

COTUIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW PELLIS      FEBRUARY 23, 1978

Q    BETTY PECK

A    MATTHEW PELLIS

Q    MATTHEW PELLIS, FEBRUARY 23, 1978.    WE'VE TALKED A LITTLE BEFORE WE STARTED THIS TAPE, AND WE TALKED FIRST ABOUT YOUR FATHER, CAPTAIN JIM, WHO WAS WELL KNOWN AND LOVED IN THE COMMUNITY.    WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT HIM?

A    WELL, NOT REALLY, BECAUSE THERE ISN'T TOO MUCH TO TALK ABOUT. YOU KNOW, WHAT I SAID ABOUT COVERED IT.    IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE HE PASSED AWAY IN '41.

BUT HIS LIFE WAS UNEVENTFUL HERE.    YOU KNOW, HE WAS JUST A STEADY PERSON IN THE VILLAGE.    OF COURSE, ALL OF THE FOLKS THAT KNEW HIM AROUND HERE PRACTICALLY ALL, THEY ALWAYS CALLED HIM CAPTAIN JIM.    BECAUSE HE WAS ROUND THE SHORE AND BOATING, I GUESS.    HE WAS NEVER, COMMANDED A SHIP OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.    HE WAS A GOOD SAILOR, I GUESS.    HE TOLD ME THAT HE WAS AN ABLE BODIED SEAMAN WHEN HE WAS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD, ABOARD A SQUARE RIGGER.    SO I GUESS HE'D BEEN A PRETTY GOOD SEAMAN.    OTHERWISE THAN THAT, YOU KNOW, HIS LIFE WHEN HE WAS HERE WAS JUST A - WORKING PERSON.

Q    BOTH YOUR PARENTS ARE INDIAN, FULL BLOODED INDIANS?

A    WELL, NO, THEY DON'T CLAIM TO BE FULL BLOODED, BUT THEY SO MUCH OF IT, YOU KNOW, THAT - BECAUSE - ON MY MOTHER'S SIDE - THERE'S DUTCH BLOOD, THROUGH HER FATHER.    AND ON MY DAD'S SIDE, THERE'S SPANISH BLOOD, THROUGH HIM, HIS FATHER.    SO, YOU KNOW, BUT THERE'S SO MUCH THERE THAT, THEY STILL, THEY MAINTAIN IT, YOU KNOW.    BECAUSE -

Q    THEY WERE BORN IN MASHPEE?

A    YUP, BOTH OF THEM.

Q    AND YOU WERE?

A    YEP.    RIGHT WHERE THE TOWN BUILDING IS,    I WAS.    AND MY MOTHER WAS ALSO.

Q    THIS WAS IN 1894 YOU WERE BORN?

A I WAS BORN IN 1894. SEE, I'M GETTING ALONG IN YEARS, TOO.

Q YOUR FATHER GOT THE NAME OF CAPTAIN JIM FOR CAPTAINING - PARTY BOATS.

A YUH, YUH. PARTY BOATS, YES. YUH.

Q AND HE WORKED FOR -

A THAT'S A - THAT'S TRADITIONAL AROUND COTUIT. THERE WAS PLENTY OF - ALL OF THE OLD SAILORS, THAT USED TO GO TO SEA, EVERYBODY ELSE, WHEN THEY CAME ASHORE, CALLED THEM CAPTAINS. (LAUGHED) THEY DID! NATURALLY, AN HONOR.

Q IF THEY WENT TO SEA, THEY CAME BACK A CAPTAIN?

A THEY CAME BACK A CAPTAIN. ALTHOUGH, THEY CLAIM, I DON'T KNOW FOR REAL, BUT THEY CLAIMED AT ONE TIME THEY WAS - FROM SANTUIT TO LOWER END OF HIGHGROUND THERE WASN'T A HOUSE BUT WHAT THEY WAS A MAN WHO HAD SOMETIME PROBABLY BEEN COMMANDER OF A SHIP. NOT BIG ONES, BUT SMALLER ONES, YOU KNOW.

BUT THEY'D SAIL - JUST THE TWO MASTERS THAT USED TO SAIL OUT OF COTUIT HERE, YOU KNOW. A LOT OF THE OLDER MEN - CAPTAIN CLAUDE NICKERSON, EDSON FISHER, TOM CHATFIELD, WENDELL NICKERSON AND EDSON SCUDDER'S FATHER, GRANDFATHER THERE, CAPTAIN EDDIE FISHER, ALL THEM, THERE, THEY HAD THE THREE MASTERS.

AND THERE USED TO BE A LOT OF THEM. YOU KNOW, IT SEEMED TO BE MORE COASTWORTHY. COURSE THEY WERE BIGGER. THEY USED TO DO COASTWISE SAILING, YOU KNOW. FREIGHTING, MOSTLY. YOU GET A LOAD FROM HERE, IF THEY HAD TO GO SOUTH WITH IT, WHY THEY DID. BUT IF THEY HAD TO GO TO NANTUCKET, YOU KNOW, CART WOOD, NEW BEDFORD, FREIGHT COAL FROM NEW BEDFORD HERE AND WOOD TO NEW BEDFORD, AND TO NANTUCKET AND THE VINEYARD AND AROUND. THAT'S THE WAY THEY DID.

