

Paul Lowman Jr.

Date: August 16, 2017
Interviewer: Jennifer Warren
Transcriber: Jennifer Warren, November 2017
Editor: Jennifer Warren, February 2020

Abstract: Paul Harry Lowman Jr. (1920-2018), the son of Ida Williams and Paul H. (Kunz / Kuntz) Lowman, was born in Menlo Park and was raised at 22 East Walnut Street in Metuchen during the Depression. His father was a signalman for the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) and applied for a part-time job as a caretaker of the abandoned Thomas Edison Laboratory in Menlo Park. Thomas Edison was a good friend of the Lowman family and he even brought Mr. Lowman a cup of ice cream for his second birthday party. The family lived in an empty farmhouse located adjacent to Edison's former residence, and Mr. Lowman was born in that house. Around 1923, the house caught fire and was damaged. The family eventually sold the property to the Edison Pioneers and moved to Metuchen.

Mr. Lowman attended Edgar School and Franklin School, graduating in 1938. As a young boy, he worked several jobs including serving as a delivery man for the *New Brunswick Times*, the Thornall Dairy, and Paul's Meat Market. He also worked in local print shops and caddied at the Metuchen Golf and Country Club. Mr. Lowman was a member of the First Baptist Church and Troop 15 of the Metuchen Boy Scouts. He married Elinor Mae Beegle in 1940 and they had two children: Diana M. Middleton and Paul H. Lowman III. Following high school, Mr. Lowman worked for E. R. Squibb & Sons in New Brunswick, Cornell-Dubilier Electronics in South Plainfield, and Public Service in Piscataway. He was drafted into the Army in 1944 and served until 1946. Following the war, Mr. Lowman moved to Blairstown and worked at the Smith Hardware Company and became its owner from 1960 to 1985.

In this interview, Mr. Lowman discusses his family and how his father came to work for Thomas Edison in Menlo Park. He recalls his early childhood memories of Thomas Edison, Menlo Park, and Metuchen. He also touches upon his education, his involvement with the Boy Scouts, and his numerous occupations as a young man.

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J. Warren: Today is August 16, 2017 and this is Jennifer Warren, representing the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, interviewing Paul Harry Lowman Jr., who was a one-time resident of Metuchen and who now lives in Palmetto, Florida. We are conducting this interview over the phone and will use this time for Paul to discuss his life in Metuchen and his family's connection to Thomas Edison. [phone rings during recording]

P. Lowman: Hello?

J. Warren: Hi, this is Jennifer Warren and I'm representing the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society. Can you hear me?

P. Lowman: Could you hold on a minute till I get to the other phone?

J. Warren: Okay.

P. Lowman: Hold on a minute until I get my other phone, please.

J. Warren: Okay. [long pause]

P. Lowman: Hello?

J. Warren: Hello.

P. Lowman: Sorry, let me turn this thing off. I have a [unclear] that I use and I just went to the bathroom when you called me, when I was just going out–

J. Warren: Oh, I'm sorry.

P. Lowman: No, it's all right, dear. It's perfectly all right. I should have been here, sitting here waiting for you.

J. Warren: Oh, I'm a little early though; so that's okay.

P. Lowman: It's all right dear. Is it Mrs. or Miss?

J. Warren: It's Miss.

P. Lowman: Warren.

J. Warren: Miss Warren.

P. Lowman: I was just wondering if I could ask you a few questions first about Metuchen?

J. Warren: Sure, go ahead.

P. Lowman: Well, what I was going to say was, being that I was born and raised here (or raised there in Metuchen), I may know some of your–have you been in Metuchen for a long time?

J. Warren: I've been working here for about ten years.

P. Lowman: Oh, well then I don't think I would. I would have thought maybe if you had been born and raised here [in Metuchen], I might know some of your parents or something.

J. Warren: No, probably not.

P. Lowman: Okay. Well, I'll tell you–I guess you know–I'm ninety-seven or going to be in a couple days.

J. Warren: Yes. Congratulations!

P. Lowman: Yeah, we getting ready for a big birthday party.

J. Warren: That's wonderful.

P. Lowman: My daughter [Diana M. (Lowman) Middleton] and son [Paul H. Lowman III] are going to be here to help me. But this is quite an honor for you, the society [Metuchen-Edison Historical Society], to take the time to question me about some of these things, and I'll do my very best to give you my honest history and knowledge of it.

J. Warren: Okay, that would be great. Anything you want to share about your life in Metuchen, we would love to hear about it. So I'm just going to ask you a couple of just basic open-ended questions and feel free to share whatever comes to your mind. Okay?

P. Lowman: That'll be fine. Yes. And Chrissy said—Chrissy Beegle [Christine Beegle, niece] has been my go-between here between you folks. I guess you know Chrissy?

J. Warren: Yes, she's emailed me several times.

P. Lowman: She's a wonderful niece. She's been starting to do the—my history of my—well, you have to excuse me, I'm bad on words. [laughs] But listen, she's doing my history of my family [genealogy].

J. Warren: Yes.

P. Lowman: Starting it anyhow. So she's got me up to about the second generation now, which is wonderful. But it gets more complicated every day, trying to find out something about these parents and things.

J. Warren: Yes, I understand.

P. Lowman: Well, I'll do my best now. What would you like me to tell you about, dear?

J. Warren: Okay. I want to start out by asking you about your parents and when they first came to settle in the area.

P. Lowman: Okay. Now, my parents, that's a tough situation because both of them had the misfortune of losing their parents when they were just children. And they were both raised by their grandparents. So they were raised in Jersey City, New Jersey: Ida Williams and Paul H. Lowman¹. And let's see, I think Chrissy just said she got a birth certificate of my dad and I have my mother's—or yeah, my mother's birth certificate. Mother wasn't very well. She died very young; she was only fifty-two. She had a—well, in those days they called it thrombosis, and this day (today), they call it a stroke. But she had a second one and it killed her. So I don't have so much of—but what I really started I think it was, when I was born in 1920 at Menlo Park, my older sister was there. I had an older sister who was about six years older than I am.

¹ Paul H. Lowman's biological surname was Kunz / Kuntz.

J. Warren: And what was her name?

P. Lowman: Her name was Lillian.

J. Warren: Lillian, okay.

P. Lowman: Lillian Emmett, Lillian Emmett. And she was born in Jersey City where mother and dad first got married. Dad worked in a hardware store as a boy. Well, at first, he drove a little horse and wagon for a grocery company and delivered orders and stuff. And then he got a job in the hardware business, and if I remember, it was Molineux's Hardware Store. I have some pictures of that. And then they decided that they (friends of his) could get him a job on the railroad. And he was a bit too young, and I'm afraid that he kind of lied a little bit about his age. He had to be eighteen years old in a hurry and the Pennsylvania Railroad hired him as a signalman. And the signalman's job was to walk from the towers and the towers in those days had—didn't have electric—they had kerosene lamps that lit the signals. You know on the railroad?

