

Renee Magriel: This tape recording is the property of Tales of Cape Cod and may not be reproduced in any manner without written permission from Tales of Cape Cod. November 17, 1977. I am on my way to see Mrs. Eleanor Small in Chatham. Want to ask you about most of your family [inaudible] from (Harwich?). Can you tell me something about your ancestry as you are aware of it?

Eleanor Small: Yes. Well, the family home was down – Leslie Nickerson. I don't really know (Les?) Nickerson [inaudible], his home was the family home. Then they built the one next to it, and then they built the one down in (Nor?) Bay. Like, they owned all of that beach side right down to the water that side of the (thing?). And [inaudible] was one of those coastal ones, you know, (walking?) down the side of the thing. And my grandmother, Nancy, came from Florida, and her name was Nancy (Cabasovich?). And her father was one of those second or third sons that don't do anything, so he came over. Yeah, he was Louis (Cabasovich?), and he said he came from (Hungary?), but I do not know where. So that takes care of that side. And then as I said, it went back up my grandmother, father Braddock. There was another Braddock. And John and – I do not know – well, came before that.

RM: So it was (Phillips?), right?

ES: Yes.

RM: That are the Harwich?

ES: On my mother's side.

RM: On your mother's side. And what about your father?

ES: That was (Chase?) in West Harwich. And [inaudible] cousin because my daughter wanted to, and she said they came – (Lot?) Chase was the first one, and she knows (Phillips?) from there. And my grandfather was Captain Benjamin. He was a real sea captain, and he was lost on the voyager in Cape of Good (Hope?).

RM: Do you know anything else about him? Did you ever meet him?

ES: No, no. It was long before – when the boys were little.

RM: Oh, I see.

ES: She had three boys. Or she had six children, like most people. She just had three living, like my other grandmother, same story. And she had a house over in West Harwich [inaudible]. The street that goes down – see, what is that street? One after (river?) the other goes down in the middle of West Harwich. I [inaudible] that.

RM: Right. What was her name?

ES: Altamira.

RM: Altamira.

ES: But we just called Alta, mostly. And my cousin Alta stayed there, of course, and my cousin Benjamin stayed because their father, Benjamin, stayed. And there were several Benjamins, I think, according to her, in the family. And then there were a number of brothers and sisters, like my Aunt Mary and Uncle Aiden were there. And then there was Eleanor and Theodore lived over – they were in West Harwich. There were a number. But I do think she came from Plymouth, and we always had Jonathon Walker in the family background somewhere. I think he was a relative of family Chase, married this Indian woman, and then he went down to Florida to help the slaves. And he was named the branded hand that started out (fishing?). Now she has his whole will out. It is the most fascinating thing. He was way ahead of his time, because he left his sons in will, but it was – if he should leave a half share to his sons but a full share to his daughters, because he had four sons and five daughters, because he thought that women had been shortchanged and they had not been given a fair shake, and he wanted to do more for them. And then he and his dad [inaudible] for the day against tobacco. He said if his sons gave up tobacco for a full year and planned to keep on, they could have a full share. And he goes on about the hills and tobacco at great length.

RM: Who has this will?

ES: And then my cousin, Alta Chase. It's the most fascinating – it's written down [inaudible] signed by Jonathon Walker.

RM: Do you think I could see it sometime?

ES: You could ask her. She has it.

RM: Yes? Is the phone listed under her name, Alta Chase?

ES: Yes, it is. Alta V. Chase, yes. But she is interesting, because a lot of [inaudible] over in – her mother was (brought over from Hong Kong?) and it kind of branches out from there.

RM: Wow.

ES: So she has most of the [inaudible]. I guess my cousin Benjamin Chase, he has a lot of [inaudible]. I don't know whether they've left or not; they are leaving very soon, though.

RM: For Florida? How old is your cousin Alta?

ES: She is two years older than I am.

RM: So she is 70?

ES: I guess so. Yes. And then she is [inaudible].

RM: So what was the name of this Benjamin Chase who had this branded hand?

ES: No, that was Jonathon Walker.

RM: Oh, Jonathon Walker. How did he get a branded hand?

ES: Because he was captured. And I have the little book, and I can't find it now. It was a book. And he was branded because he was captured for aiding slaves to escape. And somebody, a friend of his, is interesting, (Jenny Harlan?). She went out to Michigan out to see the tombstone, and this Jonathon Walker's is out in Michigan, and it has a little circle in the [inaudible] with a branded hand on it. Very weird but [inaudible]. With Grandma Chase, I would say she was not even a very nice person, but (that might be growing up?) with nine children. But I do not know. That is just [inaudible] Chase saying anything about it.

