

# QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Oral History

# JOYCE STAHL

April 23, 2021

Interviewed by Ann Doyle Charlestown

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Q: This is Ann Doyle. I'm the archivist for the Quonochontaug Historical Society. Today is Friday, April the 23<sup>rd</sup> in the year 2021. I'm sitting with Joyce Stahl of 156 East Beach Road. And Joyce is just going to relate some of her memories of being here in Quonnie. Joyce, could you just tell me your full name, where you were born and when you were born?

A: My name is Joyce Young Stahl. I was born on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1927 in Otis, Maine.

Q: Did you grow up there?

A: I grew up in Ellsworth, Maine. I was there until I went to school.

Q: How did you end up in Quonochontaug?

A: I was a nurse at Boston Children's Hospital. My husband, Nick Stahl—Nicholas Stahl—came there, and we met each other and married. His sister-in-law, Barbara Moulton, lived here. So, that's why we came here in the summer, and built a house and live here in the winter.

Q: Do you remember when that was?

A: I've been here since 1955 visiting.

Q: When did you get married?

A: 1955. The house we had, we bought from Carlotta Moulton, who is Ben Moulton's—and you'll hear about him—widow. In 1964 we bought that. Barbara Moulton was married to David Moulton on 264 East Beach Road. That's how I got here, because I was married to her brother.

Q: Was it Barbara, Ben and David?

A: Barbara and David

Q: Were there three Moultons?

A: In that generation, Bill Moulton was David's brother, and they had a sister, Ruth Moulton. There were three of them. They were the children of David C. Moulton. Wait a minute, let me start with my notes, okay?

Q: Just do it as you feel comfortable.

A: The most interesting person, I think, was Benjamin Moulton. To this group here, he was called Uncle Ben. Benjamin Moulton bought what is the Zabel house, and he bought property next to it, and almost all the way to Route 1 on that side.

Q: Who did he buy it from?

A: I don't know.

Q: It was probably the Burdicks.

A: I don't know who built the Zabel house. But it wasn't Ben. He gave sold land to his brother, another generation back, David. And he built this house with a tower.

Q: Do you mean the David that I just spoke about? Is it his father?

A: The David that was here. It was David Scott Moulton. His father was David Potter Moulton, and his grandfather was David C. Moulton. This David here inherited the house from his parents.

Q: The David that was with Barbara?

A: Yes.

Q: He inherited it from his parents?

A: From his parents. And so, in that house, over the years, it would have been six generations of people, because this David, the one we know, his grandparents would have visited, because it was built by his parents. And then his grandchildren and great grandchildren—five or six generations. Ben Moulton was interesting, because he was the adventurous one. If it weren't for Ben, no one would have been here from that group.

Q: Why is that?

- A: He bought that property, and he talked his brother into being here.
- Q: Did he buy the property that his brother, David, eventually built on?
- A: Yes. He gave it or sold it to his brother. I don't know which. But he was adventurous. He was a police commissioner in Providence in the nineteen teens and twenties. I used to hear about him investing in wheat futures and lost his money. So, he lost his money in the crash. When the crash came in '29, Ben Moulton lost a lot of money, because he had invested heavily. So, he sold off his pieces of property, except for the one where we are and the one next to him. It's Betsy Moulton Farnham who owns that. You might want to talk to her sometime.
- Q: I don't know her.
- A: She's Bill Moulton's daughter, and he was a brother to David—this David that we know. But she is said to be having some Alzheimer's.
- Q: Does she live there?
- A: No. She lives in Exeter. In the summer, she's in that house beside mine.
- Q: You'll have to point it out.
- A: I will. So, she's a Moulton. She's Elizabeth Moulton Farnham. I'm told that her mind is not good. She's probably 80. David built the house with a windmill tower. The blades blew off in '38. Guess what occasion that was? So, they always still had a tower, but during World War II when Ninigret had the Naval Air Base, they used that tower as a landmark. So, they had lots of noise as they were training bomber flyers. They used to talk about how noisy that was.
- Q: I heard a story where they used the metal of the windmill to help in the war effort.
- A: The top of the steeple was still there, but the windmill was not.
- Q: Did that blow off?
- A: Yes. That's what I heard. We used to hear a lot of stories about the '38 Hurricane, until you didn't want to hear it anymore.
- Q: But you weren't here until 1950?
- A: I've been coming to visit since the '50s, and renting. We rented in the summers. So, we built the house that's there now in '90, and moved here in '94 permanently.
- Q: You built that? I thought that was part of Ben's—

