

QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History

DANIEL MACLEOD

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Interviewed by Anne Doyle

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DOYLE: I am sitting with Danny MacLeod, and he will relate his family memories here at Quonochontaug. Why don't you just say your full name and birth date.

MACLEOD: OK; my full name is Daniel Bennett MacLeod, the Bennett being my mother's maiden name. I was born in 1935, in November. My first—I probably came to Quonochontaug in 1936, but I don't remember, obviously. My father was a Professor of Piano at the University of Missouri and loved—was born in Rhode Island, and probably brought me here when I was -what I would have been— less than one year old at the time. And I have no recollections, of course, of coming; but I suspect that he would have brought me then, he and my mother. My first recollections--and they are very, very vague--probably are around 1939—1940. We stayed at Boulder Lodge, It was the only place on the beach that had water, other than the cistern that is now up here at the ball field, where you had to go and pump with a lever. Boulder Lodge is now the house owned by the Carpenters, and it was at that time owned by a family by the name of Tetlow. They were out of Westerly. He was a dentist, and he had a— it was a rooming house, in the summer. How many people were involved, I have no idea? I can't remember--

DOYLE: This was after the Hurricane, then —

MACLEOD: This was before the Hurricane.

DOYLE: 1938?

MACLEOD: No, this might have been after the Hurricane. Yes; the Hurricane was in 1938. So yes; if we came before the Hurricane, I don't remember it.

DOYLE: So this is when Boulder Lodge was on Ocean View Avenue.

MACLEOD: It's still on it.

DOYLE: Yes, but I mean it used to be on the waterfront.

MACLEOD: Oh, did it? You see, that part I don't know. That's interesting. Now I kind of vaguely remember – my grandparents lived in North Providence, and my mother would have been pregnant with my brother Burnham, who was born in October of 1938. So just three days, essentially, after the Hurricane. And Burnham was born in Providence because my mother certainly could not get back to Missouri, and I kind of remember being at my grandmother's house and having this horrible storm: wind blowing and not being allowed outside for fear that I'd be blown away! Now maybe I – I vaguely remember that; I don't for an absolute fact that that's true. But I do remember going back to Missouri with my father – I don't remember this either, but this must have been what happened. We went back on the train; I don't think we would have driven. And my mother stayed here, and eventually, Burnham was born here. And she stayed until she was able to travel, and back 60 or 70 years ago, they kept you quite a while in the hospital, as I recall.

DOYLE: Was your mother also from Providence?

MACLEOD: No; my mother was from Richmond, Kentucky. And exactly how and when my mother and father met, I'm not sure. But Columbia, Missouri, had an awful lot of Kentucky transplants. And why I don't know. I have no idea whether it's a cousin – it seems to me I had lots of cousins, Kentucky cousins that came to Missouri. But southerners have a habit of having second, third, fourth cousins, and they make a big deal out of that. Whereas New Englanders could care less, beyond first cousins. Even first cousins they don't – they could care less about. So, I'll have to ask Anne for some prompting now – I've said a mouthful.

DOYLE: What is your father's full name, and your mother's full name?

MACLEOD: My mother's full name was Mary Burnam Bennett, and her mother's maiden name was Burnam. That's spelled without an h--Burnam.

DOYLE: And was Burnam named after --?

MACLEOD: Burnam was - Yes. Actually that's Burnam's middle name. My brother's middle name. My father's first name was Elsworth and his middle name was Allen, last name obviously MacLeod. My brother was – his official name on his birth certificate is Allen Burnam MacLeod. But they called him Burnam. And that's all I ever knew him by was Burnam, although I was aware of the fact that he was Allen. But he used to call – he was never called by that, and he used to tell the story, much later in life when he was in the Army, he got in a great deal of trouble because the sergeant or somebody was hollering for an Allen MacLeod to step forward. And that was him, but it wasn't him! It was a name

he'd never heard before. So that was the first usage of it that I'm aware of.

DOYLE: Now what about your grandparents? 'Cause I know they had a house over on the pond [Ninigret Pond]. Did you – now let's see; you didn't come here till after the Hurricane. You don't remember them talking about their place on the pond?

MACLEOD: I have a picture somewhere at home; -- I don't know that I can find it. If I can, I'll give it to you-- of me sitting in my grandfather's lap in a rocking chair on the pond. On the house –probably it must have been on the porch [on the house] on the pond. So I had to have been [a small baby]– this was pre-Hurricane, 'cause the house was swept away, or most of it was—But my grandparents came—or their parents came from Scotland to Nova Scotia, and then from Nova Scotia they moved to Rhode Island. And I think I remember my father saying that in the very late 1800's (I don't know whether they owned this house or whether it was just a nice place to come for a weekend or what it was) but I think [my father] recalled coming down on the train, getting off in Westerly, getting in a horse and carriage and coming down here.

DOYLE: When was your father born?

MACLEOD: My father was born in 1896.

DOYLE: So that's probably the way they would come down then.

MACLEOD: Yeah. Of course, that would have been much too early for him to have remembered.

DOYLE: Now your grandparents – were they living when you moved here to Central Beach?

