

QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History

ANN GERRISH LAW

July 30, 1998

Interviewed by Susi Brodie

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Q: Today is July 30, 1998, and I'm interviewing Mrs. Law about her prior experiences in Quonochontaug on West Beach. I came to know Mrs. Law through having seen her at the ball games on the ball field. And as we became acquainted, we found out that we have similar family names of Gerrish, and then we found out that she had lived on West Beach for many, many years. She has many interesting things to share about her parents' memories and her own memories.

A: I first came to Quonochontaug when I was a little girl. I was staying at the Breakers Hotel with my mother and father down at the breachway. At that time, there was the Eldridge House and the Breakers, and they were big, three-story hotels. We all went across the breachway to swim. At that time of course the breachway was shallow at low tide and you could walk across. At high tide, we had a boat with a rope—a pully kind of thing that you went across. So, you got in the boat and pulled yourself across.

However, Mother and Daddy had been coming to Quonochontaug ever since they were first married. In fact, they came on their honeymoon. It was about 1913, I believe. Before that, my father lived in Potter Hill in Ashaway. His father was a [inaudible 01:27] in the war up there. I think it might have been Ashaway [inaudible 01:31] & Tackle. I remember he was burned in New York by mistake. His mother should have been in Potter Hill when he was born, but the baby came too soon. So, he grew up in Potter Hill. In time, they moved to Massachusetts when his father died, and that's when he met my mother. When they were married, they came down in a—I think they rented a bus, and then the train. They got a stagecoach out to Quonnie. Maybe it was Providence, but they took a stagecoach out to Quonnie. At that time, we didn't have the cottage. Three or four years later we bought a cottage down on West Beach. There was a long, long stone sea wall—a cement sea wall that was between five and eight-feet tall that ran all along the coast all the way down to the breachway. There must have been 50 or 60 cottages along that. We had the one at the very end. We were next door to the Campbells and the Bowens [phonetic 02:35], who were very refined, nice older ladies.

Q: What were your parents' names?

A: At that time, Mother was Terry Shepherd [phonetic 02:44] and my father was George Gerrish. That's when Douglas went to Massachusetts. He was very successful, so he bought the cottage and the land around it. We had later on built another cottage on the side of it, because we were renting the first cottage, which is a summarized cottage. It faced east instead of southeast. But east. That was the sunrise, of course. So, we lived there. I was in college. At that time, we built a second cottage on the side of it, which was a smaller cottage, but it was strictly our own private cottage, and we used the other one for rental purposes.

Q: Was that common practice at that time that people had rental cottages?

A: Most everybody was here for their vacation and rented the cottage when they weren't. And we did that. We rented to the Duffys for many years I remember. At that time, I think I can remember there were the Crumbs. He was the mayor of Bristol, Connecticut. The Smiths were down on the breachway. That would have been Kay Smith and Bob Smith and their family. And another girl who I remember very well, but I can't think of her name. In the evenings, the group would all get together. We had children from six to 22. It was a lot of fun, because they started accumulating from the Quonochontaug Inn on down. That was the Ashaway group at that time. There were the Langworthys, who were friends of my father's who grew up in Ashaway when he was there.

Q: Oh, that's how this whole Ashaway group came to be.

A: That's right. That's right. And the Briggs—Lloyd Briggs and Barbara Briggs. And the Briggs Park in Ashaway was donated.

Q: Oh, yes. That's up around the corner from where [inaudible 04:54] is. If you go up 216 on the right-hand side, that's Briggs Park.

A: Yes. So, these kids all grew up together. And Pee Wee Birch [phonetic 05:02]—she was a Langworthy. Pee Wee Langworthy. She married Mr. Birch, and later on had cottages in this Ashaway group.

Q: Up on the waterfront where you are now?

