

QUONOHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History

MARGARET & DANIEL RASE

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Interviewer: Barbara Adams

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Barbara: I'm sitting at 133 Sunset Drive with Peg and Danny Rase; this is Barbara Adams interviewing. They're going to tell us a little bit about how they first came to Quonnie and some of their fondest memories.

Peggy: I believe I came to Quonnie in 1922. We had been over at Misquamicut for a couple of years; where Grandfather thought that he might like to buy a house. But he didn't like the bare beach. So he wanted to come over here where the rocks were. He was a great friend of Howard Thorpe, so Howard Thorpe talked him into buying these lots up front. It was between Morris Point and the Trainor cottage. And we spent the first summer here in the Trainor cottage.

Harris Taylor built the house; and it had six bedrooms and a sewing room, for my grandmother, downstairs. She had the front bedroom, upstairs; so once she came down, she wouldn't have to go back up the stairs; she could lie on her sofa in her sewing room, because she had a bad heart. It was a fun house; we had a lot of laughs in that house. At night the men would play cards, by my grandfather's rules. But we had two little bulldogs; and they'd be under the table and they'd get kicked and oh, they'd have gas attacks, and we'd have to open the door and that was not our xxx, but it was funny.

Then in the morning, when the men weren't here (they came down for only one month), my grandmother and my mother would read and sew: mother would read, and grandmother would sew. And then later on, they'd take turns. My grandmother wanted to go to France even though my grandfather didn't want her to go; so when she was 70, she learned French. And they would read everything they could on LaFayette, and then they would read everything they could on the French Bayou country in Louisiana. And that was very nice 'cause at the same time they were

making jonnycakes on a kerosene stove in the kitchen. And the floor would be warm, and mornings were very pleasant. I, even as a child, slept in, much to the dismay of my next-door neighbor, Joan Best. Because she'd come and stand on the porch. She was three years younger than I. She'd stand on the porch and say "Could you come out to play?" She called me "Could you," and of course that early in the morning, I couldn't! [Pause] It stopped.

Danny: She was in her own house, her grandfather's house next door.

Peggy: She was in her grandfather's house.

Barbara: What house was that?

Peggy: Well, that was the Crepo house. The Crepo house was made of cedar, that Grandpa Crepo had in his cedar swamp. And it had a beautiful aroma. But Mrs. Crepo said, "I can't imagine what happens to the curtains on my stairs; they're all twisted and mixed up." And I remember, they looked beautiful; and then the next morning, they were all twisted. But my grandmother couldn't tell her that Joan would go up the stairs, and while we were sitting there eating, she'd stand there and twist the curtains.

Well, anyway, we had a friend, Janet Congdon, in Morris Point, so—it was us three girls.

Barbara: Was Morris Point a hotel then?

Peggy: No, Morris Point belonged to the Congdons. They lived in the whole building; in fact they even had the garage, with the chauffeur's quarters above it; they used that to —

Barbara: They got it from the Morrises?

Peggy: Yes; m-hmm. And, oh we had a lot of fun there. We had magic- lantern shows, and we braided grass and sold belts for two cents. But we never went—we didn't have bikes. We didn't go anywhere except on the beach. We had woolen bathing suits and chafed bottoms; and we had sailboats that we'd sail in front of Red Top. There was a little pond right there in the front of Red Top, up in the rocks.

Barbara: Sort of like toy sailboats.

Peggy: Yeah. They'd be fairly—you know, they'd be about like that [gesturing?]. They were nice sailboats that we had. And we collected snails and crabs; and we spent the day—we would take a bottle of water and a sandwich and just go down on the beach. And no wonder our bottoms were raw from the rocks and the barnacles on the rocks. And lots of times, you

know, the ocean doesn't heal all wounds. Oh dear, we did have sores from that! [Laughter]

Well anyway, we were in that house until the hurricane came and took it. That was in 1938.

Barbara: What was the name of the house?

Peggy: *Kathitha*—K- a-t-h-i-t-h-a : it's actually Algonquin for "Sweetheart." And it had—I think we could get four cars in the bottom of that garage, too.

Barbara: You were right on the beach?

