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Tom Burgess

Transcribed by Matthew Winkler

Tye

But I'd later find out that I'd screwed up and it wasn't, um, it's difficult when you're outdoors to see the red light here. But as long as those bars are moving—

Burgess

Right.

Tye

Then you are recording. And since we would rather have, I'm gonna make sure we pickup your sound than ours. I'm going to put this...

Burgess

Do you want to put it on here?

Tye

Here facing you, and what we would like in starting is if you would just, um, first of all, say who you are and what the date is. And then tell us something about your story in terms of when you came to Cotuit and why.

Unknown Speaker

This presupposes you know what the date is.

Burgess

Yes, I do know what day it is, I'm not quite that old. The uh umm, Don, my name is Tom Burgess, Thomas Night Burgess if you want the full name. And today's September 6 2021. As I say, often when I'm giving my little historical talks with, uh, walk arounds for the Historical Society, I came to Cotuit in utero. Um, my mother, um, I believe my mother came to Cotuit in 1922 upon a visit probably with an uncle or something like that. She probably stayed perhaps in the Pines or the Santuit house or someplace like that. Um, in the, uhhh, in the period, my father fought in the First World War and the period between the wars um my mother and father and my older brothers um went to [unintelligible] for the summer. And they, uh, they live, they rented an old farm there that was on the on the cliff or on the

bluff, it was 100 Steps to the beach. And the water was very cold. Um my brother Rob remembers it being you know, it was very rural and quite out of the way. Um, during the war, uh, the Second World War, my father was making a little um leather washer that was in every General Motors transmission. So um he did not serve again, in the military. With gas rationing, of course, they didn't go anywhere, but toward the end of the war um they felt they could get them, you know, to go take... go away for the summer or take the kids away for the summer, I guess is what the way you said. And uh I think both because my mother had been to Cotuit in in...

Tye

Just because of the traffic noise behind I'm gonna put.

Burgess

Yup. Okay, no problem. In 22. And also, I believe, because Anna Murray was teaching at Bancroft school at that period and I know brownie will probably confirm that the [unintelligible] came to Cotuit in part part because of ancestor um Misses Sinclair, but they came down here, because they got a lot of good good news from from Anna Murray. Um they anyway, in 44, my parents came down and they rented the grey cottage, which is the house behind where Brown [unintelligible] lives now right on Main Street. It but all of that property belonged to the Bailey's in those days, and that was Harry Louis Bailey, who had been Horace Sears, um, uhh, personal secretary, and when Mr. Sears died, he left—even though he had issue—he gave Henry Louis Bailey the bulk of his estate which included the big house in Weston and and uh and the all the property on mai- on uhhh on Ocean View Avenue, the big the big house designed by Guy Lowell. And so we, uh, my mother was pregnant with me and they came down and they brought a lot of fr-, a lot of war wives, my parents had younger friends who's who were serving in the war and while they were here that summer, my father would bring down the wives from Shrewsbury and Worcester, we lived in Shrewsbury Massachusetts, and they stayed with us. The Sworewoods lived right across the street um in the house that I call Osiris Day House was next to Johnny Murray's. And they were close, became close friends or had been close friends. Anyway, the next year—

Tye

Can can you just. Um, which side of Johnny Murray's, um if you're facing

Burgess

Johnny's to the right. If you're facing Johnny Murray's house, it's the house to the right, and then you get to the green, the green school house.

Odenice

[unintelligible]

Burgess

Right.

Odense

[unintelligible]

Burgess

No, no, yeah. And um, anyway, we, uh the the the following year, they rented uh a house from from Doris Prentiss, Doris Prentiss was Stanley Butler's um daughter. And that house, 172 Oceanview Avenue, is the second house after Cross Street as you go toward the loop. Umm it was a great great old house, um the biggest the biggest room in the house was the kitchen the the refrigerator was one corner, the stove was at the other the the the sink was at another corner and there was a you know an old fashioned back door that went out on the lawn. Uh the front had this funky old um uhh porch the only one of which still exists is on, um, uhh, I can't remember her name right now but anyway, the yellow house across from from from the Masonic...

Odense

[unintelligible]

Burgess

It's it's uhhh... Anyway uh it had a portion that had kind of a wall came up to here, took a [unintelligible] and then [unintelligible]. And then they added on the house and so there was a window that went into the kitchen. Umm, and there was a table in front of it. So um and in those days, the cocktail hour was honored strictly and people were always at our house and my father would always mix up the drinks in the kitchen and pa-

Tye

What was the cocktail hour?

Burgess

Pass them out. Probably five to seven. And I always remember the hand coming out the window and putting the drinks on the on the table. Uh and from that time on from that was so that would be 46, 45 they came came, they stayed in that house and in 52 or 53, I'm not sure which year they bought it from the Prentiss's. Mr. Prentiss came from Damariscotta Maine and he decided that when he retired, he would like to, you know, he thought the Cape was getting too crowded. So he he went back to Damariscotta. Um and we bought, we bought the house and kept it pretty much as it was until my parents retired.

Odense

The bullseye windows and the front door?

Burgess

No, that was—All that stuff that's there now comes from a huge redo that was done in 1966.

Oden

Okay.

Burgess

Was the year, uh or 19... Yeah, 1966 67 was the year I graduated from Harvard. They decided that they were eventually going to retire to Cotuit and uh so they got John Barnard over in Centerville, um, to design redesign the house to a way that they would be comfortable in. And uhh so it was it was sort of a tragedy because the old house disappeared, um, uhh but the new house was eminently comfortable and and really, you know was was great for them.

Oden

[unintelligible] Did the outside appearance change?

Burgess

Yeah. Significantly because a porch came off they sort of they sort of put the actual front where the front door is now didn't change too much. Umm there wasn't a door there, the the door came off, you walked into the porch and you walked in the side way, and they they moved the stairs and reconfigured everything.

Tye

But they kept the beautiful kitchen?

Burgess

No, the beautiful kitchen turned over to the right. I mean, you know, but it was a, it was a nice house. But we had a lovely time my earliest—

Oden

[unintelligible] from the from the Sea street or something, and it looked to me like there was a gable there, and it could've been a half-gable originally.

Burgess

Uhh, may have been may have been may have been way back way back because because it'd been it definitely been Mickey Mouse'd around with a lot. And the back of the...the the [unintelligible] comes off the back, which is relatively short which is the downstairs bedroom now master bedroom, was actually just a sort of shed room and we—in the in the original house. And that actually was part of Stanley Butler's boat building shed. It was a little bit like the [unintelligible] because that the, the actual garage was not a separate building. It had been attached to the house and that's where he built the boats. When he stopped building the boats they they chopped that, you know in the two thirds, one third, one

third was left on the house. They moved the other back to use as a garage because they you know they were they had cars and stuff then. So but it was a huge, that's my earliest memories was sort of coming down from, we used to come down, you know, in fairly early June my mother would yank me out of school because she went to get down to the Cape. And uhm, we would come down and it was a you know, it was about a three hour drive from Shrewsbury in those days because we probably went 45 and we went through Stoughton and Taunton and we went...

Odenice
Route 28.

Burgess
Yeah, we came down, we went through a thing that was called the [unintelligible] Dale road because it had a lot of shade, it was a hot day it, was nice and cool. And then we've come over the bridge and get here. And the first thing you did was take off your shoes and get out and you wouldn't wear shoes again all summer except when you went to the movies, or if Mr. Crocker yelled at you when you went to the coop. But he he generally didn't. So... and we did you know, uh, I was as a as a very young boy I was I was relatively shy. I didn't make friends very quickly. But my first good friend was was Joe, then known as PQ Bessie, who lived at the um corner of [unintelligible], where the Austin's live now.

Odenice
And what was the PQ from?

Burgess
That's his name. Palmer Quintard Bessie the third.

Odenice
Okay, okay, okay.