A: Right where we are now. Yes. In fact, this cottage that's now the [inaudible 05:18] used to be the Briggs. And the cottage was recently the Eckles' [phonetic 05:24] cottage—the Eckles were Briggs. They were related. They were cousins. It was a big family group. The Farrows [phonetic 05:32] had a cottage here too at that time. Their daughter was a Mace. Deedee Nice [phonetic 05:44] was the mother of Bob and Doug, and Doug married my sister. So, then they built a cottage in the Ashaway group. But that was later. That was after the hurricane, because at the time of the hurricane, we had just finished our little new cottage, and it was a darling little place. It was just big enough for us.

Q: Where is that cottage now?

A: Well, it ended up over in the pond somewhere in pieces, because when the '38 hurricane hit, that was the first cottage to go. And all the cottages on the sea wall went, and the sea wall went. There may be a couple left, but they were all washed off their base. They were all settled on an angle. The Marshes [phonetic 06:28] were down there at that time, and that cottage went. There's a cottage that washed out in back. I think that may have been the old Marsh cottage. That sat out there, and for some reason the tidal wave stopped just before it hit, because the one that was there expected the wave to hit the cottage and take the whole thing. I guess it had broken, and it just came through in a flood and did not take the cottage.

Q: Were there people that you knew of who passed away during the '38 hurricane who were property owners down here?

A: Yes. Graham and Barbara Crumb were the ones that were in their car and came back in. Have you heard that story? They were in the car and they were gone. And they found their bodies over in back between the road and the pond. They were the grandparents of Marilyn Crumb [inaudible 07:28]. But Marilyn came back and bought a cottage down—what is that called—the thing at the breachway?

Q: Sandpiper Lane is the one to the left, and then there is another one that goes up the left.

A: This is the one that came right across from where my grandmother used to be. It came right through to the sea. There was a road there. When I was a little girl—was it the Sunrise Cottage? It was a habit every day after lunch to go back along that little road to the bowling alley and get an ice cream cone. The bowling alley was a lot of fun, of course. When we were in high school, we used to come down and have house parties at the Sunrise Cottage. We usually brought about eight of us down. Mother and Daddy came. We set up pins at the bowling alley so we could bowl. We did lots of things down here. It was lots of fun at that time.

Q: There were rooms at the bowling alley. Is that correct?

A: I believe there were. Yes.

Q: I had interrupted you. I'm sorry. You were talking about the kids that would come down from the Quonnie Inn.

A: Yes. There were the Langworthys and the Maces. They would pick up the kids as they came by their cottages. They usually stopped at our cottage and we played horseshoes for a while, and then we went on down to the breachway and picked up the Crumbs and the Smiths and Mosey [phonetic 09:02]. Gene Mosey was down there at that time. We picked them up and ended up either on a scavenger hunt or playing cards or just walking the beach and having a beach party. We walked the beach to Blue Shutters. At that time, Blue Shutters was an eating place with an ice cream parlor and stuff like that. We would walk down there and have a Coke and two straws or something. We would go across the

breachway and walk to Weekapaug. We could walk across the breachway. It was no problem at that time. We even swam to Weekapaug.

Q: The current wasn't strong enough in the natural breach.

A: No. It wasn't deep.

Q: You said you could walk across or had to pull a line across.

A: When it was low tide, we didn't even get our bathing suits wet. We could walk across it without getting wet.

Q: Did you spend time on the pond clamming, fishing or those kinds of things?