J. Warren: Um-hm.

P. Lowman: And he would carry the can of kerosene from tower to tower walking to four different towers and cleaned and filled all the lights (the signals). And then they came up and they got into—and Menlo Park had a little railroad station there on the main line and he pushed—I can't tell you exactly why but for some reason or other he got off there one day to see what the place was like because he had time. And he just walked up around and he saw that Edison had a place up there and Thomas Edison had a sign on the main gate that he was looking for a caretaker. And so dad said that would be a nice extra job for him and he had time off from the railroad because he could. He was working different shifts on the railroad. So he came and they made an application and Mr. Edison I believe hired him. Now when I say hired him, he took him on and paid him and I'm not sure whether dad was put on his payroll or whether Mr. Edison just took care of that himself personally as a personal caretaker of the estate. And the estate consisted of a farmhouse and two medium-sized laboratories. And he used to come up to there from East Orange², was his home and where his main laboratory was. And he used to come up to Menlo Park and work on special inventions that he started to work on; he didn't want to [unclear] when he was down at the main lab so he used to come up there at different times and stay. One lab had a regular little kitchen in it, a bedroom built on the end of it so he could stay over if he wanted to stay over for a weekend or something.

Well, that's where I was born on the kitchen table in that farmhouse in 1920 because my neighbor came over to the house and told dad that he better call the doctor because mother was getting ready to have the baby. And dad went and called the doctor and the doctor happened to be out on a call then and he told me he would come as soon as he could get there. Well, he didn't quite make it. And the lady (the neighbor) helped mother deliver the baby, which was me.

J. Warren: Wow, very interesting.

² Thomas Edison's main laboratory was located in West Orange at that time.

P. Lowman: And now if you want to jump in and ask any questions, you go right ahead, dear.

J. Warren: Do you know—sorry, I don't mean to interject—but do you know the time period when he [father] started working for Edison?

P. Lowman: Well, let's see, I would say it would be about 1918 or [19]19. It was about a year before I was born.

J. Warren: Okay. And did he live on the estate?

P. Lowman: Pardon.

J. Warren: Did your family live on the estate?

P. Lowman: Did my family did what, dear? I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

J. Warren: Did they live on the Edison—did they live in the farmhouse or in that area?

P. Lowman: No, no, it was—the [Edison] house was empty.

J. Warren: Okay. Where did they live?

P. Lowman: Well, they say that's where my mother and father—you mean my family?

J. Warren: Yeah, your family.

P. Lowman: Yeah, my mother and father. Yeah, that was part of the job.

J. Warren: Was to live there?

P. Lowman: The way I understood it; whether they paid him in cash for paid salary as, you know, or he had his rent free in the home. See they both lived there on the farm³. Dad had made a nice little garden and everything there, and they lived right there on the farm. He [father] moved; he was living in an apartment in Bayonne, New Jersey, which is right in Jersey City—you know part of Jersey City—and he moved up there because he could. He had free passage on the railroad. He could ride anywhere he had to go. And Menlo Park was a nice little train stop for him, which was the nearest stop to see the—the nearest stop to Menlo Park stop was Metuchen. Metuchen had a pretty big station, which I guess they still have now, don't they?

J. Warren: The Metuchen [Railroad] Station.

P. Lowman: Do you live there? Do you live there in Metuchen now, dear?

³ Based on subsequent conversations with Mark Nonestied of the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, Mr. Lowman clarified that his parents did not live in Thomas Edison's former residence. His parents lived and owned the caretaker's house, which stood to the right of Edison's former residence. Mr. Lowman said if you were standing on Lincoln Highway and the Edison residence was in front of you, the caretaker's house would be to the right between the Edison residence and Lincoln Highway. The Edison residence burned to the ground ca. 1917-1918.

- J. Warren: I work here, but I do know the Metuchen Station. Yes, it's still very busy.
- P. Lowman:** But you don't live in Metuchen?
- J. Warren: No, I don't.
- P. Lowman:** I was just going to—not to get personal, I just wanted, thought if you tell me which street you lived on or where you lived on, I'd know what you were talking about.
- J. Warren: Oh no. [laughs]
- P. Lowman:** But anyhow, to get back to dad, I think he had kind of a deal there with Mr. Edison, whether he paid him or he took it off his rent or something like that. He rented. But anyhow, mother and dad lived in the [caretaker's] farmhouse because the farmhouse somehow years later, a couple years later, two years later—I guess it would be 1918. No, it would—yeah, 1922 when I was about two years old, a man—now I can't tell, mother tell me that this was Mr. Edison, but I can't tell—I know a gentleman came and brought me a little ice cream, a little cup of ice cream for my birthday (my second birthday). And mother said, "Mr. Edison brought the ice cream." Well he, Mr. Edison, used to come once or twice a week and he always stopped in at the house and asked mother if everything was okay. And I got to see the man two or three times, so now I know I'm sure that it was Mr. Edison who brought me the ice cream.
- J. Warren: Wow.
- P. Lowman:** That was my second birthday. And let me see now, well dad used to put me in his backpack (knapsack) on his back and take me because he had to walk around the farm and check the—they had built that big tower [Edison Memorial Tower], I guess. Is the big tower still there with the big bulb on it?
- J. Warren: Yes, there were two towers. There was a steel one and then they built a concrete one. That was in the 1930s.
- P. Lowman:** Yeah.
- J. Warren: That one still exists, yes.
- P. Lowman:** That was the first one, was 1930?
- J. Warren: The first one was in, I think, 1929. That was the steel one and I think it got struck down by lightning. And then they built another one in the exact same site, but it was built with concrete. And that one still exists.
- P. Lowman:** All right, okay. Yeah, but dad used to have to walk around and he had to go up to and check the labs up there, that everything was okay. And he used to put me in the backpack on his back and I walked around with him or he carried me around because we lived there then until I was about four years old. And dad got—well,

before that, we had a bad fire in that farmhouse, had a bad fire⁴. The stove pipe or something got plugged up and dad was a great man for save—he was a great—he didn't like to hunt. You know he didn't want to shoot anything, but would like to go out with the dogs. So he raised little hunting dogs. What do you call those little hunting dogs? Well anyhow, he had four little dogs (little puppies) in a box in back of the kitchen stove and they wanted to go there. He wanted to try to save them and the fireman told him no, he couldn't go in, it was full of smoke and everything. And so he went over to the window and reached up and pulled the curtain down, which was on fire, and grabbed the box and he saved his four little puppies.

J. Warren: Oh wow.

P. Lowman: But in the meantime, when he grabbed the light (the curtain), he burned his hand very bad in the center of his palm of his right hand and the neighbors thought it was just great. In those days, you put butter or grease or something on a burn and that was it. So they put some butter on it and wrapped it up good and tight and it was three days later before he got to [unclear] the bandage off. And when he got it off, it was really in bad shape. So they're trying to paralyze his hand and he thought he was going to lose his job, but he could still maintain his job on the railroad. But they [the railroad] found out about what happened to us and so his boss felt sorry for him and he moved him up, transferred him from I think it was in the tower down in Rahway—it's either Rahway or Woodbridge—and he moved him up into the Metuchen tower. There was a tower just on the other side of the railroad station there, down towards Stelton, down that way towards New Brunswick, about a half a mile, there was a tower⁵. I don't know whether it's still there or not, but he was transferred to that tower. So that's what got him over to Metuchen. And he was coming into Metuchen then on the railroad and getting off, and he kind of took a liking so he went up to East Walnut Street. You know where that is in South Metuchen?