- A: Yes. There was a cottage there. We bought the cottage in 1964, but to make a house, we had to build a house. In that Quonnie book, there's a picture of the cottage that was there.
- Q: Is that the book that I wrote?
- A: Yes.
- Q: I'll have to look at it again more closely.
- A: That house is in there. And the windmill is in there, of course.
- Q: I'm talking now about the one that you're in.
- A: That original house is in that little book.
- Q: I'll take it out and you can show me.
- A: This David's brother, Bill, built the house next to me in the '60s, but I don't know what date. It's a summer cottage.
- Q: I didn't realize that there was a Bill Moulton, and I don't know where Ben fits into the family, but he was the one that was the initiator.
- A: He was. He got everybody here. In fact, I remember at the dinner table once—I don't know if I should tell this—they were kind of dissing Uncle Ben, because he lost all his money. He invested too heavily in the wheat futures, or something. So, he lost his money in the crash. I was sitting at the table as a newcomer, and I said, "I don't see how, without Uncle Ben, that any one of us would be at this table." They did acknowledge that that was true, but they didn't think of him that way. They thought of him as wasting the family's money. It was his money. And he paid his debts. He sold his property and paid his debts. So, that was good. I thought highly of him, and I never met him. And my husband used to say that his father really liked Ben. He wasn't so sold on David, the senior David.
- Q: The David--
- A: David's father. He just wasn't interesting enough. We all had cabanas at the beach at one time. I still have a lot.
- Q: Is that by Highland Avenue? Or near Highland Avenue?
- A: I think my lot is by the big rock. Cabanas used to be there where there was no beach anymore. It's water. It's called Atlantic Avenue, and it's Paper Street.

- Q: It shows in some of the old maps. My folks were here back in the 1900s. Some people talked a lot about the Moultons and the Burdicks and all that. I have a picture of my parents, and their cabana is in the background. That was the Moulton cabana. I don't know which Moulton. I'll show it to you.
- A: That would have been—not David Scott Moulton. It would have been his father. But I still have a lot there. It's not good for much. I pay taxes on it.
- Q: Is it in the water?
- A: You couldn't use it. It's partly in the water. You could fish there. But Ann has saved her lot too. She still has a lot down there at the beach. I don't know what good it's going to do her.
- Q: From Highland, you're looking at the big rock—Fresh Pond Rock. Is it to the left of the rock?
- A: To the left. It's almost if you go off the path, it's there. Ben Moulton's registration plate is still 10, and it's driven by Bob Power, who is the grandson of Ben Moulton. He lives around here somewhere.
- Q: Power? This is where it's really interesting. Somebody named Power contacted us a few years ago, and had photographs.
- A: That's Bob Power. He used to live at the end of my—I've got two driveways—at the end of the Hoxie driveway. They moved, and I don't know where to. But they're local. So, Ben's license is 10. If you see 10, that's Bob Power. Now, if you see 131, that's my son Nick. That was Dave's license. And that as Dave's father's license. That generation—Ben Moulton and his brother David, these are their two license plates. You can still see those around. I think that's a cute little tidbit. Bob Power is RI 10.
- Q: Is he still living?
- A: Yes. He's in his late 60s or 70s. David Moulton's is 131, and it's on my son Nick's car.
- Q: Can I review with you the relationships? You married Nicholas. And he was friends—
- A: Brother to Barbara.
- Q: That's right. Brother to Barbara.
- A: Barbara Stahl Moulton. And the generation ahead are the ones that built, Benjamin and David.
- Q: At that point, were you living in Maine when you first came down?

A: No. When I finished high school, a little before my seventeenth birthday—I looked, like a ten-year-old. I've seen pictures. We started kindergarten at five. After I finished high school, I didn't go for a year, and I've always been thankful that I didn't do that, but after a year I went into nurse's training at Boston Children's. I graduated there in 1948.

Q: I worked at Boston Children's Hospital.

A: Did you? I graduated in 1948, and worked there.

Q: Where did you live when you were there?

A: Right across from the hospital on Longwood Avenue.

Q: What did you do as a nurse?

