

QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History

JARAD AYCRIGG

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Interviewed by Leah Bradshaw in Charlestown

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Q: Could I get your full name and your birth date?

A: Jarad Aycrigg, 4/19/32.

Q: When did your family originally come to Quonochontaug?

A: That date I can't tell you, but it was the late 1800's.

Q: Was the first place your family occupied the New Bennett House, or did you have places before that?

A: My grandmother and grandfather built the Bennett House.

Q: Why is it called the New Bennett House?

A: I never heard it until I read your notes.

Q: Was it a hotel? Was it built as a hotel?

A: Yes. People would come from New York and Connecticut.

Q: Anybody from Rhode Island? Did you have Rhode Islanders?

A: That I don't know. I'm not quite that old, dear.

Q: Was your grandmother in it when it burned?

A: As I understand it, it was in May—about May. My mother and my grandmother had come down from Pittsfield to get the Bennett House ready for the season. As I heard, it

was a cold, rainy, foggy, miserable day, as only Quonnie can be. And as was the custom, they used to cover the furniture with newspapers for the winter.

Q: So that the furniture wouldn't fade? Is that right?

A: Yes. I guess. I don't know the purpose. Dampness. I don't know. But it's the way they used to do it. Of course, being cold and miserable, the women were taking the newspapers off the furniture. They were putting the newspapers in the fireplace. It gave heat, and it also got rid of the newspapers. But what they didn't do was put the newspapers underneath any frame—what am I thinking of?—underneath any wood or anything like that. One of the newspapers apparently floated up the chimney, landed on the shingles. It was right underneath the big water cistern tank. Of course, it started a fire. My grandmother tried to get the—he was kind of a caretaker, Dyke Pendleton' it used to be. This fellow's name was Dyke—to go up on the ladder and chop a hole in the bottom of the water tank, which was wood, and he said no way that he was going to do that. So, anyway, then the house burned. And it burned three other properties. It was where the Quonochontaug Inn is now. Of course, the Bennett House and Dr. Barber, who lived to the west of the Bennet House, right next door to us. It seems that old Mr. Jolly pulled his Pierce-Arrow out of the garage' and backed it across West Beach Road so the Fire trucks couldn't get through, to begin with. It slowed them down. I'm told they could see the fire from Block Island. Of course, the Bennett house was quite large. It was three stories. When it went up, it was quite a blaze. That's about all I remember.

Q: So, you would have heard this story your whole life.

A: Oh, yes. Sure. Of course, they were just mortified. Mom and my grandmother—it was a terrible effect on them.

Q: Was this before you were born?

A: Considerably. Right.

Q: Did they have insurance in those days?

A: I have no idea at all of anything about that. They never talked about that, that I know of.

Q: Even though it was just a simple accident.

A: It was just something you don't do. That's what I learned from that. In all the fires I've had in a fireplace, I've learned that you don't put paper—just put it in there.

Q: Because it can go up the chimney.

A: Yes. The property just to the east of the Bennett House, where the inn is now, that was my Uncle Lloyd Briggs' parents' home, and that burned.

Q: Completely to the ground?

A: Apparently. Yes.

Q: And then the Barber's house?

A: The Barber's house just to the west remained just a foundation for all the years that I was growing up, until the Gerrishes built a house there on that property.

Q: The house that you eventually bought—

A: No. We didn't buy it. It was left to us by my grandmother. She built the house that's there now.

Q: Where the Bennett Cottage was?

A: Yes. Where the Bennett House was. She built that. It was started in 1925, and finished in 1927. They named it the BennettCrigg as a combination of Bennett/Aycrigg. My brother was Ben, and he always thought that the house was his, because it was named BennettCrigg, as we were growing up, that is.

Q: How do you spell Aycrigg?

A: A-Y-C-R-I-G-G.

Q: So, it was Bennett and then Crigg House?

A: I'm not sure how they spelled it. BennettCrigg.

Q: Did you keep that name when you had the house?

A: Yes. But we never used it, though. We knew where we were. We didn't need to have the name. The name was there. We never put signs out or name boards out or anything.

Q: What years did you occupy that house?

A: Do you mean with the family?

Q: Yes.

A: Ever since I can remember.

Q: As a child?

