

Betty Richards: This tape is a property of Tales of Cape Cod Incorporated and cannot be reproduced without their written permission. Today's date is June 13, 1978. We are at the home of Horace Manley Crosby of 62 Crosby Circle in Osterville, Mass. With him is his brother, Malcolm Max Crosby of 47 West Bay Road in Osterville. We will gently interview these two men. Max, do you recall your grandparents or what they did?

Malcolm Max Crosby: No, I do not recall them. I never knew them.

BR: What did they do for a business?

MMC: Well, they say they had a farm out here. Then my great-grandfather, Andrew Crosby, started to build this fourteen-foot catboat.

BR: Was that the first of the boat building?

MMC: Yes. Yes.

BR: Your great-grandfather?

MMC: Yes.

BR: That must have been in the 1860s.

MMC: Oh gosh. Sure. I couldn't...

Horace Manley Crosby: It was before that, I think.

MMC: He had two sons, Horace Storton Crosby, which was our grandfather, and Worthington Crosby. They say Andrew died and, well, he had a wife named Tirzah and she was a medium. She was a medium. She would talk with Andrew after he died and then she'd relay it to the two boys who was finishing up that catboat.

BR: What would she tell them?

MMC: Well, she would tell them what the next thing was to do to build a boat.

HMC: And then they'd carry on.

MMC: [laughter]

HMC: So, how to go on and do the next step or whatever.

BR: Is that so? That is amazing.

MMC: [laughter]

BR: That was the first boat that was built in Crosby's boat yard was a catboat.

MMC: Yes. The boat was built up in the Crosby House barn.

BR: What was the Crosby House?

MMC: Crosby House was a small hotel.

BR: These people came down from other areas to stay there in the summer?

MMC: In the summer months. Yes. That's right.

BR: Were they down here to order boats?

MMC: What?

BR: Did they come down to order boats?

MMC: No. [laughter] I don't know if any of them ordered boats. No, they wouldn't order any boats. They was down here for summer vacation. They came all the way from – white people from Chicago and way out that way. They stayed for a month or so.

BR: Who originated the *Wianno Senior* and the *Wianno Junior*?

MMC: My father, Mr. Horace Manley Crosby.

BR: What gave him the idea?

MMC: [laughter] I don't know. But my father was a smart man when it comes to designing boats and building them.

BR: Can you tell us about *Wianno Senior*? What did it consist of? How long was it? What kind of a rigging did it have?

MMC: Well, the boat was twenty-five feet overall, eight feet wide, and rose two foot, six inches of water without the centerboard. It was a gaff-headed boat. A gaff-rigged boat.

BR: Any power?

MMC: No, just sail and for racing.

BR: How deep was the centerboard?

MMC: Oh, the centerboard went down three, 3.5 feet.

BR: In later years, it had additional sales?

MMC: The only extra sale it had was a spinnaker. It was a jib and mainsail rig. Then they got to racing and then they added the spinnaker.

BR: How was the boat put together? What type of wood materials?

MMC: Well, the keel was made of white oak and the frames were made of white oak. In those days, the planking was cypress. In those days, she had a pine deck and canvas covered. The cabin house, which was curved around the pond] was made of oak.

BR: How tall was the mast?

MMC: Twenty-five feet and six inches.

BR: What was the hull speed?

MMC: What?

BR: What would the hull speed of that boat be?

MMC: Speed? [laughter]

HMC: Oh, no. I guess in a good condition, what? Nine knots maybe?

MMC: I guess so. Yes.

HMC: Nine knots. I think those knot meters were used to use back there. They'd go up around nine knots in good conditions and off the wind a little bit. It wasn't meant to be particularly fast. It wasn't built for that purpose. It was a class boat, you understand?

BR: Tell me, what did the *Wianno Senior* cost when you first made him?

MMC: Well, my father got \$700.

HMC: \$625.

MMC: \$650 and \$50 for the extra ballast. Actually, \$600 without the weight.

BR: That was the first boat?

MMC: Yes. First boat.

BR: How much did you get from the most recent boat?

MMC: [laughter] You'll have to ask him. I don't...

