cool to see. Do you have any idea of the year that Maurice River became a community, Like when did East, you know, open up his business?

Breslin, John ([00:54:54](#)):

38, 39, 40, sometime somewhere in there, about that time, because, uh, that's when he was that's when he showed up and I got my quarters.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:55:06](#)):

And how did he end up living with your family?

Breslin, John ([00:55:09](#)):

Because, my grandmother was involved in the business at the time and he had no place to stay. And then, you know, it was only a short term thing. I mean, the house, both sides of the house were big. I mean,

Moore, Pat ([00:55:22](#)):

Now was there an established business that East took over?

Breslin, John ([00:55:25](#)):

I that's what I think I, that, I can't help you with. I'm, but I think Yes.

Moore, Pat ([00:55:30](#)):

Yeah, there was a shucking house and he took it over.

Breslin, John ([00:55:34](#)):

Yeah. And he bought this other person out.

Moore, Pat ([00:55:36](#)):

Okay. Okay.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:55:38](#)):

And your, grandma was already working in the industry and provided that... okay.

Breslin, John ([00:55:41](#)):

Yeah, I think so.

Breslin, John ([00:55:46](#)):

But see, during that particular time of 1951, that was a part of the 10 year span. And, by 1952, 1953, it was all done and over with so we go back to 1943 and we go back even further than that for, for him to be

Moore, Pat ([00:56:05](#)):

Okay.

Breslin, John ([00:56:06](#)):

But I can remember, I answered the phone and they wanted her. And when she got on the phone, she just slumped down in the,, you know,

Moore, Pat ([00:56:19](#)):

when she heard that, Mr. East had passed.

Breslin, John ([00:56:22](#)):

The news. Yeah.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:56:26](#)):

Do you know what your grandmother was paid at all?

Breslin, John ([00:56:31](#)):

I have no.... Uh, Some, okay. I, I remember something about a hundred dollars <laugh> at one time, which was a lot of money of course then. Sure. And, uh, I can't remember but something like that. I, yeah, but, but thank goodness she had the job because we subsisted on oysters a lot once in a while at home. That's how I got to like them.

Moore, Pat ([00:56:59](#)):

And, uh, what did your grandfather do? Did we go over that?

Breslin, John ([00:57:04](#)):

Okay. Her husband? Okay. Um, I never saw him except when he was, in the funeral home.

Moore, Pat ([00:57:12](#)):

Oh.

Breslin, John ([00:57:13](#)):

So there was a divorce back there, so, oh,

Moore, Pat ([00:57:16](#)):

Okay. Okay.

Breslin, John ([00:57:16](#)):

Uh, and he was a tailor and he had a tailor shop in Millville and I have some, I have a lot of old pictures of Millville and one of them says, AC Holt Taylor on, in the second floor, little side, out on the side. Okay. At the corner of High and sassafras. Oh, Northeast corner where Windfield Restuarant is. And that, next building down.

Moore, Pat ([00:57:40](#)):

Oh, okay.

Breslin, John ([00:57:41](#)):

He's he was a goish (inaudible). And the only picture I have of that is him, uh, of, of the Holt family in Boynton, England, their family plot in the church cemetery. That's the only picture I have of that. Very, there wasn't much left to go on. I have a lot of wills on that side of the family and, uh, real estate transactions. They owned the Banks, people owned awful lot of property in, Maurice River Township.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:58:18](#)):

That's interesting.

Breslin, John ([00:58:20](#)):

She sold to DuPont during the war, a 500 acre track, so,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:58:30](#)):

Wow.

Breslin, John ([00:58:30](#)):

Yeah. And where the Cumberland Fire, where the state highway department is out on Route 49. That was her last piece of property and she was giving it to us and, the stipulation was to build a house. And at that time, we, both felt that the, it was too far out of town.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([00:58:53](#)):

Mm-hmm

Breslin, John (00:58:54):

But it was a big piece of property. We would go out there and cut down Christmas trees.

dolhanSpeaker 4 (00:58:59):

Oh, that's nice.

Breslin, John (00:59:00):

Nice. Right.

Breslin, Barbara (00:59:01):

What about all of the land. She sold a D uPont.

Breslin, John (00:59:04):

I that's what I was just talking about. Yeah.

Dolhanczyk (00:59:06):

Yeah. That's neat. Oh, one question. I think Pat had started to ask. I don't know if you'd answered it. Um, when you were talking early on about the number about the schooners the, work boats coming into off load.

Breslin, John (00:59:21):

Maybe one or two. I, I don't remember maybe a couple of guys. Couple. Yeah. A couple. Yeah. Maybe, maybe, maybe at the most three you know, but...

Moore, Pat (00:59:30):

You don't remember the names of boats or anything. Captains.

Breslin, John (00:59:33):

Captain Spence is the only one that I know he was like the foreman to, to get the boats, you know? Okay. On that end. Like the foreman for the, shucking house, the foreman for the packing end of it. And the foreman, he was that person. Okay. So she had those three people.