A: Yes. We used to come down from Pittsfield as a family to summer. Dad would go back to Pittsfield and work for his business. The rest of the family, my brother, sister and I and my mother and grandmother, lived at the house. We were brought up there.

Q: Did you have a car?

A: Yes. The first one that I know of was a Buick. I don't remember what year it was. I think it was probably in the '20s, because later we bought a '36 Pontiac.

Q: Would you have been there when a fish truck came by or a vegetable—

A: Vegetable. Absolutely. I believe that was Mr. Serra, wasn't that his name? Did he have Sandy's Fruit Stand? But anyway, Mr. Serra used to come up to the inn and sell the vegetables and fruits there. Then of course, anybody along the bluffs also would buy.

Q: Did you call that beach the Little Beach, or the Nun's Beach?

A: It was never the Nun's Beach. That's West Beach. That's something I'm very tight on.

Q: Jean Mase is the same way. She feels the nuns were newcomers.

A: They are very much. And nothing against them or anything else. It just I don't like to see things change and be talked about—we were looking at something just today. I can't remember what it was. It was named something different. Oh, Fresh Pond up here. It's Fresh Pond. That's Fresh Pond Rock out in the Ocean. But on our GPS—I forget what it says, but it's some other name.

Q: It's always been Fresh Pond.

A: Absolutely. I'm very strong and very adamant on West Beach.

Q: Jean Mase is the same way.

A: Yes. Well, that's what it was always known as. John Kinney used to call it the Little Beach. I would always jump on his case, "No, West Beach, John."

Q: It was always Central Beach, East Beach and West Beach.

A: Exactly. It's always West Beach, Central Beach and East Beach. Top billing.

Q: You're absolutely right. What did you do as a family when you came here for the summer as a child?

A: I don't have memories of anything, except my sister and I used to go crabbing on what we call the Crab Rocks, which is at the east end of West Beach right off North Point. We used to go after the crabs, and then give them to my Uncle Lloyd Briggs for fishing. He

used them for bait. We did go over to an area at the pond, which used to be originally known as the Baxter House. The other name was Whistling Chimney—they called it.

Q: I'm trying to remember the woman's name whose family owned that. Frederica?

A: Yes. Frederica.

Q: Her sister is Carol.

A: Brown.

Q: Carol Brown. Frederica Bettinger.

A: Bettinger. You're correct. That's her married name, because it was actually the Browns. He was an automobile dealer from down around Norwalk or something like that.

Q: So, they weren't connected to the Browns of Brown University?

A: Not that I know of. I just don't know. I do remember the family talking about—I guess it was Mr. Baxter. I don't know if he had a title or not, but he was supposedly an inventor. The story that I used to hear was that he actually invented the electric lightbulb. He and Edison were friends. When Baxter was dying, Edison came and was at his bedside. He took or was given—I don't know—the formula or the directions out of the electric lightbulb that supposedly Baxter had invented. Whether that's true or not, I have no way of knowing. The other thing that Baxter was known for, in my family anyway, was a lady's hairpin. It used to be just a piece of a U-shaped wire that they would put in their hair. He was on a train, I guess it was, going to New York, I suppose, and this woman in front of him, the hairpin she had in kept falling out, and he figured that's so simple and he crimped it just a little bit on each leg of the hairpin. So, he invented that.

Q: Like a bobby pin?

A: Yes. Except it didn't have spring to it or anything else. It was literally a piece of wire that was U-shaped, but the leg was—he bent it a little bit on each leg, and it stayed in place.

Q: My grandmother had those.

A: I'm sure.

Q: She used to take twenty of them out at night. I remember watching her.

A: Yes. Well, that's the story. I have no way of proving it.

Q: Did Mr. Edison ever credit Baxter with—

A: I'm sure not. I would say no, but, again, I have no way of knowing. I don't even know whether that actually was the case. I just don't know. All I know is what I just told you. That's the story that I used to hear about Mr. Baxter.

Q: It puts a little different spin on history.

A: Yes. There are a lot of things. As an example, are you familiar with Whale Rock? It's right out in front of our house. It's a long rock.

Mrs. Aycrigg: He has named all of the rocks.

A: I only named one.

Q: There is one that was named Bathtub Rock.