HMC: It was getting up around \$10,000, \$10,500, the last boat that we built. I guess maybe if it got everything into it, it'd be a little bit higher than that, cost and everything.

BR: Could you make any money ever?

HMC: Well, it's what you call, we're making money. Ten percent maybe, something like that. That's all.

BR: Not very much, ten percent.

HMC: No.

BR: Could you tell me some more about your father's boat building experience? Who did he build for? How big were the boats?

MMC: Well, he built a boat called (*Lesailio?*) that was fifty-nine feet and six inches long for Alexander Smith of Great Island. He also built for Mr. Smith Spooner. It was forty-six feet long. He also built for Mr. Smith a cat yawl that was...

HMC: Forty-two [unintelligible].

MMC: Forty-one.

HMC: Forty-one?

MMC: Forty-one feet long.

BR: The cat yawl. What was the beam on the cat yawl?

MMC: Oh, she was twelve feet wide. Yes. The last boat that we built for Mr. Smith was a twenty-nine-foot sloop called a (Toggling Haim?). [laughter]

BR: What did Mr. Smith do?

MMC: Oh, he was a big banker there in New York. We went to New York.

HMC: Yes. He had the penthouse at 420 Lexington Avenue.

BR: You went down there, Horace, to the city?

HMC: Oh, yes, to the boat shows. He invited us up there. He took us to dinner and all that. He was a Scotchman and every boat that – as far as I know, every boat that father built for him, that I know anything about, every boat was named something to do with Scotch. He was a Scotch. There was a totter named (*Schnalio?*), the *Whistle Pinky*, that was his schooner, and the – what was the...

MMC: (*Hashinari?*)

HMC: *Hashinari*, that was the boat I always – that was a fun and kept it all.

MMC: She was a beauty.

BR: He would always come in here for repairs and leave it here for the winter?

HMC: Oh, yes. Oh, sure. We took care of the boats.

BR: Did you bring him South for him?

HMC: No. He never took a boat South. Did he ever go with our boat?

MMC: No. Not that I know.

HMC: No.

BR: He lived out on the Island?

MMC: On Great Island.

BR: Great Island. That is where the Chace is...

MMC: Right across from Hyannis Port.

BR: That is where the Chace is on that now?

MMC: I don't know.

HMC: Yes. Well, it did. I don't know about the Chace. Things changed so much. But you telling us, "Yes, sure. Malcolm Chace. Father built quite a few boats for Malcolm Chace."

BR: Did he?

HMC: Yes. The last one I knew about was named the *Pearl Necklace*. The reason it was named that, instead of giving his wife a pearl necklace, he had the boat built, put the money into a boat.
[laughter]

BR: Tell me, are there other famous people that you built boats for? Did you build them for the Kennedy family?

MMC: Oh, sure. Sure.

BR: What did you build for them?

MMC: Just the *Wianno Seniors*.

HMC: And the Juniors.

MMC: Yes.

HMC: They had quite a few of Juniors, didn't they? They had around six or seven Junior boats altogether?

MMC: Who? The Kennedy's?

HMC: The Kennedy's.

MMC: My gosh. I don't remember.

HMC: They had quite a few of them between the whole family.

MMC: Yes. I know they had a big family of children. I don't remember how many Juniors they had.

BR: Did you get to know Joseph P. Kennedy?

MMC: No. No.

HMC: No. Father did.

BR: Horace, do you know of any shipwrecks in the area?

HMC: Well, anything that we would be familiar with would be the one of the *Ildico, II, III*, going out and rescuing seven people, I believe it was, on these three matches corner, the (Shallot T Filbey?) which went aground off Bass River in the Southeast storm. They had two anchors out and one of the chains and one of the anchors broke, according to the article.

BR: Who owned the ship that did the rescue work?

HMC: The rescue work, the boat that did that was owned by Charles Henry Davis.

BR: Who was he?

HMC: Well, he was a very wealthy man that lived in South Yarmouth, Bass River. Father built several boats for him – at least three boats for him. I think this must have been the last one,

Max?

MMC: Oh, that was the last one. Yes

HMC: Yes. Last one, yes.

BR: How big a boat was that?

