

**BAYSHORE CENTER AT BIVALVE
DELAWARE BAY MUSEUM**

ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTION

INTERVIEW DATE: August 7, 2013

SUBJECT: Family history

NARRATOR(S): Joan Riggin Harper and Mary Annie Harper (daughter)

LOCATION: Bayshore Center at Bivalve

INTERVIEWER: Rachel Dolhanczyk, Museum Curator, Delaware Bay Museum, and Pat Moore, Volunteer, Delaware Bay Museum

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Joan Riggin Harper generously shared her family history. Father was a Riggin, and her mother was a Bateman. She shared stories of her growing up in Port Norris and living almost 90 years in Cumberland County. Good information regarding what Main Street looked like in the '30s through the '50s. She named stores, owners, and their exact locations. The lifestyle was simple. She shared a lot of details about individuals, maybe even a little bit of "good ole" timey gossip. She was having a wonderful time taking the opportunity to share her life with us.

Pat Moore: Okay. Today is August 7, 2013. We are interviewing Joan Riggin Harper at the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. I'm Pat Moore, volunteer of the BCB museum. Also in attendance is Rachel Dolhanczyk, Curator for the Museum. Thank you for coming, Miss Joan. [laughter] I've been looking forward to this interview with you. I think one of the easiest things to start with – whenever you do genealogy, they always tell you you start with yourself first, and then we just go everywhere from that point.

Rachel Dolhanczyk: That's what we're going to do. [laughter]

PM: [laughter] So we're going to start with you. I'd like you to start with – if you will, give us your birthdate.

Joan Riggin Harper: 2/7/24.

PM: And you were born where?

JRH: Millville.

PM: In Millville?

JRH: Yeah.

PM: Were you born at home or in the hospital?

JRH: No, in the hospital.

PM: Millville Hospital?

JRH: Right. I've lived in Cumberland County almost now for ninety years.

PM: Very good. May we have the names of your parents?

JRH: Yes. My father's name was John Cullen Riggin. And my mother's name was Emily Fowler Bateman.

RD: And it was Cullen?

JRH: C-U-L-L-E-N.

RD: And Riggin was your dad. And your mother, again, Emily?

JRH: Emily Fowler Bateman.

RD: Got all the names there.

PM: Yes. [laughter]

JRH: Yes.

PM: Tell us about your schooling. Where did you first start going to school? Where did you graduate?

JRH: All right. I went to Port Norris Grammar School, [which] was a wooden building next to the high school. I went there. There were six grades in the wooden school, and seventh grade was in the basement of the high school. When we went to the high school, the boys went in this side, and the girls went in this side. But we were not separated once we got inside. I graduated from Port Norris High School in 1941. And then, I went to business school in Bridgeton. My first job was typing deeds when the Army bought the airport ground in Millville. Yeah. From there, I was married and had three children.

PM: All right. Well, I'm going to stop you and back up a little bit. Go back to your schooling. You said you went to a business school in Bridgeton. Do you remember the name of it?

JRH: Oh, God. It was owned by a –

PM: See, now I do challenge. [laughter]

JRH: No, it was owned by a husband and wife, and it was on Bank Street. No, I have no idea.

PM: Now, was that a one-year course?

JRH: Yeah. Yeah.

PM: A one-year course?

JRH: Yeah. And they didn't teach Gregg. They taught something called Speed Script.

PM: They didn't – Gregg shorthand, no?

JRH: It was a different kind, but I don't remember a bit of it.

RD: And then you were typing deeds?

JRH: Yeah, when they bought the ground for the Millville – for the Army airfield.

RD: The Millville Army –

PM: What company were you working for that you were –? Who were you working for when you were typing the deeds?

JRH: It was the government, but I had no idea.

PM: Oh, so you were actually an employee of the US government?

JRH: I guess I was. Yeah. I didn't realize at the time, but yeah, I suppose I was.

PM: Where was your office located?

JRH: Bridgeton, second floor of a building on the corner of Commerce and Laurel Street. Yeah. God, that was a long time ago.

PM: Yeah. [laughter] And how long did you work there?

JRH: Oh, no more than a year. It didn't take long to get that work done. Yeah. And then I worked at [inaudible] for a while in the office. And then I got married and had children, and I didn't work until 1961 when we bought an insurance business, and then my husband and I ran that for twenty years in Bridgeton. I left Port Norris in 1953 and moved to Bridgeton. I've been in that area ever since.

PM: The business that you and your husband – what was your husband's name?

JRH: Bertram.

PM: Bertram?

JRH: Yes.

RD: Can you spell that?

JRH: B-E-R-T-R-A-M.

PM: And his middle? Does he have a middle name?

JRH: Earl.

PM: Earl? Okay.

JRH: Harper. Yeah. His parents immigrated to the United States in 1919 from England. His father was a minister. That's how he got here. He was born here. Yeah.

PM: Did his father continue ministering in the area?

JRH: Yeah.

PM: In Port Norris?

JRH: Oh, no. He was a Lutheran minister. His last church was Christ Lutheran on Bank Street in Bridgeton.

PM: Oh, okay. And what business did your husband have?

JRH: We had an insurance business.

PM: And that was located in?

JRH: Bridgeton.

PM: All right.

JRH: Yeah. [laughter]

RD: This was easy. [laughter]

PM: The business schooling that you had for the year, were there a lot of students in the class?

JRH: I doubt if there were more than a dozen. Yeah. And it was in the front part of a building that I'm sure was a house. I don't know. But it was on Bank Street.

PM: What did you study? Typing?

JRH: [laughter] The only thing I remember is shorthand and typing. I'm sure they must have given us some basic accounting –

RD: Accounting, yeah.

JRH: – and that kind of thing, yeah, so all I knew was it got me a job. [laughter]

PM: That's good. [laughter]

RD: That's what's important. [laughter]

PM: Now, what was your father's full name and –

JRH: John Cullen Riggan.

PM: And your mother's full name?

JRH: Emily Fowler Bateman.

PM: Okay. She was a Bateman.

JRH: Yeah, she was a Bateman.

PM: Yeah, she was a Bateman.

JRH: Her mother was a Fowler. Joseph Fowler, I'm sure, is in your – well, he was my grandmother's brother. Oh, we're tied in down here, Rachel. [laughter]

RD: Oh, I know. I know. I'm just going to make a note of that. [laughter]

PM: My husband's family goes back forever, too. He can be walking down the street, and somebody will walk up to him and say, "You're a Moore, and I'm related." [laughter] Oh. Did we establish what your parents –? They lived here in Port Norris.

JRH: Yes.

PM: Where in Port Norris?

JRH: My father was raised a block from where I was raised. [inaudible] live there now. It's on the corner of Brown and Temperance. Beautiful. They've done a fantastic job with it. Then, my dad built a house down the next corner. I remember when they dug the foundation. I was five when we moved down there. They dug up with horses, pulling a sled full of dirt. I can see that just as vividly. Yeah, it was the coolest thing. My mother was raised in this house on the corner, coming down the Bivalve road [High Street], that you can't see for all the junk they've got planted in front of it.