A: That's right. That's out in front of my Uncle Lloyd's home—Lloyd Briggs. Yes. Bathtub Rock. And then right next to that is Profile Rock and Turtle Rock. Coming east in this direction, the one that I grew up knowing was Whale Rock. That's kind of parallel to the big brown rock that's parallel to the beach right in front of our place. In front of that, out in the water, was another rock. When I was growing up, they called it Salvation Rock, but it was also called Fisherman Rock. The one that I named was Horseshoe Crab. Horseshoe Crab is right out in front of the Mase's place. I don't know if you know that one.

Q: The Mase's on the front?

A: Yes. Denise—right out in front of her place.

Q: Is that Whale Rock in front of Denise's?

A: No. That's Horseshoe Crab. Whale Rock is in front of our house.

A: Whale Rock is right near the beach—near West Beach where the nuns' cottage is. It's right there.

A: It's in front our place. We own it. That's ours.

Q: What year did you sell that house?

A: I really can't remember. It wasn't an awful long time. Well, it's getting up there. I just don't have a memory of it, for some reason.

Mrs. Aycrigg: Because he didn't want to sell it. That's why.

Q: It was a sad day, I'm sure.

A: Oh, yes. It ripped me apart. I did want to sell, because we weren't able to take care of it living in Florida and stuff. My brother wanted to hang onto it. He was the last to sell. My sister wanted to sell back in the '50s, because they weren't coming up here. Ben and I hung onto it.

Q: It's very hard when there are three children involved.

A: Yes. It sure was. We weren't able to maintain it financially, so we sold it. But the property was in the family since the 1890s or something like that. We owned all the way to West Beach Road.

Q: So, you owned from Ashaway Colony? No, because you're on the ocean side of Ashaway Colony.

A: High tide at the ocean to West Beach Road.

Q: Wow. What a huge amount.

A: Yes. It was only 60 feet wide, but it was 200-and-something-feet deep. There used to be a swamp on the back lot closest to the road. It was a swampy area. Somehow the people that we sold to were able to put in a drain field for their septic system back there.

Q: Sometimes they do these engineered septics. They call it an above-ground.

A: Yes. We don't have one on our property, because they had already put that system in that they have. Denise has it. My uncle's place—I can't remember their names who bought that. And the one down the end where Phoebe Burch used to live. She used to own the property down there. They have it. And of course, so do the Wells. And Peggy who bought Jean's. Right in back of the Denise.

Q: Jean Mase's house?

A: It was Jean Mase's. They have that system too.

Q: Did you know Bobette Drysdale?

A: She was my first love.

Q: You never call tell if you're asking the wrong question.

A: No. That's not a wrong question. Terry knows. Last I knew, she was out in California.

Q: In Southern California, right?

A: Yes. Cathedral City is where she is, east of LA. Did you know her?

Q: I knew of her. My grandfather owned a teeny bit of—they called it a remainder lot that didn't get sold.

A: In Ashaway Colony?

Q: Yes. I went to the Hall of Records, and I looked up all the adjoining neighbors, and I wrote them letters to ask them if they would want to buy it, and she was one of them. And then I started hearing these funny stories about what a character she was, and how she gave away her Mercedes or something.

A: That I don't know. I never knew she had a Mercedes. I was about twenty years old. We met on Thunder Rock. Do you know Thunder Rock?

Q: I don't.

A: It's right out in front of Bobette's property. The pizza fellow (Mr. Domino) owns a number of Little Caesars, or Caesars Pizza.

A: It's the big, tall house. It's next to the chimney.

A: Yes. You know where the chimney is down there?

Q: Is it Terry Hoffman?

A: Yes. Terry. I don't remember the last name.

A: I remember that the first name is Terry.

Q: He ended up buying that little parcel that I had to finish out his driveway and his garden.

A: Yes. He would have.

Q: And then the Wells said that they would have liked it. They tried to buy it for years.

A: I got really ticked off about the septic—the above-ground things that we were just talking about.

Q: Engineered septic.

A: Yes. That's right in the roadway—the drive down to go into Bobette's property. That really irritated me, because I knew she was out in California someplace and didn't know anything about this. So, I went up to the town hall and looked it up, and they said, "The access to that property is from off West Beach Road down farther to the west." I think they call it Midway—and come in that way. And I said, "Man, in all the years that I've lived there, we never came in that way." We always came in the—

Q: The Ashaway Colony.