Peggy: We were right on the beach, right on the ocean. And oh, we made ice cream in the cellar; and we had more people to eat. My father would pick blueberries; there were great blueberries up by the pump, where we got water, up by where the tennis courts are now. He was always picking blueberries. And my mother made the best blueberry pie. And on the back porch, they'd put maybe six blueberry pies, or six blueberry and apple, and cherry and cranberry pies out to cool. And then the whole neighborhood would sort of drift by. And I'd say, "Well, would you like a piece of pie?" And so, other people got fed, too.

Peggy: But then, while we were in that house one morning, very early morning, we heard a strange sound; and we looked out the second-floor window, back. And we saw the Graff zeppelin going into Lakehurst. And they couldn't go in and land until certain conditions. So they were just drifting down the coast, and we could look right out and almost into the carriage.

Barbara: That was about 1937, wasn't it?

Peggy: Yes. It was a fabulous sight. I don't think I'll ever forget it. It was wonderful. And then let's see; what else did we do? We always had our own fireworks, and it was just a fun time. Then the house went up over the wires, and it took it all apart.

Barbara: What do you mean, "The house went up over the wires"?

Peggy: In the tidal wave. In the 1938 Hurricane.

Barbara: Who was in the house?

Peggy: No-one was in the house. But next door—Joan's grandmother was in their house—Mrs. Crepo—and she died; they couldn't get her to come out. The

bread man and the nurse tried to get her to walk out with them. And she didn't want to walk through the water. That's the way I was always told. I don't know whether that's true. You'd have to ask Joan.

Barbara: She was washed out to sea?

Peggy: No, I think it just landed somewhere near our house, there. So then my father built another house, quite –but it wasn't like the fun house at all. And that had a four-car—

Barbara: But it was not in the same spot.

Peggy: No; it's across the road.

Barbara: OK; so now you're on the other side of Surfside.

Peggy: Right, right; looking out on the lot where Kathitha had been. And Harris Taylor built this house, too. And we had no sooner – the house wasn't finished —Harris had a lot of men come up from Georgia to work because there weren't enough workers. Everybody was building, so he had young men come up from Georgia; and they worked on our house. We came down —

Barbara: What year was this, now?

Peggy: 1939. And we came down before the 4th of July. And we'd only been here a short time when my grandmother died. And after my grandmother died, Harris Taylor moved in with us; he lived in the little room off the kitchen. So whenever we got here in the summertime, he came and lived with us. That was a fun house; we had lots of company; we had a beautiful view. We were there when the war was on—

Barbara: [And the name] changed?

Peggy: Merrill Cottage.

Barbara: Merrill Cottage. OK.

Peggy: Where did that come from? I don't know; we just attached Merrill to it.

Barbara: Because that was your family name?

Peggy: My grandfather's last name. And we would hear the planes going over. And I got—I don't know. I would sit up in bed whether the planes were going over or not or whether they dropped flares. I got, I guess quite nervous about it: whether they would find the people that went down with

the planes, and they often didn't. And they had the soldiers walking the beach; we always had coast guard walking the beach. They had a post where they checked in front of Red Top, which was the Spellacy house. We had lots of soldiers and sailors, I guess, that we had known from Alfred in school. I don't know how they got to Quonnie, whether they had cars or what; I don't remember now. But even with the gas shortage, they found their way to us and ate or stayed a couple of nights or part of a week. But we always had lots of company.

And it was there—I don't know what year—I was married in 1949, so it must have been in 1947 that Danny proposed to me there, in the living room. And I was cooking lobsters. And suddenly my mother must have heard a funny sound in the kitchen 'cause she called down and she said, "Peggy you'd better go out and check those lobsters; they've been cooking for two hours!" So we had well cooked lobsters! [Laughter] So then we got married in '49, and Mabelle Senning had a big shower of everybody that was at the beach, at their house, because Alfie had been in our wedding. She was a child there, in our wedding.

Barbara: Which house was theirs?

Peggy: The one right next to Marack house. If you look at it from the road, it's the house to the right. The other house --no, this --move back across the road. On one side it was the Twinems', and on the other side it was the Sennings'. And Mother would come down and stay with Mabelle Senning in the fall and close the house, take care of closing our cottage up. And then she and Mabelle in later years would go to Daytona Beach and have a suite of rooms where they'd stay for a couple of months down there. 'Cause my father said he didn't want to go to Florida where all the old people were! And he really felt that way, 'cause having been brought up in a college town, Methuen, when he was young—

Barbara: Was your home in Alfred ?