HMC: Well, she was seventy-five feet overall. It speaks of here the story of having a thirty-horsepower engine. They claimed that they made around ten knots going to this wreck. But, of course, that's just what the paper said. But they got the men off, eventually. Took three hours to do it and saved them. Because of this, that was the beginning of the Coast Guard going into power rescue boats.

BR: Oh, really?

HMC: Yes. See, Mr. Davis was a very influential man. He was way up in the government. Now, do you remember what he was, Max? Charles Henry Davis? He used to come here. I remember, as a little fellow, seeing the car coming in here, had all kinds of emblems on the car. Did he have something to do with the rail, the roads, or...

MMC: Yes. I think that it's roads. He traveled all over the country, I guess.

HMC: Yes, he did. Yes.

MMC: No, I can't tell you.

BR: Well, that is very interesting. That is when the Coast Guard got their power boats.

HMC: No, that was because of that.

BR: Yes, because.

HMC: He apparently being influential and the whole thing, the Coast Guard, that time, that what got them going into power light boats. That was the beginning of it.

BR: You just mentioned to us some of the economics back in 1913. Will you tell us what you would have to pay for help and what you yourself got paid when you went to work for your father?

MMC: Well, as they say, Mr. (Isa?) Hall was the only man in the shop at that time. I think he was getting \$3 a day. My brother, Carroll, and I, I think we got \$2 a day, \$12 a week.

HMC: Six-day week?

MMC: That's right.

BR: Horace, what about your work experience?

HMC: Well, I started to work for father and Uncle Bill the fall of [19]24. At that time, he was paying by the month. My first check for the month that I worked, the first work month that I worked there was \$80. That was for the month's work. I was pretty happy about it, I'll tell you.

BR: I bet. How many days a week did you work?

HMC: Oh, we worked six days.

BR: How many hours?

HMC: Eight hours a day.

BR: Did he have many people working for him then?

HMC: Well, gosh, it's awful for me to remember things. Sure. He must have had at least a dozen working for us at that time, didn't he? At least twelve men working down at that time. Gosh almighty.

BR: Max, do you recall the Depression?

MMC: Yes. I think it was the year of 1931 or probably [19]32. At that time, we were building boats for...

HMC: We built boats. We built the (*Snalio*?) in 19...

MMC: [19]29.

HMC: [19]29. Yes. That's Mr. Smith. We've been talking about that.

MMC: Yes.

HMC: My god. Yes.

BR: That was a big job.

MMC: Yes. That year – what was the man's name on it who served as the...

HMC: Mr. Boyd.

MMC: Mr. Boyd. In 1931, I think it was, or two, we built him his first boat, which was a thirty-eight-foot motorboat.

Male Speaker: Yes, all right. Yes, called the *Quest*.

MMC: It was called the *Quest*.

Male Speaker: *Quest I*, I believe.

MMC: What?

Male Speaker: *Quest I*?

MMC: Yes.

HMC: Yes.

BR: So, you had a lot of work during the start of the Depression?

HMC: Yes. We were busy. Of course, we were. After that, we built *Quest II* and *Quest III* for Mr. Boyd. Of course, that was a few years later, I guess.

MMC: Yes. Sure.

BR: So, the Depression did not affect you very much?

MMC: Not that I can remember that it did. No.

HMC: We got enough to pay our bills.

MMC: [laughter]

BR: How about the rest of the people in the village?

HMC: Well, I can't remember any real hardship. I suppose there was some that we didn't know about. But no, I think, my gosh, most everybody was reasonably busy. Of course, we didn't have unemployment then and welfare and all that, I don't believe. I don't believe they had it at that time.

BR: Did you have the WPA?

Male Speaker: You didn't have anything do with WPA?

MMC: No.

BR: Max, do you recall Prohibition?

MMC: Yes. I do. I know they used to bring the liquor in here and they throw it overboard in different places along here. I know my brother Carroll, he picked up some right across from the boatyard on the point there.

BR: What did he do? Sell it?

MMC: I don't know what he did. I don't know what he did with it. [laughter]

BR: But you remember the boats coming in with it?

MMC: Yes. Well, yes. Sure.