RD: Oh, it's –

JRH: Yeah.

RD: – there's a lot of shrubs –

Mary Annie Harper: Growth.

RD: Growth, yes.

JRH: Yes. I think people named [Tony and Marcia] Klock worked there or lived there.

RD: I don't know.

JRH: Yeah. But that's where my mother was raised.

RD: That's on the right-hand side?

JRH: Yes. Yeah. And my great-grandparents lived across the street.

PM: And what were their names?

JRH: Bateman.

RD: They were the Batemans.

PM: Yeah. What was your grandfather's full name?

JRH: Oh, my grandfather's name was Morton Timothy Bateman. My grandmother's name was Luella Fowler Bateman. Yeah. And then grandfather's father had a store down here.

PM: What kind of store?

JRH: A ship chandlery.

RD: And that was your great-grandfather?

JRH: Yeah, that would have been my great, yeah.

RD: And he was?

JRH: His name was Timothy, too.

RD: Timothy Bateman?

JRH: Yes.

RD: Oh, named for – oh, the Timothy Bateman?

JRH: Yes, exactly. Exactly.

RD: Civil War?

JRH: Yeah. Yes. Yes. How did you know that?

RD: Because cousins of yours, I guess –

JRH: Bill or Rachel?

RD: Rebecca, Becky [inaudible]? Is that their name?

JRH: I don't know. These are the people that brought the diary down?

RD: Yes.

JRH: I have no idea who they are.

RD: Her aunt is Berta.

JRH: Okay. And then she had – yeah, Berta.

RD: Berta. They always call her Aunt Berta. I'm forgetting her married name.

JRH: It's Japanese.

RD: Is it? Okay.

JRH: She married a Japanese years ago when you just didn't do that. Yeah.

PM: How interesting. Well, in any event –

JRH: Yeah. Our sister's name was Rachel.

RD: Yes. You also kept it –

JRH: And these must have been Rachel's children that brought this to you.

RD: Right. Well, Rachel kept a diary and –

JRH: Rachel's a little –

RD: – and she was a midwife, I believe.

JRH: Oh, God, not the Rachel that I know.

RD: Not the same? Okay.

JRH: But the daughter could have been.

RD: Her mother kept a diary as well. To give a little background. [laughter]

JRH: I'm not going to let her come anymore. [laughter]

RD: There's basically a hundred years' worth of diaries from the Bateman Family, starting with Timothy during the Civil War. And that's why I said the Timothy. And then the diary was picked up, I believe, by his wife. I could have this – don't quote me on this. Then it passed to the next generation, so there's almost a hundred years of entries.

JRH: Well, just to digress, and this doesn't really belong in the tape, but Dr. Emma Allen, who lived in Newport, I didn't know was a relative of ours for a long time. So, I

took Mother to see her one day. She said to me, “You know, Joan, there’s a diary.” And that’s the first time I had ever heard about it. The other side of the family, my grandfather’s sister, who lived in Woodbury, and her daughter was one of the first woman physicians ever – they had it. Apparently, they were keeping it a secret, so we didn’t even know the diary existed. We only have excerpts. So, what excerpts we have, my son has taken it to the archives in Carlisle. He was a military man, so it [inaudible] what we have. I guess it’s everywhere else.

RD: Because I thought I gave you the transcription of it.

JRH: You did. Oh, you did. Yes. Yes.

RD: One of the times you visited. That’s right.

JRH: When we were all here, you printed one out for Michael. Did they give you one? Okay. But you gave one to Mike.

RD: Well, it’s electronic, so I could email it to you. So that’s a different branch of the family, then. But all related to Timothy Bateman.

JRH: Well, yeah. It’s not really a different branch.

RD: [laughter] Right, same –

JRH: My grandfather’s sister, and they kept it very close to them. Well, thank goodness they did.

RD: Okay. Well, thank you for establishing the connection. [laughter]

PM: Has there ever been and have you ever seen any family genealogy other than these diaries?

JRH: I understand my cousin Bill has the Riggin Family – pages and pages. I keep thinking – he’s older than I am. I hope he’s going to leave it to – I still call him young Bill, and he’s in his nineties – leave it to his son Bill. But I haven’t seen it.

PM: Where is Bill? Is he in the area?

JRH: Yeah, Port Norris. Lives right next to Barney Hollinger.

RD: In fact, the son, I haven't seen in him a while, but he oftentimes is –

JRH: God, he's handsome. Isn't he handsome? He lives in [inaudible] on the [inaudible] road.

RD: And he's friendly with – or in business, I guess, with Barney Hollinger as well, so maybe, next time I see him, I'll just say, "By the way" –

PM: Yes, because one of the things that we –

RD: – "I hear you have a genealogy."

PM: – are trying to do, along with creating an oral history library, we're also collecting family genealogies for future research and things like that.

JRH: I had a cousin who was doing the Fowler side of the Bateman family. He died, and I have no idea whatever happened to that. But I do know that my grandmother's mother came from Heislerville, and her name was Randolph. Now, how did the Randolphs get to Heislerville? I think that's kind of interesting. And you think of them only as in Virginia, really. So I do know that. But that's it.

PM: Did we get your father's birthdate?

JRH: November the 6th. I do not know what year without going to the cemetery. But that's no problem.

PM: Do you remember what year he died and how old he was when he died?

JRH: He was ninety-three.

MAH: Michael was in Germany.

JRH: That's right. Mike was in Germany. It was July. Yeah.

PM: The year?

JRH: I'd have to look it up for you because I can't remember.

PM: Okay. All right. We'll look for that. Now, one of the things, let's see, your mother and father, do you remember when they were married?

JRH: Yes, 1923, February the 14th.

PM: Valentine's Day. What a romantic. [laughter]

JRH: Yes. [laughter]

PM: Where were they married?

JRH: A little town between here and Woodbury. What the heck is the name? The reason they went there to get married [was] the minister was a close friend. In fact, we call them uncle and aunt. And Uncle Charlie was at that church at that time, and that's why Mother and Daddy went up there and got married. I can't remember what the name of the – I can see the church because we used to go. It was on [Route] 47, the old way to Philly.

PM: Well, it'll pop up. [laughter]

JRH: It'll pop up.

RD: Yeah, don't worry about it.

JRH: And when it does, I'll give you a call.

PM: Okay. [laughter] And where were you married and when?

JRH: Elkton, Maryland.

PM: [laughter] Me too.

JRH: [laughter] I knew there was something about you I like. Oh my God, Pat. What are the odds of that ever?

PM: We're fellow elopees.

JRH: Yes, we're fellow elopees. Oh, dear Lord.

RD: Is that the significance of the place?

MAH: Yeah.