Q EVERYTHING CAME BY BOAT?

A MOST EVERYTHING CAME BY BOAT.

A AND COTUIT WAS A FAIRLY LARGE PORT, WASN'T IT?

A IT USED TO BE, IT USED TO BE. THERE USED TO BE A DOCK RIGHT DOWN THERE WHERE ROPES BEACH IS. WHERE THEY USED TO COME IN THERE. THERE'S AN OLD - I'VE GOT OLD PICTURES AROUND HERE NOW THAT - PHYLIS HAD ON HER CALENDARS WHEN THEY USED TO HAVE - THE DOCKS USED TO BE THERE, AND THE OLD SAILING VESSELS USED TO COME IN THERE. RIGHT INTO THAT BEACH.

Q THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE DOCK?

A OH YES, YES, THERE WAS A COUPLE, A COUPLE OF THEM THERE. BUT THEY WERE GONE BY THE TIME THAT I GOT HERE, IN 1900. THEY WERE TORN DOWN. BUT I CAN REMEMBER CAPTAIN WALTON HINCKLEY USED TO HAVE AN OYSTER SHANTY RIGHT THERE WHERE THE BEACH IS.

Q YES, AND HE OPENED OYSTERS, PEOPLE CAME AND -

Q HE OPENED OYSTERS AND FREIGHTED THEM AND SOLD THEM, YOU KNOW. AND OF COURSE, THE OYSTER BUSINESS WAS A BIG BUSINESS HERE. AT ONE TIME, THERE WAS TWENTY SIX MEN IN THE OYSTER BUSINESS IN COTUIT, IN MY DAY. EVERY AVAILABLE SPOT, ALMOST FROM LITTLE RIVER - DOWN THE NARROWS THERE BY --- POINT, THEY CALL IT RIGHT CLEAN AROUND TO CODMAN'S POINT, IN FACT.

THEN THERE USED TO BE TWO OVER IN POPPONNESSET BAY. ONE UP HERE, OVER WHAT THEY CALL THE NARROWS OVER HERE, THERE USED TO BE A MAN HAD A LITTLE SHANTY THERE, HAD AN OYSTER BUSINESS AND THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE DOWN ON POPPONNESSET POINT.

Q SO THEY BROUGHT IN THE SEED OYSTERS AND PLANTED THEM?

A THAT'S RIGHT.

Q AND THEN HARVESTED THEM LATER AND SO IT WAS -

A YES, THEY PLANTED IN APRIL, MAY, AND IN SEPTEMBER - THEY GAVE THEM THREE MONTHS, YOU KNOW, THROUGH THE SPAWNING SEASON. AND THEY WERE READY TO HARVEST IN THE FALL, BY LABOR DAY, AFTER LABOR DAY, THAT'S WHEN THEY ALL STARTED RIGHT IN, OPENED RIGHT UP. BUT IT USED TO BE A BIG BUSINESS.

OF COURSE, DOWN BY WHERE THE TOWN DOCK IS NOW, CAPTAIN BENNETT DOTTRIDGE. HE WAS A RETIRED SEA CAPTAIN. HE STARTED A COAL BUSINESS DOWN THERE. THE COAL POCKETS RAN FROM THE DOCK UP TO

WHERE BILL PRENTICE'S DRIVEWAY WAS. THEY WAS ALL COAL POCKETS ON THAT SIDE, ON THAT FENCE.

Q OH MY. AND DID PEOPLE USE COAL A LOT IN THEIR HOMES?

A OH YES, YES. WOOD AND COAL, THERE WAS NO OIL BURNERS THEM DAYS. WOOD AND COAL!

Q SO THAT WAS QUITE A BUSINESS.

A YES, IT WAS, IT WAS. THEY USED TO BE THE SCALES, THE HAY SCALES, AND CAPTAIN DOTTRIDGE THERE, HE HAD HAY, GRAIN, COAL. AND HIS SCALES WAS RIGHT THERE, WHERE THE DRIVEWAY GOES UP INTO FREDDIE CLAUSEN'S HOUSE.

OLD BUILT IN SCALES, DELIVERED WITH A HORSE AND WAGON.

Q SO, YOU'D DRIVE THE WAGON RIGHT ON THE SCALE?

A DRIVE THE WAGON RIGHT ONTO THE SCALE. WEIGHED EM AS YOU GO.

Q NOONE ELSE HAS TALKED ABOUT THAT.

A OH, I SEEN ALL THAT AND RECALL IT. IN FACT, I USED TO GO DOWN THERE, SHOVEL COAL AND OVER THE VESSELS WHEN THEY CAME IN IN THE SUMMERTIME. I WAS FOURTEEN, FIFTEEN YEARS OLD. WOULD BE JUST FOR THE SUMMERTIME, A FEW WEEKS IN THE SUMMER. YOU KNOW, A FEW DOLLARS, HONEST DOLLARS.

