

William Steere: This tape is the property of Tales of Cape Cod, Incorporated, and cannot be reproduced without their permission. The date is October 26, 1977. Today, I am speaking with Mrs. Helen Pulcifer Doland of 214 Main Street, Yarmouth Port. Mrs. Doland is eighty-three years of age. Mrs. Doland, could you tell us about your ancestry?

Helen Pulcifer Dolan: Well, I'm descended from John Howland, who came over on the Mayflower. He's the gentleman who fell overboard, but was rescued. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here today.

WS: Your ancestors, when did they come to the Cape?

HPD: Well, I think they came from Plymouth to Barnstable, settled in Barnstable. John Gorham was the son of Gorham family, I believe. My grandfather had seven brothers, all sea captains, but himself. He was a shoemaker. He has one brother, Hezekiah, who was buried in Russia. Today, there are no Gorham people with the name of Gorham.

WS: This man who was buried in Russia?

HPD: He was a sea captain.

WS: He was one of your father's brothers?

HPD: One of my grandfather's brothers.

WS: He was shipwrecked?

HPD: I imagine something like that must've happened.

WS: You were born in the Cape?

HPD: I was born in Yarmouth Port, July 16, 1894, on the house 382 Main Street, where my son now lives. My father was the doctor. He had come to the Cape from Maine in 1872. He was attending Colby College when the Civil War broke out. His class went to war, First Maine Calvary Company D. He was wounded in the war. He was a prisoner at Libby Prison. After the war, he went back to Colby, graduated, then he went to Hahnemann Medical School, Pennsylvania. Graduated from there, came to the Cape. He had two sisters who had come to the Cape from Maine as schoolteachers, married, and settled on the Cape. That's how he happened to come to Yarmouth.

WS: Did they live in Yarmouth Port here? Did they live in Yarmouth Port also?

HPD: One lived in Yarmouth Port, one lived in Hyannis.

WS: Who did they marry? Whom did they marry?

HPD: His sister, Ella, in Yarmouth Port married Frederick Matthews. He died and then she

married Joseph Bassett. My Aunt Carrie – and my aunt married Franklin Crocker.

WS: What about your schooling? Was that here in Yarmouth Port?

HPD: Yes. We had a four-room schoolhouse, primary school right through high school, three grades in each room. I graduated from high school in 1912. It had always been a three-year course in high school. But in my class, it was changed to a four-year course, just one girl and myself graduated from high school.

WS: No boys graduated from high school.

HPD: When we had started, there were probably eight of us in the freshman class in high school. But it was changed to a four-year course. Those who had entered in our freshman year could graduate in a three-year course. So, the other members of our class graduated in 1911. But another girl and I stayed on for four years.

WS: How many graduated from that class?

HPD: Probably seven.

WS: Seven. Well, in your early schooling, that was right up here in Yarmouth?

HPD: Yarmouth Port, where the fire station now stands across from the Congregational Church of Yarmouth. In the whole twelve grades, there were probably – not more than. The freshman class is, I mean, the primary classes in schools today are probably more than there were from the twelve grades when I was going to school.

WS: How many students would you estimate there were in class in the entire school?

HPD: Maybe sixty, seventy.

WS: What were the day's activities in primary school?

HPD: You learn reading and writing and arithmetic. We always had really very good teachers I think.

WS: Who were some of the teachers that you had?

HPD: I had Martha Howells in the primary school. She lived there for a great many years. In fact, my older sister, my older brother, and my younger sister all had Ms. Howells for teaching primary school. I had Helen Dolan from Brewster in the intermediate school. That was the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. Helen Eldridge in grammar school. Mr. Pierce in high school had been here for a great many years. Apparently, he was an extremely well-educated man. But he left the year I went into high school. We had a Mr. Jewett, my freshman year. We only had one teacher in high school in our freshman year. But then they expanded, and we had two teachers. Mr. Howes was the principal, and a Miss Thayer was second teacher. Then by the time in senior

year, we had three teachers in high school.

WS: What were the daily activities? You would study in the morning?

HPD: We always had a lot of homework after we got into high school. I took Latin for four years, took French for three years, then Algebra, Geometry, which I never could understand.

WS: What did you do for lunch?