BR: How about you, Horace? Do you recall any stories about the...

HMC: There was lot going on around here. I'll tell you.

BR: Tell us a little bit about it.

HMC: Well, the one thing I remember mostly about it was apparently one runner come in and went across North Bay. For one reason or another, whether they would get scared out or what, they turned around and come down the Bay, went out through the bridge after they [inaudible] and they could throw them overboard. That way, fast as they could throw it overboard, they were throwing cases of booze or what do you want to call it? Whiskey and everything else overboard.

BR: What happened then? Did the natives go out and gravel for it?

HMC: Oh, I guess they did. I guess they did. Oh, yes. There was big going down there at that time.

BR: How much did they get a case for when they sold it?

HMC: Oh, I really don't know too much about that end of it, but I heard that they averaged to get around \$50 a case for it.

BR: That was a lot of money during the Depression. You remember the first automobile, Max?

MMC: Yes. The first one in the village here? Yes.

BR: Who owned it?

MMC: Well, there was a man named (Fred Suthergreen?).

HMC: Remember the name. Sure.

MMC: Yes. Well, he worked in the shop one time.

HMC: Yes. The shop [unintelligible].

MMC: I can't remember what kind of a car he had. But I think he was the first one that had one. Also, my father had a six-cylinder Ford that he took in trades with building a boat for somebody.

I can't tell you who it was. That was one of the first ones. Also, Dr. – who was the doctor in Marstons Mills?

BR: Dr. Kenny?

MMC: No, no. I remember he had a Stanley Steamer. Those are the first three cars that I can remember in the village.

BR: Were they very noisy?

MMC: [laughter] Well, fathers was when he – they had a kind of a transmission, do you call it?

HMC: Vans? Vans you mean like the Ford?

MMC: Yes, vans. It was noisy when he would start it up and went to ship. I don't remember the – Stanley Steamer, that was very noisy. But those were the first three cars that I remember in the village.

BR: What did they look like?

MMC: Well, [laughter] rather than the four doors, I can remember that, and passenger car, and – well, I don't really remember too much about them.

HMC: The first car that I remember was called the – [unintelligible] the company. The first car that I actually remember riding in, for instance, was a Speedwell.

MMC: Speedwell.

HMC: I've never seen one or anything about them or anything that you read about old cars.

BR: You do not know who it was made by?

HMC: No, I don't.

BR: Do you recall the advent of the telephone when telephones were new? Do you, Horace?

HMC: We had them right here. That and the magneto part of it, the little thing that had the tools. I don't know if they were called. But you see where it was on the wall over there?
[laughter]

BR: Oh, yes. You do not remember how they installed it or when it came in? What year?

HMC: No. No.

BR: Do you recall the advent of electricity?

HMC: [laughter] I sure do.

MMC: Well, yes.

BR: I would think so with the way you were in the business.

MMC: Electricity came into the village. Well, I know there were they – Walden had to put it in the shop. I think it was 1922.

HMC: Well, he had some money all right, I guess on that.

MMC: Yes, 1922 and I assume that's when they got it into the houses.

HMC: I can remember going up the street with father and mother at night. We'd go to the movies up there called the Staff Theater then, and walking home when they left because there wasn't any meters. It was just so much a month. He'd leave plenty of lights on. I can remember my mother saying, "God, just like the Fall River Line. Look at the Fall River Line. There's so many lights on," walking back from the village.

BR: Well, it must have been a big thing for your shop with the advent of power tools.

MMC: Yes. You see in those days, before that, when they was finishing up a boats cabin, they had a big kerosene lamp hanging down. So, it gave light in the cabin where they were working.

BR: Yes. Max, do you recall indoor plumbing when that first came into being?

MMC: I don't. [laughter]

HMC: I don't remember much about that.

BR: Right. It probably was around the time of electricity.

HMC: Well, roughly, I would imagine. Yes.

BR: Max, could you give us an idea of what a typical day might be like when you were a youngster?

MMC: I'd get up in the morning and – I had a sister, Alma. She'd get up in the morning and make the fire in the stove out there and she'd get our breakfast, which was usually flapjacks. [laughter] Plenty of them.

