

# QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Oral History

# ARTHUR FISHER

September 5, 1997

Interviewed by Anne Schaefer Doyle

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Q: This is Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1997. I'm sitting here talking to Arthur C. Fisher, Jr., my mother's cousin, and his wife Norma Fisher in the cottage that they rent during the summer on West Beach. They will be leaving shortly for their home in Florida. The first thing I'd like you to do is tell me the names of the people in your family that came down to Quonnie.

A: My name is Arthur Chester Fisher, Jr. I live in Winter Haven, Florida at the present time. We try to spend our summers here at Quonochontaug, because we love it so much. Our family goes back to Quonochontaug for five generations, the first of which was my grandfather, Henry Fisher, who lived in the northwest district of Providence, Rhode Island. As neighbors in this area, they seemed to be quite enthusiastic about Quonochontaug. They rented. Actually, my grandfather Henry used to rent so that the grandchildren would have a place to come to. When they first came down, they rented in what we now call East Beach. I can remember my first time that I remember, although it probably wasn't the first time, because I was born May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1920. Probably that year I was at Quonochontaug in a rental property that belonged to the Bunts at that time, or to the Parsons at that time. In 1923 we rented the Bunt's cottage. In 1924, for the first time, we rented at Central Beach, which was a lone house in Central Beach that was owned by Thorpe, the developer. The developer probably put it up as a corner home in the hopes that he could sell some lots. He was successful, because my father purchased a lot. I don't know whether it's 24 or 25 or 26, but he purchased a lot on Surfside Avenue, which later on he had a house put up.

Q: Can you give me the names of your father and mother?

A: My father's name was Arthur Chester Fisher. My mother's name was Edith Bradford [inaudible 03:53] Fisher. Stepping back a little is that it's my understanding that my mother and father met at a dance in one of the hotels—I can't remember which one it was—at the breachway. My mother came down and paid a visit with one of her

girlfriends, which ended up being her maid of honor for her marriage, Bea McCloud. Whether she had any relation to the other people that were on East Beach at that time, I don't know. However, those people that were influencing the Fishers to come to Quonnie were the Roberts on East Beach and the McClouds on East Beach and the Pecks at East Beach.

Q: You lived in Providence?

A: We all lived in the same neighborhood in Providence. We lived on Academy Avenue. At that time, it was what they called the Hazard estate, which was later on LaSalle Academy. The Roberts were at the corner of the road. The Pecks lived across the street. The McClouds lived up on what we later called Westerly [inaudible 05:26].

Q: Did the McClouds and the Pecks come before the Fisher family?

A: They came before the Fisher family.

Q: Was it purely for summer enjoyment?

A: It was just for summer enjoyment. In fact, my father told us about the horse and buggy from the train station. They used to come by way of Bradford and then take a horse and buggy over to Quonochontaug.

Q: Is that your father?

A: Yes. This was back when he was courting my mother. You're talking back to 1912 or 1913, which was just the beginning. I know they had cars, but this was a long way to come down from Providence to Quonochontaug. At any rate, he used to come down here to visit his buddies.

Q: What are some of your first memories? What did you do at Quonnie?

A: Some of the finest memories I have was I was able to get a rowboat. I can't where I got it or whose it was, but I think somebody said, "If you want to fix it up, it's yours." This was at the time that the Parson boy lost his leg in Quonochontaug Pond, so I never went out to Quonochontaug Pond without some kind of chaperone with me. But I was allowed to go to the Charlestown Pond along the coast behind the sand dunes.

Q: Was that the little pond—

A: It was a good-sized pond.

Q: Did you get ice from the ice house?

A: I don't remember, but I can remember ice being in there.

Q: So, you went to the next pond up?

A: Yes. We would go to Charlestown.

Q: Would you go fishing?

A: I used to go Quahogging, and playing around with the guys. I fixed up some kind of a sail for it. I just had a good time with it. But there was a dock that ran out on East Beach Road behind Blue Shutters, which the people at East Beach used to use. I would tie it up there. That dock is now full of weeds. It isn't as fluid as it was years ago, because the farms were all the way up East Beach Road.

Q: The pond has changed a lot.

A: Yes. Then there was a lapse after 1924 due to [inaudible 09:03] to depression, or maybe even family problems. We didn't come back to Quonochontaug to stay, because my family used to go on camping trips. We used to camp for our vacations in the summertime. I didn't come to Quonochontaug from 1924 until 1934. We had a period of time of about ten years that I lost track of [inaudible 09:47].

