

Muriel Harris, Audrey Dana, and Muriel “Tookie” Bacon

Date: February 14, 2002
Interviewers: Walter Stochel (MEHS), Marie Vajo (MEHS), Ian Durand (Center for
Community Renewal)
Transcriber: Jennifer Warren, July 2020
Editor: Jennifer Warren, December 2020

Abstract: Muriel (Boden) Salmon Harris (1912-2009) was born in New York City and raised by her grandmother in Springfield, Massachusetts. She pursued her love of art at New York University (NYU) and the Art Students League of New York while working as a secretary. Ms. Harris married Dr. Mortimer Richard Salmon (1903-1942), captain of the US Army Dental Corps who died while on duty at Governors Island. She subsequently married Thomas Harris (1896-1984), president and chairman of the board of Harris Structural Steel Company in South Plainfield. Harris Steel, founded in 1910, fabricated and erected steel on many large projects in New York City including the Brooklyn Tower of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the Daily News Building, and the Port Authority Bus Terminal. In 1943, she and her family moved to 301 Plainfield Road in Edison, and she helped her husband in the steel business until his death in 1984. Ms. Harris was also an art teacher at Drew University, Lycoming College, and the Centenary Methodist Church. She studied at Union Theological Seminary becoming director of Christian Education at Riverside Church in New York City. Ms. Harris had three children: Gardner Harris, Thomas Harris Jr., and Muriel “Tookie” (Harris) Bacon.

Audrey Charlotte (Drake) Dana (1923-2007), daughter of Charles Edward Drake and Mary (Mae) Esther Drake, was born in South Plainfield in the house along Park Avenue that later became Herm’s Restaurant. When she was two years old, her family moved to 1266 Park Avenue in Plainfield where she attended Plainfield High School. In 1943, Ms. Dana married Richard Edward Dana Sr. (1919-1991), a hardware salesman who was the grandson of Walter Williams, the director of the F. W. Woolworth Company. She and her husband at one time lived in the Williams estate known as Roselawn, located along the south side of Park Avenue in Edison. They later moved to 11 Wistar Avenue in Metuchen. Ms. Dana worked as assistant vice president for the Metuchen branch of the First Fidelity Bank for thirty-three years, retiring in 1988. She was also a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Metuchen, the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, and the Historical Society of Plainfield. She had two children: Richard E. Dana Jr. and Patricia (Dana) Paul.

This interview took place at Ms. Harris’ residence at 301 Plainfield Road in Edison, New Jersey and included a total of six participants. Ms. Harris is accompanied by her daughter Muriel “Tookie” Bacon and her friend Audrey Dana as they discuss the history and memories of the Pumptown Corners section of Edison. The interview includes discussions of historic photographs donated by Audrey Dana and Muriel Harris of Roselawn (the Walter Williams estate) and the surrounding area.

Interview note: Due to the large volume of participants, there are a multitude of conversations that occur simultaneously during the interview. The transcription includes the conversations that are the most pertinent to the topics discussed, and omits any background chatter that is irrelevant or inaudible.

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I. Durand: Jim Halpin [Metuchen-Edison Historical Society member] has that brochure on his website.

A. Dana: Oh, does he?

I. Durand: Yes.

A. Dana: Yeah.

I. Durand: Now, you know what I think would be neat for me? If we could get a color copy of this and then a black and white [of this map], and then you can mark it up with whose house—you know, the roads.

A. Dana: Yes, yes.

[muffled background discussion]

I. Durand: [looking at map] Here, this is Park Avenue. This is Plainfield Road.

A. Dana: Well, I have the original slides. These came from the slides. My husband [Richard Edward Dana Sr.], we gave them to Rich's mother [Helen Elizabeth (Williams) Dana] for—

I. Durand: Excuse me, here. [moving tape recorder; loud background noise and laughing]

A. Dana: —for a Christmas present one year, we gave her these pictures. And of course, then the whole family wanted them. So we had more made up. But they are from slides.

M. Harris: Wonderful.

W. Stochel: The barn from Elmwood Farms¹ is in this picture.

M. Harris: Yeah, Wood Brook Farms², uh-huh.

W. Stochel: This is the house over on Herron [Road]? The little house that's still there.

¹ Elmwood Farms was located on Park Avenue between Plainfield Road and the bend. A portion of the residence is still extant at 4001 Park Avenue. The property was once owned by Professor Herron, and Peter Edward Burrowes, author of *Revolutionary Essays in Socialist Faith & Fancy*, resided there.

² Wood Brook Farms was a large dairy located at the bend in Park Avenue, at the site of the present Woodbrook Corners development, and it extended to the Dismal Swamp.

- A. Dana:** Yeah, that belonged to Rich's grandfather [Walter Williams]. We had a big barn over there.
- W. Stochel: Yeah, I have some of our pictures.
- A. Dana:** Well, of course, the Herrons lived–
- M. Harris:** On this [north] side.
- A. Dana:** On that side, right.
- M. Harris:** On this side of Park Avenue.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, right.
- M. Harris:** Almost across the street from the Walshs.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, I think that's what Grandpa said. Yeah. Oh, I have a picture someplace like this, I think. Who did I see? [long pause] See the Walsh house was moved down [presently located at 4 Robin Road].
- M. Harris:** I know. The Walsh house was originally the Williams house.
- A. Dana:** Originally where the big house was and moved down. Grandpa had it moved and Uncle Horace Williams lived in that house for a while. That's where people are getting confused because Uncle Horace lives here for a while and they keep saying Horace Williams–
- M. Harris:** But not very long, not very long, because the Walshs were there for a long time.
- A. Dana:** Oh yeah, very long.
- W. Stochel: And then this one. [showing photograph]
- I. Durand: Oh, now this is–here's an interesting–
- W. Stochel: So when you look at the aerial photo, you see where the windmill–
- I. Durand: Well now–but just in terms what Edgar said–so here's some pictures here. [showing another photograph]
- A. Dana:** Oh yeah. This is the pergola and that's the windmill we had [at the Williams estate called Roselawn], yeah.
- I. Durand: Right, but since the Horace Williams house was–
- A. Dana:** Well, it isn't Horace Williams then. It's Walter Williams³.

³ Walter Williams (1867-1947) was a foreign buyer and director of the F. W. Woolworth Company, a retail company and one of the original five-and-dime stores. He resided at Roselawn, a spacious mansion with twenty-

- I. Durand: A-ha!
- M. Harris: It was always Walter Williams.**
- M. Vajo: See I got this from Art Wuest. Do you know him? Art Wuest. W-u, Wuest?
- A. Dana: Art Wuest?**
- M. Vajo: Yeah.
- A. Dana: Oh, I think this is the picture I gave him. [showing photograph]**
- M. Vajo: Okay.
- W. Stochel: No, those are—yeah, from Walter Dana [brother of Richard Edward Dana Sr.]? Those two there, and those two there, and that one is from Art Wuest. [counting photographs]
- I. Durand: Now, here it is, the interior of the Williams place. [showing photograph of the Roselawn interior and the Walsh house]
- A. Dana: Yeah, that's right.**
- W. Stochel: And then the Walsh house underneath. And that's the one that still there that said—
- M. Harris: At [4] Robin Road there.**
- W. Stochel: You have to go on Robin Road; you can't go in from—
- A. Dana: That's right. You used to go in like—**
- M. Harris: Before we wore the driveway down.**
- A. Dana: Yes, right. [laughter]**
- W. Stochel: And that's the house on Herron Court [Herron Road], Herron Court here?
- A. Dana: Where the Twitchs [phonetic] lived?**
- M. Harris: I don't know who lives there now.**
- A. Dana: No, when the Twitchs [phonetic]—**
- M. Harris: I don't know the Twitchs [phonetic].**
- A. Dana: They lived there when Rich and I got married.**
- M. Harris: I don't know them at all.**

three rooms and seven bathrooms that was built in 1912. The mansion was located on the south side of Park Avenue east of Wood Brook Farms and west of Plainfield Road approximately where Mulberry Lane is today.

- A. Dana:** And then—what’s her name—Dottie Stevens [phonetic] and her husband lived in there. Don’t they live there now? Stevens?
- M. Harris:** Stevens [phonetic], no. I don’t believe so.
- A. Dana:** Really?
- M. Harris:** As I say, I don’t know. I really don’t know. I thought the Olivers [phonetic] lived there.
- A. Dana:** No, I don’t know this.
- W. Stochel:** Mr. [Thomas] Meeker driving the— [showing picture of Mr. Meeker driving a team and wagon on Park Avenue]
- A. Dana:** Tommy. He was our head gardener, yeah. Tommy Meeker⁴.
- M. Harris:** Oh, he was a good friend of ours. Tom and Gardner [her eldest son], who was a friend of Gardner’s.
- A. Dana:** Oh yeah. Yeah.
- W. Stochel:** Dick Hale [Richard M. Hale, chairman and CEO of the Halecrest Company] told me when I showed him that picture [Meeker on a wagon] that they used to call that the biscuit wagon. They used to ride it up to school. And I’m thinking the guy delivered biscuits, and he says, “No, that’s what the horse dropped on the way to school. We called it the biscuit wagon!” [laughter]
- A. Dana:** Oh my gosh.
- M. Harris:** Cute, very cute.
- W. Stochel:** When he had to take that all the way up to Oak Tree School.
- A. Dana:** Well, that’s wonderful to have that. I didn’t know.
- W. Stochel:** And then I have a picture of an airplane there [showing picture of airplane in field at Wood Brook Farms, ca. 1928] and he said—
- I. Durand:** Oh, this is not [Charles] Lindbergh. This is—
- W. Stochel:** Mother Hale, Nota Hale [wife of Walter Richard Hale, who ran Wood Brook Farms], told me it’s [Neville] Chamberlain’s airplane in the field at Wood Brook Farms.
- M. Harris:** My goodness.
- A. Dana:** Oh, I don’t know anything about that. Sorry.
- W. Stochel:** [loud tape recorder noises] That’s the old store in front of Park Avenue.

⁴ Tommy Meeker was the gardener and worker at Roselawn, the Williams house.