HPD: Well, I lived near the school, so I always could go home for lunch. But very many of the pupils brought their lunches to school.

WS: What would you have for a weekday lunch?

HPD: Well, my main meal was at 12:00 p.m. I always had dinner. We lived pretty well. My mother was a very good cook and we always had good meals. We had our own chicken and we had pigs. So, we had pork from the pigs. Then we'd have Cape Cod turkey with salt fish for dinner. That was always good with the salt pork.

WS: What is a Cape Cod turkey?

HPD: Well, it's salt cod fish with boiled potatoes. When they put on your plate, you mash them in together and pour pork fat over it, boiled onions, beets, one of my favorite dishes.

WS: Would these vegetables be the ones that had come from your garden?

HPD: Father always had big gardens. But I don't know. I don't think he grew onions. He grew potatoes and corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, squashes, pumpkins.

WS: Did he take care of the garden himself?

HPD: No. We used to have men who worked in the barn, helped him with the chores in the barn. He did a lot of work in the gardens, too. As children, we had to help, had to pick off potato bugs, which is no fun. My children always loved the story in the cornfield. We had to get up about 5:00 a.m., go down to the cornfield, and ring a bell to scare the crows away.

WS: There was a bell in the cornfield itself?

HPD: No. We had a little like a school bell that we rang. My children always thought that was a funny story. [laughter]

WS: Well, your father was the doctor of the town.

HPD: Yes.

WS: What was his territory?

HPD: Well, he'd go from Barnstable to Brewster, horsing team in best times, and sometimes he'd go to Dennis in horseback. Of course, from Weir Road until you strike Dennis, it was just woods in those days, no buildings at all. He had a sleigh in the winter. Then we had another team in the winter that was called a cage, and that was a closed-in affair. I suppose it was something like an old-fashioned carry-all or something. They had windows on the side and a window in the front. That was supposed to be a warmer vehicle to ride in. I remember my father had a big robe made of buffalo skin. That would really keep us quite warm when we'd ride. We used to go with him on a lot of his calls, especially in Dennis. He used to go to Dennis, be gone all day, making calls in Dennis and East Dennis. Different people would give him his dinner. When we went with him, he'd drop us off at some home by the beach with children that we could play with during the day and spend the day there.

WS: Were there any inns for him to eat at?

HPD: No. There were no inns in those days. No restaurants really.

WS: So, you would have dinner at some person's home?

HPD: Yes. We'd eat out or have dinner at some person's home. Everybody was a great friend of my father's, who were at Dennis. They all adored him really.

WS: Would he perform surgery in the home?

HPD: I've known him to perform minor operations. I remember him taking something off of the lip of a man one time. I think there were one or two other things that he did. Probably didn't amount to too much, but I know that he did do a little cutting. [laughter]

WS: Did they have a hospital for serious...

HPD: There was no hospital in Cape Cod at that time. My mother died at fifty-two years of age. There was no hospital. If there had been, she probably would have survived.

WS: So, in other words, he had to handle most of the cases in the home or at his office?

HPD: Yes. I think on occasion there may have been people who were sent to a Boston hospital. Sometimes I think they were sent to Martin Hospital in Tampa.

WS: So, it would be by train that they send him?

HPD: Yes, by train.

WS: Was it dangerous to travel the roads in those days?

HPD: I don't think so. I think you'd probably ride from Yarmouth to Dennis and not meet anyone.

WS: He did not carry any weapons with him or anything like that. His medication, do you know where he received that from? His medication that he purchased for his patients?

HPD: Well, I don't know. He was a homeopathic physician.

WS: What is that?

HPD: [laughter] I don't know. I really don't know.

WS: What about the home itself? You said you would raise many of the vegetables and things yourself?

HPD: Yes. We always had horses. Father always had very good horses. Sometimes three at a time that he could depend upon. We had cows, pigs, chickens, cats, dogs, pigeons. I understand that there were times before my day that my father raised squabs, set them to the Boston market. He also raised asparagus that he used to ship to Boston. He was very much interested in agriculture.

WS: Did he not own some cranberry barns?