A: Most of my graduate time was in the operating room. I became supervisor of the operating rooms. That was a big job. By then, I was 25. Isn't that weird? You thought you were grown up. You didn't have any idea of what was coming. I was so glad I had waited a year, though.

Q: What did you do during that year?

A: I lived in Camden, Maine. My folks had moved to Camden. I lived in Camden, Maine, and I had three jobs. I wanted to earn some money. I worked in the drugstore, I set pins in the bowling alley and I had a reception job in a doctor's office. I needed to earn some money to buy the right watch and the right shoes so I could into training. So, I spent the year doing that.

Q: At that point, did you know that you were going to go to Boston Children's Hospital?

A: I hoped I was. I only applied at Children's. And when I think about that, now people apply to six colleges. I only applied at Children's. I didn't have to make a visit. I submitted all my information, and my high school photograph, and by golly, I got accepted. I didn't realize how momentous that was until I realized that I should have applied to half a dozen places in case I didn't get it.

Q: Back then—

A: And you didn't pay to apply. You just sent your information. Do you want to hear about this?

Q: I do. I'm here to hear about your life.

A: When we first got in training, we were called to meet Miss Gustaway, the superintendent of the nurses. So, we went in there and we sat down. She knew every one of us by name, even me, and she never met me. I thought, "This is kind of scary." But she knew from

my photograph. I never had a personal interview. That was remarkable to me. I still think it is. There were 36 of us, and she gave us a talk. She said that when we graduated, there would be about one third of us that would graduate. That was scary too. Some people left that didn't like it. Some people just couldn't do it and didn't pass. And I remember one cheater. She got out, because you can't cheat on medications. You've got to learn it. Actually, she was right. She said half. And we did graduate eighteen people after three years. Because it was still the war, it was three solid years. It would be four if you didn't take any time off, because they were trying to get us ready. Actually, we were in the cadet nurse corps. Have you heard of it?

Q: No.

A: That was the thing they put out during the war to get kids to go—that's how I got to go. The government paid for it. They paid for your clothes and your board and everything. Books. Everything.

Q: Where did you stay? Did they have a room in a house or something?

A: We had a student nurse's house. So, that's how I got my training. We were signed up to be called into the war whenever they wanted you for ten years after you graduated. You promised to be available if they called you. So, that sounded like a good deal, because they were doing the training.

Q: You could have been sent anywhere in the world?

A: But I never got called. I was a little disappointed. I was thinking of going into the Navy as a Navy nurse, but then I met Nick and I didn't do that. But I would have liked that. I was 28 when we were married. And I've always been glad that I had those years in there, because everybody I knew was married and had kids ten or twelve years before that. So, I was glad I didn't do that, because I enjoyed those years.

Q: I think you are an independent soul.

A: Pretty much. Yes.

Q: Where did you meet your husband?

A: At Children's. He was a pediatric surgeon. He trained there, and then he was on staff. We married in '55.

Q: Did you continue to live there?

A: We lived there for three or four years. Then we went to Syracuse, New York where we lived 45 or 46 years before he retired and we moved here.

Q: What was the decision about moving here? How did you decide that this is where you wanted to be?

A: This is where we had just built a house. And that's where his sister was. She was why we came here. But nobody would be here without Ben leading the way. My husband had Alzheimer's. I don't know if you knew that.

Q: No.

A: He died of that. It's been seventeen years.

Q: How long did he have Alzheimer's?

A: He diagnosed it himself, which I thought, "Poor thing." He did, and he probably was around for about eight years.

Q: Did you take care of him?

A: I kept him at home.

Q: Here?

A: In this house. Dr. Sandival put him in the nursing home. I didn't want him to do that, but I could see why he did it. Nick was slender, but he was six feet tall. He was falling down, and it was getting difficult for me not to let him fall down. So, he put him there, and at first I thought, "Oh." But then I thought it's probably right. He lived about three months in there, and then he died. That's just one of the bad things that happens to people. There are lots of bad things. That's one.

Q: Was he able to communicate with you?

A: We always felt that he knew, but he wasn't talking. He couldn't make things connect and say it. He tried and it wouldn't, so then he stopped.

Q: How old was he when he died?

A: He was almost 88. He was kind of late in getting the disease, which is good. Some people get it much younger.

Q: How old were your children at that time? Do you have one child?

A: I have four sons. Nick is 62. John is 61. Dean is 59. Matt is 57. When Nick was five, Matt was born. That's how I remember. They're five years apart. In five years, I had five babies. They're all in their 50s and 60s.