A. Dana: **What store?**

W. Stochel: That was on the bend, the Mook Store.

M. Bacon: **That must be near the back side of the [unclear], yes.**

W. Stochel: The back side. That's the back side.

M. Bacon: **Because it had gas pumps in the front.**

A. Dana: **Yeah, Mr.–**

M. Harris: **John Tyler?**

A. Dana: **No, John Tyler was across the street. What was his name? Well, the Hales lived in the house on the corner there, Nota Hale and her husband [Walter Richard Hale], until they went back over to Talmadge [Road].**

W. Stochel: They lived right on the front house?

A. Dana: **Right. Right in the front.**

W. Stochel: Right there, yeah.

A. Dana: **Yeah, this is the back house. [showing photograph]**

W. Stochel: So this is—that house would be over to this side. This is looking at the side of the store.

M. Bacon: **Okay, and there is a gas pump right out front.**

W. Stochel: Yeah, you can see the pump.

M. Bacon: **Uh-huh, I recognize that plane.**

A. Dana: **Yeah, that's right.**

I. Durand: Well obviously, they wanted to put to the side to get the plane in.

W. Stochel: The airplane in.

A. Dana: **Yeah. See I don't remember anything about the plane. I don't.**

W. Stochel: She told me that Bob Hale⁵ flew with an airplane. They flew a bottle of milk someplace and it was like the first air delivery of milk in New Jersey. [laughter]

A. Dana: **I didn't know that.**

⁵ Walter Robert (Bob) Hale ran the large dairy at Wood Brook Farms on Park Avenue. He was once mayor of Raritan Township and later a Freeholder. Mrs. Nota Hale lived in the house close to the road at the bend in Park Avenue. There was also a milk store that had gas pumps on Park Avenue.

[muffled background discussion]

W. Stochel: That's Pence [phonetic] and that looks like the [unclear].

M. Bacon: Windmill. Well, where was the Walsh's house then?

W. Stochel: It might be—that might be it there? [pointing to a photograph]

M. Harris: Where Robin Road is tricky today.

M. Bacon: I need to see the Walshes. I mean it's still there, the Walsh house.

A. Dana: Yeah. It's still there, yeah.

M. Harris: Um-hm, and they had a clause in there. They couldn't do anything about it.

A. Dana: Well see, Rich's family lived in that [the Walsh house] for a while before they were building the big house. And Rich's grandfather [Walter Williams] and grandmother [Elizabeth Williams] and—but that was before Rich was born and everything. But they did because the house took two years to build from 1910 to 1912⁶. So it took two years to build; so they went to Europe and when they came back, they had this monstrosity being built. [laughter] And you know, there they were. So that's what—

M. Harris: Sight unseen.

A. Dana: I don't know that much about it since I wasn't there, Charlie, you know. [laughs] But these were the stories that were told.

M. Harris: But there was also a big pool back there near the windmill.

A. Dana: Oh yeah. There's an Olympic-sized pool. It's over in the pictures there, yeah.

I. Durand: Now what was the windmill used for?

A. Dana: To pump water for the pools.

M. Harris: And for electricity. Um-hm, for electricity.

A. Dana: Yeah, for running the—but we didn't, the later years, we didn't use it for that purpose. We had other priorities.

M. Harris: They said he was so frugal. [chuckling]

I. Durand: Frugal, but he does the big house. [laughter]

⁶ There was an old Walsh house on the site when Walter Williams decided to build his house there. The old Walsh house was moved to the west where it stands today at 4 Robin Road. The new mansion, built ca. 1912, had twenty-three rooms and seven bathrooms and was known as Roselawn. The property also included a pergola with a Dutch-style windmill on the west side that generated electricity and pumped water for the pool and gardens.

W. Stochel: What did he do for a living?

A. Dana: Walter Williams? He was foreign buyer at W. Woolworths [F. W. Woolworth Company, a chain of five-and-dime stores].

W. Stochel: He was a buyer?

A. Dana: The buyer for F.W. Woolworths, foreign buyer. [long pause] We had fifty some acres over here and three hundred and some acres included [unclear]⁷.

[background mumbling]

A. Dana: Yeah, that's why they named that [unclear].

W. Stochel: Oh!

M. Harris: Richard Lane or Road.

A. Dana: Richard Road and Dana Circle and Williams Road⁸. They're all named for the families.

M. Bacon: [unclear] Audrey sign.

A. Dana: No, there isn't an Audrey sign. [laughter] No, no. No, we couldn't believe Mom when she sold that property for \$25,000. Three hundred and some acres⁹.

M. Harris: Well, she was anxious to get rid of it.

A. Dana: Well, that's because my father-in-law [Edward Clarkson Dana] hated it. See that's why they all have half-acre pieces of property over there because that was in the stipulation by Walter Williams. Every house built in this area had to have at least a half-acre. And that's why they have to have the pieces of property, so when Stephenville came along to [unclear] bought it, he says, "I have to [unclear]." He expected to put them on fifty-by-fifty, I guess, and he couldn't do that. So that's why they all have nice pieces of property.

So my mother-in-law got tired of having people come because the plans all had to be approved by her. And she got tired and my father-in-law got tired of this business. And they said, "The heck with it! We are going to sell it." And they did. So I guess you get tired of the people, "Mrs. Dana, I want to build a house. I understand you have to approve the property," and blah, blah, blah. Because she got tired of that¹⁰.

⁷ The Williams family owned the land around the house that was fifty acres, plus another 300 acres where the Stephenville Ranch Homes were built.

⁸ Present-day Williams Road, Richard Road, and Dana Circle where the Stephenville Ranch Homes were built are all named after Williams' family members.

⁹ In the 1950s, the Dana family sold the 300 acres of the property for \$25,000. This is where the western portion of where Stephenville is today. Because of a deed restriction by the Williams family, the lots in this development had to be at least a half-acre each.

¹⁰ In the 1960s, Audrey Dana's father-in-law got ill, and her mother-in-law could not take care of the house. It was at that time owned by a family trust that ended up selling it to a builder. They then moved to Mason Drive. Before

- I. Durand: Well, [unclear] there was a big to-do about whether to put in sewers or the septic systems.
- A. Dana: Yeah, we had septic.**
- M. Harris: We had septic too.**
- I. Durand: And I think they finally built it on the—finally got through that would—the soil would be perfectly well, so we needed to put sewers [unclear] the big break.
- W. Stochel: Also, the Metuchen—went to Metuchen sewage, back woods, swamp there somewhere. And so until they put the west side intercept in, the rest of [unclear] didn't come out of the sewer because this is the plant Metuchen used [unclear]. That's why certain areas of the town developed past the other areas because they could get access to the sewage and then they could go full—
- M. Harris: Full steam around their [unclear].**
- W. Stochel: My mother [Louise A. (Hollingshead) Stochel] says she remembers a horse track on Park Avenue, like a horse racetrack.
- M. Harris: Oh, a racetrack. A racetrack? I don't know that.**
- A. Dana: Whereabouts on Park Avenue?**
- W. Stochel: Like across from Wood Brook [Farms], like the bend in the road.
- A. Dana: No, no.**
- M. Bacon: There was a little school over there for retarded kids that had the campaign. Remember that little school?**
- I. Durand: Oh! Is that what it is for? Because I have seen references on old maps.
- W. Stochel: Suz Anne School¹¹. Okay, let me get—let me clear that because that's a mystery. It shows up on old maps, but I have no idea what that was.
- M. Harris: But you know that.**
- M. Bacon: Yeah, I used to go there.**
- A. Dana: Yeah, maybe on—memories! [chuckles] I can't think of people's names; I'm terrible. I'm always so good at names. She had a daughter that went to that school. She lived on, not Longview [Road], but on this side, next door to Edith's. You remember Edith? She lived this side of the Beavers [phonetic].**

they moved, they had an auction to sell off the furniture and got rid of everything. The house was demolished in the late 1960s. When developed, the lots had to be no smaller than a half-acre.

¹¹ The Suz Anne School was on the west side of Park Avenue past the bend where the present-day office buildings are located. It was a school for handicapped children, and it had a horse ring in front. Tookie Bacon recalled riding horses over there as well as riding through the Williams estate.

- M. Bacon:** Where did the Dunkels [phonetic] live?
- M. Harris:** The Dunkels [phonetic] lived up Park Avenue where Nevsky lived.
- A. Dana:** Oh, Nevsky Street. Yeah.
- M. Bacon:** Do you have any Dunkels [phonetic]? Have kids?
- M. Harris:** They had a lot of—yeah, they had about six kids.
- A. Dana:** Well, who lived in that house before? I mean as a kid, was Bob Vanders [phonetic] lived in that house with his family but Mr. Hale brought Bob Vanders' [phonetic] father out from out west and put him in the farm in charge of something special there. And that's where they lived; that was their house. And then his family moved to South Plainfield later on when they got a few dollars together. I guess they bought the house in South Plainfield.
- M. Vajo:** Can we get back to the school? What part of the school was it and how long was it there?
- M. Bacon:** I think it was a little house with a—there was a little barn and horse ring around there. They had some clothes and chickens and things.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, the handicapped children. Yes, definitely.
- M. Bacon:** I don't know much about it, but I used to go by there.
- A. Dana:** I don't think it's there. I really don't. But I know it was for handicapped children because this lady, that lived over here, her daughter went there. And she said, "I send her to this little school over here on Park Avenue," she said.
- M. Harris:** I don't know, maybe. I wonder if Gardner would know.
- W. Stochel:** That looked a little bit of a mystery of why this shows up on the maps and what it was. For years, I've wondered what that was because it's not—there's nothing there now. There are buildings there, and I don't remember anything in the sixties and seventies scene.
- A. Dana:** No, no.
- M. Harris:** It was almost by Wood Brook's.
- A. Dana:** Yeah. But I think it was more on the Tyler, on that, their stuff.
- I. Durand:** Could you say more about that, the Tyler place, because that's—so that's why we—because Tyler Road.
- W. Stochel:** Well, John Tyler¹² was the owner of Wood Brook Farms.

¹² John Tyler owned Wood Brook Farms and lived in a house on Nevsky Street. In the 1980s, he sold what was left of Wood Brook Farms in the Dismal Swamp and it became Edison Tyler Estates.

