

## **Major Charles Carman**

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Interviewer: Ruth Terwilliger  
Transcribers: Janena Benjamin, February 2006 and Laura Cabbage-Draper, March 2019  
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Abstract: Charles Bloomfield Carman (1885-1982), the son of Theodore F. Carman and Louise (Osborn) Carman, was born in Menlo Park. Both his father and his uncle, William Carman, worked for Thomas Edison in Menlo Park, and his sister Maria (Carman) Campbell made the first recording of the Edison phonograph. Major Carman attended Rutgers Prep School and graduated from Rutgers University in 1908 where he received his degree in civil engineering. He served as a major in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War I. Major Carman worked as an architect and borough engineer of Metuchen, and he worked for the Defense Plant Corporation during World War II. He was involved in over 900 engineering projects and helped design more than 1,500 buildings, including the Forum Theatre, Metuchen First Aid Squad, Menlo Park Firehouse, and Edison First Aid Squad No. 2. He is most known for his work in acquiring land and buildings at the Raritan Arsenal.

Major Carman was an active historian, who was instrumental in the surveying of the Edison's Laboratory site in Menlo Park. He was a member of the Metuchen Republican Club, former officer of the Mount Zion Lodge No. 135, and former commander of the Fugle-Hummer Post 65, American Legion. He also helped erect a monument in the Old Colonial Cemetery to honor veterans of the American Revolution. He married Rhoda Hammond from Sussex, New Jersey in 1940; she died in 1945 and they had no children.

In this interview, Mr. Carman discusses his genealogy, his early childhood, his education, and his relationship with Thomas Edison. He also touches upon his personal life and his work as an engineer and architect, including designing his home at 68 Linden Avenue.

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R. Terwilliger: Hello everyone, my name is Ruth Terwilliger and I am a member of the Metuchen Historical Commission. We are a newly-formed commission with each member appointed by our mayor, Donald Wernik, on May 21, 1973. Our purpose as a commission is to be an instrument for achieving the collecting of historical facts and the preserving of historical sites in the Borough of Metuchen. [recording paused]

I would like at this time to introduce other members of our commission: Mr. Martin Jessen, who is our chairman, Mr. Frank Urich, Raymond Dwiggin [phonetic], Mrs. Shirley Trense, Mr. William McDuffie and Mr. Charles Carman.

Major Carman is one of our oldest members. Mr. Carman has lived in Metuchen-Edison area all of his life, and he has lived an extremely interesting life. I felt it was so rich in historical value that we, as a commission, encouraged Major Carman to share some of his background with us on this tape. Today is December 29, 1973 and Major Carman and I, Ruth Terwilliger, are sitting in the living room of the house that Major Carman built for he and his wife some seventy years ago, here on [68] Linden Avenue in Metuchen. [recording paused]

Mr. Carman, where did your ancestors come from in Europe?

**C. B. Carman:** **On my father's side, he came from England; and my mother's side, she was an Osborn, her father came from England and her mother's family originally came from Holland [Netherlands]. It was a very old family in this country—was landed in 1631, the father's [side] did, in Roxbury, which is now part of Boston [Massachusetts]. They lived there for a few years and later they moved—several members of the family moved—to Hempstead, Long Island [New York]. There are still a great many Carmans living in and around Hempstead.**

R. Terwilliger: When did they come to New Jersey then?

**C. B. Carman:** **Well that I don't know exactly, but that was in the 1600s as near as I can figure out. And some of them settled in the southern part of New Jersey.**

R. Terwilliger: This is down—Cape May, Toms River?

**C. B. Carman:** **Around Cape May, yes.**

R. Terwilliger: Gee, that's interesting, Mr. Carman. And how did you ever end up in Menlo Park then? Is that where you were born, in Menlo Park?