Peggy: Alfred. Now, um--
When we didn't have cars, when the men weren't here—once in a while we'd have a month of fog that would just sit on us, so that's nothing new. And we'd go over to the Bowling Alley and call Westerly and get the taxi to come down the next morning. And the taxi would come down the next morning right at 8:00 and we'd go to Westerly, and we'd go to the Library and we'd get books. And we'd go to Opie's [dress shop] and we'd go to all the elegant stores, and we'd go to the --there was a restaurant down in back of where the Washington Trust is now, there on the square, and we'd have our lunch there. All the ladies would have hats on, and gloves: it was very elegant.

Barbara: Did you do your marketing while you were there? Or just shopping?

Peggy: No; we didn't do any marketing; we just shopped in the stores and went to the Library and got tons of books. Our [grocery] shopping was done in Kathitha, mainly in Kathitha. Mr. Brown would come from Charlestown; like he'd come on Thursday. And he'd bring the order you'd given him on Monday. And then on Thursday you'd give him an order that he would bring on Monday. He would bring all kinds of staples and meat; lamb-- everything good like that.

Barbara: Where was his store?

Peggy: He was over in Charlestown. That Mr. Brown. And then we always had Giuseppe Truro, that brought vegetables. He was out of Westerly. And then we had Mr. Lamb, who was the fish man. Did you have Mr. Lamb? Sure. I think everyone had Mr. Lamb.

Barbara: How about the bakery? Was that Arnold's bakery?

Peggy: Yes. It was Mr. Arnold that was trying to save Mrs. Crepo. He was the man that was with the nurse, I think, that was trying to save her. Yes, we had baked goods from him. We never were without delicious food.

Barbara: I remember a laundry truck coming too. How did you do your laundry? Your sheets?

Peggy: We didn't; they always went to the laundry. We only did [at] home underwear and things like that.

Barbara: Did the truck bring them back, too?

Peggy: Yes. We'd send them by the man and he'd bring them back. And they'd all be folded up. [Whispers, pause]

Peggy: Well, we had a great gang of kids. By the time the Congdons moved from Morris Point, and I think they sold it to Charlie Downey, and they bought Spellacys' house, Red Top. And they had a ping pong table in the cellar, and we were always over there. Mr. Congdon bought pop by the case, and I think it was 10 cents for a bottle of pop. Mr. Congdon said "Anything you wanted." What was it that you'd get here, not root beer—

Barbara: Coca Cola?

Peggy: No.

Barbara: Dr. Pepper?

Peggy: No, something -- it was another kind.

Barbara: Birch Beer?

Peggy: Birch beer! That was it. We never had birch beer at home, but down here there was always birch beer. Well, the people, the people really have changed. There were—

Barbara: Now in this gang, this group: There was Joan, and you, and Janet Congdon. Her sister was older, right?

Peggy: Yeah; she wasn't in our group; she was much older. But there were the Mases, and xxx Wood and xxx and Barbara Ander. And I don't think John Lamperti; he was much too young. He wasn't in our group, in that group.

But we had lots of fun. We played "Murder" and games like that; but we rarely went to the movies, and we didn't have television. And I guess we didn't listen to the radio, either, at that age.

Barbara: I remember listening to the radio. And who was the guy that was in the, I think he was in the Morris Point—who was the chauffeur, he was in the gang, sort of, too, on the periphery?

Peggy: Oh, do you remember him? Kenneth Johnson.

Barbara: Yes!

Peggy: He was in the—he wasn't from Morris Point; he was—the family that he worked for sometimes lived in Hobby House, and then they wanted Red Top; so the Congdons must have been out of there by then, when he was here. And there were three younger girls in that group and then a boy, Buster Alvord. But that wasn't the early group, though.

And with Mollie Congdon much older than Janet—she smoked cigarettes, and so once in a while we'd try to find an odd cigarette that we could share around. So we'd smoke either in the Crepo cellar or maybe my grandfather's cellar. But we never had more than a couple of puffs.

Barbara: Do you remember --well, you mentioned the Bowling Alley. We used to go down there once in a while --

Peggy: Oh we were down there almost every night. And you had to walk up and around; the road didn't go down where it goes now. You had to go down the old beach road down by—**Barbara:** the Dingle?—**Peggy:** Well,

down by Whistling Chimneys. And then you'd get in front of the Lewises' in back of the hotel; and they had pigs. And if you'd be laughing or something, it would set the pigs off; and they'd start grunting. And there were no, no streetlights; 'member? No streetlights; and oh that was a dark place.