Q: And they're all living?



- A: Yes. Matt lives in Texas with his wife and family. His two boys are college boys now. They were having a tough time, should they go to college, or what should they do? And the other three live locally. Nick lives in Westerly, John lives in Westerly and Dean lives in Bradford. They're taking care of me.
- Q: You have people watching out for you.
- A: Dean doesn't really watch out, but he's doing the outside work. I can contact him any time. John, unfortunately has eye problems, so he can't drive. He's only 60. He was taking me on errands, but he can't do that anymore. I try not to call Nick too much. I contracted with a friend to do my errands and take me to my appointments.
- Q: You're making the decisions for yourself.
- A: So far so good. Yes.
- Q: I admire that. When my dad was here, before he died, he was calling, and I said, "Dad, I'm concerned. I live a distance. I can't get here." Finally, he agreed to go into The Elms. He was just there six months.
- A: I dread the thought of doing that. I don't want to go to The Elms. But you have to do what you have to do. Nick says I'm going to go live with him. But I think that's kind of tough too. They have wives.
- Q: Does he have children too?
- A: My grandson, his son, lives with me in the hotel, I call it, over the garage. But he's made an art store room in the kitchen, so I said, "That raises the rate. This is not an apartment. We are not a motel." I'm glad to do something for him.
- Q: What's his first name?
- A: Bronte. His first name is Nicholas. He makes documentaries. If we didn't have COVID all around, he'd be in Brazil, Ireland, Austria. He should be in those places.
- Q: Is he independent, or does he work with others?
- A: He works with friends. It's got a name. It isn't just himself. It's a group in itself. He's doing it all from home, which is now in my house. It's nice to see him every day, because he's there.
- Q: That's nice in a way.
- A: It's great. I think it's great. I like seeing him coming and going. The reason he moved here from his parents' is because he wanted to have some time with his friends. He's got

friends her. He didn't want to bring them to his parents' house, and he doesn't have to bring them to mine. I'm not allowed to pass the breezeway. I sneak in there, though. He has his boundaries, because that's now his kitchen. But when I need to, I sneak in and go through the garage.

Q: When you moved down here, you and your husband moved into the house that you built?

A: The house we bought, we moved into in '64. The house we built, we moved into in '94. I was going to tell you that the house was a windmill that we sold in 2010—this last one.

Q: To the present owners?

A: No. They sold in between to somebody else. She sold it to Mr. Quince. But she's been gone since 2010. I can hardly believe it, but it's true.

Q: She, meaning?

A: Ann. There's some other stuff that I want to tell you. David Scott Moulton's grandfather, Benjamin. I like the phrase describing David C as rugged, but native honesty, intolerance of shams and makeshifts. I'll give you this paper.

Q: The David that I met here, was that his father?

A: Grandfather. This David, David Scott Moulton, that we knew, it was his father that built the house. But he's mentioning his grandfather. David's father, David built the house. His brother Benjamin bought all that property, and he built Maria's at 156. Benjamin bought the house that is now the Zabel house, but I can't remember who he bought it from. Maybe it's in here. Ben purchased the house, that we call the Zabel's, and the properties on either side, and for some time owned all of that up to Post Road. Somewhere in the 19-teens, he sold or gave his brother the property, which is now the one that just disappeared—David Scott Moulton's. And then he lost his money during the Depression. He retained the lot where our house is, and where Betsey's house is next to me. I'll show you that. And that became our David's brother Bill's house—that cottage beside me—that generation. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. You can have all this.

Q: That would be great. I was wondering about when Nick was born, and what his life was like down here?

A: My husband?

Q: No. I'm talking about your son. Tell me about how that evolved. I know what you did with the cottage. And then you were married and had your boys.

A: Nick was born in 1959 in Boston, where we used to live. We were married in '55. We still lived in Boston. When Nick was under a year, we moved to Syracuse in 1959. The other three were born in Syracuse.

Q: Would you come down summers?

A: We always came in the summer. We would always be with the boys. Nick would bring us. We had a car to drive—sort of a car. He would come when he could on weekends. Then we'd go home at the end of summer. We'd go back to school.

Q: How did you live in Quonnie at that time? Did you depend on the vegetable man coming?

A: No. I think he was still coming to Barbara and Dave's house, but I didn't get into that. I think they still had milk delivered.