**C. B. Carman:** **I was born in Menlo Park. I don't know just how they came there. My grandmother [Ann Maria (Ayers) Carman] on my father's side was an Ayers and the Ayerses had a home on the Plainfield Road near Oak Tree. He had over 400 acres and that property ran through Menlo Park—from Oak Tree over to Menlo Park.**

R. Terwilliger: Oh my gracious. Was that a farm now or was it just land that he owned there?

**C. B. Carman:** **Well it was just land, mostly woods and so forth, and because this is very early. And my grandfather [Melancthon Freeman] Carman built a house, which is still standing in Menlo Park. It's on the Lincoln Highway and is known right now—oh I forget now just what they did call it.**

R. Terwilliger: Is it Menlo Hall?

**C. B. Carman:** **Menlo Hall, that's right.**

R. Terwilliger: Menlo Hall, right. I think I've seen that sign up there. Is that the great big house that sits back off the road?

**C. B. Carman:** That's it, yes.

R. Terwilliger: And at one time it seems to me as a child I remember it used to have an elk or something on the front lawn? Do you ever remember that?

**C. B. Carman:** No, I don't ever remember that because it had nothing to do with the Elks [Lodge].

R. Terwilliger: No, I realize that. I thought maybe it was like a deer I guess is what I'm thinking of.

**C. B. Carman:** No, well I don't remember that.

R. Terwilliger: But that has the widow's walk up top? Is that the one? Where you can see what they used to call the widow's walk or the captain's walk?

**C. B. Carman:** Well, what we called—that's a cupola.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, a cupola?

**C. B. Carman:** Yes. And from that—

R. Terwilliger: And he built that house?

**C. B. Carman:** Who?

R. Terwilliger: Your grandfather built that house?

**C. B. Carman:** My grandfather built that, and I used to often go to that cupola and you could look all around the country from there.

R. Terwilliger: Could you see Perth Amboy and the water from up there?

**C. B. Carman:** Well no, I wouldn't say Perth Amboy because there's a hill between Menlo Park and Perth Amboy.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, yes. Right.

**C. B. Carman:** But it's very high ground there, so my father [Theodore Frelinghuysen Carman] built a house opposite that, and I was born in that house. That house burned when I was a very little boy. My father rebuilt on the same foundation. And that house is torn down just two, three years ago.

R. Terwilliger: Is that for the McDonald's [fast food] stand, you told me, that was there?

**C. B. Carman:** Yes, that's right. Yes.

R. Terwilliger: What a pity. How about the house right next door to it? The last time I was at McDonald's, I noticed that that seems to be a pretty old house.

- C. B. Carman:** Well it is. I should imagine about the same age as our own house. Now that goes back quite a ways because my sister was born there and she died last March and was over 102 years old.
- R. Terwilliger: My gracious, that does come back some. Now if I can get informal, really informal with you for a few moments Major, I'd like to ask you some really in-depth questions about like maybe—what was it like as a young boy in Menlo Park? Was Route 27 a dirt road? And what did you do for fun?
- C. B. Carman:** Well, it was a dirt road. And before I moved from there—my father died [in 1899] when I was only thirteen—but before he died, they built a macadam road there.
- R. Terwilliger: On Route 27?
- C. B. Carman:** On Route 27. It was always known as Middlesex and Essex Turnpike.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh, yes. I've heard that.
- C. B. Carman:** Yeah. That road is considerably over a hundred years old.
- R. Terwilliger: Was there much traffic on it at that time?
- C. B. Carman:** Well no, you see, there were no automobiles. The automobiles came in about the time my father died. And it was a dirt road and we had a horse and carriage.
- R. Terwilliger: Did you have one in your own family—a horse and carriage?
- C. B. Carman:** Oh yes, yes. That was the only way to get around.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh my goodness, that's hard to believe. Now where did your mother go to do her shopping?
- C. B. Carman:** Well, my father was a scientific farmer and at that time, my uncle, my grandfather had died—I never saw my grandfather Carman—but my grandmother lived quite an old age, as fact all the Carmans and the Ayerses have seemed to have lived quite a number of years.
- R. Terwilliger: That's wonderful.
- C. B. Carman:** Of course, I used to play over there in the big house. I used to live there for part of the time. My family used to go over there and live there.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh, and this was in your grandfather's house across the way. Now did you have farm land there?
- C. B. Carman:** Yes. Well, they had about a hundred acres at that time. And my father used to farm a lot of it and had a peach orchard and so forth. And he was a scientific farmer.
- R. Terwilliger: What did your father do for a living?