Q WERE YOU PAID BY THE HOUR?

A WE WERE PAID BY THE JOB FOR THAT.

Q BY THE JOB.

A YES. IT WAS ONLY ABOUT THREE HOURS, UNLOADING, - MAYBE THREE AND A HALF HOURS UNLOADING A VESSEL.

Q AND HOW MUCH WOULD YOU BE PAID -

A USED TO CARRY ABOUT, THEY USED TO CARRY ABOUT FORTY - THE SMALLER ONE USED TO CARRY ABOUT FORTY TON AND THE OTHER WOULD TAKE ABOUT FIFTY FIVE, SIXTY - MAYBE.

Q AND HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD WORK AT UNLOADING IT?

A THERE WOULD BE TWO SHOVELERS AND ONE UP ON THE ROOF, THERE, DUMPING. THEY DUMPED IT INTO THE LITTLE CART, YOU KNOW, THAT WENT THE WHOLE LENGTH OF THE ROW THERE BECAUSE IT WAS SOFT COAL, NUT COAL, PEAT COAL, FURNACE COAL, STOVE COAL, ALL GRADED DIFFERENT.

Q ALL DIFFERENT GRADES.

A DIFFERENT GRADES, YES.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER HOW MUCH YOU'D BE PAID FOR UNLOADING A SHIP?

A USED TO GET TWO DOLLARS FOR THE LOAD. BOUT THREE HOURS - IF WE WAS LUCKY WE MIGHT GET OUT, TWO AND A HALF. BUT, VERY RARELY. ON THE BIGGER BOATS, WOULD TAKE ABOUT FOUR AND A HALF. SHE'D TAKE ABOUT FIFTY, MAYBE FIFTY-FIVE TON. WAS QUITE A PILE OF COAL. BUT IT GENERALLY WOULD BE ONE GRADE AT A TIME. SOMETIME YOU'D HAVE TWO GRADES, ONE ON DECK AND ONE IN THE HOLE.

BUT IT WAS - THEY USED TO TAKE, MOST OF THE SUMMER. GOOD WEATHER, THEY MADE TWO, SOMETIMES THREE TRIPS A WEEK TO NEW BEDFORD AND BACK. COURSE, THOSE SCHOONERS, THEM DAYS, THEY NEVER HAD POWER AND DO IT ALL SAIL, BOTH WAYS. IF THEY'D CATCH THE WIND AND TIDE RIGHT, IF IT WAS RIGHT WHEN THEY GOT THROUGH AN ORDER THEY'D JUST, GO RIGHT BACK AND START AGAIN ANOTHER LOAD IN A WEEK, SOMETIMES THREE, THIRD LOAD.

Q THEN HOW WAS THE COAL DELIVERED TO THE HOMES HERE?

A THEY DELIVERED BY WAGON, BY WAGON. T'WAS ALL DELIVERED BY WAGON THOSE DAYS, HORSE AND WAGON. EVEN THE PEOPLE OVER IN WEST BARNSTABLE THAT HAD COAL POCKETS OVER THERE, THEY USED TO DELIVER BY HORSE AND TEAM. USED TO BE A COUPLE OF DIFFERENT ONES OVER THERE. BUT THEIRS, OVER THERE, CAME DOWN BY RAILROAD. BUT THE COTUIT DISTRICT COAL CAME IN BY WATER.

Q WOULD YOU SAY MORE CAME BY WATER THAN BY RAIL?

A NO, I DON'T THINK SO. BECAUSE, YOU HAD - THOSE PEOPLE OVER THERE, THEY HAD A BIGGER AREA, BECAUSE WALTER SCUDDER'S FATHER - COURSE HE WAS LOCATED IN OSTERVILLE. HE HAD ABOUT THE SAME TYPE

THAT CAPTAIN DOTTRIDGE DID HERE, HAY, GRAIN AND COAL. HE USED TO CART ALL HIS BY HORSE AND WAGON FROM WEST BARNSTABLE. BUT HE HAD THE OSTERVILLE-CENTERVILLE AREA AND THE WEST BARNSTABLE, YOU KNOW, HAD PART OF IT ALSO. WITH WEST BARNSTABLE AND PROBABLY

SOME OF THE BARNSTABLE AREA BECAUSE THERE WAS ANOTHER OUTFIT IN HYANNIS THAT TOOK IN THE AREA AROUND HYANNIS, HYANNISPORT, PART OF CENTERVILLE, CUMMAQUID AND THE DIFFERENT AREAS. SO THAT'S THE WAY, THEY YOU KNOW. BUT THAT'S ALL THERE WAS AT THE TIME, WOOD AND COAL. THERE WAS NO - THEN, LATER ON AFTER AWHILE THESE RANGE BURNERS CAME IN STYLE AND THEY GOT BURNERS FOR FURNACES SO THAT ELIMINATED A LOT OF THE COAL AND ORE BUSINESS, PRACTICALLY ALL OF IT.