J. Warren: Yes.

P. Lowman: East Walnut Street. There's an East Walnut and a West Walnut. And he found an open lot on East Walnut, at 22 East Walnut—is the number.

J. Warren: Yes, I saw that in—

P. Lowman: Pardon.

J. Warren: Yeah, I saw them in the [city] directories—your home address.

P. Lowman: Right, yeah. Chrissy got me a couple of those older—well in fact, she got me two of the census reports from Metuchen from 1920, I guess it was, and 1938. Yeah, she got one from 1938 that listed my dad's name and my mother's and my sister's. And let me see now, well he made a deal and bought a lot and a house. The house

⁴ Around 1923, a fire happened in the kitchen of the caretaker's house. It is believed that the kitchen area in this building was rebuilt by Mr. Edison and the Lowmans continued to live there for a year or so before selling it and moving to Metuchen.

⁵ He is referring to the old HU Interlocking Station along the Pennsylvania Railroad between Main Street and Lake Avenue in Metuchen.

had to be built because there wasn't any house there, just an open lot. And he had a lot built and we moved to Metuchen when I was about four years old. That would be in 1924. And in 1925 when I was five, mother took me around the corner—and are you familiar with the streets in Metuchen now?

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: You should be, you an historic. [laughs] Well, you know where East Walnut Street is? If you come out of East Walnut and turn to your left and go down one block to your right, you come to Brunswick Avenue where you had your school. And you had your school, [Edgar] Elementary School was up there on Brunswick Avenue.

J. Warren: Did you go there?

P. Lowman: Yeah, that's where I started. Mother used to walk me around there and walk up the Brunswick Avenue and I went till sixth grade. And seventh grade, they sent me down to Franklin High School. I'm sorry I'm a little confused, I was looking at the booklet there that my niece sent me about the schools. See the Franklin School was burnt down or something, and it says the second one was moved. I don't know which, the one that I went to is still there or was still there the last time I was down there, down on the highway [Middlesex Avenue]—Franklin High School.

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: The high school now is in a retirement home or something.

J. Warren: Well actually, it was demolished. It had a fire in the 1950s, but it was still standing. But then it was demolished, I think, in like 1999, somewhere around there. And they have a new high school that's over near Grove Avenue.

P. Lowman: Well, that's on down on Lincoln Highway, isn't it? Towards Edison Township?

J. Warren: Yes.

P. Lowman: Yeah well, I graduated in 1938 from Franklin High School. I went there from sixth grade or seventh grade to twelfth grade, graduated from twelfth grade in high school there. It wasn't too bad when I got a little bit older, but when I was younger we had—it was quite a long walk to walk. We walked all the way from East Walnut Street all the way down to the high school in seventh grade.

J. Warren: Oh wow. Yeah, that is a long walk.

P. Lowman: But you know, I'll tell you a little bit of an aside for that too. You know in those days, we didn't have refrigerators. We had iceboxes. And we had to get a [unclear] of ice to keep them cold. So I used to take my little red wagon and I brought a bag and I pulled it down with me when I went to school. We went down and around in the back of Costa's Ice Cream Factory [at 16 Pearl Street].

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: Is that still there? Costa's Ice Cream?

J. Warren: No⁶. [laughs] But we do remember it well, yes.

P. Lowman: Well, I used to—and I pulled it up underneath the loading platform in front. And I got to know the gentleman [Gregory Costa] that run the ice cream place or the ice place where they made [unclear] of ice in there that they sold. You know Costa did beside their ice cream, they made ice too in the ice factory. When I came out from school the night, I gave him fifty cents and he gave me a fifty-cent block of ice. They wrapped it up and put in a bag and I headed back up home with it. That was about every third day. In the summertime, it was almost every other day; it melted pretty fast.

And then right across from Costa's was a printing—Walt Bradstreet had a printing place [Bradstreet & Woolever Printers at 15 Pearl Street]. I don't image that's there anymore—a small print shop right across the street from Costa's? Well anyhow, to get on, to try and bring Mr. Walt Costa in there they rushed the boys into—two or three of us used to go by there when we were about eighth grade, ninth grade and all the rest at one time we wanted to come in and make a few dollars helping in the print shop sorting papers and different little jobs you do. So I worked for him for about two years when I was in school. But after I got married in 1940—I married Elinor [Mae Beegle] up in Blairstown, New Jersey. We got married and we decided that I would like to go back again [to Metuchen] because I had gotten a job at Squibb's in New Brunswick. You know Squibb's & Son⁷?

J. Warren: Um-hm.

P. Lowman: The pharmaceutical?

J. Warren: Right.

P. Lowman: Well, I got a job with them and Mr. Bradstreet lived on the corner of Brunswick Avenue and Main Street. His mother's house was right there [at 127 Main Street]. Maybe it's still there, I don't know? And she [Minnie H. Bradstreet, widow] had made an apartment upstairs. So when we got married, I went to see Walt and ask him; he said that the apartment was open and he rented. I rented an apartment from him for about four years from Walt's mother, and his wife [Ruth Bradstreet] lived downstairs and we had our own entrance and little apartment upstairs. So that's how I got back to Metuchen in 1940.

But then Uncle Sam came around in 19—well, Diane [Diana M. (Lowman) Middleton], my daughter, was born in 1942. And a couple of years later, Uncle Sam decided that he wanted some more men to send over to Europe, so I was drafted. But Squibb's tried to get me deferred for quite a while but they figured I had an older man that could take my job, so Uncle Sam took me. I was twenty-four years old and had a two-year-old daughter. I didn't think it was very fair, but that's what they wanted and that's what we had to do. But let's see, well then

⁶ Costa's Ice Cream business moved to Woodbridge and then closed in 1977. The building at 16 Pearl Street is still extant and serves as a business center.

⁷ E.R. Squibb and Sons, Inc. opened in New Brunswick in 1907. It is now known as Bristol-Myers Squibb.

Elinor and Diane moved back to Blairstown to her home and she lived with her parents for a while, while I was in the service until [19]46. And then I got discharged in [19]46 and I went back to Blairstown.

But I tell you, you wanted to know about my parents, and I'll tell that's about all I can tell you about my parents except that dad stayed on the railroad until he retired about thirty-eight years; he retired. Mother got very ill. She got a case of tuberculosis there for a while, and then she had a double stroke and then she died when she was fifty-two⁸. But that was about three years after I went back [to Metuchen], after I was married. I was back in about 1940, I guess—yeah, it was about the time Diane was born.

But we had a doctor from Plainfield, Dr. Lippincott. I'm sure he's not there anymore. [laughs] He took care of my mother when I was born and he took care of my wife when my daughter was born. So that's quite a coincidence too.