A: Yes. We always came in that way. I said, "The city or whoever puts those things in has blocked the legal right of way."

Q: You can't turn around if you go far down that road. There is no turning around.

A: No. To get to the chimney property, if you will, which was Phoebe Burch—did you ever know of them?

Q: I know the names only.

A: But to get to it, you can't now because of that structure that's there that they put in.

Q: Perhaps that was the plan.

A: I don't think Terry had anything to do with that.

Q: Who did it?

A: I think that's city or state—whoever puts those things in. I don't know who does them.

Q: But it's to his house?

A: It's for his house. Yes.

Q: Because I have driven too far down there with Jean Mase, who wanted to go see her nephew Robin at one point, and we had to back until we could find a driveway to do a three-point turn.

A: Yes. It's always been that way. Even when Phoebe owned the property where the chimney is, we had nowhere to turn around. You couldn't go out Midway where the city or town says you're supposed to go.

Q: Does the town have an imaginary road on Midway?

A: Who knows. You know this town better than I do.

Q: As a boy, did you pick berries? Did you play games at night? How did your family spend the summer?

A: The only time that I can remember something is Mom had a picnic for us right down on the rocks in front of the house. I remember that clearly. I'm talking when I was about six years old back in that period of time. We didn't come down here during the war. We were in Florida during the war. We went down to Florida in January of '42.

Q: So, until '44 or '45?

A: We came back up. Mom and my brother. My sister was already married at that time. This was in '46. We came up and opened up the house and got it ready again to rent, because it had been closed up all during the war. The Navy wanted to rent the house from us during the war for sailors to live in, because they have a naval base up here. My grandmother didn't want to do that. What the Navy wanted to do was go in and paint it. They wanted it all painted gray inside—Navy colors. So, she didn't want to do that. We came up to open the house. We sanded the floors. We did a lot of stuff. We spent most of the summer up here. To answer your question about what did we do for entertainment, the beach was our entertainment—water and the rocks. Crabbing and that kind of thing. It was enough.

Q: Did you play at the pond or fish?

A: I remember my sister and I went over occasionally to Whistling Chimneys, Baxter House, and they had a boat. We'd go over there and get blue crabs every now and again in Babcock Cove there. We didn't do that often. It was the greatest place in the world to grow up. As we got older, we used to go down to the bowling alley in the evening. A gang of kids would all hang out down there. Do you remember that at all?

Q: I remember that my brother had a job setting up the pins. Were they the duckpins? I can't remember.

A: Yes. I think they were duckpins.

Q: His job was to set them up. And people would get impatient with how long it took. They'd start rolling the balls when my brother would still be putting the pins out.

A: We used to have to set our own pins when I was coming along. They didn't have anybody to do it.

Q: I think he got paid ten cents a game or an hour. I don't remember. He was happy to get the money, because then he would buy some ice cream or play a game himself.

A: It was a hangout for the kids when I was coming along.

Q: What was the area you called Babcock Cove?

A: It's like a cove right at Whale Rock or Whistling Chimneys—whatever you want to call it. It was a cove that is part of Quonnie Pond.

Q: And you got blue crabs there?

A: Yes. I remember I dumped a bucket over. We were just in bathing suits, and, boy, did we scramble to get up on the seats.

Q: Because they bit you.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you have recollections of the '38 hurricane?

A: Yes. The family had gone home—gone back to Pittsfield, because we were getting ready for school. I was six years old at the time. I remember up there my dad going crazy, because we were out playing, and he was trying to get us back in the house. But down here, my grandmother was staying at the cottage. She went into town with Barbara Briggs. Do you know Barbara Briggs?

Q: I know that name.

A: Barbara worked at the bank at Industrial National. My grandmother went in with Barbara to get her hair done.

Q: Was this Westerly?

A: Yes. When the bank let out, I guess they started coming back home—back down this way. Barbara had a '38 Ford convertible. They were coming back down. They got as far as Dunns Corners, and they were stopped. The officer said, "Where are you going?" They said, "We're going down to Quonnie. We're going home to Quonnie." He said, "Lady, you can't get through there. There is ten feet of water across the road." I think that was a little stretch. Then Barbara said, "I've got to get home. I've got beans on the stove." She was cooking on the stove.