Burgess
He decided that that was a little flaky when he got to public school, so he changed his name to Joe or at least what he's called. Um, and he still lives here he still lives on on part of that that was the Breck and Benbo property, where the Austin's live. And Joe lives right behind, built a house on a property that his mother lived on when she retired here. Um and then I got to know, you know, in those days all of the skiffs were raced off the off the loop, um and so the loop Beach was really sort of the center of of summer activity as far as swimming and sailing was concerne. And and for a while the Bailey's gave their beach um uhh next to the loop which is where the [unintelligible] live now. And the Sinclair's lived at the top of the uh uh the top of the steps there, [unintelligible], and their dock was used by the Cotuit Mosquito Yacht Club for you know the [unintelligible] came with a big wheel which was an old converted uh uh lifeboat, um, as was our was our was our committee boat and and the races were always started right at loop and a whole bunch of people would you know stand at the window because of the

hurricane of 44 had taken then almost all of the trees in Cotuit. Because we used to go to where the Zeiss's live, and um I remember mother and father the—friends of theirs from Worcester, the Mortons—rented that house and they used to have cocktails and the sleeping porch was upstairs and you could see the island and the bay from that then because there was nothi-

Tye

Amazing

Burgess

They had flattened, 44 really took the trees down. Um...

Tye

Was there a name of that hurricane?

Burgess

No, they were not named until after the war. 38 did a lot of damage to structures in in, apparently in Cotuit, barns were destroyed and things like that. Roofs were taken off. But for some reason the 44 hurricane really just trashed the trees.

Tye

In a way that even both-bothers [unintelligible].

Burgess

Yeah, I mean, the I used to, when Mrs. Cabin when I lived over at the Ropses's, I was once in the woods there between, you know, between where Shannon Collins lives and the Lowells. And I you know, they're just these these what look like, you know, they're they're wood piles that stretch like fences, you know, often I say, why did they you know, why did they make these wood piles. She said that was just cleaning up after 44.

Tye

Jeez.

Burgess

And it was all pine, so it was, it wasn't burnable. All they could do was you know, take it up and stack it to sort of clean up the woods. Anyway but, uh, I've lost my train of thought here but anyway.

Odense

But people could stand and watch the races.

Burgess

Yeah, right. Right. Yeah, it's [unintelligible] people could stand and watch the races because there was no growth there. You know, and I think there was one tree on the island, um, and and

Odenice

And Joe Kennedy's house wasn't.

Burgess

Joe Kennedy's house. There was nothing between you and the O'Brien's. The [unintelligible] Bailey Big house. And so it was you know, that was very popular. People all—parents came and watch the beginning of the races and stuff and on Sunday, everybody was down there bathing, and they could see the informal race go by. And that all that was all hunky dory until 54 when Hurricane Carol came through and then the you know, the advanced warning on that was lousy. Umm there was no advance warning and the and the and the hurricane shifted track. And so it came in and uhh we went down and I remember my brother Rob swam out to get you know, the [unintelligible], the old [unintelligible], and bring it in, and all I could do was pull him up on the beach which was just a um, you know, a recipe for disaster because the boats just banged together and destroyed each other. Um, so...

Tye

And did that hurricane also take down trees [unintelligible] 44.

Burgess

Uh, took took down a lot of trees. We had, there was a fatality across the street, Mr. Witten Pemberton, Witkim's beach house was destroyed in his, Mr Rennie, who was his then gardener, I believe was killed and the the roof fell in on him. And Dr. Pooler, who was my next door neighbor, lived in the house on the corner of cross street and and Maine, next to us, it was next to, he was a dentist. He had a heart attack like the day after he. But he was helping and I think the strain you know...

Tye

Jeez

Burgess

Just, yeah, Riley Davis who worked for the Bailey's is up on now non existent house was known as the apollonio on the corner of C Street and Main. Sort of placed by that nice house that's just across...

Odenice

Yup. Southwest.

Burgess

Yeah, he was on the roof there because the roof was was covered with some sort of glue down canvas, and it was peeling back and he got swept off and bent—broke his leg very badly. Umm so there was you

know, it was a it was a, it was quite the storm in the end. I remember the, I don't know if the eye [unintelligible], but there was a period when there was a sort of a [unintelligible] I remember my father going out and the whole side of the house, southeast side of the house was absolutely green from the torn apart maple leafs and [unintelligible], and he hosed the hosed the house off, you know, to get them all off and then 10 minutes later it started blowing just as hard from the other direction. So it was, but it was that was a wonderful. Living down there was great.

Tye

Can I stop you for one second. I'm intrigued by these hurricanes because we think of hurricanes, all the news about how much worse they're getting and the hype that builds up to um Ida and all of these storms. But the idea of hurricanes coming in those days without any warning really made them a kind of peril that the um...

Burgess

Yeah, you know, there were, presumably there was warning but I do know, we knew that there was a hurricane around but the theory was that Carol I think was gonna gonna veer off and go you know, off the cape, and rather like Henri, you know, she decided that she was not going to go off the cape. She was going to come right in on Falmouth, or Buzzards Bay or wherever she may land, but it was pretty damn close to Cotuit. And and so there was no and of course, we had no um, there was no apparatus in place to care for the boats or anything like that. So after that, um, Leonard who who profited greatly because he started to build skiffs to replace, Leonard Pak, he, he and and Mr. White and other people who are in the in the association got together and formed a kind of Hurricane Preparedness Committee. And they worked on the whole idea of you know, what to do, you know, how to, you know, how to treat warning. And, you know, and they also collectively decided that the loop was going to be a good place to keep skiffs. And so, everybody, man, fortunately, Mrs. Cabot, um, who lived um was Mrs. Mrs. Robes' sister who lived down on the beach there uhh very kindly offered the um uhh the Yacht Club access to her beach and her dock to use for racing. She had been allowing the, um, the, uh, the, the CMYC to use her beach for what was called the cove series on Tuesday morning for kids who are really sort of even younger than juniors because I remember I went I must have been 12 or something. And, you know, Larry taught me how to sail. And I and I weighed maybe, if I weighed 75 pounds, I was probably lucky. Umm, so, you know, the whole thing was, like AHH. As long as the wind was light, it was okay. But and so that was you went down there, David Ebeling taught us how to sail that in these courses and stuff. And it was very, it was very nice, very family oriented. The whole thing was sort of mothers and dads kind of you know, we're behind the scenes of the kids who ran the yacht club and they put a pull—then after that it was not too long after that the Chesney's came up from Florida and they, Johnny Chesney was a wonderful sailor and he, um, he, he had he had he lived down in wherever they wherever the wherever the I can't remember where it was clear water, I think...

Odense

[unintelligible]

Burgess

Yeah. And that's where Optimist Prams was kind of taken off and so he brought a pram with him, umm or a couple of prams with them and they sort of demonstrated that and and then Leonard got into the idea, well he could build the prams out of plywood and and and that sort of took off and then...

Odenice

There was a little corporation for it. Jeff Jacks was involved, and [unintelligible] and somebody else they started this. Maybe it was Leonard or...

Burgess

Right, right. Right. Yeah. And I think [unintelligible] that maybe Jerry was involved.

Odenice

Jerry, yup.

Burgess

But um and so that whole thing really, you know, that was the the Yacht Club got much more formally into the idea of of instruction. And that's that took off and now we have this you know huge program that the yacht club runs. So with that, you know, and so I lived through that sort of transition from... I was before the pram program, but I saw it grow up and obviously my kids went through it, but that was uh...

Tye

Can we go back to your history for a minute?

Burgess

Yup.

Tye

So um you go off to college, your parents are converting the house into a retirement house. Um, and you came back summers? Or you came back...what was your reinvolvement here after you were..?

Burgess

We... I came back as often as I could, I this was I, I was uh uh...I went to public school through the sixth grade, and in the sixth grade, uh, the next year, they're going to have double sessions in the town of Shrewsbury, because the population had grown. The schools hadn't, you know, so they were building schools. They weren't, you know, they couldn't deal with it for a year. So my father said, I'm not sending this kid half a day to school. So I went to Fa-

Odence

Couldn't deal with him the other half of the day.