- C. B. Carman:** Well he did a little farming but before that, before I was born, he worked with Thomas Edison.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh, let's talk about that a little bit.
- C. B. Carman:** Well the whole family knew the Edison family. In fact, my two sisters, who were much, much older than I, used to play with the Edison children. And my sister, who died last March, Maria Campbell, was quite a favorite little girl with Edison, and she was—
- R. Terwilliger: With Mr. Edison himself?
- C. B. Carman:** Well yes. You see they all knew Edison pretty well, because there's nothing whatever stuck up with Edison. And no one seemed to know who he was until he was introduced, because he was right with the men all the time.
- R. Terwilliger: Yeah, that's what I've read. As I've told you before, my own young son is terribly interested in Edison and in his research for a report he made just recently, that was pointed out that no one that ever came into his laboratory or his factories ever knew [or] could say, "Well that's Mr. Edison, he's got the suit on and he looks like the executive." They said he always looked like just one of the men.
- C. B. Carman:** Well, he was one of the men, and well his greatest discoveries were right in Menlo Park.
- R. Terwilliger: That is such a pity that there's not more left there to what he had.
- C. B. Carman:** Well we are trying awfully hard. I'm chairman of the Advisory Committee [for Edison State Park] there. We're trying to get the state to do something. And I had a promise just within a week or so ago, that they will go down there and do something. So, there's great pressure being brought to get there with the legislature to do something.
- R. Terwilliger: I certainly hope so. Well let's hope we'll live long enough to see it happen. To get back to your family's relationship with the Edison family, can you tell us anything about what were they like as a family? Were they very average people and did you "borrow a cup of sugar" kind of neighbors?
- C. B. Carman:** Well they were very ordinary people, and friendly.
- R. Terwilliger: They had three children also?
- C. B. Carman:** Well, yes. There were three children. I don't know whether they were born in Menlo Park or came there after they—or moved there after these children were born. There were three children by his first wife. There was William, Thomas and they called her Dottie—Dottie Edison from "dot-and-dash."
- R. Terwilliger: Oh for goodness sake, that's interesting. [laughs]

**C. B. Carman:** Yeah. Because Mr. Edison worked hard on this incandescent light and a neighbor of ours, Mr. [Joseph or Martin] Force was right with him on that invention. And my father was among the very first to ever hear the phonograph.

R. Terwilliger: Oh really. Is it true that I heard that it was your sister who did some of the recording for Mr. Edison? Did she speak?

**C. B. Carman:** Well, Mr. Edison wanted my sister—she was a very little girl then [approximately nine years old]—to speak in the phonograph, and she was rather bashful but she did speak in the phonograph. And the broadcasting station—when my sister was a hundred years old—the broadcasting station in around Toms River got her to speak and had an interview and that was broadcast<sup>1</sup> from there. And they called her “the first broadcaster.”

R. Terwilliger: Oh for goodness sakes, isn't that wonderful! And that was when she was 102 years old?

**C. B. Carman:** Yes.

R. Terwilliger: That's really remarkable. Now do you remember Edison at all? You were a very little boy.

**C. B. Carman:** Edison moved from there [Menlo Park] I think just about the time I was born.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, that's true.

**C. B. Carman:** But I did meet Mr. Edison when he received his Doctor of Science degree at Rutgers [University]. And I went up and spoke to him, introduced myself and we had a very, very pleasant talk about Menlo Park.

R. Terwilliger: And how old were you then—when you met him, when he got his degree?

**C. B. Carman:** Well, it was a few years after I graduated from college.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, so you were a young man yourself then at the time.