Q: From Consumer Dairy?

A: I expect so. I've got a bottle from some dairy. I don't know which one. Consumer Dairy sounds familiar.

Q: Did your boys really love it on the beach?

A: They pretty much did. But we made a mistake in not getting to know neighbors in the summer—other kids—because they had three cousins down the road.

Q: Whose kids?

A: Ann's. We skipped a generation. Ann is my niece, but we have children the same age, because we were late and she was early doing her thing. So, they played a lot—the seven of them. But we didn't get to know other kids. Now, I think that was a mistake. You should know as many kids as you can when you're young.

Q: We don't have control over all those things.

A: We didn't even think about it. There were kids around, but they didn't get to know them.

Q: So, Nick doesn't have really strong connections with Quonnie?

A: He does now, because he's been here since he graduated from college. He's been working at Westerly Hospital all these years. He's got strong ties here.

Q: What about to Quonnie specifically?

A: No. I don't think so. But Westerly. John was in New Jersey for years teaching until he couldn't see, so he retired early.

Q: Did he have macular degeneration?

A: No. That's what I have. My kids don't have it. He had glaucoma not well contained soon enough. He can see in the daytime okay, but not in night, so he can't drive. He was a teacher, and loved it. Nobody who was a teacher loved it more than he did. And Dean has always been an outdoors man. Matt is an engineer in Houston working for a big company.

Q: Who did you get to know, or didn't you get to know down in Quonnie?

A: I used to know Doris Hatch quite well. She lived across the road. I've known Nancy Penhowl and Bill for years.

Q: Is Nancy still living?

A: She is. Bill is not. Nancy has a great deal of pain from bad joints and bones—very bad.

Q: A long time ago, I had done an oral history with her husband.

A: He was great.

Q: Yes. I did meet him that one time.

A: He was an interesting man. Who else did I know?

Q: Doris Hatch is Nancy Warner's mother.

A: Yes.

Q: Did she live where Nancy lives now?

A: Yes. She did. Nancy and Bill lived there.

Q: My father knew Doris. Bill Schafer. I have a couple of pictures of Doris in our collection.

A: She was a doer. She was one busy lady. Nancy is too.

Q: I haven't seen Nancy in a long time.

A: No. They have a daughter, who's sick and requires a lot of care.

Q: Is that when you got involved with the church? I don't think the church was even created by that time. How did you get involved with the church?

- A: We came from a Presbyterian Church, and my husband had two Presbyterian grandfathers who were ministers, so Presbyterian was what it was. But I said, "When we go to move, I want to visit all the churches and see which one I want to listen to every Sunday." So, we did, and we ended up Dunns Corners with Jim Glen. Absolutely great. So, that was soon after we came. Probably a year after we came.
- Q: So, your husband knew him too?
- A: Yes. In fact, we went to church a couple times, and one time Nick said to Jim Glen, "What in the world is wrong with the organ?" I had not noticed anything. And Jim said, "It's a piece of junk." Jim Glen made Nick chairman of a committee to get a new organ, and he gave him his committee. And Nick didn't know anybody. He gave him all the people that didn't do anything with the music. I kind of think Nick paid for it. I kind of think he did. He got a good organ, and they've got a good organ. Isn't that funny? "What in the world is wrong with that organ?" He shouldn't have said.
- Q: We live a couple of houses down from Pete Skipper, and I know he was active in the choir in your church.
- A: Yes. We have a wonderful director. He's probably going to retire pretty soon. He's Andy Wallace. He's a great choir director. Our organist is something out of this world. I don't know how we got so lucky with people.
- Q: We go to the bell ringing concerts there.
- A: Oh, yes.
- Q: I think one of them is a member of your choir.
- A: Yes. Andy Wallace is in that bell ringing. In fact, he does solos sometimes.
- Q: And he's amazing. We enjoy that every year.
- A: He is amazing. And he sings.
- Q: Do you also sing?
- A: I don't sing. No.
- Q: What do you enjoy doing?
- A: I used to be on boards and things and do stuff, but I can only go there now and then leave. I can't do any jobs there anymore.
- Q: Were you an organizer?

A: I was on the Board of Deacons and on the session as a trustee. I don't think I was a very good trustee, but I was there. You can tell whether you're doing something good or not. I always did stuff around there.