HPD: Yes. He owned probably a half a dozen cranberry barns. There was one on the South Yank Road. There was one across from Dennis Pond. There were several down through the Weir and shipped his cranberries to Baltimore, Boston. It was fun going cranberrying. Schools didn't open in those days until the end of September. So, we always used to go cranberrying. It was hard work on your knees. But I used to like it because you took your lunch and I always liked picnic lunches. A lot of men and a lot of the older women, they used to go cranberrying. My father would set up the screening apparatus in that barn, which was a big barn. There used to be three very jovial women that used to screen for him. It was fun to have them around and always laughing and having a good time along with working.

WS: The women were allowed to work then during those times?

HPD: Yes. If there was an opportunity for them to make a few dollars, they were glad to do it. At one time, I don't remember it, but there was a tailoring shop in the area. It was down, sort of across the street from Center Street. I remember hearing a lot of women that, that's where they learn to be such good seamstresses.

WS: When that closed down, did they do seaming in the home?

HPD: Yes. That building is gone now. That was long before my day, really.

WS: You said that women would come into your home and make a dress for you right there?

HPD: Yes. Women used to come in by the day to do sewing. Probably got a dollar a day and their dinner.

WS: Would this be a special dress or would this be everyday clothing?

HPD: Just ordinary sewing. We had two or three different ones. My mother would start spreading around. One year, she'd have one, another year she'd have another. Probably come about twice a year. Sew two or three days at a time.

WS: What type of items would they make for you?

HPD: Well, they'd make us school dresses. We used to have a lot of hand-me-downs. They'd make these things over to fit us.

WS: What about for dinner? In the evening, dinner? Well, that would be called supper, would it not?

HPD: Yes. At night, we had supper. That was a lighter meal. In the winter, we'd have (hulk corn?). A man used to come around and sell that. I don't know just how it's made. It used to have milk on it. A little bit of sugar, I guess. We'd have oyster stew. We'd always have preserves. Mother used to do up peaches and pears.

WS: These would be from your own orchard?

HPD: My grandmother had a lot of pear trees. So, the pears would be from my grandmother's trees. I think my father used to buy peaches by the basket, like probably a half bushel basket. We did have a peach tree, but not enough to preserve. He'd buy half a bushel of peaches. She does all the stuff. We always had cranberry sauce and apple sauce.

Female Speaker: Hi.

WS: Check this out. Could you tell us about the entertainment in the home?

HPD: Well, we were always a great family for playing games. My father was a great whist player. So, we learned to play whist, to play parchisi, checkers, all-made, flinch, all sorts of games. Did a lot of reading. Yarmouth always had a very nice library. We used to patronize it a great deal.

WS: Where was the library then?

HPD: The same building as now, only it was smaller. Didn't have any wings in those days.

WS: What were some of your favorite books?

HPD: I used to read Aldrich's *Bad Boy*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Red*, *Blue*, *Yellow Fairy Books*. I used to read a lot of grandfather's books. Those were about poets, boarding schools more or less, I guess. Louisa May Alcott's books, (*Pink Wood Papers?*).

WS: What about other entertainment in the home? Did you have music?

HPD: We had a piano. My oldest sister played the piano. My mother had a very nice alto voice and used to stand around the piano. Everybody would be singing. My brother had a big – used to play in an orchestra.

WS: Tuba?

HPD: Yes. It was a tuba. I knew it was a huge instrument that used to be in his bedroom. I don't know if they did very much with that orchestra. But I guess they did probably play in parades that they did have in Hyannis. I don't remember parades in Yarmouth. But I have heard my oldest sister speak of parades that they did in Yarmouth. But in my day, I don't remember any.

WS: Did you used to go to Hyannis often?

HPD: On occasion. Of course, we did used to go over to my Aunt Carrie's and visit there probably several times a year. Then brought dried goods to us in Hyannis that I guess once in a while you had to go there to get a few things. We had a small store in Yarmouth, Isabel Louis' Store. She carried dried goods and underwear, stockings. But if you wanted something really different, I guess you'd have to go to Hyannis.

WS: How many stores were there in Hyannis at the time?

HPD: Well, I guess there were quite a number of stores, but Hyannis had a fire. I don't remember the year. A good part of it was burned. But they built it right up again anyway.

WS: That was when you were a girl?