And then I remember Priscilla Hatch's brother; he was always reading all the funny books and things. And no one would buy anything; they'd wear the books out for Mr. Eldridge.

And then Mother Brindley, over there on the corner, made ice cream and had one of those machines where you'd try to pick up dolls and things with a claw. And then we'd go across, when we were younger we'd go across [the breachway] to the Coast Guard Station and dive off the dock over there 'cause it was deeper than anything we would have. And that was fun.

Barbara: But we had to go across at low tide—

Peggy: If it was high tide, you could talk them into giving you a boat ride across. If they weren't busy that day.

Barbara: [To Danny] When did you first come to Quonnie? Do you remember?

[Sounds of confusion]

Danny: I think it was probably about 1948.

Peggy: That was the year you proposed to me.

Danny: Yup!

Peggy: No; you proposed in 1947. We were engaged a year before we got married.

Danny: We got married in '49.

Peggy: Yeah.

Danny: So it must have been '48 --if we were engaged for a year --

Peggy: Well, I was thinking we got engaged in '47.

Danny: That was my dog's fault. Did you tell her about it?

Peggy: The lobsters. Yes; I told her about the lobsters. [Unintelligible] He'd do anything darin' -- He loves to fish.

Danny: Once in a while I like to go fishing –

Peggy: And he started a fishing club, of all the casters. You started that, what, four years ago?

Danny: 1991.

Peggy: But people that get up early in the morning and like to [gab] –Peter and George and Alice Thompson –**Danny:** And her kids.

Peggy: And they'd go over and all sit together over at East Beach and fish off Fresh Pond Rock there. That's a great place to fish.

Barbara: Do you remember when they blasted Fresh Pond Rock?

Peggy: Yes. Yes, I do. That was a great disaster.

Barbara: Was that in 1941 or --?

Peggy: I don't know. It was sometime at the beginning of the war. There were plenty of other things that would give away the lay of the land. And that was a sad thing to smash that rock up.

I remember the German e-boats and the battleships that would be off the beach.

Barbara: But we all had the black-out curtains that we had to pull down every night.

Danny: And the tents on the beach, with girls sleeping in them overnight!

Peggy: But that wasn't during the blackout. That was when we were little. And the skunks: Janet and I would sleep on the beach between our house and Congdons'. In a tent, in a tent. We thought we were great –**Danny:** Did they patrol the beach at night? **Peggy:** We felt very safe, from everything but the skunks.

Barbara: And the mosquitoes.

Peggy: The mosquitoes didn't bother us too much. I think by then our skin had gotten too tough, for the mosquitoes to bite us....Dan?

Danny: Does anybody know why the skunks disappeared, a couple of years ago?

Barbara: They're back again.

Danny: They're back again, but they were gone for about three years.

Peggy: But why did they disappear? No one was able to explain it. Were there other questions now?

Barbara: Can you tell us what you did on a typical day? And, well now, let's see, you were at Merrill Cottage for how many years? On Surfside.

Peggy: Well, which side of Surfside? I was –

Barbara: Merrill. [Unintelligible]

Peggy: I was at Merrill from 1939 until we left [in] '95.

Barbara: '95. And when did you purchase this house over on Sunset Drive?

Peggy: Well, we didn't; we built this. Howard Thorpe trapped me into buying one lot—he said it would be a good investment—when I was in high school. I used to be a hat-check girl at different things that went on and saved my money and bought this lot. So Dad bought the next lot, to protect me; that's what he said. And here we owned two lots.

And so in 1958, when Jerry was born, or just before he was born, Henry Brightman came up one fall, to Alfred, with the man from the Texaco gas station, and he said, "We came up for a football game in Alfred, and I understand you're thinking about building a cottage." He said, "You know I can give you a good deal. I have very well seasoned lumber that came from Coast Guard boats over at Point Judith." And he said, "If you can give me the plans, I'll get the house started right now (this was October), and I can keep my men working all year, because I'd like to have them have something to do." So Danny drew a sketch of this on an envelope and gave it to him. And we came down in the spring and there was the house!

Barbara: Wonderful!

Peggy: It was as easy as that!

Barbara: What year was that?