MACLEOD: My grandfather had died. I don't recall the year in which he died, but my grandmother was alive, and she would come down for the day, periodically. She had a driver, and he would drive her down for the day. And we'd have a picnic or whatever, and then she'd turn around and go back. But she was a—she lived – I don't remember when she died either. But I think she lived – I don't know when she died, but I think maybe— maybe in I want to say she died 1968 or thereabouts. She lived up to a good old age.

DOYLE: They lived in North Providence. I think I've been on that street. Elaine Henry took me about three times.

MACLEOD: Probably did. It's really a –it's all—it's just big apartments now.

DOYLE: Yeah. Now, you don't know what drew them down here to begin with--?

MACLEOD: I don't. I have no idea.

DOYLE: I didn't find that out from anybody.

MACLEOD: Well, there was a family over at East Beach, on East Beach Road, by the name of Latham. And they were high school friends, grade school friends of my father's. And their families came. And of course, Dick Henry's-- Elaine Henry --Dick Henry's wife's parents were friendly with my parents--my father. My mother really is not part of the Rhode Island story in the early, early years. But exactly what drew them here, I don't know.

DOYLE: So they must have come here at the end of the 1800's.

MACLEOD: I would say so.

DOYLE: And they built that house themselves. That was their house, on the Pond.

MACLEOD: That I'm not sure of. Whether they built that house or they bought it, I don't know.

DOYLE: Now I know your dad was a pianist. And was his father also, or his mother?

MACLEOD: No. There was no music, to my knowledge, in the background. My grandfather ran an automobile garage in Providence, very close to Brown University. And it was called the Brook Street Garage. And garages back then apparently were a little different than now, because of the wealth -- the difference in wealth was very pronounced, and if you had a lot of money, you had a chauffeur-driven car, and you had a chauffeur. And the Brook Street Garage sorta was where they housed the cars. And they would take them in for polishing and washing and doing all this and that; but as far as doing extensive repair work to engines, I haven't a clue whether that went on there or not. But --

DOYLE: Did you ever go into their home, in Providence?

MACLEOD: Oh yes. That was a big, big old house, up in North Providence.

DOYLE: So that must have been, when you came here summers, you would go there. You were living in Missouri most of the time.

MACLEOD: Yeah. We would have --- Yes; but we were just dealing with a few years up until the Hurricane. And then a very few years until the beginning of the War. And we did not come in '42 and I think '43, because of the gas rationing. We just couldn't get here. But we were certainly here -- well I take it back because I remember down in the front there were sandbags down there, and they had soldiers. And they had cannons, and they did all this practicing. And shooting things. And as kids, we used to go down there and hobnob with the soldiers, who seemed to enjoy having us, because we were just little squirts, and they'd tease us and chase us.

And after a while, if the officer came along, they'd tell us: You've gotta get out of here; you're not supposed to be here."

DOYLE: Now this was when you were staying at Boulder Lodge, probably –

MACLEOD: Yes. Yeah. I would say so. Absolutely.

DOYLE: Because I have heard stories about them bringing cannons down from uh-Burlingame.

MACLEOD: Oh, OK.

DOYLE: And there was a cannon right on Central Beach. Now is that the one you were talking about or do you mean East Beach?

MACLEOD: No; I 'm talking about right down here in front of –what I can only describe now as the Kulaks' beach lot.

DOYLE: Yes, that's exactly what—that lot belonged to the Wholeans. And Bill has given us a couple of lectures about it. He is on our trolley tour. And they rented-- they used-- the government rented his--that lot was their property, 'cause after the Hurricane, their house that was there got washed back, ended up on Ocean View. And they leased the property to the government, and they put the cannon there. That's where it was.

MACLEOD: I didn't know any of that. Really, my recollections are definitely after '39--

DOYLE: But you remember the sandbags and the--

MACLEOD: Oh yeah; oh yes; that was in the early '40's.

DOYLE: And do you remember the cannon being there, at all?

MACLEOD: I don't think I do, no. I don't think I remember the cannon. But I do remember some great, big shells—probably two feet long, that were – they just left them there like you would discarded pistol shells, from bullets. You just left them there. There was no necessity to save them or to recycle them; that was something far—that hadn't been thought of yet.

DOYLE: Now, during that time – World War II--did you wander as a [child]--you must have been seven or eight or so, did you wander down toward East Beach where the bunker was?

MACLEOD: Oh yes.

DOYLE: Did you go down that far?

MACLEOD: Oh yeah, sure.

DOYLE: What do you remember about that?

MACLEOD: The one thing I remember, probably more than anything about that bunker, down next to the Blue Shutters –I remember when it was built. And there was a lot of houses - it was an oddity. It was made out of cinderblock, and it was a communications area, is what it was. And people sort of would put their nose up and say, “Who would ever want to live there?” And “That’s ugly.” And of course, after the ’54 hurricane, which of course fast-forwards a bit, that was the only thing left standing there! All the other houses had been washed away.

DOYLE: Have you seen the walls of that building? They are –I don’t know –

MACLEOD: Oh huge, yes! And up at the very end of ...the East Beach Road, as you know, behind the church there’s a huge communications thing up there.

DOYLE: It was the lookout station.