A: Yes. We did a lot of clamming. We got both steamers and quahogs. Marcy Crumb had a boat over on the pond, and we would go sailing up and down the pond. Of course, they had sail boat races that came down from Weekapaug at that time. We'd go over and sail around and watch the races and everything. It was a little boat. During the hurricane it ended up deep in the mud. It wasn't much good after that. So, we lost the boat. Then after the hurricane, we had a trailer. We moved the trailer onto the lawn, which was pretty badly washed out. We had a lot of rocks placed in front of the cottage for a breakwater. They're all gone. You wouldn't even have known they'd been there. The only thing that was left was the fireplace out of the new cottage, and that was upside down and half buried in the sand. We had the trailer there for a while. There was another hurricane in there somewhere, and the trailer went out. Daddy was discouraged at that time, so he bought land up in the Ashaway group, because it was higher. And of course, the Quonochontaug Inn stayed. That wasn't gone. And [inaudible 11:30] cottage stayed and Briggs' cottage stayed. The [inaudible 11:36] cottage had burned. I believe that's where our cottage is now. It was either our cottage or Sal's cottage that had a foundation. But the cottage had burned quite a while before that, so that was a new cottage out there. We built the new cottage in '48. Let me see if I can remember things that were back further than that that you'd probably like to know. I remember the people had lots of fun down in the hotels. They were always crowded. Everybody was in a great mood. The Mase boys stayed there at the same time. I knew them then, but I didn't remember that. When we met them later on when we were in high school, I had forgotten about playing with them at the Breakers. Captain Saunders had a fish market down beyond the hotels. The breachway wasn't deep. There were lots of flats out in there, and we could walk through this horrible grass and mosquitos and get fish at Captain Saunders. That was gone, of course. There was a family named Snow down there too. We used to get a boat and go out in the pond a lot, explore the islands. Of course, Daddy used to take us fishing. He loved to fish. One day we were out there and there was the worst rain storm we ever saw in our lives. He turned the boat over and propped it up with a stick, and we sat in that boat and ate graham crackers in the rain.

Q: Did you meals consist of a lot of fish? Or where did you go shopping? Where did you get other food for meals? Did you shop at the local farms?

A: Yes. We did a lot of that. But in those days, people had little panel trucks. They came down. We had three bakers that would come through in a day. We had lot of bakers. And we had a vegetable man or two that would come. They would park in back of the cottages, and everybody would shop. Mother wasn't driving at first, so we brought a lot of stuff with us. When we came to stay, we had enough stuff in that car or on that car so we could stay forever.

Q: How long of a drive was it for you to come here?

A: One hundred miles.

Q: How long did that you take you?

A: Quite a while. Maybe three hours. I don't know. A lot longer than it does now, or course. We came on little roads. There were no highways. And we had a luggage carrier on the running boards. You should have seen the car. We had food all the way up the roof in the back seat, and the cats and the dogs and the kids and the clothes. We had a pump. We didn't have running water. We had a pump on our sink. We would pump our water. We didn't have electric lights at first. We had kerosene lamps. Even Mr. Potter wouldn't put in electricity down here. Do you remember him?

Q: No, I don't.

A: He built all the cottages down here. He built this one.

Q: What year did he build this cottage?

A: Forty-eight. He was building it with his sons at that time. And Brad Fisher was kind of taking over building at that time. Mr. Potter never paid income tax I understand. He worked until he made enough money to live. When he got to the income tax bracket, he quit. He was independent. He had his own vegetables, his own cows, his own chickens. He was absolutely self-sufficient. He had his own well. We used to go out to his well to get drinking water, because we didn't have drinking water. This is a great place for appetites. Every morning we managed to get down to the beach by 10:00, because by that time we had the dishes done, and Mother let us go. And we spent the morning on the beach. We came home for lunch, and that was dinner, because we had light suppers. We had big dinners. After we'd eaten everything in sight, we always put [inaudible 16:09] and ate the whole loaf of bread.

Q: Oh, my glory.

A: My sister and my brother and I. Usually we went one side of the breachway in the morning, and the other side of the breachway in the afternoon. So that the kids that lived on the breachway didn't have to walk all the way up to our end of the beach, we went

down to their end of the beach. And there were lots of beach fires at night in between and on both beaches—all beaches.

Q: Do you remember meeting Trevor from Weekapaug?

A: No.

Q: Or knowing Trevor up through Central Beach and East Beach as it existed back in those days?

A: Not at that time. No. Because from Each Beach, there weren't any houses back there. The hurricane took down an awful lot of them. We never did get acquainted with Weekapaug. We walked down to a place down there and got ice cream, and we walked back at night, but we didn't spend time there during the day.