J. Warren: Um-hm. Yeah, it is.

P. Lowman: Well, he had a nice big home just about two blocks down in Plainfield over there next to the hospital [Muhlenberg Hospital], very close there. If you go to his office or you had go to the hospital, you just went next door to the hospital. But I worked for Mr. Thornall's Dairy⁹. Have you heard any questions about that—milk farm delivered milk all over the Oak Tree area or Oak Tree section, South Plainfield-Metuchen? Well let me see, anything you would like to know, dear, that I forgot? [laughs]

J. Warren: Let's see, let's go back to [Thomas] Edison. You mentioned a couple of stories about him visiting. Did your father ever talk about what Edison was like, or did they have any sort of close relationship?

P. Lowman: They were the best of friends.

J. Warren: Oh really?

P. Lowman: Well, that's how dad got the job, I guess. He just went up to him and spoke to him and Edison took him for a walk around, showed him what he would have to do. And dad said, "Yeah, that'd be fine." And he was happy to find a place to live right there. He'd have a house to live. And Mr. Edison says he was very happy to have somebody to come live in the house and take care of it. But he [father] never had a bad word for Mr. Edison. He always had a good word for Mr. Edison. And mother did too because when he [Edison] used to come quite a few times, he'd come during the week when dad wasn't home or dad was at work. And he always made a business to stop at the house and see if everything was okay or if she needed anything, or if everything was okay or if she had any trouble with anything around the house, he would fix it for her or get it fixed. So he was very, very helpful as far as a caretaker goes. But no, him and dad were very good friends. And in fact, he was very unhappy with dad that he went and tried to get his puppies out and burned his hand and all like that. He said, "Let that place go." He said, "We can always build another house." Course he wasn't there at

⁸ Ida (Williams) Lowman died on March 1, 1943.

⁹ The Thornall Dairy was run by Jim Heaton, grandson of William M. Thornall.

the time of the fire, he was back in [West] Orange. But when he came up the next day, then my dad, I guess mother and dad went and stayed with neighbors. Well, she had the two kids then (my older sister and me) and I think we managed—he had a visitor—yeah, I think it was about three days we had to be out of the house and he had carpenters come in and rebuild. It [the fire] didn't burn the house down, but it did a lot of damage inside so they just tore a lot of the inside and rebuilt the inside¹⁰.

Now let's see, I was talking to—I can't think of his name now—but he called me too from the Middlesex County Historical Society [Mark Nonestied from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission]. He said they were starting, going to start in September, they were going to start some kind of—what do you say?—looking into the Edison estate there [archaeology] in Menlo Park. And he had called Chrissy. Chrissy said, "Give my number." And I told him a little bit, just like I was just telling you. But he was questioning the house whether Edison really owned the house, or was there, or rented¹¹. I told him I couldn't answer that because I was only two years old when I was there. I didn't know too much about it. So what I'm telling you, dear, is some of it is what my mother told me and my sister.

That was another thing about that ice cream business, my sister said that it was Mr. Edison that popped in. He came up to the house and he found it was all decorated up for the—some of my friends around (the neighbors) to come for a little birthday party. And he wanted to know which one of the two of us is having a birthday. I told him. And he went down to the grocery store where they sold everything in the general store and bought a Dixie cup of ice cream and brought it back up. Later on, I told my sister, I said, "I don't like to tell people it happened because I'm not sure." She said, "You can be sure that it was him." She said, "I know Mr. Edison." And so I'm pretty sure that's what really happened when I was—and mother told me the same thing. So I don't want to make any statements about what happened when I was only two years old because I really don't—I can't say that I remember him. I remember being told of him at an early age.

J. Warren: Right. Yeah, that's very interesting.

P. Lowman: Go ahead.

J. Warren: No, I was just commentating that it's incredibly interesting.

P. Lowman: Well, I hope so. [laughter] I'm just so well blessed dear that I could—my memory is still that good.

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: But I tell you, I like to repeat it because I think that's the only way I can remember different things.

¹⁰ The Lowman family patched up the house and lived there for another year before moving to Metuchen in 1924.

¹¹ Deed research indicates that the Lowman family bought the Edison caretaker's house on August 4, 1922 for \$1,600 from Eva Elliott. They sold the property in 1926 for \$100 to the Electrical Testing Labs, part of the Edison Pioneers.

J. Warren: Exactly.

P. Lowman: And as I go along telling the story, then different things come up too that I had—I thought I had forgotten but I didn't, you know.

J. Warren: Right.

P. Lowman: But I just wanted to make sure that the folks understand—you know that are listening—that most of these things actually happened, except for the Edison business in the beginning. There are a few things there that anybody would kind of question, you know? But if they do, I'm sure that when you start making some historical—looking into some of those things, you can get more out of them.

J. Warren: Right. Well, not a lot is known about Edison after he left Menlo Park in the late nineteenth century. We don't know a lot about what he did in Menlo Park because he moved to West Orange. And so I think a lot of people are interested in the fact that he did come back many times.

P. Lowman: When I got over into Metuchen, interest in Metuchen business—well, I got to tell you something about my Boy Scout business. I started out when I was eight years old as a Cub Scout, in the Boy Scouts in Troop 15 which met in a Presbyterian church, which I guess is still located down there by the station?

J. Warren: The [First] Presbyterian [Church]? Woodbridge Avenue, I guess?

P. Lowman: Yeah, yes, the street went right up into the driveway into the [railroad] station. The same street [Woodbridge Avenue] that went all the way through all way over to the park [Roosevelt Park]. And they built on the right-hand corner, they built the new post office [at 360 Main Street]. I guess that's still there, isn't it?

J. Warren: Yes.

P. Lowman: Yeah. See I remember some of those things. I remember Danford's Ice Cream Parlor [at 476 Main Street] down on the corner of Main Street and the Lincoln Highway [Middlesex Avenue] across from the Borough Hall.

J. Warren: Right.

P. Lowman: Am I right? Next to Danford's was the [Washington Hose Company] firehouse.

J. Warren: Yes.

P. Lowman: And across the street on the other corner was the [Centenary] Methodist [Episcopal] Church.

J. Warren: Um-hm, that's no longer there. But yes, you are correct.

P. Lowman: [laughter; unclear] some of it is still there. That's great. Well, I tell you I went up from—you go up from the new post office there, the first street was—it was what? I don't remember the name of the street, but down the street it had the [First] Baptist Church on the other end of it.

J. Warren: I think—is it Clinton [Place]?

P. Lowman: Clinton, that's it. Yeah, Clinton, that rang the bell.

J. Warren: Or Carlton [Road], maybe? The names have changed over the years, but yes, the Baptist Church, yes.

P. Lowman: Yes well, my mother was a superintendent of the Sunday school for years in there. And I was christened in that church, raised in there, and I was baptized in that church. That was one of the churches that had a water baptism. They had a baptism pool built in the church. We were baptized in the church in the water.

J. Warren: Interesting.

P. Lowman: Pardon.

J. Warren: I said that's interesting.

P. Lowman: Oh. And let's see now, the next street up was—well, is the theater still up there? The next street?

J. Warren: Forum Theatre? Yes.

P. Lowman: Yes, Forum Theatre still there? And the other corner, there was another ice cream parlor on the corner of Amboy Avenue there too. I don't know whether they're still there or not?