Q: By the time you came back, were you coming to Central Beach?

A: By the time we came back, it was the year that my folks decided to build a home on the lot that they purchased from Thorpe.

Q: When Aunt Edith and Uncle Arthur lived up on the hill, that was bought at a separate time. When did they move down here permanently?

A: They moved down from Fruit Hill, where they were living at the time, on the north side of Providence in 1947.

Q: So, they purchased the Surfside lot first?

A: That was purchased in the '20s. They built a house on that.

Q: Before they built a house in the back—

A: That was long before they built the house in the back. But that property was not part of Central Beach. That was owned by someone else, and Thorpe had yet to buy that in the '20s. That was not part of the original Central Beach. Part of the original Central Beach was down where the bathhouse is, where the wells were. [inaudible 11:15] house over there is where the ball field was supposed to be. At a later date, [inaudible 11:23] was able to buy that. I think it probably either before or just after the '38 hurricane that he bought up on that knoll. They bought that lot there. The Dodds bought two lots—no; they bought four lots. Two on either side of what is now Ninigret Road. My folks bought three lots on Ninigret Road. The used to have access from the road down below.

The road was never put through to Central Beach. It wasn't approved for quite a while down by the fall field.

Q: Where did it stop?

A: It stopped up at the top of the road, whatever the name of that street is up at the corner there where [inaudible 12:16] house is, which is—is that Kenyon Street? That's Kenyon.

Q: When your folks lived here year-round, at that point you were on your own.

A: Yes. We also built a house. We took the old barn on the estate that they sold and made it into a home up in North Providence that same year. That was in 1947. They had moved into this house a long time before we sold on Fruit Hill and moved to Cincinnati. The problem we're having now with cigarettes, tobacco and so forth, I wonder if anybody of the older group can remember the promotion that was put on by Lucky Strike. In Quonochontaug, where Blue Shutters is now, they used to call it Barbour's Blue Shutters. The Barbours owned it. Their mother name Mary, she ran the store. It started out just as a little ice cream shop in the beach. They built it up, and they put in bath houses. The tobacco people came in, and as a promotional stunt they tried for one year a movie on the beach for the young people on Thursday night. Just at dusk, if the young people went over there, they had a movie. They had a good movie to watch on the beach in the park, which was [inaudible 14:33] in those days. I don't know whether that lasted the full summer or not. I was a teenager when this was going on. This is when was when our house was just being built. I lived in our house on Surfside when it was being built, and I mean being built.

Q: Wasn't that built just before the hurricane?

A: It was built from '34 to '36, and then we were in it when the '38 hurricane came.

Q: As a teenager, did you get into any trouble?

A: I don't remember getting into any real trouble. I'll be darned if I can remember some of the kids' names. Most of the time when I was there during the week, I was working, because I was a 25-cent-an-hour helper building my folks' house. George Saucy—I don't know whether anybody remembers George Saucy, but he was someone that moved down to Quonochontaug also to build a house for my folks. He was evidently not able to support himself properly during the Depression, so my folks said, "How would you like to build a house for us?" And so, he moved down with his wife. They rented a place over on East Beach Road, which they later purchased along some other property there, and built four or five homes over on East Beach right on the [inaudible 16:26].

Q: Did you brother Bob also help build the house?

A: Yes.

Q: Is that when he started getting interested in—

A: No. He was interested before. He was already going to the [inaudible 16:39] Institute at the time. I don't think that he participated too much at the time. I was the only worker there, because I think Dad would have been pretty critical of where George worked, because he always said, "If it didn't fit, get a bigger hammer." He was quite a character.

Q: Getting back to East Beach and some of the activities that were going on—

A: That is the only thing I can remember. I wracked my brain on that.

Q: Did your families go with picnic lunches on the beach?

A: I don't remember. Of course, we wouldn't have picnics on Central Beach, because they wouldn't allow it. I don't remember picnics on Central Beach, but I can remember putting on clambakes at my mother and father's log cabin.

Q: Can you tell us about getting ready for the clambakes?

A: The one I remember mostly was the one that I put on for my help at work. We came down Friday, and I went over into the pond. We got a bucket full of Quahogs and them in ice to keep them overnight. The next day they were all gone, because we had eaten them all raw. We had to go down to get some more for the chowder and clam cakes.

