JACK MANIACI

BOB BODEN

TYE: Three years ago at the beginning of the pandemic, Phil and I went to talk to Jim Gould as he was leaving town, and we talked to him outdoors because everybody in the early stages of COVID was especially worried about being infected, and he didn’t infect us with COVID, but he infected us with his obsession for Cotuit history. And we decided that we would start out by interviewing everybody who looked like we had to interview in the next five minutes, who was over ninety or whatever. And we’re now working our way down to…

ODENCE: You’re healthy enough to be way down the priority list, ok.

TYE: And the interviews are built around a number of themes with this one basic question at the center of it, which is “What makes Cotuit the most special place on the planet?” And when we talk to people about Cotuit we realize that everybody has a very different take depending on how they came here and how they experience it, but every interview that we do, we hear two or three things that we had no idea were part of Cotuit’s history, so we would love, if you’re ok with it, just to tell us who you are and take us back…

ODENCE: Can you just make sure it’s working, I didn’t.

TYE: So it is, the red light is on. We’ve only had probably 25-40 interviews, something like that, we’ve only had one time where it was really on the fritz, so if you just say your name and today’s date that would be great in getting us going.

BODEN: Oh that’s good, December 10th-ish? Bob Boden. And you want to hear me?

TYE: We’d love to hear first of all how long you’ve been coming to Cotuit and what brought you here.

BODEN: I’ve been coming to Cotuit forever. I grew up wintering in Weston, outside of Boston, but always had a house here. My folks had always had. My grandmother is a Nickerson, Cape Cod Nickerson, and my great-great-grandfather was a whaling captain in the mid 1800s, so I’ve got roots going back a ways.

ODENCE: And there’s some Handy connection as well.

BODEN: Probably. I believe I’m a direct descendent of William Marston of Marstons Mills. I have never researched it, but 100 years ago when a liquor company was trying to put wires through Marstons Mills they had to take land by eminent domain and my father got a small check. So I’m pretty sure that went through William Marston. And his name was Marston.

TYE: And where, when you were first coming here from Weston, were you staying?

BODEN: We had a house on the corner of Sea Street and Main, the one with the round turret, it’s now Cashin’s house.

ODENCE: I didn’t know you were there first, huh.

BODEN: Yeah, and then they sold that in I would say 1956. And then we bought the two houses down, the—oh who was it that owned that? Katie Weeks, Katherine Weeks.

TYE: Two houses closer to the center of town, or…?

BODEN: Yeah. mansard roofed house with the big barn.

ODENCE: 1220 Main.

BODEN: Something like that, yeah.

TYE: And that’s where you are now?

BODEN: No that’s long gone, the Cashins own that and… You know, we sold it after Mum died and I had been living with Mary Jo at 825 Main Street, she bought that years ago and then we sold that and we moved up to East Lane out behind the ballpark, and we’re there now.

TYE: Tell us a little bit about what you do in terms of career and other things so we have it.

BODEN: I went to Mass Maritime Academy, and getting out of Mass Maritime Academy my brother-in-law decided that it would be fun to buy Peck’s Boats, so the two of us bought Peck’s Boats and ran that for five years into the ground—well, I don’t know about into the ground but pretty much. It was back when there was a petrochemical, gasoline all of the sudden doubled in prize and petrochemicals and boats doubled in price and you couldn’t sell them. We didn’t do particularly well at it and Peck got it back. And so I went off to sea on occasion because I went to Mass Maritime and had a license. I on occasion went out on tankers, I went out on supply boats for the oil rigs, I went out—I was out on a dredge for a couple years, dredging all around the world, dredging harbors and stuff. Did a huge project in Colombia, South America, digging channels 65 feet deep.

ODENCE: Wow. So very much in the Cotuit captain style, you go out a while, back a while.

BODEN: Yeah, and Mary Jo was making films at the time for WGBH and had thought that she wanted to make some sort of film about the wives left behind, but I don’t know. Is that true?

MJB: It’s very true. It’s an interesting topic, separation.

TYE: It’s a great topic.

MJB: Yeah.

TYE: Did you ever do it?

MJB: No, I think that sometimes things slip through your fingers and you regret it, and that’s basically what happened. I did other films like *Nova*, I did a lot of science films, things like that. But that topic hit me directly, and I think everyone experiences it, doctors, who are working hard in their hospital situation, is such that they stay there, and it just goes on and on, but…

ODENCE: But not like a whaler wife who might be three years without a husband?

MJB: No.