J. Warren: Probably not.

P. Lowman: No well, and in the back of him was a little print shop [Everybody's Print Shop at 291 Main Street]. And I got a job in there working after school cleaning up the prints [by hand] and all like that.

J. Warren: How old were you when you had that job?

P. Lowman: Oh, let's see, I would be about fifteen or sixteen, seven—no, I tell you, I was just getting old enough to—that's where I got my social security card. The old German printer in there, he was only paying me for a couple hours each day. But he told me I had to have a social security card.

J. Warren: Was that your first job?

P. Lowman: Pardon.

J. Warren: Was that your first job?

P. Lowman: Yeah, that was my first one, yeah. Because then afterwards, after he decided he was going to retire, and Walt Bradstreet closed the little shop down there by Costa's, and he had a regular little card store there right across the street from that on the right-hand corner. I think it was a big apartment house there and they had a couple stores downstairs on the street level and two or three

apartment floors upstairs. I walked to work, worked in there that summer, and then he let me work in there then. You know regular, not full time, because I was still in high school.

But you know another thing, when I was in the Boy Scouts, Jim Heaton was my [Troop 15] Scoutmaster at that time and he happened to be the grandson of Bill Thornall (the milk company). And he needed somebody to help deliver milk¹². Those days we were delivering raw milk; they didn't have pasteurized milk. Nobody knew what pasteurized was when I was a kid. And he got me a special driving permit from the Motor Vehicle Department so I could drive the milk truck and deliver some milk between five and six in the morning before school. And I used to deliver about thirty or sixty bottles of milk every morning.

And well let's see, and I went from the Boy Scouts, we went—they [the Middlesex County Scouts] bought Camp Sakawawin up in Blairstown. That's how I got to Blairstown in 1932. I was old enough to be a Boy Scout then and they had a little competition on to see who would pass the most tests and the most merit badges in one year. And whoever did, got a free week at Camp Sakawawin up in Blairstown. And I happened to be the lucky one and I won the first week. Well, when I went up there for a week, I fell in love with the camp. [laughs] And it was great, but I was still in school so I had to just go in the summertime. But then I found out later on that the boys got older and could become Eagle Scouts; they could get like a counselor's job at the camp. So I worked real hard, and while I longer was working at camp, I got my Eagle Scout badge. And the director that hired me said, "You always got everything going, keep going, keep moving around." He said, "We're going to make you an activities director." And I said, "Okay." So I was an activities director, but it turned out to be like an assistant camp director because every time the camp director decided he was going to take off for a while, then I had to take over. [laughs] And I did the job. But that was great, and we had, of course we had—I don't know, you're not familiar I don't think with that camp, are you? Up there, Camp Sakawawin in Blairstown?

J. Warren: No, not too much.

P. Lowman: It's quite a ways out. Well, it was Middlesex County though that bought the [camp]—it was Middlesex County Scouts that we belonged to. I don't mean—we belonged to the national [Boy Scouts]. The state was Middlesex County state, and they bought the—or rented the place for the camp. And then we built a nice little swimming area where they could swim in the lake. It was a beautiful lake. And some of the summers, the kids from Blairstown, this camp town, didn't have any place to go swimming because that was the only lake. [laughs] We had to take in [unclear] away for the whole summer. So we just decided that we would just rope in the lake or an area where the city children could come and swim under the direction of our lifeguards because we didn't want anybody to get hurt or anything, and then they would be suing us. So we put lifeguards on duty, and that's where I met my wife. She came in one Sunday afternoon with two or three of her girlfriends and of course we (the boys) had to talk with the girls. And that's where I met her.

¹² Mr. Lowman was roughly fourteen years old at the time; he would later rent an apartment upstairs from Jim Heaton in Oak Tree following his high school graduation.

J. Warren: At that camp.

P. Lowman: That was back in 1938. And I kept going up every summer and sometimes every year. So I went up in 1940 when she decided she would marry me. So we got married.

J. Warren: [brief interruption] Sorry about that.

P. Lowman: She was a wonderful girl though, dear. I tell you, I sure miss her. I lost her in 2010; she had died. I had taken care of her for six years with Alzheimer's disease. And finally she got this Staph disease, or Staph infection or something, I guess. And they said, the doctor just decided they just couldn't do anything for her. And so I turned her over to the hospice people and they did a wonderful job. They took care of her for almost a week and she passed away and left me in 2010.

J. Warren: Oh, I'm so sorry.

P. Lowman: And she died in October and if she lived till December, we would have been married seventy years.

J. Warren: Oh wow.

P. Lowman: I was married December twenty-second [1940]. I would have been married seventy years then. But I guess now, is there anything else I can tell you, dear? [laughs] Do you have any other questions?

J. Warren: [laughs] You've covered quite a bit.

P. Lowman: Chrissy said you had all these questions.

J. Warren: I did, and you've gone through most of them.

P. Lowman: Well, that's good.

J. Warren: I just wanted to ask sort of your recollections of the town of Metuchen. You've kind of gone through some of the places that you remember, but is there anything you did for fun as a kid? Or anything, any part of the town that you remember specifically?

P. Lowman: Of Metuchen?

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: Yeah, I'll tell you, what do you want to know? My mother and father are buried in the cemetery on Lincoln Avenue. You know where Lincoln Avenue is, in South Metuchen?

J. Warren: Is this Hillside Cemetery?

P. Lowman: I don't know.

J. Warren: Yeah, near the railroad [Lehigh Valley Railroad].

- P. Lowman:** The name of the street is Lincoln, yeah. Yeah, the railroad right behind. My mother and father are buried in there, in the cemetery. Now across the street—was it High Street?
- J. Warren: Yes, the YMCA [Youth Men’s Christian Association at 65 High Street]. Did you go to the YMCA?
- P. Lowman:** I was just going to say that I was raised and learned how to swim in that YMCA. Yeah.
- J. Warren: Oh wow.
- P. Lowman:** Because then that street goes down alongside—why was that Thomas Street? Does that come out down the other end, down at Edgar School?
- J. Warren: Um-hm.
- P. Lowman:** Right?
- J. Warren: Yeah.
- P. Lowman:** It goes down, yeah. Let’s see, I was in the Boy Scouts then for—well, I just lost my—I didn’t lose it—but I didn’t get it renewed for fifty years in the Boy Scouts.
- J. Warren: How long were you in the Boy Scouts?
- P. Lowman:** Well let’s see, maybe about 1942-[19]44, somewhere around in there. Just after I got married, I went back to Blairstown and I helped out as a—I don’t know what they call?—well, it was the committee (the Troop Committee) that took care of the troops because we had Troop 14, Troop 15, Troop 16, three scout troops there. I don’t know whether they still have them or not, but we did have them.
- J. Warren: Yeah, I think so.
- P. Lowman:** Well, I’ll tell you how they may have came out. Troop 14 was started in the Methodist Church and of course, the troop was full of Methodist boys naturally. Next, Troop 15 started and they were Presbyterian. And then the priest decided or the Catholics decided that the boys weren’t allowed to meet in the church. We didn’t have places to meet so they were meeting in the churches. And they decided they didn’t want—we weren’t allowed to meet in the Christian church. So they started Troop 16 and Troop 16 ended up with about 50 percent were Catholic boys and 50 percent were [unclear] Christians anyhow. The Christian boys didn’t care about meeting in the Catholic church; they wanted to stay with the Boy Scout troop. Now, the Troop 14 got hooked up with the American Legion. Is the American Legion home still over there?
- J. Warren: No, unfortunately.
- P. Lowman:** It used to be on—it was right on the highway there, on Lincoln Highway, just as you—well, almost over to the bridge, almost over to the railroad. Right on the corner, a triangle lot, they [American Legion] used to have that building [on

Lake Avenue]. But anyhow, and then we used to have our Memorial Day services over at the park. Do they still have that?