BR: Did you live in this house?

MMC: What?

BR: Did you live in this house?

MMC: Yes. Sure. Father had stoves around the other burnt coal and I had the ashes to empty every morning. Then I'd get ready and I'd go to school and come home for lunch.

BR: What was the school like, Max? Do you remember it?

MMC: Sure. [laughter] It's still up there in the middle of the village. [laughter] Yes.

BR: How many grades?

MMC: Nine.

BR: Did you go to high school after that?

MMC: I went to high school for two or three months. I had a camp on Aunt Tempys Pond over here, which was named after my great grandmother. I was building a camp over there. This day, there was two other boys and I, and we were putting the roof up on it for another addition. Mother came over there and caught me. Yes. I was playing hooky. [laughter] That was the last of me going to high school. I never went back to high school. I went to work.

BR: You went to work in the boat yard?

MMC: No. I didn't go to work in the boatyard at that time. Father was putting in a fire break around this pond that I talk about and he...

BR: What is a fire break?

MMC: Well, it was a road that if they caught a fire, they might be able to stop it. We had a lot of forest fires in those days here on the Cape. So, he had three other men cutting down the trees and cleaning it up and he made me go to work with them.

BR: Max, do you recall how they fought a fire? How did they put a fire out back in the day?

MMC: Well, [laughter] with shovels and sand. That's all they had in those days. Just shovels and if it come up to a road, well, they'd throw sand on it and try to stop it.

BR: When did you get automatic firefighting equipment pumps and all that?

HMC: 1926.

BR: 1926.

HMC: That's what started it.

BR: Yes. Must have been some very serious fires around.

MMC: They were terrible forest fires.

HMC: It was in Ashfield and Sandwich and that area, more so than right in Osterville. I guess probably had some, but the biggest ones were in Ashfield and Sandwich and that area over there. Big woods and big [unintelligible] acreage.

BR: Max, how would you refrigerate your food?

MMC: Every winter, they had ice houses here that they filled up with ice. The Osterville Ice Company had a big one over on Joshua's Pond. They delivered ice here to the house. I won't say every day, but two or three times a week, I guess. They had an ice box out there. Of course, you had a tray or something underneath to catch the water and they had to be taken care of. We didn't dump them. [laughter]

BR: Yes. Do in the weekends?

MMC: Well, in the summer, I played baseball [laughter] if I could get past that. Of course, the weekends, father used to have me come into that shop and clean up shavings. But if we had a ball game on, I went and played baseball and I suffered the next day [laughter] for it. [laughter] In the winter, of course, we went skiing on the ponds.

BR: What other things did you have for entertainment? Did you go to dances eventually?

MMC: No, I never could dance. That's one thing I never did.

BR: Movies?

MMC: Well, we had a movie here we used to go to.

HMC: Not so much in the wintertime. They don't [inaudible].

MMC: No, no, no. That's right.

HMC: Of course, father had an (oxter?). Of course, we had a band too.

BR: Your father?

HMC: Oh, yes. In my time, every Sunday night, they'd have oxter meeting in this room right here.

BR: Really?

HMC: Yes. It'd be eight or ten come down every evening, whether it was bad weather or good weather. They'd generally would be getting ready to play for a show down in the hall, what they call the Veterans place – Union Hall.

MMC: Union Hall. Yes.

BR: What kind of a show?

HMC: Oh, a free drama of some kind or...

MMC: (Wistful?) show.

HMC: Wistful show. Yes. They would say, "Well, we're going to give a Wistful show, say, in the middle of February." So, father would get together and they'd start rehearsing. Many a night, I've gone upstairs because I had a bed up there, lit the old kerosene light, and gone to bed with them playing down. I'd gone that way many a time. I was, of course, small. Later on, I got into it. I got to play. I played the violin and Max played – what did you play?

MMC: I played the bassoon.

HMC: Yes. Bassoon. Yes.

BR: Oh, the bassoon. Yes.

HMC: That's right. But you learnt that in France. When you was in France, you learnt to play that?

MMC: Yes. Sure. Fighting for the Yankee Division.

BR: Oh, did you?