Moore, Pat (00:59:50):

Yeah. He was operations. Yeah.

Breslin, John (00:59:52):

Yeah. Weren't working. And there were two other people in the office and I had a picture of the office and I cannot find it. Mm. I have John,

Breslin, Barbara (01:00:03):

John, what was Hick's job?

Breslin, John (01:00:05):

He was the, he was the packing house foreman,

Breslin, Barbara ([01:00:09](#)):

Is he still alive?

Breslin, John ([01:00:10](#)):

I doubt it. I mean, it could be.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:00:17](#)):

And the two other people in the office, um, they assisted,

Breslin, John ([01:00:21](#)):

They were, they, they did clerical work. Yeah.

dolhanSpeaker 4 ([01:00:23](#)):

And were they men or women?

Breslin, John ([01:00:25](#)):

Women

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:00:25](#)):

As well. Oh, interesting.

Moore, Pat ([01:00:29](#)):

And you don't remember their names.

Breslin, John ([01:00:30](#)):

Okay. That goes off on the side, on the other, I think on the other. Yeah. Yeah.

Moore, Pat ([01:00:34](#)):

You don't, it

Breslin, John ([01:00:35](#)):

It doesn't fit there without, folding it. I'm sorry about that. That's okay. And I think those, those, those envelopes are, uh, uh, archival type of.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:00:44](#)):

Oh, good. Good. Thank

Breslin, John ([01:00:46](#)):

You. Cause I got a lot of stuff <laugh> but I, I put, put into archival, you know, that's

Moore, Pat ([01:00:52](#)):

Good. Do you remember the, uh, the names of the other women that worked in there?

Breslin, John ([01:00:56](#)):

I can't remember. Okay. I I've been thinking, thinking, thinking, and, but, uh, now I can't. I'm sorry, but time passes.

Moore, Pat ([01:01:06](#)):

Yeah. Now did, uh, did Mr. East, you said he had children?

Breslin, John ([01:01:11](#)):

Yeah. Two Anna, and Fred Junior.

Moore, Pat ([01:01:14](#)):

Okay. And did Anna stay in the area and marry or? Uh,

Breslin, John ([01:01:25](#)):

She didn't go to school while she was older. Of course. Uh, I have no idea what happened to her. Okay. But I was in the house once on Caloris Avenue just once. I think my grandmother had to go up to see him about something and she took me with her.

Moore, Pat ([01:01:49](#)):

Well, uh, do you have any more?

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:01:52](#)):

Well, I think we hit, I, there were

Moore, Pat ([01:01:53](#)):

A few things I hit most

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:01:54](#)):

Of think. I think I scratched it all.

Breslin, John ([01:01:56](#)):

Couple, couple of the sides. Yes. When we, when we bought our first car, uh, December 53, no, 50 December 52, we got married in 53, had the car then, uh, 52, uh, I bought the car from a friend of mine's father who had a big Chevy agency in Philly. So I, this is of course I be before sales tax and all that nonsense. You

Moore, Pat ([01:02:24](#)):

Bought a brand new

Breslin, John ([01:02:25](#)):

Car, brand new car! Well, I was working at the shore at Abbot Dairy's was not generous, but it was a union job. And you had to get paid and the rate wasn't even \$2. Can you imagine? Yes. My first job at Bingham's was 48 hours a week. \$18 a week. Wow. In 1944. Yep. <laugh> yeah. Anyway, um, we, uh, I, I said, well, we went up to see about the car. I said, do you like oysters? Oh yeah. So, uh, I said, Hey, uh, we never, she never wanted to be called grandmother. It was Mabel to everybody. Even my mother <laugh>, this was, I mean, she was really adamant about that. Uh, you'd call her grandmother or grand or whatever. Why should you get upset? Uh, anyway, I said, can you get me a pint of oysters, so we took a pint of oysters up to this place. And, uh, one other time, the, uh, train, when it would come up to Millville, uh, I got to, of course I got to know the engineers and the whole crew. And he said, I like to have some oysters. I said, obviously, if I can get some for you. So I stood, the train usually showed up around five o'clock or so, cuz it had to meet a passenger scheduled to go to Camden mm-hmm <affirmative> and uh, they stopped just at the other side of the track and I gave him his oysters.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:03:54](#)):

<laugh> ah,

Breslin, John ([01:03:57](#)):

That was only, that was only at one time. So, but uh, anyway,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:04:02](#)):

Actually

Breslin, John ([01:04:02](#)):

It was interesting, you know, that the whole, the whole deal.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:04:06](#)):

Yeah. Uh, you had mentioned earlier about the ferry, uh, that usually your grandma would, would take, would drive, but on occasion she.....

Breslin, John ([01:04:12](#)):

I don't think it was a ferry per se, it was just like some kind of a boat fishing boat or something that didn't get her across the river.

Dolhanczyk ([01:04:18](#)):

Were you ever, did you ever drive?