MACLEOD: Yeah, yeah. It somehow was connected to Block Island, I’m told. But-

DOYLE: It was cable.

MACLEOD: Yeah, with cables.

DOYLE: Now were you aware of that when you were there?

MACLEOD: No; no. No idea. But it was subsequently purchased by a lady and her husband. Interestingly enough, she also had roots in Missouri.

DOYLE: The Summerfields?

MACLEOD: Summerfield-- yeah; she was from Kansas City, I think she told me. And by the time I knew her and actually got a chance to visit that house, or to see it, her husband had passed away. So, I didn’t know her husband. Yeah; Mrs. Summerfield, yeah.

DOYLE: Did she take you upstairs?

MACLEOD: Oh, absolutely.

DOYLE: What did it look like? What did they do with that space? After the lookout –space—

MACLEOD: As I recall, it was just a space; it was not – it was almost like going up into a lighthouse, maybe, to look out. There was no – there might have been a couch up there, but it certainly wasn’t finished. And –huge, huge big thick walls, too; I definitely remember that.

DOYLE: Just – or the whole building?

MACLEOD: The whole building. Yes.

DOYLE: Do you remember them – the soldiers—practicing at night, apparently, this is what I hear. They shot at certain targets. No, not at night, probably. This was in the daytime.

MACLEOD: They had planes that would go by with the things [waving].

DOYLE: They had banners or something—

MACLEOD: Yes, way off the back. It was like the tail of a kite, or something. But that's what it was, for target practice. And they'd shoot at it.

DOYLE: Now, kids weren't allowed on the beach then, were they?

MACLEOD: We weren't supposed to be, no. And they had sentries. But they just – I'm sure they knew you were around, and as long as they –I don't think they felt it was imminent that a German sub marine was going to pull up on the beach.

DOYLE: Did you ever hear of a time when that happened?

MACLEOD: No. No. There was always a rumor around that *Red Top*, which is now the Bundy's' house, had some kind of affiliation with the war, and maybe they were German sympathizers; but I think that was just made up. I don't know. I don't know if it's been substantiated or not. But they say that that was – I don't know if they said that's why it had been built with a red top, so they could find it – I don't know any of that stuff.

DOYLE: Now your family, your mother, and father, decided at some point to build your cottage here in Central Beach. Do you recall when that was?

MACLEOD: We came – with the exception at least of one year, maybe not two years, maybe just one year we couldn't come back [after the '38 Hurricane]. We rented a house down next to the Nuns' hotel. And we also rented another year (and this would have had to have been probably the year after the War ended, I'm going to say '46-'47) we rented the Rase house, which is now the Van Pelt house. And another year, we rented *Old Salt*, which was owned by the Randall's and now the Ogdens. And in I want to say 1949, my grandfather and grandmother built the house on Surfside—not Surfside: Ocean View.

DOYLE: Oh, they built it.

MACLEOD: They had it built; yes. And that was the very last house that a local builder by the name of Charlie Link built. And then after that, Brad Fisher moved in, and he built. There was no competition between Brad and Link; it was just Link retired.

DOYLE: And was Mr. Brightman around at that time, too?

MACLEOD: Yes.

DOYLE: Do you know anything about the Brightman family?

MACLEOD: The only thing I remember about the Brightmans is that they had that store up at the end of the road, and Mr. Brightman, Senior, had a peg leg, a wooden leg. And Brightman is an old, old family name around here. I don't know – but he was not the builder; it was his son, actually, it was his grandson that was the builder.

DOYLE: Was that Henry?

MACLEOD: That was Henry; yeah. And he kind of came along, and he never actually was in competition with Brad Fisher. But a few people down here did hire him to build their houses.

DOYLE: I've heard of a couple of houses that he did build, and I was just wondering what that situation was.

MACLEOD: Well, he –he- they were in competition, but I think Henry Brightman must have built other places, whereas Brad, I think, just exclusively seemed to have cast his lot here.

DOYLE: Mhm. So you didn't know any of the family; you weren't buddies with any of the –

MACLEOD: No.

DOYLE: Is Henry Brightman still alive?

MACLEOD: [Pause] No. Henry –the—Henry Brightman – there may be several Henrys; that's why I'm muttering, mumbling here.

DOYLE: Yes. Yes.

MACLEOD: But the Henry that was the builder was in the second world war and is now deceased. He had two sons, Barry and Joe, and Joe's still alive; Barry died within the last year.

DOYLE: I thought – that's why I asked you, because –Barry was in the war? Or the father?

MACLEOD: No, Henry. Barry would be in –50's, were he still alive.

DOYLE: Mhm. So your grandparents built the cottage on Ocean View, about -

MACLEOD: Yeah.

DOYLE: -the end of the –about 1949?

MACLEOD: Yes. I want to say 1949.

DOYLE: Mhm. And once the cottage was there, did you come down for the whole summer?

MACLEOD: Yes. Mhm.

DOYLE: So you must have been early teens. Or twelve or thirteen –

MACLEOD: Well, I was uh thirteen maybe, thirteen -- fourteen.

DOYLE: Yeah.

MACLEOD: When we first came.

DOYLE: Now, how were your summers spent at that point? What did you do once you got here?