Q: What was the place that you walked for ice cream?

A: I don't know. It was before you go over the bridge. That's all I remember. It was just a little place at that time. It didn't do anything else but sell—a convenience store, like 7UP.

Q: Was it just the two of you girls that came here?

A: And my brother.

Q: What's your brother's name?

A: Scott.

Q: And he is older or younger?

A: He was eleven years younger than I was. He came along with trailer. We always had to laugh. That was what he would call his sky parlor. We had a lot of fun.

Q: What was life like after the '38 hurricane?

A: It was terrible. I think the hurricane was on a Monday or Tuesday. We came down that next weekend. The [inaudible 18:10] masons were out back.

Q: They used to live across the street.

A: Right across. And they were on Worcester, so we drove down to Worcester and asked them what happened, and they said it was terrible. They were terribly upset. But they hadn't lost their cottage. So, we came down and we went to see my uncle, who lived in Avondale. He was a lobster fisherman. He had his boat on the Pawcatuck River.

Q: What was his name?

A: Alvin Scott. He was really my great uncle. He was my father's uncle. He lobstered between here and Block Island. He had Charlie, who was an old circus roustabout, and that was his mate. He kept him on the boat. Charlie was great. He was a little old guy. Quite a character. And he had no family. No one ever knew anything about a family. But he lived on the boat. At the end of the month when Uncle Alvin paid him, he disappeared, and he'd be gone for a week or seven days. When he came back, he was pretty well hungover and he was broke. Then he would get back on the boat and work for a month or so, and get enough money to go out on another binge. One night he came home and he missed the boat. He walked off the end of the pier, and they found him floating in the morning. That was the end of Charlie. His first boat was the RSD, and that was about 35 feet or something like that. He got another boat, and it was 48 feet. During the hurricane, that boat was picked up and carried across the road and dumped in a field, but it wasn't hurt.

Q: In Avondale?

A: Yes. Just right across the road. After the hurricane, they sat in our front room and they could look out on the part that goes across into Connecticut, and he said they carried out bodies for two days after that, because the front row was gone. Do you remember the front row? There were sixteen homes out on the front row, and there was nothing except sand there after the hurricane. Just nothing. So, we came down, and they wouldn't let us go out to see Uncle Alvin. We had to do a lot of talking, because they had closed off Avondale and we weren't allowed to go out there. But we finally did get out there. And then we came down here, and there was nothing. It was such a horrible feeling to stand there and look at where your house was—the houses were, and there was nothing. Nothing but sand. Just sand. And we went swimming, which was stupid, because there were bodies. And the water had churned all that wood to splinters. They were soft splinters, but it was like a really thick soup with wooden splinters in it. You couldn't see the bottom. You couldn't see through the water at all. And we went out swimming just because that's all we did, I guess. But it was kind of creepy, and we didn't enjoy it very much. And then we went into several of the houses that sitting on an angle. They wouldn't let us go over to the pond and into that area at all. The WPA was stacking all the furniture that survived in big piles and burning it. Their argument was that they were preventing an epidemic. Don't ask me what kind of epidemic you get, but that's what they were doing.

Q: Maybe because there had been so many dead bodies.

A: Food. I suppose there was food in it. One of the men had a lovely old desk with all his papers in it. It was sitting out in the road, and he wanted to take it, and they wouldn't let him. They wanted to chop it up. There were blanket rules, and they stacked them up and everybody had to behave. So, I guess he lost that too. All we got was a salad bowl.

Q: Do you still have that salad bowl?

A: Oh, yes. It's been around ever since. It's just a little one. But we have always kept it. And we use it. That was right after the hurricane. We were all heartbroken, of course. We had to have another cottage, and Daddy couldn't make up his mind whether he would build another cottage or not. So, around Christmas, my sister and I went out and bought Mother a whole set of dishes, because she had a new set of dishes. We bought them in the Woolworth's five-and-dime store. We bought a whole new set of dishes so we could put them in the new cottage when Daddy got around to building it. And we still have those. They're down at the little house. But it was a very emotional Christmas. Everything was emotional at that time. Such a tremendous loss. Actually, we were so in love with this place. And we would cry all the way home whenever vacation was over. We'd cry all the way home, because we couldn't bear to leave.