RM: Right. His thinking seemed to have been very progressive.

ES: He would be amazing. He would think of something was printed in the newspaper recently. I mean, it's [inaudible] to think that he was on the women's lib way back then, more equal rights for them. I guess that's what it was.

RM: That is really amazing.

ES: Yes, because I had never heard it before. So, yes, it is four-page thing. You see, unbelievable size. And she knows all the fascinating characters that used to live in West Harwich.

RM: She sounds like she...

ES: And they could imitate people. There used to be a drive-in store called (Zimbaylin Store?), and he and his wife were absolute characters and she would tell stories about – and they have a daughter who is kind of a free-swinging type, and it's so funny to hear them [inaudible], and they were brother and sister. And their father was a sea captain. Everybody went down there and [inaudible]. They hear about them. There is ever so many fascinating characters like [inaudible]. And then they had the great Dennisport fire. That was a big excitement of the (century?).

RM: When was that?

ES: I can't remember. I do not know when it was. They had a whole block at Dennisport. (Dr. Ginns' block. You heard of Dr. Ginns?

RM: Yes.

ES: Oh, he was famous and that wonderful house of his that is still there. He was really a great aid to all the women of the cape. You didn't have to have an abortion [inaudible]. It was fine.

RM: Why?

ES: Because he took care of you.

RM: He took care of you?

ES: Oh, but he was a big man. Everybody [inaudible]. I trusted his...

RM: Was everyone very fond of him?

ES: Yes. And then he had to end up back down in Harwichport. When I was a child, they had the big blacksmith shop. Ernie Cole used to be the blacksmith in Harwich. He looked exactly like Longfellow's poem. He took – made for it. You know, the big apron that [inaudible]. You looked in the door and it was all dark except the fire down low. Oh, it was a fascinating place to go to see horses shod.

RM: What was his name?

ES: Ernie Cole.

RM: Ernie Cole?

ES: Yes. And he was a marvelous – except he like Jamaica gins a lot. Outside of that, he was a marvelous man. And you would go over there, and you'd see him, and I think it was (a breeze?) Anyway, it was a whole picture. Anyway, at one time, they caught fire and burned down. Oh, it was so sad. The church bell, you know, everybody by the church bell, poor thing. And, well, the little Catholic church burned in Harwich. The fire department got there. They got the hose fixed up to this pond down there. [inaudible] lots of mud dropped down. That was another blow, but this was very exciting because the paint shop was behind the [inaudible] paint shop.

RM: Would just go, yes. Where was this?

ES: It was right by (e-geometry?) store. Where was the (e-geometry?) store? It was right in the middle part – you know, where the (Pilgrim?) Lodge is, the street that goes there. It was right down that street.

RM: Near the [inaudible] shop, where that is now and the photography place?

ES: Yes. Because (Eldridge's?) grocery store used to be right there, I think. And J. Oscar Holtz, he was fabulous. He had the grocery store over there. Oh, he was really something. We had an ugly start, but that is a very late start. It is so funny about New Year's Eve about J. Oscar and his wife. Well, it seems that this man from Chatham – let's see, what was the – Hamilton. (Becky?) Hamilton was a very old man, just died recently. And they were having a New Year's Eve party at somebody we knew, and everyone was there at the house. And suddenly, he looked exactly like father time, he decided to draw something like father time so he [inaudible] and had one of those old-fashioned (vise?) ropes under the side. And he went out to walk up and down

the street to (wish?) [inaudible]. And what aggravated him, the people next to him were from Hawaii and they shot out fireworks on New Year's Eve, which wasn't heard of down here. And so Oscar Holtz and his wife [inaudible] and they saw him. And he says – oh, Oscar said to him, “Go home. You're drunk. Get off the streets. You're drunk.” No, “Get off the street,” and he was like, “Don't talk to him, Oscar. The man's drunk. Don't talk to him.” And there was a little bit of chit chat, and Reggie said, “If you don't stop, I'm going to cut your legs up the side there.” So with that, they went in the house and called the police. And so police came down, and we were all spoken to them about cutting Oscar's legs off. It was funny. And he could not be (apple cheeks?). He was an old Nova Scotian man, like the proverbial storekeeper. He had marvelous stew, and the sausage [inaudible]. All the barrels of [inaudible], the penny candy, the (case there?), and everything, and the meats. Always cut his meat and stuff in the back, which it smelled a little bad. But however that may be, the sanitation wasn't all it was.