MACLEOD: Well, doing what kids twelve and thirteen do! They just spent the day at the beach and—

DOYLE: You never got bored –

MACLEOD: Never were bored; no. When I got to be fifteen and certainly sixteen, I had summer jobs.

DOYLE: What did you do for summer jobs?

MACLEOD: I worked at the Haversham Inn--

DOYLE: I didn't know that!

MACLEOD: --as a dishwasher, and I worked at the Shelter Harbor Inn, also as a dishwasher. And one summer I worked – when I was sixteen or seventeen – I worked at the Misquamicut Club as a – I would drive the – I was kind of a handyman; I did whatever they asked me to do, including driving the food down to the beach club.

DOYLE: So that's where the handyman comes from!

MACLEOD: Well, it could be; I don't know! [laughter] But we--

DOYLE: Did some of your friends from Quonnie also work in the same places?

MACLEOD: Yes. I was very very close friends with a guy by the name of Gene Zabel. And Gene and I usually ended up working at the same place. Because it was a – well, we just did.

DOYLE: So, you met Gene down here; that was when you became friends.

MACLEOD: Yes.

DOYLE: All right. Let's see now – when – how long did you come for a whole summer? I mean what was the point where that stopped?

MACLEOD: Well, my –

DOYLE: You went to college –

MACLEOD: Yes, but I used to—we always – we came for the summers, even right up – I don't think there's a summer that has gone by, with the possible exception of 1942, that I did not come here for some period of time, not the whole summer but for some period of time.

DOYLE: Mhm.

MACLEOD: And so my folks came all the time, and Burnam and my sister and my brother—somebody was here all the time.

DOYLE: How did your folks feel about Quonnie? What was---

MACLEOD: I think they loved it! I know my father did. And I think my mother did too; I think she grew to love it.

DOYLE: Can you say anything about your father being part of that “Runny Nose” Club? [Laughter] Or don't you know—

MACLEOD: Well, I know a little bit about it. My father loved to walk. And he always got up very early in the morning. He was up at 5:00 and sitting on the porch and making coffee, and he became very friendly with a man by the name of Dick Moran. And they used to walk, all the time. They would walk, and it got to be kind of comical because every morning my father would call, or Dick Moran would call and the conversation was very simple – it was: “Do you feel like taking a walk?” And the answer was always “Yup, ” and so they walked. And finally, other people started to join them, and so this little band of walkers expanded –

DOYLE: Just men—

MACLEOD: Just men –just men. And I think it was Dick Moran who started referring to them as the “Runny Nose” Club.

DOYLE: I have a picture of them!

MACLEOD: I'm sure you do! Yeah, yeah. And that was fun. They—

DOYLE: Can you mention any of your other friends that you might have had here?

MACLEOD: Well, you were really kind of friendly with everybody, even though they might have been younger than you were. I remember Jean Gerrish now, but then Jean Southerland—now Jean Gerrish. She's older than I am, but I certainly remember her. I remember the Glover family, Tim and Pete Glover. I remember Jerry Pitcher of course.

DOYLE: Yeah. Now were the Glovers around the same age as you?

MACLEOD: Pete Glover was – I want to say Pete Glover was my brother’s age, which would have been maybe three years younger than I. But his older brother Tim Glover was a contemporary of mine.

DOYLE: Did he also work jobs where you were working?

MACLEOD: No. I don’t remember Tim –

DOYLE: Were they from Providence?

MACLEOD: No; they were from Naugatuck. And there was Bill Saunders; he was older than I. The age difference—and this is still the case now: there’s very little difference between 72 and 75 now, but there’s a huge difference between 13 and 16 –15—18—or whatever. And things haven’t changed there; it’s still uh—And there was a family by the name of Lattner that used to be here. They had two daughters, Martha and Susan.

DOYLE: Where did they live? That name sounds familiar to me.

MACLEOD: The Lattners lived in – uh-I could tell you exactly where it is; I’m just trying to think of the name. It was originally the Jordan cottage, and then it was purchased by the Lattners, and then the Lattner’s sold it eventually when they left and Pete Gibbs’ parents bought it.

DOYLE: Oh; right down and around the corner from us, here on Neptune.

MACLEOD: Yes. And it’s now owned by– I can’t think of the people’s names.

DOYLE: Yeah; I don’t know them at all.

MACLEOD: But the – uh-Mrs. Jordan, I remember Mrs. Jordan. I don’t remember this, but Kate Waterman told me not too long ago that she remembers her up on the roof banging some nails in at the age—well into her 80’s!
[Laughter]

DOYLE: Now did you know the Watermans? Did you know Kate’s husband?

MACLEOD: Oh yes; I knew Chickey Waterman or George; his name was Chickey. And he had a sister named –uh-

DOYLE: Carol?

MACLEOD: Carol. Carol Waterman. And her father was a doctor.