Q: Did you cook as well?

A: My mother did the chowders and the fritters. But as far as the bake, usually my brother and I put on the bake, because we watched our grandfather do that so many times. That was my mother's father. That was Frederick [inaudible 18:51], who ran a TV business in Providence. He came down towards the latter part of his life. He sold his business. He was slowly going downhill, but he did come down and did quite a lot of physical work on the Surfside Avenue property putting a driveway in and so forth. I remember working with him on that.

Q: So, he was the cook?

A: He was the pit master, which is what they called them in those days. He was the one that supplied the balls, because we always had a ball bake.

Q: So, you learned to do the clambakes from him?

A: From him. Yes. Dad and I would participate in the bake, because Dad knew more than I did about it.

Q: I often wonder how that was all organized. You went over to the pond and gathered the quahogs.

A: We got the quahogs. We got steamers over there. There were good steamers in the old days in both ponds. In the end, we used to go over to Goat Island on Quonochontaug Pond to get the steamers. They were in the sand just off the old inlet from the ocean; not the new breachway.

Q: Could you cross over that breachway at that time?

A: We had to walk across it in places. At the hotel and across the street, they had one of those old-fashioned lines, like a clothes line on big pulleys. There was a post on one side and a post on the other, and the hotels had a little skiff, which you could get into and pull yourself right across to go to the bathing beach. The bathing beach at the hotels was behind the Coast Guard station on the other side.

Q: Can you give us a timeframe for this?

A: I'm talking in the '30s before the hurricane.

Q: After the hurricane is when the beach was all upset?

A: It was upset. The hurricane upset it, because it took out the Coast Guard station. They used to put the boats in around the corner where the breachway is now. It was a sharp turn to get into the breachway. It didn't go straight in like it does now.

Q: Did you take a boat in and out of that breachway?

A: Yes. I had a skiff. Now it's getting up to the Central Beach days. I would go up the old breachway, and we'd hit sandbars and I'd have to get out and pull the boat over. You would stop your motor.

Q: Was it dangerous?

A: Yes, it was dangerous. I can remember going out there in foggy weather and being kind of foolish, but we'd always get back.

Q: Did you go out to fish?

A: Yes.

Q: Once you got to Central Beach, did you associate with other people around you? Who were your neighbors?

A: I can remember the industrious next-door neighbors when they built their house. They pitched in and did a great deal of it themselves. It was Ham Spries and his wife before they had the home that your grandmother rented over the years.

Q: Do you know who owned Seabiscuit before Mr. [inaudible 23:21]?

A: Was it the McGowins?

Q: No.

A: I thought that the McGowins house before the hurricane, but I'm not sure of that. The house over there that I really remember was the one that some professor from Brown—I can't remember his name—which ended up over there after the '38 hurricane. It's owned by Netty Prior. The Prior's house. We used to have a lot of fun, because every weekend he'd bring some Brown students down to help him work on the house. I don't think that house was on Central Beach at the time.

Q: So, that line of Central Beach changed.

A: His original line was never changed as far as I know. But the Central Beach Association did acquire some lots after the hurricane to supplement the parking lot. I think that Ham Swarze and Henry Lockwood were probably responsible for a lot of that.

Q: Do you have a memory of how the houses were lined up along the front of the—

A: Yes. I can't remember all the names of the people, but our house was an empty lot before the schwarz built. Then it was the Sewels house. The Bartisons—she was down here then. The Sawyers. I never did know who owned it. Whether the Sawyers owned it or the Sewels owned it. I think the Sawyers did. I don't think [inaudible 25:39] had anything to do with the [inaudible 25:42], even though he was the husband.

Q: Are these all Providence people that you're talking about?

A: These were all Providence people. They lived in the same neighborhood we did.

Q: I have heard that originally people came down to this area because they were hunters. Do you know anything about that?

A: Yes. The Pittsfield group. They used to be off in the area, which I call wetlands over here in the area to the pond. You'd always see a load of wetlands. There were all these blinds also and hunting for [inaudible 26:25] Island.

Q: What is that?

A: That's the one that sits right off of Thorpe's house looking straight out at the big one.

Q: Do know if it was the Pittsfield people that were here?

A: It was the Pittsfield, the Longmeadow group, the Ashaway group.