Burgess

[laughs] Yeah. Uhh, so I went to Fay school as a da—in Southborough—as a as a day, a day student for two years. And then I went to Phillips, all my brothers, I have three older brothers, I just lost my oldest brother was 91 last May and then my next oldest brother's going to be 90 on uh Thanks, right around Thanksgiving and another brother will be 81 or 82. He lives in Washington. So all my brothers have gone to Phillips Academy before me. They trucked me around to look at all these other schools, but I figured you know, what is it I'm gonna go to this place. So I went to VA, it probably wasn't the world's greatest fit. I was probably the smallest, smallest person in my class. My math teacher called me the Mighty Mite. But it was a terrific education. And you know, when I could drive I would you know, when I...my parents would let me I would come down you know, I'd come down on the offseason because we owned the house and it was heated and you know, and so, you know, I I I I really considered myself sort of a Cotuit native. I didn't have terribly many friends, one or two in Shrewsbury and they sort of drifted away so this was my home. And, uh, and I got to know more and more people who were you know, when you came in the summer as a little kid, there was a very townie townies versus the summer people sort of, among the adolescents. Buddy Souza was...Buddy Souza was sort of the terror of the of the summer kids because he's was very much in the sort of James Dean, Elvis, you know, slicked back hair, the car. You know, we were all terribly afraid of Buddy Souza's was a bad gonna beat us up, turns out Buddy Souza was the nicest guy in the world. He was like a soft [unintelligible]. But anyway, you know, the way you fantasize, but um, uhhh... and so it was, you know, I got to know more and more more people and that was...

Tye

Can I stop you for another second?

Burgess

Yup

Tye

So I'm intrigued by the, we're intrigued by the, um, the townie summer mixing or lack of mixing in terms of the different worlds. Was it an economic thing, was it just the worlds that they were cast in that there was supposed to be a uh this tension. What do you think was going on?

Burgess

I don't know. In in part, the word that Lee Burlingame as I recall, was one of the few um, uh, townies that raced and had a skiff, um, so some of that was—

Odence

Probably because his father was a big sailor.

Burgess

Yeah, his father was a big sailor and and um uhh and I think that's probably probably um true of a lot of these summer communities that the that the competitive racing was something that was done by summer people. And whereas sailing, traditionally, here was a job, you know, something that you sailed out to the oyster beds, or you sailed out, you know, you know, you were hauling stuff. Um...

Tye

But now people come summers, there's an enormous economic difference between a normal Cape Cod, Cape Cod, as you know, better than me socio economically is um one of the um more depressed places in the Commonwealth, and summer people have become wealthier as housing prices have gone up. Was there that kind of an economic gap then?

Burgess

Oh, I'm sure. You know, to some extent yes. I mean, the town of Mashpee was in receivership. You know, all of our maids were were from you know people had, even we had a cook, um, my mother always had help through the Depression. I mean that was a way of giving people you know some money, they have we had a little bit of money and they could you could afford it. And and May Lopes, who was and Hana, all those people who worked with us, May Lopes was like my mother, uh uh came from came from Mashpee. They were Wampanoags. Umm the Riley's Beach was known as the maids beach because on Thursday, um it was almost all black people. Umm, or people of color.

Tye

People of color meaning Wampanoags?

Burgess

Wampanoags and some of the bigger houses had people who you know they brought with them. Umm, Mr. Havlat Cellblot brought Clarence Clarence was nine feet tall, black as, you know, a a Nigerian and he drove a a huge Cadillac. Convertible Cadillac. And he was Mr. Havlat Cellblot's factotum he did all the negotiations with the Cotuit grocery etc. And Havlat's, Mr. Havlat's Cell lives with a Cummings now.

Tye

And Thursday was—

Odence

[unintelligible]

Burgess

Yeah, yeah. Was originally Benedict Smith's property and Guy Lowell's property.

Tye

And Thursday was day off?

Burgess

Thursday was a day, maids day off. And and and so the maids all went down to the Riley's beach to swim and of course, you had Riley's and then next door to Riley's was the Pines hotel and that was in operation until 58 59, 60? Something like that. Because we always went down and the the Pines had a great raft with a slide on it that was off, um, off just off the Pines Beach, and at five o'clock, you could go, you know, anybody could go. So we would go get there at like 4:59, you know. And you'd run out the Pines Beach and the idea was to dive through the lifeguards. If the lifeguard was standing, you would dive through his, his his legs into the water and then go out and swim and use the slide.

Tye

Can I ask you a strange question about Pines? We interviewed, um, it was...

Odenice

Fran, Fran Parks.

Tye

Yeah, Fran Parks. And the and she brought along a brochure from the hotel and stamped in the brochure, and it was strange because it was unclear whether it was the hotel that stamped it in there or who, but it was, it said no Jews.

Odenice

It was slightly more polite than that, but essentially.

Tye

Yes. Essentially.

Odenice

Jewish clientele not welcome.

Tye

Yeah, something like that. What, how much was there a sense that this was a restricted place. Or that all of Cape Cod was restricted?

Burgess

Well, I think that I think that Helen McClellan ran, you know, she she she was the gatekeeper for for Cotuit. Now there there were there were uh, Billy Herman, um the Herman's lived up near Vineyard road, I can't remember where but, and, and, you know, I think they were probably the first Jewish family, you know, summer family in, in in, uh, in Cotuit. And, and, you know, there was, this was a waspy place.

Tye

So that was the gate? Was for wasps? Was it were...beyond Jews were Catholics, were blacks, were anybody, the gate closed to everybody?

Burgess

Umm, you'd have to ask Helen that. But But, um, umm, you know, as far as I can see, I mean, when you talk about, you know, we were talking about, you know...

Odense

And, and just, Helen was a realtor so...

Burgess

Yeah, she was a realtor. And, and, yeah. And even you know, even Don Law, I was talking to him, we were out sailing on his big boat. The other—and he said he lived in a Osterville for like, you know, 10 years or so. And then, you know, Helen said I've got a house to show you you know, and she said, you know it's in Cotuit and he didn't know whether he wanted to live over here. But you know, he said you know, she was you know if Helen McClellan wanted to show you a house in Cotuit, you know, well wow, finally I'm okay.

Tye

And who was, I don't know what his um background is.

Burgess

Um well Don Law lives down down, and and his... he was a he's a hu...

Tye

Not Don Law the promoter?

Burgess

Yeah, yeah.

Tye

Ah, and, okay.

Burgess

Yeah.

Tye

So explain Don Law who is...

Burgess

Well, he was a huge music promoter.

Tye

Yes, but also...

Odense

[unintelligible] he knew he made it when Helen McClellan...

Burgess

Right

Tye

So it was not that Don Law was any excluded category, it was just that he had made it?

Burgess

No, no. But um uhh and so I and I, you know, I I do recall, I had very good friends in Osterville. When we started to race against Weano, we had team races against Wianno, that Wianno would occasionally invite us over for dances at the Wianno Yacht Club and stuff. And we get to know a bunch of Wianno kids that were our age. It was terrific. We could drive and get over there. So we get, and I started to crew on seniors and stuff, and we had a terrific time. And I always remember, I'm—one of my good friends was a guy named Roger Welles and his mother lived over on, his father lived on a little old shack on Crystal Lake and, and I always said, you know, Mrs. Welles you should come over and live in Cotuit. And they they were Catholic. And she said, she said, oh well I love Cotuit, but it would take me 40 years before anybody would speak to me.

Tye

That's so interesting. He, that's so interesting—

Burgess

And I'll tell you another story on that. That that the Reardons, who lived, just sold their, you know, passed away and sold the house above the above above the loop. I remember Mrs. Reardon looking at a house on Grand Island. And she said, you know, it's only recently they've let, you know, one or two Catholics in.

Tye

I'm intrigued by this, because um now, in more recent times, um, you hear people and I don't know how apocryphal the story is that Paul Firemen, you know, building willowbend, because he wasn't allowed into um country clubs in Osterville, or whatever. He, you hear Cotuit being a more, the more open place now, and people not being able to get into Wianno club or whatever. Um is...has there been a reversal in terms of snob factors or the uh...