DOYLE: Now did your parents, or your grandparents, know them from Providence as well? Because Mr. Waterman was—

MACLEOD: He was a doctor. If they did know them, I never knew them to be social friends. But again, I was quite young. But I never remember them coming to the house for coffee or a drink or whatever you might do then socially. And a Var, the Vars of course—

DOYLE: Charlie – did you—

MACLEOD: Oh, I knew Charlie, sure, sure. Charlie and my brother were big contemporaries. And of course, I knew the Schafers, and I still do – [Laughter at the mention of Doyle’s family name] But the Vars – Ruthie Vars used to —and this was so true at the time: they were from Westerly, and when the summer was over, and that usually was the same time as school started, they would leave here and go back to Westerly. And it would never ever dawn on them to come down here again until the spring. It was just something you didn’t do. You just –it was closed up; the house was closed, the water was drained, and you were out of here. And there was just no reason to come here.

DOYLE: Now talking about the water for a minute, now do you remember how the water was distributed? You mentioned the pump house, which was near where the ball field is now

MACLEOD: Yes; it was very close, as I remember, it was very close to where the bulletin board is.

DOYLE: Mhm.

MACLEOD: Although the terrain probably was different. I mean it wasn’t a sunken down ball-field type thing as it is now; it was bushes and probably –

DOYLE: Were the pipes in the ground or wee they on top of the ground?

MACLEOD: No; the pipes were—the old – When Howard Thorpe put the water in, he buried the pipes—certainly three and four feet down – or a ways—

DOYLE: When he –

MACLEOD: -- This was just the original part of the Beach, though.

DOYLE: When you say --all right; now what does that mean?

MACLEOD: Well, I don’t know. I want to say this road we’re on now was not an original part of the Beach.

DOYLE: Well, originally, Central Beach went up only to Neptune Avenue and then--.

MACLEOD: That’s right; this was all bushes. So as houses were developed here, the pipes frequently – if not right on top of the ground, they were close to it.

And later, because it was strictly a summer community, freezing wasn't an issue. Because the pumps were shut off and people went away.

DOYLE: Yeah.

MACLEOD: And if you wanted to stay, you had to have your own source of water. So –

DOYLE: Did you know the place where the Sclaters lived? The old farmhouse?

MACLEOD: Yes.

DOYLE: Did you know the people that had that?

MACLEOD: Yes; their name was Tuthill. And they had a daughter, Beverly, and I knew the Tuthills. How they happened to come to that place I don't know.

DOYLE: I was just wondering if that place had water during the winter. Or, they probably had their own well.

MACLEOD: Yes; they had their own well, 'cause it's an old farm; it dates back to 1730. And they had a – as all houses did back then I guess; there was no such thing as water pumps. They had the old pitcher pump. And you took it out, and you cranked the lever, and you took the pail inside the house. And there was the water. And that well's still there.

DOYLE: Oh, it is? Do they still use it?

MACLEOD: To water their lawns, yes. It's still an active well.

DOYLE: Now after the Hurricane, people like the McGlones, who live down at the end of Neptune here, he had had a place on the waterfront, and it came over on the pond, and that's where they put his cottage; but they lived here year-round. So I was wondering – they must have had their own source of water.

MACLEOD: Yes, they did; they did. Now, when I say that when we used to stay at the Tetlows' house, they were the only ones that had any water, by that I meant—I'm not counting McGlones; McGlones were year-round, lived here year-round. It just wasn't really part of the mix. They weren't – they had no children, there would have been no reason for me ever to go there.

DOYLE: So, you didn't really know them.

MACLEOD: I knew John McGlone—I knew them both but –

DOYLE: I'd like to know about what they were like—

MACLEOD: Well, John McGlone, he was the original Mr. Fixit around here. He was the man!

DOYLE: So you kind of took over !

MACLEOD: Well, there was Brad Fisher was in there – I didn't really – but his wife was –she stayed at home. I mean there was no big social circuit around here, as I recall. She used to always insist that her husband tell her where he was going, sort of as best he could on an abbreviated schedule each day. Not that she was nosey or didn't trust him. It was just that if he got underneath a house and something fell on him and he couldn't get out, she wanted to know where to start looking.

DOYLE: I have four spoons that were in that house when it floated across .

MACLEOD: Really! Isn't that neat.

DOYLE: She gave them to me when we were married. They were friends with my grandparents. But I didn't know them at all. Let's see: I'd like to have you fill in, in terms of where in your life you were, not just at Quonnie but you moved to Nova Scotia, I know. How did that all fit in? And tell me when were you married?

MACLEOD: Well, I was married in 1965. And I was working at a school in New Canaan, Connecticut. A private day school. And I worked there for six years.

DOYLE: Where did you go to college?

MACLEOD: I went to the University of Missouri. And after graduating from college, I went in the army, as did everybody then, unless you were 4-F or could somehow talk the Draft Board out of taking you.

DOYLE: When did you graduate?

MACLEOD: 1957. And I was in the Army from – til '58; I was in the six-month active duty program. And then the balance of which was served in the Reserves. [Then] I was teaching at a school in Connecticut, and I became very friendly with a guy there; he came the same time that we did. And we both quit, not because we disliked the school – but we weren't –well it was in Fairfield County; it was a very expensive place to live, and the school where we worked really couldn't afford to pay us a lot of money, and it was – we left financially.

DOYLE: And that's when you went to Nova Scotia?