- A. Dana:** Yes, but he had his house over here, the other side of Nevsky Street down [unclear], that older home.
- I. Durand:** That's where the Triple C [Ranch] is on Tyler Road. Okay, all right.
- A. Dana:** [laughs] You know I've only lived here since 1944.
- M. Harris:** Well, I've lived here since 1943. We moved here in [19]43.
- A. Dana:** Yeah. So I mean it's hard for me to know.
- M. Harris:** But it was so different. You know we thought we were moving out to the country from New York.
- W. Stochel:** You were.
- M. Harris:** Well, it was. It was really country.
- A. Dana:** We were. I canvassed for the [American] Red Cross along these streets, remember? [laughs]
- M. Harris:** This was just a dirt road [Plainfield Road] going up a hill. And my little boy [son] would go up there with his three-wheel bicycle and had a make-believe girlfriend. Her name was Sally and she had dinner with us. [laughter] We didn't have any children around here. Then came Stephenville [Parkway] and then we had the Mooks and we had the people who had the ice cream–
- A. Dana:** Costas.
- M. Harris:** Costas [on Southfield Road] and some of their children and the Mook children [on Park Avenue]. We had a group of kids suddenly.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, finally.
- M. Harris:** We sort of went from house to house having a daycare for each child, each one of us.
- A. Dana:** Well, when you lived in the country, you don't have any—we didn't have any of these houses.
- M. Harris:** Right. There was nothing; there was nothing. It was wonderful.
- A. Dana:** But I told the Red Cross I'd canvas for them. So I took my son in my carriage and I went down Park Avenue and up here, and I'd see Muriel [Harris] and I'd go to someone up here that lived on corner of Hillwood [Avenue]. I don't even remember the name.
- M. Harris:** The Czar [phonetic]. Czar [phonetic]? No, that's Brook Avenue.

- A. Dana:** No, someone else. Oh, I called. I wanted to tell you I called someone about Mrs. Gamble [phonetic]. I understand she's held in hospice now and she's under hospice. So I didn't really want to disturb her.
- W. Stochel: Okay, that takes us up to Nevsky Street. You know John Tyler was over on Nevsky?
- A. Dana:** Yes, he did.
- W. Stochel: Wood Brook was like from Nevsky down and then exactly to the swamp [Dismal Swamp].
- A. Dana:** The swamp, yeah.
- W. Stochel: Coming up Plainfield Road, [Gustav] Lindenthal, The Lindens [estate].
- M. Harris:** Yes, on the other side of the street.
- A. Dana:** Yes, I used to Red Cross with them. I used to go over there. [laughs]
- M. Harris:** We went over to that property at one time. My husband [Thomas Harris] and I, we walked over it. He was thinking of buying it because he knew it was for sale. But it was so wet that he decided against it. But we knew the Lindenthals¹³ pretty well.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, I met them too. They were nice people.
- W. Stochel: And he was a bridge builder.
- M. Harris:** Yes. He was more than a bridge builder. He did either the [New York] Pennsylvania Station or Grand Central Station. And I'm not sure which now.
- [muffled background discussion]
- W. Stochel: So that would be like where Sleepy Hollow [Road] down-
- M. Harris:** Yes, off Southfield Road. Off there, above it, which is now Stephenville [Parkway]. The other side of Stephenville.
- [background discussion while serving coffee and tea]
- W. Stochel: Remember one of the ones, the question that we did ask, where was the pump?
- M. Harris:** Right here in the middle of the road. Right in the middle of the road, there was a triangle there in the middle of the road¹⁴.

¹³ Gustav Lindenthal (1850-1935) was an engineer and bridge builder who built many famous structures including Hell Gate Bridge in New York City. About 1907, Lindenthal purchased a large estate called The Lindens on the east side of Plainfield Road near where Southfield Road is presently located. His wife continued to live at the estate into the 1950s before the house was demolished to make way for new residential developments.

¹⁴ The area is called Pumptown Corners and is named after the pump that formerly stood on an island in the middle of Park Avenue. The pump is said to have been there during the Colonial era into the early 1940s. Ms. Harris said it was similar to the horse trough on Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen. The pump was taken down prior to the Harris family buying their house in 1943. No known photographs of the pump exist.

- A. Dana:** See, I can't—I don't—it isn't in the picture at all.
- M. Bacon:** You know how this road divides up here? Park Avenue. Well, you imagine a piece of—a triangular piece of land right there?
- I. Durand:** At the intersection with Plainfield [Road]?
- M. Bacon:** Yeah, but more on Park Avenue. It's on Park Avenue.
- A. Dana:** It wasn't on Plainfield Road.
- M. Bacon:** It's wasn't on Plainfield Road. But if you're driving down and you are going to go either right or left, it was right in the middle there right before you get to—
- M. Harris:** Before it became right or left.
- W. Stochel:** That's either Park Avenue through the—jogs out a little now to make that right turn.
- A. Dana:** See it doesn't show.
- M. Harris:** They took part of our property at that time.
- A. Dana:** Yeah. Well, Rich's parents or grandparents used to have the garden, Tommy Meeker included. And they would go out and cut the grass out there in that area and take care of it, keep the weeds down.
- M. Harris:** And they had a flash after the pump was taken down. And the pump was very much like the pump that's out on [Route] 27 or Middlesex Avenue near the Episcopal Church there.
- M. Vajo:** St. Luke's
- M. Harris:** St. Luke's, yes.
- M. Vajo:** That whole [horse] trough there. The watering trough.
- M. Harris:** Yes, that's what it used to be. And they would stop here to water the horses. [coughs] My husband used to say that this was a track from New York to Perth Amboy, which was called Perth in those days. And this would be the watering stop, and they water their horses, and the people would stop here, and they had a great big oak tree and they would come and sit under the oak tree, and have their refreshments or what have you. There was a little tin cup out there to have their water. And when we first came here, an old man came to the door and asked me if I had a tin cup. And I said, "I don't have a tin cup, but I can get you some water." And he said, "No, I want a tin cup. I want a tin cup. I want to remember when I was a little boy. I used to come by here and have my water out of a tin cup and we would have a picnic out here." That was my first introduction to the pump.
- I. Durand:** Now when did the pump get taken down?

- M. Harris:** Just before we came here. I don't know exactly the date. But it wasn't here when we came here.
- M. Bacon:** The pump?
- M. Harris:** Um-hm. Well, they had a flasher in the middle.
- I. Durand:** You came—what did you say—[19]43?
- M. Harris:** We came in [19]43, um-hm.
- W. Stochel:** That's why my mother doesn't remember the pump because she would have been a little bit too young. She helped my uncle deliver newspapers.
- A. Dana:** Oh, did she?
- W. Stochel:** Yeah, George Hollingshead, who is my uncle, who had to take the *Home News* route from Oak Tree all the way down to Oak Hills. And he said he used to stop at Wood Brook Farms last because he knew Mother [Nota] Hale would give him milk and cookies. [laughs]
- A. Dana:** Well, I used to go down and have tea with her. [laughs]
- I. Durand:** Well, before Charlie Brown's [Restaurant at 222 Plainfield Road] took over the Pumptown.
- M. Harris:** Yeah, it was called—
- I. Durand:** Pumptown Corners?
- M. Harris:** No, it wasn't before that. Before that it was called—
- A. Dana:** Well, it was the Beef Locker.
- M. Harris:** No, before the Beef Locker.
- A. Dana:** Oh, it was called Oak Hills Manor.
- M. Harris:** It was called Oak Hills Manor when we came here because people from the shop (after all there weren't that many places where they could eat) and they bring the men over here for dinner, lunch, and so forth, to Oak Hills Manor. And it was owned by an elderly couple. Do you remember the name of the couple?
- A. Dana:** The what? Petersen's, the Petersen's. They lived right in Oak Hills.
- M. Harris:** Very nice couple. I think they were Danish, weren't they?
- A. Dana:** I think they were. But Oak Hills was sort of elegant in those days because I remember my husband took me there one week before we were married¹⁵ and he says, "We are going out to dinner." We went to Oak Hills Manor, and I dressed

¹⁵ Ms. Dana married her husband Richard Edward Dana Sr. in 1943 and Teppers did the clothing for her wedding.

all up in my little red dress, and then we went and we had dancing and dinner. And I thought I was on top of the world! But it was a nice place.

I. Durand: Well, before it became Charlie Brown's, it was Pumpstown Corners. We used to go there [unclear].

M. Harris: Well, they stole our name.

I. Durand: They had a knife on the back of the menu. There was a little description of the history, and how it had been—you know you were talking before—it was a stage dock. And what I recall is you go upstairs now, there are still rooms upstairs that are used as offices. But there were rooms that were used for overnight guests.

M. Harris: Well, they call it a manor, I guess so. Why not?

A. Dana: Yeah, I suppose it could have been.

M. Harris: It makes sense; it makes sense. Too bad we don't have a [unclear].

A. Dana: Yeah.

W. Stochel: We have the picture of the place. That's on the wall. Here's the picture on the back.

[muffled background discussion]

M. Harris: It was a lovely place.

A. Dana: It really was. It was nice because—

M. Harris: Because it was still in the country.

A. Dana: Yeah.

M. Bacon: I know there was a little store right down on the corner of—where the Geary's—remember the Geary's Store¹⁶?

A. Dana: Oh yeah. That was down in Metuchen, yeah. Right on the corner. I used to run down, well, before they closed. My father-in-law would decide he wanted ice cream, and I'd hop in the car and race down there and get him ice cream.

I. Durand: Now which corner?

M. Bacon: Central Avenue and Plainfield [Avenue]. It was right down past the Oakcrest [phonetic].

W. Stochel: You pass St. Joe's [St. Joseph's High School] and it was on the right.

M. Harris: Right there, at the corner.

¹⁶ The families in this area would shop at Geary's Store in Metuchen. The store was located at the northeast corner of Plainfield Avenue and Central Avenue in Metuchen.