Q: Did everybody seem to settle in their own little [inaudible 26:50]?

A: Right. You'd think they would want to get away from each other, but they didn't.

Q: In general, did you feel good about being at Quonnie?

A: Yes. I looked forward to it. It wasn't like kicking us off to school or something. We'd look forward to it. And I suppose we looked forward to going back to school in the fall. We definitely did, because I don't remember objecting. It's just like [inaudible 27:27] down at Central Beach when I was growing up. When I was in high school, right after Labor Day, boom, everyone left. Not a sole down here, which is a big change from today. On Surfside Avenue where our first house was, at least my folks' first house, there was an open lot, then there was Sewels, then there was—what was their name? Brown was the next one. There's another lot there which they built on.

Q: The Pomeroy's?

A: No. That's Brown. And then the one on the corner was the Saunders house. It was up on the front.

Q: Do you remember going to the pond to get water?

A: We got our water on East Beach. We used to get it at Beddington's farmhouse. That was the well that we used.

Q: The structure still exists today.

A: Yes. That's the same. It hasn't been really changed. I don't know whether the well house is out there. I'm not sure. It used to be.

Q: I walked by it. It's there. And it's the same as the pictures that I have. I don't think they use it.

A: I don't know over at Central Beach—what they did. They must have had a well. We rented the cottage there the first year at Central Beach. There must have been a well there. Over at the other cottages we rented, the well was piped underneath the road and into the pond, which is now a fresh water pond. The pump would be up on the back porch. That was the only water you had.

Q: Are you talking about Surfside?

A: No. I'm talking the other end where East Beach is now, and the cottages that were there before Central Beach was built. Back in the '20s, the houses were there, and the water came from across the road. The outhouses were across the road too. You left everything in the pond from which you got your water from.



Q: Is that right?

A: Sure.

Q: My goodness. That's the first I've of that.

A: That was a fresh water pond. It still is. And actually the basis for our water supply was Central Beach.

Q: Is that the basis today?

A: Yes. That's the basis today for the fresh water that we get out of the well.

Q: I'm going to turn the tape over and continue the conversation.

A: I was in tip-top shape.

Q: This was to help get you in shape for football.

A: Yes. I was told to increase my speed, and it did. They changed me from [inaudible 30:51], as I remember, and I made All State.

[overlapping conversation]

Q: Let's talk about World War II. Were you married at the time?

A: Yes.

Q: Let's talk about where you met Norma.

A: Before the war started, I had already determined that I wanted to study to be an aeronautical engineer. I thought that I should be able to do it in two years. I looked up schools and decided that the Lincoln Aeronautical Institute in Lincoln, Nebraska would be a good two-year school. I applied and was accepted. I went out to live in Nebraska. I was there for a year or so, and then on Valentine's Day I met somebody. It wasn't long after that we decided to get married.

Q: Where did you meet?

A: We were neighbors. I rented an apartment. There were two of us. She was working at another apartment. She sold soap and a few other things. That's where I met her.

Q: Was Norma living with other friends?

N: I was living with a woman. I was helping to take care of her child.

Q: When were you married?

A: We got married on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1941. Then I came back to Quonnie in Rhode Island. She came out to Quonnie from Lincoln, Nebraska. We announced to our family that we were married. They didn't know we were married. It didn't all happen at Quonochontaug.

N: [inaudible 33:36] over here. That's how we happened to stay in Quonnie.

A: We lived in the Surfside Avenue house. We stayed there, and it got so darned cold—it was after Thanksgiving that we back up to Providence and moved in there with my folks. I was working for Hamilton Standard, which had a division in Pawcatuck, Connecticut.

Q: When you had to go back to Providence, did you have to commute to Pawcatuck?

A: No. We didn't move back to Pawcatuck until I had made my decision that I was enlisting in the Air Force. I was going to be drafted after the holidays. I wasn't drafted; I came because I enlisted. That was part of the deal that I could stay home for Christmas and the holidays. So, we moved up to Providence and got Normal all situated up there. And then I went into the service just after the first of the year in 1943.

Q: What were the names of all your children?

A: The first one was born in Westerly Hospital. Judith was the first one. Then Lois after [inaudible 35:19] week of May.

N: She died 57 years ago today. She had spinal bifida.

A: And then Alan was born. He was born in Westerly Hospital. He came back here. He spent his first month right here. That was when we lived here.