MMC: Yes. After the Armistice was signed, I was sent to this band school in the City of (Chamole?). I studied the bassoon under – they had two men that had played in the Paris Symphony Orchestra and I studied under them for three months.

BR: Max, what do you remember about World War I?

MMC: [laughter]

BR: What did you get? What did they pay you as a doughboy?

MMC: Well, I got \$30 a month and I was made a first class private. That gave me \$32 or \$33 or \$34, I forget now. [laughter]

BR: Did you see any action in France?

MMC: Absolutely. I went over the top with 130.

BR: Was it tough living over there when conditions were bad in France?

MMC: Well, of course, we went over there and we were building boats within the small town. If I remember it, [laughter] we were sleeping on the ground, but we were inside. I didn't suffer as far as food. We always had plenty to eat. Not plenty. I won't say plenty, but we had enough to keep us going. I didn't suffer any that way.

BR: What kind of transportation did you have?

MMC: Well, we were walking. [laughter] Yes. Of course, there might have been trucks in those days.

BR: You're walking [inaudible].

MMC: Yes. We walked twenty kilometers in a walk. I didn't think it was too bad.

BR: Do you recall the industry that you had in the village of Osterville other than boat building? How did a fellow make a living?

HMC: Well, it was the Daniel Brothers was probably the – at that time, Mike, growing up there, was the biggest contractor building houses and like that. You had G. W. Hallett and he was the one standard plumber here at that time. Of course, we all came in and branched out as they always do. Outside of that, you had your stores. Electrician was – like you to call first part of the electrical work. They were done by Herbert (Hentley?). The same place of businesses right there, the top of the hill there on Parker Road. Then he was in with Walker Dames and they split up and Walker went into his own business. Both businesses are being run today by the younger people, of course.

BR: Were there any shell fishing?

HMC: Oh, yes.

BR: Oystering?

HMC: Oh, yes. Sure. My uncle, Joe, had the shanty over here by the bridge there going all the way to the harbor. I don't know whether Uncle Joe built – Uncle Joe did a little boat building earlier, didn't he?

MMC: Uncle Joe didn't build boats in a while. Yes. He and father – this man named Frank Randall come on from New York and got father and father got Uncle Joe to go with him. They went to South Brooklyn and they built boats after five years from 1900 – no, from 1895 to 1900. Then they came back and Uncle Joe worked a little while, but he didn't like it. Father said he didn't like it very well. So, he went into the oyster business. He got these grants out in the bay there and started the oyster business. He'd have vessels come in the spring with seed oysters and they'd plant them on these grants and they would be there all summer. They were in shape to ship to market in the fall.

BR: How far would he ship them?

MMC: I worked for Uncle Joe two winters and he shipped them to Chicago. I know that.

BR: How would you get medical care if you needed some help?

MMC: The only thing we had, a man by the name of Dr. Kenny here in the village. Of course, he'd come here if you called him up.

BR: What if you needed hospital care?

MMC: Ship you to Boston.

BR: How would they do that?

MMC: [laughter] On the train, I guess.

HMC: We'd go to West Hospital and walk on the train and I suppose they went twice a day or something like that.

MMC: Oh, yes.

HMC: I remember mother took me to Boston when I lost an eye. I lost an eye when I was about four years old. I remember that very plainly. Going to Boston, all that business.

BR: What if you needed a dentist?

MMC: Well, you have to get Hyannis. I broke that a tooth while skating on the Sam Pond over here. Father called up Edward Hinckley, who was one of the dentists in Hyannis. I used to ride the school barge to Hyannis when I had to go over and have it fixed and that tooth put on.

BR: What was the school barge like?

MMC: Well, [laughter], it was a two-horse affair. [laughter]

HMC: It would carry probably twenty, thirty kids going over?

MMC: Yes. Sure. It was quite a big thing then, yes.

BR: Do you remember the stagecoach?

MMC: The one that went to the trains? Yes. Sure. Yes.

BR: Remember the traveling salesman that used to come around?

HMC: People call them [inaudible].

BR: Tell me about them.