- I. Durand: It was on the right, okay.
- M. Harris: No, it isn't. It was on left.**
- M. Bacon: No, it wasn't on the right. It wasn't on the right, it was on the left.**
- W. Stochel: It was on the left?
- M. Harris: Uh-huh.**
- W. Stochel: As you went down under the [Port Reading Railroad bridge], it wasn't on the St. Joe's side? It was on the other side?
- M. Bacon: The other side.**
- I. Durand: So it's on that like—the far corner as you come underneath the railroad?
- M. Harris: Yes, uh-huh.**
- M. Bacon: If you were going to turn back to go to Metuchen, it would be on your right then.**
- M. Harris: Big white house there now with a fence around it. And they had everything. I used to wonder how they could store all. Where? How?**
- A. Dana: Yeah. How could they put everything in that store?**
- M. Harris: I couldn't keep track of their inventory. Anything you wanted, they had there in the way of foods.**
- A. Dana: [offering food] Did you want these? They're delicious.**
- W. Stochel: No, I'm good.
- A. Dana: [referring to food] I didn't know you had all these talents.**
- M. Bacon: And then the Mook's house was Pumptown Acres¹⁷.**
- I. Durand: Now there's an earlier map of the area, much earlier, and I didn't bring it with me, that shows an earlier Pumptown Tavern.
- M. Harris: A tavern? [looking at map] Oh, there, uh-huh.**
- I. Durand: Over here. You can cut a little further up past your house on Park Avenue on the right. And then the road kind of meandered on over through the swamp, kind of against along the—where maybe Metuchen Road is now over toward South Plainfield. That the one?

¹⁷ The Mook house was also called Pumptown Acres and was built in 1811. The altered version of the house stands at 4001 Park Avenue near Herron Road. At one time, Professor Herron lived in the house. The farm was also called Elmwood Farm. Drayton Mook had seven garages for seven cars on the property. He later moved to Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey.

W. Stochel: Yeah, this is the cornfield. This is 1876, and by that time, Park Avenue was in with the old [unclear].

[muffled background discussion about locations on map]

A. Dana: [talking simultaneously] You know I had some pictures. I found them in Rich's things, some negatives, so I took them down and had them developed. And it was pictures of the Mook house when it had a summer porch in the summer place to—you know it was built on the back. And then Bucky came down one day to see me and I said, "I found these pictures, Bucky." I said, "Would you like them?" And I gave them to him.

M. Harris: Well, he probably has them, I'm sure.

A. Dana: Knowing Bucky, he keeps everything. So he probably does. [long pause] Nobody does. They probably don't even know about Mrs. Wright [phonetic].

M. Harris: Well, that was a big place too.

M. Bacon: Right across from Oak Hills? Which is called—

I. Durand: Hadacourt [phonetic].

M. Harris: Hadacourt [phonetic], right.

M. Bacon: I used to ride there all the time. [chuckling]

I. Durand: Actually, that was still active when I moved here from Elizabeth.

M. Bacon: And she called it Fyfe Acres¹⁸. It was Fyfe Acres.

M. Harris: Right, Fyfe Acres.

[long pause]

A. Dana: I'm surprised Ruth isn't here. She told me she'd be here and she said Dick may come with her. She got caught at the beauty parlor, I guess.

M. Harris: Oh, or changed her mind.

A. Dana: Another bounty for life. [unclear]

I. Durand: So you have been let out of prison, but you are on parole.

M. Harris: Uh-huh. [long pause] He is the cutest thing though.

A. Dana: Walter Williams was the first president of Metuchen Golf and Country Club too. His name is the top one up on the list, Walter Williams, nineteen—I can't

¹⁸ Just north of St. Joseph's High School was a riding stable called Fyfe Acres. The name was used because it was owned by Mrs. Fyfe and it was five acres. Paddock Court is located there today.

remember the date. I was there yesterday to meet with—I didn't look at it. No one knows. I don't know.

I. Durand: Well, what did [unclear] do?

A. Dana: Not really. I tried to go through my husband's things and tried to find something. This is a picture of the Walsh house when Mom and Pop—

M. Harris: Oh, I know that house so well.

A. Dana: And when my mother-in-law was a young girl, and they would bring the horse up to the front of the thing and this is—I found this behind the house. [laughter]

M. Harris: Tookie [Bacon, her daughter] used to ride her horse right through there. You'd stop one day to have lunch or tea with [unclear] Walsh, and she tied her horse to the downspout. [laughter]

A. Dana: By the way, I was trying to find things for this area. And my father-in-law and my husband both were—took a lot of pictures. But I went through slides and slides and I found nothing of the [unclear] I was hoping to find. If anyone would know anything, her husband would because she and Dick got married about the time her mother and father bought this house. She said he was—the Westcotts.

M. Harris: Oh, Hale, okay.

M. Bacon: The Westcotts across the street?

A. Dana: Um-hm.

M. Harris: But before the Westcotts, you remember the name of the people who had the house before the Westcotts? Well, I know one of the people because Vernon Bug also was in there before the Westcotts.

A. Dana: I don't remember that.

M. Harris: Well, we know him because he had wanted our houses in Plainfield. And when he moved across the street, he called up to tell us that he was our neighbor and we had him evicted from the one in Plainfield. [laughter] So he was well-named. But he was there, and then there was someone before him, and I don't know their name. And the house was empty for a long time before Bug moved in. And before the Mooks also, did you have any record of the people who lived there before the Mooks?

W. Stochel: It was a Dr. Herron.

A. Dana: Dr. Herron, yeah.

M. Bacon: From Herron Road there.

W. Stochel: There was ... [recording ends]

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1]

- A. Dana:** Oh, whatchamacallit lived there for a while. He worked at Wood Brook Farms when they had two children, two boys. [long pause] Thanks. [laughs]
- M. Harris:** Well, you are going back a long time now.
- I. Durand: My experience is that–
- A. Dana:** It comes.
- I. Durand: It comes. It just takes a little longer.
- A. Dana:** It takes a little longer. Maggie [phonetic]–what is her name? [long pause] I know her somewhere. Her parents lived in South Plainfield. Well anyway, I'll think of it maybe. [chuckles] I don't know.
- M. Harris:** I have to explain what the council is? The council? On this property, this was originally five acres here and it was divided for the benefit of one of the sons. Do you know anything about the Edgars who lived here? Who built this house?
- W. Stochel: The Edgars built this house?
- M. Harris:** Donald Edgar. Donald Edgar built this house¹⁹. And he was connected to the brick company in Sayreville.
- W. Stochel: Sayre and Fisher [Brick Company]?
- M. Harris:** I don't know what they called him, but it was a brick company in Sayreville. And that's the reason this house is all built of brick. They said it would never burn. Its walls are a foot thick. And one of his sons became–I forget what his title was–but he was connected with the State Department. And I believe that was an adopted son also called Donald. His other son was called Richard, I believe. Richard was a ne'er-do-well. That's what his mother called him to me (the mother, the wife of Donald Edgar, who built the house). Her name was Olive. And then they had built this little house next door to us for this ne'er-do-well son, who married and had two children. And then were divorced. And then the Kemps²⁰ moved here from Chile. They first lived in Plainfield briefly while they were looking for a house, and they lived here.
- M. Bacon:** People for Anaconda?
- M. Harris:** Anaconda. He worked for Anaconda.
- I. Durand: Which is why they were in Chile.

¹⁹ Ms. Harris' residence was a Tudor-style brick house with a slate roof at 301 Plainfield Road that was built by Donald Edgar, who was in the brick business in Sayreville. That is why the house was built out of brick and the walls are a foot thick. One of Edgar's sons was connected with the State Department. The other son was a ne'er-do-well so the Edgars had a house built behind the Harrisers for him.

²⁰ The Kemps worked for the Anaconda Copper Works, and prior to buying the house, they lived in Chile.

- M. Bacon:** A private company, right. And then when did the Luces [phonetic] live?
- M. Harris:** The Luces [phonetic] lived there just before—
- M. Bacon:** The Luces [phonetic] lived over in before the Kemps did.
- M. Harris:** Before the Kemps did, yes.
- A. Dana:** Oh really? I didn't know that.
- M. Bacon:** When they were building their house.
- A. Dana:** Oh!
- M. Harris:** In fact, their house is a duplicate of this. Except it is bigger, interior. Because their family was also involved in the construction business in Westfield.
- A. Dana:** Oh? See I always knew them living over there. That was before my time. [laughs]
- M. Vajo:** So you have a picture there?
- A. Dana:** Hm?
- M. Vajo:** What do you have a picture of?
- A. Dana:** Oh, they are just some things my husband put together. There's a lot of Metuchen stuff.
- M. Vajo:** You have these? [long pause]
- M. Harris:** Well, you kept everything in good condition.
- A. Dana:** Well, as I said, I—that was when he was—
- I. Durand:** Now was that before it was returned? Or was that after returning?
- M. Vajo:** That was after return, I think. I don't know.
- M. Bacon:** [looking at photograph] Here's the drug store at the corner in Metuchen. I didn't even go there. Right along there, that was the drug store.
- A. Dana:** Oh yeah. The Burroughs [Metuchen Pharmacy at 396 Main Street].
- M. Bacon:** Burroughs, um-hm. And then there was the Boro Hardware [at 655 Middlesex Avenue].
- M. Harris:** No, Metuchen Hardware [at 401 Main Street] across the street.
- M. Bacon:** But this was Burroughs.

- M. Harris:** **B-o-r-o-u-g-h, I think. Go back far enough, you can probably find some labels up in our medicine cabinet.**
- I. Durand: When was this?
- M. Vajo: [showing photograph] That was the original—no, that was the second Franklin School. The first one was the BIL [Borough Improvement League Building at 491 Middlesex Avenue], and this was the second one.
- I. Durand: And then there was the third one at—
- M. Vajo: That [the second one] was moved [to New Street] and turned into an apartment.
- I. Durand: Oh, okay.
- M. Vajo: I want to copy this.
- A. Dana:** **Well, he was the brother of—only lived, yeah, a short time. I think my husband did this when we had—I don't know something to do with the police or something.**
- M. Bacon:** [looking at photograph] **This is a good picture of the windmill.**
- A. Dana:** **Yeah.**
- M. Bacon:** **Wow. I remember this now seeing this picture with this big arbor.**
- A. Dana:** **Yeah, with the pergola all the way down, um-hm.**
- M. Bacon:** [looking at photographs] **I want to know if this was called Sacred Heart School [Brothers of the Sacred Heart].**
- A. Dana:** **Oh yeah.**
- M. Vajo: And Brother Felix.
- A. Dana:** **Brother just died, just died. Brother Felix, he was ninety years old. I read it in the paper.**
- M. Harris:** **Brother School now. What is it called today? Used to be called the Brother School.**
- A. Dana:** **Now it's St. Joe's.**
- M. Harris:** **St. Joseph's, um-hm.**
- M. Vajo: St. Joseph's²¹. Yeah, a couple pictures here.
- I. Durand: [looking at photograph] Now this is a factory here; the house here.