Q: Some things never change.

A: I know.

Q: Through the generations, that's a thing that's done by a lot of people.

A: Yes. I took Toby and Sandy to the plane on Tuesday, and Toby cried all the way in. So, history is repeating itself. Of course, the girls are so in love with this place. They'd like to move back here and live. So, we built this place when my son Scott was born in '48. We have added a little bit. Not much. We added the back porch. First of all, we built the little house in back—the little shanty. And Sally used to come down here, because she was married, and she would come down with her family and live in that, and I would come down and stay over a weekend. I was working in Hartford, and I used to come down from Hartford for weekends, but we didn't have this cottage at that time. We didn't have this until after I was married.

Q: What else in terms of this front row of houses or this Ashaway group that survived the '38 hurricane?

A: Not much. The Hatch's house stayed. And McDonalds of course. And [inaudible 24:33] never made it. About this time, East Beach was building up pretty well. And you were in the [inaudible 24:43], weren't you?

Q: No. We had other family members who rented in there.

A: What was her name? Duckworth.

Q: Jane Duckworth.

A: Yes.

Q: That's who my grandfather purchased Javogee [phonetic 25:03] from.

A: Yes. And Janey Duckworth was a cousin of the Crumbs. She and our gang played together. She was the only one from Central Beach at that time. We used to go down to her house a lot. Her house was the old farm house. [inaudible 25:34] had a farm, and he had pigs and cows. We used to love to go over, because we bought milk from him. The road came out across from his farm. So, we would walk over to the farm and buy our milk. And lovely baby pigs. We thought they were the cutest things in the world. We would snuggle and look at the baby pigs for a while. The cows during the hurricane went up in that little—there is a raised ground out there, and a lot of the cows got up on that and outlived the hurricane. But we found pigs swimming over in back. They got washed away.

Q: Were you here in the '54 hurricane?

A: No. I was not there. That's the one when my brother had just been married. They were down here on their honeymoon. They told them that the hurricane was down in South Carolina, and would get here at about 3:00 in the afternoon. So, as he was packing up all her wedding presents and getting ready to leave, as soon as they came through to tell them to get out, about that time the front windows all went out. The hurricane had started to move rapidly all of a sudden. It got here between 11:00 and 1:00 in the morning. So, all the front windows went out, and they got in the car and left about that time. We couldn't get hurricane insurance after the '38 hurricane. What we had to get was flood insurance, which was the best we could do. We got flood insurance, and after the windows went out, the floor was in pretty bad shape. And Jerry [inaudible 27:20] stood over on his porch and took pictures.

Q: So, he has actual footage?

A: I've seen pictures of the waves breaking over our front porch. There was a lot of wind, and the waves were being blown all to pieces. They were breaking over the front porch. Then we put hurricane shutters on, and every year we'd have to put the shutters up. We did that for a while, and then my brother got tired of doing that, so we stopped doing that. We haven't done it since.

Q: And now at least they would be able to come through and tell you to evacuate.

A: Yes. We were down here with the kids, and there was a hurricane coming. The kids said, "We've never seen a hurricane. We'd like to see it." And so, we were down in the little cottage at that point getting ready to leave, because we had moved everything out of this house and we were supposed to get the plane back to Colorado. I said, "You can wait until they come and tell us we have to leave, and then we're going to have to go." I happened to call my husband, and he said, "You get out of there. Don't you stay another minute. You get on the next train out." And I said, "Well, the kids want to stay," and he said, "No. You're not going to stay," so I had to leave. We got on the last train out, because as we went out through New York state, the bridges went out in back of us. It was just as well we went. That was another one. That was not the one when our front

windows went out. That was a minor one. It didn't turn out to be too bad down here at all. It went straight up through New York. We didn't get it that badly.