**C. B. Carman:** Yes.

R. Terwilliger: And he did stand and chat with you for a while?

**C. B. Carman:** Oh yes, yes. We had a wonderful time together.

R. Terwilliger: You know now there was a story that I had heard that he had built a railroad from up where his laboratory was into Pumptown Corners. Is that true?

**C. B. Carman:** That's true. Oh yes.

R. Terwilliger: Did you ever ride on that? Did you ever see it or walk along it?

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<sup>1</sup> Toms River station WLBM broadcast aired on August 1, 1971.

- C. B. Carman:** Oh no, there's nothing there. When I was a little boy, I used to play—several of us kids used to play—around those old buildings. And then we used to walk on the old tram road, but there wasn't much left. But in later years, when I became an engineer, I did a lot of work around there. I located, to the best of my ability, the location of the old railroad track and made a map of it, and that map is—a copy of it—is in the [Edison Memorial] Tower at Menlo Park.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh, that's wonderful! Now there is a section to the bottom of the tower that has some artifacts stored in it, that you can go in to look at.
- C. B. Carman:** There's practically nothing in the tower. See, you're only allowed to go in the first floor and you can see the eternal light—that's about all there is there. The second floor, no one's allowed to go there because there they have the batteries and things and the public is not allowed to go in there. But there is a small museum nearby, and they have a few things that pertain to Edison, but not very much.
- R. Terwilliger: But there are no remaining buildings or his home. Did they tear all of that down—his house and the laboratory?
- C. B. Carman:** Well he lived near the Lincoln Highway—near where that flagpole is—on the Lincoln Highway near or on the corner of Christie Street in Menlo Park. And that house was occupied a number of times. It was deeded over by Mr. Edison to his daughter Dottie Edison. And she told me that she never got much rent out of it. It was all costly and [she] never once had rented it and finally it burned down. Now, there was a school there. We had—well I went to school in Lafayette first—a very small boy when I went over to Lafayette School.
- R. Terwilliger: Was this in Menlo Park also?
- C. B. Carman:** That's in Menlo Park, near the shopping center.
- R. Terwilliger: Near where Menlo Park Shopping Center [is]?
- C. B. Carman:** No, the shopping center—well yes, it's called Menlo Park Shopping Center. It's on Lafayette or—no, Parsonage Road near Route 1. That school was torn down, a large building placed there. But I went there. It was a one-room school with one teacher.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh my gracious!
- C. B. Carman:** And then so many of us who lived in Menlo Park went to that school.
- R. Terwilliger: What grades did it go through?
- C. B. Carman:** Well, fifth grade.
- R. Terwilliger: Through to fifth grade.
- C. B. Carman:** Yes.

- R. Terwilliger: And did you walk from your home on Route 27?
- C. B. Carman:** **That was the only way, or occasionally in bad weather the families would take us to school and come after us. And then they decided to have a new school in Menlo Park. And before that was finished, some of my relatives got permission from [Thomas] Edison to occupy that house as a school. So I went to school in his old home for a few months, and then we moved into the new school, which is not far from the tower. But that was torn down and finally burned down.**
- R. Terwilliger: Oh my goodness, they've had their problems with schools in Menlo Park.
- C.B. Carman:** **Well yes, yes.**
- R. Terwilliger: I was thinking when you were talking about going to school out on Parsonage Road, about—do you think winters were more severe then in this area than they are now?
- C. B. Carman:** **Yes, I do. Yes.**
- R. Terwilliger: Do you remember it being very snowy in the wintertime?
- C. B. Carman:** **Well I think we had more snows than we do now.**
- R. Terwilliger: Really?
- C. B. Carman:** **Yeah, yeah. [recording paused]**
- R. Terwilliger: Major Carman, I wanted to ask you—I guess you went all through grade school in Menlo Park up on to, what, seventh grade?
- C. B. Carman:** **[unclear] throughout the seventh grade. And then my father died and my mother [Louise (Osborn) Carman] and I went to Rahway to live with my married sister. And I went to school in Rahway for two years in grammar and two years high school. And then I went to Rutgers Prep [School in Franklin Township] and put in three semesters in Rutgers Prep.**
- R. Terwilliger: Was this training to become an engineer now?
- C. B. Carman:** **Well yes, and then I finished the prep school in three semesters, and then I took examinations presented at Rutgers. And then I went to Rutgers for four years, received my Bachelor of Science degree, and then a few years later my civil engineer degree. And then after that, I applied for membership in the American Society of Civil Engineers. Now I'm a life member of that.**
- R. Terwilliger: That's very nice and then you're probably also—are you a professional engineer—your PE [professional engineer] license?
- C. B. Carman:** **Yes, I'm a professional engineer.**
- R. Terwilliger: Yes. Now were you still living in Rahway when you went to Rutgers?
- C. B. Carman:** **Yes. [recording paused]**