HPD: Yes.

WS: Did they have a fire station at all?

HPD: No. There was no fire apparatus or anything in those days. Just depended on men fighting the fires.

WS: Was there a police station?

HPD: No. We had constables and sheriffs, but they didn't have too much to do. Occasionally, a drunken man would be arrested. That's about the size of it, I guess.

WS: Was there a lot of drinking when you were a girl?

HPD: There was no social drinking. Men became intoxicated. That was about it.

WS: When did you say that people began social drinking?

HPD: Not until after Prohibition. I think Prohibition opened up the drinking as it is today.

WS: You would not have it in the home.

HPD: No. My father was deaf on liquor, and he was deaf on tobacco. Those things were taboo in our house.

WS: He was also against soda and that type of thing, was he not? Candy?

HPD: Well, my father didn't believe in the beverages that we drink today. Ginger ale, all those things, we never had them in the house. I did have ginger ale or sarsaparilla on occasion in a drugstore. But he didn't think they were good.

WS: How would you buy it then? Did they have soda fountain in the drugstore?

HPD: Yes. We had soda fountains.

WS: Which drugstore was that?

HPD: That would have been Hallet's Drug Store right here in Yarmouth. Then there were several drugstores in Hyannis.

WS: What was your favorite thing to order in a drugstore soda fountain?

HPD: I liked root beers and sarsaparilla.

WS: Was the drugstore mainly a place where you bought medicine?

HPD: Yes. That's why you had your prescriptions filled the same as you do today. They carried a lot of patent medicines, which my father didn't think much of.

WS: He did not believe in the claims of the patent medicines?

HPD: No, that's right. I think he felt it was all the alcoholic contents in some of them.

WS: Well, what about the other types of entertainment? Did you have movies when you were a girl?

HPD: It was the Idle Hour in Hyannis. On occasion, we would get to the Idle Hour. Sometimes it would be a group of us, maybe ten or so. We'd walk to Hyannis and back to go to the movies. Of course, you could get the train here at Yarmouth, and go to Hyannis in those days.

WS: How much would it cost to travel from here?

HPD: I think that'd cost 10 cents from Yarmouth.



WS: Would that be one way?

HPD: Yes. Of course, in those days, the station was right in the center of Hyannis. We always had entertainments at the church, Congregational Church. Had bean suppers in the winter for 10 or 15 cents. No beans and Frankfurt's, just beans and brown bread. Coffee and assorted cakes, which were delicious.

WS: You said the church in Yarmouth, here. You said they had suppers?

HPD: Yes. That would be followed by entertainment a lot of times. People would do readings. We'd have solos. Put on a little sketch. Also, we had good many entertainments in Lyceum Hall. We had dancing school and a Professor Fish from Sandwich used to drive over with his horsing team. We'd have our lessons from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Then the public would be admitted for a price for a three-piece orchestra, piano, violin, and drums. That was always something to look forward to. We loved going to dancing school and dancing from 9:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m. We had minstrel shows in Lyceum Hall. The young men of the town would get that up. That was quite a lot of fun when they played. The end men would have jokes on the local people. Everybody took it in. Good's dead would laugh along with them.

WS: Do you remember any of these jokes?

HPD: No. I don't really. But a lot of the older men were a lot of fun. They had a great sense of humor. I know my uncle was a staunch republican. Wouldn't vote for a democrat if it was his best friend. There used to be a man in town, Pat Hammond, an Irishman, who had the livery stable. Of course, he was a staunch democrat. He and my uncle, good friends. If a democrat won, Pat would come to Uncle Ben with an old pan drumming on an old tin pan. They'd just laughed it over. [laughter]

WS: Where would they do this?

HPD: He lived on Summer Street, and he'd come down to this house where my uncle lived. He'd laugh and drumming on his old tin pan, "The democrats had won." [laughter] So, they'd just laugh, no hard feelings.

WS: What about town meetings? Did you have that?

HPD: Yes. There was always a town meeting. That was quite a gay affair because there were so many old characters in Yarmouth that it was fun to listen to. It wasn't like town meetings today. It was small.

WS: Where would it be held?