Peggy: 1958. And we thought it would be nice—you know, we now had this boy, and we thought it would be nice if maybe we had other children, too. So we wouldn't have to be living on top of everyone. Oh, I know what we did! When we were in Merrill Cottage, at first, we always rented it—my mother and my aunt owned it—they'd rent it for the month of July; and then one year my mother would have it for August, and the next year we

would have it for August. And we would go up to Sea Breeze and stay. Now that is an ideal vacation.

Danny: The years that we didn't have the house—

Peggy: The years that we didn't have the house— We'd get up in the morning and Mimi Nurmi would have popovers hot out of the oven, and Thursdays we'd have lobster and beer out on the lawn. And there was croquet and Mrs. —Mrs. --Henry's mother would play the piano before supper; everybody would sing. ... Yeah, that's an ideal vacation. You don't have to do a thing! You have no laundry; you have no dirty dishes. And the kids would catch fish—

Barbara: How many families could she have there?

Peggy: I don't know. She had three floors of bedrooms. And it was just wonderful—

Danny: [Unintelligible comment, about an organ ?]

Barbara: Now this was when it was Sea Breeze, not the Kenyon House, right?

Peggy: This was when it was when it was Sea Breeze. And they would try to eat as much as they could, and send the plates back for more. We had roast lamb, and corn, and everything that was good and fresh. And they had two Finnish girls that waited on table, and everybody just loved them. And we have a reunion every year, of Sea Breeze people.

Barbara: Who was in that reunion?

Peggy: Well, last year it was Penny ... her name was Marvin? Maven?

Danny: Mxxxxx [unintelligible]

Peggy: The Frosts were there ---Now they were there, and the Henry Johnsons, and Jacqui Schmidt's family, and Sue Pickens' father and mother were there; they owned the other side of Alexine's house. . . Crookers—they were there; the Crookers were there. He'd been coming [to the Inn] since he was a teenager and it was [called] the "Kenyon House," that Charlie Downey ran. He'd come in; I don't know where he was coming from, but he'd [Crooker] come down on the trolley from Westerly to Weekapaug and put his luggage on a sailboat and sail down to the Kenyon House.

Barbara: What years were these, what years that you stayed at the Sea Breeze? For part of your vacation?

Peggy: 1940's and 1950's.

Danny: I stayed with the family in the late '40's and early '50's.

Peggy: Right . . . That would have been the Wingates and the Rases; my cousins that would stay there.

Peggy: It was so wonderful to just relax; and you'd come up from the beach, and everybody would have a drink, and ...oh.

Barbara: Did you have square dances?

Peggy: Oh--They always danced, even when Charlie Downey had [before the '38 Hurricane]. He had two or three bowling alleys downstairs in that building [separate from main inn]. The dance hall was upstairs. That's where I learned to dance, 'cause he [Charlie] was my first boyfriend. I was about five, six, and seven and thought the sun rose and set on Charlie Downey. I just loved him. I didn't meet Danny 'til quite a while after that! But I'd put my feet on Charlie's feet and dance.

Peggy: And that was uh --who was the man in Maine, that sang? The famous man in Maine? Anyway, that was the time of his records.

Danny: Morrison? No, Morrison was the person who was in Mystic. Captain Bamberger?

Peggy: Morrison; he was in charge of entertainment. He was from somewhere in Connecticut, and he'd bring some of his people that were going to be on—have floor shows and things. And he'd bring them up and they'd have a show that the children could see, and then they'd have a grown-up show later. [Laughter] That was fun up there!

Now let's see; what else?

Barbara: How did you get to the beach from the Nurmis', from the Sea Breeze Inn? Did you walk? 'Cause that's quite a distance.

Peggy: We drove down and parked on our lot [grandparents had cottage on Surfside, Central Beach, near West Beach end] and then went from there down to "Little Beach" [where Nuns' beach is today]. We never went to Central Beach's beach. We always went to "Dowd's Beach" [same as Nuns' beach].

Barbara: Was that what it was called, Dowd's Beach? I know we didn't call it "Nuns' Beach." Do you have any recollection of the Quonochontaug Inn and the people that ran that, the Lewises?

Peggy: I don't have as much as Joan [Best/Thomsen] would. She knows a lot about that; and [you could] talk to her. I don't know that much. The Mases' grandpa and grandmother stayed there some summers. Grandma and Grandpa Dowd would be there.