PM: Is it?

PM: That was the place to go to elope. You could get married [snaps finger] like that, with no witnesses. [laughter]

RD: And why was that? Just because the laws were lax?

JRH: That's a long story.

RD: Another interview?

JRH: Yeah, I'd rather not go into that one. That was in 19 –

MAH: Can you say grandfather didn't necessarily approve?

JRH: It was '42, I think, Pat. I think. It was '42 or '43. I don't remember. Gets a little personal with these questions, doesn't she? [laughter] Oh, God.

PM: [laughter] All right. Your dad started out as a pharmacist, or he studied as a pharmacist?

JRH: He studied. He never got through because his father died.

PM: And where was he studying? In Philadelphia?

JRH: In Philadelphia?

PM: Yes, there was a pharmacy school in –

JRH: Yeah, they had sent him to Peddie, and he graduated from Peddie.

PM: Peddie. Okay. And that is in Trenton or Lawrence?

JRH: Yeah.

PM: Yeah. Lawrence? I think Meghan went to Peddie.

JRH: Yeah, Lawrence Township somewhere.

RD: Yeah, she did.

JRH: No kidding? They take girls?

RD: Yeah. I think she did a year – went to high school [inaudible]

JRH: Yeah, like an in-between – yeah.

RD: Our director [inaudible]

JRH: Then he went to Philadelphia [College] of Pharmacy, yes. I just have remembered this from bits and pieces, Pat, because my family never would sit down and give you the whole thing, so you just have to –

PM: Oh, families don't. [laughter]

JRH: Yeah.

PM: That's the reason it's so good that we can grab history this way.

JRH: So this is how I figured it out. He had two brothers. The oldest one was named Walter Louis. Walter Louis – called him Uncle Louis. He went in the service in World War I, so he was totally out of the picture. And when he came back, he was a plumber, so he was never involved with the oyster business. My dad and my uncle Bill went into business. Apparently, Uncle Bill was already working with his father. My dad came home to help with the oyster business. My dad's health failed. Oh, we had moved into the house, so it was about '30-'31. I remember everybody – they rushed him to Philadelphia Hospital. Today, whatever he had wrong with him could have been fixed, and he would have been able to work the rest of his life. Well, he chose not to. Now, this does not really belong in the tape.

RD: Oh, would you like me to –?

JRH: Just for a minute.

PM: – stop it?

JRH: Yes

RD: Okay. We're just going to pause for a moment.

[Recording paused.]

JRH: Okay. Dad never really worked after he – what I think happened was he sold his share to his brother Bill. But that's just something that I think.

RD: This was – backing up – because your dad was sick?

JRH: Yeah.

RD: And this was 1933-ish?

JRH: Right in the early '30s, yeah.

RD: And your mom went to work for the telephone company?

JRH: No, she didn't go to work until in the '40s, after the war started.

RD: Oh, after the war? Okay.

JRH: Yeah.

RD: She was a telephone operator? [inaudible]

JRH: She was a telephone operator. She was a telephone operator until she retired. Yeah.

RD: And your dad – the family's business name?

JRH: Was Riggin & Riggin.

RD: Riggin & Riggin?

JRH: Right. Right. Yeah, you've got letterhead somewhere in there. Now, see, this is 1927, and so Daddy was still working with Uncle Bill.

PM: Okay. Joan is referring to an original paper that is handwritten – 1927. Is that [inaudible] oyster beds?

JRH: [inaudible], yeah.

PM: Riggin & Riggin. Then, it is a graphic chart or plot of the different lots that the Riggin & Riggin –

JRH: I was so excited when I found that.

PM: – company –

JRH: Yeah. C.M. was my father's uncle. And of course, Chef (Campbell?) and Newcomb Brothers [inaudible] – they're all familiar with those. But isn't that cool?

RD: And the neat thing about it is there's sort of a key on the left-hand side. It tells you how old the oysters are in the different sections, so if there are three-year-old oysters or two-year-old or new plants, you can follow the key, which, of course, makes sense. Then you know which ones you're going to be dredging up that season and what ones you got to leave another day or two.

PM: Right. That was the Excel spreadsheet of 1927. [laughter]

JRH: Exactly. [laughter]

RD: Yeah.

PM: Now, the business started in the early '30s. Now, were they just oystering at that particular time? And what was the name of their schooner? Were they still under sail?

JRH: Oh, their two boats were the *Tony Faust* and the *Addie S. Riggin*.

PM: And how do you spell Addie?

JRH: A-D-D-I-E. She was my father's mother.

PM: okay. And it's Faust, F, as in Frank?

JRH: F-A-U-S-T. I understand she's in the mud somewhere.

PM: And do you know who that Tony Faust was?

JRH: I have no idea. Never heard.

PM: Yeah, because that's a very strange name.

JRH: Yeah.

PM: I've never heard that name.

JRH: I don't have the slightest idea. I remember Uncle Bill had – oh, the little boat they'd tow behind. He named that the *Jean and Joan*. They had a daughter, Jean, who was a week older than I. He named it *Jean and Joan*. [laughter]

RD: Oh, that's cute.

PM: Do you know where their schooners were built?

JRH: No. I haven't the slightest idea. *Tony Faust*, I'm sure, was not built locally. The *Addie S. Riggin* could have been bought somewhere in a local shipyard.

PM: Okay. So they weren't the original owners of those two schooners?

JRH: That I don't know, Pat. I don't have a clue.

PM: Okay. We have some charts that we can look up ship names and see years and –

JRH: I know where some of the boats were built, but I don't know.

PM: Now, in the '30s, were they still oystering under sail or –

JRH: Oh, yeah.

PM: – they had motor –

JRH: They didn't go to motors until the '40s, I think.

RD: Around the war.

JRH: Around the war, yeah. Oh, what a shame.

RD: Do you remember seeing the boats under sail?

JRH: Oh, my God. Well, where Mother and Daddy's house was built, if you stood at the top of the stairs and looked out the window, you can see all the reaches, so they would come – Pat? The Peak of the Moon?

PM: Yes.

JRH: – come past the Peak of the Moon. There was a bend. Then, there was another bend. And then there was another bend, and then it went onto into Dorchester, Mauricetown, and Millville. So it was a sight. Oh, God, it was gorgeous.

PM: Now, do you remember being on the boats when you were little?

JRH: No. I get seasick.

RD: Me too.

PM: Oh, so you never got a Sunday picnic on the boat? [laughter]

JRH: Oh, no way. [laughter] And my dad smoked cigars in the car.

PM: [laughter] How long did they operate Riggin & Riggin? Now, when they first started, they were just oystering.

JRH: They took over their father's business.

PM: Okay. And they were just oystering?

JRH: That's all they ever did.

PM: Okay. They didn't have a shucking house?

JRH: No. No, they never had a shucking house. I think most of their oysters – now, this is just a guess – were sold to Fred East because they were very, very close friends because Fred and –

RD: In Maurice River?