Q: At Surfside?

A: At Surfside. He was born in August, so we stayed here until Thanksgiving with him. Then we moved back up to Providence. We had Alan at that time.

N: We skipped about three years there from the time that we both had moved from Nebraska. Then we lived in Westerly.

A: That's right. We lived in Westerly. We said Providence, but we lived in Westerly, Rhode Island.

N: We moved to Bradford. That's where our daughter was born. We lived in Bradford, she died [inaudible 37:00].

[overlapping conversation]

Q: And then the twins were born in 1935. Did you always come on a yearly basis with your three children?

A: Yes. As long as there was a house there. My folks were either renting Surfside Avenue or spending time there themselves when it wasn't rented. When they built the place up on the hill, which was Bayberry at the time, and now is Ninigret—the log cabin. Then they moved up there permanently. Then we came down all the time, didn't we?

N: We'd come down a week or two at a time.

A: We spent our couple-week vacation, because that's all I had.

Q: And you finally built your own house on Seabreeze.

A: Yes. The kids and I decided to relocate. I didn't want to relocate without discussing it with the family. It seemed that the solution to have everybody happy was to have a central location at Quonochontaug, Rhode Island. The idea was that if my father would see fit to it—if they would let me go out to Ohio, that I'd see they had a home in Quonochontaug. We bought the land and built the house and moved everything we had from North Providence, which we built a house up there—we moved that stuff into Quonochontaug, and we moved into a rented quarters in Cincinnati. We never bought a house there. We just rented.

Q: What do you think about all the changes that are going on here?

A: Some good and some bad. I'd like to see a little more openings, but there never will be.

Q: Opening in the sense of less building?

A: Yes. Fewer buildings. It's too bad they weren't thinking ahead when they sold lots here years ago that it wasn't something that would be a little more restrictive. On the other hand, it may never have gotten off the ground if it wasn't the way it is. Maybe it has an advantage.

Q: Did you ever think how Quonnie might have changed your life at all?

A: I'm sure it has. For instance, when we bought in Florida, I looked for a place in Florida that might be the same as Central Beach. We found a place with covenants and deeds and so forth and restricted it like Central Beach, so that's why we thought that we had a good deal.

Q: Can you tell us about your involvement in the [inaudible 40:23]?

A: [inaudible 40:29] down here has been an important part of [inaudible 40:33]. Then as they get older, they have to kind of give it up.

Q: I hear you were at the last tournament.

A: Yes. [inaudible 40:42]. I'm glad he's been active.

Q: It's a good way of meeting people.

A: Yes. Look at that ball field up there on Saturday and Sunday.

Q: If you lived in suburbia, you would get pretty isolated.

A: You don't know your next-door neighbor.

Q: Have you been involved in government at Quonnie at all?

A: I ran the tennis for a few years. I think everybody should participate. I thought I would serve a duty. But after I retired, I guess I was the sealer of weights & measures for the town in the Republican party. Bob McMillan was [inaudible 41:54]

N: He was the president.

A: The next thing you know, I was the sealer of weights & measures. I didn't even seek it. I didn't look for it. I didn't know anything about it. But I figured everybody was honest, so I wasn't worried.

N: He was the town council president in Charlestown [inaudible 42:11].

Q: Could you speak about that a little bit?

A: Brad Fisher and Betty [inaudible 42:26] Fisher moved to Quonochontaug right after World War II. They also used the Surfside Avenue house as a basis of their operation. They built a home quite speedily, which was always—what's the name of the people?

N: Jim Brown.

A: Yes. They built the house that Jim Brown left afterwards. That's where they first moved—Seabreeze. They lived there. Most people will remember Brad Fisher was the contractor who built a lot of homes there.

Q: Was that because he lived here all year round?

A: Yes. He got to be a neighbor. They lived here, and they participated in the grange and the Masonic Lodge and the town. He was president of the town council for a while. They had a resurgent group after World War II. A lot of the young [inaudible 43:37] came in and decided they were going to take the Republican party over, which [inaudible 43:41], and so they did. It was all Republicans, but it was a different group. So, he had that. He decided that he would drop out of the politics, because he couldn't do two jobs

well. You either had to stay in business as construction, or he was going to have to run for the upstate senate. If he did that, he knew his soul wouldn't be his own for the rest of his life, and so he decided that he couldn't afford to do it. If he was a rich man, he could do it, but he wasn't, so he wasn't going to do it and get in trouble. That was his thinking. He had his head on his shoulders. He had been wined and dined.

