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Phil Odenca

Transcribed by Madeleine Scott

TYE: So the date is, um, March 21, and it is the second day of spring, and the first day that really feels like spring in Cotuit, and I am here with Philip Odenca who is, um, my sidekick on this project and knows more about the history of Cotuit than anybody we're gonna talk to or have talked to, um, and I wanna start by asking him, um, a simple question about the Yacht Club, which is: Tell us what you know about how it got started, and how you got started with it.

ODENCA: Sure. Well, I think others have talked about the beginning of the Yacht Club, and there's some pretty well-recorded history on it, so maybe, you know, we can sort of broad brush over that and then, you know, a little more of what I remember, but-

TYE: So, I want to interrupt you. Where – if somebody who's listening to this wanted to get some of the, um, recorded histories of the Yacht Club, where would one look for that?

ODENCA: Uh, well, I- the- the Historical Society is a good, you know, it's a good place to start. There are several papers that have been written one- one in particular by Anna Murray called, "We," (*undecipherable*), "We Make Our Own Salt," something like that, I can't – I don't know if I have it exactly right. Um, so that's- and there's some other papers on that, and then, uh, my father's book on the skiffs, uh, is sort of an encyclopedia of the history of each boat, but- but the first, uh, 70 or so pages are other aspects of- of- of the history behind those boats and of course the Yacht Club was a very important part of that.

TYE: Uh, so I want to just say, if anybody ever does listen to this tape someday, um, we're gonna try to have, when the Historical Society has the posting of these interviews, we will try to include links to some of these other histories that people ought to take a look at.

ODENCA: Yeah. So, good idea. But- but yeah, the Yacht Club was started in, uh, 1906 and it was a- it was a group of kids, um, and geez, you know, from there the early history of Cotuit it really can- can unravel, but it was, uh, you know, they were- they were summer kids and they were some of the first, it was – being a summer person in Cotuit or anywhere, I suppose was a

relatively new thing then, um, and they, uh, their, uh, parents, uh, bought boats that were modeled after the boats that the oystermen used, and the oystermen would actually sail out to do the oystering and- and, as I understand it, would sometimes race back at the end of the day. And so, uh, there were, uh, the parents contracted for a half a dozen or so skiffs, and that was, uh, that was the beginnings of the Yacht Club, and somebody, uh, somebody being a fella called Morse, who was, I think, had a purchasing for Harvard, um, has a- had a big house that's just, just beyond (*undecipherable*) beach as you- as you take that turn. Uh, he- he, I think, sort of coached the kids through putting together bylaws and getting organized, but it started with- with, uh, with probably, uh, 12 or 18 kids and about half of them were- were girls, before women, you know, had- had the vote, and they had- they had voting rights, as the story goes. And, uh, and that was- that was it. There's been sailing under the auspices of the Cotuit Mosquito Yacht Club since, uh, since 1906.

TYE: So as somebody who doesn't know anything about the Yacht Club, I'm curious – are the boats rented? Are they owned? Are they – what does the club have in terms of its own assets versus just, uh, providing a place for people to gather and do things?

ODENCE: Yeah. So the Club had – the Club's assets, up until the, uh, let's say the 50s, uh, was a, you know, a cash box where they collected the 50 cents, um, dues every year, um, and literally- literally no other- other assets. In the 50s, a parents' organization started up, called the Association of the Cotuit Mosquito Yacht Club, that bought some boats, uh, boats, I'm sorry, being motor boats to- to, uh, to supervise the races. And then, uh, in, uh, I guess it was the 80s, I don't remember the year, but I'm lookin'- lookin- over at the, what is now the Yacht Club – we got a piece of property, in great part through the- the generosity of the- the Ropes family, uh, who- who segmented off a piece of their land, and- and, uh, provided it at a very reasonable generous price to, uh, to the Association. So the association of the Cotuit Mosquito Yacht Club has a- has a quarter acre with a couple of sheds on it, um, owns some motor boats, and owns a, uh, a fleet of 420s, which are sort of the standard racing boats for high schools and colleges these days. But in terms of the skiffs which the Yacht Club races, uh, they're all privately owned and pretty much have always been, uh, been privately owned.

TYE: So does that mean that only people – I don't, again, know what it takes to, um, afford a skiff – does that mean that it was always people of means who are doing this? Or that people who scraped together dollars and could afford to buy a skiff and, um, and join?

ODENCE: Well, uh, it's a- it's a great question. And I think it's become a little more, uh, pricey and- and- and requires a little more on the way of means these days, particularly to be competitive. Um, but, uh, if you wind back the clock a little, a Swamp Fox 66, my boat we bought in, uh, in the, uh, late 60s for 125 dollars. But it came with a new sail. So justified the price. Uh, but, no, these days, it's- it's, um, it's, you know, tens of thousands of dollars to- to afford one and so it's- it's a lot of money. On the other hand, people are pretty generous about loaning out their boats, particularly to juniors.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: So- so you know, kids who were – and that's kind of always been the tradition, even before there was a formal instructional program in place, which has been in place since the early 60s. Uh, there was a, you know, good history of- of people teaching other people, older kids teaching younger kids. And the- the racing series are segmented by age. So there's a junior series up to 16. And if you, you know, if you had a friend- if you have a friend who's 17, or 25, or 63, um, they're not gonna be using the boat on Wednesday mornings for the junior series. And so it's- it's, you know, even today, it's pretty easy for a junior to get a hold of a boat if they want one.

TYE: Is that where you learned how to sail?

ODENCE: Well, a lot of us grew up with it in our blood. I mean, I think literally my first summer my father got in trouble for taking me out sailing as a- as a tiny infant. Um, and so I- you know, I- I learned somewhat from going out with him and sail- but- but sailing, I would say, actually, yes, it was more – I- I was kind of a disaster, honestly, in the Pram Program, which was the instructional program. For whatever reason, I just- I didn't like it. It scared me. You know, I had a lot of aversion. But, um, some older kids started taking me out. I felt better about it as a consequence. And then when I was probably 11 or 12, friends and I started getting to take boats out, just us. And that's really, you know, when it started appealing to me and when I- when I got into it. But I remember being pretty young and being pretty –not liking sailing too much.

TYE: Could- can you do me a favor?

ODENCE: Sure.

TYE: As we're talking-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Just – it's more important that it be near you, and it is near you-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: But just occasionally look and see that lines are going back and forth. We can't see the-

ODENCE: Okay.

TYE: Red light here-

ODENCE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

TYE: But just so that-

ODENCE: Yeah. I can see. Yeah, they're moving.

TYE: Ensure that it hasn't lost any, uh-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Juice, and the, um, so again, um, I'm intrigued by the Yacht Club, both in terms of its sailing aspect, and in terms of its helping define for a lot of people here, what Cotuit was like as a community and what made it a special place. How unique is it to have an enterprise like the Yacht Club in a village on Cape Cod or a town on Cape Cod?

ODENCE: Well, there are Yacht Clubs in a number of towns and villages on the Cape. Uh, and we've had- I've had some exposure to some of them, more when I was a junior going to interclub competitions, um, and dances afterwards and those sorts of things. Um, most of them are much more formalized. So the- the, uh, CMYC is- is unique in its informality. And- and in its, uh, it's being, you know, organized and run by people who are under 21 years of age, and we have that reputation, and there's- there's funny stories around about commodores going to the Nantucket Yacht Club, and not, uh, not being suspected of being commodores.

TYE: How about your prowess? Is the, uh, is Cotuit one of the more successful, in terms of the races, Yacht Clubs around?