BODEN: Well, then I decided that I didn’t really like going out for that amount of time, so we discovered that Naushon Island needed a captain for their little private ferryboat, so I interviewed for that and got that job and lived on Naushon Island for 14 years.

TYE: Wow.

BODEN: And Hadley Harbor, going back and forth. Mary Jo worked and was home most of the time at different places. Woods Hole Oceanographic, MBL, which had BU [?] marine program, and SEA, which is a school ship arrangement.

TYE: Can I ask you, I’m intrigued about Naushon. I was a reporter for a long time at the *Globe* and had an editor who was part of whatever family. She was a Cabot and a Wyman, and whatever, and would always invite me to come over to Naushon. How much is Naushon the enclave of the family’s and how much is it… Were you one of the few outsiders who lived there?

BODEN: It’s only the enclave of the family’s plus employees. It’s the Forbes’ direct descendents of John Murray Forbes.

TYE: She was a Forbes, too. Forbes, Cabot, and Wyman.

BODEN: Yeah.

TYE: And was it fun and unusual to be there as an outsider?

BODEN: It… We got along very well with a lot of the people. There was a couple… a little iffy. Mostly the old-timers we got along with very well. We ended up… You know, we get invited to get-togethers and things too.

TYE: And you kept during that time in Naushon and all the things you’re describing, you kept a Cotuit connection?

BODEN: We kept the house here and rented it. And then when we came back, we lived in it, and it was on 825 Main Street, it was very noisy compared to Naushon, with no cars. So Mary Jo walked around for a year or two and found the house we’re in and we were able to make arrangements to buy it.

TYE: That’s great. And after Naushon?

BODEN: Well after Naushon, we were there 14 years and then I—because I was home every night—now found a little job with Patriot Party Boats which have a ferry that goes to the Vineyard, and I’ve been there 22 years, I think.

ODENCE: Wow.

TYE: And it’s still booming[?]?

BODEN: Yeah.

TYE: Great. What does that mean?

BODEN: That’s a 45 foot boat that runs to the Vineyard eight times a day on a schedule and we do the newspaper at four in the morning, and bread, and bagels, and people, and no cars.

TYE: Wow.

BODEN: But it’s a, you know, he just pays me, I don’t own the thing.

TYE: It’s great you manage and maintain a lot of connections, memories.

BODEN: Yeah, still go on the water, but I’m home every night. Beats not being home at night.

ODENCE: You go to bed kinda early.

BODEN: Ah well yeah, I only do… Right now I got a really good schedule. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday I start at two in the afternoon and I'm done at 5:30.

ODENCE: Oh wow, great.

TYE: And when you’re doing the morning, how…?

BODEN: And Thursday and Friday morning I start at four in the morning, so I have to get up at 2:30 but I’m done at noon. So it’s alright, I mean I’m getting ready to think about staying home. It’s getting old.

TYE: Can I ask how old?

BODEN: I’ll be 75 in January.

ODENCE: That’s my guess. Did your father come here every summer?

BODEN: Yes. Yep, he used to… He grew up on Long Island, well, in Flushing, which is right there.

ODENCE: Yeah.

BODEN: And they would come up. And back when he was a kid, they really didn’t… You know, we didn’t have Route 95. And they’d come up, they’d drive part of the way and go on the Fall River Ferry part of the way, and do all sorts of fun stuff.

ODENCE: Oh wow.

TYE: Why? Why go all the way from Long Island, you’re on a beautiful coast…

BODEN: Oh well, Long Island and Flushing was, I guess it was more rural then, but it’s, you know, it’s still pretty city-like. And then…

ODENCE: His parents.

BODEN: Yeah, his parents, his mother, my grandmother, was a Cape Cod Nickerson. And she had moved to New York and had worked for a Simon & Schuster company sort of thing, I don’t know which one it was.

TYE: So that must have been… I’m just trying to envision, especially if you were doing it going back and forth. What would it take, do you think, would it take from where they lived in Flushing to get here in terms of time?

BODEN: It would be a whole day or two if they, I think if they drove. And apparently, you know, back then people got flat tires every hour or two, you know, so you’d have to stop and fix a tire or change a tire, and you know, and they did it on the ferry from Fall River to God knows where it went. I don’t know. But part of it was on a ferry, maybe it was New York to Fall River and then drive from there, I’m not even sure.

ODENCE: And did they stay with your grandmother?

BODEN: Yeah.

ODENCE: And was she on Ocean View?