RM: All it was cracked up to be.

ES: You would call it typical in the practice. And he [inaudible] was very thin, because one time after he died she got terribly ill [inaudible]. One time the nurse went out. She got hold of a pot of baked beans and she ate all she wanted that day. She was fine. You see, [inaudible] she wanted to do what she wanted to do.

RM: You think that is the trade?

ES: Yes. Yes, I do. But, oh, there were ever so many people on the street. And we had our characters, too. Lonzo Jordan, which you have heard.

RM: No.

ES: You have never heard of Lonzo Jordan?

RM: No.

ES: He was our chief character in town. We had a little (storage?) shop in Harwich Port, and he always used to bring us a whole wagon of – cut flowers down and sell them in front of our shop. And he was a faith healer. He came in once, he said, “You have got a terrible pain in your back.” [inaudible] what. But anyway, he said he was a faith healer, so he took on the pain. Everybody knew him. I mean, that is the way people were then. They were your own characters, your own town, and you accepted them and [inaudible].

RM: Right. Was there sort of a real separation between Harwich Port and Harwich center?

ES: Yes. [inaudible] They had a cannon. The Harwich Port were people would take it down there, and then [inaudible] would bring it back there. And there was a big deal of feeling about that cannon. I do not know the ins and outs of it.

RM: And people would keep taking it from one town to the other.

ES: Yes. Between Harwich and Chatham, there was a great – of course you heard the story of the ship that was in great distress right off the coast?

RM: No.

ES: Oh, they thought nobody found it, so they rolled in a little boat and they saw somebody trying to hail them. He said, “What town it is?” And they said, “It is Chatham.” So they rolled right back because they were Harwich [inaudible]. Rather be lost at sea than...

RM: [laughter] Really?

ES: Well, they thought the (fate?) was [inaudible].

RM: Oh, right.

ES: We even felt it when we came down here.

RM: You mean to Chatham?

ES: Yes. Because we were Harwichers. And this is much later than that.

RM: Yes. So, did you feel ostracized?

ES: A little.

RM: Really? Chatham has always had a very bad reputation for...

ES: It is very...

RM: It is very insulated.

ES: Yes. Because you knew a great school, between Chatham and Harwich, the [inaudible] regional. And then they made this great speech in town meeting. I have never – “Your people, children have been born and brought up in Chatham. You want your children to go to school on foreign soil?” That [inaudible] the Harwichers so much because it was about – well, it was six miles one way or the other between the two towns, the foreign soil deal.

RM: [laughter]

ES: Just like Harwich bought the jackrabbits at one time. They were going to stop them for shooting, as though we did not have enough [inaudible]. And they said in the paper that Harwich had to put little blue jackets and would go [inaudible] so the Chathamers wouldn't get their rabbits, see?

RM: So the Chatham people would not shoot them, you mean?

ES: Yes. When we got there.

RM: [laughter] Who suggested that?

ES: That is another thing on the same thing. Governor Dedon was going to build a tunnel through the end of P-town to South Boston so that people could come down the cape, go straight through in the tunnel, and back to South Boston. Wouldn't bother us at all. Wasn't that lovely?

RM: [laughter] Yes. So what are your earliest memories of Harwich Port? When did you...

ES: Going to the station on the barge. You know what a barge is, do you?

RM: It is a cart, right?

ES: A cart. You sit on two sides of it. There was a (lamb?) in the center to keep it. Going to Boston on the barge. And then you stayed at the Adam's House. That was on every Cape Cod. Always stayed at the Adam's House in Boston.

RM: In Boston?

ES: Because one of the sons came out of here was a minister from Harwich Port and [inaudible] had the Gideon Bible. They had the round leather things in the lobby and the lace [inaudible], the whole deal. Very lovely.

RM: You were not born here. When did you first...

ES: Well, my grandparents were here and, well, my father was a surveyor, went around here and there. Sometimes we were here with my grandmother instead of out there.

RM: Oh, I see. So your family actually lived off the cape, your father and mother?

ES: No, I meant sometimes they did. Sometimes they were back here.

RM: Oh, I see.