Q DID THE SAME SHIPS, WHICH HAULED COAL, DID THEY ALSO DO OYSTERS? WERE THESE SHIPS ALL DESIGNED SO THAT THEY WERE VERY VERSATILE AND EVERYTHING WENT INTO THE HOLE?

A OH YES. COURSE, AFTER THE COAL SCHOONERS GOT THROUGH FREIGHTING COAL, THEY'D JUST WASH THAT HOLE AND DRY IT OUT, YOU KNOW. CAUSE THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT OF DUST COMES FROM COAL, NO MATTER HOW CAREFUL YOU MAY BE. BUT THEY WOULD WASH THE HOLES ALL OUT AND PUMP THE BILGE - COURSE, A LOT OF IT WOULD GO RIGHT DOWN INTO THE BILGE THEN THEY'D JUST PUMP IT RIGHT OUT, YOU KNOW, WITH THE BILGE PUMP SO, WHEN THEY GOT READY TO FREIGHT THE OYSTERS THE HOLE WAS ALL CLEAN. YOU KNOW, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE ANY OF THAT BLACK DUST.

Q SO THEY COULD WORK IT OUT, THEY COULD TAKE, BRING IN A LOAD OF COAL AND TAKE OUT A LOAD OF OYSTERS?

A YEH, THAT'S RIGHT.

Q AND HAVE THE SHIP FULL BOTH WAYS.

A YEH. SOMETIMES THEY DID THAT.

Q BECAUSE THEY WERE LAID UP IN THE WINTER.

A OH YAH, LOT OF THEM ARE. MANY A TIME THEY'D BE FROZE RIGHT IN HERE, YEH.

Q YES. BUT MOST OF THEM STAYED IN THE WATER OVER THE WINTER?

A OH YAH, THEY NEVER HAULED OUT THE BOAT, THE SCHOONERS, THERE. SOMETIMES THERE'D BE TWO OR THREE OF THEM ANCHORED OFF TOWN DOCK THERE, FROZEN IN.

Q I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO YOUR INDIAN ANCESTRY. YOUR MOTHER WAS ADDIE L. OAKLEY AND SHE WORKED FOR PEOPLE AS A DOMESTIC IN COTUIT AND YOUR FATHER WORKED HERE. SO THIS IS WHY YOU MOVED TO COTUIT.

DID YOU HAVE MUCH, MANY ACTIVITIES WITH THE PEOPLE OF MASHPEE, OR DID YOU PRETTY MUCH INTEGRATE WITH THE PEOPLE OF COTUIT, CONSIDER THIS MORE -

A OH - NO, WE ALWAYS KEPT IN TOUCH, MY FAMILY, - WE ALWAYS, YOU KNOW, WAS IN TOUCH BECAUSE I HAD AUNTS AND UNCLES THERE, AND MY GRANDFATHER. I WAS FOURTEEN, FIFTEEN YEAR OLD WHEN MY GRANDAD DIED, MAYBE A LITTLE OLDER. I DON'T RECALL NOW. BUT I USED TO GO UP THERE ALL THE TIME.

OF COURSE, MY AUNTS AND UNCLES WERE THERE, UP THERE IN MASHPEE PROPER. BUT, DAD'S FOLKS STILL LIVED OVER IN SOUTH MASHPEE. GRANDFATHER PELL'S AND GRANDMOTHER, THEY LIVED THERE UP TILL THE TIME THEY PASSED AWAY. BUT THAT WAS A LITTLE TOO FAR AWAY TO TRAVEL. IT WAS ABOUT EIGHT OR NINE MILES, AROUND THE ROAD DOWN THERE.

SO I DIDN'T - BUT GRANDFATHER OAKLEY - I USED TO GO UP THERE AN AWFUL LOT. AND OF COURSE, MY AUNTS AND UNCLES, WE USED TO GO, AND THEY USED TO HAVE PARTIES AND PICNICS. FAMILIES USED TO GET TOGETHER QUITE OFTEN. BECAUSE THEY USED TO COME ON DOWN AND VISIT MOTHER AND DAD TOO. SO IT WAS ALWAYS CLOSE, WE WERE ALWAYS CLOSE.

Q AND THEN YOU WENT INTO THE ARMY DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

A YES.

Q AND YOU WENT OVERSEAS?

A YES. AY YUP.

Q WHERE OVERSEAS WERE YOU?

A WHERE? I WAS IN FRANCE, ALL THE TIME. NEVER GOT OUT OF THERE. I WAS DUE TO GO ON LEAVE THE WEEK THE ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED, FOR TWO WEEKS LEAVE. BUT THEY CANCELLED ALL LEAVES, AND FROM THERE ON WE JUST GOT READY TO COME BACK TO THE STATES. THE ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED IN NOVEMBER, AND WE LEFT THERE IN FEBRUARY.