HPD: There was a town meeting house on Union Street when I was a girl. I remember on several occasions when there was a town meeting, as high school pupils, they would let us go to the town meeting and see how it was conducted and so forth.

WS: Do you remember going to one of them?

HPD: Yes. You'd have to walk from Yarmouth. I think it was over near the railroad tracks. Somewhere in that vicinity.

WS: What time of day would it begin?

HPD: In the afternoon.

WS: How long would it generally last?

HPD: Probably nothing more than three or four hours.

WS: Do you remember any big issues that they would talk about?

HPD: No. I really don't. It was really more for fun than we used to go, I think, than to learn anything.

WS: Who were some of the characters of town meeting?

HPD: Probably, I better not mention them.

WS: So, the fair was a big entertainment in the summertime.

HPD: The Barnstable County Fair. You saved your money all year long. Not that we had much money. But everything we get we put away, saved, for the Barnstable County Fair, which was held the last Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday – Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in August. Tuesday was Children's Day. You got in free. Wednesday, the governor is to appear. Thursday was kind of breaking up. People were getting their animals ready to take home. Then women were getting their baked goods ready and their sewing and flower arrangements. We had a neighbor, Mrs. Charles Gray, very interested in wildflowers. Used to tramp all over and really knew everything about wildflowers and weeds. She'd have a kitchen full of bottles with all different kinds. Very interesting woman. Take them all over to the fair.

WS: This was her hobby?

HPD: Yes.

WS: She did not make a living?

HPD: No. Just loved doing it. My younger sister always used to get a prize for her brown bread. I think she'd get 50 cents. I don't remember that I ever displayed anything. She could also sew. Used to take over the sewing and get 50 cents for that. I don't remember that my father ever took any animals over. But there were all kinds of animals there. There was horse racing. They had band concerts. They had a grandstand. I think that cost 25 cents to get in there

and sit to watch the horse races, ball games. Then they had the midway with the merry-go-round, which I patronized that greatly. They had fortune tellers, snake charmers. I don't know whether they had tattoo artists. All kinds of crazy things. Then the last day, they would have a balloon ascension. They usually used to land in Barnstable Harbor, near Sandy Neck probably. But then we'd go home, and we'd watch to see where the balloon man was going to land. That was quite exciting. Then Thursday night they always had the agricultural ball in the building that was on the ground. I guess the building is still there today.

WS: Who was there on the agricultural ball?

HPD: Well, that was quite a swanky affair. I never went. My brother used to go. But I think they had an orchestra from Brockton. Everybody, all the older young people would fall into that. In fact, we used to have dances in Lyceum Hall where we'd have an orchestra from Brockton. The young men in the town would get together and sell tickets for no particular reason, just to have a dance.

WS: What time would the dances begin?

HPD: At 8:00 p.m., usually from 8:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m. Then if they're having a real good time, they'd go around and see if they could get money enough to pay the orchestrators to play until 1:00 a.m. We had a grange that met in Lyceum Hall. People from Barnstable, West Barnstable, Sandwich, I think, all used to come to the grange for members of it.

WS: Well, what are the activities of the grange?

HPD: Well, I suppose a lot of the people who did a little farming had that sort of a get-together to talk over their problems, et cetera. Then it was a social affair also. Used to put on bean suppers there. I think they used to meet once a week.

WS: Well, camp town meeting was also a summer activity.

HPD: Yes, camp meeting. Before my day, a great many of the residents of Yarmouth used to go over to Hyannis, to the campground, and pitch up tents and live in the tents for a week. That was sort of a vacation period for them. Some of the people from Yarmouth owned cottages. My family used to go in a tent. I guess they had a lot of fun.

WS: They would spend the night at camp?

HPD: Yes. They'd stay the whole week through. That was an outing. We used to go several times during the camp meeting week. That was like a picnic affair. They did have an eating tent, but we all had taken our lunches. Of course, there was the real reason for camp meeting, the services in the tabernacle, which was a big out-of-door bell with a big top. They had chairs inside. Great evangelical preaching, used to get a lot of converts I guess.

WS: That was the main purpose of the...

HPD: That was the main purpose of camp meeting.

WS: To convert people to what? A specific religion?