BODEN: No, she was on Nickerson Lane, between the library and the Coop. Her family owned all of the property. They owned the property that the fire department is on. All the way through to Main Street.

ODENCE: Wow.

BODEN: And the Nickerson Plumbing Company, which the fire company, fire department owns now…

ODENCE: The house they bought next door, Victor Nickerson.

BODEN: Victor Nickerson was her brother, and the three boys are my father’s first cousins.

ODENCE: Ok, I hadn’t made that connection.

BODEN: Roger, Martin, and Robert. And they’re all gone.

ODENCE: Oh, so where was, I mean, we should talk about Clara, ‘cause where was the house where they found the diary that was the basis for the book?

BODEN: I think that that was down just past here on the left.

ODENCE: Ok.

BODEN: You know more about that than I do, actually.

MJB: I don’t know but I think it was Ocean View above Loop Beach, the white house that’s quite long now.

BODEN: Oh, the mayor’s house then.

MJB: No.

ODENCE: You mean the one that Buddy Daly lived in at the very top?

MJB: I don’t.

ODENCE: Oh I know, the Bendetson’s house, got it.

BODEN: Ok.

ODENCE: There we go. So, talk about your grandmother ‘cause she was such an interesting character.

BODEN: Yeah, so my grandmother, Clara Nickerson Boden, she was born in 1883, I couldn’t tell you the date, I could look it up quick enough. She knew her grandfather, who was the whaling captain. And her grandmother. And they moved out of whichever house it was, I guess it was…

ODENCE: And he was Horace, right?

BODEN: He was… Yeah, her grandfather was Horace. And the book, *The Cut of Her Jib*, the name is Seth, and that’s actually Horace’s brother and father, and they were both captains also.

ODENCE: Right.

BODEN: So there’s a lot of that. And so she found the diary and read it and transcribed it, ‘cause it’s beautiful writing but it’s hard to read. And then decided to write a novel from it. It’s not completely accurate, but it’s from the diary and it’s, you know, stories about growing or you know living, marrying a whaling captain, you know, the protagonist, Faith, was from Mashpee, or Marshpee at the time, and moved to Cotuit. I think she may have never even seen the water living in Mashpee, by the time she got to Cotuit and became a schoolteacher here and was away for, you know, while he was away for a couple of years. And it’s a story of growing up, you know, life in Cotuit. It’s quite a book.

ODENCE: Yeah.

BODEN: I read it every couple of years.

ODENCE: Me too, I just read…

BODEN: It’s available at the… We republished it, reprinted it, and it’s available at the historical society, or for me.

TYE: I’d love to see that, the—So I can get a copy at the historical society, that’s great.

BODEN: Yep. And I have… It was originally published by Kirkman, who was a rich guy out on Handy Point, and we call it Codman’s point. And he was a good friend of grandmother and had lots of money and decided that he would finance it, and he did it with a printer in Portland, Maine. And it’s numbered, 350 copies all numbered, and it came in with parchment around the book and in a box, and I have five or eight of them still in the box. And I have copy number one with a bunch of stuff with it.

ODENCE: Oh wow, cool. And she was somewhat of a Renaissance woman. I mean I’m just judging by the fact that she painted as well.

BODEN: She did paint. And her husband was a teacher in New York City. He actually was instrumental in getting visual aids into the school system of New York City with, you know, overhead projectors, projectors from Keystone, which is in Pennsylvania, a company that did lenses.

TYE: Was your grandmother year-round here?

BODEN: Yeah, well no, they lived in New York City and then, when my dad was young, and then they retired up here.

TYE: But they did, and you became year round when?

BODEN: ‘64.

TYE: Wow, so a long time.

BODEN: So I was 15.

TYE: And when did you become year-round?

MJB: Probably 1977-ish.

TYE: So, when you think of this place and how it has changed or the things that sort of made it special and what stayed the same, what do you think of as… You’ve got a long span of comparison. What do you think has changed for the better or for the worse in Cotuit?

BODEN: Because I was a summer kid ‘til I was 15, I didn’t really know a lot of the locals. I knew a few of them, but we were always in the yacht club and sailing Cotuit skiffs. I did fairly well. And that was always good. I don’t know, I mean we grow with the town, I guess, and it’s certainly changed a lot, there’s a lot of people that were summer that are here year-round now.

ODENCE: What’d you do when you weren’t sailing?

BODEN: In Cotuit?

ODENCE: Yeah.