Burgess

I don't know. I really can't answer that. I just can remember that, you know, um, Cotuit was was was always considered less clubby than Osterville. Osterville was a real sort of Wianno place. Now, yes. You know, if you looked at um now, uh... the Bailey's didn't belong to Wianno club. But Mr. Wickham, Pemberton Wickham belonged to the Wianno club. Carter Wickham didn't belong to the Wianno club. Mrs. [unintelligible] Riley didn't belong to the Wianno club. She was her own club. Um, then you had the pines, uh the Wessons, the Wessons belonged to the Wianno club. Um, the Lloyds, I can't remember the Lloyds?

Odenice

No.

Burgess

No. So you had these big families had huge estates. I mean, that there was you know the difference. I mean, the Wessons, you know, hired, Mr. Wesson hired a, you know, his own train his own freight train to bring the wood to build their house from Arkansas. Um, you know, a completely separate train. They had money. Of big time.

Tye

We heard a great story of last Saturday from Wingate Lloyd about the expedition coming from Philadelphia when they would come for the summer. And they were bringing their two servants and their cooks

Odenice

Dogs.

Tye

The dogs.

Burgess

Yup.

Tye

Everything and all the luggage. Um, so...

Burgess

Yeah, and the same thing is true next door to [unintelligible] the Northey's. When Grandma Northey came I remember Tony telling me you know, Grandma Northey came from Salem, you know, they had the great big car, the Irish cook, you know, the show for you know, steamer trunks full of stuff, you know?

Odenice

The Lloyd's [unintelligible] trains. So they'd come on the train

Burgess

Train.

Odenice

And be picked up by the driver [unintelligible] couple of cabs

Burgess

Yeah, cabs, yeah, to get everybody there.

Tye

But the story on the trains that was intriguing to me was the expedition the the logistics of taking a train from Philadelphia and changing in Grand Central and then taking a night Cape Coder, it was a day's worth of travel.

Burgess

Oh, yeah.

Tye

And a big deal.

Burgess

Yup.

Tye

And you needed servants just to coordinate all the things that were going on on the trains [unintelligible].

Burgess

Well, and when I was when I was, you know, when I was in my teens, probably young teens, I mean we went out we would go to pick Mr. Bailey up, you know, and other people at West Barnstable on you know, sometimes the they took long weekends, so they come [unintelligible] Owl, the or the Cape Cod or on Thursday night, you know, and then they take the...and Mr. McLaughlin, McLaughlin's dad who lived on [unintelligible]. He was [unintelligible] in Washington and he would come all the way on the on the sleeper. Um, and you know, and then to West Barnstable and then, yeah.

Tye

When you say all the way, could you actually go all the way from Washington?

Burgess

I think you could go from Washington through, you know without...

Oden

Yeah, the train went from Washington to Philadelphia.

Burgess

They might've switched...

Tye

Yeah, but I'm saying they had to switch in New York. Not all the way through to here.

Burgess

If he was on a sleeper, they might have switched the car. I don't think he had to get up and get out.

Tye

Ah so they didn't have to, they didn't change the train, that would be brilliant.

Burgess

Yeah, yup.

Tye

So you have, there's so much that you know that I want to be steer around a couple of different, speaking of trains, tracks.

Burgess

I'm gonna put my feet up.

Tye

So you going back to your personal and family history, the house that your parents um renovated, the house with the green kitchen and the porch and the day change. Is...that's not the house you live in today?

Burgess

No.

Tye

Okay. They, did they live there through the rest of their lives.

Burgess

They lived there the rest of their lives when my father passed away in 85. And my mother was very severely incapacitated with dementia and Parkinson's that she was in a nursing home and she passed away in 1988. When my mother passed away my brother Rob was the executor and we all decided the best thing to do was sell the house. You know, auction off stuff that had to be auctioned off and then um, you know, go—fortunately and before my parents death, my um, in 1981, uh, Sepi Deedskin who lived in in uh, Carol Lices step dad lived in a red house at the top of of Putnam ave there.

Odence

86 Putnam.

Burgess

86 Putnam. Uh, we were very good friends with the Deedskins, we'd been living in the Ropes's farmhouse, where Jonas lives right now and uh taking care of the Ropes estate in the summer. I did all the lawns and the fields and all that kind of stuff. And I taught sailing, um, uhhh, we had been teaching in Italy I'd been teaching in Italy and and Mr. and Mrs. Deedskin wanted to learn Italian. They knew some, they knew Spanish quite well and they wanted to learn Italian and they had a couple of other friends. Mrs. Deedskin was a member of the circle of Francaise so she, you know, was a good linguist. So once a week, we'd go over there maybe twice a week over there on their porch and I would teach them Italian. It turned out that umm uh the house where we live in now, which is on the corner of Lowell and and Maine across from the ballpark. Uhh, Mrs. Turner lived there. Umm and she was she she was the daughter of people...she was French. Her parents would have been representatives of the French Line in New York when she grew up. She came to to Cotuit to be a babysitter for the Wholesdeeds. And Ken Turner, who had divorced his first wife, squired her around and eventually married her. Anyway...

Odence

[unintelligible]

Burgess

Yeah, yeah she was she was French. And so she—Misses Deedskin knew her through the French the circle of Francaise. Well, it turns out in 1980, she decided she wanted to get out of that house and go live with her daughter or live in Boston. And so uhh she was going to put it up for sale. We were in Italy, I was taking the kids trip from Brooks to Italy when that happened. Somehow Sepi got ahold of us, Mr. Deedskin, and said this house that your wife said she wanted to live in is going to be for sale. You should come and look at it. So when we came home from Italy, it was must have been in the beginning of April, end of March, uhh, we came down. The first thing we could we came down. The house hadn't gone for sale. We met the lawyer John Konathan, who was representing Mrs. Turner. We went to see the house, Mrs. B walked in the door, she hadn't take two steps, she said this is the house. So [laughs].

Tye

So that's the one...

Tye

That's the one we bought.

Tye

And you bought it as a summer or as a year round?

Burgess

It was a year round, eventually year round. I was a teacher in private school. So we had we had we were housed at Brooks but so we uh, that was the Carter—

Tye

So at the Brooks school?

Burgess

Yeah. That was the Carter era, so the we um went around. So my father said go over and talk to Andy McRod the, you know Cape Cod five, or you know at at in in uh um Osterville and see if you know they've got some money to loan you for a mortgage. So I went and said, Andy, my father is Arthur Burgess. You know, so can I ask you for a mortgage? He said, well let's [unintelligible] so and if he can find any money in there I'll lend it to you. Well, eventually we got like a \$30,000 mortgage at 17% or something.

Odenice

Yeah, jeez.

Burgess

The whole house cost \$82,000 so we got some money from my parents. I called every advisee parent I knew from Brooks to say, could you loan me some money, you know, and eventually we scraped

together the money. The Deedskins gave us a loan for a few years and we bought the house. So that's how we got it. And...

Oden
Amazing

Tye
And when you left, when you retired from Brooks.

Burgess
We came here.

Tye
You came here.

Burgess
And in '90, and before we left, I'd retired in 2004. And in 1996 um we had sort of scraped together some money and and we got Carrie Grover to do uh an extensive renovation. The house as as bought had one one bathroom, off the kitchen and we would often have 10 people during the summer. You'd take a number. So, um, we we made the requisite, you know changes and and then in 2000 I retired in 2004. We went through a terrible period in 1999, 2000 my son drowned in the Caribbean and my daughter's husband died of the flu three months later. Having died when they had been married only for about four months, so sort of there was a period where I was kind of blacked out, I can't remember too much of it. But by 2004, I sort of put we were we were back on track and I thought, okay, you know, I've, I'm in good shape and I think I'd like to retire and you know, I can keep my hand in teaching if I want to. So I, we did, and I did teach at Cape Cod Academy. I subbed, I for while I said I should have been their marriage counselor. I went in and they had, or family planning counselor, because I had all these people on pregnancy leaves. I taught English, I taught Latin. And it was a lot of fun. I did it. It was just great. Three months. Perfect. You got in, you really like it, then the last week and I was counting the seconds before I could get out.

Tye
Get out of there, yeah.