MACLEOD: And that's when we went to Nova Scotia. And the reason we went is because this friend of mine went. Although we settled in entirely different sections of Nova Scotia, so it wasn't like—I'm friendly with

him today, but it wasn't like we lived close to each other. We lived there for six years.

DOYLE: And your first two girls were born there?

MACLEOD: My oldest daughter, who's Lucia, was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1970. And we moved to Nova Scotia in 1970, and my middle daughter, Suzanne, was born in Nova Scotia in 1973. And my youngest daughter, Laura, was born also in Nova Scotia in 1975.

DOYLE: Thank you.

MACLEOD: And they have still to this day dual citizenship. What that means is – [hesitating] I don't think dual citizenship means much anymore.

DOYLE: But they can go back and forth across the border then, fairly easily.

MACLEOD: Well, no more easily than anybody else. The only time, I think, that having dual citizenship meant anything was, when I was at St. Luke's, it was right during the Viet Nam War. And one of the students there had—

DOYLE: St. Luke's is –

MACLEOD: That's the one in Connecticut.

DOYLE: In Connecticut, right?

MACLEOD: And one of the students had been born in Canada. And everybody was very envious of that because he was not subject to the draft. [Laughter]

DOYLE: How did you like it in Nova Scotia?

MACLEOD: I enjoyed it.

DOYLE: Where did you teach? You taught again -

MACLEOD: I taught in a vocational school in Nova Scotia. And we were on the south shore, in a place called Lockport. But the school is in a place called Shelburn, which is –you can find more easily on the map. And it's very much like it is here. It was south shore. Probably Spring came a month later and Fall came a month earlier, or maybe two weeks. But not severe weather, that you attach to Maine or in this case northern Nova Scotia. We had snow, sure; but it was very much like the East Coast, I thought.

DOYLE: And when you came back here, you lived at the cottage for a while?

MACLEOD: Yes, we left Nova Scotia in 1970-71. I asked my mother if it would be all right if I winterized the cottage down here, and if we stayed for a year or so. And of course, she said it was fine. And a year or so became four years. But towards the end – during the latter part--it wasn't really fair to

my brother or sister that we monopolized the place. So we built a house and moved – I want to say 1976, maybe—we moved to our current home, which is – uh- across the way.

DOYLE: And how did you kind of work into being the Quonnie handy person?

MACLEOD: Well, I worked with –I came back – when we came back from Nova Scotia, I was trained to be a teacher, and that’s really what I had done. And I went to the local school places to get a job; and I was told that, while they were impressed with my credentials, they said I had too much seniority and they couldn’t afford to hire me. And they said it wasn’t a matter for them to get involved with, it was a union matter, that unions insisted that if you – but anyway, I’m not being pro or anti-union in my designation. I had worked in a vocational school in Nova Scotia; I had learned the basics of plumbing and electricity, and things of that nature. So I went to work for the local carpenter, Brad Fisher, and he--

DOYLE: You worked for Brad? I didn’t know that!

MACLEOD: I did indeed. And he kind of added to this bit of knowledge that I had--

DOYLE: What was he like to work for? Be honest [Laughing]

MACLEOD: Brad was – uh- out of fairness to Brad, I worked for him when he was at the very end of his working days. He was - uh—I didn’t think he was difficult to work with. He – uh-

DOYLE: Did he teach you a lot? Or did you kind of do it on your [own]?

MACLEOD: Well, he did teach you. If you set out to do something, he was very conscious of what you were doing. And if he didn’t like the way you were doing it, he would show you, tell you. But wouldn’t scream at you. I don’t remember him screaming. Uh –But as I said, he wasn’t a full-blown carpentry company by then; he just had – well his finish carpenter was Karl. Karl Steiner, was it? Not Steiner but – Karl –

DOYLE: I want to say Smith, but I don’t think that’s right.

MACLEOD: No, it wasn’t Smith.

DOYLE: No, no; it wasn’t. What did – did Karl take over?

MACLEOD: No, no, no no. I just—

DOYLE: I was wondering -- I thought of Karl once in a while, and I remember Karl; I remember what he looked like and he used to bring the gladiolas to us and --.

MACLEOD: Yeah, right. To your sister, and she used to sell them too.

DOYLE: So he did the finishing work?

MACLEOD: Yeah, but he wasn't there very – there was another guy, that really --I can't think of his name. Karl was kind of getting out of the business too when I was there. Stoner, I think his name was Stoner--

DOYLE: Stoner?

MACLEOD: Who, interestingly enough was also from Missouri.

DOYLE: All these Missouri people here!

MACLEOD: I know it, I know it!

DOYLE : We didn't even know it! [Pause] So, after you left Brad, then you just started taking on jobs. I see.

MACLEOD: Yeah, yeah.

DOYLE: And you still are doing that, aren't you?

MACLEOD: Not anymore. No; I'm all done. And I'm done because I can't do it anymore. It's just physically it's not easy for me. 'Cause what I did involved a lot of crawling around underneath houses, and doing stuff that just – can't do it anymore.

DOYLE: You didn't work with John Pappadia at all, then—

MACLEOD: No; John was mainly lawns, and things associated with lawns, just like his son does it now. John and I would supplement one another; if I needed a set of hands to help me do something, he was always available, and I would always reciprocate. But we never competed with one another.