ODENCE: Yeah, I think- we- we hold our own, we don't stand out as, I think of Vineyard Haven of, at least in my day, was- was the club that turned out the, you know, the best sailors on a national level. But we're very- we have a lot of kids coming out of the program and going on to

sailing college and those sorts of things. Um, and the instructional program is- is considered, um, certainly one of the best on Cape Cod, and, uh, and, uh, and I believe is absolutely the cheapest. There's a nicer way to say that – most cost-effective or most reasonably priced of any. It's, uh, it's really, uh – and that sort of is part of the whole kind of informality of the Club, but it's, you know, that has a very good reputation.

TYE: Are the instructors, um, just kids who have been through the program to the Yacht Club and want to come back and help out with other kids?

ODENCE: Yeah, pretty much always. You know, it's, uh, for the- for the ACMYC that organizes that, it's always, you know, a challenge thinking forward. There's no real succession planning or anything for the instructors. And, you know, thinking who- who could do it, but it- it's usually, uh, college kids who've been through the program, um, have been involved in the yacht club and sailors. Occasionally, um, they'll bring in an older person, either – and there've been a few who've been through the Yacht Club – but a handful of times over the years, it's been somebody from outside, just 'cause you needed somebody 'cause of the- just that particular scenario at the time, but- but the norm is- is, uh, kids who've come up through the program.

TYE: And this is all volunteer?

ODENCE: No, no, no. There's (*undecipherable*)-

TYE: Oh, the instructors are paid?

ODENCE: Yes.

TYE: Paid through dues?

ODENCE: No, so the-

TYE: Paid through lessons charges?

ODENCE: So the, uh, the CMYC is, does the racing program and dues are part of the racing program, and they have a very small budget, it's mostly to print schedules, uh, pay dues to the national, uh, and local organizations. And, uh, what else? Not much. Not much else in the budget for the, um, uh, the ACMYC, which is, again, the parents' Association, which has two functions:

to- to support the racing through providing motor boats and operators for the motor boats. Um, so we really look after the safety of the fleet, and then to run an instructional program. And, uh, the ACMYC is run completely off donations. There's no dues, per se, anybody paid- who pays any amount is a member. Um, and then, and then, uh, instructional fees for the- for the program. And that's what- that's what funds the program. And the- the instructors are not, um, getting rich, but they do okay. And they're able to augment it through some private lessons as well. So you can, you know, you can- you can make a reasonable living. My- one of my old friends, uh, (*undecipherable*) Matthew Barzun, (*undecipherable*) I'm spacing on his name. So Matthew Barzun is a great guy, part of the Barzun family, and he's actually ambassador to the court of St. James in the Obama administration. Uh, he worked- he worked in the program, was always a bright young guy. He coined the term 'pink collar work' for, uh, for- for being a sailing instructor, because yeah, he didn't get paid a ton of money, but you got to sit out in the sun all day. Um, but doing real work. I mean, teaching kids is not- it's not, uh, is not any mean feat. But that was- that was pink collar work.

TYE: And you've been, um, a student or a reluctant student, uh, that you were an instructor?

ODENCE: Yeah. Yep.

TYE: You were-

ODENCE: Ran the program-

TYE: Commodore? You ran the program as – that's called Commodore, or what is it called?

ODENCE: So the, you know, yeah, we're- we're conflating two things that are easy to conflate.

TYE: Yeah.

ODENCE: So you – the instructional program, the person who runs it is the head instructor.

TYE: Yeah.

ODENCE: Or sometimes there's no head instructors. But that's all separate from the Yacht Club that has a Commodore. Now to- to conflate them back together and confuse things further. It's not unusual for the Commodore of the Yacht Club to be an instructor, and perhaps head

instructor. But that's just, you know, there's no- there's no real connection, except they're the right age and have the, you know, the right age and the right skill set for both.

TYE: And were you both?

ODENCE: Uh, yes. Not- not, I don't know, maybe simultaneously, I don't remember. But I was head instructor, and I was Commodore a few times as well.

TYE: And active in the parents' group?

ODENCE: Uh, yeah, I was president of the Association, and, uh, and had been on the board of the Association a number of times, the Council, it's called.

TYE: So in addition to the kinds of sailing activities you've just described, this also sounds like it was a social group. You talked about dances and people develop friendships through it; it sounds like they last into adulthood. The, um, talk about that. What – how much of a part of your relating to Cotuit was the Yacht Club and the sailing program, and what specific kinds of activities did it run?

ODENCE: Well, the dances I referred to were when we'd go, uh, to the Hyannis Regatta-

TYE: Ah.

ODENCE: As guests of Hyannis and then, you know, come home and put on our blue blazers and head- head back over and check out the Hyannis Yacht Club girls. Uh, or from – kids from many Yacht Clubs. Um, so that was, you know, as- as an example, they do these, you know, there – these big regattas tend to have social events as well. And, uh, we've not really had a lot of that except around big, big events like the, uh, when we did the 100th. It was- it was big when we did the 75th. And there were usually social events around those, but the norm for the Yacht Club is, per se, is not to have, um, social events. That said, there is certainly a social group that revolves around the Yacht Club. And, you know, we've talked to people, ol- you know, my seniors who- who, you know, have the same- same experience with the Yacht Club, but certainly in my memory, for me, most of my social life revolved around people who were involved in the Yacht Club, and- and continues to...

TYE: So it strikes me, again, as an outsider, not knowing what I'm talking about, that the- that there's a certain metaphor of, um, Hyannis or maybe Osterville having, um, fancy, elegant yacht

clubs and Cotuit having a shed, um, in terms of the- reflecting the informality and the wonderful sort of a little bit outsider status of Cotuit. Is- is that accurate? Is – are we a less fancy version, um, and a more fun version of things that are going on across the Cape and across coastal America?

ODENCE: Yeah, I- I think so. I- you know, my- my experience with those places is they're, you know, they're fine people and fun, it's just that there's certainly much more of an air of formality around it than – and you know, Commodores literally wearing, you know, blue blazers that have some insignia on them for the- for the yacht club, and, uh, you know, bigger, bigger time sailing, um, literally bigger boats, and- and you know, bigger regattas, and that- that sort of thing. Um, but, uh, you know, I can promise you things are every- every bit as competitive and, you know, probably more fun here as a – at least by my standards – because of the informality.

TYE: Was it only summer kids who were there?

ODENCE: Uh, not- not only, and there's always been some level of encouraging others to participate. And certainly the- the instructional program, um, draws in kids. I forget, we were- I was just looking at some stats on this. And I think something on the order of 20% of both the, um, uh, students and the instructors in the last few years have been year-rounders, which I think is a good-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: A good and healthy thing.

TYE: But you said instructors, is that because that's a way for kids who might not have the means who want to earn some money to do it? Or is it? I mean, are there – would they be 20% of the kids who are taking lessons be year-rounders as well?

ODENCE: Yeah. Yeah. That's what I'm saying.

TYE: Oh there would. That's what you're saying.

ODENCE: But, so, both.

TYE: Both, okay.

ODENCE: I think it's just sort of natural, usually the instructors, we tend to grow our own instructors.

TYE: Yep. So those are kids starting at the beginning, and then going through the same progression that summer-

ODENCE: Yep.

TYE: Kids would go through.

ODENCE: Yep.

TYE: So, um, you are, uh, the first second generation of somebody who we've interviewed here.

ODENCE: Yeah. (*undecipherable*)

TYE: And second generation Cotuit Yacht Club. Um, your dad was the Yacht Club, um-

ODENCE: Another Commodore. And my daughter was Commodore and head instructor.

TYE: So three generations, maybe we'll get a third generation here. But I want to take you outside of the Yacht Club – first of all, I want to ask, before we leave the Yacht Club – what other stories haven't I been smart enough to ask about that you have that are fun, Yacht Club-related stories of Cotuit?