²¹ St. Joseph's High School was known as the Brothers School. And Brother Sylvester(?) farmed part of the Williams estate for crops for the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

- A. Dana:** **Yeah.**
- I. Durand: Because taken in the fall, the winter, with the–
- M. Harris:** **The pillars?**
- A. Dana:** **I have some interior pictures. [looking at photograph] Is that the greenhouse? I don't know.**
- M. Vajo: The ones on the back are useful.
- A. Dana:** **[reading the back of photograph] The Metuchen Clubhouse on Highland Avenue.**
- W. Stochel: That's gone.
- A. Dana:** **Yeah, but that's my mother-in-law's writing. [laughs; background talking]**
- [looking at photographs] These are the interior and outside pictures that–I took these down. I had small pictures and I took them down to–I don't know whether you know Doug Tatmin [phonetic] in Metuchen? Do you know him? He's a photographer. And he came back and gave me these.**
- M. Harris:** **These are great. [unclear] picture. He did a good job.**
- A. Dana:** **He's just fantastic.**
- I. Durand: Now where is he?
- A. Dana:** **He lives in Metuchen, the Metuchen Guide, Doug Tatmin [phonetic].**
- M. Bacon:** **[showing photographs] Now look at these. These are great!**
- M. Vajo: I'm up to my coffee with some of this.
- A. Dana:** **Here's your little–I'm doing it right now.**
- W. Stochel: This was probably the grandest house [Roselawn] in town in Edison.
- A. Dana:** **Oh yeah.**
- W. Stochel: The only other house is the Bloomfield Mansion on Amboy Avenue that I could think would come close to–and this one is a far newer house than the Bloomfield Mansion.
- A. Dana:** **Yeah, that's right.**
- W. Stochel: And it's like somebody who had a lot of money built this big, big house.
- A. Dana:** **He did.**
- I. Durand: Look at that entrance, the foyer stairway.
- W. Stochel: There probably was never anything else like this.

- A. Dana:** [background talking] Oh, they did a lot of entertainment too then. We had an auction unfortunately, and that's what happened, you know. We didn't get clean outs [unclear].
- M. Harris:** No, you don't.
- A. Dana:** [showing photographs] These are just pictures of the parlor actually.
- I. Durand:** Yes, this was a grand house.
- A. Dana:** Oh, here's the yellow. Yeah.
- I. Durand:** Oh, so this is the companion to that.
- A. Dana:** And this—we had a party and this was the—and I had this silver gravy [unclear]; we were set up. [laughs]
- M. Vajo:** [looking at program] What was the Scarlet Lancer's [Club]? Do you know?
- A. Dana:** Well, they used to be at the—where Metuchen Hardware used to be, that building, that's where they met [at 401 Main Street]. That was where they met.
- M. Vajo:** Okay. Well, they said drill team and so on.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, they met there. And I know my father-in-law told me that.
- M. Harris:** What did they do?
- A. Dana:** Got me!
- I. Durand:** It looks like they entertained.
- M. Vajo:** Yeah, I was wondering about the drill team demonstration.
- I. Durand:** Okay, so this is when it [Roselawn] was yellow. [group affirmation]
- A. Dana:** Well yes, the past few years, yeah. It only costs \$40,000 to paint that house²². [laughter]
- M. Bacon:** Back then, huh?
- M. Vajo:** What would it be now?
- A. Dana:** I remember the last time mom had a painter, it cost \$40,000.
- W. Stochel:** What? It is half of what she sold Stephenville for. [laughs]
- A. Dana:** That's right! Do you believe that?

²² When Roselawn (the Williams house) was last painted, it cost \$40,000 for repairs and painting.

- I. Durand: Where was Robins Hall?
- M. Bacon: It's still there, it's still marked—it says on it.**
- I. Durand: Is that the old Metuchen Hardware Store?
- M. Bacon: Yes!**
- I. Durand: Okay. So there is, there's a main flag kind of engraved in stone over there.
- M. Bacon: And there's another little crack on the side. Isn't that where the hairdresser is?**
- A. Dana: Yeah.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah, we got some old pictures when that was Robins Hall over [unclear].
- A. Dana: Oh, they had had many out there according to my father-in-law and mother.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah, I think that picture is in the Metuchen book.
- A. Dana: A lot of this stuff is Rich's grandmother Dana's, and of course she was very into all of this—you know, she was at Robins Hall all the time. Of course, her husband was a doctor here in Metuchen.**
- I. Durand: Well, there's some neat stuff in here.
- M. Vajo: Yes, I would like to borrow and make copies. I'll spend the rest of my life making copies. [laughter]
- M. Harris: Go have it made.**
- A. Dana: Well, I took it down at the historical society one night and I showed it to different ones, but they didn't seem to be interested so I just took it home with me.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah. Well, for me it's planned—I've been getting into—you know you loaned us the family pictures. We have copies of that.
- A. Dana: Yeah. Well, that's wrong. That's not a family picture, that's a picture of an Audi at the Metuchen Golf and Country Club.**
- M. Vajo: Okay, okay. You see this is what we get the information. We got to correct it, that's all.
- A. Dana: As a matter of fact, I was going to go see (Bill Ainslie suggested that I do this) Lenore Applegate Stewart because he said in the picture she might be able to identify more than I did because she and Rich grew up together. Now, if my husband were here, he'd be able to tell me everybody that was in the picture.**
- M. Vajo: She was pretty ill though now.
- A. Dana: Yeah, I know. That's why I haven't been down.**

- I. Durand: The Raritan Yacht Club? Is that a predecessor of the Raritan River Boat Club or is this a different organization?
- W. Stochel: Isn't the Raritan Yacht Club in Perth Amboy?
- M. Harris: Yes. That's right.**
- I. Durand: Okay, okay.
- M. Harris: Because Tom Desmond is a member of that Raritan Yacht Club.**
- I. Durand: So here is 1883.
- M. Harris: You know the Desmonds²³ across the street from us? Dr. Desmond, up on the hill? Right across—directly across the street from us. Three-hundred-and-six? Three-hundred-and-six. [long pause] That's the house that was built originally for the Moores, AT (Arthur Thomas Moose).**
- A. Dana: Yeah, right. They had a daughter Karen.**
- M. Bacon: She lives in Tallahassee [Florida].**
- A. Dana: Oh, does she?**
- M. Harris: We still hear from her.**
- M. Vajo: The historical society had no way of copying or didn't want to take the time to copy all of this. But I will! I'll make copies because this is—
- I. Durand: Actually, Marie [Vajo] has done a wonderful job of cataloguing.
- A. Dana: I know she is. I know she's great. [laughs]**
- I. Durand: And now the process of putting into a computerized database to make it easy to search. How is that going, Marie? Slowly?
- M. Vajo: Yeah, it's [unclear] very slowly. No, it's getting better. The first hundred years are the hardest.
- [looking at photograph] Is this the railroad station up here?
- I. Durand: It clearly is.
- M. Bacon: Oh, Metuchen—the church in Metuchen.**
- A. Dana: Oh, the Methodist Church, yeah.**
- I. Durand: The Roman Catholic Church in Metuchen? It says, "Roman Catholic in Metuchen."

²³ Dr. Desmond lived up the hill from Pumpton at 306 Plainfield Road. He was a member of the Raritan Yacht Club.

- A. Dana:** **That was St. Francis!**
- I. Durand: That was St. Francis before it–
- M. Harris:** **–became a cathedral.**
- I. Durand: Obviously, they completely rebuilt because this is a frame structure.
- M. Harris:** **Oh yes. It's completely different, completely different.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah. We made that one too.
- W. Stochel: Is that the one–before the one burned down or after the one that–?
- A. Dana:** **Well, I never heard it burning.**
- W. Stochel: The one story I heard of the St. Francis Church is that they had candles on the Christmas tree or something.
- M. Harris:** **Really?**
- A. Dana:** **Oh, I had never heard that.**
- M. Vajo: A lot of places burned in Metuchen.
- W. Stochel: The Methodist Church burned; the St. Francis burned at one time.
- M. Vajo: The First Reformed–didn't that? I mean the Reformed Church.
- A. Dana:** **Oh, the Reformed Church. I think I have slides of that fire [in 1948]. No, maybe then I gave them to Gregory Morgan [phonetic]. I gave them to him.**
- M. Vajo: [showing gravestone photograph] This Richard Dana, 1897-1897.
- A. Dana:** **Well, see that's–[unclear] was my father-in-law's cousin and her brother was born and he didn't live.**
- M. Vajo: It's quite a stone they have here.
- A. Dana:** **It's the [First] Presbyterian Cemetery, yeah.**
- W. Stochel: So they are over in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Metuchen by the church?
- A. Dana:** **Yes.**
- W. Stochel: Okay. I remember we studied that graveyard.
- A. Dana:** **Oh, it's quite a cemetery.**
- M. Vajo: [looking at photograph] What is the top picture there? Do you know?