DOYLE: You never joined forces in any way.

MACLEOD: No, no.

DOYLE: Um – I know this might be difficult for you, and if you don't want to talk about it, that's fine. But in terms of what your situation is now, in relationship to Quonochontaug.

MACLEOD: Well, I still have friends in Quonochontaug. We've sold the house.

DOYLE: Can you mention a date on that?

MACLEOD: We sold the house in 2010 I believe, in September; I don't remember the exact date. Whether I'll totally regret having sold it I don't know yet.

DOYLE: It's still a xxxx; you're processing it.

MACLEOD: It is a – it was a –yeah, yeah. We didn't live here; it was strictly a summer place. It was owned by three of us: my sister, my sister-in-law. And it was a – the house was old; it was needing some work. Everybody – all being retired now, everybody wanted to use it more and more. And it just looked – plus the place needed work. And the taxes were – they were a consideration. And we thought it would just simplify matters if we sold it, and sold it before one of us died when it was going to have to be sold anyway, because my three daughters were not in a position to buy it, my brother's daughter was not in a position to buy it, or maybe wasn't interested. And so we just thought it made more sense to get rid of it.

DOYLE: But it's OK for you to be here; you don't mind coming in to Quonnie?

MACLEOD: No. I don't mind, no. I might come in the summer – I don't know. I might. But Quonnie's changed, as I'm sure all of the people you've talked to—

DOYLE: Yeah. Yeah. They've said -- Do you want to say something about the changes?

MACLEOD: Sure, I don't mind. Everything changes, I guess you --especially for the old-timers, I guess you tend to remember the way it was when everybody knew everybody else; you didn't hesitate to cut through somebody's yard if that was the simplest way to get to another part. Nobody minded.

DOYLE: You didn't know the boundary lines of people's property?

MACLEOD: No. No. Didn't exist. And it was a true community. It's not a community anymore, I don't think. It's a bunch of – uh—it's been found, and it's been found by people that are quite well to—do; and I don't have a problem with that. It's just that's the way it goes. But I think money brings with it all the negatives that you associate with money. And the houses are getting bigger; the place is becoming more—Ruthie Vars called it “fractured,” and I think that's a pretty good way to put it. The houses are getting bigger, and there seems to be no end to that and no consideration – that's not the right word, but –it's changed, that's all.

DOYLE: Yeah.

MACLEOD: But everything's gotta change.

DOYLE: That's right. But it's still hard to accept change. No matter – even knowing that it's going to keep on changing.

MACLEOD: It is.

DOYLE: That's what life is all about. Some of it's hard to accept.

MACLEOD: And there seems to be – I don't know—maybe this sounds --there doesn't seem to be any sensible policy as to how to address this change. The (in quotes) the “outsiders” have dictated now that we have a board of governors, and we have all [these] fancy names that I'm sure they got through some yacht club in New York. Have to [have] these designations: Commissioner of This, and the Head Guy of That and on some matters – and then within that framework you have a more exclusive framework that are the real – and it's just—it's gone crazy.

DOYLE: And I think it's also a symptom of what's going on outside of Quonnie. I mean the whole society is--

MACLEOD: Yeah.

DOYLE: -- more complex. It's—Life isn't just simple anywhere, really—

MACLEOD: No; it isn't. I was particularly annoyed with the way Jerry Pitcher was treated on his – where they ganged up and told him in absolutely –I've always felt that if you need a variance, to build something that is not allowed by the current zoning, that your squabble should not include Central Beach; it should be strictly between you and the Town. And for the Beach to get involved, officially, I think is wrong. And that's what happened with the Pitcher business, where they came out and had all these meetings, and oh yes, we've got to oppose this. But then they -- someone said that well, I'm willing to –if we're going to address this question, we've got to do it for everybody. We can't just single out the Pitchers in this case. And they haven't done that.

DOYLE: They haven't?

MACLEOD: No; they haven't. They've had several -- all kinds of variance requests since then, and they've never turned anybody down.

DOYLE: Similar -? Requests?

MACLEOD: Well, yes; using up more of the land than they should have. The house across the street from me happens to be the Huntingtons'—

DOYLE: Oh, I didn't—

MACLEOD: Oh, there are all kinds of – any time a variance comes up, I think. And some of the people that pass judgment –I won't mention names, at least not now –some of the people who voted against Pitcher's variance needed a variance themselves. To me, that's just the ultimate in hypocrisy.

DOYLE: Ooh! Maybe it's good that we don't all know everything that's going on.

MACLEOD: Maybe it is, yeah.

DOYLE: It creates hard feelings, obviously. Um – is there anything else that you can think of that --?

MACLEOD: No; not really.