Burges
So it was true. The kids were great. Umm and it was a real nice way to retire. I really enjoyed it. Um and I got involved with a lot of things here. The Civic Association due to the fact that [unintelligible], Stuart Bornstein wanted to put in 22 condos. We eventually whittled them down to 11. Um uh the Barnstable Land Trust I got involved with because we, Mr. Deedskin had been involved with that a lot and that was the Mary Barton land trust in Eagle pond. And so I've been I was on the board of that and stuff. So it

was it was a great and and Peter particularly liked it because she came from she's Dutch and she came from village life in Holland and she loved Cotuit because it was village and it was a place where you can walk to the store, you could talk to Paul Noon was working in the store for Steve in those days. And...

Tye

This is also [unintelligible]. So I want to say you probably taught my brother and my niece at Brooks, but the um, my brother would have been there in the class of um something like 70 and my niece would have been there much more recently, probably just before you retired.

Burgess

Probably your niece 70, I-I didn't get to Brooks until seven- until 73. From 68 to 73 I taught at a place called St. Stephen's school in Rome. I used to say to my my Brooks parents when I was administrator, I said that I started teaching land in Rome, I was at the top of my career at the beginning, I've been working my way down ever since.

Tye

So I also thought that um Brooks was a really beautiful uh campus. But so many people who teach in private school are um at wit's end at the end, because they don't have housing, separate from what they had in school. And the idea that you Cotuit to come to...

Burgess

Well, that was one of the things, we had we had a thing for a while at Brookes was called a liaison committee was a liaison between the faculty and the trustees. And uh one of the things, I was a member of that, and one of the things we did with another one of my wonderful colleagues who was head of the science department, was work on methods to either force or encourage um uh resident faculty to acquire uh property um to which they, well, they might require or not. But like summer, if they weren't going to work in summer school or something, they had places to go, you know, could we get a could we get some money, you know, for a down payment on a purchase of a house and stuff. This was and there were various ways, you know, savings ways to do that. And it was and we had a lot of education about that. Because, indeed, um it was very difficult. One of my colleagues that I've worked with in Rome became the head of the Classics Department at Groton, and he always thought he was going to retire to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and you know, and he went to Charlotte, North Carolina making that [unintelligible]. When he had a friend there and and he said, you know, you know, and he had a Belgian wife, who didn't like snow. So, but he said, You know, I could not I couldn't afford to go to Cambridge, Massachusetts, you know, you know, and they didn't have as good a program as as Brookside did.

Oden

[unintelligible] a couple there teaches at Kent?

Burgess

Yeah that's right. Julie. Uh she [unintelligible] Julie Defesantis. She was she was in, uh, I knew her for when she was at Brooks, they teach at Kent. They live right down the street from us. Yeah.

Tye

So it strikes me that you have seen partly because you have an eye for history and partly because you've lived through a lot of a lot of changes in the village. And the, has from the time you have conscious memory coming down from summers uh in Shrewsbury, to what you're seeing now, when you think of the ways that the village has stayed the same and the ways that have changed, what are the things that strike you most?

Burgess

Well, the thing that strikes me most, I think, is that when I was a kid, I would say, if you asked [unintelligible] Cotuit I would have said, it is comprised of, you know, the all year round folks who live here and work here. And and, you know, and, and are essentially bankrolled by Milton Crocker, who who saved all of their lives in the depression. Um, um...

Tye

Explain that for people who don't know on the tape. What did he do?

Burgess

Well he was, he ran the, he ran the Cotuit grocery. And, and, and you could, you know, he and Harry, were, you know, if you had a crisis, I mean, they could, they could, they could give you money, and they give you money...

Odenca

At least feed you.

Burgess

Yeah, at least feed you.

Tye

So give you credit on food.

Burgess

Yeah.

Tye

And give you actual money

Burgess
Right

Tye
To help you through...

Burgess
If necessary.

Tye
Wow

Burgess
I mean, even even, like, you know, even Dick White when he went off to, uh, when he went off to, he was working out of Packs, and he was with Kath, he was just married to Kathy and he was going out to law school. And he was late getting, you know, accepted, I don't know where it was Case Western or something out in Ohio, and and so he said, I've been accepted. [unintelligible] get by on a beer from Harry or something. And he said, I don't know, how am I gonna get out, get out there. And Harry says to him, Well, how much is it gonna cost? He said, eh, probably about 500 bucks. Harry said pay me back, gave him the 500 bucks. So that, you know, that was that was that part. That was the townspeople, and they were they were, were very close. You know. And then, I would say when I think of Cotuit when I was a kid, it was these big families. And families they were. I mean, if you went all the way from the cow yard to the Lloyds, everybody was a family, the Almies and the Bidwells were one family. And then you got to the Wadsworths, you know, and in between those people related to but I can't remember their names. And then, you know, then you got to the the Lowell's, and the Lowell's and the Ropses and the Barsons. And that was one whole family. And then you came up the street, you know, when you got out to the Bailey's on and and the Lloyds and and the Wessons. I mean, they they owned a lot of property. And they had big family. And there were tons. The Northies and the Shreeves and the Ropses and the Pearsons were all related, you know. Um, so...

Odense
[unintelligible]

Burgess
Yeah through, and the Coolidge's, yeah. Through the the original relation was a Shreeve. And they, and they, they all came from, that relationship was in Salem, not Boston, that was in Salem Massachusetts. So they were you know, and and you kind of, you know, you kind of, and then and then as the...

Tye
Can I interrupt one more second?

Burgess
Yup, yup.

Tye
The the, when you you mention these names, to a Bostonian these are names that resonate.

Burgess
Yeah.

Tye
Whether its Shreeve or Cabbot, are these the same ones that are the big?

Burgess
Yeah.

Tye
These are?

Burgess
Yeah. Uncle Willie used to work in what he called the store, which was Shreeve [unintelligible] and Lowell. Uncle Willie Shrieve. He he was a famous [unintelligible] he was famous for saying that Cotuit was an old Wampanoag word for alcohol. Because the parties were long and brutal, but um, and even, but I was saying, about these, the families and then you had this other thing that was, I would say, just post the sort of big families who are pre, they were pre the war anyway, you know, but you had post World War Two, you had sort of regional things that came in and that I think, came through the pines, people came to the pines, and they stayed at the pines and they want you know, you had the Holsteins who stayed at the Pines. And Rita and that crowd. You had the Cleveland people, um the Bedearthas's, the um, you know, Suepile all of...

Tye
Cleveland, Ohio?

Burgess
Cleveland, Ohio and St. Louis.

Tye
How did they come from...

Burgess

They came to the Pines and then they liked Cotuit.

Tye

And then they stayed.

Odense

[unintelligible]

Tye

And loved it, just amazing.

Burgess

Right, you know, and then you had from brownie and from Anna we have the Worcester people who came [unintelligible] my parents. The Calots, the Sessions the, and they rented, they rented up and down. You know...

Tye

And they spread word back in Worcester

Burgess

They spread the word or the other other people, the Mortons that you know, who rented the Mortons rented the the Zeiss's Redhouse. The Calots lived everywhere. The Calots lived in number two Worcester place, which Jessie Hurley's just bought. They lived, oh God they lived everywhere. Who else would [unintelligible] there were a fair number of you know, some of them came over from Daniels island. They were the Townsends and the Calots lived in Daniels Island [unintelligible] for a while. But those days, you know, there was nobody over in Poppanessex except them and the mosquitoes as big as small dogs.

Tye

I gotta interrupt again and just ask the partly what you're describing is how people ended up anywhere.

Burgess

Yeah.

Tye

The word spreads. But was there something special about Cotuit that you thought you had discovered paradise or a little bit of...?

Burgess

Well, yeah, I think it is. It is unique. It was it somehow was small. Um, but it had the conveniences for all these people.

Tye

What conveniences [unintelligible]

Burgess

And the convenience. The convenience was, you know, Milton Crocker, if you came from if you came from Cleveland, and you came down for Thanksgiving, you know, you could call up Harry and Milton and say we're coming and they had the key to your house and when you arrived, the refrigerator was full of all the stuff you needed for breakfast, etc. dadada.