I used to go riding [horses] up at Shelter Harbor, and sometimes we'd bring the horses down here. Janet Congdon and I sometimes rode. We didn't bring the horses on the beach . . . we'd bring 'em down to the back yard. I guess, just to show we could do it.

But it has been a beautiful, quiet place. And in my early youth, everyone knew everyone, and it was a very friendly place. There would be Bill and Alice Saunders of the last house on Surfside before you get to the parking lot. They lived there, and Mrs. Saunders' father was Grandpa Palmeter [? sp] . He was Daisy Forest's father, too. It was a comfortable family grouping of people.

Barbara: How many cottages?

Peggy: Now let's see, what we're talking about; there would be 1,2,3,4,5,6,7As I first remember it, there would be about 16 cottages. No cottages on the back streets. There'd be the farmhouse [as you came into Central Beach from West Beach Road] and then the cottages coming down [on the way to Peggy's grandparents' Surfside cottage . . . this was know as West Street then] the three little ones, which were always cute. "Hobbie House" wasn't there then. Stahl's house wasn't there then, 'cause that got built on "Garbage Hill." "Garbage Hill" was where the people of Morris Point buried their garbage in the sand dune.

Barbara: Where was the windmill in relation to Morris Point Hotel?

Peggy: It was out in back of . . .

Barbara: Or were there a couple of windmills?

Peggy: I think there was only one mill; it belonged to Morris Point. I don't know whether the Dowds had one too, or whether Mr. Tinkham had one. Miriam [Spencer] could tell you about that. They had a great big tank up in Morris Point that held the water. Mr. Tinkham lived in the house two doors down from the ho—from the nuns.

Barbara: The old Quonochontaug Inn.

Peggy: Yeah. Mr. Tinkham—and uh . . .

Barbara: [Wasn't that] the Ashaway group?

Peggy: No; the Ashaway group was the other side of the hotel. Mr. Tinkham was this side, toward Dowds'. [Further voices over each other discussing location of Tinkham house]

Barbara: The house between Dowds' and the hotel?

Peggy: There were two houses in there.

Barbara: There are two houses there now.

Peggy: And then. Yeah. It must have been built about the same time that Grandpa built our house [1924]. I think Mr. Tinkham put the posts that we used to go down [the old] Dowd Drive [off West Beach Road]. . . I think Mr. Tinkham must have put those in: the cement posts with big stones in them.

Barbara: The stone pillars.

Peggy: Yeah. Yeah. That's Miriam's grandfather.

Danny: [What about] the pillars going into Central Beach.

Barbara: What do you know about the [stone] pillars coming into Central Beach up near the farmhouse [on West Beach Road]?

Peggy: They look alike. We don't know. We often discussed it. We don't know who built them.

Barbara: Do you know this Roger Spears, who is related to somebody who does that stonework? A lot of that stonework? The skill has been passed down in his family. I have to look him up.

Peggy: Was he at Central Beach?

Barbara: No. He was not at Central Beach. He was written up in the newspaper about his stonework.

Peggy: No; I haven't seen a thing about it.

Barbara: You've seen a lot of changes over the years. Some good? Some bad?

Peggy: I don't think any of it has been for the best. I think that friendships of the people that knew each other at the time, . . .that part of it was just wonderful. And up until the time of the Hurricane, most of the people were Rhode Islanders down in Central Beach. There was Uncle John Burdick and Aunt Alice; and he had a store up in Ashaway. And every

night he'd come down, and as he went around the corner of Surfside, he'd have the window open, and he'd be whistling and xxx. He lived in Ashaway on Route 216. He had the house, that house that Mr. Young moved back so he could build his new house [eastern corner of Surfside and Spray St.]

Barbara: Oh, Quinona?

Peggy: Yes. Uncle John and Aunt Myra . . . Did I say "Alice" before? Uncle John and Aunt Myra; they were from Ashaway. They brought up Harris Taylor's sister. [Harris Taylor's] parents died in the flu epidemic, and Uncle John and Aunt Myra didn't want to take on a boy; so Miss Stillman brought Harris up, and the Burdicks brought his sister up. They had two houses down here. [From the western end of Surfside] Let's see: there was Grandpa's house, there was Red Top, there was the Chipmans' [?sp]. . (they were the 7th Day Baptists from New Jersey) , the Burdicks', and then Mr. Wolf. [More names, unintelligible due to voice overs] That's the way it went.