ODENCE: Well, I told you I jotted notes. Let's see-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: What I have on the Yacht Club. Uh, yeah I didn't- I didn't have a lot specifically – I mean, I, you know, we could talk about the Yacht Club all day. I think, you know, one of the elements of the Yacht Club that's kind of interesting is the, um, is the way it somehow collapses,

uh, age groups. And, uh, so it's not a- it's not a story, per se, but it's- it's an observation that, you know, there are a lot of, you know, 16-year-olds on a first-name basis with 60-year-olds. Um, and that's, you know, that's kind of always been the case, 'cause we're out competing and racing against each other and sort of on a- on a level playing field. And- and, uh, you know, you get – there's a race committee, um, which is the essentially management of the- of the CMYC, and, uh, the head of the race committee, uh – there is a chairman of the race committee, appointed by the Commodore, often the chairman's older, sometimes 25, sometimes, you know, 65. And a range of people on the race committee, but you'll have a mix of the race- of the youngest folks on the race committee tend to be maybe 16. So you'll get this many decades span of people on the race committee working together on an even plane, discussing issues, voting on things, adjudicating protest from races. And, uh, and it's, you know, it just- it just makes for this interesting cross-generational thing. My- my father, who's- who's, uh, 90- 92 this summer, um, you know, wouldn't have a lot of friends around, except that he's- he's buddies with my friends, you know, the folks of my generation and he's got this – I- I don't get invited, but he's got this Tuesday night supper thing when, you know, when there's not a pandemic, where he's going out with a bunch of my friends, people my age. Um, and so that's, you know (*undecipherable*)-

TYE: Because of the- because of the Yacht Club stuff?

ODENCE: Well, because of, I think this- this effect of collapsing-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Generations. Not, you know, not having sort of age group generational distinctions, really.

TYE: But people who were Yacht Club-connected, who-

ODENCE: Yes.

TYE: Collapsed generations and the-

ODENCE: Yes.

TYE: So, um, if there's more on your list, but I also wanted-

ODENCE: That was about it for the Yacht Club.

TYE: So I want to ask you, as you know, 'cause you've been, um, sitting here as a co-interviewer, and all, uh, the people we've talked to, the most interesting stories tend to be whatever anybody says after they say, 'I probably shouldn't tell you this.' And then they go on. What Yacht Club stories shouldn't you tell us that humanize this, take it beyond? You've given us a wonderful outline, um, generic. Personalize it with your experiences, whether or not you should tell us.

ODENCE: Oh, geez. Well, I wasn't ready for that one, certainly. Uh, well, I you know, I think I already said the thing that's most embarrassing is that I was- I was such a terrible sailor as a- as a young kid. And, uh, you know, I do reasonably well now. I pretty much win something every season, which is not a huge distinction, but it makes me happy on prize day. Uh, but I was, you know, I was really bad to start with. And, um, and, you know, and was always playing catch up – my friends, my contemporaries were- none of them were bad the way- in the way I was. So I was, you know, I was always playing catch-up. Um.

TYE: What kind of hell did you raise as a Yacht Club-er?

ODENCE: What kind of hell? Well, I actually – so this isn't totally Yacht Club-related, and I'll-I'll see. There was- there is- has been a tradition amongst that crowd – I wouldn't call it a Yacht Club tradition – but there has been a tradition of (*undecipherable*), which is pulling, you know, pulling tricks on other people. And, uh, the first one that came to mind for me was, some of them are boat-related, so I'll circle back around to those, but I've been meaning to tell you one of them, which was dropping firecrackers down your chimney. So when the Hendersons were there, and I was- I was probably, I'm guessing 11 or 12, and over at the Pecks'. And my father and Bill Peck were good friends, although they were – this is part of that generational thing – they were probably 20 years apart. Uh, they were- they came up with this idea of – uh, they knew Jerry was probably sitting in front of the fire, I don't know, maybe it was light in the s- you know, in August, in a cold night. And they thought it would be pretty funny. So, uh, they- they encouraged me and Jeff, uh, Jeff was two years older, Jeff Peck, um, to drop some firecrackers down the chimney. So they drove us over and we scampered up on your roof and dropped firecrackers down the- down the chimney. And Jerry came scampering out and, um, I can't remember whom he was convinced it was, but he- he had somebody in mind that wasn't us, and, uh, ran into Bill and Larry who were – I think they were in- I think- maybe they were on foot, I don't remember, but in any case ran into them. And they- they concurred with this conclusion of who it was. And it wasn't us. And we were- we were still cowering up on the roof.

TYE: Oh, geez. Ah.

ODENCE: So that was one. But there- there are a number. There was a, uh, the – another one that ties to your house, actually, you've heard of the- the groovy room in the basement. So there was this- one of those suspended ceilings, you know, I don't remember what they were called, but you could just push up the tiles-

TYE: Sure.

ODENCE: Right. And so ever- there- they would put beer c- you know, when you're done with the beer cans, they would just go up there. And so I guess there was a collection of many hundreds of beer cans that they cleared out one night. And, uh, so I came down with my father to race, I don't remember the age I was, probably (*undecipherable*) or 10. And, uh, and our- our boat was literally full to the brim with- with Budweiser cans.

TYE: Ah. Love it.

ODENCE: Um, but it wasn't a problem, 'cause in those days you could just sink 'em in the harbor, and that was okay. So there was, that there was another one where, uh, Jeff Jackson's, uh, somebody got a hold of a turkey from the Dell (*unsure of this name*) turkey farm, and tied it up under the, uh, deck of Jeff Jackson's boat. When he came- so when he came down sailing one day, there was a turkey there and he was subsequent – Oh, I know! I- no. So it went back there. So his name was, uh, Jeffrey and- and Guy Jackson, his oldest nephew, couldn't say Jeffrey. And he's- he garbled it as 'turkey.' So he became Uncle Turkey. So that was- that was the inspiration for the turkey there. Um. Yeah. And the- the- the- a couple others I remember. Edie Henderson, uh, somebody, uh, she was very serious about her sailing in the day, one of the other folks we write, uh, interviewed, and this was before my time but I guess they took out and removed her centerboard and just put a piece of- a fake piece of wood at the top where the centerboard sticks up, so she didn't know when she went to let her centerboard down and had no centerboard. And then the last one I'm, um, recalling at the moment was, uh, it used to be – uh, used to be, probably in the 70s, when a lot of our generation had taken over sailing, the, uh, and- and a number of the fathers were squeezed out of the boats 'cause their kids were sailing. Uh, they- they took the Labor Day series and so, um, you know, at the end of the season they got their last sail in on Labor Day, and, uh, came down one morning and my father's boat, Jerry Henderson's boat, and Gardy Jackson's boat, were all well up on Ropes Beach right by the- right by the wall.

TYE: So let me ask you, as a again, non-sailor, when I look out on a summer day, and I see a fleet in the afternoon, a fleet of, um, small sailboats coming in, looking really beautiful as a- as a group, I can always assume that those are Yacht Club, I can generally assume if they're coming in as a fleet like that, that they're-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Cotuit Yacht Club?

ODENCE: Yeah, yeah. The o- you know, if you're- if you're talking from Loop Beach-

TYE: Yep.

ODENCE: You know, for example. Uh, you, uh, we- we will often say oh, you know, we start in the harbor, we will often sail out to- to a buoy right off Loop or out to the last red channel (*undecipherable*), which we call 'last red,' sometimes south down towards Oregon. Um, if you look way out, you'll see the (*undecipherable*) seniors, they're bigger boats, 24-foot boats, and they're- they're kind of out on the horizon, you know, well past the channel, and over towards the (*undecipherable*). But yes, anyone you would see up that close, if you saw, you know, more than three boats that looked alike together, that's- that's the- the skiff, the skiff fleet, certainly. And- and- and, you know, just circling back a little bit to the Yacht Club history. So, the Yacht Club started, um, by Loop Beach.

TYE: It did? Ah.

ODENCE: Yeah, so it was, uh-

TYE: Before the land was donated here, or the...?