Q: Were you involved with the East Beach Association?

A: Only to pay dues and go to the beach. I've done cleanup jobs at the beach, and I've planted grass and trees with Art Ganz.

Q: Do you know Art very well?

A: Yes. And Pam. And they're in church.

Q: Yes. That's right.

A: And they'll be taking me to church when they come back from vacation. I've done those things. I've cleaned up the beach and all that planting stuff for the dunes. I've been known to clean up East Beach Road when we have those cleanup days.

Q: Last weekend.

A: I didn't go to that one.

Q: That was on West Beach Road last weekend cleaning up West Beach Road.

A: I didn't get into that this time.

Q: There's a time for everything.

A: So, I don't do anything but pay dues so my kids can go to the beach when they come in the summer. I haven't seen them for a year and a half. I'm a brand-new great grandmother again for the third time. My granddaughter.

Q: She's from which family?

A: She's John's daughter, my son John's daughter. She lives in San Diego with her husband, and now three little boys.

Q: All boys? You just produce boys in your family.

A: We have one granddaughter. That's it. Everybody else is boys. I hope they can come. If they come to visit me, I'll know I've been visited by three little boys. And I've got to feed them. I think I'll have a good time, but I'll be busy.

Q: Let somebody else do the cooking.

A: You know what I do? I put a lot of stuff in the freezer. But they'll help me. Everybody helps me clean up. They all do. They know that they have to.

Q: So, you're very satisfied in being able to live where you are?

A: I hope I don't have to leave it. I hope I don't. And I do stairs a dozen times a day. I've got great stairs and railings, and I use the railings. And there's no carpet on my stairs. They're nice.

Q: Your stamina is amazing.

A: If you don't do it, you're not going to live until—I know that. And I can't do the stairs fast like I used to, but I can get up there and down.

Q: And you have railings.

A: Then I forget, "Why did I go up there?" Then I've got to go back up. So, I get a lot of exercise that way. But I hang on, and I tell myself, "Put your foot all the way on," and coming down, "Don't catch your heel." I talk to myself, because I've got to. I'm going to forget.

Q: You're being safe that way, and you're not going to fall. It's when you do things in a hurry, that's when you get into trouble.

A: You can't. I can tell you this: an old person's job is don't cause trouble. Don't hurt yourself and cause problems. Not just for you, but it makes an awful mess, because I have fallen. I got a big stick stuck in my leg one day, and it causes all kinds of—"I've got to get to the hospital." I called the ambulance. So far, I've been able to call my self if I had to go. But then everybody is in a stew, because you did this, and you don't want to do it. That one I couldn't help. But falling down, you should try to avoid that. It's not good. Eventually something is going to break. The doctors go, "How many times have you fallen this year?" And so far, I've been able to say, "None," so far this year. I have fallen the year before.

Q: Did you know how that happened?

A: Yes. I went up two steps, and remembered something I wanted to do, but I forgot I had gone up two steps, so I stepped back one big one and I cut my leg, and I bumped my head. I shouldn't have admitted it, because it caused all kinds of x-rays. That causes trouble.

Q: I understand what you're saying.

A: It just makes people have to do stuff they shouldn't have to do.

Q: I like your attitude and your thinking. That's wonderful.

A: I have a button to call if I need something. And I also have a telephone with a button on it in my house. I use the phone. When I go for a walk, I take it with me, so then I could call. And I take neighbors' phone numbers with me.

Q: If you need the help, it's available.

A: Yes. If I need a ride, I can just call the police to give me a ride, but if I know that the Ganzes are home, I call them and they can take me up the street, or something like that, because they're closer than my children.

Q: We used to do that for Peg O'Brien.

A: She was the funniest one.

Q: She helped us with my dad, and then we kind of kept track of her.

A: She's one of the ladies that I used to drive from The Elms, and she was funny. She had some sense. The others didn't seem to have much. But she was funny. And the day that a woman said, "Now, where are you going to sit?" I said, "I think I'll sit in front with Peg," and she's in the front laughing. She had a laugh that would take the roof off.

Q: That's one thing that when I think of Peg, I miss her laugh. We live kitty corner across the street. We would hear her laughing, and then it would make us laugh.

A: She just is funny. My son Nick was very good friends with her and her husband. He was younger than them, but good buddies. I haven't seen her for a long time. In church, I met her in the aisle, and we embraced, and when we came apart I had her pocket book in one hand and mind in the other. And you should have heard her. She just let loose with that noise she could make. It was hysterical. I said, "I'm pretty good at this."