Q: Cooking all day on the stove?

A: Yes. She used to let them simmer. She made the best baked beans in the world. So, they were simmering. But I don't know where her dad was at the time. I guess he was here. I don't know. Lloyd was my favorite.

Q: What was your grandmother's name?

A: Married name or maiden name?

Q: Both.

A: Her maiden name was Minerva Gimlick and don't ask me to spell that one. And her married name was—my grandfather was George Hoxie Bennett.

Q: That's a very old name.

- A: The Hoxie House out here on the Neck Road was Asa Hoxie's place. There was a relationship there, but I'm not sure what that was. Asa Hoxie.
- Q: Asa Hoxie's farmhouse is on West Beach Road.
- A: That's correct. Across from Thompson's place now. Yes.
- Q: Asa was such an old-fashioned name.
- A: My Uncle Lloyd was Asa Lloyd Briggs. He was in the Rhode Island House of Representatives for two years. He wouldn't run any more than that. He had enough. He used to be known as Abe Lincoln.
- Q: How about during the 1954 hurricane? Do you remember that?
- A: Absolutely. Do I ever. My brother and I were in the house at the time. That was an interesting experience.
- Q: I was in this house upstairs as a child. I remember the wind blowing. These windows are not very good, and the house isn't insulated. It's just a cottage. The wind blew so hard, our beds jumped up and down. They were those iron beds. I remember coming downstairs to tell my parents to make them stop moving, and they said they couldn't do it. Then I remember hearing this pounding on the door, and it was the National Guard telling my parents they had to evacuate. My parents said they were sorry, but they had nowhere to go and they would just stay. That wasn't true; we had grandparents in Ashaway. We stayed, and the next morning it was sunny and lovely.
- A: I remember laying in bed. My window looked out to Montauk Point. My clock radio went off at 7:00 to Jack Sterling of CBS News. Sterling said, "Hurricane Carol is located south of Long Island. It's expected to cut across the eastern tip of Long Island, but there is no danger to the New England coast. I repeat, no danger to the New England coast." That's an exact quote. It turned about 90 degrees, as I recall. I was six years old, so I'm not too accurate. It could have been more or it could have been less.
- Q: Was that the one where the Dowd girls were there?
- A: Yes. Florence and Agnes.
- Q: They went up to the top floor, and they burned some matches that they had gotten in Europe and were rescued. That's the story.
- A: They were great girls. We loved the Dowds.
- Q: Wasn't one of them an artist?

A: I don't know. I wouldn't be a bit surprised, but I don't know that to be a fact. It was pretty heavy out there. I remember Ben and I were down in the first floor looking out the window at the sea. He wanted to take a picture. He was up there and he took a picture. You couldn't see a thing. I said, "I'll tell you when there's a big one coming." I was watching these things get bigger and bigger, and finally I said, "Get this one. Get ready." I told him to snap it. Just as he did, that thing burst through the window, burst the front door open. We were immediately in water almost to our knees. He got the picture, but you didn't know what you were looking at. There was so much rain that you couldn't tell.

Q: the water was inside your house?

A: Yes. You know how high that property is. It came up. It broke the parting strip. It was as high as the parting strip.

Q: You were on the second floor?

A: No. We were on the first floor when that happened. That came through three times. We just opened the back door and let it out.

A: And did you see the waves on the Gerrish house?

A: Yes. The front porch roof—it went right over. I didn't see that. Ben did. He said it went right over and cleared the roof and landed—do you remember the little shanty that sat in back of the Gerrish house—a cute little place? It landed right in front of the shanty.

Q: So, the shanty now had a porch.

A: Yes. It didn't get hit. It landed on the ground just before it would have hit the shanty. And Phoebe Birch's house—I remember seeing that. I saw it drifting on by Bob Finlason. There's a U-shaped driveway there at Bob Finlason's house. Phoebe's house went over onto the West Beach Road. Where it stopped was right in the middle of that U. So, the way you would get to the breachway, it would go through Bob Finlason's driveway and go down there. Then they moved that house over onto Sunset Drive. It sits on the corner.

Q: Was it a log cabin at one time?