Q: Please mention Karen and Marilyn.

A: Two twin daughters, Karen and Marilyn Fisher. They spent some wonderful times at Quonochontaug. They gained a lot of wonderful friends. They still think of it as their home away from home. They come here as frequently as they can. We hope they do for a long time to come. They come back here.

Q: I see that as a theme now in people's houses.

A: When you think of it, it's five generations of our family that have been coming to Quonochontaug for one reason or another. I think an awful lot of it is the people. I think a lot of it has to do with the people you meet and see.

Q: Norma, were you involved in school?

N: [inaudible 45:43] was one of the original eight women. And they talked about politics and [inaudible 45:55].

Q: So, it was a real practice?

N: I started to play bridge. But one of the women didn't play bridge. So, then they decided they would get together and talk and discuss things. That was connected with the South County Hospital. The women got together in homes. These eight women just loved each other. There are only two alive today of the original group. But it still meets Mondays.

Q: Can you remember the original group?

N: Mrs. Bristol. She started it. Lucille Clifford. Ruth Brown. [inaudible 47:02]. She's over on East Beach Road. Doris Hatch, a new member. And Gwyneth [inaudible 47:13].

Q: What about Edith?

N: And Edith. Those were the original eight. They got together. It wasn't gossip. But they began to [inaudible 47:26]. That's how all through the years they've been.

Q: Has it always been eight women, and if one might leave for some reason, then they [inaudible 47:38]?

[overlapping conversation]

Q: Do you keep it to the eight?

N: Yes.

Q: Who is in your group now?

N: Right now, it's Elizabeth [inaudible 47:54] and Joanne Thompson. Doris Hatch is still a member. She was one of the original. And Emily was a summer guest.

Q: Are you part of the eight?

N: No.

Q: Doris Hatch—I forget what house?

N: She's on East Beach Road. They moved here from Rochelle, New York, or somewhere. She became involved. We went to every town council meeting. We were very politically active.

Q: I didn't realize that.

[overlapping conversation]

Q: But for the fire district, you were not [inaudible 48:47].

[overlapping conversation]

Q: I didn't know that, Norma.

N: And then we volunteered at the Center for the Arts in Westerly. We are a small group of people, but we are committed to 5,000 to 10,000 people. Westerly has a group. Stonington, Hopkinton, Ridgefield, Charlestown. There are a lot of people [inaudible 49:20], and they shop and do their things in Westerly. It isn't as if we [inaudible 49:26] life from everything. As a result, a lot of us do things like that. Then there was a [inaudible 49:33] group that stayed very active. Then people from Quonochontaug belonged to it.

Q: What does that mean?

N: It's the International Order of [inaudible 49:44]. Lois [inaudible 49:56] was one of the original members. They started as young girls in the congregational church, and from there it has grown to an adult women's group. They support almost all of the charities in the area [inaudible 50:12]. We used to make afghans for the veteran's hospital.

Q: Is that still ongoing?

- N: That's ongoing [inaudible 50:22] homes the third Thursday of every month all year long. Most of the people in Quonochontaug, in one way or another, belong to it.
- A: [inaudible 50:34] some of the other things that are down here that they ran for young girls.
- Q: Is that where I went to camp one year?
- N: Yes.
- Q: Where is that camp?
- A: It's up on the way to Providence. Do you know where Indian Lake is? Do you know where the tower is at the top of Route 1? Right down in there on the left is the Indian Lake. I used to call it Saugatuck.
- N: And your grandmother was a counselor or something one summer there. She took films—she took movie reels of her camp.
- Q: Was this when my mother was young?
- N: Her sister-in-law. Mrs. Seamans.
- Q: Daisy.
- N: Daisy was the mistress of the camp—the manager. I guess your mother just came in to help her out.
- Q: My mother?
- N: Your grandmother. You probably went one summer.
- Q: I did go one summer.
- N: My girls went for four or five because of grandma. They have had their [inaudible 52:15] camp.
- Q: Is it still in existence now?
- N: No.
- A: [inaudible 52:19] that built our house was responsible for building the cabins up there in Saugatuck too.
- N: A lot of people from the Westerly area helped build that camp. It was sold to the Episcopal church for [inaudible 52:35].