BODEN: God, I have no idea. I was never one for sailing for sailing’s sake. I mean like Tom Burgess will hop in a Cotuit skiff and sail around the harbor for the afternoon, and that would just drive me crazy. If I wasn’t racing, I wasn’t in a Cotuit skiff, I don’t know.

ODENCE: And who’d you hang out with, I mean I know Bill Peck.

BODEN: Bill Peck, Terry Henderson, Guy Jackson.

ODENCE: Yep.

TYE: What do you remember in this room?

BODEN: This room, well this was a party room. We had a barn building at our house down the street and the upstairs was wide open with a ping pong table in the middle with chairs and sofas all the way around it, which was big for parties. And then this became more of a party room for, well, it’s been shifted here. Especially since it was warm in the winter.

ODENCE: Yeah.

TYE: But can you give, for people who are trying to picture the era, what did a party consist of? Was it drinking, was it…?  
  
BODEN: There was a lot of beer, there was a bit of drugs, not super bad drugs, but there was usually acid or mescaline or something of that nature. Psychedelics. Not a lot of hard liquor, a lot of beer. Beer, I mean when I was growing up and young, too young, the parents would normally buy the beer. ‘Cause at least they knew where you were, I think that was the rationale. Have a beer and stay here.

TYE: And the drugs, I’m trying to envision what the… Was that easy stuff to come by in Cape Cod or were people bringing it in from cities, or where were they coming from?

BODEN: I don’t know that I ever really purchased much. I would show up and somebody would say “Here, try this!” Sure, why not?

TYE: And this was, as you said, one of the gathering spots because the Henderson kids were affable and because Edie was more tolerant?  
  
BODEN: Yeah, I mean, if she claimed that she didn’t know what was going on down here, I doubt that.

ODENCE: Yeah, so we probably… I’m trying to think when they redid this house. It was probably 1970 or so, so that’s the era we’re talking about.

BODEN: It could have been a little earlier than that, ‘cause I graduated from college in ‘71, and I think it was… I don’t know if it was high school or not.

ODENCE: Yeah, but I think even before it was redone it was…

BODEN: Yeah, this was still a party room.

ODENCE: Yeah, I mean this was kind of like a boat shed. There were garage doors off the back, and…

BODEN: Yeah, that’s true. There was some sort of kitchen right over there.

ODENCE: Yeah, well that was the only kitchen for the house was right in there, but yeah, so I think the party in here started before the place was redone. But anyway, we’re talking late ‘60s, early ‘70s.

BODEN: Yeah.

TYE: And you would come down for the whole summer or come down on the \_\_\_\_[?]?

BODEN: Oh we always came for the whole summer, and that included… Oh, but that was through Labor Day. School started right after Labor Day in most places. Today, everything’s starting before Labor Day and it’s…

TYE: It does start, it’s crazy.

BODEN: And I don’t like that.

TYE: So, I’m trying to envision your spending. The winter in what I think of as… Certainly one of the more affluent Boston suburbs is Weston, and was coming down here—sorry, it’s cold—did it seem like this great escape, like you couldn’t wait to get here, or did it seem too quiet and you wished you were in the city, or what was it like coming here?

BODEN: Oh no, I loved coming down. Well I lived for sailing, for the yacht club.

TYE: You had siblings who were coming here?

BODEN: I’m the youngest, my brother is eight years older and my sister is four years older than me.

TYE: Do they still have Cotuit connections?

BODEN: Yeah. Well, my brother just sold his Cotuit house, he lives in Hyannis, and my sister had a house and they have given it up but they come and rent the same house every year for a couple of weeks. And they live in Minneapolis.

TYE: So, over all this time that you’ve been here and doing those jobs you’ve done, you’ve gotten to see a lot of the Cape. Is there ever a question to you that you’re in the right place on Cape Cod?  
  
BODEN: Oh, I think Cotuit… As Cotuit? Yeah I can’t imagine living anywhere else.

TYE: Why, what is it about here that distinguishes it from the rest of the Cape and the world?

BODEN: I’m not sure. I mean, you know, I guess if I’d lived in Osterville I could have sailed the Wianno Yacht Club, although it’s a lot more expensive. I mean the yacht club here is, when I was growing up it was a dollar a year dues.

ODENCE: Oh, I think you’re exaggerating, I think it was 50 cents.

BODEN: It could have been 50 cents and a dollar initiation fee. And everywhere else, you know, they borrowed the Bailey’s Beach when I was very young, and then moved down to Hattie[?] Cabot’s, and she was wonderful.

TYE: …I know he was asking about sailing now, how often do you go out now?