Tye

Wow.

Burgess

And Harry had, they had two beautiful [unintelligible] should have saved the delivery. Delivery vehicles because they were gorgeous. Um and you know, they so they delivered.

Tye

Motorized uh [unintelligible] were they...?

Burgess

They were they were they were they were Chevy vans of probably 1946 or 47.

Tye

You remember this?

Oden

Maybe a later version [unintelligible] Steve Gould drove one.

Burgess

Yeah. Yeah, probably. And it had Yeah, and then, you know, beautiful, you know—

Oden

Logo

Burgess

Beautiful, you know, golden lettering ala the Boston Globe, Cotuit grocery company on the side, they were gorgeous. And you, you know, if you couldn't get to the grocery, you called up and you gave them

your order. And then they packed it up. And, you know, they drove, he drove it down and delivered. And so all of the for people who came from a long way like the Wesson's coming from Arkansas, I mean talk about a train trip. You know, they arrived and the place was ready. Um and and so the same with the Lloyds. I mean and if you you know, I don't know whether you'd row across in a Hurricane, but they got you stuff somehow. And that was what...

Tye

So Wingate Lloyd said, I we asked that specific question sort of how where did you get your [unintelligible] all of your provisions and he was too young to have known at that point but

Burgess

Right.

Tye

You're describing they probably got their provisions.

Burgess

Oh, yeah, yeah. And I mean, I remember my my mom, she used to say, you know, cuz she complained that you couldn't find something. We eat what, we eat what Milton wants us to eat. But um it was it was a wonderful, the grocery was another place. It was just transcendently wonderful. I mean, it was it was the I cant remember, old Mr. Snow who was the first butcher, he would cut the meat while he was still smoking a cigar [laughs].

Tye

Wow.

Burgess

And then Lula Force was the last butcher. He would—they were wonderful, you know, and you could go in and get, you know, my mother would have, you know, the hamburger ground in front of her and stuff like that. It was real—and the head, you know, and then you had my father liked the New York cheddar, they had the big block, I want some of that rat cheese, he would say. Cut this thing off!

Tye

And you didn't have to go across 28 for any of that stuff.

Burgess

No, no. And then, you know,

Odenice

There wasn't a grocery

Burgess

There wasn't

Tye

So there wasn't, okay.

Burgess

When we lived in the Robses farmhouse we would go once a week we would go to Osterville, to the a&p in Osterville to do some big buying stuff there. But you know, and then we for the rest, we shopped at the Cotuit grocery, but even by then the Cotuit grocery was you know, gotten much smaller and it didn't have didn't have didn't have a meat counter anymore. Or not much of one because they just couldn't support a separate butchery you know. Um he was on

Tye

Because stop and shop did them in or the?

Burgess

No I think it was just, yeah to some extent and also the butcher, you know, Lou retired and there was nobody gonna take that up again. You know, it's just you know.

Odense

Harry did.

Tye

Yeah, Harry did it for a while. Yeah. So it gradually and then when Harry died, that was just a tragedy. And then Milton survived. His father survived a couple of years when he passed away the kids just couldn't, you know, couldn't [unintelligible], the whole thing was closed for like two years before Steve bought the building. [unintelligible] Yeah, and that was, that was tough. You know, it was nothing was going on. But uh, and I think that, you know, that's one of the things that I feel right now that that makes Cotuit you know, Megan and Seth, you know, running a nice store people feel comfortable going in there, the food is excellent. You know, it's very welcoming. That's the thing that, you know, and if you needed, you know, when people were, the Dertha's, the Dertha's came back from Florida and COVID, you know, they, they bought their stuff from the Cotuit grocery and delivered it, you know? So the same thing operates when, when you need it.

Tye

So, but just what you were just describing, um again, trying to figure out what's the cause and effect? Is there something about Cotuit that encourages special people like Seth and Megan to come here and do that, and they know that there's a community that will support them? Or is it luck that we end up with?

Burgess

Very hard to tell. There's something about, I do think there is something about the the geography of Cotuit that's magical. That other Cape town's have and have, you know, there are people who are devoted to their Cape village. But but it's remarkable that that, that Cotuit has survived with, you know, so many things, you know, there's no place to stay here. When when I was a kid, there were tons of places to stay here. You think well, wow, you know, you could stay at the Pines, you could stay at the Cotuit inn, you know, and and...

Odenice

There were a few bed and breakfasts.

Burgess

There were bed and breakfasts. And, you know, you guys stayed in the Mary Meadow,

Odenice

[unintelligible]

Burgess

And yeah, right. Yeah. Yeah. So, in that, that, I think is, in one way, that's a little bit sad. I think it's nice to have, you know, some transient people who come through. You know, and I'm not, you know, I'm not wowed by the incredible overbuilding or the sort of extreme building. Certainly on vineyard road, the two newest things, one looks like an office building, and the other looks like I say, a refugee from Disney World.

Tye

Yeah seriously. That's a good...

Burgess

But you know, and I was up there watching them tear down the trees to make this major Avenue and this new house that's over on [unintelligible] bay, and watching these huge machines, I actually took a movie of it. Just chop these trees and whack [tree cutting noises].

Odenice

Right next to Wind gates.

Burgess

Yeah, right next to Wind gates, you know, that thing. It took them an hour and a half to tear down hundreds of years of trees. I mean, you know, just horrendous. But, Ellie was saying, or was it, Lisa said

they sold a little piece of property next to that, to some woman and said said, Oh, well, at least I'll get some light. [laughs].

Tye

But hear you tell that story. And hearing so many people tell a version of it of those same properties, including my wife who walks there every day, the idea that would be happening in most villages more often. And it strikes me that is still a rarity here, and there's something..

Burgess

Yeah, I think that I think, you know, uh, originally, I mean, the people who who were out there, um, were very aware of the value of of land on the cape. And they, Mr. Lloyd, and Mr. Whitcomb came to my father at one point, with a with a proposition to buy pretty much all the land around Papanasam Bay for some some maybe it was a half a million dollars, it was a lot more than my father could chip into. But you know, that was what became New Seabury. And their idea of buying all of Papanasam Bay was not to make it New Seabury. What we walked down there where you walk along the Mashpee River, that was Mr. Whitcomb's duck hunting place, I mean, and he gave that to the trustees of reservations. You know, the Lowell's [unintelligible], out between Wake bee pond, that was the Lowell's one of their woodlots but it was basically a place they went on Sundays to make trails and have picnics. They liked open spaces. I mean, the Lloyds like their woods, the Wesson's, you know, they didn't use all their 100 acres, but they had 100 acres.

Odense

Could imagine that having gone a very different way. We're very fortunate.

Burgess

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, yeah, exactly. I mean, when the Wesson's sold off to Frank McCourt, they did not sell off like, you know, Cinderbill, I mean, you know what happened you know what happened in the in between [unintelligible] and Hyannis in the in the 60s and 70s and 80s. Before anybody knew that, you know, our septic systems weren't going to work. You know, that's that's the tragedy.

Tye

You started and I interrupted you, I think the um, talking about the separation, um, the townie versus summer people in terms of looking at change. Has that, were you going to say that it's changed now in terms of the relationship?

Burgess

Ah to some extent I think.

Tye

Because there are more townie, because there are more [unintelligible].

Burgess

I think I think that I think, you know, the the general, the general nature of people's employ is not so divided um as it was then. I mean, the summer people, you know, went off to work in major cities except for the Wesson's, who went off to their huge farm in Arkansas. And, you know, the townspeople have their, their, you know, relatively more, you know, almost 19th century, village life here, you know, now, you know, everybody's everybody's in the mix, to some extent. And, you know, a lot of the things that people did here as, as professions that were still existed in, in my time, I mean, you know, have sort of, you know, disappeared to some extent. Local grocers, local people. You know, it's been taken up. There were there were a lot more local, you know, now we talk about Eat Local, and we get local farms, there were a lot more local farmers when I was a kid, I mean, there were, every one of these estates had its own farm. The Witkin farm had a farm, you know, the Wesson's had a place. And then you had all these farmers and he went over to Falmouth, everybody, you know, the back the back part of of everybody's house was was a strawberry field or a cornfield. And you could go, you know, pick your own and, or flowers were all for sale on the side of the street. Most of those people were, you know, Portuguese Cape dirty. You know, they were they were immigrants in the back part of fa Falmouth, and you go back, go there now. And it's, you know, they're the farms have disappeared, the back the back yards, or, you know, the same people maybe are there, but they have different jobs. You know, different different [unintelligible]. So I think that's, it's a little more cohesive and the things, the things that we operate, we do, like look at the Yacht Club, tons of people join the, the, the instructional program, and they're not all summer people. There's quite a few local people. And so that...