Q: How many families are you still acquainted with who were in this area?

A: Not many. The [inaudible 29:12], of course. The [inaudible 29:13]. I do a Christmas card with the [inaudible 29:17]. Who else do I have from down here? I guess that's about it, except the family. After we built this house, Daddy sold the back lot to the Perkins, because they were friends of my brother. He thought Scott would be more interested in staying down here longer if he had a friend. So, [inaudible 29:45] and Joyce moved in out back. Scott used to come and stay with my husband and I and our kids. He was single, and he'd come down to stay with us while we were here. He used to bring his girlfriends down. Of course, he brought Dorothy before they were married, and we all thought she was such a doll. We were so glad that they were getting married. And then when Scott died, he left this place to his sons, because in the original deed, my father left his land to Scott and to me and to our issue. So, the husband wasn't supposed to inherit; just the kids were supposed to inherit. So, I've got a trust for all my children to inherit this at this point. But luckily everybody has loved this place. One nephew has never bothered much with it, but the other two like it and come down quite a bit.

Q: It's quite a distance for them to travel.

A: No. Scott is in Brimfield, Massachusetts, which is 85 miles from Sally's home here. I think it's about the same from his. He comes a little different angle. Of course, we come the farthest of anybody. Otherwise, we'd come more often. When the kids were little, I used to come down as soon as school was out. Scott wasn't married. We'd just come in the end of June and just stay all summer, and then go back on Labor Day. Now, as my kids got older, you have to be back in the middle of August to play football. School starts the last week in August. For a while, we kept them out of school, and that was fine. But as they got older, we thought that school was more important than vacation.

Q: Do you have any memories of during the war what things were like here?

A: Yes. Definitely. I'm glad you asked that, because we were down at the Sunrise Cottage at that time, and of course there was a beach patrol. I guess they were Coast Guard. They traveled with a big police dog up and down. They had stations, and they would punch in at different stations as they went up and down the beach. I don't know how many hours—if it was every two hours that they would come by in front of the house. It was a blackout. I was working in Hartford, and I came down. I knew this road pretty well, because I learned to drive going back and forth to Pendleton's to get water. So, I knew how to turn the lights out and come in with the cars.

Q: Did you have to turn the lights out at dusk?

A: We had to turn the lights out when we turned off 1, and come in the dark. You're supposed to come in daylight, of course.

Q: Because there were still a lot of lights on West Beach Road. I remember riding my bike on it quite late at night and saying, "This is pretty creepy with no lights."

A: There were no lights. But I used to bring the car, because I knew the road pretty well. That was fun. There were all kinds of rumors that there were submarines off the coast. Maybe there were. I don't really know. But we came down for vacations whenever we could. We spent as much time down here as we could.

Q: Did you see an influx of soldiers? I've heard other people talk about the fact that soldiers would come down Route 1.

A: Mother and Daddy used to bring hitchhiking soldiers back and forth once in a while. Daddy was a dentist in Spencer. Spencer is a small town. It was 4,000 or 5,000 I guess. He had a man come in to have his teeth examined, and he did not want to go into the service. He said, "Doc, you can tell them that I can't be drafted, because my teeth are terrible." Daddy said, "Your teeth aren't terrible." He said, "I can't tell them that, because your teeth are perfectly good." And he wouldn't tell them. About a week or so after that, the word went around in Spencer that my father had a short wave set at Quonochontaug and was sending message to the Japanese. It went all through town. People would cross the street and not speak to him. He said, "You sure find out who your friends are," because a lot of people would say, "Doc, don't worry about us. We're your friends." But there were people who wouldn't even face him on the street. It was pretty sad. He was terribly honest. He wouldn't ever do anything like that.

Q: Did the atmosphere change after the war?

A: As far as he was concerned?

Q: As far as the activity level down here? Did most people continue to come during the war?

A: I don't know. About that time, I went out to California, and I didn't get back probably until after I was married.