ES: See? They moved around so much. They usually stayed with nana, my grandmother, but my nana has passed.

RM: Oh, I see. What were your parents' names?

ES: Henry (Nova?) Chase and Agnes Marion Chase. And Marion, Phillips [inaudible]

RM: And so they lived on and off...

ES: Yes, different places. We lived in Plymouth for a while when he was working on the [inaudible]. And they were fixing it up at the (seminary?) there, and became the new (cage?) for

Plymouth Rock and so forth and so on. And I stayed on there after they went back to finish high school [inaudible].

RM: When did you move on to the cape permanently? Do you remember?

ES: No, I have no idea of dates. [inaudible] she knows everything like that, you know?

RM: Do you ever see her?

ES: Of course, I do. She lives in West Harwich.

RM: Oh. [laughter]

ES: [inaudible] Roberta doesn't live there, but [inaudible] live there. There are three daughters who...

RM: And she has a sister?

ES: Yes.

RM: What's her sister's name? (Dot?)?

ES: (Dorcas?) Chase [inaudible].

RM: (Dorcas?) Chase [inaudible]. And Antony remarried?

ES: No. But (Dorcas?) was the head of the diabetic team at the hospital for a long time. She was a nurse. And they can imitate that dialogue. They can tell you. And it is so funny, you would just die.

RM: Do you think they would be willing to talk to me?

ES: Oh, I am sure. They both like to talk.

RM: Yes, a lot of people do.

ES: Yes. Some do not admit it but...

RM: Yes. So, before you were married, were you living on the cape?

ES: Oh, I went to art school in Boston. Well, then I worked in Boston, Boston jobs. And then I guess I got married, then we went to Chicago. And then we came back. I guess I have lived out here ever since.

RM: Yes. Is your husband from the cape?



ES: He is. He was born in Chatham, I believe, although they are really Harwichers. Always kept the [inaudible] the cape guard – no.

RM: The, what, coast guard?

ES: Coast guard, yes. National guard, really. And so they were down in Harwich town, up in Boston, different places, moving around there.

RM: When did you come to the cape? When did you settle? I mean, you have had this business for quite a while.

ES: Well, we first lived with my mother, and then we bought the little house in the corner where the [inaudible] is.

RM: With who?

ES: Darling old house. I adore old houses. But other than what, I go for little (covered bridges?) when I down here – I go to the old houses and windmills.

RM: I like windmills.

ES: I like windmills. I like lighthouses. I adore lighthouses. One of [inaudible] is adorable [inaudible]. [inaudible] nearest they've got around here, anywhere, is Monomoy.

RM: Well, tell me about Monomoy.

ES: Oh, it is just wonderful. Nothing about it except that it is just like it always has been. Now they're not letting anybody build anymore out there, so as the old houses go, there is nothing more [inaudible]. I was having [inaudible] the great big thing and it was an inlet to a [inaudible]. Now it is dried up. It's just happenstance.

RM: Do you sail out there?

Unknown Male Speaker: We go in the motorboat.

RM: Oh, the motorboat.

ES: Yes. Sure quicker. But of course, you do have to watch your days, because it can be terribly rough going out there because it is very (shoal?) out here. But in the point is lovely. That is where the seagulls rested in the point. But they are not as bad as the terns. [inaudible] just dive bomb you when you're over there nesting season. They're just vicious.

RM: Really?

ES: But the seagulls – but you want to be careful walking through to not step on a baby, because they are around [inaudible] and you try and take a wide berth around them babies. Oh, but it's

just so wonderful out there. It is as though you were there at the beginning of the world. I mean, it's the way it always has been, nothing to bother it.

RM: There are very few places on the cape like that.

ES: Oh, I guess there are quite a few. We went down to [inaudible] beach in Wellesley. I think that is a beautiful beach. And if you come back the old way, that is fantastic because it is older.

RM: Little narrower, yes.

ES: And no [inaudible]. And they can move another car, you have to have a helicopter lift you up or something. I do not know what you do. But we come back three times that way, and we would just drive on and on and on and on in the wilderness. It could never go out.

RM: That is nice.

ES: I love that. I like Brewster. Love Brewster. That car just (beats?) there. The huge stones and all the sea. And early in the morning, when the sun is just coming up, and the (rims?) were set, and you think sea monsters coming right out at you.

RM: [laughter]

ES: It's the only place that has huge rocks like that.

RM: Right. I mean, it looks completely different from the South Shore.