Q THEN YOU WERE HAPPY TO BE BACK IN COTUIT, WHEN YOU FINALLY GOT HERE.

A I CERTAINLY WAS, I SURE WAS.

Q AND YOUR MOTHER WAS HAPPY TO HAVE YOU -

A OH, GOLLY I GUESS SO. SHE WAS, I WAS ALWAYS HAPPY TO BE WITH HER BECAUSE, YOU KNOW. SHE NEVER SHED A TEAR WHEN I WENT AWAY. BUT I CAN WELL REMEMBER HOW SHE LOOKED. BUT SHE WROTE REGULARLY.

Q SHE DIDN'T SHED A TEAR THAT YOU SAW - BUT -

A YOU KNOW, I TOLD HER I WAS LEAVING TO GO INTO THE SERVICE. SHE SAW ME OFF IN THE TRAIN FROM HYANNIS THE NEXT MORNING. CAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE ANY NOTICE TO GET READY. I GOT READY TO - I GOT MY NOTICE IN THE MAIL AT NOONTIME AND HAD TO BE IN HYANNIS THAT NIGHT. I WAS WORKING SO I HAD TO GO TELL THE PARTY I WAS WORKING FOR I HAD TO LEAVE, GET THROUGH BECAUSE I WAS GOING INTO THE SERVICE AND THAT WAS IT!

SO I WENT, I REPORTED THAT NIGHT, TOLD HER I WAS LEAVING IN THE MORNING. SHE WAS THERE TO SEE ME OFF IN THE TRAIN THE NEXT MORNING. BUT, WELL I KISSED HER GOODBYE AND IT WAS, YOU KNOW JUST FAREWELL. SHE NEVER SHED A TEAR. LOT OF THEM BROKE DOWN AND CRIED, HUNG ON AND EVERYTHING ELSE AND I JUST SIMPLY TOLD HER, DON'T WORRY BOUT IT, I'LL BE BACK. SHE USED TO HAVE A SAYING THAT A BAD PENNY WOULD ALWAYS COME BACK TO YOU.

SO I TOLD HER, YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THE BAD PENNY! WELL I SAYS, THAT'S ME! (LAUGHS) SO SHE NEVER FORGOT IT. I DIDN'T EITHER. SO I PROMISED MYSELF THAT WHEN I COME BACK, I'D NEVER GO SO FAR AWAY THAT I COULDN'T SEE HER ANYTIME IN TWENTY FOUR HOURS. SO I STAYED RIGHT IN COTUIT.

BUT I HAD A LOT OF FUN. I GREW UP. OF COURSE MY MAIN INTEREST WAS IN MY WORK AND HELPING MOTHER AND DAD. THE SPORTING LIFE THAT I HAD - SPORTS. THAT WAS MY MAIN -



Q WHAT SPORTS WERE YOU INTERESTED IN?

A WELL, BASEBALL WAS MY GREAT LOVE. BASEBALL AND SKATING. BUT I PLAYED TENNIS ALONG WITH IT ALL. BUT SKATING AND BASEBALL --

Q WAS THERE A BASEBALL TEAM WHEN YOU WERE A YOUNG MAN?

A OH YES.

Q AND YOU PLAYED ON THE TEAM.

A OH, I USED TO PLAY. I PLAYED FROM THE TIME I WAS IN GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Q WERE YOU ONE OF THEIR STARS?

A IN GRAMMAR SCHOOL I PLAYED ON THE HIGH SCHOOL TEAM.

Q WOW.

A THEY USED TO HAVE A VILLAGE TEAM HERE, TOO. ALL THE OLD TIMERS AROUND HERE.

Q DO YOU THINK THE KETTLEERS ARE AN OUTGROWTH OF THAT -

A YES, HUH. WELL, IN THEM TIMES, YOU KNOW, EVERY TOWN, PRACTICALLY EVERY VILLAGE, IF IT WAS ANY SIZE, THEY HAD A BASEBALL TEAM. AND THEY USED TO JUST COMPETE WITH A LOCAL TOWN. LIKE COTUIT PLAYED SANDWICH. THEY HAD A TEAM IN OSTERVILLE. THEY HAD ANOTHER TEAM IN HYANNIS, YOU KNOW. AND ALL DOWN THROUGH THE CAPE, PROVINCETOWN, ALL THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES THEY HAD. A LOT OF THE VILLAGES - IF THERE WAS ANY SIZE, ENOUGH GUYS TO GET UP A TEAM, THEY'D HAVE A BASEBALL TEAM. THEY JUST COMPETED AMONGST THEMSELVES.

Q THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE PROFESSIONALS THEN?

A NO, NO. THERE WERE SOME, YOU KNOW - THAT EVENTUALLY WENT - THE LATTER PART OF MY PLAYING - THAT WENT TO THE BIG LEAGUES, TRYOUTS. THEN THEY WERE BIG STARS. OF COURSE, I FIGURED THERE WAS SOME AWFULLY GOOD BALL PLAYERS RIGHT AROUND HERE. NATURAL BALL PLAYERS.