J. Warren: Which park is this?

P. Lowman: What's the name of the park now? I don't know. We used to have a little parade down through town and it went around the highway and over to where Amboy Avenue comes down to meet—

J. Warren: Oh, Memorial Park?

P. Lowman: That's it, that's it. You got it, dear.

J. Warren: Okay.

P. Lowman: Yes, that's it. Yeah, that's where the Scouts used to have their services on Memorial Day.

J. Warren: Yeah, Memorial Day Parade.

P. Lowman: Uh-huh, right.

J. Warren: Yes, okay.

P. Lowman: And we did a lot of work up at the—what's the name of the park up there where the old soldiers' home [Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home] is? In Menlo, well it's actually in—a big lake up there, what do you call that lake?

J. Warren: Roosevelt Park? Which one are you talking about?

P. Lowman: Well, it was—you know where the old soldiers' home is in Menlo Park there?

J. Warren: In Menlo Park?

P. Lowman: Yeah.

J. Warren: I think maybe it's Roosevelt Park, but I could be wrong.

P. Lowman: Let me see, what is it? Well, you could go all the way out the end from—well, like that from the railroad station or the [First] Presbyterian Church, all the way out that street and get to—what do you call that? It's a beautiful big place there. The county runs it. I think it's a county park—Middlesex County.

J. Warren: I think it's Roosevelt Park. I think that's what you're talking about.

P. Lowman: You got it, you got it. Roosevelt Park. That rang a bell just as you said Roosevelt. Yes, that's it, dear. The Boy Scouts used to go up there and we would take the kids up and I picked, you know, and they'd take their little pop tents and we go out in the woods; we have a little camp [Kiddie Keep Well Camp] for weekends and like that. And a lot of the kids could go up with their leaders and pass some of their outdoor tests up there; different things you had to do in the woods—pitch a tent and all that kind of stuff, all that. They could pass their tests up there. And

then of course, all those Scouts all went to Blairstown to the camp up there—that Camp Sakawawin, they called it.

J. Warren: Now did you become a Scoutmaster?

P. Lowman: A what, dear?

J. Warren: A Scoutmaster?

P. Lowman: Yes, I was Scoutmaster for about two years, yes. Another place I worked too was Cornell-Dubilier¹³. Have you heard of that one in South Plainfield?

J. Warren: No.

P. Lowman: Well, when I was working for Squibb's over there, working part-time, and in the lab over there where we were testing it. Well, before I went to Squibb's, I worked for Public Service. Public Service was a gas place in Piscataway and we had to work shift work so I had some, lots of time off in between my job. So I got a night job at Cornell-Dubilier. They make little electrical things to put in for TV [television] and radio and like that. And you could go in, just sign in and work as long as you want and sign out. And then at the end of the week, you just took your card in and it paid you so much an hour for the hours that you worked. And it worked out very nicely because you could work in the evening or you could work at night because they were open twenty-four hours a day. So it worked out very nicely.

And let's see, well I didn't tell you much about the army business and I don't like to talk about it. I was in the US Army for two years [1944-1946], went to Europe, got banged up a little bit, come back and I was in the hospital up in Camp Shanks, New York. I don't know whether you heard of that or not? It was where—it's the state insane asylum and they divided it in half. It was such a big place, they divided it in half. And the Army took over half of it during the war. And we got put up there for a while.

J. Warren: Oh wow.

P. Lowman: But then I came out all right. I got a little kink in my back once in a while, but nothing serious. But [I] got home safe anyhow.

J. Warren: And after that, you moved to Blairstown?

P. Lowman: Yeah, that's where I was married in—see I was drafted when I was twenty-four and I had already been married, since 1940, for four years and I had a two-year-old daughter. And then Elinor and Diane went up to her mother's in Blairstown to live with them while I was in the service. And when I came out, I went back to Squibb's and Squibb's had already joined the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] and most of my old friends in there told me, "Paul, if you can find another job, you better get another job because we have been on strike three times in three years." So they said things weren't going too well. So I decided to

¹³ Cornell-Dubilier Electronics, Inc. (CDE) was a 26-acre facility manufacturing electronic components in South Plainfield that operated from 1936 to 1962.

Elinor, she would rather be up there in Blairstown, her hometown anyhow, so we just stayed there at home in Blairstown and I went to work in a hardware store [Smith Hardware Company at 21 Main Street in Blairstown] up there. [I] worked for them for about fourteen years, thirteen years. And then they (Mr. and Mrs. Smith) decided they were going to retire, so they made it possible for me to buy the business. So Elinor and I bought the business and we saved the business from 1960 to 1985. And then the big boys started moving in so the little mom-and-pop stores didn't have a chance with them—you know with Home Depot and those kinds of places.

J. Warren: Right.

P. Lowman: And they kept coming in, move closer and closer, and people were running there. Well, people begin to drive more, getting automobiles for getting out of town. Before when they didn't have any automobiles and they couldn't run out of town, they had to stay in town and that's what kept us going.

J. Warren: Right.

P. Lowman: So afterwards, we just had a big sale and sold all of it. And I had another friend who had a hardware store in Hope, New Jersey, which is about twelve miles from Blairstown. [loud background noise] And he was selling a lot of the same kind of merchandise that I was, so we just boxed everything all up there, made an inventory, and he bought everything that I had left over. So it worked out very nicely.

So I hope that everything came out okay, dear?

J. Warren: Okay. Can I just ask you a couple more questions and then I'll let you go? Is that okay?

P. Lowman: You go right ahead, dear. I'm sitting here nice in my easy chair and I'm very comfortable.

J. Warren: Okay. Well, if you're tired, just let me know.

P. Lowman: I'm very, very happy about telling you what I do know. [laughter]

J. Warren: Well, I just want to go back a little bit to school. I mean you talked a little bit about going to Franklin High School. I didn't know if you had any stories about high school or any of the activities that you did at school that you wanted to share?