R. Terwilliger: And you were ready now with your education completed to go out into the working world and seek a career. [recording paused]

Major, before we leave this period of your life, I would like to ask you—what was college life back—like in those times when you went to school at Rutgers?

**C. B. Carman: Life at Rutgers when I was there was entirely different than what it is now. In fact, the classes were very much smaller. Our class where we matriculated was slightly over a hundred, about forty graduated. And we had personal contact with the professors, which I always enjoyed and received quite a little education that way.**

R. Terwilliger: Yes. You mean there was a lot of personal attention then?

**C. B. Carman: A lot of personal attention. The professors were really interested in their pupils.**

R. Terwilliger: That's wonderful. You're very right when you say it isn't like that at all today. It's very rarely like that today.

**C. B. Carman: That's true.**

R. Terwilliger: Yes. And did you live on campus?

**C. B. Carman: No, I lived at home. I lived in Rahway at the time, commuted.**

R. Terwilliger: That's what I was interested in. I was thinking about it and I thought—what kind of a car did you have?

**C. B. Carman: Well, there were no cars at that time.**

R. Terwilliger: Oh, there were no cars, okay.

**C.B. Carman: I took the railroad train.**

R. Terwilliger: You took the railroad train from Rahway into New Brunswick and then of course you could walk up to the college.

**C. B. Carman: Yes. It was a short walk, yes.**

R. Terwilliger: Right. And was there a group that you traveled with on the train? Were there a number of other students?

**C. B. Carman: There were a great many students there; they were scattered on the train. We didn't necessarily sit together, but there were great many commuters who were going to college.**

R. Terwilliger: Now I don't know whether you remember exactly off-hand, and I don't want you to tax your memory, but do you remember what year it was when you graduated?

**C. B. Carman: Well, I graduated in 1908.**

- R. Terwilliger: My gracious. And that was at your graduation when Thomas Edison came to the graduation ceremonies?
- C. B. Carman: Well some few years after I graduated, Mr. Edison received his Doctor of Science degree.**
- R. Terwilliger: All right, from Rutgers?
- C. B. Carman: From Rutgers. And I was over there at the time and went up to see him and introduced myself and we had a very pleasant, long talk.**
- R. Terwilliger: Did he remember you as a small boy?
- C. B. Carman: No, no, because Edison moved from Menlo Park about the time I was born, within a few years.**
- R. Terwilliger: But how about your sisters then?
- C. B. Carman: Well my sisters were much older than I, and they knew Edison quite well. In fact, one of the sisters was the first to ever talk in the phonograph. My father was among the very first who ever heard the phonograph, because he was working with Edison at the time. And my father, mother, and my two sisters knew the Edison family quite well.**
- R. Terwilliger: That's really, really interesting. When you finished college, what was your first job? What did you go out and do? Did you go to work right away?
- C. B. Carman: Well before I graduated, between the semesters, I worked with an engineer in Rahway, Mr. Moss, who was a city engineer. And I got some very valuable training there.**
- R. Terwilliger: Was this in the surveying party then?
- C. B. Carman: Well surveying. And after I graduated, there was practically no work for a few months—it was all the Depression. And I finally got a job as an engineer with the county engineer. And I laid out part of the road which is now between Rahway and Bayway-Elizabeth.**
- R. Terwilliger: What is that road called?
- C. B. Carman: It was a very old road, but we made it out of green granges and so forth. And I had complete charge of that under the county engineer.**
- R. Terwilliger: Were you a party chief as they call someone who heads a surveying party?
- C. B. Carman: Well I was a party chief, but there were only two of us in the party. [laughter]**
- R. Terwilliger: And if I'm not being too personal, do you remember how much you made then?