HMC: Well, he used to come here at the house. I know that because oftentimes, they came after a normal working day. Mother would say, "Father, here comes the drummer." It would be probably somebody from either Beckman or Hatch in New Bedford, one of the Boston outfits. I wouldn't know about that because I know in my time, most of our business was done with the two places in New Bedford because it was handy for us and took care of us in good shape.

BR: How would you go about getting clothing when you were a youngster?

MMC: Well, if we wanted to sew the clothes, we used to have to go to Hyannis. There was a man named Louis Aronofsky. He had a big store there and, I don't know, in the village here, I guess, underclothes and things like that. He bought and sold them.

HMC: They crack [unintelligible]. I used to go up and get overhauls for father the I crack those all the time.

MMC: Yes. That's right.

HMC: I suppose he had pants and things like that.

BR: Where would the women get their clothing?

MMC: [laughter]

HMC: One thing that comes to mind while speaking about that used to be a headlock.

MMC: Yes.

HMC: Isaac Cohen. He had a big pack on his back. He'd come around and I think he'd make probably about two trips a month, something like that, maybe.

MMC: Yes. Also, a man by the name of Mr. (Melsman?).

HMC: Melsman from [unintelligible].

MMC: He'd drive and he had a horse and a big wagon and he sold clothes.

BR: You remember the medicine men?

HMC: Well, this must have been in probably about just around World War I time or possibly just after it. They came several years. They came to the, what we call the Union Hall. They had put on shows and, of course, they'd stopped periodically and sell whatever they had to sell. I don't know what it was, but I wasn't interested in that part of it. All that I was interested in was the entertainment end of it. [laughter] That's as much as I remember about medicine men.

BR: Do you recall any of the storms that hit the Cape? Was the weather bad here in the early days?

HMC: Well, as I grew up, I – good graciously. We used to drain that swamp up right up there and they dug a drain to go down into the bay. When I was a young boy, that drain would cover right over the snow. That cross there probably in some places was, well, 30 feet or more. You don't see that today. But the thing [laughter] you do, they didn't have any equipment. Of course, father laid his car up come fall. He didn't try to run the car in the wintertime. Now, everybody runs their car like they always do. The difference is always that way, you know?

BR: Do you remember any hurricanes that you had? You were so close to the water. What was the worst one?

MMC: 1944.

HMC: Yes. That was a...

BR: What happened here?

MMC: Well, it was a severe hurricane. The water in those shops down there was six or seven, eight feet over the floors.

BR: Did you lose any boats?

HMC: Oh, well, they were damaged. We had quite a lot of damage to boats that we had to leave. After, when it was all over, we went around and the floats and got them off of the beaches or wherever they were and repaired them.

BR: Must have been a busy winter.

HMC: Well, it wasn't any one winter. There were several of them. [19]38...

MMC: Yes.

HMC: And [19]44 that Max speaks of. Then [19]54, that was the year we built the Snack Bar down there, that store. We got 2.5 feet of water right over there in [19]54. Then they had a couple more called Carol and Edna. I don't remember the dates of it now after that. Well, those didn't do us any good. I'll tell you.

BR: It was Main Street Osterville?

HMC: Yes. Going up over the hill here, across the Parker Road and up. It was sand. That's what it was.

MMC: Yes. Also, they used to – on this road down the hill and down into the front of the house, used to cover it with shells. Yes. They'd grind them up and they had a shell row.

BR: What kind of police protection did you have?

MMC: One. [laughter] Well, we had a...

HMC: Constable.

MMC: We had a constable. Yes, and a truant officer. If you played hooky in school, they'd call him up or get hold of him to come and get who was ever playing hooky. [laughter]

BR: Did you have any crime at all?

HMC: The only thing that I can remember is when I was a young kid and we were going to grammar school, yes, they broke into the post office once, didn't they?

MMC: Oh, Yes.

HMC: Yes. That's the only thing I can remember about anything. They broke in and blew the safe off something. They caught him up there by the canal somewhere.

BR: What was discipline like in school? Was that a problem?

HMC: For me, it wasn't. I suppose it was for him.

BR: Tell us about it, Max.