ODENCE: Yeah. So, uh, the- the quick history on that was it started, um, there was a guy, uh, a guy called, uh, Woodman, and now I think I confused – I think it was actually Dr. Woodman who was probably the guy who was organiz- who helped the kids organize. I think the Morses were involved, but I've- I've always confused that one. Uh, but Dr. Woodman rented, um, uh, a house that I don't think is there anymore. Um, but- but, uh, the house – uh, or no, he would build a pier, although we rented in the summer, and the pier was sort of where the Bennetsons' (*unsure of this name*) pier is-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: So just a little bit to the east of Loop. And so the Yacht Club ran off that pier in its early days. And then, um, later, the Bennetsons' house was owned by a family called the

Sinclairs, uh, who were from Corning, New York and, um, and relatives of- of Brownings, whom we- whom we, uh, interviewed. And so they, for a couple of decades, uh, let the Yacht Club run off their pier. So the Yacht Club kinda ran out of Loop Beach, and if you needed crew, you'd just go over to the beach. Um, and then in the – I guess it was the late 50s – when, uh, Mrs. Cabot, Harriet (*undecipherable*) Cabot, uh, whose house I'm looking at across the water there – donated her beach and so it ran for many years off her beach, um, until her brother's family, um, Sally Ropes and her sisters, uh, you know, helped to facilitate our getting the- the land, which was only a hundred yards or so down the beach from Mrs. Cabot's. But, uh, but what I recall from- from my youth was, uh, the, uh, vestiges of the Yacht Club being run out by Loop, which was – a number of boats still moored there, a number of the skiffs still moored there. And, uh, and so I think, you know, I think the Yacht Club had been in the harbor maybe, you know, we're talking five years or so since the move, and there were still – the Hendersons kept two boats there, the Murrays had a boat there, number 38, The Escape, the, uh, another cousin, another Madison cousin, uh, the Eblings, had a boat, uh, Tom Burgess' boat was there. And these were all – and there were a few more, Buddy Bailey – these were all people who lived in that Loop area, who just kept their boats there. And so they would sail into the harbor for the races, and- and, you know, meet up with the rest of the fleet at the starting line, but start from out there. And then, over the years, there were fewer and fewer boats out there, it just became less and less convenient. So they all moved into the harbor. But yeah, there used to be when I was- when I was, uh, you know, in my preteens, there were a good half a dozen boats still out at Loop.

TYE: The place where the Yacht Club is now – is that land that is, um, restricted to Yacht Club forever? Or is there – is there some-

ODENCE: It's owned-

TYE: Protection-

ODENCE: It's owned by the Yacht Club.

TYE: It is.

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: But there's some protection-

ODENCE: Owned by the ACMYC.

TYE: In the gift? I guess what I'm asking is, when it was gifted, um, was it gifted with the provision that somebody couldn't someday just turn around and decide to develop it, or that it has to stay the Yacht Club?

ODENCE: I- I'm not sure.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: You know, I don't- I don't recall. It wouldn't surprise me if there was such a restriction, um, but – and, you know, anything can happen. It's probably academic, 'cause I don't think-

TYE: You can s-

ODENCE: I don't think the Yacht Club's ever going away.

TYE: Good. Um, so take us back to, um, your first memories. You were coming here. Your father told us how, sort of, the family ended up here. You were coming here from the time you were an infant, summers, till when?

ODENCE: Well, till today.

TYE: I'm sorry, that's not – let me – uh, the summer part of it, till when? When did – you were a summer resident until a few years ago when you became more of a year-round? Or when did you become...?

ODENCE: Well, it's- it's not black and white.

TYE: Yeah. So when did- when did it go from being just summer to being more often here?

ODENCE: Uh, well, I mean, it's been- it's been kind of gradual over the last decade, I guess. Um, our, you know, a- a- a milestone would be from when our center of gravity shifted from Lincoln, where we were living when my girls were in, uh, later grade school through high school, uh, and into college. Um, when we sold – we had a big house there, which we sold – and, uh, and, we moved into a small place, uh, outside the city. And, um, and so I would say at that point, our

center of gravity sort of officially shifted here. Um, and then when we bought this house, which was five years ago, you know, all- all the more. Um-

TYE: Before here you were?

ODENCE: We were, uh, on Lewis Pond road, which is, you know, off kind of behind the Coop.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: You go down Coolidge, and sort of straight across and another block. We l- that's where- that's where our place was.

TYE: And you were from a child here, every summer of your life, or most summers, or what was the?

ODENCE: I- I missed one summer, in the summer of '82, I lived in San Francisco, and never-never made it back. But pretty much every other summer. Uh, my grandparents lived at the corner of Nickerson Road and Main Street. Uh, the southwest corner.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Um, Sean O'Brien owns it now. And he'd lived – his family had, and I think still has, the house right, uh, behind, if you go back on Nickerson, the bend there. But- but, uh, yeah, so we, uh, so we would, uh – our typical pattern – and yes, you know, I spent my, you know, my first summer there, and I think he stayed there, you know, for very early summers. And then, you know, just with families wanting a little more space, um, we – our pattern was to come down for a couple of weeks over the Fourth and stay with my grandparents. And then my father would, uh, he'd be back and forth a bit. But he- he would typically rent a place then for, uh, for a long August, five weeks or so in August. So we didn't- we didn't catch the whole summer we'd- we'd go back to New Jersey where I went to high school and grew up, uh, for a few weeks in the summer, but were here most- most of the summers.

TYE: So there is some point in all of our lives, um, where we stopped doing things because we're attached to our parents and we start doing them because we want to do on our own.

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: What was it about Cotuit that – was it the joy of the early summers in the Yacht Club? What was it that brought you, as an adult that had to make your own decisions and eventually an adult who had to buy your own place, um, what was it about Cotuit that was appealing to you?

ODENCE: Well, it's just what you do. Uh, I thi- you know, I've thought about – you know, we've asked everybody what- what makes Cotuit special-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: And why people and- and a variant on that, or a follow on it, why people keep coming back. And, um, and I think, you know, this is unsatisfying, but I think some of the reason people keep coming back is 'cause people keep coming back. So, you know, if- if- if it was the case that none of my friends growing up were here anymore, then maybe I'd be here, but maybe not. But, um, but there is this sort of self-reinforcing thing, uh, tradition, uh, of- of people coming back. And so, you know, in a day when most people don't live in their hometowns anymore – I mean, it used to be the case people grew up in their hometowns – we- the reason we were in New Jersey is we were in the town that my mother grew up, and so I had teachers that she had and, you know, all that kind of stuff and, you know, played with kids who- whose parents went to school with her. Um, but that's – and that happens but it's unusual, but- but here, um, everybody can keep coming back, you know. We've got people I grew up with, live on the West Coast, but are still coming back for a couple of weeks in the summer. And so I think that's, you know, that's been the attraction and of course, you know, I enjoy sailing my skip every summer, it's a nice place to be in the summer, so- so why not? And I've got a wife who was, you know, tolerant- tolerant enough to- to put up with it.

TYE: So take us through memories of, um, when you think of this village, um, your memories of it have been reflected in the stories you ask other people. You know lots of stories of things that have happened here. What's on your list, or what are your favorite stories about Cotuit. that say something about you and Cotuit, and about Cotuit and Cotuit?

ODENCE: Uh.

TYE: What's there?

ODENCE: Yeah, what's there? Well, I had my, you know, sort of the – as I think of my youth, it was, um-

TYE: Is this still going? It's still making-

ODENCE: Uh, the bars are moving.

TYE: They are moving, and that's a good sign.

ODENCE: That means it's working. Okay.

TYE: That does mean it's working.