- Q: So, this all had to do with that group that helped support it and started this camp?
- N: Yes. [inaudible 52:46], and then they had a home for the elderly. There were a lot of things. But it's an international group. [inaudible 52:56].
- Q: From what you're saying, it was a lot of service-oriented involvement more in those days than today maybe.
- N: It still does.
- A: They give a lot of scholarships.
- [overlapping conversation]
- N: It's 300 to 400 a year that pays for books and things that the scholarship has given to them. I really can't help you much with the political life. I even came back from Cincinnati to be on the—
- A: To show you're a citizen. She said, "I've got to go back to"—
- [overlapping conversation]
- A: We were living in Cincinnati. The next thing I know, she's flying back here to go on jury duty.
- N: This was our residence. We always called Rhode Island our residence.
- A: That was the most expensive jury duty they ever had.
- [overlapping conversation]
- Q: When you get together with your group of eight, do you still talk about the issues of the day?
- N: Yes. Karen [inaudible 54:30]. She's part of it. Now Mrs. Butterworth and [inaudible 54:37]. They are still very much talking about the issues. Elizabeth [inaudible 54:46] with information for the group.
- Q: I didn't realize you were still very active.
- N: [inaudible 55:00]. It was a wonderful time in our lives. Then I was on the charter commission. I helped build the charter for Charlestown at that time.
- Q: Do you remember when that was?



N: In 1975. Of course, the charter has been changed. We were the original people. From each district, they chose people. Bob [inaudible 55:40] was very active politically. They could talk you into almost anything. Whenever there was a need—and [inaudible 55:53] couldn't do these things. I volunteered at Cross Mills for years. That's a very active community. The library has a lot to do with people interacting.

A: So, what you've been saying really is that there is plenty to do here.

N: And people become your friends for a lifetime. That's why I love to come back. I have friends. We're interested in each other and the families.

Q: That's what life is all about.

N: Yes. Very enjoyable.

Q: Is this when you were a teenager?

A: When we were teenagers, we couldn't get down here if we didn't drive. We had to have a car. I remember the first car I had down here was a '28 Chevrolet. That's an old car.

Q: Was that your very-own car?

A: No, it wasn't. My grandfather had it, and then one of the truck drivers drove it under a truck, so it was shorter on one side than the other, but it still ran. The next thing I knew, Dad had it. Then the next thing I knew, I had it.

Q: So, it was passed down?

A: It was passed down, just like anything else. I finally ended up by selling it for \$65 to a guy who used to come by. He had to have that car. He finally got his father to come over and give me the \$65.

Q: Were there other grandchildren?

A: No. He was more or less living with Mother at that time, because he had retired.

Q: Are you talking about your [inaudible 58:12]?

A: Brad Fisher. This was the other side of the family.

[overlapping conversation]

A: I don't know who it was, but I know that we had a connection with roller skates. Barbara would be better able to tell you than I can. But we used to go over to these places—not only over to Misquamicut, but [inaudible 58:51] at the time, because there were different things at different times. One time they tried to have big bands in there. Then they tried

to have some entertainment type of thing, but the thing that made out best was the roller-skating rink. We used to go down there and roller skate. I don't remember things that happened there. There was never any trouble there.

N: Do you remember the bowling alley?

A: Oh, gosh, yes. The bowling alley after the '38 hurricane were the weirdest alleys you ever found, because they couldn't do anything except leave it the way the building was. It was like a roller coaster. Some of the fellows used to work down there setting pins for five cents. I don't know who used to do that, but some of them did. I never did. The other thing I remember was going over to Point Judith in the old Chevy. I used to go over there to be with my friend, Steve Cooper, who I met when we used to camp when I was younger. Steve Cooper's father ran Aunt Carrie's restaurant at Point Judith. Stewart got killed in World War II, and his sister had just died, but she ran that up until that time, and now I guess her son is running Aunt Carrie's.

N: Her father is a state senator.

A: Yes. He was a state senator from Narragansett. His name was Cooper. Aunt Carrie was his wife. That was Mr. Cooper's wife.

[overlapping conversation]

Q: Is that why you would go to Point Judith?

A: I'd go over there to visit them, because we used to camp there down in front of Aunt Carrie's. There was a campground in the '20s. We used to go down there as a family.