Q OH THERE WERE, YES. HOWIE BEARSE -

A HOWIE BEARSE, EVEN AS A LITTLE TOWN AS MASHPEE WAS, WHEN I WAS THAT HIGH THEY HAD A BASEBALL TEAM.

Q OH REALLY.

A OH SURE. AND IT USED TO BE A GREAT THING FOR MASHPEE AND COTUIT TO GET TOGETHER AND PLAY.

Q THEY WERE SO CLOSE!

A CAUSE THEY USED TO HAVE A, - UP THERE WHERE THIS DEVELOPMENT IS THERE BY NO BOTTOM POND THERE. ALL GROWN UP NOW BY RAYLN ROAD, - THEY USED TO HAVE, FOURTH OF JULY THEY USED TO HAVE A BIG TIME THERE. FIREWORKS, BAND CONCERT. THEY EVEN HAD A BAND IN THE VILLAGE HERE. COTUIT BRASS BAND.

Q WITH LOCAL PEOPLE PLAYING?

A YA, AND JUST THE LOCAL PEOPLE, YOU KNOW, PLAYED. THE BAND HALL USED TO BE RIGHT THERE WHERE ELAINE'S OFFICE IS, RIGHT THERE, OR JUST THIS SIDE OF IT. THEY MOVED THE BUILDING AWAY, AFTER THERE FOR AWHILE. THEY USED TO HAVE THE OLD BAND HALL THERE AND THEY USED TO HAVE BAND PRACTICE ONCE A WEEK, AT NIGHT.

GET OUT, MARCH AROUND THE TOWN . THEY WERE ALL LOCAL, ALL LOCAL TALENT, TOO.

Q THE COMMUNITY WAS A LITTLE MORE HOMOGENEOUS THEN.

A IT CERTAINLY WAS, IT CERTAINLY WAS. BUT NOW THERE'S SO MANY PEOPLE COME IN HERE, LIKE, DOWN IN THE - I GO DOWNTOWN NOW, AND I DON'T KNOW, SIX PEOPLE. WHEN I GO INTO THE POST OFFICE.

Q BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW ALL THE PEOPLE BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU DO IN THE SUMMER?

A (LAUGHS) WELL, THERE'S SO MANY. WE HAVE SO MANY TRANSIENTS HERE. BUT EVEN THOUGH THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE HERE THAT LIVE IN THE VILLAGE THAT COME DOWN TO THE BEACH IN THE SUMMERTIME, THEY KNOW ME WELL ENOUGH. OF COURSE, THEY KNOW ME, THEY KNOW I'M PETE. BUT, SOME OF THEM I CAN'T REMEMBER THE NAME, THERE'S SO MANY OF THEM.

ALL THESE PEOPLE IN THIS PROJECT DOWN HERE, CRAWFORD, DOWN HERE. ALLAN CRAWFORDS' PROJECT THERE WHERE ALL OF THOSE NEW HOUSES AND HOMES ARE. I DON'T KNOW HALF OF THOSE PEOPLE. SOMETIMES I RECALL THE NAME BECAUSE OCCASIONALLY I'LL TAKE A RIDE DOWN AROUND THAT WAY AND I'LL SEE THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE THAT HAVE HOUSES DOWN THERE BECAUSE THEY GOT A BIG SIGN UP THERE WITH THEIR NAMES ON IT, YOU KNOW, ON THE ROAD. BUT, DON'T RING A BELL TO ME.

Q NO, NO. JUST SO MANY PEOPLE.

A BECAUSE THEY JUST MOVED IN HERE THE LAST FEW YEARS. IF SOMEBODY COME FROM OUT IN CALIFORNIA OR TEXAS SOMEWHERE, YOU KNOW, AND GAVE ME THE NAME. I COULDN'T REMEMBER IT - (LAUGHS)

Q THAT'S RIGHT. THE PEOPLE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO KNOW. WHERE DID YOU GET THE NAME, PETE?

A WELL, MY MOTHER SAID THAT MY GRANDDAD GAVE IT TO ME. BECAUSE, AFTER I LEFT SCHOOL I USED TO GO UP THERE, AS I SAID, OCCASIONALLY, YOU KNOW, AS OFTEN AS I COULD FIND TIME TO VISIT HIM. BECAUSE HE WAS LIVING ALONE AT THE TIME. ONE OF MY UNCLES LIVED WITH HIM, BUT HE WAS RARELY AT HOME. SO HE TOLD MOTHER THAT, - HE WAS AROUND THE WORLD. A WHALER.

Q OH REALLY?