Q: Did you know her neighbor, Margaret Kulka?

A: No. I don't think so.

Q: They were very good friends too. She's not living anymore, but she used to go over to East Beach. There was a little road. What was the name of the family? She's German. I can't remember. I think it begins with an O. I don't remember. Anyway, she spent time over there, and working at the Tunxis, the little place when it was a café. Do you want to go over anything else that you've written down?

A: I don't think there's anything more on here, but you could have my notes.

Q: All right. Thank you, Joyce, very much. I really appreciate it.

A: My scribbles.



- Q: I want to make sure I didn't miss anything.
- A: I'm not closely in relationship with any Moultons. Only as an in-law. But I did hear a lot.
- Q: How well did you know Barbara?
- A: I knew her since I was married. Not before.
- Q: They were from Providence.
- A: Yes. They all were. Barbara and Dave grew up as neighbors in Providence.
- Q: She was a very smart lady.
- A: Oh, she was a doer too. They had a sister too. Her name was Gretchen. It was Barbara, Gretchen and Nick. But she didn't have anything to add to this. She lived in Pennsylvania.
- Q: Would you consider yourself friends with her then?
- A: Sure. Yes. I was friends with all of them. But it was odd when I came into the group. I was so young. My husband was eleven years older than me, so his sisters were twenty. When I was 28, and Nick was 39, both sisters were in their 40s, so I was like a child to them. Also, I came from Maine, and they couldn't imagine Maine. I said, "Yes, it's a state." They knew people went to Maine, but they didn't know anybody who came from Maine. It was kind of funny. But they were good guys.
- Q: What business was David, Barbara's husband, in?
- A: He worked for an insurance company in Providence. Then he retired. I don't know what he did. He worked for the town here also. He went to the town hall every day. He was tax assessor, and he always that Mr. Eisenhower got in on his tail, because he ran at the same time. Dave was tax assessor for years in Charlestown. He used to bring his own typewriter and his own pencils.
- Q: Even though he didn't live here year-round?
- A: Yes. They lived here year-round since the '50s. So, he worked for the town all the time. He couldn't use any town property. He had to bring his own pencils, his own typewriter, because that was cheating the town. He was just unique. The fact that to do town work that he couldn't use the town pencils, because that was costing money to the town, and he had to bring that old typewriter with him every day. They had a typewriter, but you couldn't use it. He had a strange idea about fairness and honesty and stuff like that.

- Q: You've given me a good sense of that family. I went to see them once a long time ago. Do you remember anything about the inside of that house that was particularly interesting? How did they get into the--
- A: That was attached to the garage. The windmill tower, then the garage. Most of the time we went through the back door, which is a little closed-in porch into the kitchen. But there was a front door there that proper people used. So, you went into the house in the kitchen, and a good big dining room, and a good big living room. Then they had a sunporch on the back. They had their bedroom. It went a long way. The bathroom was off that end.
- Q: Somebody else was saying that there was a certain time—breakfast, and then they would do things in the pond, and then they'd come home and have lunch, and then they'd go to the beach in the afternoon.
- A: That's a different generation than I'm thinking about, because they had tennis courts at one time. And probably the generation before this one, that we knew, probably had those rules.
- Q: Did they have servants?
- A: Yes. They had maid at Ben's place, where we are. They had a maid too, because there was a little maid's room. It's a terrible thing. There was the house, and then there was kind of a utility place where the water pump was. Then there was the maid's room, which was this little, tiny place with a toilet. I thought it was terrible.
- Q: I think that was typical back then. Did Ben's maid come from Providence?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Did she live with them in Providence?
- A: Yes. And they had a maid's room too at Quonnie at 264. A little more generous than the one that was over there. That was terrible, but I guess the maid didn't care. That's what she expected, I guess.
- Q: Did you have maids growing up?
- A: No.
- Q: So, this must have been very different for you to get adjusted to.
- A: Nick's mother had a maid. That was totally different to me. We grew up in the Depression. I was born in 1927. My sister was born two years before me, my brother two years after. So, our childhood was through all that. We had enough to eat. How I

would describe it we were just a little before going to the poor farm, because we used to visit friends in the poor farm.

Q: Did you have a garden and grew your own vegetables?