JRH: And Mabel Holt.

RD: Mabel? We know about Mabel Holt.

JRH: Yeah, Mother and Mabel were close friends.

RD: We interviewed last week –

JRH: Oh, that's right. You said did.

RD: – John Breslin, Jr., who's the grandson of Mabel Holt.

JRH: From Millville?

RD: Yes.

PM: Yes.

JRH: The Breslins. Close friend of my mother's, yeah. One of them was a schoolteacher or a principal or something, wasn't he?

PM: Well, John, the one we interviewed, was a schoolteacher here in Port Norris.

RD: And then finished Upper Deerfield? Taught in –

PM: Yes, finished his teaching career in Upper Deerfield.

JRH: Oh, my God.

RD: But he's now retired, so he told us quite a bit about his grandmother, so that's an interesting connection then.

JRH: Oh, my God. Well, he would have remembered Mother if you said Emily Riggins because she was on the school board for thirty-five years here.

RD: Oh, sure. [laughter]

JRH: She loved every minute of it. Yeah.

RD: Just so I can clarify, so what Riggins & Riggins did was they planted –

JRH: To the best of my knowledge, they planted and dredged and –

RD: – harvested –

JRH: – and that was it.

RD: – and then sold to probably F.F. East.

JRH: Yeah.

PM: Do you know if they rented space in the sheds here for their business?

JRH: Don't have the slightest idea.

RD: If they had an office?

JRH: Yeah. I don't know.

PM: Now, Rachel had mentioned, in conversation with you previously – where physically was the business held, do you know? There was something about a fire.

JRH: Oh, yes, we did. Yes, we did have a shucking house because they burned it down. It was arson.

PM: Okay. Tell us about that.

JRH: Well, I'll tell you what I know. I remember standing in my mother and father's bedroom, watching it burn. Now, of course, to me, it didn't mean anything, except it was a big fire.

RD: Do you know approximately the year or time period or how old you were? You were a child?

JRH: No. Well, it was before my dad got sick. I know that. But I don't know what year it was.

RD: So around 1930, maybe?

JRH: I would guess, yeah. What you've got to do is you've either got to go to his house, or you've got to get Bill in here and, even if young Billy has to bring him because –

RD: Yeah, that would be great.

JRH: – he would have the answers to all this.

PM: Okay, good.

JRH: Years later, I was talking to a friend of mine whose family was also in the oyster business big-time. And we were just talking one time about the business. He said, “Well, you know who burned your father’s shucking house down.” I’m not going to tell you. And I said, “No. Do they know?” He said, “Of course, they know who did it.” And I said, “Well, who was it?” And he told me. And I said, “You got to be kidding.” These were people that lived in a lovely house. So I said later to my mother – she lived to be 102. I said, “Mother, I know who burned the shucking house down.” “Who told you?” I told her who told me. She couldn’t deny it. But they were never able to pin it on this guy. It was a local guy. Anyway, that’s how they lost their shucking house; they did shuck oysters. I had totally forgotten that. As they say, shit happens.

PM: Yes. [laughter] Do you remember the location of the shucking house?

JRH: Well, I could see it out of their bedroom window, so it had to be, I would say, more in Shell Pile than Bivalve, although Mother and Daddy’s house is tall. But it was down here.

PM: Now, after it burned down, did they rebuild?

JRH: No.

PM: They just totally went out of business?

JRH: As far as I know, they never shucked an oyster after that, but then I – there are some things, Pat, that I just plain just don’t know.

RD: But they may have still kept working on the schooners and planting and harvesting.

JRH: Oh, yeah. They still ran the boats, yeah.

RD: So maybe that’s why, when they would sell to F.F. East, maybe that was part of it or something.

JRH: Yeah. Well, I just thought maybe that’s how they got to be so friendly. I don’t know. Yeah.

RD: Right. It's interesting, though. Yeah. Do you have any memories of the shucking house?

JRH: No.

RD: No? You never went in?

JRH: I never saw it, no. No.

PM: You said you had recollections of Mabel Banks – is it Bank or Banks? – Holt.

JRH: Oh, Mabel Holt? Well, she was just a close friend of Mother. They became friendly. I remember one year, Mabel had to take a business trip, and Mother went with her out in the Midwest somewhere. That was a big deal. But I just remember her going with Mrs. Holt.

MAH: Oh, wow. They must have gone by train, huh?

JRH: Yeah. Yes.

PM: Yeah. John was telling us about her trips. She would take trips out to brokers –

JRH: Yes.

PM: – and set up contracts for –

JRH: She invited Mother to go one time, and I do remember that. Yeah.

RD: Oh, neat.

PM: Yeah. And he did say that she went out as far as Ohio and Missouri.

JRH: Yeah. Right. And that was a long trip.

PM: Oh, yeah.

JRH: Very important for a woman, especially. Yeah. That's how Mother became friendly with the Breslins. See, I didn't realize that.

RD: Oh, good. [laughter]

PM: The other thing we wanted to get a little clarification on is that you have some history information about the old church that is down the street from us. Can you share that with us?

JRH: Yeah. Do you have a decent picture of that?

RD: We do. When it was in good condition?

JRH: Yeah. Oh, because I have two, and I was going to have a copy made if you didn't.

RD: Oh, okay. Well, I'd be curious to see what version you have. That'd be great.

JRH: Her name was Rebecca Fowler Morris. She was the oldest in the Fowler family. They grew up in a house down on the corner of Main and (Temperance?), the big white house that's still on the corner. She was married to James Morris. I remember seeing Uncle Jim once. I don't know what he did to make a living. For some reason or other, she became very interested – I don't know whether she had the church built, but I remember my grandmother telling me that Aunt Beck would take a hack, which would have been a taxi – a horse and a wagon – and her little organ and come down every Sunday to have service. Of course, when automobiles came, she came down in a car. There couldn't be more than twenty people in that place. That's all I know. We've always called it Aunt Beck's church.

PM: Now, at that time, where was that church located?

JRH: Right there.

PM: Right there?

JRH: It's never been anywhere else.

PM: See, we have conflicting stories.

JRH: Really?

PM: Yeah, that it was built somewhere else and moved to that –

JRH: Well, Pat, the only place I ever remember seeing it, as far back as I can remember, is right where it is. We just always called it Aunt Beck's church.

PM: Now, where did Aunt Beck live, and where was she —?

JRH: okay. You know where [Hoffman] Funeral Home is as you come down to Bivalve?

PM: Oh, yes.

JRH: okay. Well, she's the first house, as you make a turn on the left. In front of it was Sammy Cobb's store with a telephone office on the second floor. Did you know that?

RD: Maybe. Well, I can't say for sure, but it sounds a little familiar. [laughter]

JRH: Okay. But that lot's all cleaned off and looks nice.

RD: Oh, Marie Cobb's store?