A HE TOLD MOTHER THAT WHEN HE WAS ON SOME OF THESE CRUISES AND ONE OF THESE SHIPS HE WAS ON, HE SAID ONE OF HIS SHIPMATES WAS A VERY SHORT, STOUT MAN. HE SAID HE WAS VERY STOUT AND HE SAID WAS, BUILT LIKE A HOGSHEAD. (LAUGHS) WAY HE SAID. SAID HE WAS BROAD AS HE WAS LONG. AND HE SAID THEY CALLED HIM PETER FAT!

SO MOTHER SAID WHEN I WAS SMALL, UP ABOUT TWO AND THREE, FOUR YEARS OLD, I WAS VERY CHUNKY, TOO. SO HE SAID GRANDPA USED TO CALL ME PETER FAT! SO THE NAME ALWAYS STUCK TO ME.

Q EVEN AFTER YOU'D LOST THE FAT.

A YES, AND AFTER, YES. WELL, I GOT UP TO BE ABOUT FIFTEEN, SIXTEEN YEARS OLD I WAS UP THERE ONE DAY VISITING WITH HIM AND HE SAYS, IS YOUR NAME REALLY PETER? I SAYS, NO. MOM TOLD ME IT WAS A NAME THAT YOU GAVE ME FROM SOME OLD SHIPMATE. HE LAUGHED. AND I TOLD HIM WHAT IT WAS AND HE SAID, OH YES, I REMEMBER NOW.

COURSE, HE WAS GETTING ALONG IN YEARS. HE WAS IN HIS NINETIES THEN. LIVED TO BE NINETY SIX. WITHIN A MONTH. BUT ACTIVE UP TO THE LAST TWO YEARS HE LIVED.

Q AND DID HE TELL YOU TALES OF THE SEA?

A OH YES. HE TOLD ME MANY WONDERFUL STORIES ABOUT HIS WHALING VOYAGES. THREE, FOUR YEAR CRUISES. IT USED TO BE VERY INTERESTING TO ME.

Q WHAT WAS HIS JOB?

A WELL, I DON'T KNOW. HE JUST SAID, COURSE, THEY, THOSE WHALERS, WHEN THEY WERE ON SHIP, COURSE - I DON'T THINK HE WAS EVER COOK. BUT THEY USED TO HAVE WHAT THEY CALL BOAT STEERERS AND BOWMAN AND OF COURSE THE BOWMAN WAS WHAT THEY CALLED THE STRIKER. AND HE WAS THE ONE AND THEY HAD, THEY GENERALLY HAD - DAD SAID THEY USED TO HAVE ONE MAN THAT WOULD TAKE CARE OF ALL THE LANCES AND STUFF LIKE THAT WHEN THEY WERE USED, AND THE KEGS AND LINES AND THINGS LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW. SOME OF THEM TALES THAT HE USED TO TELL ME WERE REALLY FANTASTIC.

HE TOLD ME HE SEEN A BOAT GO TO SPLINTERS, JUST - (MADE A SMACKING SOUND). HIT THAT BOAT LIKE THAT WITH THEIR FLUKE, YOU KNOW. AND MAN GOES THIS WAY AND PIECES OF BOAT GO THE OTHER WAY. BUT IT WAS VERY INTERESTING. I THINK HE SAID HE HAD A COUPLE OF THREE YEAR VOYAGES.

Q SO THAT WOULD BE IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY.

A OH YAH, YAH. HE WAS BORN IN 1818. WENT TO SEA AS A YOUNGSTER.

Q AND WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A GEORGE. GEORGE T. OAKLEY.

Q AND HE LIVED TO BE NINETY-SIX?

A WITHIN A MONTH. YEP.

Q WHEN YOU WENT TO VISIT YOUR GRANDFATHER, HOW DID YOU GO?

A I WALKED.

Q ELEVEN MILES?

A WELL NO, THAT WAS ONLY ABOUT FOUR AND A HALF TO HIS HOUSE. HE LIVED UP THERE WHERE, HE HAD THAT, OWNED ALL THAT PROPERTY WHERE THE TOWN BUILDING IS UP IN MASHPEE NOW.

Q AND YOU LIVED, UH -

A WE LIVED DOWN AT LITTLE RIVER, ON THE POINT.

Q SEEMED IT WOULD BE MORE THAN THAT.

A WELL, CERTAINLY NOT - WELL, IT'S FOUR MILES, FOUR MILES FROM COTUIT CORNERS, HERE, UP TO THE CENTER OF MASHPEE WHERE THE FIRE STATION IS. THEY USED TO CALL IT FOUR MILES. YOU COULD DO IT IN ABOUT AN HOUR, LITTLE BETTER. JUST WALKING, EASILY.

Q DIDN'T HAVE BICYCLES, DID YOU?

A NO, DIDN'T HAVE BICYCLES TILL YOU GOT QUITE A BIT OLDER THAN THAT. I WAS I GUESS IN MY TWENTIES BEFORE I HAD A BICYCLE.

Q WELL, ON THE OLD SAND ROADS, THE BICYCLE DIDN'T GO VERY WELL.

A BUT THE BICYCLES WASN'T TOO GOOD THEM DAYS BECAUSE THE ROADS WERE DIFFERENT.