MMC: Yes. Well, I remember I was in the seventh or eighth grade I guess and we had a teacher named Mr. Ferguson. He was a big husky guy. [laughter] This day, a boy by the name (El Font Beaumont?) and I – it was a rainy day and we were jumping up and down on one of the piazzas. He came out and grabbed the two of us by two fingers and threw us into this front school room there. He threw me against the desk, but it didn't hurt me.

BR: He was a tough customer?

MMC: There was a boy named Charles Barry. His father was a barber and I think he, as I remembered it, ruptured him. He threw him out in the yard there. He got mad. He was a bad one. [laughter]

BR: Do you remember how the holidays were celebrated? Christmas. What did you do Christmas?

MMC: We hung up our stockings by the fireplace. That was about all it was to it.

BR: What did you get in your stocking?

HMC: [laughter]

MMC: [laughter] No.

HMC: Whistle. I'll tell you. It was all foolish, nothing useful.

BR: Like what?

HMC: Well, stockings and clothes to wear and things of that nature. There wasn't any money spent for foolish things like it is today. I'll tell you.

MMC: Yes. Father had a man by the name of Preston Wright staying in the house with us at that time. He was working in the shop with father. I remember this Christmas time, he bought Carroll and I BB guns. [laughter]

BR: What about Thanksgiving?

MMC: Of course, my mother's mother, my grandmother, lived over on the pond and we used to go over there every Thanksgiving until she died.

BR: It was a family day.

MMC: Yes. That's right. The whole family.

BR: Do you remember the Fourth of July?

MMC: The Fourth of July, well, the night before the Fourth, all the boys in the village are out and shooting firecrackers. We'd ring all the bells at 12:00 a.m. The Methodist Church, the Baptist church, and the schoolhouse Bell, we'd ring them for an hour.

BR: Keep everybody awake?

MMC: Yes. [laughter]

BR: Do you know how far back you can trace your family?

MMC: Well, our grandfather he died in 1894. I was a year old. On my mother's side, [laughter]...

HMC: On mother's side, Grandpa Ames, he died off of [unintelligible]. Yes, on the lumber schooner.

MMC: That's right.

HMC: He got struck overboard, I assume.

MMC: Yes. The storm. Yes.

BR: When was that?

HMC: Oh, well, my gosh. We can't remember.

MMC: It was before our time.

BR: What was your mother's maiden name?

MMC: Velina Parker Ames.

BR: Do they go back to the Mayflower?

MMC: [laughter] No.

BR: So, probably two or three generations?

HMC: The story is that three brothers came over from England. One stayed here. One went to the West Coast, which is supposed to be Bill Crosby's relatives. Whether it's true or not, I don't know. The third one didn't like it here and went back to England. That's the story I've heard. Now, how true it is, I really don't.

BR: That was your grandfather's family?

HMC: Well, way back further than that, I guess.

BR: Great-grandfather?

HMC: Yes.

MMC: Living here on the Cape, very much. As they say, the only place I went to was Chicago outside of living here. I was only out there for a couple of months. I was damn glad to get home out of that place.

BR: Thank you, Max, for giving us this interview. Horace, do you have something you would like to say?

HMC: Well, of course, I was born and brought up right here. Lived here all my life. It makes you [unintelligible] when I look back at it, schooled right here in the village, of course. I only went to high school one year before I went to work for our Uncle Bill's shop, before. But I've grown up here and met this girl and I married my wife. We've got a family. I'll show you the family picture there. You'd like to see that, I think. Back in 1947, our father and mother was getting too old to handle this upstairs and down and all. So, I married and had four children. We lived over in the cottage over here. It was my grandmother's. They built for my grandmother when she retired from the Crosby House. So, I bought it from my brother, Bill. He moved over here. He lived here first after Grandma Crosby died. He moved over here when Uncle Bill died

and they sold that to him. I took the cottage because that was all we needed at that time. Just three of us, my daughter and then left everyone here. But in [19]47, mother and father said, "Look, this is too much for us." So, we swapped houses. So, we've been here ever since 1947. We were here.

BR: I guess what you are saying to me, you would not change a thing.

HMC: I wouldn't change a thing. No.

BR: Thank you, Horace. That is very good.

[end of transcript]