JRH: Marie Cobb's store, yeah.

RD: That building was just purchased by the Port Norris Historical Society. Across from Newcomb's Market? Is that the same place or no?

JRH: No.

RD: Wrong place, then.

JRH: No.

RD: Okay. Never mind.

JRH: No, no. Let me have your pencil. Let me show you where it was. This is Main Street. This is the cross street. This is where Dr. Sharp's house was. Okay. Originally, Sammy Cobb's was right there.

RD: Oh, Sammy Cobb? Okay.

JRH: Who's her father? This was the shoemaker right there. And then over here was this building. Now, I don't know what was in it. He moved over here eventually. But the telephone office was on the second floor, where Mother worked.

RD: And that was across the street from Doc. Sharp's house?

JRH: Yeah. And then Aunt Beck's house is right there.

RD: Behind that is – okay.

JRH: Yeah. There are two houses there, and there've always just been two houses there.

RD: Oh, okay. The business I was thinking of was Marie Cobb.

JRH: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Marie had her own little place at some point.

RD: Across from what's today Newcomb's Market, in the building that the Port Norris Historical Society is renovating.

JRH: Oh, really?

RD: Yeah. I got confused. Too many Cobbs.

JRH: The one that was a thrift shop or something?

RD: Next to it, yeah.

JRH: Oh, okay. All right.

RD: But essentially, she lived right down the street?

JRH: Yeah.

RD: And was that in the 1930s, then?

JRH: What?

RD: I'm sorry. Aunt Beck, when she was playing the organ and –

JRH: Oh, I would imagine, yeah. I would imagine.

RD: That's interesting.

JRH: I don't remember when she died. I know she was alive when I was in high school. Whether she was still going down there, I don't know. [She] must have an important telephone call. She works for Frank LoBiondo, Pat. She's his chief of staff – Mary Annie.

RD: Joan's daughter, Mary Annie Harper, is the chief of staff for Congressman LoBiondo. She's been sitting in the room with us, and she just left to take a call.
[laughter]

JRH: Well, she was funny. I said, "Why are you going with me today?" She said, "I want to hear what you have to say." [laughter]

RD: Excellent. Now, Pat, did you ask – maybe you did – what type of church it was, the congregation?

JRH: I don't know. I never thought – the Fowlers were all raised Methodist. I know that. The Batemans are all raised Baptist. But I don't know. I just don't think she – I don't know. Because she was not ordained. She just played for them. Apparently, she preached to them. We always called it her church. I never knew of anybody else there but her. I don't know anybody left in town that could even refute this because it's been so long ago. It seems to me I'm the only person that knows it's Aunt Beck's church.
[laughter]

PM: Yeah. [laughter] We've tried to do some research on the church. I've only been able to go back as far as when it was an African-American church, so that had to be –

JRH: Well, maybe she played for the Black church. It's possible.

PM: Yeah. The preacher that last was affiliated with the church is now retired. He lives here in Port Norris. The church – I'm trying to remember the name, and it's a very long name. I can't remember the name of the church, the congregation – and he moved to Bridgeton. They physically left the building here, but they moved that congregation to a church in Bridgeton. I think it is still there in Bridgeton.

RD: And that was twenty, twenty-five years ago or something?

PM: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

JRH: What's his last name?

PM: The preacher's name I'd have to – I rely on electronic files, not my brain.
[laughter]

JRH: Is the Black church still on Railroad Avenue?

RD: Yes, Shiloh?

JRH: Shiloh, yeah. Okay. Well, that wasn't there when I left.

RD: Oh, I think it was House of Jacob.

PM: Something of the House of Jacob.

RD: It's a longer name now.

JRH: Yeah. Oh, they do love long names.

RD: Yeah. But do we know how far back his memory went, like to the '50s maybe or –

PM: His was in the '50s and the '60s, and I think they pulled out in the '70s.

RD: '70? Yeah, okay.

JRH: You see, the sad thing is every one of Aunt Beck's family is gone. There's nobody. She had two boys. They each had one son. They're all gone, so there's just nothing left.

RD: So, Aunt Beck's church? [laughter] That's what we can call it.

JRH: Aunt Beck's church.

PM: Now, do we have Aunt Beck's full name?

RD: Rebecca Fowler –

JRH: Fowler Morris.

RD: Oh, Morris?

JRH: Yes, M-O-R-R-I-S.

RD: Okay. I put Morrison, so [inaudible] that, so Morris. M-O-R-R-I-S?

JRH: Yes.

RD: As opposed to the river spelling? Okay. [laughter]

JRH: Yes. Yeah.

PM: Do you have anything specific –any specific questions? I think that’s pretty much the –

RD: Some of the background? Yeah.

PM: Yeah, some of the background things.

MAH: Mom, didn’t we figure out that *J & E Riggin* went to Maine?

JRH: Yes, the *J & E Riggin* is the name of a –

PM: That’s what I wanted to ask you.

MAH: Schooner.

JRH: – tourist boat.

MAH: It’s like Windjammer Cruises.

JRH: Windjammer Cruises, yes.

RD: Now, is that an additional schooner?

MAH: That’s the *Joan* [inaudible], right?

JRH: No, that was for Jake and Ed. Now, Ed is the father of Ned and the twins. Are you familiar with either [inaudible]–

RD: I don’t think – tell us.

JRH: – or [inaudible] or [inaudible] or Ned? One of them lives next, I think, to Bill and (Polly?) – same road Barney Hollinger lives on. We used to call him Warrington. Call

him Warrington sometimes. See what he says. Well, that's his name. He lived with his – or he didn't live with – his uncle Barney.

PM: We have a painting of the J & E Riggin.

JRH: Really?

PM: Done by [McConnell].

JRH: Chili McConnell?

PM: Yeah.

JRH: No kidding.

PM: Yes, and it's downstairs. Before you leave, we'll show it to you.

JRH: Yes, I haven't seen that.

PM: It is a painting of the 1927 bay race.

RD: Actually, '29.

PM: '29.

JRH: That's what Timothy Bateman was part of.

PM: Yes. And I think it was a Bateman that donated the painting. I don't know who donated –

RD: I'll have to look at our records. Yeah.

PM: – the painting to us.

RD: I don't know offhand. Yeah.

JRH: How about that?

PM: Yes. So, I started doing a provenance on the J & E Riggin and did find that it is still –

JRH: It's still there?

PM: Yes. The last I had recollection was a young couple – they were professionals and decided they didn't want to do the Wall Street thing and whatever. She wanted to be a gourmet cook, and so this young couple purchased and rehabbed the entire boat.

JRH: Oh, my God.

PM: And it's not just a daysailer. You go up, and you sail on it –

RD: For a week or something.

PM: – for a week or two weeks, if you want.

JRH: Oh, my gosh.

PM: And they since had children, and the children were on the boat with them. Yeah, Gordon and I, my husband and I, were this close to booking a week. But then I started speaking to her and getting the measurements for the bunks. Well, my husband is six-foot four-and-a-half feet. [laughter] And we said, even in prenatal position, I don't think he's going to be able to sleep in a bunk, so we gave up our excursion on the J & E. [laughter] But that's very interesting. I didn't think of that.

JRH: Well, their father was Charlie. He must have been my grandfather's brother. It's the only way I can figure it that he was my dad's – because they were my dad's cousins. There was Jake and Ed and Theresa and Kate. There was one more. I can't think who it was. But Ed lived – I can't believe that you haven't had any experience with them. They lived right almost the last house going down to the Peak of the Moon, a big house. She was Dutch, and she had one funny eye. They had three girls, and Ed. We call him Ned. Then, she had a change-of-life baby, and she had twins. And that's where Chick and Dick came in. Now, one of those kids made their living tonging for a long time. Boy, that must be hard.

PM: Oh, yes.

RD: Well, some of the photographs we have in our collection, I've seen the name Chick written on it. That must be –

JRH: It could be.

RD: I'll have to check our records then to see, but you know how people handwrite on a photo? I've seen multiple times Chick. I've often wondered, "What does that mean?"

JRH: When we have a minute, I have a question I want to ask you guys. Do we have a minute?

RD: Sure.

PM: Yes.

JRH: Do you have a picture of Ed Cobb making sails anywhere?

RD: We do, yeah.

JRH: Oh, shoot. I thought I'd found one for you.

RD: Oh, well, if you have a photo, we could compare –

JRH: No, no. I was at Franklin Institute, and I don't know when. And these people – and I can't – Mary Annie said, "Mom, I wasn't with you." We went to see a special exhibit on something, and I turned around, and here is this picture of Ed Cobb making sail. Well, I went nuts, like I do now here, when I see some of your stuff. I said, "Oh." When we lived in Port Norris – after I got married, we lived down here for a while – his house was across from the old Seashell Restaurant. That make any sense?

RD: I have heard people make mention of that restaurant, so yeah.

JRH: Yeah. Well, he lived right across the street. And when they had the sale at his house, I bought two oil paintings and a loveseat. My son has the oil paintings. But I thought if you have any tie-in with the Franklin Institute at all, they'd send you a copy. But if you have a copy, why –

RD: I think I saw in a publication one of the photos of him –

JRH: It might be the same picture.

RD: – was with the National Archives.

JRH: Yeah. He was an old, wizened man – tiny.

RD: Yeah. Do you remember him?

JRH: Yeah.

RD: Oh, tell us what you remember.

JRH: Well, that's all I remember. I remember he was little, and he kind of had sharp features. When I saw that picture, it just blew my mind. And Ed Dubois was a close friend of my grandfather – the other sailmakers. Yeah. And I did go [inaudible] and watch them. That was fascinating.

RD: What do you remember about watching them make sails?

JRH: Nothing, except they were just friends we had.

RD: Do you remember the sail lofts at all?

JRH: Yes. Oh, yeah. It was humongous because you make these sails. When you think all that stuff was made by hand, and their nets were made by hand – incredible. So, there we go. Oh, this doesn't have anything to do with you guys, but do you know there was an airplane-spotting place?

RD: I'm not sure. Tell us.

JRH: Down below Mother and Daddy's house.

RD: I don't know. Tell us about it.

JRH: Well, it was a little house – my grandfather was a spotter. And I just happened to think of it. Rachel said, "Think of everything you can think of." My mind's been going crazy.

PM: This is during World War II?

JRH: Yes. And it was manned all the time, twenty-four hours a day.

RD: I have seen the –

MAH: Did they have a deck or something they stood on?

JRH: Mary Annie, I don't remember. I just think they had binoculars, to tell you the truth.

RD: And they had cards with silhouettes on them. I've seen the card.

JRH: Oh, yeah. That's right. Yes, they did, for identification.

RD: You could know if it was a Zero or something. [laughter]

JRH: Yeah. Oh, God, look what's coming.

PM: Yeah. My husband, when he was young, belonged to a club that was associated with the airfield. There was a spotting tower, which actually was built as a fire watch tower in Millville. They would actually – the boys would actually take turns and go up –

JRH: Are you talking about the one out on the Bridgeton-Millville Pike? [Editor's Note: The access road was on Rieck Avenue.]

PM: Yeah.

JRH: Oh, I remember that.

PM: Yeah. And they had those silhouettes on the wall and, yeah, and they were up there doing their time spotting planes.

JRH: No, there was nothing tall, so they must have used binoculars. And then it became a little house. A very nice couple, a Black couple, lived down there that everybody just loved. When I was a child, I never heard in my family a Black person denigrated in any way. We had colored help, both my grandparents and us. And my God, if we didn't pay attention and be polite – one my mother had, I was terrified of. Oh, my God. If she didn't look like a witch. She had that skin that was not shiny and wore shoes with the backs – now, I was terrified of Bertha. Oh, my God. My grandparents had one who lived in Haleyville, and her son graduated from high school with us, I think. She was very light. My grandfather, of course, came home every – he worked down here. I don't know who he worked for. I don't remember where he worked, maybe at Fred Dubois. I don't know. He did accounting. He would say, "Fannie, come and sit down with us for lunch." "No, Mr. Bateman, I got things to do." She would not sit at the table with us. I got to tell you this. Guess what I thought a bootlegger was? When they would come in

Friday nights – and of course, all the Blacks that worked on the boats wore those rubber boots –

PM: Yeah, the big, high rubber boots?

JRH: Yeah. Yeah, that you could push down. And, of course, the first thing they're going to do was go uptown and get whatever. Well, these guys are walking uptown in these boots. I thought, "The bootleggers are here." [laughter] Well, that's another story for down here. Oh, God. Oh, this has been fun.

RD: So you had help in the house, like a housekeeper?

JRH: Yeah. They came in by the day, yeah.

RD: Did they live in the home with you?

JRH: No, Peak of the Moon. Most of Mother's girls came from the Peak of the Moon. Fannie came from Haleyville. My grandmother would have to go up and get her and bring her down and take her back.

RD: Oh, okay. Interesting.

RH: But the other two – now, Mary was just sweet. She was just one of those big, jolly, big-bosomed Black women. But Bertha, oh God, I can see her now. She was scary. [laughter] Voodoo is all you could think of. Yeah. [laughter] Oh, Lord.

RD: What else do you –?

PM: I have a question. Did you ever know or meet Ma Henderson?

JRH: Oh, no, I never did. I just heard about her. No.

PM: And what kind of things did you hear about Ma Henderson?

JRH: Fun things. Let's just say for the [inaudible]. Now, Becky Meredith, who had a little restaurant down here, and my Aunt Beck Morris were very, very close. I don't know what the connection was. I assume that Aunt Beck Meredith was younger than my Aunt Beck because I remember later on that she would be at Aunt Beck's a lot doing the cooking. But Becky Meredith was an icon. You just didn't mess with her. I'll tell you that. If she told you to sit down, you sit down. But a heart of gold.

PM: Now, wasn't her restaurant here?

JRH: It's down here [inaudible].

PM: And the research, when we wanted to put the little restaurant here, we had to, for historical reference, we had to prove that there was a restaurant in this area.

JRH: Oh, yeah, there was.

RD: That's right.

PM: So I did some research and found a census that had the Merediths in there and their occupation and location.

RD: And we have a picture of Meredith's restaurant.

JRH: Now, her great-great-grandson is Bob Cole, the optometrist in Bridgeton. Yeah. His mother was Aunt Beck's granddaughter. Willis Robbins married Aunt Beck Meredith – no, he didn't. No, he didn't marry her.

RD: That's interesting.

JRH: She was a great person – Aunt Beck.

RD: Oh, I never heard anybody – yeah, I heard people mention Becky Meredith but never describe what she was like, so thank you for telling us about her.

JRH: She was a tall woman, stern-looking – I always remember – with an apron on.

RD: That's really neat. Yeah. What else do you remember –? If you're still good to go [inaudible], any other questions. When you were a child or a teenager, what do you remember of the shipping sheds, of the building we're in now? Do you have any recollections of the railroad or the –?

JRH: Oh, my goodness, yes. When I lived here after I was married, our house was right across from the railroad station, catty-corner.

RD: In Port Norris?

JRH: In Port Norris.

RD: Which is now where the –

JRH: They built a road now all the way to Bivalve. Well, there was no road to Bivalve then.

RD: Memorial?

JRH: Memorial Avenue.

RD: Memorial Avenue.

JRH: Yeah. Well, it wasn't called that then.

RD: And that goes – there's the municipal hall and the post office?

JRH: Across the street.

RD: Across the street? Right.

JRH: Yeah. So was a gas station here, and the railroad tracks, and our house was here, so I have a picture of my son because we moved when he was six, waving to the conductor as they go by. [laughter]

PM: I have a question. Do you remember if that was also a passenger train, or was it just a freight train?

JRH: No, I don't think it ever carried passengers. It came from Millville. I think it was just always to come down and pick up the oysters. Then I think it also brought coal down to the coal yards, to Harry Webb and Oscar Ferguson, whose coal yards were right back of where, like where the post office is, in that area in there. That's where the coal yards were.

PM: Brown Street – isn't that Brown?

JRH: No, that's no street at all, actually. It wasn't a street at all, Pat. It was just – when I went to school, where Brown Street now goes all the way –

RD: All the way through?

JRH: – through town, at the lumber yard, it stopped. They would never let kids do this today. We worked on a dirt path probably about that big –

RD: A foot?

JRH: – had to cross the railroad tracks. Sometimes, the train was there. Well, I would never go through, but some kids would crawl right over the [inaudible]. Then we had to cross a ditch, but there was a bridge. And then the road didn't become a road again until you – well, I don't know how to describe that one to you. Anyway, it was a little dirt path. It wasn't just me. There was a whole gang of us [who] went to walk up there.

RD: Yeah, that's something.

JRH: Yeah.

PM: Do you remember some of the stores that were in Port Norris?

JRH: Every one.

PM: Well, tell me about them. [laughter]

JRH: [laughter] Well, in this book that I brought Rachel, Joe describes it. This is what I do lots of times when I don't have anything else to do. Oh, here it is. He calls it – it's his brother Jesse. Jesse graduated with me and then moved to California – “A Walk Down Main Street, from Fraser Lounge to the Peak of the Moon.” You know where Fraser Lounge is? Okay. As you come in from Dividing Creek before you get to Capaldi, there was a house there. There was a big pond of water where we used to go ice skating. Fraser Glenn's – the story goes – family received a grant from King Charles. The Glenn family married into the Warrens, that have the lumberyard, so they had the grant. And as I got older, all I wanted to do was get that grant. I've never seen it. But that's the story. So yes, you just started at Fraser Glenn's, and I'd just start going down. I think, “Well, this was here, that was there. Yeah, yeah. [inaudible] Yeah. yeah.”

RD: So his account is accurate?

JRH: Oh, it's perfect. Yeah.

RD: Were there certain businesses or people you remember in particular?

JRH: Yeah, there was a feed store. And they had a scale just like the one you're going to come to my house and get. Let's see. There was the post office. I don't remember too much from Dr. Sharp's house going this way because – we weren't divided, but we were in a way. That's where it stopped. The Baptists were all there. The Methodists were all down here. The Italians were way up there –

PM: Strawberry?

RD: Strawberry.

JRH: – [inaudible] – that's what we called it. And once a year – my grandfather brokered with a produce broker at one time, and he was very friendly with the Italians, but my grandfather was that kind of a person. He was just a man everybody just loved and smart as a whip. Every year, when they would have their feast day, the red-white-and-blue [inaudible] from [inaudible] would come down. Here were all these darling little girls with their flowers in their hair carrying the stuff. They would come all the way down Main Street. Then, they would turn on Temperance. And right across from my father's mother was a man by the name of (Rollie?), [inaudible] (Rollie?). And he was also a broker. And they would come down to serenade him, for lack of a better word, so we got to see the parade, just sitting on Grandmother's front porch. But I used to think, "Oh, I'd like to be one of those little girls." [laughter] [inaudible] they carried their saint. It was light enough they could carry it. And then they would have fireworks. Well, all we had to do was stand up in Mother and Daddy's upstairs, and you could see the fireworks.

PM: Oh, wow.

PRD: And this was the time of the harvest, did you say?

JRH: No, it was in the summer.

RD: Oh, summer? Okay.

JRH: And then, as I got older, I was allowed to go. And they had a lot of games of chance, where you threw a ball at somebody. So that's how it was. But I can remember the street from Dr. Sharp's house all the way down to the end. Yeah, there was a feed store. There was – oh, what was his name? Had a plumbing business. There was a barbershop. Then there was Kelberg's. And then there was a lady who was a great-aunt of a friend of mine. In fact, that was who told me about the fire. She had a dry goods

store, just a little, teeny-weeny one. That was when you covered cigar boxes with cretonne. Are you old enough to remember that?

PM: No.

JRH: Well, you had to make your little sewing box, and so you took a cigar box. You know what they look – you remember what they look like?

RD: Yes.

JRH: You covered it with fabric, I suppose, with that awful paste you used in school. Yeah, she was there. Then I don't know what was in the other dry goods store before it came. But there was Kelberg's and Godowns eventually. Then, the pool hall. Then Izzy's. Back of Izzy's was the –

PM: Izzy?

JRH: Goldblatt.

PM: Goldblatt? Yes.

RD: Goldblatt.