Q SURE, RUTTED AND -

A THERE WERE NO HARD ROADS AROUND HERE THEN. COURSE, THEY WERE ALL DIRT ROADS, AND NARROW.

Q BEAUTIFUL WHITE SAND ROADS, WEREN'T THEY?

A NO, THEY WERE DUSTY, DIRTY OLD - (LAUGHS)

Q NO BEAUTIFUL WHITE -

A WHEN A HORSE AND WAGON WENT DOWN THE ROAD IN THE SUMMERTIME, YOU COULDN'T SEE, SEE FOR A HALF AN HOUR TILL THE DUST SETTLED! (LAUGHED SOME MORE) OH WELL, WELL I DON'T MIND REMINISCING ONCE IN AWHILE, YOU KNOW, WITH DIFFERENT ONES. ONCE IN A WHILE I'LL

BUMP INTO SOME OF THE OLDER ONES AROUND MASHPEE NOW, THERE'S NOT TOO MANY OF MY AGE LEFT AROUND THERE. IF THEY DO, IF THERE'S STILL AROUND, THEY DON'T GET OUT AROUND. I GUESS, ONE OR TWO THAT ARE AROUND THERE, NEAR MY AGE, MAYBE ONE OR TWO ROUND MY AGE, LITTLE OLDER. NOT TOO MUCH OLDER, EITHER.

Q DO YOU THINK THE TRIBAL COUNCIL IS GOING TO BE ABLE TO PRESERVE THE MASHPEE LAND AS THEY WANT TO, FROM THE DEVELOPERS?

A WELL, I DON'T KNOW. I HAVEN'T DUG INTO THAT HARDLY AT ALL. COURSE, I HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE VILLAGE AND EVERYTHING ELSE, AND I HOPE THEY CAN MAINTAIN THEIR TRADITION. I HOPE SO. BUT THE WAY IT LOOKS TO ME, REGARDLESS, WHERE IT ISN'T SETTLED YET, I PERSONALLY DON'T THINK IT'S GOING TO BE SETTLED FOR A LONG TIME.

BECAUSE I THINK THAT EITHER WAY, THERE'S GOING TO BE AN APPEAL. AND IF IT DOES, THAT'S GOING TO BE A LONGER TIME THAN WE'VE HAD ALREADY. IN MY ESTIMATION. I THINK THE ONES THAT'S GOING TO DIVIDE THE BENEFITS IS SOME OF THESE LAWYERS THEY HAVE. THEY THE ONES THAT GONNA GET THE MOST OF IT!

Q I THINK THAT'S TRUE.

A BUT I, I NEVER WANT TO GET INVOLVED, BECAUSE SOME OF THE ATTORNEY'S ON BOTH SIDES THEY CAME DOWN TO TALK TO ME AND I JUST DIDN'T. YOU KNOW, I TOLD THEM IF I COULD HELP THEM, YOU KNOW, BY WHAT I, WHAT THEY WANTED TO KNOW. BUT I DIDN'T WANT THEM TO GET, ASKING ME TOO MUCH PERSONAL QUESTIONS.

BECAUSE AS FAR AS TRADITION, I WAS BROUGHT UP THAT WAY AND A COUPLE OF MY UNCLES USED TO TRAVEL WITH THE OLD KICKAPOO INDIANS, SHOW. THEY USED TO HAVE A MEDICINE SHOW THAT USED TO TRAVEL. BUT THEY WERE, THEY WERE NOT FROM MASHPEE. THE KICKAPOO WAS SOME OTHER REGION NOT TOO FAR AWAY, BUT THEY SOLD THEIR OWN HOMEMADE MEDICINES AND STUFF LIKE THAT.

Q FROM HERBS?

A HERBS, FROM HERBS. AND OF COURSE, MY MOTHER, SHE WAS ALMOST AN HERB SPECIALIST.

Q OH REALLY.

A WHEN WE WERE YOUNG, IF THERE WAS ANYTHING WRONG. MY DAD WAS THE SAME WAY. IF THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED, YOU KNOW, AROUND THE HOUSE, WELL - GO GET THIS AND GO GET THAT AND - MY MOTHER, ALWAYS IN THE FALL, SHE HAD HERBS HANGING UP IN THE ATTIC, DRYING.

Q THAT SHE GATHERED FROM THE WOODS?

A SHE GATHERED FROM THE WOODS, THAT'S ALL.

Q DID SHE TREAT PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OR JUST THE FAMILY?

A NO, JUST THE FAMILY, SHE NEVER -

Q WHAT WERE SOME OF THE TREATMENTS YOU HAD FOR CERTAIN ILLNESSES?

A WELL, WE DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF THINGS THEY HAVE NOW, TODAY. YOU TAKE COUGHS AND COLDS AND CUTS AND BRUISES AND STUFF LIKE THAT. OF COURSE, THEY DIDN'T PRETEND TO BREAK -

END OF TAPE