Q: How old were you when you went out to California?

A: I was out of school, and I had been through G. Fox & Company's training school. I went out from there.

Q: Out of college?

A: Yes. Out of college.

Q: Did your father send you out there?

A: No. I always wanted to go to California. I was working for Fox's. Everybody was going into defense work, and everybody was making lots of money. I wasn't making very much money. I was getting \$22.00 a week. They were making a lot more than that. I was an assistant buyer. I was firing little girls who were rude. I thought, "Here I'm firing these girls, and they're going across the river to Pratt & Whitney, and they were making twice as much as I am. What am I doing this for?" So, I quit and went to California and I worked for Douglas. I built airplanes. That was fun.

Q: Did you continue to come here after the college years?

A: After I was married, I came back here. We came regularly after that.

Q: And your kids have come since they were babies?

A: Yes.

Q: I heard you say that it's sixth-generation?

A: My grandkids are sixth-generation. My great grandkids are seventh-generation. My mother and father lived in Haverhill. His mother had been coming here since she was a girl. And her mother had been coming here before that.

Q: Was the late 1800s?

A: Probably early 1800s.

Q: Where did they come when they were here?

A: The inns. They would come down the inns either for the day and have dinner or sometimes they stayed at the inns. I don't know whether they stayed at the inns before they were married or not. But Daddy came when he was a little boy. He'd come down with his grandmother and his mother in a carriage. I don't know if they had a stagecoach or not. I think they did have a stagecoach that came out here. One time when we were little—this was all a dirt road, and not a very good dirt road. We came down early one spring. It had been very rainy. It was a single-track road. You didn't pass cars on it very well. You had to kind of pull into the bushes to get by cars. It had rained a lot, and there were two tracks. They were maybe ten inches deep. You couldn't get out of them. I remember we prayed all the way in that we wouldn't meet another car, because if we met another car, we'd have to back up to somewhere where we could have gotten out of the road to get. You just could not get out of that track.

Q: Do you remember coming up near Slater's home or Whistling Chimneys?

A: Yes. Whistling Chimneys is a lovely old home. We used to go out on the pond through their land. There weren't houses anywhere around. It was alone out there. So, we would

just cut through the fields to get out to the pond. We went through everywhere out here to get out to the pond and go clamming or fishing.

Q: Was it all weeds?

A: It was beach grass. It was tough on the feet. But there was no better route, so there was no reason why we shouldn't just walk through, or get a boat down the breachway and go out, or if people had boats that were tied up, we would just drive a stake in the dirt and tie the boat to the stake. So, we would go to wherever their boat was. There weren't any loading docks or launching docks or anything else. Of course, there was nothing at the end of the breachway like there is now. That was all just grass. That's where Captain Saunders had his little fish market, but you had to walk through water and grass and everything else to get there. They had big planks that they laid down on the grass, and you would walk the planks out to the fish market. The mosquitos were terrible. We used to get fish and eels and lobsters and everything else.

Q: If you had to capture some of your fondest memories, how would you encapsulate those?

A: The kids that we knew down here we had so much fun with. We had a wonderful childhood. We flew a lot of kites. We played a lot of horseshoes. We built a lot of beach fires. The strange thing about it, future husbands or wives down here, Sally married a guy who she met down here when she was thirteen, and latched onto him about that time and just never let him go. And of course [inaudible 40:51] her brother, so I dated Bob while Sally was dating Doug. That worked out very well. Then I had a roommate in New Jersey, so when I went down to see her in the winter, I saw Doug and Bob at the same time. We had a nice relationship. Then I brought my husband down. He went to Pratt & Whitney engine school during the war in Hartford, and I brought him down. And then Scott brought Dorothy down for weekends when he was working in Boston and she was working in Boston. We couldn't marry them until they accepted the beach. It was interesting. And my grandkids have all loved it down here. I think Mother made that part of our lives, because my mother was a really wonderful person. Everybody adored her, and they called her [inaudible 41:47], because that's what Sally's kids always called her. So, they just adored her. She died when she was 103. That wasn't too long ago. That was about four or five years ago.