Barbara: [Tell me about] the first house, the first house on the beach that you stayed in.

Peggy: Trainors'. Trainors' house is back across the road [now] . . . the top of it.

Barbara: The Carpenters' house?

Peggy: Yes. After the Trainors'. That was the only house besides the farmhouse—

Barbara: Yes.

Peggy: There was the farmhouse, Morris Point, and then Trainors'. And then it got into ----the xxx group, the grouping of houses where the center beach is. [Unintelligible conversation]

Danny: She was asking you where you stayed then.

Peggy: At the Trainors'. At the Trainors' Grandpa's house was built.

Barbara: And that was in '24.

[TO SIDE TWO]

Barbara: [Your Grandpa built his house in] 1924. And [Mr. Trainor?] put out his first brochure then. That right?

Peggy: I would say so.

Barbara: You were already here.

Peggy: Um hm.

Barbara: And when he did this, there was just the farmhouse that he bought.

Peggy: He tried to get Grandfather to buy that, and all the land, but Grandpa didn't want it.

Barbara: And the Trainor house was here?

Peggy: Yes.

Barbara: And who was Mr. --was Mr. Trainor related to the Thorpes? In business?

Peggy: I think just in business. Just in Thorpe and Trainor. I don't think they were related, no. . . .I bet Mr. Thorpe stopped in every day. I can't remember a day when he didn't stop by. I don't know --[xxxxxxx]

Barbara: Well, he sort of supervised everything that was going on. When people started to build, he set down certain rules.

Peggy: He organized who could buy the land and who couldn't. He wanted it to be a nice [restful?0] area.

Barbara: He screened everybody who wanted to make a purchase?

Peggy: Right. I would --Maybe you shouldn't quote me! But it kept it a very nice community down there.

Danny: Well, I think you probably would have wound up with hot dog stands and this kind of thing down there if Thorpe hadn't done that.

Barbara: M hm, because those were the days before zoning, zoning laws.

Peggy: Well, it's been a lovely place to live, and I know we're going to enjoy being up here, too. Because we had to make up our mind which house—I mean this was all ours, where we would have had to buy out my cousins in the other one, the Merrill cottage. But this is --we love being up here. It's beautiful; we get to see all the sunsets. Just beautiful. [Xxxxxx]

Barbara: And the children, they enjoy coming?

Peggy: They certainly do.

Barbara: And I know you have grandchildren coming—

Peggy: Just one. We only have one grandchild.

Barbara: That's right..[xxxxx]

Peggy: Her name is Jacey. That's right.. And she'll be here next week. And she was just four, in May. And she loves to come down, and she rides her bike – I couldn't believe it—across the street! We got her a bike and she rode right out! [laughter] This is a nice place for children. They're out on the pond in boats, and the tennis courts, and swimming and the beach. And I would say they're as safe as you could be anywhere.

Barbara: I would think so. I noticed that the teenagers that are down at the beach – you know, they're very nice kids. And the people, the families that have been here for years—

Peggy: I think it's interesting, though, that some people have always gone over to Central Beach, and some people have always gone over to –what do they call it? The “Little Beach”—And uh—

Barbara: I think it depends where you live, too. For example, when we rented the “Fo'C's'l” we were always down at the Little Beach, but when Dad bought Old Salt, we were closer to the big beach, so we would go there.

Peggy: But we always—I've got pictures of people sitting on the beach, in front of the Doll House. You know, the Lampertis, the Sennings, the Mases, even Helen Mase there in the picture, and Bob. Everybody went down there, husbands and wives, Mary and Bob, and at that time it was just Peter living; they didn't have the twins.

Barbara: The Dowds built that house, Mr. Dowd, about 1919 was it?

Peggy: I think so.

Barbara: That's a splendid house; I hope that remains.

Peggy: Who knows? [xxxxx] Drinking in public—[laughter] I was just looking at the man [xxxxx] [whispering: “television, you're on television”]

We were –in my beautiful flower gardens, between the Crepos and my mother, and Mr. Congdon, they had the most beautiful glades; and Dr. Ann Waite would come down from up at Waite's Corners; and she'd help my mother do rock gardens. And they were beautiful; everybody was – there was a race to see who would have the most beautiful glades. Mr. Congdon loved flowers.