Odenice

There's a few instructors

Burgess

Right, instructors.

Odenice

[unintelligible] 20%.

Burgess

Right, so you've got, you've got that, and then that means that people, you know, they just mix, and that's, that's a healthy thing. I think, on the other hand, you get, you know, you know, when I grew up, everybody seemed to know everybody from the end of the town to the end of the town, and, you know, people come in and they buy, you know, now we're spending 10s of millions of dollars to buy property. And, um, you know, from what I hear of people living up [unintelligible], you know, they don't know, necessarily who these people are, nor did the people who come in care about knowing them. So [laughs].

Tye

So all that makes sense. What I wonder is being able to look back and sort of assessing what kind of long range impact there was of COVID. Are we gonna say this changed things more? That a lot of people came here [unintelligible] with the assumption that work was no longer gonna mean being in a workplace and that they could stay here and do their work from here. [unintelligible] that, the.

Burgess

I I think so. But I think that in many ways that that's healthy.

Tye

I'm saying it's a good thing.

Burgess

Yeah, I think it's a good thing. I think it's it's nice to have people who live permanently, or at least a bulk of the year here, you know, so they're invested in what's going on. Um, uh, I and I and I think that um, but i don't i don't i i don't know percentage wise, would be interesting to find out how many people are will make that because I already feel that the Cape's a lot quieter now than it was

Tye

Two weeks go

Burgess

You know, two weeks ago and and that, you know, yes, it's still busy. And yes, there are still people here, who are working here, but I have a feeling that the general trend will will shift back. The big problem for us is is this place gonna be nice enough. I mean, you know, can you drink the water? Can you swim in the water? Can you eat the shellfish, you know, it's a huge, it's a huge deal.

Tye

It is a huge concern. So a pal, who I used to sit next to, I worked for a long time at the Boston Globe and a pal I worked with, wrote um a big Sunday sort of exposé called Rape of the Cape. And it was how the environmental, environmental factors would undermine Cape Cod eventually. And that led, this was now probably 30 years ago. And it led to the Cape Cod commission and a lot of better environmental planning. But the question is to me, will we still too late, and when the federal government was paying 75 to 80% of sewerage costs and things like that, places got in on the act and the Cape didn't. And will we, do you think we're too late or do you think we're...?

Burgess

Well, I I you know, you're never too late, because you always fix something. But but, um, you know, this bizarre thing about the machine gun range, I mean, all this kind of stuff. It's just, you know, it's so wrongheaded that you know scratch.

Tye

On the other hand, the good news of that, is, if you were to ask anybody who's paying attention to it, 90% of people would say it was wrong headed, it wasn't as crazy. And the guy who ran, the arrogant guy who ran the place is either gone or will go in five minutes. And I think the, have we

Burgess

I think the thing is, it's not us. I, I am I'm a great fan of Andrew Gottlieb, who's the apcc guy, and I read his weekly,

Tye

Weekly [laughs] that's great.

Burgess

And I put it on my Facebook all the time. And I, and I love everything he has to say. And I think it is true, what he says you have to start locally and in you know, the, our biggest our, you know, and I feel like Ronald Reagan, right, that our biggest problem is the amount of, you know, red tape and permitting and and stuff that goes, I mean, trying to get alternative septic, for example, that, you know, that works, um, you know, reviewed and tested, just get things going. It's not like we're a nation of people who can't invent things, you know, there are solutions out there. And um it is going to take I think people you know, people just have a hard time wrapping their, their head around the fact that what what happens, the way we are now started happening when I was a kid, okay, and I was out, you know, catching crabs and eelgrass, you know, in Papanasam Bay and, and, you know, Prince Co. Well, that isn't here anymore, but it started then . And it's gonna take about that amount of time to really, you know, really clean stuff up. So you have to say, okay, you know, it isn't something that you could just turn around and in a heartbeat, but you know, you got to start doing this stuff in order to make things get slowly better. And I think that's possible.

Tye

But so I wanna raise--

Burgess

Spend some COVID money on it [laughs].

Tye

Seriou-well, COVID money, or maybe the biggest, the beyond the infrastructure bill.

Burgess

Yup.

Tye

I mean, if we get this three and a half billion dollar thing, it would be the biggest environmental investment that we've ever made.

Burgess

Yeah

Tye

And the, so, I, I have one last question and PHil probably has a bunch more. Mine is there aren't many places on the planet that over time have gotten less commercial, and Cotuit is one of them. Of all the places that you wonderfully described on your tour, this used to be this and this was that. Well, for better or worse, they're gone now. And there isn't much commercial, everything is this is still an amazingly quiet village that has, have we managed somehow to buck some...?

Burgess

I think that the three you know, if you look at it we have a post office.

Tye

Yeah.

Burgess

Crucial. We can improve some of the help. But anyway, the

Tye

Higher back [unintelligible]

Burgess

Or higher back the old ones, yeah. But that's just because we don't like anything that's new. We have a wonderful library. We have a good little restaurant bar. We have an excellent uh local store. We actually have a garage that can fix your car now. Um and all of that you don't have to cross 28 for. So actually, if I really didn't want to go to Cotuit Li, I suppose the only thing I would go to is Cotuit liquors, you know, and I only drink beer and wine. So if Steve would actually open up his beer and wine store, I could actually never go, I would never, never have to go across 28.

Tye

So, um, and that's pretty.

Burgess

And I think that's one of the reasons that that people like this place is that you know, you can feel um, it it's homey. It's a nice place to call home. You know, and you can...

Oden

That's a nice summer.

Burgess

Yeah. And and and you know, as I said in my thing when I was doing the the thing for the TV, you know, we're on the road to nowhere. And that that's another benefit.

Tye

That's a huge key. Isn't that this place [unintelligible].

Burgess

People come here because they're coming home.

Tye

Mmm.

Burgess

Even when they come in the summer, you know, one of the guys down School Street, can't remember his name, and said his grandson comes, and every time he comes, he gets out of the car, he walks down School Street to the town dock to make sure that nothing has changed. [laughs]

Oden

They'd be disappointed to see that big [unintelligible]

Burgess

I know I know that's, oh boy there's a there's a hornet's nest.

Tye

What do you got?

Oden

No I I, on most of these I've always had questions at the end, but I actually don't.

Burgess

Yeah, well. We had a, I had a wonderful, wonderful time here as a kid that was really great.

Tye

Do your kids and grandkids come back?

Burgess

Um my my daughter comes in the summer, she's out in San Francisco and and yh, she came for two months with with, the grandkids came. And Mark came, Mark broke his hip on his way here, so that delayed him by three weeks.

Tye

Mmm, jeez.

Burgess

But he was up and he was up and walking, they gave him a new hip. He was up and walking with a cane the next day. Three weeks later they said fine to travel. Only thing he couldn't do was crew in a boat with a with a centerboard.

All

[laughs]

Burgess

That did! He could not go in a boat that had a centerboard.

Oden

Wow.

Burgess

He said you can go on a boat that has a keel. Theory, I guess was big enough. You know, he wasn't gonna toss around

Oden

Or step over.

Burgess

Yeah, right. Yeah.

Tye

But so...

Burgess

My my, my my Henry, my grandson, he has a little, you know, he starts up in about May and he counts the seconds till he's gonna get to Cotuit.

Tye

So this is...

Burgess

And this is coming all the way across the country.

Tye

And this is true to his heritage here.

Burgess

Yeah.

Tye

I mean the, this is great. Wow.