DOYLE: Did you ever go to the Pond? Did you ever spend time on the Pond? Sailing or --

MACLEOD: I used to sail. There was a family by the name of Gately, who lived very close to our house over here on Oceanview. And they sailed the Pond. They had –they belonged to the Weekapaug Yacht Club, and they used to have weekly sails., and sailing races out on the Pond. And I was a crew member. I wasn't the head guy, but every boat had a crew. And I crewed for Barry Gately and learned to sail. And the boat that we always sailed against – there were maybe a dozen boats in the race, but they always seemed to be down to two or three people who were the better. And one of the families –they had a house in Weekapaug. Their name was Boss – B-O-S-S—and they were the owners of the A.T. Cross Pen company. And one of the sons went on to be an Olympic sailor. And one of the sons is one of the only Rhode Island members of the Augusta National Country Club. How's that! Spiffy!

DOYLE: [Laughing] Learned a lot today !

MACLEOD: And I became friendly with a guy –

DOYLE: Did you have a car when you were down here?

MACLEOD: No. I palled around with a group of guys who were two or three years older than I was –Gene [Zabel] and I did: Phil Jones and Bill Hatch, and they were old enough to have cars, so they kind of -- --But there was a guy that lived over on East Beach who went on to be a Superior Court judge in Rhode Island, a guy by the name of Jack Orton. And these are little things that pop to mind that I never would have thought of. And I was trying to think of some of the other – Well, anyway, the place is – uh-

DOYLE: How was it living down here in the winter, when you came back from Nova Scotia? Was that any diff—well, it must have been different –

MACLEOD: Well, there were very few families down here. It was, it was – I'm just trying to think, off the top of my head who was here. Mrs. Mase's mother-in-law was here—

DOYLE: Mmm--Living in the house --?

MACLEOD: Living in the house-- but she died here. In fact, my oldest daughter Lucia, one of her little jobs was to go over to the Mases' and take the dog out for a walk. And she went over one morning to take the dog out, and she came right back over to our house, which was right across the street, and she said, "Dad, I think you'd better come over; Mrs. Mase is on the floor." So, I went over, and she had not died, but she died within two days. We called the ambulance, and they came down.

And Mrs. Bradshaw lived here--

DOYLE: Yes.

MACLEOD: That was – Kate Waterman was here, with her husband Chickey, or George.

DOYLE: Oh – year round?

MACLEOD: Yes.

DOYLE: You know she's moving –

MACLEOD: Yeah. I do, and I'm trying to think –Jerry Pitcher was not here when we first moved, but he came within a year, I think, he and his second wife. And Thurston Bonney was here; do you remember Thurston?

DOYLE: I remember him. Yeah; I didn't know him very well, but

MACLEOD: They stayed down at the -- in the house down the front – which is now the—used to be Mrs. McConnell's house. Used to be Saunders'; do you remember the Saunders?

DOYLE: Yes, I do.

MACLEOD: They bought that. And I'm trying to think if there were –

DOYLE: And your girls were going to the public school here –

MACLEOD: Yes.

DOYLE: So they would have to get the bus, or –

MACLEOD: Yeah; bus picked them up right down by the pillars.

DOYLE: OK. Do you remember the Pond freezing, or –

MACLEOD: Oh yes; I remember the Pond freezing all over. I don't know if you could safely walk across it though--

DOYLE: I was going to say –did they skate on the Pond?

MACLEOD: There was a pond in the woods over here that they could skate on. But they never tried to skate on this thing [salt pond].

DOYLE: Recently somebody gave me a photograph – it was taken in the early 1900s—of the *ocean* frozen.

MACLEOD: Really!

DOYLE: Yeah. So --

MACLEOD: I've heard of that.

DOYLE: We think we've had a bad winter, but –I think there've been some other winters that have been pretty bad.

MACLEOD: Well, you know they say – I don't know whether this is just foolishness or not--they say that's the way the deer got out to Block Island. Maybe a hundred years or so the ocean froze between here and Block Island all the time, and that's the way the deer got over there. When you think about it, how else would they get there unless they were taken by boat?

DOYLE: Yeah, that's true! [LAUGHING] Unless they swim –

MACLEOD: Swim, yeah! But that's a pretty ambitious swim!

DOYLE: Well, thanks, Danny, very much.

MACLEOD: Oh, you're very welcome.

DOYLE: And if you've anything to add, you can –

MACLEOD: I will. And if you think of anything you –but Agnes James was a --

DOYLE: I remember her, but I don't know who she—where did she come from?

MACLEOD: She was from Providence; she went to elementary school with my father.

DOYLE: Oh really! The connections are amazing.

MACLEOD: My father – I've told you this story I'm sure. My father –all of my father's earliest friends –elementary school – called him Bay. And when he was born, he had an older brother. And apparently – so the story goes—my grandparents weren't sure what they were going to name him, and so they called him "Baby." And to his older brother, who was probably two years old at the time, "Baby" was a little much, so he called him "Bay." And then of course, that was compounded when they finally chose to call him Elsworth: Bay was much easier! So –
[Laughing]

DOYLE: [Laughing] He had such a good sense of humor.

MACLEOD: Yes; yes. And nobody every called him Elsworth that I remember.

DOYLE: No; I have never heard that.

MACLEOD: But he didn't mind it. It wasn't like you could get him mad or something by calling him Elsworth. He didn't care.

DOYLE: So his brother—I didn't realize he had a brother –did he come down here?

MACLEOD: - Only – No; not very often.

DOYLE: Well, thank you again.

MACLEOD: You're very welcome. Thank you