- C. B. Carman:** Well I remember when I was working for the city engineer of Rahway, I made as much as two dollars a day.
- R. Terwilliger: Two dollars a day! That must have been good money back then too. Now they want that much in an hour and then some, to start out with too. [laughs] Well I think that's so interesting. And I think it brings us to a portion of your life that I'm curious to know if you don't mind sharing it with us, and that's how you meet Mrs. [Rhoda (Hammond)] Carman?
- C. B. Carman:** Well, I—cataracts developed and I went to Newark Pioneer Infirmary to have the cataracts removed and I met my wife there. She was a nurse.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh for goodness sakes. And how old were you then, Mr. Carman?
- C. B. Carman:** Oh, I must have been close to forty. I'm not sure.
- R. Terwilliger: Close to forty. Well then you were a bachelor for a long time.
- C. B. Carman:** Yes, I was.
- R. Terwilliger: I see. I didn't realize that [phone rings; recording paused]
- So your wife was a nurse in a hospital where you had cataract surgery done.
- C. B. Carman:** Yes. She was not on the floor, but she was working with the doctors at the time of the operation.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh, I see. Then you courted for a while and became acquainted and decided you'd marry.
- C. B. Carman:** Yes.
- R. Terwilliger: That's very, very nice, Major. Did you marry in Rahway or in her hometown? Where were you married?
- C. B. Carman:** I was married in her hometown of Sussex, New Jersey.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh yes. That's a lovely area. And when did you build this house then in Metuchen? Was this your first home here?
- C. B. Carman:** I lived in Metuchen. I rented before I built.
- R. Terwilliger: I see. You and your wife?
- C. B. Carman:** Then I built this house [at 68 Linden Avenue] about fifty-two years ago.
- R. Terwilliger: But you and your wife lived in this home most of your married life then together?
- C. B. Carman:** Oh yes, yes, yes. Of course, we traveled a lot too with my work with the government.

- R. Terwilliger: Yes, that's what I did want to ask you. Before we leave the house though, it's such a beautiful home, you know I just want people to realize what a lovely home it is and some of the interesting things you've told me about it. To start with, did you survey the piece of property that the house was built on?
- C. B. Carman: Yes, I surveyed it. At the time, I was with the government. I had a title office with the government. We prepared the title and I designed it.**
- R. Terwilliger: Very, very good. And I understand then that you designed the house, the layout, the floor plans, and everything.
- C. B. Carman: Oh yes, yes.**
- R. Terwilliger: But did you actually do the building on it then, or did you contract that out for someone else?
- C.B. Carman: Well most of the work was done by day's labor in this house.**
- R. Terwilliger: You mean by different individuals and day's labor.
- C. B. Carman: With day's labor, yes.**
- R. Terwilliger: And I understand the fireplace here, I'd like to describe it. It's a beautiful fireplace made of all-natural stone. If I'm correct Major, didn't you tell me that's the very stone that came out of the ground?
- C. B. Carman: Well, a lot of that stone came out of the ground, but I bought some.**
- R. Terwilliger: I see, but it's all native Jersey stone.
- C. B. Carman: Oh yes, yes.**
- R. Terwilliger: It's just a beautiful fireplace, it really is, and a very, very comfortable home. I must describe all the beautiful dark woodwork and lovely staircase and very bright and cheery lovely windows throughout the house. And your wife and you lived here then for, what, about thirty years, was it?
- C. B. Carman: No, we only lived here about—I was only married about a little over five years when she died.**
- R. Terwilliger: Oh, I didn't realize that. I thought she was much older than that.
- C. B. Carman: No.**
- R. Terwilliger: That must have been a very, very sad moment in your life.
- C. B. Carman: Well, it was.**
- R. Terwilliger: But we'll move on now. Five years after you were married and your wife has passed away, were you working for the government then, Major?