P. Lowman: Well, I tried to get into sports. [laughs] I loved sports, but I'm so, so short. I'm only 5'5" and only weighed about 150 [pounds]. So they told me I was way too small for football. Coach, he took me on those first years so I could get a letter. He said, "Paul, I wish you wouldn't come out next year because I hate to put you out there because one of those guys is going to knock you out." So anyhow, I got out of football. So I played basketball for a couple of years, made out fairly well with that. And then the big tall guys had come in, and us little fellows didn't have a chance.

But I organized what I call a “safety patrol,” which they didn’t have and we needed because where Franklin School was there on the highway [Middlesex Avenue] was right on the main corner and the kids had to cross the highway. And they didn’t have any street guards or anything like that today. So I organized a bunch of fellows and the seniors (although not all senior, but the boys in the high school), and we organized a street patrol and put two—we got in with the [Metuchen] Police Department and we had yellow straps and everything. And the kids that were allowed out a couple of minutes before the school got out. They went out and stood out and helped the kids get across the street. Well, that was working out pretty good. So then the principal decided that he needed something like that in the school, so he got me to organize patrols in the school where the kids were—you know had certain places to go in case of fire. Of course, they all didn’t know. They weren’t all actually sure of what room they were in or which way they should go to get to the exit. So we had that all mapped out, got the kids to draw big maps on the doors of each one of those rooms to show the kids where to go if anything happened. And I got quite a bit of recognition from the Board of Education for that, so I felt very happy about that.

J. Warren: Yeah, that’s amazing.

P. Lowman: And let’s see, well I got job with one of the lawyers in town. His son was a good, very good friend of mine, and he got—his son and I had a job of caddying at the [Metuchen] Golf and Country Club. And I guess the Oak Tree Country Club still there?

J. Warren: Yeah, the Metuchen Golf and Country Club?

P. Lowman: Yeah.

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: Well, of course in those days you didn’t have no carts or nothing. Everybody had to carry a bag. And because everybody thought that the more clubs they had in the bag, well the bigger the golfer they were. [laughs] They didn’t make it any lighter for the caddie. But as I was going to say, I caddied for almost three years of my high school time. In the afternoon, every time I got a chance to go when I wasn’t working in the print shop, I’d go to the country club and I was able to buy my first automobile with it (the caddie money). And to make you laugh, dear, I paid fifty dollars for a 1933 Chevy.

J. Warren: Oh my goodness. [laughs]

P. Lowman: Well, that was about all it was worth, was fifty [dollars]. It ran for about a year, then I had to give it up. But the guy that sold it had graduated and he was going on to college and he didn’t want a [19]33 Chevy. He had to have a better car than that. So he sold that one to me for fifty bucks. And that was my first automobile.

J. Warren: Sorry I don’t want to interrupt, but your niece also mentioned that you worked for a local butcher. Is that true?

P. Lowman: Oh, oh yeah. Well let’s see, that was when I was younger. Oh, there some other jobs that I forgot, I guess. I started off delivering newspapers like everybody else.

And they had a contest in my area, up there in South Metuchen, all around the YMCA, that area. And then on the other side of the street there, on Charles Street, Lincoln Avenue, those streets, they had no paper delivery so they—was it *New Brunswick Times*, the New Brunswick paper?

J. Warren: Um-hm.

P. Lowman: I guess they're still in business, aren't they?

J. Warren: I think so, yes.

P. Lowman: Yeah, yeah. Well, they put out a contest and they said that if anybody could deliver papers, to go around and get as many customers as they can get. So we did and I got seven customers and somebody else got ten, and three of us I guess, and so they give us each a paper bag and we threw the papers. And a morning paper had to be delivered before school, before seven in the morning. And then afterwards, the neighbors started hollering to see if they could get their papers, "We want one too." So we got more customers. So then they (the paper) came around and they said, "We're going to have a contest and the one of three of you that can get the most customers in one month, we're going to give him a bicycle." And so, luckily, I did it. I got the most customers and I got a brand-new bicycle.

J. Warren: Oh wow.

P. Lowman: So then I rode around with the paper. But then in the butcher shop business, the butcher said, "I see you have bicycle now you're riding." "Yeah," I said. "You know, that would make a nice—it would save me delivering all my—" He said, "I have about six different people that buy, that call in every week, two or three times a week, and order meat. And they want it delivered." So he said, "If you come in every day, I'll give you fifty cents for delivering maybe three or four packages." So I took that on. I got a basket for the front of my bike. I go to the butcher shop right from school and pick up all orders he had to deliver. And then next day, a couple of days I'd go, and he'd say no, he'd didn't have anything at all. But he always paid me cash when I went in; he always got a bag with some meat in it, some cold cuts or some chicken or something like that. He always had some extra meat in it. Mr. [Paul] Domokos¹⁴ his name was. He was a German—Domokos. And I did that for about two or three years, I guess. The same time, I was doing the newspaper. But then I built the newspaper business up with more because then I got some afternoon route papers to deliver. And then after when I was delivering meat or delivering for Domokos, I had newspapers to deliver at the same time. So I got that all in before I went home for supper and mother said, "Do your homework!" [laughter]

J. Warren: Was this butcher located on Main Street? Or do you remember where they were located?

P. Lowman: He was located right on the corner of Lincoln Avenue. His house was on the corner and his butcher shop was next to it going down towards downtown. And facing the house, it would be on the left side. And next to him was a florist shop. It was two shops, I think, two more little stores in there. Yeah, but across the

¹⁴ Paul Domokos owned Paul's Meat Market at 212 Main Street.

street from Lincoln Avenue was a big grocery store. I don't know whether that's still there or not? An A&P or something like that? A big grocery store.

J. Warren: Yeah, I don't think it's there anymore.

P. Lowman: No, next to her was a beauty parlor where my mother went to have her hair done. [laughs] Yeah, I remember quite a bit. Across the street then, well next to Lincoln [Avenue], let's see it was Lincoln and the next one would be Charles Street. In between there used to be a Texaco gas station and I made a few dollars in there too because I used to go in on weekends once in a while when he wanted a Saturday afternoon off or something like that. I would go in and take care of the gas station for him. John Learn¹⁵ his name was. Of course, these names don't mean anything to you folks because they're about fifty years old now. [laughs]

J. Warren: No, it's all very interesting.

P. Lowman: I'm sure there's a lot that are not as well-off or as blessed as I am to be hanging around at ninety-seven.

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: I can't believe it, dear. I can't believe it.

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: But it's true. And I have two of the most wonderful kids that you have ever seen in your life

J. Warren: Well, that's great.

P. Lowman: My son has built himself up in his company. He's the vice president of his company now, getting ready to retire because he was just seventy years old last year. And my daughter is—well, she's seventy-four and she's already retired. And she lives up in Knoxville, Tennessee or Knoxville, Georgia. Just above me, about I think it is 300 miles. And she drives down here once or twice a month to make sure that I'm doing okay.

J. Warren: Wow. Oh, that's great.

P. Lowman: So, I say I'm spoiled, so well pleased and so well blessed with such wonderful children because I know some of the older folks we have in here, they didn't even know where their daughters are or where their sons are. Now that's a shame [unclear] the children, you know?

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: Well, can I ask you a personal question, dear? How old are you?