A: No. Never a log cabin. Just a Quonnie beach house. It was wonderful. I loved it. I don't remember any log cabins around.

Q: Was that Howard Thorp at one time?

A: Yes. You're right. Howard's house was.

Q: But it's not a log cabin now.

A: No.

Q: Why did Mr. Jolly pull his Pierce-Arrow out? Did it just fail there?

A: He was afraid that it was going to catch fire. He wanted to get it away. He just used his brain.

Q: He was trying to save his car, but that would impede the fire department.

A: I don't think he ever thought of that. I don't know. I never met him. I guess it must have been his son, who I referred to as Old Mr. Jolly. Then he had a son later that I knew.

Q: Did you know Miriam Spencer, who had been Miriam Jolly?

A: Yes.

Q: She's still around.

A: Is she really? Is that right?

Q: Yes. And still is able to go to the beach. I think she's 96. Jean Mase is 98. And I think Miriam is 96.

A: I don't remember personal contact with her, but I knew of Miriam Jolly.

Q: She would be a little bit older than you. At least a decade.

A: I'm 85.

Q: So, she would be eleven years older than you. A tiny, little lady. Very tiny. Like a bird.

A: I'm having trouble trying to remember her. But I certainly know the name. I guess she never married.

Q: She married. That's why she became Spencer. Her brother ended up with the house in Quonnie, and Miriam ended up with the house in Harrisville.

A: There was a son. I can't remember his name. They had lived in Florida. I knew them in '46 or '48. It wasn't '48. It must have been '46. Or it could have been '51. I was visiting in '48. I spent the summer in Pittsfield. We came down to the beach just one time, so it wouldn't have been at that time.

Q: Is there anything that you can think of just to say about Quonnie that you remember that you enjoyed visiting or anything like that?

A: I enjoyed all of that. I can't think of anything off hand. I'm very disappointed in the architecture that's taking place. It just blows my mind. It's terrible. The house next to Denise—is it Domino?

Q: Yes.

A: Did you call him a doctor?

Q: No. We called him Mr. Domino, but I believe he has something to do with a hedge fund manager or an investment banker—one of those guys.

A: I'm not pleased with them at all. Very disappointing.

Q: I think we asked you if you were Mr. Domino.

A: You did. I think I replied, "Heavens no." Terry had the idea that you referred to him as a doctor.

Q: No. I don't think he's a doctor. I think he's in the banking industry.

A: What do you know about Money Rock?

Q: I only know that there is a piece at the Smithsonian. What do you know about Money Rock?

A: I asked you first. The story that I have heard was that there was a piece either at the Smithsonian or the Museum of Natural History in New York, and that the only other known piece of Money Rock, or that type of rock, was in western Africa. That type of rock—there are only two known places in the world. However, I took a bunch of pictures of Money Rock and wrote to—I think it was the Smithsonian—supposedly to the head of whatever type of stuff that is.

A: A curator.

A: Yes. Not archeology, but rock people. She wrote back and said, "It's nothing unusual at all."

A: I can't believe that.

A: No.

Q: It just looks so much like silver dollars. There are so many of them in there. I've never seen anything like that.

A: The thing is they're all about roughly the same shape and the same size. And there is quartz on the outside that surrounds it. I had a friend from Mystic that I used to work with over at the Seaport. His name was Jerry Hoxie. And Jerry was an artist and kind of an amateur—what is the term I'm thinking of? Anyway, he saw it. He said, "That's the result of three volcanic explosions." The first explosion blew the stuff out. Then it came back down. That's when you get that, quote/unquote, quartz stuff or something. I'm all wrong about how I'm telling this. But he said that it indicates three different explosions that took place. I don't know how much he knows. He said the ledge that in back of our house where there's a geodetic survey marker embedded in that—he said that's some of the oldest rock in the world. That goes way-way back. I think it's a type of lava formation or something. He said it's the oldest type of rock in the world. It's not that that's the only one. It's just that type of rock.

Q: Did he say what kind of rock it was?

A: He probably did, and, in my usual state, I cannot remember. Terry mentioned something about the cemetery. Right about where you turn off to come in here, on the right-hand side, there was a cemetery in there. The people that had the big house on the corner, at one point they cleared that all out and exposed it and made it very nice. Now I notice that it's not there anymore.

Q: It's there.

A: Nobody has disrupted it?

Q: No. If you go back and drive very slowly and turn left, you can enter it. There is a little welcome sign and a slight explanation of what you might see. Then there are footstones and headstones, and a little bench to sit on.

A: Whoever it was, and I can't think of it—it wasn't the Pendletons that had the old farmhouse. I can't think who they were.

Q: Wasn't it the Pendleton farmhouse?

A: It might have been. I can't remember.

Q: Stanton is the one who got—

A: I think Stanton had all the property.

Q: The whole neck.

A: And he had what was the old Seabreeze Inn. That's another thing. What happened to that? The addition they put on there was terrible. But the original part was just like the Wilcox Tavern. The same period. The same everything. They bulldozed it all in and set it afire.

Q: It was some kind of training for the fire department.

A: What a stupid, stupid thing.

Q: No one wanted to buy it. Kids were breaking windows.

A: All that framing and stuff—I had been in the house a few years before. But the framing was all good. That stuff is prize. Bob Taytrol, who I know from the Seaport, he went into that business of restoring homes and rooms and that kind of thing. At that time, he'd get \$10,000 a room. There are places where you can buy those timbers that you just can't get today. The wainscoting—that was fine. It was beautiful.

Q: Some of that was fir.

A: I had a friend that I worked with at the Seaport, who was—there it goes right out of my mind. They own huge chain stores.

Mrs. Aycrigg: Woolworth.

A: Dick Woolworth. Yes. I brought him down to look at it to see if he'd be interested in buying it and restoring it. He said, "No." He had other projects that he needed to do. What do you know about—I won't call it a cemetery so much, but right at this end of Sunset Drive where you have to take a turn to the right to the old road. When I was growing up, there were some large stones, almost like roof stones, that were in there and had obviously been placed there by a human. The story that I knew of was that these were the graves of some of the folks that were on the shipwreck, the Harry Knowlton—the Larchmont and Harry Knowlton when they collided and froze to death. They buried them right there. It was in the winter. It was the coldest winter. They collided. The Harry Knowlton I think was a three-masted schooner. The Larchmont was a passenger steamer. It was a clear night. They collided. I think both of them went down. There was quite a loss of life.

Q: Did some people make it to shore?

A: Yes. I think there were some survivors. Don't press me on the exact facts, because I just don't have them. But many perished. I think it was a little west of the Quonnie Breachway. It's well known. Google it. I don't know enough about it.

A: Did it happen out in the ocean, or did it happen in the Quonnie Pond?

A: These were big ships. Harold Brown—what do you know about that building—that house? What have you heard?

Q: That it was a trading post.

A: Bingo.

Q: I heard that it was a trading post at one time. Beaver pelts were traded.

A: It was a Dutch trading post.

Q: And that it may or may not have been used for rum running during Prohibition.

A: I'm sure it was.

Q: Because of its location and proximity to Nopes Island.

A: What's Nopes Island?

Q: What I've heard, and I don't know if it's true, is that liquor was dropped on the beach at night, and then it was brought maybe through Whistling Chimneys, or maybe through this point almost exactly across from Shelter Harbor, and then brought by a little boat across the pond to Shelter Harbor, and then dispersed to people. Local people would be questioned by the authorities, "Do you know where the rum is coming in? Do you know where the liquor is coming in?" and they'd say, "Nope." And they were telling the truth, because it was Nopes Island.

A: Where is Nopes Island?

Q: It's that prominent point on the pond near the old breach—the original breach across from Shelter Harbor. It was easy to move stuff from this side to that side across the pond.

A: What Harold Brown told me—he didn't get into the rum-running and stuff, but he said that there used to be a bay—Quonnie Pond literally was a bay, and one storm closed it off just west of the old breachway. That's where it was all open to the pond. The ships—not just little boats, but ships could sail into the pond.

Q: It would have to be a bigger access point than I can imagine. It would have to be larger than the breachway. If it were a bay, that would make sense.

A: That's what he said. In one storm, it closed it all off. Of course, Quonnie Pond is the deepest salt pond in the state of Rhode Island. These ships were able to get in and out of there, according to Harold.

A: Don't you wish you could go back in time?

Q: Yes. I wish it every day.

A: I do too.