Burgess

Yeah, yeah.

Tye

So I think

Oden

Actually, I do have one

Tye

Yeah please.

Oden

Just just a quick sketch of the Burgess family.

Burgess

Oh, okay.

Oden

I mean, you could do it, you could do it for hours.

Burgess

Yeah, I know. Well, just my my, I'm named for Thomas Burgess who came over perhaps on the boat called Ann to Saga Slinn. And then he knew, he went to Duxbury. He settled in Duxbury for like a year or two. And then he came to Sandwich. He presumably knew the Tin Man of sandwich, came on the ann. And he came down there and he was fortunate. He and his wife were fortunate to live the grand old

age of 85. So he was like, outlived all those guys. He was like the elder of the town of sandwich. And he had a bunch of kids, his oldest kid was married a woman from Duxbury, and they enjoy the the uh uh unique history of being, he's the first person to get divorced in the colonies. They fell out. And she fortunately they they crammed in the divorce She had died two weeks earlier. Anyway, he married a Quaker, and he went down a little Compton. He was he was exiled. Because he married the Quaker and he and he was left five pounds when the old man died. That was it. But he started, um, he had a whole raft of kit, girls, but he did have one boy. And there's a whole bunch of Burgesses that were down in Rhode Island, one of whom ended up being Sire, or grand sire or guy who signed the Declaration of Independence. And then I'm related to the second son Jacob, but he was in he was in sandwich and then the next one, they would sort of swap Yankees. They moved with where the where the swamp grass was good, the marsh grass was good. The next one moved over to Warrel. And uh that house still stands and it's called Burgess point. There's a great part, an onset, and that's a real old house and that stands and then his son was a doctor. He went down to New Bedford he was lived outside of New Bedford and he his wife, he was a doctor so they didn't last long. If you were a doctor you got sick, so they they lasted till they were about 36, 40. And he had three sons. The um, my relative Benjamin he became a doctor. He went to Mount Martha's Vineyard he married um he married a Martha's Vineyard girl. Lived in Tisbury, during the revolution. And when he, the British sacked Martha's Vineyard they, they took, they took away all the cattle and sheep and they, they sort of, you know, trashed it. And so he he had as a as a he was a member of the board of selectmen of Tisbury, and that kind of stuff, but he is his old man that the first doctor had gotten paid off a lot of times in his life, with land out west of the uh Connecticut River. It was a settlement of the Pequot wars and these guys got get given land. And of course, they didn't know what to do with it. So they sold and so the doctor had bought in on a theory that, you know, was an investment. And it was a period where apparently the currency was worthless because there was a war between the the colony and the and the mother state and Britain and so you know, the specie wasn't any good so you need to have either you know, gold or land. So he had land. The guy and Benjamin Burgess in the revolution he had gold because he was a doctor and he got paid you get paid with species so he had you know, and apparently he left, they went across Buzzards Bay, um, were taken across Buzzards Bay they were shot at by a British, British in the he...he had his wife's sew the gold in the hem of her skirt. And they went and they went out, went out to what was Chesterfield, Massachusetts now called that parts town called Goshen. And he [unintelligible] he already had land. He bought some more land and he established a big farm and he was a doctor out there. Horrendous stories about that, you know, his best friend was a guy from Shrewsbury, had to saw his leg off. Anyway, he lived for a long time. He was 80 or some odd, he's the first person to have an actual obituary, and the obituaries have a description of how after the after he died, they took him apart to discover his kid his kidney stones were the size of golf balls. He'd been in agony for the last 10 years of his life. Anyway, his, she had a whole bunch of kids. Umm and a lot of girls, one of the girls married a Whitney and so I'm distantly related through her to the guys who built the subway in New York and Boston. They were brothers and you know Payne, Whitney and all those Whitney's. The umm, my my ancestor went and became a lawyer. And he was down in Blackstone, uh Massachusetts, and then he moved to Worcester. And then his son, then he he, his wife died and he married the uh an Aris up on Salisbury Street and

Worcester and lived in this ancient house with a with a barn that had been lived, built, like two years after Worcester was founded. It was very ancient, all was destroyed in the late 19th century. Went up up or Salisbury Street got built by the you know, Wyman Gordon people all their fancy houses that looked like, you know, Newport gets shipwrecked on in Worcester. And then my, my, my grandfather, had a whole bunch of different professions. Eventually ended up as a butcher, um and he married a woman, a Scott, who had an amazing life, brought up in England, taken to Australia, came back to England, came to the United States, lived in Melrose, somehow my great great grandfather, my grandfather matter, in came when he was working in Boston with one of his uncles, and then he came back to Shrewsbury. And, and then my, uh, my, my father was a third, third child. Had an older sister, my oldest uncle was a civil engineer or became vice president of the Northern Pacific Railway, lived out in the lived out in Washington state for a while and then eventually in Minneapolis, St. Paul, used to come and visit visit us in his private car. In those days, he'd get called all the way to Worcester to see his fa, he came every year to see his family. And then my father, he served in the First World War in the Marines. He was a sergeant he never didn't see any action he was luckily late enough to visit the trenches but not be in them. He spent most of his time guarding German prisoners of war. Came back, he founded, started a leather business. And he eventually was in Worcester and uh um my mother uh was the heiress of another leather business. And in Shrewsbury, and uh they got, they got together and eloped, because my mother is my grandmother, Vicki was a staunch Catholic and the Hickeys themselves, though they had originally been Catholic, my great grandfather when he emigrated to the United States, married a protestant women, and became pillar of the Congregational Church in Shrewsbury, because he saw which side the the the, you know, the picture of George Washington was on. And, and but his oldest son had married this Catholic girl and my, my Scottish grandmother was the teacher in the Sunday school teacher in the Protestant church. So they never, those two families never entered each other's house, never met each other.

Odenice

Wow.

Tye

Jeez.

Burgess

Other than my grandfather, Bill Hickey, who met everybody in the world. He was he didn't have those but but the women were never never set out to reach up. So my mother and father, we fortunately, were brought up with no religion because there was no way you could satisfy either side.

Tye

Both sides, wow.

Odenice

So you might as well piss them off equally.

Burgess

Right, exactly [laughs]. But anyway, my father had his own business, the Burgess Leather Company, and then my mother's business, the Hickey Leather Company had been, I mean that's a history story. That was traces back to pre colonial or a colonial foundation [unintelligible] a Memphis brand in Shrewsbury [unintelligible]. And that was in a building right across from our house in Shrewsbury up until I was a little kid, and eventually the town came along, took a look at it and said, you know, this building is A gonna fall down, or and probably kill all of your employees, the way you're running this business. So my father bought a textile mill in Grafton that was emptying out and shifted the businesses over there. And they ran that up until up until I was in college in the 60s 70s when he retired and continued with a little bit on my brother. And eventually, he sold it to the guy who was the principal Financial Officer, and I believe it exists in Maine and New Hampshire, the Burgess leather company does, but the rest of it eventually wound down. It's quite quite a story. I mean, these people they had, they had a big, big business and made a lot of money in the world war one uh with leather, you know, for for soldiers and stuff made a lot of money in way back in the Civil War.

Tye

Have you ever put on paper the whole, this whole family history?

Burgess

No, I've never put it on tape.

Tye

So can I just make a presumptuous suggestion. Someday, your grandkids and your great grandkids and people are going to want to know that story. And you go back, you know, um, to colonial days in a way that that's a great story.

Burgess

Yeah. Yeha. There's some great stories about the Hickeys and their leather company because they they would go my my my uncle Great Uncle Frank, bought all this all this leather from Switzerland. And you know, there was a commodity crisis. Maybe it was in 22 or something. So by the time it showed up, they couldn't pay for it. So they had, went in receivership. The place was called Hick-Green and Hickey Leather Company and you know, two days later it reemerges, the Hickey Leather Company. And the judge keeps saying how did they do this. You know how did they sell all their equipment to the lawyer for a buck [laughs].

Tye

So, I'm, um... my wife is going to kill me.

Oden

Okay.

Tye

Get back. This has been um, extraordinary and the uh—