**C. B. Carman:** No, I finished with the government at about that time.

R. Terwilliger: When you say working for the government, is this when you worked out at the arsenal [Raritan Arsenal]?

**C. B. Carman:** No, no. I wasn't married when I was with the arsenal, when I was an officer in the Army. But later, shortly after we were married, I was called to Washington [District of Columbia] because I was still with the Reserve Corps on defense work, and I traveled quite a little from Long Island to the middle west on various jobs.

R. Terwilliger: My gracious, you did do a lot of traveling then. Well, I think that pretty much completes your life, Major, except to say that I know personally, having visited you here in your home, that you're still active doing your work, your trade as an engineer and architect, and just as bright-eyed as can be. But before we finish our taping, I want to know about some of your—

**C. B. Carman:** Education?

R. Terwilliger: No. I wanted to talk a little bit first about some of the headstones I've seen up in the Old Colonial Cemetery that have the Carman name on them. They must be relatives of yours.

**C. B. Carman:** Well they are. The Carmans have a good-sized plot there, and in the old cemetery my great grandfather [Phineas Carman], who was a major in the [American] Revolution, is buried in that plot.

R. Terwilliger: And did he actually take part in any skirmishes here in this area?

**C. B. Carman:** Yes.

R. Terwilliger: Was he killed during the Revolution?

**C. B. Carman:** No, no. I understood that he was wounded.

R. Terwilliger: Yeah. But he just died a normal death in his own private life?

**C. B. Carman:** Oh yes, yes.

R. Terwilliger: And then are they—they are all relatives that are buried up there?

**C. B. Carman:** They are. Yes.

R. Terwilliger: Well, that's very interesting. [recording paused]

Major, before we complete this taping, can I ask you to try to reflect a little bit about and tell us a little bit about what Main Street was like, oh let's say back in about 1910, 1912?

**C. B. Carman:** Well, yes. Main Street was next to the same width as today, sixty-six-foot wide road. It was all a country road—at that time, there was a trolley track in it.

R. Terwilliger: And the trolley track went from—where did it go?

**C. B. Carman: Well it went from Amboy Avenue to Christol Street—through town and the pavement was not very wide. In fact, portions of it, there were ditches on either side and small paths to go from the sidewalk to the street. [laughter]**

R. Terwilliger: And were there many shops along Main Street?

**C. B. Carman: Well, there were a few shops there. That was the shopping center for the entire area there.**

R. Terwilliger: I remember there was pictures I've seen of an old A&P. Was that there at that time? Do you remember the A&P that used to be on Main Street?

**C. B. Carman: Well I designed one on Main Street and then later we designed the other A&P, the present one, and designed a great many A&P stores.**

R. Terwilliger: How about other buildings on Main Street that you've designed? Can you recall?

**C. B. Carman: Well, I designed the Forum Theatre.**

R. Terwilliger: The Forum Theatre? For goodness sakes, that's wonderful! And do you remember about when that was built? I'm really putting you on the spot here.

**C.B. Carman: No. It's probably a number of years ago.**

R. Terwilliger: It's quite old. [laughs] I know I grew up in that theater and it's still going strong. It had been used, I understand, from the early or mid-1900s. So we can just about pretty much judge what the age of it is. How about the electrification of Metuchen? Do you remember when the first electric lights came into Metuchen?

**C. B. Carman: No, I don't. That was before I was borough engineer.**

R. Terwilliger: Before your time. Yeah, I see.

Well Major, I truly want to thank you for your cooperation in doing this taping.  
[recording paused]

You have been an extremely interesting subject and I'm sure for years to come we will ever be grateful to you for taking the time to complete this tape for future generations to enjoy. Thank you, Major Charles Carman.

[END OF INTERVIEW]