ODENCE: Yeah. You know, I- I, uh, some of the folks we talked to, I think Johnny Murray, you know, to some extent, talking to, uh, Edie, you know, they talked about where their lives were centered and, you know, we got – it was sort of interesting to hear some of them didn't travel so far, Edie wasn't allowed to go, I don't know, beyond where- wherever, Loop Beach. Um, you know, my youth was certainly in the high ground and- and, uh, and, you know, I just have – so many of my memories were, you know, somewhere between the corner of Nickerson and Main and- and Loop Beach. I mean, that was- that was really life, you know, when I was- when I was really young. And, um, and Loop was quite a – I mean, Loop was where people went. Like I- I don't know anybody who goes to Loop beach anymore. Riley's has sort of taken over as where, you know, my father and his crowd and some of my friends hang out, um, and then people go to the Island. But- but in those days and some of it, you know, a hangover from the Yacht Club being there, I suppose. We went to Loop Beach and, you know, my parents' friends went to Loop Beach, and all we sat in the same place. You know, it was kind of at the- the east- the east end of it. And there were, you know, numerous mothers there all the time, any of whom I could go up to for a dime when the ice cream truck showed up, um, or could ask permission to do whatever you needed permission to do, and if, you know, if one mother had to go back to the house for something, that was okay, it didn't disturb the kids, 'cause there were plenty of other mothers to- to fill in. And so, uh, yeah, I mean that – so that was, you know, that was one end of what I remember is hanging out at Loop Beach and with the, uh, with the- the skiffs there, you know, once I started swimming and – I don't know what age we're talking about, but getting up to eight, nine, 10-years-old – there was a lot of swimming out to the skiffs, getting up on 'em, and diving off. That, you know, that's an activity I remember. And I also remember prams being around. So prams are the, you know, what they call 'opties' today, in those days were called optimus prams, and they were made out of wood. And, um, there were usually a few of those kind of hanging around by Loop Beach as well, even though the instruction was off Mrs. Cabot's beach here in the- in the harbor. And, uh, I remember taking prams out and sailing around. And- and we'd do a lot, or we'd turn them over. And, uh, you know, there's early lessons in physics. You could- you could swim under a pram, (*undecipherable*), and then there was air. So it was just sort of this novel thing that your- your head was out of the water, but you were still under the pram and sort of hidden. And yeah, so a lot of- a lot of that stuff at the beach. And then- and then at the other end, my, uh, grandparents' house seemed quite magical. It was- it was, you know,

ran very differently from our household she- her- she was very, um, emphatic about the- the main rule of the house was that everybody had to have fun. You know, she was-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: She was an unusual lady. And everybody – well- well-known and a big entertainer. Um, and she, you know, she looked out, you know, for- for kids in a big way. The ha- the refrigerator always had Cokes and ginger ale, there were literally always brownies available in the same corner of the kitchen all the time. Um, but it ran very differently. There was help, she grew up in a fairly wealthy family. And- and, uh, so there were, you know, gardeners and maids and- and cooks. Um, and she'd cook sometimes, but – and I imagine she did mostly, you know, in the winter – but when we were around you- there was, you know, one cook that would come in for breakfast and lunch, and another one would come in for dinner. You know-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: A lot of the times and- and, uh, yeah. people to clean the place, and all that. And we'd all – it all just seemed very luxurious to me. Um, it had it's-

TYE: This is your father's parents?

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: And they were not here year-round?

ODENCE: They were.

TYE: They were here year-round?

ODENCE: Yeah, they- they – so he- he was born in Newton. Um, but- but, uh, by the time he went to high school, they were here year-round.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Yeah. Um. But the- the dow- I was was gonna mention the downside of, you know-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Some of this stuff was Sunday dinners were at noon. And you had to dress.

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: And, uh, you know, I think early on that meant a tie. Um, but, you know, things might – things loosened up a little bit. But, you know, you weren't wearing a bathing suit and, you know, any of that stuff. So it was – and I, you know, I took- I took the good with- the bad with the good and you know, but if, you know, at six or eight years old, you'd rather, 10, you know, even worse maybe, you'd rather be, you know, at the beach or out sailing than, you know, sitting on the- on the porch having a, you know, a slice of roast beef at- at, uh, noon on a Sunday.

TYE: So I'm intrigued by, um, one theme that's run through a lot of the interviews we've done is the narrow definitions of people's worlds. And as kids, you know, whether it was Edie Henderson or whomever, um, they were allowed to go a certain number of blocks or a certain distance from home.

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Um, and it strikes me that as life is a cycle, so our- our definitions of what the village looks like to us. So that as we all go off to college worlds, or worlds of work, where you are traveling around and you're seeing a country, and then in older ages, we come back – end up back in a place like Cotuit. And my guess is your father's world is a circumscribe- scribed world geographically, in terms of where at 92 you go, and where you meet your friends and things. Is there something – it strikes me part of the magic of a place is that you love that circumscribed world, because within this tiny village, there's a whole lot happening, if you know about it, that can satisfy you, and why do you even need to go across 28? If you don't have to do it? Is – has your world come, in a way, a circle that- that now, Cotuit is once again the center and- and you spend most of your life in a certain, uh, circumscribed geographically area?

ODENCE: Yeah, well, I mean, it's a- it's an odd time and you know, somebody who's listening to this down the road, this is, you know, we're- we're hopefully coming out of the pandemic. But, uh, yeah, I- I don't leave the village very often these days, so that, you know, it's-

TYE: But you don't feel deprived, not leaving the village?

ODENCE: I don't. I mean, I- I'm looking forward to restaurants. Um, I'm, you know, I'm still working and I'm sort of semi-looking forward to getting back in the office sometimes. I don't know how all that's gonna play out. But, um, you know, for- for a place to be confined for a year, which it's just about been. Uh, yeah, pretty, you know, pretty nice place to be. Um, and I have, you know, I was gonna say without the social life – there's still a little social life in that I, you know, you see people out walking around and- and, you know, I usually will bump into somebody I know when I'm out on a walk and, you know, we'll have a- a chat from six feet away. So I don't feel completely deprived in that way. And, um, you know, but there's- there's plenty of time of, uh, you know, strolling the beaches or off in the woods, and- and, uh, you know, that's- that's all nice as well. I- I, uh, I do feel, uh, you know, I've- I've covered all the territory. It doesn't- doesn't seem to get old. But I've, you know, I've covered the village pretty well, you know, 'cause I get out. I get out walking probably 75 miles a week, something. Is it that much? No. That's too much. Six – uh, no. Too much. So call it 45 miles in the, uh, in the village. So, I, you know-

TYE: So talk about – anybody who doesn't, um, know what you look like. You're the guy who walks, um, and runs with no sneakers.

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: And the- and that's because it's healthier? 'Cause it feels better? 'Cause...?

ODENCE: Uh, yeah, both, all- all of the above. Although, um, you know, I'm- I'm, uh, I've been running barefoot for- for 12 years, I think. Um, I'm hobbled now with some plantar fasciitis and I- I actually just, I – so it's been a few months, and I gave it a go yesterday. It was such a nice day. And I made it a third of a mile and I could tell it wasn't helping. So I got- I gotta fix that. But, uh, but walking barefoot's fine, it's not that, well, I mean- and that is, I mean, for me, Cotuit, that's one of the aspects of, you know, one thing I, uh, I, uh, guess equate with Cotuit is being barefoot. I mean, I've-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Ever- every summer I've, you know, been without shoes, you know, in my life, I've been without shoes more than- more than with shoes, and just- just walking around. And I was thinking I've got, I had some of my notes were on the Coop, and one of the things I was remembering is that, uh, you didn't have to wear shoes in the Coop. I think the Kettle-Ho always

required them, as I remember, but- but, uh, you know, jumping into the Coop, um, where – the coop also didn't require- require currency. Because you could just say, 'Yeah-'

TYE: Charge it.

ODENCE: 'Charge it to my grandmother, or to my- to my father.' But you could go in if you needed- you know, whatever you needed, you could go in and get it, um, with no money and no shoes.

TYE: So I'm intrigued by the no shoes also because that to every kid to whom summers mean not having to wear shoes-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: I mean, going barefoot, you've been able to extend that. Um, I- I want to talk about two things that the, uh, two aspects of the, um, of village life that you have watched and your questions-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: To other people reflect. You've seen the- the center of the village go from having a lot more, um, establishments and activity than they do now to now having Kettle-Ho and the Coop and the post office and not much else. Um, has that diminished the community? Or made it better 'cause there's less commercial activity? Or just made it different? What's the – how does it feel different than when you grew up?

ODENCE: Well, well that- that all- that transition predated me.

TYE: So you – there wasn't much more there now- when you were growing up than there is now?

ODENCE: No, I- I mean, what's, uh, so that there – the stores were different, but there- there wasn't much more. So there was a gas station, there was- there was Scudder's (*unsure of this name*) on the corner. Um, and, uh, but really beyond that, it's, you know, the commercial establishments have been the Kettle-Ho and then the Coop. And now they've- they've evolved a

bit. So the Kettle-Ho, in the day was a- a lunch counter, like you might, maybe would have, maybe in the old days when pharmacies had lunch counters-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Very similar to that. Ice cream – you know, you could get a ice cream sundae, or you could get a milkshake, and their, you know, a grilled cheese sandwich or a hamburger that was you know, fried on a- on a flat grill. Um, and so that's- and so if you go into the Kettle-Ho now, sort of that- that main room, the biggest, the open room was that.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: And then on the- the other side where the bar had- and- and the bar, yeah, so the bar – I won't try to describe the configuration. But the other side was sort of a touristy gift shop kind of thing.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: And you could get, you know, postcards, um, you know, an inflatable, you know, uh, raft for the beach, you know, a towel, that- that kind of stuff. Um, and newspapers, and that's where you'd get your newspaper, So, so, uh, and- and, uh, I guess you could get dinner there, it wasn't open very light, they didn't serve drinks, certainly. Um, but that was, you know, that was kind of it for- for there. And, uh, so new- so now it's sort of shifted a bit to the Coop, um, where you now- now you go to the Coop for lunch, uh, or breakfast, not quite the same scene. Um, and- and newspapers are at the Coop. So that's, you know, been a little- a little bit of a shift. Um, but in tho- in those days, the Coop was a little- looked a little more like a small grocery store. So there were aisles. Um, there were small-sized, but shopping carts, that were a little smaller than you'd see at, you know, Stop and Shop or something, but- but actual shopping carts, and, you know, up- up and down the aisles. There was a butcher counter. Um, and there was- there was a liquor store, too. They had a seasonal- seasonal license for that. But, uh, but yeah, the Coop was a little more like a, uh, supermarket and then, uh-

TYE: Because there wasn't the supermarket here then or just-

ODENCE: Well-

TYE: Because people didn't want to go to the supermarket across 28?

ODENCE: Yeah, well, there wasn't-

TYE: There wasn't one.

ODENCE: There wasn't the one at 28. That was-

TYE: Ah.

ODENCE: That was Treasure Island at the time, which was- was, uh, Bob Hayden's junkyard-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Essentially, there wa- if people went to the supermarket it was generally the A&P, which was behind Wimpy's in- in Osterville. Um-

TYE: So that was a long way to go, so-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: It's really-

ODENCE: A little bit of a haul, yeah.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: And, uh, and- and the Coop delivered, they had this sort of pale green-colored delivery van-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: And my- my grandmother would get deliveries a lot, she'd call up. And you know, 'Hello, Milton, this is Marian.' And you know, I remember, 'We need some nice soft toilet paper, 'cause Larry's here,' was- was one of her lines. Uh, but yeah, the Coop was- was very much a grocery store. And then they had a- a candy counter. So kind of where you check out today, it was a much smaller checkout counter, just maybe six feet long. Um, and behind it was candy. And, uh, if you were in good with the women who worked the counter, they'd let you get your own candy and- and pay for it. And, uh, and there were two women, Marian Morris, and Amelia whose last name I don't know, she was, um, she was- I think it was a Portuguese name. She was fr- um, from Santuit. And, um, she was the one you were a little scared of. Marian was the, you know, the nicest person in the world. And Amelia turns out to have been a wonderful lady, too. But, uh, but you kind of hoped Marian was there when you were (*undecipherable*), 'cause Amelia would, uh, might, you know, might snap at you if you were being too slow getting your candy or- or whatever. But that was, uh, yeah. That was the scene at the Coop and, um, yeah, very, you know, kind of a very – more of a grocery store. Very – a different feel than today.

TYE: So speaking of different feels, um, going from being here, mainly summers, um-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Or having this, to having your center of gravity here. Um, does it feel different, both in terms of your identity as a year-round person and living through, um, fall and spring and the dead of winter in Cotuit? Does it give a different sense to what it means to live here?

ODENCE: Yeah, I think, you know, one- one thing I notice, and I don't think it's really so much just from moving down, some of it's- some of it's from getting older, but- but there- there is a magic for kids here, that maybe you retain more of if you continue to only come in the summer.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: And that is, you know, when you go to Cotuit, it's a little bit like my grandmother's rule, of you know, the only rule is you have to have fun. You know, there- there are pretty much no responsibilities until you get into pink collar work later- later on, which isn't so bad. But, you know, there's the, you know, it's just so unplugged from school, or, you know, or any other cares. Is- it is, you know, every day is just having fun, and that's kind of what summer's like for kids anyway, but when that summer is, you know, a place, then that feeling is associated with the place. It's, you know, totally carefree, 100% fun. And so, you know, again, I think you lose that with age somewhat, but- but as well, living here year-round, um, it's a – and I always have fun here year-round – but you don't- you don't get that quite, you know, quite that same summer magic (*undecipherable*). I loved coming up for Thanksgiving and occasionally we'd come up in

the, uh, in the, uh, offseason. Oh, here's another bad, you know, bad boy story. I remember I- I flew on a plane for the first time, I don't quite remember why we did it, but my father and I flew up here. Um, and I was probably six years old and it was unusual to fly in those days. My mother hadn't flown. I flew before my mother ever got on a plane. And we came up, and, um, they served us a meal on a tray on the plane, which I thought was neat. And it came with a little three pack of Winston's. And I-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: I was pretty young, and I slipped mine into my pocket, and, uh, kept them for Jeff Peck who was two years older. I knew he'd know, you know, what to do with it.

TYE: That's great.

ODENCE: But- but anyway, the- the- the, I, you know, whe- on those times when I did come off-season, and it was more often Thanksgiving, um, I loved that too, 'cause it was so wild to come to Cotuit when it wasn't warm and when you had to wear a sweater. And when, you know, nobody was around, I mean, even- even at Thanksgiving, it was still quiet. And usually I'd have a few summer friends around, Jeff Peck was- was my- my one year-round friend, and so he was always here. But- but, uh, you know, Gordon Jackson or Mary Henderson, who were others that were my- my main buddies, they were often around at Thanksgiving too. And so, you know, throwing around the football, remember thrown around a football in the middle of Main Street in front of my grandparents' house. And you could go 20 minutes without having to get out of the street 'cause a car was coming by, even at Thanksgiving.

TYE: But so two places that we've talked about in terms of, um, uh, places – it- it strikes me that one word that's a theme throughout a lot of the things you're talking about is fun-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: And the Cotuit – but that while anywhere, summer, by definition for kids, 'cause they're not in school, is gonna be fun-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: And anywhere they are is gonna be fun, and certainly anywhere as beautiful as Cape Cod is gonna be fun.

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: But there is something about Cotuit's personality that's more fun than most. And that when we talk about the two institutions that are left here, they are the Coop and Kettle-Ho. And anybody who knows Kettle-Ho from anywhere in Cape Cod would say that that's the closest thing to a, um, *Cheers* bar, kind of fun experience that – relaxed, and just a fun place that people come there from across the Cape.

ODENCE: Yeah, amazingly.

TYE: And anybody who knows the Coop compared to other general stores on the Cape, um, would say that that's got to be one of the best and sort of most-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Relaxing, most – and I don't think it's an accident that they're in Cotuit, that the- that they're a reflection of Cotuit as much as Cotuit's a reflection of them. But I don't know what I'm talking about. Do you think they reflect something about the character of Cotuit?

ODENCE: Well, luck, maybe. I just think – and act- and that actually is something that I think Cotuit's been fortu- you know, had a lot of good fortune, over the years, which I can, you know, I can talk about a little bit, thinking about the history. But I think, you know, those are just two lucky things. I mean, that the, uh, that the Coop's been able to keep going is great. And that we have, you know, Seth as the- as the ringleader there, he's such a great guy, I just think we've been really fortunate. And, um, you know, equally that the- that the Kettle-Ho has worked out. That is a difference, by the way, I was gonna mention, is there were a couple of bars, and we've talked about Hack's Bar, which was in the- in the Cotuit Inn, um, which was, you know, a different scene, but a really fun scene. And then there was, uh, off and on over the years, there was a bar at Harbor View, which is a, you know, private home now. But the Kettle-Ho, really, you know, filled- filled that gap. And, um, I just feel so fortunate to, you know, to have it there. And, you know, we- when they're doing takeout, we make sure to keep doing the takeout, 'cause it would be s- you know, we're just very supportive of the place, it would be a real shame for it- for it not to be there. But, um, yeah, what a- what a blast. And what a blessing to have it, you know, within walking distance of home. It's- it's- it's fun, but I – yeah, I mean, so that's not really – your question is, does it reflect the town? I mean, I don't know, I-

TYE: So we'll- we'll talk to Seth at some point. And-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: My guess is, he would say, partly luck that he ended up here.

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: And partly that there was something attractive about Cotuit and about the heritage of that place, that he could have bought into a lot of businesses, or opened things in a lot of places, and that there's something about-

ODENCE: Yeah, I mean, maybe-

TYE: This place-

ODENCE: Maybe-

TYE: But we'll – maybe not.

ODENCE: Maybe a hoity toitier town wouldn't have, you know, had as good a reaction to a place like- like the Kettle-Ho. I-

TYE: So you said a minute ago that there were things about the history of the place that make it special that you wanted to talk about, what is it about the history of the place?

ODENCE: Well, it was just, uh, you know, I- I just think, um, you know, I was prepared for the 'what makes it special' or 'why people come back' or 'why it is as it is,' and I- I don't, you know, I've thought about it a lot since we've talked to people about it. I don't really have it all worked out. And, but, as you know, I think the Harvard thing plays into it, somewhat. Um, but I think, you know, I – there's some themes and this isn't- this isn't well thought out, there're still spinning in my head, but, you know, I- I think the geography plays into it somewhat. And then I think the whole, you know, the- the- the kind of maritime prosperity here, and then Harvard coming in. And it's something- it's something along the lines of – so the geography is a, uh, a wonderfully protected beautiful harbor, which I think certainly contributed, the- was a big part of the maritime prosperity. Um, it's being on a peninsula, so not really on the way to anywhere.

TYE: Huge.

ODENCE: And, uh, somebody told us, I think Keith might have said that the traffic used to get routed through the village before 28 was completed, but- but the peninsula nature of it was, you know, easy to cut off by- by 28. I think the- I think having, you know, the other side of the peninsula be Shoestring Bay, and having Shoestring Bay be too shallow to be very interesting, helped. Because that – when I was a kid, I remember somebody buying some land on Shoestring Bay. And, uh, you know, in Cotuit. And- and somebody else commenting, like, why would anybody ever want to be over there. And of course now, there's wonderful houses and you get a great view and all that, but it was sort of unimaginable that there would ever be anything there. So what you ended up with is- is just, you know, this side of town and a main street, um, that- that didn't go to anywhere but to a dead end. So you don't, you know, it wasn't, you weren't going to get a lot of, uh, you know, accidental tourists. And then I think – so maritime prosperity allowed Main Street to build, you know, be built up with- with attractive old houses. Um, and- and then when, you know, when the whaling industry started winding down, and I guess, you know, sailing ships started winding down in general, and transportation on land improved so you didn't need the coastal schooners supplying places and all that. Um, the Harvard thing came in, and the story there is- is, uh, I'd have to go back and figure out how the Lowells got here, but A. Lawrence Lowell, who was the president of Harvard, was here in the summer, and then started inviting many of his friends down. And so a lot of the summer residents were Harvard professors. And so what happened was you could get this- this vacuum was quickly filled by- by people who had jobs that allowed them to spend the entire summer. And- and so, you know, otherwise maybe it would have needed to have been filled by touristy stuff. Uh, and, and- that's, and so that's what I'm thinking has sort of preserved thing. So the- the off the beaten path nature, um, you know, the- the luck of- the luck of the geography being, you know, causing the, you know, the nice- the maritime prosperity, and that and the luck of- of, you know, the Harvard thing happening, um, sort of kept the place, uh, kept up the vitality, without ever, um, without ever needing, you know, tourists.

TYE: So I also like – everything that you said has a logic to it. I also like what you said a few minutes ago about luck, because I think that every one of the things that you've described could have gone one way or another. Harvard could mean elitism and haughtiness-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: And all the things that Cotuit doesn't have.

ODENCE: Yep.

TYE: And instead, we've got the better side, which was the smart professors, and the literary and arts life that Jim Gould had talked to us about-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Harvard bringing in, and, um, that a certain amount of luck and people coming here and drawing like-minded people with comparable values, that it's maybe partly accidental that we didn't end up being Osterville-

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: Or whatever. And I think that the, um – huh. Um, what else is on your list that you want to talk about?

ODENCE: What did I have? Well, we've done- we've done a pretty good job. Um. Peck's Boats was a bit of an institution, and the Pecks-

TYE: Are there-

ODENCE: We haven't really-

TYE: Many Pecks still around?

ODENCE: So we're down to one Peck, which is Jeff-

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Uh, and his family. And, uh, they live just across the bridge in Ashby. Um. And that the- the reason the Pecks own land there is that there was a thought of dredging Shoestring Bay and a- built- and having a boatyard-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: There. Uh, and they actually did have, uh, for a while, they had, um, a bit of a boatyard, further south, on, uh, in New Seabury. Um, but, uh, but Peck's Boats was a bit – I mean, it was an institution of sorts, and I remember going out and it was- it was much more of a workshop, than the- the main building that's still there was- was actually workshop where- where skiffs got built. And Le- you know, Leonard ran the show. And, um, you know, we talked to Johnny Murray about having- having worked there, we'll probably also talk to some of the other guys who worked there, Dick White is one of the ones in town, Elliott Wheelright, and I just remember going out there to buy sandpaper or Woolsey paint with- with- with my dad and- and, uh, you know, it was sort of a boys' club. There was like, you know, the *Playboy* calendars hanging up, you know, kind of a smelly bathroom, and, you know, lots of guys doing guy things, doing woodwork and stuff. Um, and, uh, and then I came, and then they- they would, uh, employ, you know, employ summer- summer kids mostly. And then I did my turn there. And in addition to working for the Yacht Club, I was the- the skiff guy there for a couple of summers, which was more seasonal, in- in the sense that it was more beginning of the season when the skiffs needed to go in. So they had, uh, Jeff, my- my friend Jeff was working the front end then, which was much more retail and it was when wind surfers and lasers were big, and it was kind of- kind of a fan- more of a retail store. Even before that he was pumping gas there, I'd go out and help him. There was a gas – yeah, they had gas pumps. And they didn't- they- I remember they didn't have automated shutoff. So Betty Peck, who taught me how to pump gas, you know, I said, 'How do you know when to stop?' She goes, she said, 'When your feet get wet.' Uh, so Jeff started working there. And then he kind of took over as the retail guy. And then I was, you know, I was out back in one of the sheds that was referred to as my office. And I would do, you know, I would do the skiff preparation, uh, I spent a couple of years at that. But that was a- that was a pretty neat part of Cotuit for- for a lot of people. And the Pecks – Leonard had a, uh, a tugboat called the Francis (*undecipherable*). Um, that was, um, that was, uh, a pretty much of a fixture in the harbor for many years. And- and that was predated by a boat called The Big Wheel, which was a smaller, smaller tug boat. And I, you know, and I've – and- and the Big Wheel would- would serve as the- the- the Association, early on, would hire Leonard to follow all of the races. And so that would serve as the- as the committee boat for the races. And- and as, you know, very young, I don't know, three, four years old, I remember being petrified and trying to get onto the Big Wheel at low tide at the town dock and having to climb down the ladder and it just seemed like a, you know, a huge drop down to the- down to the Big Wheel, and going out and watching the races, have early memories of, you know, seeing this skiff fleets from the Big Wheel. And he had a, uh, he had a ca- a brass cannon with which he'd start the races, so that the go-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: We still s- we still talk about the go gun, but nobody's blown off a gun for, you know, many decades, but he had this little brass cannon that would shoot a, uh, a blank shotgun shell. And, uh, he'd pulled the shell out and I remember the smell, I don't know if you've ever smelled a-

TYE: Yeah.

ODENCE: A shell, there's something that's very attractive about that smell. They say smell is your, you know, your longest lasting memory. I certainly remember the smell of the shotgun shells coming out of there. So, you know, Leonard and the Pecks were a big- were a big fixture, uh, in town. That was one of the things. What else did I have? I think we've- I think we've touched on – oh! I know, yeah, no, this was interesting. So, um, I was just thinking about my friends and things that we did. 'Cause I asked – that's a question I asked of my father, I asked of Ronnie, what did you do as- as kids? So my friends I mentioned (*undecipherable*) Gordon- Gordon- Gordon Jackson, Mary Henderson were, and Jeff Peck were- were really my three best friends. And we- we kind of had a little club that- that, uh, was formalized at times, but- but were- were-

TYE: Called?

ODENCE: The Bird Brain Club. Uh, and so, uh, and it wasn't always all four of us together, but different, you know, different subsets at times. And so I remember, uh, so Dr. Taussig, who was, uh, Helen Taussig was a very famous, uh, physician, uh, lived down by Oregon, so I was thinking about Oregon, and going down there and we would, um, Mary and Gordon and I, a couple times, would sleep out at Dr. Taussig's house right on- on Oregon. Um, at the time, and I don't know if we – we may have talked about this with somebody, the- the Popponeset Spit used to come all the way from what is now the mouth into Popponeset, but all the way up past Oregon-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: To where the McCourts' house is, which was the (*undecipherable*) at the time, and I don't- I don't know – that was in my lifetime, but I don't remember it, but that's to get into, uh, the Lloyds or in the Popponeset Bay, you'd come in through this river that was a little, little bit like Seapuit River is now, um, and, uh, and then in my, you know, in my memory that went away, but there was a- always a spit at Oregon and, um, and- and-

TYE: Went away through erosion, or was it-

ODENCE: Yeah, just through- just Mother Nature.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: Um, and I think a lot of that land, I think there was much less land in front of – do you know the McCourt's house that I'm talking about?

TYE: A little bit.

ODENCE: Yeah. And that was the Westons' at the time, I think they had much less beach. So it started depositing there. And you- you- you gotta spit that went from there, out to across from Oregon with a lagoon inside it, and people would moor boats inside that lagoon. And so Oregon Beach, you know, which is now just a skinny little piece of beach. In those days, you could go across to the spit.

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: And you had this long beach. And, um, so we would sleep out at the Taussigs' when I was little, at Helen Taussig's, but then, um, uh, in later years, uh, several times that crew of four would sail over to- from- from Loop, probably. Um, when the skiffs were at Loop, we'd take a couple of skiffs from Loop, sail to Oregon and- and sleep out on that spit. I think we will probably, I don't know, 11 or 12 years old. Um.

TYE: That sounds like a blast.

ODENCE: So that was fun. And then, um, and then about that time, I started coming up for the whole summer. So I'd be, you know, I would stay when my parents and sister would go away for the three weeks. And I was – it was wherever I could find a place to sleep. So one- one summer I was behind the- the Pecks' house in a- in a tent, and the Pecks lived on Piney Road at the time. And so I was in a tent out behind their house. And, um, and then I- I started staying with the Jacksons, and- and the Jacksons' barn was sort of a well-known fixture over the years with different people living there. But I spent, you know, many, many summers living, uh, living in the Jackson's barn. One- one summer, Chris and Gordon and I were living there, we had, uh, three guys and two beds. And so literally wrestled every night for-

TYE: Who'd get a bed.

ODENCE: Who got a bed. And if you, you know, if – well it- it kind of went till somebody gave up and said, screw it, I'll sleep on the couch. And then-

TYE: Wow.

ODENCE: And then that was it. Um, and we used – it seems to me, we used to do a lot more organized games than I think kids are doing these days, (*undecipherable*)-

TYE: Like what?

ODENCE: Soccer, a lot of soccer. And we had this game, I think it came from Lincoln. Um, the Jacksons were from Lincoln, and the Hendersons were from Lincoln. And there was a game called Herbie, that was, uh, essentially soccer with three teams. You'd have three goals at the, you know, points of an equilateral triangle essentially, and no boundaries in particular. And you were trying to have the least goals scored against you, and any time that, you know, one team was ahead, meaning they hadn't had a lot of goals scored, the other two-

TYE: Would gang up on the-

ODENCE: Would- would gang up. So it kept it very even and competitive. It was a really- it was a really fun game. 'Cause of, you know, the other two teams would be sometimes with you, and sometimes against you.

TYE: Mm.

ODENCE: It was, you know, it was very, very interesting, you sort of had to pay attention. And we didn't have, like, red, yellow, and green shirts or anything. So you had-

TYE: Who was who.

ODENCE: To pay attention to who was on your team. But lot of that. And then we'd play, uh, we had a game we'd play called 'ghost,' which was, uh, kind of a combination of tag and- and, uh, freeze tag and hide and seek. And, uh, it was always over at the Jacksons' house and it always happened at night. And so that was why it was called – we called it – with teams. We'd play with teams. And (*undecipherable*) 'ghost.' But I don't see as much, and I think that's been a general trend, kids don't organize themselves into games as much as they used to. But we- we certainly used to do a lot of it here. But that – yeah, that's- we've hit on-

TYE: So-

ODENCE: Most of what I had on my list.

TYE: I want to end with what we normally have begun the interviews with, um, to just say who you are now in terms of what your – what is your work world now? How would you describe yourself professionally?

ODENCE: Uh, well, I work for a technology company. And, uh, I run- I run a group of, uh, about 50 people spread between from California to Belfast, Ireland, and we, um, we help companies do technical analysis when they're buying software companies.

TYE: Hm.

ODENCE: So if- if you're buying a software company, um, you have a- you have an opportunity before you finally sign the deal to ask a lot of questions and- and, you know, learn- learn more about the company than you could when you were just flirting. And so we get brought in to analyze the- the software and the operations around the software to make sure there's no big problems, or-

TYE: Internationally?

ODENCE: Yes, and most of the business is North America and Europe, but, uh, but yeah.

TYE: So we can add to this, um, as we go along and do others. And the, um, I want to and I can turn that off. Um, let's agree that sometime, when we each have a few minutes over the next week, that we'll shoot a couple names to one another in terms of-

ODENCE: Sure. Yeah.

TYE: Who makes sense-

ODENCE: Yep.

TYE: Next on the list. And if the weather stays like this, that-