- A. Dana:** **Oh, that's our driveway. The driveway to the—that's the greenhouse and the big house is over here.**
- M. Vajo: And that's Main Street down below.
- A. Dana:** **And that's Mr. [Edward] Burroughs. [laughs]**
- W. Stochel: [looking at photograph] This is the top of the bank as you are going down Main Street. It was a circular drive up there instead of a parking lot. So I think this was taken from the cemetery over to there.
- M. Vajo: Oh yes, there's many, many—[showing photograph] look at this, the cut through.
- I. Durand: Wow. But whereabouts is that? Is that where Grove is now?
- M. Harris:** **That's in Metuchen?**
- A. Dana:** **You know where that is? They have it blocked off now right by the funeral home.**
- W. Stochel: Oh, it's the Lehigh. The Lehigh Valley [Railroad], yeah.
- A. Dana:** **Lehigh. Yeah, that's where that is because I asked my husband the same thing. I said, "Where was—?" [laughs] He would tell me.**
- W. Stochel: [looking at Roselawn photograph] It's a massive house, boy.
- I. Durand: Is it?
- W. Stochel: [laughs] How many rooms?
- A. Dana:** **Twenty-three.**
- W. Stochel: Twenty-three rooms? [laughs]
- A. Dana:** **Well, you know when you live there, you don't think about that. You just know the place has to be cleaned!**
- M. Harris:** **That's right.**
- I. Durand: I was going to say, looking at some of that furniture that are very ornate furniture and thought—
- A. Dana:** **It has to be cleaned. It was all right when they had a full staff of help, but then we didn't have any help. [laughs] It was sad.**
- I. Durand: Well, I was just thinking not only inside, but outside, there's very extensive gardens there.
- A. Dana:** **Oh yeah. Well, this Tommy Meeker, you have a picture. He was the head of everything at the house there.**
- M. Harris:** **He was the maintenance.**

A. Dana: And he stayed with my mother-in-law for years even after everybody else was gone.

M. Harris: Tommy Meeker, uh-huh?

A. Dana: Yeah.

M. Harris: Wonderful, wonderful man.

A. Dana: Oh, he was. And Lena, his wife, was just as nice. Just as nice.

I. Durand: Are those St. Bernard [dogs]?

A. Dana: Yeah, they [Williams family] had St. Bernards. They just loved their St. Bernards.

W. Stochel: Had big dogs for the big house. [laughs]

A. Dana: Yeah. Well, they would sit on either side of the kneelers out in the back by the back door.

M. Harris: Picturesque, huh?

[muffled background discussion]

A. Dana: Well, I will tell you what that is. We had a tennis court and one very wintery day, it snowed and then it thawed and that is like a skating pond on a tennis court. That would be—that was right through the outside here, you know in this side of the dorm. But that's what that is.

[muffled background discussion]

W. Stochel: [looking at photograph] Okay, that looks like one of the post Plainfield Road.

A. Dana: Yeah, that's Luce's [phonetic] house. And that's got to be your house [at 301 Plainfield Road].

W. Stochel: And the road is out. Is that the one car?

M. Bacon: Oh, is this the Mooks house?

I. Durand: Now which group is this?

M. Bacon: No, the Mooks house was here.

I. Durand: This obviously is a school.

A. Dana: Yeah, exactly.

W. Stochel: It would be about here because this was where Heron Court, Heron Place [Herron Road] is because that house, yeah.

- M. Harris:** Took [addressing daughter], is the brook shown on that picture?
- A. Dana:** No, it doesn't show, Muriel.
- W. Stochel: That would be the brook, right? Isn't it?
- I. Durand: Along here?
- M. Harris:** Down to Park Avenue.
- W. Stochel: These are the houses up on Southfield [Road].
- A. Dana:** That could be Brook Avenue. That could be Brook Avenue.
- W. Stochel: Well, this could be Brook Avenue right here.
- M. Bacon:** Yeah, it could be. And this is Campbells [phonetic] house within here.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, right.
- M. Bacon:** I'm not sure this one. This isn't the [unclear] behind [unclear]? Maybe it is?
- W. Stochel: I think it is because it's set farther back off Plainfield Road.
- A. Dana:** It's got to be.
- M. Bacon:** Yeah, yeah, it is. Okay, and this ends on all that lawn.
- W. Stochel: Right.
- M. Bacon:** She used to have the most beautiful rose garden, Mrs. Kemp.
- I. Durand: That's obviously a foxhole or something.
- A. Dana:** [looking at class photograph] My husband, I guess, was in Washington School [present-day Mildred B. Moss Elementary School], I think it is. He went to the school in Metuchen. He's down in the front row there, I think. [laughs]
- I. Durand: Well, there were two teachers, I think.
- A. Dana:** Yeah.
- W. Stochel: Washington School, Mildred Moss, named Moss School. She was there so long they named the school after her.
- I. Durand: Look at the ceiling underneath the beams and—they didn't need a bond around this to build that one. [long pause; laughs at dog in background] Bribery works every time. With our dog, the magic was T-r-e-a-t. And they know—they have a surprise vocabulary and you just say that word once—
- A. Dana:** And they know it. They hear it.

- I. Durand: Well, this is a marvelous collection.
- A. Dana:** **Well, I don't know how much of a collection it is. [laughs] I just grabbed things that I thought might interest you.**
- M. Harris:** **Well, it's a wonderful collection, really.**
- M. Vajo: This is tremendous.
- A. Dana:** **And you know in looking through—would you believe I found these? You know what these are?**
- I. Durand: Slides?
- A. Dana:** **Glass plates in the photographs. It looks like Rich's family. I don't know who they are.**
- I. Durand: Remember you used to have the slide projectors, lantern projectors you put the glass slides in.
- M. Vajo: We have one down in the [unclear].
- A. Dana:** **I don't even know who they are. They may be Rich's family when they were young. I don't know. I just don't know. Does it say anything on the box at all?**
- M. Bacon:** **[introduction to the audience] This is my brother Tom [Thomas Harris Jr.].**
- Audience: Hi Tom!
- M. Bacon:** **I come bearing gifts, Audrey Dana? Walter Stochel? Ian Durand?**
- I. Durand: Hi Tom. How are you?
- M. Harris:** **You can do a lot of information here.**
- M. Bacon:** **[addressing Tom] Have a seat.**
- T. Harris Jr.: What are we going to be? What are we historizing about?
- M. Harris:** **This is the historical society here on tape. Pardon?**
- I. Durand: Are you the donator of the [unclear] bus tour?
- T. Harris Jr.: The bus tour?
- I. Durand: Yeah. Great, thank you. [laughter]
- W. Stochel: So he [Thomas Harris Jr.] grew up here in the neighborhood? He grew up in the neighborhood?
- M. Bacon:** **Yes, we have an older brother [Gardner Harris] too but he's from—**

- A. Dana:** **He's the baby!**
- M. Bacon:** **Yes, he's the baby. [laughter] We went to school at Metuchen High School.**
- W. Stochel: What elementary schools did you go?
- T. Harris Jr.: I was out of the area.
- W. Stochel: You went to Woodland?
- T. Harris Jr.: No, I went to school in New York and Pennington, New Jersey. Not in this part.
What kind of business—are you talking about the business or we talking about—?
- M. Bacon:** **No, the house and X surrounding areas.**
- A. Dana:** **The lived area.**
- M. Bacon:** **The Wood Brook Farms.**
- M. Harris:** **And Mr. Meeker. Remember Mr. Tom Meeker? That's Gardner's friend.**
- T. Harris Jr.: It's a construction company. [chuckling]
- M. Harris:** **No, he's part of the bridge building company.**
- I. Durand: Right.
- A. Dana:** **Are you going to get some of those beams from the World Trade Center [in New York]? [chuckles]**
- T. Harris Jr.: We built the World Trade Center up to the first eight floors from the basement up two floors above the lamp. And we built the office building across the street.
- W. Stochel: So the steel came from Harris Steel?
- T. Harris Jr.: For the basement, and then the rest of it came from Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania], Des Moines [Iowa]. And they broke it into eleven different fabricators and [unclear]. So they had some real troubles [unclear]. That was the last of Mr. Moses [unclear] New York City.
- M. Vajo: Are people still—?
- I. Durand: [looking at the Dana glass plates] I think so. Yes, they are all family portraits.
- A. Dana:** **Are they?**
- I. Durand: Yeah, uh-huh.
- M. Harris:** **Could they still be developed?**

M. Vajo: Yes.

A. Dana: They could be?

M. Vajo: I know someone who does it.

A. Dana: I just found them in Rich's things and I—what is this?

M. Vajo: Do you have a picture of the windmill there?

A. Dana: Yeah.

I. Durand: Now you might—if these were projected and you could see the detail, you might recognize them?

A. Dana: Oh sure, sure.

M. Vajo: I think we own a projector down in the Grimstead Room. Don't we, Walter?

W. Stochel: I think there is. I don't know how to use it, but I think—because we had glass plates. We have a whole bunch of glass plates down there.

T. Harris Jr.: Okay, I've got to go. Nice to see you.

[muffled background discussion]

A. Dana: Nice to see you, Tom.

I. Durand: Nice to meet you, Tom.

M. Vajo: Nice meeting you.

[dog barking and background discussion]

I. Durand: [looking through glass plates] These are all family pictures.

A. Dana: Are they?

I. Durand: Yeah. Mostly girls, it appears.

A. Dana: Well, that would probably be my mother-in-law and her cousin.

I. Durand: Well, the only thing it says on here is "Rutherford."

A. Dana: Oh, Rutherford. Oh, they lived in Rutherford, New York before they moved here.

I. Durand: Okay.

A. Dana: So these are pictures taken back then. Thank you! Now I know.

W. Stochel: Solved another mystery!

A. Dana: **Yeah.**

M. Vajo: I tell you what, I think these I have copies of or don't—you know they're not pertaining to [unclear]. And these are allowed to make copies now. And you know you'll get them back.

A. Dana: **Pardon me?**

M. Vajo: You know you'll get them back.

A. Dana: **Oh, I know you'll give them back to me, Marie, yes.**

M. Vajo: Some people don't want all of this.

M. Harris: **There isn't. [laughs]**

M. Vajo: I know, but I—

M. Harris: **You have to keep track of—**

I. Durand: Oh, there's a little more of the box.

M. Harris: **Can you do this yourself? Or do you have someone to do it?**

M. Vajo: Well these, you got copy machines now that they just run them right off. It's just they take them there and get them. These will come out beautiful.