Q: There is a tremendous sense of community here.

A: Absolutely. It's a place where we could go and see our parents' backgrounds. This way we saw how Daddy grew up and how Mother and Daddy lived together at first. There is a lot of family history down here. My grandmother Scott ran away from [inaudible 42:27] when he was seventeen. She was my father's grandmother. She came over to— what is it? I just can't think of the word. She lived down there. She hired out as a seamstress and became a seamstress and lived there. My grandmother was Grandma Gerrish. I guess that's where she was born and started [inaudible 43:05] until they moved up here.

Q: So, that's originally how your family came just because of the [inaudible 43:16]?

A: Yes. Because Daddy always came here when he was [inaudible 43:20]. And I guess he got pretty fond of it too. Mother adored it down here. She loved the ocean. She just loved it. And they used to live out in the little house.

Q: The shanty?

A: Yes. Daddy gave me this place and he said as long as they were alive, they wanted that little house. Whenever we came back from vacation, they would go down and spend time in the little house even after Daddy was retired. It was a good family thing. When Sally came down, the Maces and the [inaudible 43:58] were all down here at that time, and they moved over to Central Beach. That was our first connection with Central Beach. And the Maces moved—that house is huge now.

Q: Bob Mace's house?

A: No. The one across.

Q: What used to be the Graham's house? That was Mace's?

A: Yes. It's not quite directly across, but one house over. They got into a big house now. But that's where Edith and Kenneth lived. I don't know that the [inaudible 44:37] ever had another house of their own down here. Oh, they had that one. That's right. The [inaudible 44:42] had a house that Larry and Robbie have now. They gave it to the Roys like Daddy gave this to me.

Q: That seems to be a tradition of passing that on.

A: Yes. As long as we own it, we can take care of it. Daddy kind of gipped me, because he gave me the land that the first cottage was on. I kept saying, "I'd like to have that land. I'd like to build a cottage on it." Of course, I wasn't in any position to build a cottage at that time. But he said, "Well, you pay the taxes on it, and you can have it." So, I said, "All right. I will." So, one year I wrote out the taxes and gave it to him. Twenty-six dollars.

Q: What year was that?

A: That was right after the second hurricane, the one that took the little trailer out. [inaudible 45:51] after that '38 hurricane. There was one in there somewhere. It wasn't too long after that. I can't remember the date. It was during the war sometime. After I went ahead and paid the taxes on it one year, he went ahead and sold it.

Q: You still have a beautiful spot to raise a family.

A: That sold too, and they built houses back on the land where we had our house. But they built them far back. Now there is no way to protect them in case there is another hurricane. The Davis moved down. The sea wall was divided where the road comes in now.

Q: The driveway that's called Ashaway?

A: No. Down below.

Q: That little Sandpiper Road on the left-hand side?

A: Yes. There were about fifteen or twenty houses, and then there was a break. There was a cement sidewalk on the top. That's what people did on Sunday. They'd walk up and down the cement walk with their parasols. There was a break, and you had to go out through sand to get to the next cement wall. And that one went all the way down the breachway as far as it goes right now. Right down before it comes out. It was just a cement sidewalk. The ladies dressed up and walked it.

Q: I can't imagine how hot they must have been in all those clothes.

A: Well, they got an ocean breeze. Do you remember the bathing suits? There was a mother in a bathing suit with these big puffy bloomers that came down to her ankles.

Q: Do you still have some of those pictures?

A: Yes. I think Sally has them. I don't know if Sally has them or my brother has them. She passed them on to somebody. I don't have them.

Q: That might be something that the historical group would be interested in making copies of. We have a lot of postcards and things, but pictures would be neat.

A: Yes. I have some from when I was a little girl. I had a blue bathing suit with little things that came down.

Q: It must have taken forever to dry.

A: Yes. And it's prickery too. I remember that. It's probably because I've seen pictures.