ES: Yes.

RM: Well [inaudible]...

ES: Oh, I had a story about [inaudible]. [inaudible] I seen something I never saw before in my life. I saw this man and this little baby, and she was a great big woman. She wore men's clothes long before, you know. Had her hair cut [inaudible], men's cap [inaudible]. But she had a number of children of a certain shade. But I said, "Doesn't matter what color they are. They are all [inaudible]." I saw her nursing the baby. She worked with [inaudible], so they had a man on that side, I think.

RM: But she wore men's clothes. Her name was chew tobacco (Sue?)?

ES: Yes, because she chewed tobacco.

RM: Oh.

ES: Which is a little bit unusual.

RM: Yes. What were the other names that you just told me?

ES: Oh, snake foot Charlie. He was just a poor unfortunate...

RM: Snake foot Charlie?

ES: Yes. And the history [inaudible] all them little children from the village used to come down and sell blueberries in blueberry season. You always got your blueberries that way. You bought a bowl out and they put [inaudible]. They used to sell red flowers at the side of the road, too.

RM: Those are the Portuguese children.

ES: Yes. I have a relative who [inaudible] Portuguese [inaudible] call them Portuguese; you're supposed to call them (Cape Verde Islanders?). However, it is called Portuguese down here regardless of that fine distinction. Another thing that I think ought to be got [inaudible] was the fun of cranberry for the family. Every family had their own bog, and the whole family went together.

RM: Did you do it?

ES: Oh, sure. My mother made [inaudible] fingers. That was the first thing you need to get ready, and knee pads, because otherwise those vines will just cut your hands to pieces. And it was done by scoops then, and hand picking in some cases with the young (lads?). And then the children were allowed [inaudible] and you got paid for your measure. See, somebody kept tally. And then when it, oh, that smells of cranberry [inaudible] eat your lunch in front of that. And hearing the (screen?) of cranberries, they bounced along the (screen?), and the black snakes going across the bottom, yellow (cow slips?). Oh, it is just endlessly fun for children, because they did not have to pick [inaudible].

RM: Right, right. They could just kind of just watch them.

ES: Yes. And Lonzo used to entertain us at the cranberry bog at lunchtime.

RM: Where did your family have a bog?

ES: It was up off Hoyt Road. That's off Main Street.

RM: [inaudible]

ES: [inaudible] has them all now, I guess, but each piece and family Chases had one up near the (tri-post?) in Bassett. Oh, yes, the (tri-post?) in Bassett House was one of the earlier houses they had there. And she said – I do not know which relative – she was six feet tall. And then here is this (tri-post?) Bassett built like a regular Cape Cod house. So when [inaudible], the house at [inaudible], they built that. She had the ceilings built nine feet high downstairs and eight feet high upstairs.

RM: Why? Because she had some big relatives?

ES: No, because she was this woman that was so tall. She had it built that way. She said, "I am not going to hit my head anymore on things."

RM: [laughter] What was her name?

ES: Alta will tell you. I couldn't figure out just where she came in.

RM: Where she came in from?

ES: Yes. So when you see a house in Cape Cod with nine-foot ceilings, it is rather unusual unless it is one of those big mansion things.

RM: There's a house in South Harwich. It's a very large gothic kind of house on the righthand side of 28, across from what used to be the South Harwich post office, and they have really tall ceilings.

ES: Yes, a house like that would have it.

RM: And that was a small house.

ES: Oh, it was?

RM: Yes.

ES: Oh, I thought you said this great big thing.

RM: Well, it was. It is a large – some friends of mine own it. It's a pottery place now.

ES: Oh, yes.

RM: The ceilings are really high, unusually high for a cape house.

ES: Yes. Because the house, usually seven, few inches over seven feet, usually, because we got a beautiful, old Cape Cod house up there.

RM: Oh, you lived behind the church?

ES: Yes.

RM: Do you have any children?

ES: Yes, I have four children.

RM: Grandchildren?

ES: Five.

RM: Five.

ES: Yes. I just had a new one. My youngest daughter had a baby, so we were out there yesterday. [inaudible] to see how the other half lived.

RM: Yes. How they doing?

ES: Good news. Well, you get \$350 on a velveteen jacket, it's a little bit much. And the prices are fantastic, but this is [inaudible]. It is a kind of Cape Cod mall, let us put it that way. Now I have one daughter who is out in Washington state.

[end of transcript]