A: We didn't have much place for animals or anything, but we did grow some food. Also, there were people who, if they could help you, they would. By the way, my mother, who could hardly feed her family—in those days, people came by looking for food. They came to your door looking for food and something to eat. She could always find a couple of biscuits and some molasses. I think they thought they had gone to Heaven. They were so happy to see that. That's what she could come up with, and she did.

Q: How was your relationship with your mother?

A: Good. I've always said that she worked the hardest of anybody I've ever known raising three children on almost nothing. And my father was a good man and a good worker, but he had an accident, and then he couldn't do different kinds of things. It was tough for her. Once I asked her why she didn't go to church with us, kind of like, "You send us to church," and she said, "I don't have a dress," and she said that just like I said it. And she didn't. She was covered up, but she didn't have a dress to wear. She sent us off. Once I found a nickel. I knew I was supposed to share. We knew that. We were taught that. So, I took the nickel to Sunday school with me, and I was putting it in, and I wanted to take back two pennies. I was going to give him three and take back two, and then I got my hand slapped.

Q: By who?

A: The teacher thought I was going to steal the money. I know that she never did understand what I was doing. I was going to take back two pennies and give them three. I was sharing three, and I wanted two back. I didn't take them. I didn't get them. Now you couldn't hit anybody like that. You could be in jail. But I remember that. And once I found a dime. My mother had boarders too. One of these boys said it was his, and I knew it was not, because it was well packed into the ground, and I dug it out, because I saw a bit of it. So, I knew it didn't fall down there yesterday. Well, my mother said, "If Charlie says it's his, you must give it to him." So, I did. And she knew too that it was mine, but she said, "That is the way you must—you must not argue with him. If he says it's his, you have to give it to him." So, I did.

Q: What would your advice be now? Has that changed?

A: I wonder. I could see her point. You're supposed to believe people. So, if he's saying that, we're supposed to believe him that he lost it—that he's the one that lost it. So, you would be giving it to him. It's not like yours. It was his. He lost it. But I knew it wasn't his, because I knew it was buried. I'm sure she knew it too, but this was the way she dealt with that. At one time we a man, Mr. Carter, and three children corresponding ages to ours, and Charlie was the only one that told me that was his dime.

Q: Living with you?

A: Yes. They were boarders. My mother fed all these people, and they gave her probably \$2 a month or something. This was the Depression. And when youngsters used to come from the country, we called it, where I was born in Otis, two hours to go to high school. So, we had boarders that way too. We had a lot of boarders through the years.

Q: Just like a lot of the people that I've talked to here, like Phyllis Reynolds, they had boarders around here a lot just to pay the bills.

A: Yes. Just to be able to make it. My brother got Scarlet fever, and we had a house full of people. Mr. Carter's family was there. Mrs. Peters lived in the front room.

Q: Did they quarantine him?

A: Yes. We were quarantined for something like eight weeks.

Q: How did you keep everybody separate?

A: Nobody else got it in that whole house. And I remember going into the different rooms with my mother, and lighting some fumigant we had. I can't remember what it was called. You had to light it, and it smelled. It probably didn't do anything. Nobody got Scarlet fever. I give my mother credit for that. She kept him isolated, and she took care of his laundry. Well, she took care of everybody's laundry. But somehow nobody got it.

Q: Nobody, but—

A: It was my brother that got it.

Q: But nobody else?

A: No.

Q: Did he develop heart problems?

A: He was very fortunate. He's still living. He's 91. He'll be 92 in October.

Q: You have a family that has a lot of good genes.

A: Yes. We've always been walking. My sister died at 91 of cancer. I thought that was very mean to have cancer, but she did.

Q: My mom had cancer, but she died when she was very young.

A: I think there's a lot of bad things that happen. If it doesn't happen to you, it's just by grace. It's not like you had anything to do with it.

Q: You don't really know why. It's a big question why.

A: You can do your best, and you can keep as active as possible, and eat as well as possible. We all fall off of that train, but we do the best we can. And then you've done the best you can do. Memories are funny. Thinking about my husband, that was awfully sad watching this happen when he died. We need to remember the funny things he used to say and do. That other stuff doesn't leave you, because you were there. But you remember the good things, because he was very wise. He was a very serious man, but he also was funny. Starkweather and Shepley downtown Westerly, he used to call them stark naked and shap