I. Durand: Now did you want copies of the aerial shots, Marie?

M. Vajo: Yeah. I don't know how they are going to a copy. You say you have the slides?

A. Dana: **Yeah, I have the slides. I have to get them out and find them.**

M. Vajo: Yeah, it would be easier than doing from the picture.

A. Dana: **Yeah, okay.**

M. Vajo: If we could do that, I would really appreciate it.

A. Dana: **I had those done by Eastern Kodak. And it was quite expensive to have them done. I was really surprised by the cost.**

M. Vajo: Yeah. Again I know a couple of people that—

M. Harris: **[looking at photograph] This is on Main Street, Metuchen. Isn't there a big thing right there?**

M. Bacon: **Because you had the church?**

M. Harris: **I had the church, yes.**

- M. Vajo: Oh yes. I missed that one on the way through. [chuckles]
- M. Harris: This is in Metuchen.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah, Danfords Corner [at 476 Main Street].
- M. Harris: Uh-huh. And the church [Centenary Methodist Church] used to be over here.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah.
- M. Harris: You can see the walls.**
- A. Dana: No, okay. Thank you. [looking at photograph] Right, this is the Walsh house. This is after they moved down there. So this is the Walsh house too.**
- I. Durand: The big one, a big house to move.
- A. Dana: Yes, it was.**
- M. Bacon: They didn't move it? The Walsh house?**
- A. Dana: Yeah.**
- M. Bacon: They didn't move it. They built around it. They didn't move it though.**
- A. Dana: They moved the whole house down.**
- M. Harris: She's talking about before it became—**
- M. Bacon: Oh, before! [laughter] Excuse me. Where was it? Where was it placed?**
- A. Dana: Where the big house is. And he lived down there.**
- M. Harris: Yeah. He wanted a bigger house.**
- A. Dana: That house wasn't big enough for him, he had to build a bigger house. [laughter]**
- M. Harris: It was a big house.**
- W. Stochel: Was it big enough? He had—that's pretty big! [laughs]
- I. Durand: Is this when it was built?
- A. Dana: This is when the tower was being built. This is a pergola and all.**
- W. Stochel: Oh, Metuchen in the fifties, I guess?
- M. Harris: Uh-huh, early sixties or probably [19]59 or something like that. We were planning to build and then we sold the property there. And we built it there at hillside, top of the hillside.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah, I wanted this slide too. This is what I missed.

W. Stochel: [looking at photograph] This would be Danfords, okay. This is Hillside or Highland [Avenue]? It's Highland. Now this is where that cigar store [Smoker's Haven at 470 Main Street] is.

A. Dana: Okay, you got these, right?

M. Vajo: [looking through photographs] Yes. A lot of them are empty and some of them are family. Oh, the school, the class. That shows the school. It shows the room which is interesting.

W. Stochel: And the church was on this one. That was the Centenary Methodist Church there.

M. Harris: It's still, now it's on top of the hill.

I. Durand: Right, I know it is there. [looking at photograph] Okay, so this is about 1955?

M. Harris: About that. In the planning stages.

I. Durand: Well, it's a [19]55 Volt and a [19]55 Chevy wagon.

M. Harris: And then we were fortunate enough to get that property at the top of the hill because it belonged to the railroad, Pennsylvania Railroad. And one of our members was a member on the board so we were able to get it at a reasonable price.

I. Durand: Wow, it's a private [unclear].

W. Stochel: No, look at all the cars on the street. I think it's Main Street, 531.

M. Harris: Something like that.

W. Stochel: Route 531.

I. Durand: And here's another picture that clearly shows—

W. Stochel: Danfords.

I. Durand: Right.

M. Harris: [separate conversation] Still hanging in there, huh?

M. Vajo: Oh yeah.

M. Harris: I wonder how they manage.

M. Vajo: Oh, I think quite a bit, I think, with the—

M. Harris: Repair.

M. Vajo: Yeah, repair. Keep reminding me to pick up things.

- W. Stochel: [looking at another photograph] The trolley tracks?
- I. Durand: Oh, okay. Good, good.
- W. Stochel: I don't see them there.
- A. Dana: This was the Mirrors of Metuchen [*The Metuchen Mirror* newspaper] in there. It was in the papers years and years ago.**
- W. Stochel: That looks like it's concrete there by the side. This is the state highway, so I can see the borough probably gets in their jurisdiction ended.
- M. Vajo: [looking at additional photographs] The house and the windmill.
- M. Harris: Now you may have those if you like.**
- I. Durand: Okay.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

- W. Stochel: The Atlantic Charter²⁴ on the ship the [USS] *Augusta* with [President Franklin] Roosevelt and [Prime Minister Winston] Churchill. And he's a member of the Churchill Society and he was telling me all of these—he's going to be over at Whispering Knolls [Assisted Living at 62 James Street, Edison] now. He's packing up for the—yeah. But he had—you know he was telling me some of the—and then he was in the shoe business.
- M. Harris: He was a charming man, really.**
- W. Stochel: Yeah. Because he was standing by me, I forget he was in the shoe business when somebody was talking about how Metuchen has changed. And I said, "You can get six different kinds of pizza now in Metuchen, but you can't buy a pair of shoes."
[laughter]
- A. Dana: That's right. That's for sure.**
- M. Vajo: Walter, can I borrow your pen for a minute?
- M. Bacon: And Morris, that was a good store [Morris Stores at 413 Main Street], where Mr. Morris is.**
- M. Harris: Morris Zuts?**
- A. Dana: Oh, Morris Zuts. He's in Redfield Village [Apartments] with his wife. He took Mrs. Zuts' [Ceil Zuts] license away her; she had an accident. Now she's angry with so-and-so. [chuckles]**

²⁴ The Atlantic Charter was a statement issued on August 14, 1941 that set out American and British goals for the world after the end of World War II.

- M. Bacon:** That's called Metuchen Pharmacy [at 396 Main Street], right here on the corner.
- W. Stochel: Yeah. That's where there is a little store. People tell me that it was an ice cream store at one time.
- I. Durand: That's a convenience store then.
- W. Stochel: Right. So maybe when it was a pharmacy, they also had it.
- M. Bacon:** They had an ice cream counter.
- I. Durand: Well, that was common.
- M. Harris:** Soda fountain.
- M. Bacon:** Soda fountain, right.
- M. Vajo: [looking at photograph] Was that Costa's Ice Cream?
- W. Stochel: No. Costa's was up—
- M. Vajo: Phyllis worked there.
- W. Stochel: Phyllis Boeddinghaus worked at Costa's?
- M. Vajo: Yeah. [laughter]
- M. Harris:** She did?
- A. Dana:** Yeah.
- M. Vajo: That's what she said. [laughs]
- M. Bacon:** [offhand comment] I tried to call Gardner, can't get him. No answer.
- M. Harris:** I was thinking that Costa's would have [unclear]. Who had the—?
- A. Dana:** [looking at photograph] This was the picture that you were telling me. They gave me a copy of the picture. But if you look at the original picture, down in the front are golf clubs. And that's—
- I. Durand: The key.
- A. Dana:** You know, that's what it is. But this little boy right over here is my husband, right there. [laughter] This was about 1927, I think. Rich's parents are back here and Rich's cousins are there. His grandmother and—his grandfather are over here. Grandmother there. I don't think mother could see that. [dog barking and whimpering] No, no, she couldn't sit down. She had a machine in there.
- M. Harris:** Everything has to go to my machine now.
- A. Dana:** That's right up the—Horace had me do.

- M. Bacon:** Now Walter, that poet, Marie Eglington²⁵, she had been publishing in the *Metuchen Recorder* and so I'm sure you could get copies of the poems.
- W. Stochel: And she lived—?
- M. Bacon:** Right on the other side of the street beyond the Mooses—I don't know where it would be now? About Southfield, about that area.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, Southfield [Road].
- M. Bacon:** And it was torn down in the—maybe about 1960 because I used to hang out there when it was abandoned. And the cops came [unclear]. We used to explore. [background laughter]
- W. Stochel: And the cops told you to get out. Do you remember the cop?
- M. Bacon:** No, I was young except for my older because, “People sleep in here.” And I have some of the poems actually, some of them. They were all thrown in the attic, just a big mess. The house has just been abandoned.
- I. Durand: Those were the days when GM [General Motors] needed the road.
- M. Harris:** You can tell by the cars. [laughter]
- I. Durand: Yeah, yeah. Now there are a couple Packards in there, and a Studemaker, and a few Fords.
- M. Harris:** You know when the Mooks lived here [at 4001 Park Avenue], Drayton had seven garages for seven different antique cars behind the house.
- A. Dana:** They are all gone now, aren't they?
- M. Harris:** Uh-huh. He has boats now down at Lake Hopatcong. [laughs]
- A. Dana:** I know. I've been up there.
- M. Bacon:** Well, Bucky, he comes. He sees you.
- A. Dana:** Yeah, he comes and sees me when he gets out.
- M. Bacon:** Christmas Hardware, I know [unclear] the place.
- A. Dana:** Well, I think they are all up at Lake Hopatcong. I think so. When we were up there, let me see Rich and I were up there about maybe fifteen years ago [unclear] we had a lot of [unclear]. I think Bucky has most of them though. I think he may have a place out in Detroit [Michigan] where he has them.

²⁵ The poet Marie Eglington lived near where Sleepy Hollow Road is. The house was abandoned after she died. Tookie Bacon recalled how she used to play in the abandoned house and how there were poems strewn around the attic.