BODEN: I haven’t been in a Cotuit skiff in five or eight years. I don’t know, I always think of doing it, my family still, my brother still, or my sister-in-law. Who owns the boat? Holly’s got it. I think she’s got it official.

ODENCE: That makes sense, cause the Spences bought a different boat.

BODEN: Right, and I keep on thinking I might want to do it, but I don’t know. I went out four or five or eight years ago and won a race and I figured, “You know what, I’ll go out on the top.”

ODENCE: That’s impressive. I have memories of your parents house a bit. Well, you know, you talked about the parties up in your apartment and I seem to remember some big bash over there when I was really little, and…

BODEN: With a clam bake?

ODENCE: Yeah a clam bake. And there was like the biggest lobster ever, am I remembering that?

BODEN: Oh yeah! Now, there was a friend of the family named Bruce Peters, who went by Boo Boo. Friend of my brother, older than my brother and a little older than Brownie. And he would come down and I think they actually stayed the house that your grandparents had.

ODENCE: Well they were friends of… His parents were friends of my grandparents in Newton, so that was the connection.

BODEN: Yeah, there you go. And he came down and wanted to have a big party every now and again. And I think it was in 1960 was the first one. They called it Boo Boo Day and they had a race, a special race, and they had a prize, and they had a big clam bake in our yard, including—We had three lobsters that totaled 65 pounds. I have the small claw from the biggest lobster, which is about—I’d say—13 inches long. I still have it, but it’s up in the attic.

ODENCE: That’s amazing.

TYE: Caught where?

BODEN: It came from New Bedford, but Frog Ashley, Donnie Ashley, who was a local year-rounder, was a shellfisherman a lot of the time and a mason, but nobody… We couldn’t catch lobsters around here, so he organized everybody to go quahogging and they caught enough quahogs to sell in New Bedford to get the lobsters. So they got three lobsters and made lobster salad out of it, ‘cause they couldn’t serve lobsters to everybody ‘cause, you know, even at 14 cents a pound they were expensive at the time. I mean in 1960 they were probably 49 cents a pound.

ODENCE: Yeah, that makes sense, yeah. So that was a big bash.

BODEN: So that was a big bash and we had a lobster, and Frog took care because he knew how to do the lobster bakes and, you know, did it with a fire and the rocks, the seaweed, and got the seaweed outta the canal.

ODENCE: Oh wow.

BODEN: And they did it two years in a row, ‘60 and ‘61, and then it fizzled.

ODENCE: I was gonna tell you about Bruce. This was two months ago, I went to L. L. Bean in Burlington, Massachusetts to get my boots back to get resold, and the young guy’s filling out the paperwork and he had to go check on something, and there was a woman standing next to him, sort of observing ‘cause she had never seen a return for boots. And while he’s off—you know, I gave him my name and address and everything—and she said, “Do you know Gates Odence?” I said, “Long gone, but yeah!” And this was Bruce Peters’ daughter, working at L. L. Bean, so we had a chat.

BODEN: Wow. Bruce had the large claw from the lobster and told me I could have it, but I never got it, so I assume the family still has it.

ODENCE: Yeah, well I didn’t ask her about that.

BODEN: The big crusher claw as opposed to the sharper. I have the sharper.

ODENCE: The other thing I was remembering of your parents was chameleons on the porch.

BODEN: Yeah.

ODENCE: What was the story with that, just somebody…? You were rich, you got ‘em for Christmas or something?

BODEN: No, we went to the circus in Boston Garden and there were, you know, you could buy chameleons. They had a string and a pin and you’d put it around, you know… So we got these chameleons in summertime—or it was spring, so—and my folks had a screen porch, and she had flowers and plants everywhere. So one of the chameleons got out and liked it, and we never did catch it. There might have been two.

ODENCE: I thought there were multiple, yeah.

BODEN: Yeah, so we just left them out there and we never did find them again and I assume they died in the winter.

ODENCE: Ok so it was just one summer?

BODEN: Yeah.

ODENCE: That’s funny.

BODEN: That’s great memory, I like it. Yeah.

ODENCE: Have you ever studied up on Cotuit history or just your family?

BODEN: Just my family, really. And, I don’t know, grandmother’s book is really the focus of it.

ODENCE: Yeah.

BODEN: And she was, you know, I would say it’s an eighth grade read.

ODENCE: Yeah, I think that’s right.

BODEN: You know, it’s *Cut of Her Jib*, it’s not *Moby Dick* by any stretch.

ODENCE: But it’s good, I think it gives a good sense of what it was like in the village at the time.

BODEN: Yeah. I have always thought that I want to take the diary and make a book from it…

ODENCE: Yeah, you read the transcription.

BODEN: I wanna put on one page the diary page and the transcription right there exactly the same, so the words are in the same place.

ODENCE: Oh yeah that’s cool.

BODEN: So that you can go back and forth and just do the whole thing.

TYE: So is there a way to read that diary somewhere now except for your copy of it?

BODEN: That’s it. Well I have a transcription that my grandmother typed before she wrote the book. And I have that and it’s real close. It needs to be done again.

TYE: I would think the historical society would want to digitize that and have that, it would be so easy to do now. I mean…

BODEN: Speaking of \_\_\_\_[?], I have a… It was published in ‘53 I think and ‘54 grandmother was on WEEI on the radio around Thanksgiving and we all sat around the radio and listened to her and I still have a copy of it. We have it on a disk, and I have it on CD also.

ODENCE: Digitized?  
  
BODEN: Yeah, I have it on a CD and you can listen to her. You can hear her voice talking, too, about the book, and about, you know…

ODENCE: Oh, that’d be great to have, you know, one of the manifestations of these oral histories—or the only one at the moment—is that we’re making them available on the historical society website as recordings and people can listen to them, and…

BODEN: Right, I can get to that, that’s easy.

ODENCE: That would be great.

BODEN: And you can just duplicate it, I don’t mind that.

ODENCE: Yeah, I’ll just upload it, yeah but we’ve got a dozen or so that Betty Peck did in 1978 which are kind of cool, we’ve got Milton Crocker, we’ve got—jeez who else was on the list?—Charlie Brooks, Mrs. Cabot, and a bunch, you know, a lot of voices from your youth. Your grandmother’s would be absolutely the oldest thing we have, that would be great.

BODEN: That was about 1954.

ODENCE: Wow.

TYE: Can you take us back for a second? So your grandmother's manuscript—I’m sorry—your great-great… The manuscript your grandmother found, what kind of a story is that?

BODEN: It’s a diary.

TYE: It’s a diary. Her grandmother’s diary?

BODEN: Yeah, my great-great grandmother’s diary.

ODENCE: And she was a Clara too, right?

BODEN: Well yeah, Clarissa Collins I think.

TYE: But how much does that give you a flavor for what life in Cotuit was back…?

BODEN: Oh that’s 100 percent.

TYE: It is. Wow. So that really… I’d love to hear the WEEI interview, but that’s actually, the idea of having that manuscript there is incredible. Have you thought about ways to have that digitized or get it out somehow?

BODEN: Yeah. I keep on thinking I’ll do it, but I mean, you know, with today’s technology I could email. It’s a three-ring binder that she has typed pages and I could just, you know, push the button and make copies.

ODENCE: Well, you could have it… You could do optical character recognition and it would try to read it. And my experience with that is it’ll have a lot of bugs, so somebody’d have to go through and edit it, but you can get pretty close.

BODEN: Yeah, but I wanna make sure that… I want the page to page to be the same.

ODENCE: Yeah, you want an image of the actual diary.

BODEN: I want an image of the actual diary plus the transcription to be, you know, legible, readable.

TYE: Have you compared the two, is the transcription pretty accurate?

BODEN: I have not. I’m told by my sister that it’s very close.

TYE: So if the historical society… So there are perpetual grants that Mass Cultural Council and others are offering. If they could get a modest grant to have a specialist come in and do that, would you be game to give them access to it?

BODEN: Yeah, I would check with my sister and brother, but yes.

ODENCE: Yeah, that sounds very grant worthy.

TYE: It does, it’s the oldest actual version of what life was life and if she was giving a vivid diary sense of what life was like then… We’re talking 150-200 years ago, how long ago?

BODEN: 1840s and ‘50s.

TYE: 1840s and ‘50s, wow, that would be almost 200 years and I think the…

MJB: If I could interject something: at the Boston Public Library in cooperation with the state, they do free digitizing of some of these works. I brought one up there for the Cahoon Museum of American Art and it was a ledger, a business ledger from the 1700s. And it’s free, but you have to get on a list, so someone could explore that.

TYE: That would be great or to figure out what they’re doing and have somebody come so you didn’t have to give it up at all.

MJB: We didn’t have to give it up, we stayed right there, yeah went up there and…

TYE: That’s great, well that would be a great place to have it then as well. Just it seems like something—if you’re willing to have it happen—something ought to happen with that, ‘cause that would be about the most valuable document that they have at the historical society, and I think the…

BODEN: Yeah. In the cover of the number one book I have a document which is the official marriage certificate for Horace, and it isn’t really, I mean, you get a marriage certificate now, a license, but it’s an intention, it’s a letter of intention, which is what they were doing at the time, and we have it.

TYE: Someday, around 10-5 minutes from now? What was intention in terms of getting married?  
  
BODEN: I’d have to read it again, but you know, it’s hard.

ODENCE: And was the farm girl from Mashpee a part of fiction, or was that true, was that part of the diary?

BODEN: Couldn’t even tell you at this point.

TYE: So what else, when you think back to your early days in Cotuit, any stories that are funny, that are racy, that are anything else that sort of give a flavor for some more dramatic moments of your time here?

BODEN: Well I don’t know, we had Hurricane Carol in 1954, I was five. And that was exciting.

TYE: How devastating was Carol?

BODEN: Very. At that point the Cotuit Yacht Club was at Bailey’s Beach, so outside of the island, and that point there was no warning, the hurricane just sort of showed up. And the boats were on moorings right there, and they all ended up getting driven up the hill, and most of them were destroyed. For some reason, my father’d always put 100 feet of line coiled up underneath the deck of our boat, and they’d tie it around the mast and started pulling it straight up the bank, and as the waves did it, he was up at the top of the hill tying it off and making it tighter and tighter so that it didn’t get all jammed sideways.

ODENCE: Oh, every time it would be washed up a little, be anchored up some.

BODEN: Right, it ended up with just one piece of the ribbon broken and then the rest of it was ok.

ODENCE: And that was ‘46?

BODEN: Yeah, and I have pictures of all the boats jammed together, just sort of crumbled up on the beach.

ODENCE: More good stuff for the historical society if you could make copies.

BODEN: And that’s easy. That’s all digitized.

ODENCE: Yeah, oh ok, that’s great. I was also… Another memory I had was sleeping out on the island.

BODEN: Oh yeah that was fun. Terry and I…

ODENCE: I have a three or four year old’s memory of that, what’s your memory?

BODEN: Terry Henderson and myself and Blauvelt. Chris Blauvelt and Larry O. We all went over to the island and all the sudden it got weathery. But we somehow got into—and it was Jerry[?] Henderson, too, and Larry.  
  
ODENCE: Yeah, we sailed over from Loop Beach, I remember.

BODEN: Right, and we got into somebody’s bourbon, as eight year olds, I guess.

ODENCE: Oh I thought you were older, you had to be older than that.

BODEN: Maybe ten? I don’t know, I couldn’t tell you.

ODENCE: Probably, yeah, you were probably like eleven or twelve, judging by how old I was.

BODEN: Yeah, and we had this fire going, and somebody threw an oyster shell into it. You don’t put oyster shells in fires because they’re made up in layers, they’re not like a quahog shell. They’re made up in layers and there's water inside. And it got hot enough to boil, made steam. The oyster shell popped and blew a hot coal over and landed on my hand, so I had a blister the size of a Buick on the back of my hand as it burnt that badly, it was a second degree burn. And of course we had that, and then it started raining, it was blowing about 50, we had to sail back. And we got back to Loop and Terry and I and Blauvelt were probably drunk, because, at the age of twelve we didn’t know any better. It was kind of a disaster, but we all survived it, and we didn’t do it again. You were there?

ODENCE: Yeah, little kid. I guess I sleepwalked a little, and so my dad put a rope around me in my sleeping bag, in case I got up and was sleepwalking, find me floating ‘cross the harbor.

BODEN: I like it! Yep. I’m gonna come up with a picture of me. There I am. There’s us fishing at Loop Beach. You’ll like this. You’ll really like this.

ODENCE: Oh yeah, that’s great. I was gonna ask you… There’s a couple pictures up on the website, so send me that, that would be terrific. That’s a very high quality photo, that looks like…

BODEN: That was from a slide, and that was digitized and I have that. Thought you’d get a kick out of that.

TYE: Speaking of alcohol and water, we’ve gotten stories from a number of people about Rum Runners, did you every hear anything about rum?

BODEN: I’ve heard a lot, and I can tell you a couple of stories, but that was long before me. That was, you know, Prohibition. Apparently they used to bring liquor in, and if they get close to the beach then there was revenue cutters around here or, you know, officials, they were weighted and they’d toss them over the side and they’d be in burlap bags and you’d have to go find them later. And Victor Nickerson, the plumber, he used to make all sorts of stuff, you know, he made Victor wellpoints, and he had a machine shop, and he could, you know, so… Every now and again somebody would come in and say, “You know I lost my anchor, I need a grapple. Can you make me a grapple?” And he’d say “sure.” So they’d go up and they’d try to grapple the stuff up, and they never found all of it. And there are stories of people finding it up until the end of the ‘40s I think.

ODENCE: Somebody found a bottle down by Oregon about two or three years ago, posting on Facebook. It was a bottle of Canadian rye, and the bottle had like raised lettering from the manufacturing, it was the company.

BODEN: So by the bottle you could probably date it, too.

ODENCE: Yeah, it was certainly of that Prohibition era. And there was still liquid in it, but the bottle had a like screw-on, I don’t know, stainless, some kind of metal top that you’d use as a shot glass, and that was corroded a little bit, but other than that the bottle was perfectly intact.

BODEN: Wow, yeah I heard rumors of the stuff coming up into when I was a kid, but I had, you know… But he… Apparently the whole family were teetotalers and were certainly against it, so after a while he said, “You’ll have to borrow, you know, such-and-such’s grapple, because…”

ODENCE: Oh Victor Nickerson wouldn’t support this effort?

BODEN: Right, and my grandmother would tell a story about this one person who would stay with them on occasion and always bought a bottle of really good liquor from wherever. And they would thank them, and then when they left they would pour it down a tube because, you know. And it was probably the best stuff available, too.

ODENCE: Sad, sad story.

BODEN: Right. Yeah, who knows. But my grandfather built the house on Nickerson. The little house. There were three or four family houses, and there was another lot, so they built the little cottage on Nickerson Lane.

ODENCE: Is it still there?

BODEN: No, the one family had it and left the water on and it broke, and you know, they had eighty-thousand pound water bill and dead house.

TYE: Were they the ones that sold it to the fire department in the land there that you were describing?

BODEN: No, that was the Nickerson Plumbing, and that was… I actually, I had an offer, I could have bought that for 50 grand.

TYE: The whole stretch of it?

BODEN: No, just the Nickerson Plumbing building, but I didn’t. I would have liked to, but it stunk mostly of cutting oil, because they did a lot of metal cutting and drilling, and you use a lot of drilling oil, and all the wood was soaked through, the floors.

ODENCE: Yeah.

BODEN: And I didn’t have 50 grand at the time, ‘71-2.

ODENCE: That would have been a deal even at the time. I think we’re good, unless…

BODEN: I don’t know, what else is there?  
  
TYE: So I would love to see someday… That is a brilliant idea for a documentary, I think the wives who were left behind, or from widows’ walks to everything else, it captures such a spirit in the…

BODEN: You need to read grandmother’s book.

TYE: Yes, so…

BODEN: At any rate, I delivered four of them to the historical society the other day, so they probably have one or two.

TYE: So I’m interested in reading your grandmother’s book, I’m more interested in reading your great grandmother’s diary, just the… that?

BODEN: I can arrange that.

TYE: We have the President Lowell’s book of about a hundred years ago, where the \_\_\_\_\_[?] did, which gives some feel for what this place was like then, but the idea of getting it from somebody who’s doing a vivid day-by-day diary going back 200 years, where really that’s an era that’s tough to imagine what that was like. I think the…

BODEN: I was thinking that you probably, if you want to buy one and have it that would be great, but I would loan you a numbered edition, an original, that would make it a little…

TYE: If you trust me to do that, that would be greatly…

BODEN: I have a bunch of them, I can just… But I would definitely want that one back.

TYE: So should we mention to the historical society people your great-great grandmother’s diary, or do you want to pursue that on your own, we should…

BODEN: You can mention it and see if they’re even interested, and what they wanna do, you know, whatever. I will check it out with my sister, brother-in-law, and brother.

MJB: I can send you the link to the digitizing. And it becomes public, it’s on the net after that. So you can just Google it and you get there. And the public would be reading it, which would be beautiful.

ODENCE: Yeah, we’ll mention it to them. I think, you know, as you say, it certainly would be grant worthy if they were gonna do it in some other way.

TYE: All these grants, it’s sort of crazy, because they perpetually, instead of people, they have the money there, and they’re perpetually soliciting people to apply for it, and I think any good topic there is in this state a grant.

ODENCE: Well thank you!

BODEN: Yeah, you’re welcome.