Barbara: What would you say your fondest memory of Quonnie is, or do you have one?

Danny: That's a leading question!

Peggy: Oh, just families and friendships down there. That's my fondest -- It's not just one memory; it's a collective memory. I loved both houses down there, and I loved the people that dropped in and out. And [xxxxxxx] to sit on the front porch with my father and watch the lightning. Can't say that I'd enjoy doing it now, but I used to love to do that with him! But I never was afraid.

Barbara: The kids still love it. They'll sit down on the beach and watch it. You know, out over the water. **Peggy:** Yes. **Barbara:** It's fascinating.

Peggy: It is fascinating. And at that time, I never was afraid of it. But I've seen enough of it now so that I could do without it.

Any more questions there? To end it off with?

Barbara: Not unless you have anything you'd like to [mention] –

Peggy: I think that's about it.

Barbara: OK then; we'll wrap it up.

Peggy: Just hope it survives another hundred years! Of course then you could go into the breachway and the boardwalk over there. That was always fun; oh, walking along the boardwalk and the people sitting on their front porches, which were right on the boardwalk. But that wouldn't be Central Beach . . .but—

Barbara: No, it wouldn't; but, I mean, I consider it part of Quonochontaug. It's really old Quonochontaug. It's older than Central Beach—Central Beach or East Beach. Because that --with all the big hotels that were over there—that was the drawing card.

Danny: Do you suppose they settled over there because it wasn't open to the ocean? With the pond? **Peggy:** I think so. **Danny:** I wonder what the impetus was to build the hotels over there. I would think that they would be more subjected to the ocean, you know, although many of those houses survived the Hurricane.

Peggy: [I guess] they never thought of a storm really; they didn't think about it.

Barbara: My history notes say there was a big one in 1916. But of course there probably wasn't anything over there yet. I don't know the dates on some of those old hotels.

Peggy: I think they were there in 1916.

Barbara: Oh --you do think so? You think they were there in the late 1800's then?

Peggy: No, 1900. I know I can look up the date.

Barbara: Some of those post cards that we have in the collection have postmarks on them of 1906 and things of that kind.

Peggy: Well, I did that story on Mr. King. **Barbara:** Yes. **Peggy:** And the dates of when his family built their hotel on the flat, even up on the bank of the breachway, and they built three sections of it right there on the breachway..

Barbara: Wonder what happened to all his records.

Peggy: I don't know; I've got all the things that I did when I interviewed him; I have all those. But I don't know what happened to his things, because I interviewed him and we went back to Alfred and came back down, remember? And when we came back down he had died.

Danny: But you had sent him a copy before he died.

Peggy: I had sent him a copy, with his picture in it.

Barbara: So what's your next article going to be, Peg?

Peggy: Well I'm doing one on a banner [flag] that's been in the family since 1844. It was in a torchlight parade that went through Potter Hill and from Potter Hill through Westerly to Stonington. That was for the 1844 Clay campaign. We've given it to the Westerly Historical Society. It's beautiful. I'll show you a picture of it before you go. It's a linsey —it has squares of linsey-woolsey material all the way around it. And then it has a big painting of a mill that burned in 1877, I think. And on the other side it has a big eagle with claws and everything. And a Mr. Crandall painted it. And I didn't know all this until Chris Van Den Bosche found an article in the Westerly Sun about it. It was in the possession of my grandfather, but my grandfather never told me all the things that the paper said. He never told me that it was in the paper. All he said was, if you find it in the attic, it should go back to Westerly. So that's what we did; we took it back to Westerly, to Davy Crockett.

Barbara: [To] Davy Crockett?

Peggy: Davy Crockett is the president of the Westerly Historical Society.

Barbara: Isn't that neat!

Peggy: He's an Episcopal minister. . . .

Barbara: How did Potter Hill get its name? Does it have anything to do with pottery?

Peggy: No; no pottery. It was the Potters, the family. It was up on this hill, next to the mill, that these people, the Potters, lived. It was the house that Howard Thorpe lived in.

Barbara: Well, that takes us back to Quonnie – Howard Thorpe.

Peggy: Goodbye and I've enjoyed talking with you. And I hope this shows how much we've loved Quonnie over the years. The last 73-- and maybe even the next 50 will be great too.

Barbara: Here's to that! And may we live that long.