HPD: To have their sins forgiven. There'd be a lot of backsliders, I think. They were people that would go forward and have their sins forgiven. But during the year they would commit more sins, I think, have to be converted again.

WS: The camp meeting was held where?

HPD: Right by the campgrounds are today.

WS: On Union Street, is it not?

HPD: On Willow Street.

WS: On Willow Street. Then the train would stop there?

HPD: Yes. There was a station there. I think they called it the flag stop. People could get off the train right there at the camp meeting ground. Then if you wanted to go back to Yarmouth, they'd put a flag up and they would stop and bring you back to Yarmouth.

WS: Did the people come from off Cape to attend these meetings?

HPD: Yes. I think that many people came from Rhode Island, New Bedford.

WS: Early tourists, you might say. Early tourists?

HPD: Yes.

WS: Was there much tourism on the Cape when you were a girl?

HPD: People from New York and Boston owned houses here in Yarmouth. For instance, where Anthony's pay for inn is today, that was the summer estate for Dr. Bacon from New York. He was an eye, ear, and nose specialist. For the Sandy Side, the Simpkins' that was their summer estate. Where the French restaurant La Cigale is, that was the summer estate for Thomas Thacher.

WS: Who was Thomas Thacher? What was his profession?

HPD: He was a descendant of Anthony Thacher, settler of the island.

WS: Where did he come from?

HPD: Boston.

WS: What was his profession?

HPD: I think he was probably a stockbroker.

WS: So, you did have a summer residence on the Cape?

HPD: Yes, quite many of them. The main row on Strawberry Lane, where the Historical Society is now, was the home of Henry C. Thacher, who was the father of Thomas Thacher, those estates.

WS: They would come down in the summertime by train?

HPD: Yes.

WS: Your grandmother would?

HPD: My grandmother kept borders and some of the Simpkins's used to stay at her house. All the maids would get their houses open for the summer.

WS: Who were they? Who were the Simpkins's?

HPD: They were the residents of Sandy Side. There was another Simpkins family from St. Louis who had a house on Strawberry Lane.

WS: Well, the gypsies would also come to town occasionally.

HPD: Yes. That was a horrible experience. I was scared to death of them. They'd come in the springtime. Sometimes they would be on their way down the Cape. Sometimes they would be coming from lower Cape on their way to the cities, I suppose. Very treacherous people. Petty thieving. Always wanted to read your palm. Going to grocery stores and stealing stuff off the shelves. Not much the storekeepers could do about it. Just let them do it, I guess. A lot of times people would hear the gypsies were coming, the sheriff or the constable, whatever you call them, he'd go out and just tell them to keep going. He'd have a badge on, so that meant to them that he was someone important. They keep moving on.

WS: They all came by wagon?

HPD: Yes. They had the gaily colored wagons. Of course, they were rather fascinating to look at. Dressed in gay colors and so forth.

WS: How many of the gypsies would there be?

HPD: There'd be two or three wagons, probably.

WS: So, it would be entire families?

HPD: I imagine, yes.

WS: Children and dogs?

HPD: Yes.

WS: What type of wagon did they have?

HPD: Well, it seems to me they were sort of cart looking affairs. I guess they used to camp out. That's the way they lived, I suppose. Just riding around and had a way of getting their own meals and so forth.

WS: Did they have a certain area that they would camp in or?

HPD: I imagine they used to just camp in the woods between different towns. There were no developments in those days, a lot of wooded property.

WS: What about holidays? We are about to celebrate Halloween next week. What was that like in your day?

HPD: Well, there was no trick and treat on Halloween in my day. We used to have little parties, maybe ducks for apples. Try to bite a donut hanging from the doorway. Put your hand behind your back. We'd have probably cider and donuts for a treat. But nothing like today. [laughter]

WS: What about tricks? Did they play tricks at all?

HPD: I don't think so. I think in the spring is when the boys used to get out and play tricks. They had tic-tacs. They used to tic-tac on people's windows. It really kind of scared the old ladies that lived alone.

WS: What is a tic-tac?

HPD: It's like a spool and it's cut with notches on a string. We girls didn't do anything like that with the boys. Older boys that used to do things like that. That's the way I remember it. I was sort of made that way.

WS: Would you wear costumes?