Breslin, John ([01:04:19](#)):

I never, got that. No.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:04:21](#)):

No. So you would drive, your grandma would drive it, Mabel <laugh> would drive it.

Breslin, John ([01:04:28](#)):

She was really adamant about it, right Barb? She were adamant about that

Dolhanczyk ([01:04:32](#)):

And another

Breslin, John ([01:04:33](#)):

Very determined, very determined. Absolutely.

Breslin, Barbara ([01:04:37](#)):

She would probably be president if she was alive. Yeah.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:04:41](#)):

I liked it when you were talking about the, Maurice River would serve the town and this village, do you remember how many streets there were?

Breslin, John ([01:04:51](#)):

There was just one road, in.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:04:53](#)):

Just one, kinda what you would see.

Breslin, John ([01:04:53](#)):

Yeah, that's just about it. I rode in and, uh, of course, you know, used the same thing out in a bit, but flooded. That was just too bad. And the railroad, of course, every once in a while had to shore up the tracks and, you know yeah.

Moore, Pat ([01:05:09](#)):

Did, did they, um, did they float oysters on that side?

Breslin, John ([01:05:14](#)):

Float them? You mean in the shell?

Moore, Pat ([01:05:17](#)):

No. Yes. In the shell?

Breslin, John ([01:05:18](#)):

No. No. I never remember that? No.

Moore, Pat ([01:05:21](#)):

Okay. They just unloaded from the boat right onto the dock?

Breslin, John ([01:05:25](#)):

Right, right up into the dock on the conveyor belt and into that, uh, one room.

Moore, Pat ([01:05:31](#)):

Check

Breslin, John ([01:05:31](#)):

On wheelbarrow by wheel barrow, by wheel barrow.....

Moore, Pat ([01:05:36](#)):

Yeah. I wonder how many years, um, they actually did float, um, even, even on this side?

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:05:45](#)):

Uh, it wasn't until like the late twenties, so,

Moore, Pat ([01:05:48](#)):

Yeah. But like, when did that stop?

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:05:51](#)):

I wanna say 1927.

Moore, Pat ([01:05:53](#)):

Okay. But,

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:05:53](#)):

Um,

Breslin, John ([01:05:54](#)):

And you know, it's, it's ironic that started up again in some places do the harvesting like that. The do it in Maine. I know that.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:06:05](#)):

That's interesting. Yep.

Breslin, John ([01:06:07](#)):

Yeah. And all over the place. Let me show you this one picture here.

Moore, Pat ([01:06:11](#)):

Yes,

dolhanbSpeaker 4 ([01:06:11](#)):

Please. Yes.

Breslin, John ([01:06:14](#)):

Sorry, Barb.

Moore, Pat ([01:06:21](#)):

Where did you get that book at Bogarts?

Breslin, John ([01:06:23](#)):

I bought it, see, I played the organ at the Broadway Theater and I bought it somehow anyway, the person who wrote the book had a, was giving a tour of the, theater and, oh, and kind of a talk about the whole thing. I know it's in here.

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:06:46](#)):

Is that the marked page you have there? The paper

Breslin, John ([01:06:48](#)):

That's that's the one for Port Norris. Oh, okay. There it is. That that's the marque, that's the, that's the organ I play. Oh, it's kind of dark, but, uh,

Moore, Pat ([01:07:05](#)):

How cool. That's in Pitman.

Breslin, John ([01:07:08](#)):

Uhhuh.

Moore, Pat ([01:07:09](#)):

I've not been to that theater. Many of my friends have, but I've not been to that theater yet.

Breslin, John ([01:07:13](#)):

That's the only one

Moore, Pat ([01:07:14](#)):

Around that still has its original organ.

Breslin, John ([01:07:17](#)):

Original it's original.

Moore, Pat ([01:07:19](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Cuz the Levoy Theater lost their organ long, long, long.

Breslin, John ([01:07:23](#)):

My mother would practice on that. She never played it full time. She never played it for performance, but she would practice she was allowed to practice and it was one of only three made by that company out of stock parts. The company did not actually build the, uh, put, build the pipes or make manufacturers the pipes or anything that they just bought everything stock.

Moore, Pat ([01:07:52](#)):

Very cool. Well, do you have any more questions?

Dolhanczyk, Rachel ([01:07:54](#)):

No, I think we,

Moore, Pat ([01:07:56](#)):

Well, we certainly do appreciate this.

Breslin, John ([01:07:58](#)):

This is fun. It was absolutely. Um, Cause you, you got, I, I had to draw out way back here. See some of the,

Moore, Pat ([01:08:08](#)):

But, but this information, uh, just, you know, just increases the ability of what we can now provide to, uh, researchers that come in and school kids that come in, you know, we now have a story that, you know, we can talk about what was across the river. Yeah. And, um, so we, we just appreciate this very, very much and thank you.

New Speaker ([01:08:31](#)):

You're quite welcome. I enjoy it. I did good. Lot of fun. <laugh>.