J. Warren: How old am I? I'm thirty-five.

¹⁵ John E. Learn owned a service station at 188 Main Street.

P. Lowman: **Thirty-five?**

J. Warren: Yeah, just a little bit younger. [laughs]

P. Lowman: **A little bit. God bless you, dear. I hope you make it many, many more.**

J. Warren: I hope so too.

P. Lowman: **It was so nice talking—I did all the talking. I hope I didn't mess everything all up.**

J. Warren: No, that's wonderful. That's what we called for, and I really appreciate you sharing all of this information.

P. Lowman: **Well listen dear, say thank you to the society too because I'm so pleased that the society would take the time to interview me for, you know, to get—now where will this—is this for something special that you are doing this year or is this something you do a lot of the time?**

J. Warren: Well, the society did a bunch of oral history interviews. They've been doing them over the past thirty years. And so they've been interviewing a lot of Metuchen residents. So when your niece contacted us, we just thought it would be great to add to our collection, and so we are so thrilled that you wanted to take the time to talk to us about all your recollections.

P. Lowman: **Well, I'm just so happy that I was able to remember some of them, you know.**

J. Warren: Yeah, you remember a great deal.

P. Lowman: **Are you going to put out another book or something? You know I wanted to tell you about that too. I have three books here that my niece sent me. The one that I was really happy to get with—the one about the Brainy Borough, Metuchen—the Brainy Borough?**

J. Warren: Um-hm.

P. Lowman: **The book. That had settled a lot of questions for me too.**

J. Warren: Oh, well that's great.

P. Lowman: **I always was kind of questionable about who was the Brainy Borough. But then after I read your book, I'm all settled about it. Metuchen has got the championship. They're the Brainy Borough.**

J. Warren: Yeah.

P. Lowman: **And I have the other one of a—now wait a minute, can you hold on a minute? I got to get to the side of the desk. Hold on a minute.**

J. Warren: Okay.

P. Lowman: **Yeah, the one I have of Metuchen, the Brainy Borough. And I have this other one that you, that the society, put out with the—Metuchen. It's all the firemen and all**

the—I can't read it. It has a bunch of firemen on it, in front of it, baseball men, Police Department. And the other one that she sent me was the New Jersey Metuchen area—Metuchen Chamber of Commerce. Oh, it's a Chamber of Commerce book. That was very helpful too. [loud background noise] And then they sent me a couple of street maps. I asked about the street maps. I told her where I lived and she wanted to go and see—this one niece I'm talking about now; Eric [Beegle, grand-nephew] and his wife are—they live over, what we used to call—well, they say they live in South Plainfield now.

J. Warren: Okay.

P. Lowman: Didn't we have another name for that area, do we? Years ago? No? Now I can't think of it. But anyhow, I lived over there myself in South Plainfield for a while when we first got married.

J. Warren: Oh really? Is that where you—is that where you lived after you graduated?

P. Lowman: No, after I got married.

J. Warren: Oh okay.

P. Lowman: And I came back to Blairstown. And then that's how I got that job working nights over at Cornell-Dubilier because they were close by there in South Plainfield. And they were supposed to get over to Squibb's in New Brunswick. You know there was one other thing I was going to ask you too, dear. If you could do me a favor?

J. Warren: Okay.

P. Lowman: Let me get it out here. You folks put out—what would call it?—little paper here. I think it says summer—*Nannygoats* [newsletter].

J. Warren: Yes. Yes, we do.

P. Lowman: How would it be if I asked you, could you stick one in the mail for me once in a while?

J. Warren: Oh, of course.

P. Lowman: You have my name and address here, don't you?

J. Warren: Yes, I think your niece gave it to me.

P. Lowman: Yeah, I'd love that. You got some good stuff in there.

J. Warren: Oh, that's great.

P. Lowman: How often does it come out, dear?

J. Warren: I'm sorry?

P. Lowman: I said when do you print them? Every month or—?

- J. Warren: I think every quarter. We try to keep up with it. But a lot of people that work on it, they're pretty busy.
- P. Lowman: Yeah, it says Summer, Winter, and Fall; I see it's quarter. If you would send me one of them, I would surely appreciate it, dear.**
- J. Warren: That would be no problem at all.
- P. Lowman: Make me feel right at home every time I read it.**
- J. Warren: Yeah.
- P. Lowman: Well let's see, oh, there is one other thing I was going to ask you. Have you heard of Dr. Leonard? He has a business there; it started in Metuchen?**
- J. Warren: Dr. Leonard?
- P. Lowman: Yeah, he sends me a catalog of all kinds of trinkets. I found a wireless doorbell I ordered from him. And when it came, it says it came from Edison, New Jersey.**
- J. Warren: Interesting. I don't know him.
- P. Lowman: I think that's just his company name. I don't know whether there is a Dr. Leonard¹⁶. But anyhow, I said something to Eric [Beegle] about it, and he said that they built up a big section of warehouses and stuff right between Metuchen and Edison and Menlo Park. Well, some big area there. He said he went over, drove over there and he saw the name on one of the things [unclear]. But I called; they gave me a telephone number. I called the number and number is some outside, out west someplace. And I asked her about it, and she said, "Yes, we have a warehouse there," which she says, "they don't have no telephone service there." She says, "You won't—I mean it's not open to the public. It's just a warehouse where we ship our stuff from."**
- J. Warren: Yeah.
- P. Lowman: It's much easier because it's more centralized in this area, so that's why they use that. But that would be down near that Roosevelt Park, I bet. Or out in that area?**
- J. Warren: Maybe. I can't help you on that one. I'm sorry. [chuckles]
- P. Lowman: Okay. Well, thank you very much anyhow. I sure appreciate you taking your time to talk and listen to me chat while you're here.**
- J. Warren: Well, we appreciate everything that you've done in sharing all this stuff.
- P. Lowman: Okay. Now you sure that's no more questions now?**

¹⁶ Dr. Leonard's Healthcare Corporation is located at 100 Nixon Lane in Edison. The warehouse is located in South Edison near the former Raritan Arsenal.

J. Warren: Not unless you want to add something. Do you have anything else that you wanted to add?

P. Lowman: Well, I guess that's about all I have. I tell you, if you do get anything else though, please feel free to—you got my number now—give me a call anytime. I'm here twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

J. Warren: Okay.

P. Lowman: I don't get around very good. I use a walker all the time. I haven't got to the wheelchair yet, but I used to use the walker to walk with. So I don't get out. Once in a while, Diane takes me out for a ride or something like that. And I wish you could come to my birthday party. I'm having a birthday party on the twenty-seventh.

J. Warren: Yes.

P. Lowman: Diane's giving me a family birthday party. And if you're up this way or down this way, you might come on down. [laughter] Love to have you.

J. Warren: Well, I wish you a very early happy birthday.

P. Lowman: Thank you, dear. Thank you very much.

J. Warren: Okay.

P. Lowman: You take care now. God bless you, dear.

J. Warren: You too. You too.

P. Lowman: Bye-bye.

J. Warren: Thanks, bye.

P. Lowman: Bye-bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW]