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FRAN PARKS
TRANSCRIBED BY JACK MANIACI

TYE: So, the way we start these things is, if you're okay with it, just saying your full name and what is today's date, the 24th.

PARKS: Frances Slocum Parks. 24 April 2021.

TYE: Great and, for starters: what piece of your family first came to Cotuit and why?

PARKS: My great-grandparents came to Cotuit in 1882. They purchased Camit[?] Farm, sold to them by Mr. Tolman.

TYE: Where is that?

PARKS: You'd know it as Point Isabella. So I know you're on Cotuit Connections. So there's a lady on Cotuit Connections called—this is for your amnesia file—Mary Isabella DuPuy. That's me. That was my great, great, great-grandmother. And so that's how they came to Cotuit.

TYE: They purchased the farm. How did they hear about Cotuit, any notion of why they...?

PARKS: I have no idea.

TYE: Where were they coming here from?

PARKS: Dorchester.

ODENCE: At just summers, right?

PARKS: Yes. Dorchester when Dorchester was, you know, where the Brahmins lived, not Dorchester of today. And he was a, my great-grandfather was... they had a chemical company make chemicals in Waltham, and that closed. And then he was a buyer for RKO Keith's Theaters. He went all over Europe buying whatever they needed to decorate the theaters. Yeah.

ODENCE: I didn't know about that. I knew he was a chemical guy and I didn't know about Waltham. So I had, I was living in Waltham for five years and there's an area very close to where I lived called The Chemistry and it was... I don't know if that was just one factory or if there were several factories, but I'm sure he was there.

PARKS. I have no idea. I don't know. And so then they died, went to my grandmother, and she

made it into a year-round home, and...

ODENCE: And that house was, there's a house called the Camit[?] House on Point Isabella, would that be it?

PARKS: That was it, that was the Camit[?] House. There was nothing on the point. The point was completely empty.

ODENCE: So this is the one, I think it's sort of on the right, just sort of hit that little lollipop at the end, it's on the right.

PARKS: Yeah, right.

ODENCE: It was owned by a guy named Welsh for a while, and then Ben White owned it for a while.

PARKS: Ben White owned it, yeah.

TYE: "She made it into a year-round house," meaning she winterized it or started living year round?

PARKS: Both. Prior to that, just before World War Two, my great-grandmother got a letter that said "Greetings from the War Department." And they took it, it became part of Camp Canduit. And she drove down one day, she wanted to check on the house and see how it was, and they wouldn't let her in because she didn't have the proper credentials.

ODENCE: Wow, so they just completely took it over, and officers were probably living there or something?

PARKS: I don't think... I don't know, I think the officers lived in the Whittier house. I don't think anybody lived in my grandmother's house.

ODENCE: Okay.

TYE: But they just wanted... it's contiguous to the base and they wanted it as...

PARKS: Yeah, yeah. And they paved the entire beach.

TYE: That's incredible! So did the... for the entire duration of the war, it stayed in their hands?

PARKS: Yes. Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

ODENCE: And she was Carolyn, is that right?

PARKS: Yeah, Carolyn Ezra, that was my grandmother. But this was obviously before she winterized it.

ODENCE: There's a great picture in Jim and Jessie's book of her canoeing up around there.

PARKS: And the dock that they had was on the north side of Point Isabella, and that went in either the '38 or '44 hurricane. I don't know.

TYE: But can I back up? I'm intrigued by the wartime and I presume, government has all kinds of powers to do things like that, but, when they turned it back, was the house in the same shape and they unpaved the beach?

PARKS: Yes, everything was back to pristine conditions. The only thing was, I think it was probably the hurricane of '44, I'm not one-hundred percent sure, but the point was completely denuded of trees, and that was cleaned up by the German prisoners of war from Otis.

TYE: Do they, when they do something like that, do they figure out some way to fairly compensate or how do they do... Are you just out of it for that time?

PARKS: You're just out of it. So to fast-forward a little bit, I got a phone call one day about twenty-five years ago saying, "Listen, we have an oil leak here at Cotuit Bay Shores and, you know, this is your responsibility to clean it up," and I'm going, "Er, don't think so, wrong number."

TYE: So it was something that the army had done in terms of, in fuel...

PARKS: Yeah, they buried it, a buried oil tank hadn't been removed. Apparently they forgot it.

ODENCE: On Point Isabella?

PARKS: On Point Isabella, yeah. Yeah, it was fouling something, but not my problem.

ODENCE: Jeez, how did they even think it might be? You know, why not go back to the encampments, you know to send...

PARKS: I don't know who told him to call me, but you know.

TYE: That's fascinating. So then, how does it, what happens to the property in terms of... Does your grandmother live there through...?

PARKS: My grandmother lived there. Then she passed away and then it was sold and Ben White bought it. And other people have bought it. And my grandmother, about a year and a half or two years before she died, sold the point part, and the Birds built a house there.

ODENCE: I got, I was married on that property.

PARKS: Oh, were you?

ODENCE: Yeah, well the lot just towards Old Short road was, Mr. Welsh owned it. Then it was a separate lot and yeah, we got our tent there and everything.

PARKS: So, doesn't have a beach anymore. My grandmother... there was a dock and a bathhouse and a beach and she, you know, renourished the beach.

TYE: So that started the family coming here, but it wasn't like your parents stayed in the same place that she was. That house was gone in the...

PARKS: No, my parents bought a house on Piney Road, had a house on Piney Road.

TYE: They had been coming here when their parents... when your grandparents... We're talking maternal or paternal grandparents?

PARKS: Maternal.

TYE: Maternal. And so had your mother been coming here all her life?

PARKS: Oh yeah. Yeah, she used to, her job when they drove down was to hold Jack, who was the cat, in the backseat, who didn't like riding in the car, the Model A or Model T or whatever it was. And yeah, so...

TYE: And then was there a period when nobody was coming or they, your parents, were coming continuously, all the way through?

PARKS: I don't really... I don't know what exactly went on between the time my great-grandmother died and my grandmother moved in. She was... my grandmother had some sort of breakdown and ended up being in a rest home with what I think is probably a catatonic stupor, which is like... for eighteen years. Eighteen years, yeah.

TYE: So this is postwar and a long time after that?

PARKS: Yeah, yeah, until she did the house over in maybe starting in 1948, '49. That's when she did it over.

ODENCE: Were your parents on Piney Road when you were born?

PARKS: No.

TYE: Did you come down in your grandparents' day?

PARKS: No, just my grandmother's.

TYE: Your grandmother's. So after she was recovered and back in the house or before she had the breakdown or the...?

PARKS: She had... her husband, William Edward Coffin Ezra, was an architect. He was the architect for the Plymouth Quarters Company, and his job was also to take care of the workers, so he built the homes, designed and built the homes for the workers. He organized the... there was a daycare for the children of the workers, there was medical care, and he took care of all of that, and they obviously lived in Plymouth, and that's where she had her breakdown. And he went on, actually, to be asked by President Theodore Roosevelt to go to Panama and do the same thing for the workers on the Panama Canal that he'd done for the workers in Plymouth.

TYE: So, you grew up coming to Piney Road?

PARKS: I grew up down here. I grew up here.

TYE: So you were here full time on... what did your parents do here?

PARKS: My father died when I was two and a half. He was a writer. And so that, you know, that was that. So when I...

ODENCE: What sort of a writer?

PARKS: He wrote poetry.

ODENCE: Oh wow.

PARKS: Well, according to Leonard Peck it wasn't very good.

ODENCE: Well, according to Leonard Peck a lot of things weren't very good.

PARKS: Yeah, right, yeah! And so fortunately, my mother had enough income with the help of my grandmother that she didn't have to work, so she did a lot of volunteer work. And so, I started my school at the Santuit School, which is where the post office is now. And so, kindergarten to fourth grade, I was there. And I tried... I have a picture somewhere in my house of the kettle hole without the trees behind, and you can see over the Poppanessett.

ODENCE: I was just wondering... you know, I've been looking at that. I asked my dad—he doesn't remember much of it—but it was like playing fields back there, right?

PARKS: Right. Down a very steep hill.

ODENCE: Yeah, but I've been noticing all that terrain there, there is... That's got to be one of the bigger kettle holes in town.

PARKS: Yeah, it's behind the Scudder House also.

ODENCE: Yeah, well it drops off like crazy back there.

PARKS: Yeah, drops right off. And goes all the way over to Popponessett. So you could see,

when the trees weren't there, you could see all the way over to Popponessett.

ODENCE: I wonder too, you're probably not gonna know, but I wonder if they actually built up where Main Street runs because it's fairly steep off both sides of Main Street there, down to the harbor and then down to the kettle hole behind the Scudders.

PARKS: I don't think so. All the pictures I've seen don't look like they did that, you know.

ODENCE: Yeah, just so, I guess it was just natural. But it's fairly, you know, you got probably sixty feet there, that's sort of the right level for Main.

PARKS: Yeah.

TYE: So what other schools did you go to?

PARKS: So then one day in the spring they said, "Okay, everybody, pack, you know, pack your stuff up, we're going for a walk," and we walked down to the new Cotuit School.

ODENCE: Yeah, cool.

TYE: Which was where?

PARKS: On Old Oyster, where it is now. Yeah, we were, I was in the first class that was in there.

TYE: And that was through what grades?

PARKS: Sixth.

TYE: And then you went to...?

PARKS: Junior high school, which is now the Catholic school in Hyannis, for two years, and then to the high school.

TYE: And so you were bussed from here to there?

PARKS: Yeah, Mr. Perry drove the bus and they also owned the Kettle Ho, which was Perry's.

ODENCE: Oh, I never realized it was the same guy.

PARKS: Yeah, same.

TYE: What were some of the other characters in town?

PARKS: Well, you know, Halloween was a big event. But the bigger event was the day after Halloween, where you went down to the park to see what had been added to the park overnight

by the Ashleys and some of their other... Harry and some of their other friends. And one year, they had a skiff up on the flag pole.

ODENCE: Wow.

PARKS: Yeah.

TYE: That's got to be a pretty strong...

PARKS: The next year, they had somebody's entire picket fence. White picket fence in front of the flagpole. And then...

TYE: Did people accept things like that as part of a good natured...?

PARKS: Probably everybody except the person that owned the property that, you know... "Excuse me, you have to get your boat off the flagpole." And the other one I remember was some kind of... I think it was one of those work... things for railroads, you know...

ODENCE: Oh, a handcart.

PARKS: Yeah, there was a handcart and nobody could figure out—oh, no, no, it was just on the ground—But nobody could figure out how they got it down there without somebody hearing it.

ODENCE: Yeah.

PARKS: You know, and then every Halloween somebody would break into the school and ring the bell. The Santuit School. And Harry West lived across the street, and he was a custodian, so he had to go, you know...

ODENCE: Did you say it was called the Santuit School?

PARKS: That's what... Yeah, I never called it the Santuit School, but yeah, it was called the Santuit School.

ODENCE: Because there had been a Santuit School, which I think is... no, I don't know. Now I'm not connecting the dots. But yeah, okay, I've never heard that one referred to as the Santuit School. That's interesting.

PARKS: And so that happened every year.

TYE: Was the... How much different did the center of town look? How much different... Was there an attitude of what you could do here, what you had to go elsewhere to do?

PARKS: You mean for kids, for stuff?

TYE: Everything from shopping to whatever. Was it more village centered, that you could do...

you could live your whole life here and not have to go anywhere else?

PARKS: You probably could if you could afford it, you know.

TYE: So things were more expensive.

PARKS: Little, yeah, a little bit more expensive, you know, at the coop, probably, but he delivered. And Mr. Crocker. A lot of people were able to eat through the depression because of Mr. Crocker.

ODENCE: More than one person has said... it's amazing

TYE: He sounds like a really extraordinary character.

PARKS: He was, he was a wonderful man. And his wife was a lovely lady.

TYE: Was there... So, when we talk to people, everybody describes, as they were growing up, their world sort of expanding. Initially, were all your friends in the proximity to where you were living? How did you define your world growing up?

PARKS: Just, you know, the people who lived, the kids who lived across the street. The Haydens were down the street, the Pecks, you know.

ODENCE: Were you and Bill more or less the same age?

PARKS: Yes. He was my age, yeah.

ODENCE: Okay. And then, which... So that would make you and Janie the same...?

PARKS: No.

ODENCE: Or she's older?

PARKS: She's older. She was my babysitter.

ODENCE: Okay, mine too!

TYE: She was your babysitter?

ODENCE: So Cindy...

PARKS: Kathy was a year younger than I am, yeah, and Cindy's the youngest.

TYE: So can I ask you—this is a deviation, but—Jane was here two or three months ago on the deck, talking about her memories in the town, but the other thing we were talking about is her memories... her father's passion for music and for jazz. You remember that growing up?

PARKS: Oh yeah, sure, he had... when you walked in the front door of Milestones, the first room on the left was his music room. It was all wood and filled with record albums.

ODENCE: Ah, amazing.

PARKS: Yeah.

TYE: Do you remember... So a guy who just died, who was a big part of that world, who was living in—I think it was—Hyannis when he died, was Jack Bradley. Do you remember Jack?

PARKS: No.

TYE: So growing up, did you stay here right through, or did you leave at some point and come back to Cotuit?

PARKS: Well, growing... You know, I left when I went to college, when I was eighteen.

TYE: Where did you go?

PARKS: I went to Indiana University Medical Center, became an X-ray technician.

TYE: In Bloomington?

PARKS: Indiana:—No, Indianapolis—God's answer to nothing. At that time especially.

ODENCE: Bloomington's pretty nice.

PARKS: Yeah, it was a big shock. The first day I was there I was in line to get something to eat, and all the service people were Black. And the people around me that were ordering from them were incredibly rude and nasty. And then when I sat down at a table to eat, the table behind me had people who were members of the John Birch Society. I called Thomas, said I thought I landed in the wrong place.

TYE: Indiana was a hotbed of KKK, and it was one of the most conservative places in America[?]

PARKS: I don't know if it was the KKK, it was a spot on the Underground Railroad.

TYE: It was, but it was also the, it had... I was shocked to find out the KKK... You think of KKK, it started in Georgia, and you think of it in the South, but Indiana, really conservative place. So did you stay there for four years?

PARKS: No, two. Just two, yeah, just two.

TYE: And then came back?

PARKS: And then I came back and I worked at Cape Cod hospital as an X-ray technician, and then I worked for Dr. Rapp, yeah.

TYE: We did an interview with him a few weeks ago, and he was really wonderful, and I didn't realize that he started as a GP and then took on radiology, as a specialty. And you were living in Cotuit all that time?

PARKS: I lived around the corner from them. I was their babysitter.

TYE: You were, okay. What was it... So when you're off in college and when you're as far away as Indiana, was it always clear to you that Cotuit was the place to come back to?

PARKS: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

TYE: Because?

PARKS: I just missed it. You know, I missed the ocean, I missed the people, I missed, you know, the way it was just a completely different lifestyle. You know, and for the last [unintelligible], I became a pediatric physician assistant in 1980. I just retired. And so, for thirty years I commuted to Braintree from Cotuit.

ODENCE: Oh wow.

TYE: Working at...?

PARKS: Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates. It used to be Harvard Community Health Plan, yeah.

TYE: You must have been, that must have been among the earliest days of PAs.

PARKS: Yes, it was. And I did that because of Dr. Higgins. I used, you know, Dr. Higgins made house calls, and I always thought that it would be good to have somebody like a PA to help Dr. Higgins, you know, and see, so he wouldn't be working for fourteen- or sixteen-hours days.

TYE: Did you ever work with him?

ODENCE: You might enjoy, there's a... Betty Peck did an oral history with him in '78, and we're gonna post it on the Historical Society website.

PARKS: Yeah, his mother and my grandmother Ezra[?] were apparently good friends. Yeah, and she had one of his mother's painted screens, I guess as a gift. She'd gotten it as a gift.

TYE: So I'd like to ask about one of the things... We are here eighty to ninety percent of the time now, and one of the things that changed from coming summers to being here all the time is, and I can't speak for you, Phil, but I can't wait till the end of summer, when some people go, and I

can't wait for the dead of winter, when almost everybody goes. Was it like that for you growing up here?

PARKS: Oh, absolutely, yeah. You know, and Labor Day came, and ninety percent of them left; Main Street, Hyannis, went back to being two-way. And, you know, a lot of families would come down, you know, for Thanksgiving. But the big difference was that the people that came stayed for the summer, and even the people that rented stayed for the summer. So you got to know them when they weren't, you know... The hotel was gone by then, I don't think, I don't know how many people were staying at the Cotuit Inn.

...

TYE: When you were growing up and after, as an adult living here, how much of a gap between summer people and real people or year-round people...?

PARKS: It depends upon which ones you're talking about. The major difference today is that a lot of the people who are either summer people or have moved here year round and were summer people are keeping themselves more isolated from the residents of the village. When I was growing up, you know, they all... the Wessons, or at least Cynthia, and the Lowells and the Lloyds, you know, they were here to relax and enjoy the summer and, you know, you couldn't tell the difference between them and, you know, the carpenter, and they were interested in and cared about the village and, you know, helped out and supported the church and did other things like that. And I think that's the biggest difference today.

TYE: Meaning that's gone?

PARKS: Yeah, that...

TYE: When you were growing up, were you as likely to be hanging out summers with summer kids as year-round kids?

PARKS: I wasn't here in the summer, I went to summer camp in Vermont. Yeah.

ODENCE: Which camp?

PARKS: Teela-Wooket. It's in Roxbury, Vermont.

ODENCE: Ah okay.

PARKS: It's actually a place smaller than Cotuit.

TYE: A really wonderful place. When you think, if you were to tell somebody, who was coming here from planet Mars or from Indiana, this is why Cotuit is different than the rest of Cape Cod and this is why I couldn't wait to get back to Cotuit. What is it about this place that makes it different?

PARKS: It's home. And all the people that I knew growing up and a lot, most of the people that I know now, care for the village, care about protecting the village, preserving the village, you know, taking care of other people in the village who can't help themselves, you know, getting involved on boards and just actually working to maintain what we have.

TYE: And what happens here... Is it my imagination, or is this a really different place than Osterville, or than Mashpee, or Marstons Mills, or is it just one more village on Cape Cod?

PARKS: I think it's a little unique from those other places because they just have different folks but, you know, if you look at the MSPCA, there's a big sign in front with the name... big huge publishing company. But they were some of the residents of Osterville and, you know, they've given tons of money to the MSPCA, to the hospital, certainly to the library in Osterville. So, you know, there are other people that feel the same way, that just come here for the summers.

ODENCE: Well I, Larry's gesturing my way, folks at home. So I'm selfishly interested, since you mentioned my grandparents in some of our correspondance, I'm interested in your memories of them.

PARKS: I can remember being in Bruce Hall before it was connected to the church, when the ladies were working on quilts, being under the quilt frame. And I remember your mother mostly there at the women's fellowship. Your grandmother, I mean. I told you, your grandfather, I saw him walking down the stairs one day... not the stairs, down by Scudders, the gas station. And I didn't recognize him because he didn't have a cigar in his mouth. He always had a cigar. And my mother and I went on a cruise to Cuba. Cuba was one of the stops, and I wanted to go to a cigar factory. Unfortunately, the two ladies that were with us didn't want to visit any cigar factories and certainly didn't want to go to any rum factories. So I was very, very upset I didn't get to, but I just, you know, they just were part of the fabric of the village.

TYE: How important was the church to the fabric of the village?

PARKS: Oh, it was very important. It was, you know, we had youth fellowship and celebrations for Halloween and holidays and when I was there the minister was Bob Smith. And, you know, so we went on trips, we went camping in the Green Mountains in the spring, in mud season. And you know, took trips and it was in... and the social part was lots of dinners. You know, there were at least a monthly dinner there, there was a dinner at the Grange. I remember going to a dinner in Freedom Hall in the cellar, in the basement.

TYE: A dinner, again, sponsored by the church or by another...

PARKS: No, the Grange was where the Catholic Church is now. And that was the farmers, the agricultural people. The dinners in the church were usually done by the Women's Fellowship and I'm not sure who did the one that was in the basement of Freedom Hall, and then there were dinners at the lodge that the Eastern Star ladies did. So you didn't have to cook a lot.

TYE: It sounds like there were a lot of communal groups and this was community.

PARKS: Yeah.

TYE: And you mentioned farmers in the Grange. Were there many people who made their living here as farmers?

PARKS: I don't think so, except for—the only farming I knew was the Ropes Farm. It's where you get your eggs and vegetables and chickens.

ODENCE: And that was just behind where there was a barn that fell down recently. So behind where the Dannhausers live now.

PARKS: Yeah.

TYE: Pictures?

PARKS: Pictures, yeah. So you've probably seen this. This is Main Street Cotuit, downtown Cotuit, with this horrible photographer who put himself in all these.

ODENCE: And you've just been collecting these over the years?

PARKS: Yeah. This shows Freedom Hall with the stairs, when the light was up there.

TYE: This is beautiful, though. This shows horsedrawn and cars.

PARKS: I think this is No Bottom Pond. And so that would have been the golf course. This is the Harbor View with a tower next door to it. Everybody had a dock then.

ODENCE: Yeah, so that's a little east of Loop.

PARKS: A little east of Loop. And this is... Jane's house is over here. And I brought this because when I was growing up there was a boardwalk all the way out.

ODENCE: Oh right.

PARKS: And I guess that went and one of the one of the hurricanes. This is Ropes. And that's a water tower there and all these little...

ODENCE: Oh, that was part of the Santuit house probably. Or no...

PARKS: No, the Santuit house is over here.

ODENCE: Ok so this is up like Nick...

PARKS: Yeah, Nick's, and that's where Nick Moore's house is. That's the school I went to.

TYE: Wow. And that was when it was the post office, it was the post office site?

PARKS: Yeah, it's where the post office is now. So this was the doctor's office. And...

TYE: Which doctor would have been there?

PARKS: Dr. Higgins. He came and gave us all... We had a dentist from Hyannis come and checked our teeth.

TYE: That's so interesting. He was above the school.

PARKS: No, this was his office for, you know, the, quote, nurse's office. We didn't have a nurse, but this is where I got my polio. My polio vaccines.

TYE: So that's bigger than I would have thought for a school house. How many kids would you say were there when you were in elementary school?

ODENCE: It was up to fourth grade, right?

PARKS: Yeah... No, no, it was these... This is a hallway here. Behind that was the first and second grade room. The middle was a fifth and sixth, and this was a third and fourth over here.

TYE: Ah, so it was first through sixth.

PARKS: And then there was a kindergarten downstairs.

TYE: So fifty kids or two-hundred kids or what do you think?

PARKS: Maybe fifty. And this is a house that was...

TYE: One more second. fifty kids, so that's fascinating. If it was first through sixth grade. You're only a handful.

ODENCE: So call it sixty.

TYE: Ten kids a grade, so you really knew everybody in town. Every kid in town.

PARKS: Pretty much yeah. So this is Belair Lane at the end of Little River Road. This is like a chateau that was built there. And this is a... If you went this way, you're going to Mr. Gould's house.

ODENCE: Oh, I know the one you mean, yeah, that's right on the water. Chalet-looking place.

PARKS: Yeah. It's a Codman cottage [?]. What's this? Oh, these are two of the Morris houses.

ODENCE: Yeah.

PARKS: And these are the inside of the Pines.

ODENCE: Oh wow, I don't think I've ever seen...

TYE: Gee, that was really elegant.

PARKS: Yeah well, I'll drag this out first so you can see. To a point it was elegant,

TYE: To a point meaning...?

PARKS: Well, the things we all knew about the village.

TYE: Yeah. Like what kinds of things?

PARKS: You'll see.

TYE: Ah.

PARKS: So this is what you would get if you saw a set [?] for information about the Pines. Last page.

ODENCE: Oh nice, "Jewish patronage not desired."

TYE: Not desired! Can we just... Could I ask you to read that out loud? This is from the brochure of the Pines.

PARKS: "Jewish patronage not desired."

TYE: And would it have gone without saying that Black patronage was not desired, or that other...

PARKS: I would assume. I don't know, that wasn't...

ODENCE: Probably not even attempted.

PARKS: That wasn't... My grandmother had household help. One was a cook and housekeeper and the other was a butler and a chauffeur. His name was Combine[?]. He was from India, and he was as dark skinned as you could possibly get, so... I grew up in a house with somebody whose skin was a different color than mine, and you know, we had Cape Verdeans and Portuguese doing all the yard work, so it was never a topic in my house what people's...

TYE: Would you mind if I shot a picture of that?

PARKS: Oh sure, yeah.

TYE: I've never seen anything that blatant.

ODENCE: And it's stamped on later. It was an afterthought. It wasn't... They forgot in the original brochure, God.

PARKS: So this is Mr. Fowler's plan for what is now Cotuit Coves [?].

ODENCE: Oh wow, yep. I've heard of it but I haven't seen it, and I think the lots were like, twice, some of them... Well the ones around the golf course are twice as big. I think they got split when Kellyville was built. Like each of these, I think, was cut in half for Kellyville.

PARKS: It was a lot of... They didn't want to run the water down to Kellyville. A lot of people. So then this is just...

ODENCE: I think Roger Reid told me that the pump... that Kellyville operated off wells that were in the golf course and over time they got decommissioned, but that was where the first water came from.

PARKS: So that was the original chemical fire station. That's the library. I think that's the library.

TYE: Can I ask, when you say chemical fire station... because it was designed for chemical fires, as well as other fires?

PARKS: No, it was... chemicals were used to put out the fires.

TYE: So this is the modern fire station where they had chemicals to put out fires, right, it was more...

PARKS: Yeah.

ODENCE: Not just buckets.

PARKS: Not just buckets. They had a fire truck which is now the one down at the Historical Society. And then this is when the new station was built. And these are just a bunch of... a lot of postcards that you see. So these were from the images that this guy, who put himself in every single picture.

ODENCE: He's in that car?

PARKS: Yeah, he's in that car.

TYE: Who is he?

PARKS: Who knows, you know... Ruined a lot of pictures. That's the post office. So, I think this is the Lowell property.

ODENCE: Lowell, Parsons [?]. Yeah, those houses still look pretty much like that. And what was this from? Was it like a tour that...

PARKS: I have no idea, I found it on eBay.

ODENCE: Really? Oh interesting.

PARKS: Yeah. And I think it's from the plans for it. And seeing some, a group of houses designed by somebody.

TYE: Are you too young to have known President Lowell?

PARKS: Yes.

TYE: Was he still a... Did his presence loom at all here or didn't it matter?

PARKS: Didn't loom to me.

TYE: Didn't loom to you, okay. 'Cause one of the things that intrigued me that Joe Gould [?] said before he left was that one of the reasons Cotuit had lots of artists and writers and other people here was 'cause of President Lowell. But your dad was here nothing to do with that.

PARKS: No, he didn't go to Harvard. He went to Wesleyan in Connecticut.

TYE: Do you have his poetry?

PARKS: No. I just have one that got published, that's all. He was sitting next to... you know Hunker Rennie[?]?

ODENCE: Yeah.

PARKS: Yeah. Apparently my father sat next to him at a fire district annual meeting. So Hunker knew him for thirty seconds. And that was the night actually that he died.

ODENCE: Oh wow.

PARKS: He walked home from Freedom Hall and had a heart attack and passed away.

TYE: When you were two?

PARKS: Two and a half, yeah.

TYE: Wow. Had you... Do you have siblings?

PARKS: No. No, just me, so...

TYE: That is amazing, your mother must have been an incredibly strong person to have carried on.

PARKS: Yeah, I think so, yeah. So, you know, everybody has troubles.

TYE: So we've asked a bunch of questions and probably have missed a lot of important things we should have asked. What should we have asked about Cotuit that means something to you and your experiences?

PARKS: The Kirkmans. I'm probably an authority on the Kirkmans because they, yeah... I remember when Mrs. Kirkman died, and her money was left to the cemetery. And, being an only child, I spent a lot of my time with adults, so I kept my mouth shut and my ears open. And that was a really, obviously big topic of discussion. So I was on the library board for a time and when she died, her lawyer, New York lawyer, wrote "the Town of Cotuit," which the town, the selectmen, immediately said, "Well, no, she meant the town of Barnstable." Yeah, so they got the money, minus some money that was left to her stepsisters, and it was for the maintenance of the old section of Mosswood. So when I was a teenager, any teenage boy in Cotuit pretty much was working at Mosswood, because they had buckets of money and, you know, that's where all the boys went to work.

ODENCE: Yeah, Keith Rapp included.

PARKS: "Work." You know.

TYE: And it was just the boys?

PARKS: Yeah, and then...

ODENCE: We should note the airquotes around work. It was a little casual.

PARKS: Yeah, a little casual, a lot of holding up those shovels. So then I went on the library board. So after they died, they got everything, the town got everything, got the house, the farm animals.

ODENCE: And the house was the Codman [?] house...

PARKS: House was at Codman Point, right.

ODENCE: And Kirkman was a soap guy....

PARKS: Soap manufacturer from New York. And they loved the library. And so the town asked the library to take his books. He had a book collection and a few other things and some paintings, and the library did, but they insisted on being paid to store it. And that worked until... actually John Clem[?] was one of the selectmen, and they gradually stopped giving the library any money. Because they were using it to pay salaries in the DPW along with apparently using some of it to repair the bathhouses over at Craigville Beach, yeah. And so, long story short, so I got appointed to the town of Barnstable Trust Fund Advisory Committee, which advises the town manager, which is—just an aside, I didn't vote for the change in form of government because

when I read the new proposed form of government and I got to the town manager, he has sole authority to spend the town trust funds. Didn't have to talk to anybody. And so when the form of government changed, and Rutherford came, he stopped all funds being disbursed from the Kirkman fund. And none got, you know... so the DPW wasn't using 'em for salaries, and that went on... None of the money was spent for years, and I was on the board and, you know, we wanted to sell some of the books of his collection that weren't that valuable and, you know, it was just a horrible time dealing with him. And so after I left the board, I got appointed to the Trust Fund Advisory Committee just because I really didn't think Cotuit was getting its fair share of the Kirkman funds.

ODENCE: Which should have been all of it.

PARKS: Which should have been all of it, right. And so, finally, he let one—when he was manager—he let one disbursement of funds go out to all the libraries. And then he stopped because, you know, he wanted some sort of special programs, but... So we, the committee, worked very hard to come up with a plan and gave it to him and he said no, he didn't like it, and, you know, “come up with something else,” and he'd know what it is, what he liked... So fortunately, he left and, once Lynch became town manager, we were able to give out grants on a yearly basis to the libraries. So that the funds now are spent about half between the libraries and half between the cemeteries. I forgot to tell you that when I first looked into it, when Mrs. Kirkman died in 1957, the trust was worth five million dollars. When I wrote a letter to town hall in like, I don't know, 2008, the trust was worth five million dollars. I'm going, “well, this is a problem.”

TYE: What happened? They were just spending so much of it, spending principal...

PARKS: I don't think anybody was paying any attention to it. And they were, you know, they were paying, I don't know, some bank...

ODENCE: Had it in a bank account... savings account.

PARKS: Pretty close. They were paying some bank an enormous amount of money to manage it.

TYE: Do you think—so this is a strange idea—but do you think that Cotuit could have or could contest that it is due, that the intent was to have all the trust here? I've never heard of something saying because they put the wrong adjective in front of it... I mean, clearly the intent was Cotuit.

PARKS: No, it was contested mightily by all residents of the village and some very high profile Boston lawyers, you know, on behalf of the village had gotten aware, you know.

ODENCE: So did Mr. Kirkman donate money for the construction of the Kirkman room?

PARKS: No that came from the Kirkman Trust.

ODENCE: Okay, so then there was some money that the library was able to get out of it for that.

PARKS: Yeah, that was for that, yeah. But no, see, he died, and, you know, his will says that he hopes the money goes to the library, but then, apparently, Mrs. Kirkman wanted red velvet drapes in the library, which was dark as a tomb anyway. You went in there and like Miss Finney had one light on, you know, on the desk. She was a librarian. And you could only have three books. And Miss Finney didn't want red velvet curtains so Mrs. Kirkman had her nose put out of joint and left it to Mosswood.

TYE: Why... So in a way, it's lucky that libraries have anything because it could all be going to the fanciest cemetery in the world if the... geez. Any other stories like that? Those are great.

PARKS: So after the... Did Keith tell you about, or did you ask him about how we ended up with the post office where it is, where the school was?

TYE: No, I don't remember him saying that to me.

PARKS: Okay.

ODENCE: I think I know, there was this grand swap, but I'd love to hear your take on it.

PARKS: Yeah. So at that corner of Main Street and School Street there was a big building right here, where there's now a park, and it had a market in it, and it had the post office, and the postmistress was Myrtle Nickerson, and Jackie Bartonella's in her house. And Louise Harmon was the assistant, and then upstairs was Manny Barr[?]. And so, the school was gone, Bob Hayden, you know, tore it down. Or I don't know if he tore it down, but he cleaned it out, all the desks and everything that was worth anything inside. And it got torn down. And then Keith and Ed Mycock somehow worked to deal with a town that if the town gave the church the school property, then they could have the property where, you know, that little section of the park, the property where that was. And so that's how it ended up being the churches. I never... that's all I know, I never got anything, you know, more straight than that. I do know that Phyllis Dudley, who was a realtor, was in charge of the bonds that were sold to build the post office. And one night some of our less savory characters, our, you know, homegrown juvenile delinquents broke into the church and tried to break into the safe. I guess they thought there was money in it or something. And they couldn't break into it. And so it now resides down under the dock. The town dock, the old part.

ODENCE: There's the safe? they got the safe out of there?

PARKS: Yeah they got the safe out of there and took it down and dumped it, yeah.

ODENCE: Oh wow. So the church continues to own the property that the post office was on, and that's how the...

PARKS: Yes, right. The post office pays rent to them.

ODENCE: I think—I'm trying to think—I think I had heard that there was... I didn't know about Keith's involvement, or Mr. Mycock's, but I think I heard that there was some money behind it

from the Whitcombs, maybe?

PARKS: Yeah, yeah, that's one. Apparently... I've asked Keith about that, and he goes, "Oh, I don't know." I don't know if Carter owned that block because next to it was the Christian Science Reading Room, and I can't really remember, but he got married and his wife turned that into an interior decorating place. So he obviously owned that building. So I'm pretty sure he owned that. You know, his father made wheels for railroad cars, yeah.

TYE: But does that give the church enough of an endowment to support the church these days?

PARKS: You'll be unthrilled to know that, let's see, when they built a new post office, the negotiations... The post office basically paid for building the new post office. They pay the mortgage plus they pay rent. So yes, it's a very good deal for the church.

ODENCE: And they get parking on Sundays with the post office parking lot.

PARKS: Yeah well actually the post office only has the spots that rim the post office. The rest are for the church. I was a trustee on the church.

TYE: So everything that goes on kind of has a backstory to it.

PARKS: Pretty much. any more good ones.

TYE: Any more good ones?

PARKS: You know, that's about it. I mean I've been on the historical board, I've been on the library board, I've been on the church board. And I think the main reason that I did that, not only because, you know, I just got really interested in history. And that is because growing up in this village, I saw my Sunday School teacher was the wife of the man who I bought gas from, you know, and the Boy Scout leader was the electrician in town, and, you know, so when you grew up in a place where you see everybody doing volunteering, then... so it's a good example, hopefully.

TYE: So this is more time than we told you we were gonna take. This has been terrific, and if you should think of anything else, we'd love to hear it. My last question is, who else would you say... So, you are healthy and vibrant. Who among older people in town would you say, "get to quickly?"

PARKS: Marianne Robello [Rebello?].

ODENCE: We're trying.

PARKS: Yeah.

TYE: Who else?

PARKS: Did you talk to the Hadleys? Laurie Hadley?

ODENCE: They're on the list

PARKS: They're on the list, okay.

TYE: Would Bob Hayden be good?

PARKS: Probably, yeah.

TYE: Good, Jane is a character.

ODENCE: Kind of runs in the genes in that family.

TYE: Have you seen her recently?

PARKS: Since she's moved to Milestones, no. I haven't seen her. I know she's not well, and I email her. You know... But yeah, I always used to say that, you know, I lived in this small little specific time zone on Piney Road because if you went down to the Hayden's, they had Hayden time, which was different for every member of the Hayden family.

ODENCE: That's a lot of time zones.

PARKS: Yeah, and none of which I think we're on time. And then there's Rapp time. And then there was my mother's time, which was where you're always five minutes, ten minutes early to wherever you go.

TYE: How long... When did your mother die?

PARKS: She died in 1992.

TYE: And was here til the end.

PARKS: Yes, Yeah.

TYE: Great. Anything else?

ODENCE: No, I think it's been wonderful, thank you very much.

PARKS: You're welcome.