- W. Stochel: One of the questions now I have is what happened to the Williams house?
- A. Dana: **Well, my father-in-law got very ill and my mother-in-law didn't have any more help. She had one maid, period. And with twenty-three rooms, it was just too much for her so we decided—see it was all in a family trust, so you couldn't just say, "I'm going to sell the house." You had to contact this one and then that one. So we ended up selling it and my mother-in-law moved to Metuchen on Mason Drive and with [my] father-in-law. And I think he was only there about a year and a half before he passed away. But we had an auction to sell everything because we got stuck with so massively use it, you know.**
- W. Stochel: Yeah, going from a twenty-three-room house to a house on Mason Drive in Metuchen which—
- A. Dana: **Well, she took a lot with her, but nothing—**
- M. Bacon: **The size of the furniture is so huge.**
- A. Dana: **[dog whimpering] Yeah, it was very, very large. So anyway, and of course, when you have a library and a living room and a formal dining room and everything to go with all these things, it's just too much. So we had the auction. And of course, we didn't do well on it at all. But we got rid of everything, as much as we could. And of course, Mr. What's-His-Name, he wasn't part of the country club—**
- M. Harris: **Paterniti [phonetic].**
- A. Dana: **No. Paterniti [phonetic] would be blind to buy a lot, but he didn't get—but he did buy a lot, but he didn't put any money on it. Let me see, see I can't think of it off the top of my head. Anyway—**
- W. Stochel: So they sold directly to the builder who built all those houses there?
- A. Dana: **We sold directly to the builder, yes.**
- M. Bacon: **Wasn't there a stipulation that nothing could be done to the house?**
- A. Dana: **Well see, once we sold it, it was no longer a farm. It was considered Class A zoning. See several people wanted to buy the house and make like a Kappa organization out of it, you know like for the sisters or something. Well, you couldn't do that. Once we sold, it was then Class A zoning. We couldn't do that. So we had to just sell it and that's it. Someone wanted to make a restaurant out of it, couldn't do it. So your hands were tied. If we wanted to open a restaurant, we could have done it as a family. But no one in the family wanted to do that.**
- I. Durand: That's a lot of work.
- M. Bacon: **And then they started to build right away?**
- A. Dana: **For a short time after that, yeah. But there again, the properties had to have a half-acre. That was all stipulated. So they couldn't just put shacks on there. Sort of a good thing to know when you are going to sell large pieces of property.**

- W. Stochel: So it was sold in the 1960s, late sixties, let's say?
- A. Dana: Let's see, the exact date was—I had it down with some of my papers.**
- W. Stochel: So it was in the—let's say in the sixties.
- M. Bacon: Mid-sixties.**
- M. Vajo: It's close enough.
- W. Stochel: Yeah, I don't need an exact date.
- A. Dana: When Rich and I moved into our house [at 11 Wistar Avenue] in Metuchen in 1960. And of course, the house was still there. So I guess it has to be some—yeah right, I'm sure you're right. It's probably—**
- M. Vajo: Mid-sixties.
- A. Dana: Let's see, my mother died in [19]69. Pop died in 1970. So yeah, so it would have to be—he was already in Metuchen when he died. He was in Metuchen in 1970, within a year, a year and a half. So I would say [19]68, maybe. I was trying to think dates. I should have had them all at my fingertips!**
- Audience: No!
- M. Harris: You can't. You're living today.**
- A. Dana: [looking at photograph collection] Yeah. These are great!**
- W. Stochel: Thank you very much for putting them in the collection.
- M. Harris: You're welcome.**
- W. Stochel: Through 1950s views of Metuchen of downtown, I had a question about the weathervane. Yes. What is that on the weathervane²⁶?
- M. Harris: It's a model of one of the LCI(L)s, which we were building during that time. And they make that Landing Craft, Large, Landing Infantry LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry (Large)). And we built them at the rate of one a day.**
- I. Durand: Yeah, that was amazing.
- M. Harris: Three-hundred-sixty-five a year.**
- M. Vajo: You want to use this?

²⁶ The Harris house had an interesting weathervane on top of the flagpole. It is a replica of an LCI(L) [Landing Craft, Infantry (Large)]. This was a type of landing craft built for the United States during World War II. They were built in sections at the Harris Structural Steel Company in South Plainfield and trucked to Perth Amboy. The trees on Oak Tree Road were permanently scarred by the sections of the Landing Craft scrapping them. The final assembly of the LCI(L) was at the shipyard in Perth Amboy.

- A. Dana:** Yes.
- I. Durand: Okay, no weekends off. This was–
- M. Harris:** **Three-hundred-sixty-five a year.**
- I. Durand: And then they would be trucked to–
- M. Harris:** **Yeah, in sections from South Plainfield. They would build in South Plainfield and they would carry the sections down to Perth Amboy where we had a shipyard at Barber [also known as Maurer], a place called Barber, which was right next to the Hesses [phonetic] who had a little tiny foil company down there. A little tiny one, it was a tiny one, which I guess used to come and sit on my desk, the older Mr. Hess [phonetic]. [laughter]**
- I. Durand: And they had some final assembly there with the yard there.
- M. Harris:** **Yes, it was assembled there, uh-huh. And then it was–wherever it was going to another shipyard for completion for interior and so forth. East coast shipyard, one for [unclear] east coast shipyard.**
- I. Durand: Okay. And then presumably they went overseas?
- M. Harris:** **Uh-huh, went overseas, all over.**
- W. Stochel: So the weathervane on the flagpole had been here since World War II?
- M. Harris:** **Pardon me?**
- W. Stochel: Since World War II?
- M. Harris:** **World War II, uh-huh.**
- W. Stochel: My mother told me–my mother lives on Oak Tree. We live on Oak Tree Road, and she lived there and she remembers them trucking. She would tell me Landing Craft, they would close the street off, they were so wide, and they would clip the trees and that’s why our tree in front had a hole in it! And the tree just–they just couldn’t–the county cut it down this year because it was going to fall over. But Mom would point that out and I [said], “What are they chucking Landing Craft up Oak Tree Road?”
- M. Harris:** **Because that’s how did it though, in sections. No, it was quite a feat.**
- A. Dana:** **That’s where my husband took his flying lessons on Oak Tree Road just near the airport.**
- I. Durand: Oh, the one over where the old ShopRite [is]?
- W. Stochel: In Iselin?
- A. Dana:** **Yeah, that’s where he and Louise flew.**
- M. Harris:** **Were the movie house is there?**

- A. Dana:** **Yeah, it's in that area.**
- M. Harris:** **Was it an outdoor movie house, wasn't it?**
- A. Dana:** **Driving.**
- I. Durand: The old ShopRite?
- A. Dana:** **Yeah, old ShopRite.**
- I. Durand: If you go down to just before the [Garden State] Parkway, if you're crossing the Parkway, on the left there is, I think, a Cardi's [phonetic] or something is in there or they used to—but it's now all Indian stores.
- M. Harris:** **There's a theater there also on the left of Oak Tree Road, just before you make the turn to go onto the Parkway.**
- A. Dana:** **Oh yeah, well that wasn't down that—**
- W. Stochel: Musical theater.
- A. Dana:** **Yes, but it wasn't down that far. It was more this way—that's where the airport was. That's where Richard would fly.**
- W. Stochel: We have a book on Iselin, Iselin history, and there's a picture of the hanger and a description that was on Oak Tree Road near Wood Avenue.
- A. Dana:** **Yeah.**
- M. Vajo: If you're speaking of South Plainfield, I know a woman that lives—trying to get to the historical society [unclear] and they want pictures. They're going through the Arcadia books like we did. So if you have any pictures of your steel company [Harris Structural Steel Company]—
- A. Dana:** **Which we probably do. [laughs]**
- M. Harris:** **We have a lot of people who have pictures. I don't know. We haven't too many pictures actually of the steel company, you know we're there. You know you just don't do the—**
- M. Vajo: I know, that's the trouble.
- I. Durand: That's right. If you live in New York, you don't go to the Empire State Building.
- M. Harris:** **Same thing.**
- M. Vajo: Yeah, this is what she is looking for, anything in South Plainfield that goes back then because we have very, very little and they are trying to get—
- M. Harris:** **We have a lot of the finished item, but we'll see.**

- A. Dana:** I was born in South Plainfield, you know.
- M. Vajo: Oh yeah?
- I. Durand: Whereabouts?
- A. Dana:** Do you remember Herm's Restaurant?
- W. Stochel: Oh yeah!
- A. Dana:** Well, that was where I was born.
- W. Stochel: You were born in Herm's?
- A. Dana:** Yeah. [laughter] No, it was a farm. We had my father [Charles Edward Drake] there and a foreign man, and that's where I was born and my brother was born in that house.
- M. Vajo: Do you have a picture of the house?
- A. Dana:** Maybe the front. I don't know. It was at—you know you probably went to Herm's for dinner there. I don't know whether you did, but we did. But it had like a porch in the front, you know a glassed-in porch, and I think I might have a picture of that, but I don't know. But that's where I was born. But my parents didn't stay there. They moved when I was two years old because I moved to Plainfield. My father didn't want us to go to South Plainfield schools. So he moved us into Plainfield. So I moved up the street on Park Avenue to 1266 Park Avenue across from Muhlenberg Hospital. But that's where I was born in that house.
- M. Vajo: I look for things for her because they're really struggling like we did sometimes.
- I. Durand: So you were born at home?
- A. Dana:** Yes! Dr. Anthony [phonetic] was my doctor. I remember my mother [Mary (Mae) Esther Drake] telling me that. [laughs]
- W. Stochel: So your family moves you uptown into Plainfield so you can go to Plainfield—so you are a graduate of Plainfield High School?
- A. Dana:** Yes, I am.
- W. Stochel: Okay. The Cardinals [Athletics] of Plainfield High School.
- A. Dana:** Yes, yes. It was a wonderful school in those days. I guess it's still a wonderful school, but we didn't have the school they got today. We had a much smaller school behind.
- W. Stochel: The one on Arlington [Avenue]?
- A. Dana:** Yeah. [dog whimpering] What? Oh, you don't look happy.

- M. Harris:** **He [dog] said, “My mother’s not here.”**
- I. Durand: They know.
- W. Stochel: He’s out with the other dogs. [laughter]
- M. Harris:** **He’s the cutest dog. He’s just so cute and spoiled.**
- A. Dana:** **Yes. I was down at the—doing volunteer work for the library and your granddaughter brought— [dog whimpering]**
- M. Vajo: I think the cookies are—
- M. Harris:** **Yes, he smells the cookies.**
- M. Vajo: The cookies are getting to him. [laughter]
- M. Harris:** **Good boy, good boy. Are you? Okay, good boy. [laughter]**
- I. Durand: If you say it often enough.
- A. Dana:** **Yes.**
- M. Vajo: Well, this is wonderful ... [recording ends]

[END OF INTERVIEW]