HPD: I don't think we did on Halloween. I don't think there were any costumes to be had in those days.

WS: You would not make your own or anything?

HPD: No.

WS: Of course, there was no trick or treating?

HPD: No, whatever.

WS: Did you receive candy for Halloween?

HPD: No. It was just a very simple ducking for apples. That's about the size of the...

WS: Thanksgiving, what would that be like when you were a girl?

HPD: That was a feast day. We usually used to come up here to my grandmother's. She'd always have a couple of old ladies that lived alone. We used to have a bountiful spread, turkey and all the fixings, apple, minced, pumpkin pie, plum pudding. Everybody gouged themselves. I always had second helpings. Pass up your plate and say what you're having and say, "Everything that I haven't got." The plate would be empty. People had good appetites in those days. No dieting.

WS: Your grandmother would cook the meal?

HPD: Yes.

WS: Did people bring items?

HPD: I don't think so.

WS: She would cook the turkey? Would you have turkey or?

HPD: Yes, always had turkey.

WS: She cooked that in a wood stove or?

HPD: Absolutely.

WS: How would she do the cooking? Would she have a thermometer?

HPD: Heavens, no. Just told that it was done. [laughter]

WS: Did she have a timer or anything?

HPD: No. I don't know how they ever managed to cook such good food in those days. Because today people are learning to do it, too. I don't think I ever could learn to cook on a big stove.

WS: She would have an oven stove?

HPD: Yes, a big oven.

WS: Well, the next holiday in the year is Christmas. Could you tell us about that?

HPD: Christmas, we always had at home. My grandmother and my uncle always came down to spend Christmas with us. It wasn't the affair like it is today, nothing glamorous and gifts, just useful things. Our dinner was about the same as Thanksgiving, just a repetition of Thanksgiving dinner. We hung our stockings. You always hear people say in the old days you got an orange in a stocking. We never got an orange in our stocking, maybe an apple. We never had a Christmas tree. I've often wondered why, but I never thought to ask anyone why. We'd have all our Christmas gifts in a clothes basket. We'd draw out this gift for this one, this gift for that one. Older shoes, we'd get. We certainly needed those in the winter. Hand ribbons, handkerchiefs, writing paper, maybe some pencils. I always wanted books. I got one once, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Used to make out a Christmas list of your wants every year. Never got much that was on that. One time, my youngest and I got a very nice silver bracelet. Hat pins, we used to get hat pins.

WS: Did you wear hats?

HPD: Yes. We wore hats. We used to get hat pins up in this store, Harris' store, where the Yarmouth Galleries are now. He was a jeweler. Also carrying little things that you could purchase for probably 25 cents, like a little gem or something. But we had our Christmas tree at the church, Congregational Church. At that Christmas night, every child would always get a bag of Christmas candy. Occasionally, someone would hang a gift on the tree with your name on it. They served coffee and assorted cakes for refreshments. As I said before, the older men in the town were all very happy type people. They'd hang jokes to one another. I can remember them standing in the back of the church vestry, laughing over things they'd given one another.

WS: These would be jokes that they had given each other around the tree?

HPD: Yes. I don't know what the jokes were, but they were always quite hilarious, laughing at this late.

WS: What would you receive in your stocking?

HPD: Well, I really don't remember too much. We had long stockings in those days, too. But I really can't recall too much what was in them. They were usually bulging anyway.

WS: Did you give your parents gifts as children?

HPD: I suppose we did. Probably somebody was always giving my father a pack of cards. Because he always wore out the cards he had. I think we used to make things for our parents, too.

WS: Do you remember any of the items that you made?

HPD: I can remember embroidering like, say, a bureau scarf for my mother. Very simple things for Christmas time.



WS: In the church, what time of day would you go to service at the church?

HPD: You mean for Christmas?

WS: Yes.

HPD: Probably around 7:00 p.m.

WS: In the evening?

HPD: Yes. As a little girl, we were never out at night. I can remember walking home from the Christmas tree. It would be cold and maybe snow on the ground. I was amazed that the stars in the sky, there were so many of them.

WS: A clear, cold night?

HPD: A clear, cold night.

WS: Who are you walking with?

HPD: My older sister, Mrs. Siebens.

[end of transcript]