JRH: In back of him was the icehouse, Ogden's Ice House. And then, as you came down, there was a little street here. Ed Cobb lived right here. Back here was a dairy for a while. And then there was Walt Rudolph's gas station. And before that, Lambert, who had the post office down here, his wife was a hairdresser. And then, one of her daughters was a close friend of mine. And those horrible things – oh, my God –

PM: When you went to get a perm? [laughter]

JRH: Perm.

PM: With the wires that went up –

JRH: Oh, yeah. Right. It's a wonder they didn't get electrocuted.

PM: I had one of those. [laughter]

JRH: Oh, I did too. Oh, God.

PM: And they were heavy.

JRH: Oh, yeah. You couldn't move – yeah.

PM: [inaudible] trying to hold your head up. [laughter]

JRH: Yeah. That was the end of commercialism on that side. But on the other side, right across from where we lived, was Dan Bateman's grocery store and then the Seashell Restaurant and then Doc Day's. That time, there were three doctors in town, and they made house calls.

PM: Who were the three doctors? Dr. Sharp?

JRH: Dr. Bradford and Dr. Day.

PM: D-A-Y?

JRH: Yes. And then there was another little store going back this way, Pritchard's. And his name was Jesse. Her name was Harriet. She was my grandmother Riggin's sister [inaudible]. So he had a – it was kind of a little general store, a little – as I remember. And then there was another store, a great big place that just kept changing hands all the time. Then there was a ditch. In back of the ditch was a blacksmith shop, Cantoni's. And then there was a bank and then a gas station.

RD: The bank that's still there on the corner?

JRH: That's still there, yeah, and then a gas station. Albert Roberts had a gas station. Then there was where Newcomb's Market is, the Pontiac Garage.

RD: Right. That I've heard, yeah.

JRH: They sold cars. Then there was a shoemaker and then Sammy Cobb's store. It was up, yeah, to the cross street.

RD: How interesting. Yeah. Do you remember, here in Bivalve, some of the businesses, or did you not venture out of town?

JRH: No, well, no, I had no reason. I knew that there were businesses here. Now, young Bill's grandparents had a meat market down here – Haleys. I think it was the Haleys or

the (Hensons?). I don't know which. He's related to Haleys and (Hensons?). They had a meat market. My grandfather's father had a ship chandlery down here, Timothy Bateman, my great. Then I remember Mr. Lambert being here because of my connection with his daughter Margaret. And then there was Walt Garrison's mother [who] was the port of entry, I want to say. What do you call that?

RD: Oh, custom house?

PM: Customs.

JRH: Custom house, yeah.

RD: And what was the name?

JRH: What was her name? Her last name was Garrison. But I don't know.

RD: We may be able to look that up. And that was the custom –?

JRH: Yeah. Boy, I'll tell you, I'm exhausted.

RD: Yeah, well, so it's been an hour, so we usually don't go beyond an hour. [laughter]

JRH: Oh, really? [laughter]

RD: Although I did have one other quick little thing, if you don't mind.

JRH: Sure. Yeah.

RD: In other conversations with me, you talked about playing around here and with your cousins. Could you just share a little bit about being a kid here? You talked about walking to school.

PM: And what kind of games did you play? [laughter]

RD: Or what did you do?

JRH: Oh, well, the family that had the land grant – their daughter and I were very friendly. We spent our time playing paper dolls. You made your own doll clothes. I remember, I think it was the McCall's Magazine, which doesn't print it anymore. You cut out the paper doll.

PM: Betsy McCall. [laughter]

JRH: And then you were on – yeah, and so we made dolls –

PM: That was the paper doll's name.

JRH: – clothes. I don't know. You just went out. Nobody worried about you. You didn't have to worry about being kidnapped or anything. We crossed the ditch one time in the winter, up in the middle of town [inaudible] the ice, and the ice broke. So, I went home soaking wet, with mud up to my knees. We would walk clear up to Capaldi's to ice skate. That was a long walk. You just went out and played. Just you went in the woods to play. Nobody worried about you. It was a wonderful time to be a child because you played.

PM: Yeah. After school, you played until supper. During the summer, you left the house about 8:00 in the morning and didn't show up until 5:00 for supper and –

JRH: Brought your friend home,

PM: – and you mooched lunch wherever you could. [laughter]

JRH: Yeah. And you'd say, "Can Sally stay for supper tonight, Mother?" "Well, maybe." And we ate so differently. When peas were fresh, you'd have a great big bowl of peas with milk on for supper [inaudible] fried tomatoes and milk gravy – oh God.

PM: My favorite. [laughter]

JRH: Me too. I love that. Lima beans and corn. And Sunday school picnics were unbelievable, the food that they took. Fried chicken, lima beans and corn, lemonade, iced tea, hot dogs in a thermos. We went to Mays Landing, down to Lenape Park – wonderful place for a picnic. So, there you go.

RD: Good. Well, thank you. Great descriptions.

JRH: I'll probably think of ten million more things.

RD: Well, we can sit down another time, for sure.

PM: This was fun. This was lots of fun.

RD: Thank you. Great. Well, thanks so much for sitting down with us.

JRH: [inaudible] see which one this is. Oh, this was when Daddy was applying to the Board of Shellfish [inaudible].

MAH: Yeah. And then the other one is where grandfather invited the guy from the governor's – or the governor to spend the night at your house, and you said, "Thank you, John, but we can't." Can we go see that one picture?

PM: Yes.

RD: Sure, definitely.

JRH: My dad ran for –

PM: Oh, [inaudible].

JRH: – assembly one time. But I don't know who beat him out, some Republican. My family was all Democratic. When I got married, my husband was Republican.

PM: Uh-oh.

JRH: Well, that was like you marrying a Catholic at that time, so I've become a Republican for the rest of my life. My father never forgave me, truthfully.

MAH: Well, then the funny story is, you know, I work for a Republican congressman. He was a state legislator before that, so my grandmother didn't approve. But one year, I think she was living in Millville –

JRH: The Maurice house.

MAH: No, before the Maurice house –

JRH: Oh, in the apartment.

MAH: – when she was living by herself. She stuffed envelopes for Frank. And we thought the world was going to change because she stuffed an envelope for a Republican. That amazed me. I'll never forget that.

RD: [laughter] That's so funny. Oh, my gosh. You mentioned your dad was on the shellfish council.

JRH: Yeah.

RD: And I imagine for a number of years then?

JRH: Yes, as I remember that, yeah. And he did the whole thing. He was a mason.

PM: Well, Joan, we thank you very, very much.

RD: Thank you so much.

PM: This has been –

JRH: Oh, I thank you.

PM: – so great.

JRH: It's nice, too, because it brings back such memories to the person you're interviewing. That's why it's so much fun.

PM: All right. Thank you very much.

JRH: Oh, you're welcome. It was a pleasure to meet you, Pat.

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Reviewed by Pat Moore 9/13/2023

Reviewed by Molly Graham 10/3/2023