

## QUONOHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Oral History

# RUTH SCHAFFER HOPKINSON

February 19, 2011

Interviewed by Anne Schafer Doyle

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Q: Today is Saturday, February the 19<sup>th</sup> in the year 2011. This is Ann Schafer Doyle doing the interview. I am interviewing my sister, Ruth Schafer Hopkinson, who is here for a visit. Ruth, state your full name, when you were born and where you were born.

A: Ruth Schafer Hopkinson, a.k.a. little Ruthie Schafer. Born in Boston, Massachusetts February 1946.

Q: Why did you first come to Quonnie?

A: The most immediate memory is my mom and dad rented a cottage in Quonnie, and we went wherever our mom and dad went. Although I am aware of family history where my grandmother and such came first. But I came because my mom and dad came, and my family came.

Q: When was that? How old were you?

A: I believe, by looking at pictures, that I was at Quonnie from 1946 on. There is a picture of me on the beach, and I'm a fat baby sitting on a towel. I must have been six months old. It's either I was here first at six months of age, or I was here at a year and a half. I have pictures of me at year and a half.

Q: Where did you stay when you here when you were young?

A: My parents rented Sea Biscuit, a cottage that is now known as Swan Song down near the beach within a stone's throw of the entrance to the beach. It was a real cottage. I understand the history of that is that it floated over to the spot that it is now built on during the 1938 Hurricane. But it was a real cottage. It was not finished.

Q: Was there something specific that you remember about the inside of the cottage?

A: I can't remember exactly how it was set up. There was a stairway going to the main part of the house where we had an open dining room and living room. The bedrooms were like little rooms off the center of the house—very narrow rooms. I think what I remember the most about Sea Biscuit is the garage—driving into the garage from our home in—I must have been living near Boston at the time. But getting out of the car and the smell was one that to this day reminds me of the beach. It's a beach smell. Specifically, the smell of the garage is a wonderful smell to me. It's a very positive smell.

Q: What are your earliest memories? Do you remember anything when you were staying at Sea Biscuit?

A: I don't have that many memories of Sea Biscuit, other than what I just described. I've tried really hard to think. I remember being barefoot all the time. I think I just followed you and Bill home from the beach. I don't have any specific memories of Sea Biscuit, other than what I described: the way the house was set up and the smell of the garage.

Q: Did you have anybody else in the cottage with you besides your mother?

A: Yes. My mom. If dad followed the same pattern that he followed his whole life, Dad would come down from Boston on the weekends to be with his family. And of course, my sister Ann and my brother Bill. Somewhere in there I have a memory of my grandmother, Annie Siemens. It's vague. But if my mother was at the cottage, then I would be at the cottage. I just went wherever she was.

Q: So, your earliest memories were after you left Sea Biscuit. Why did the family leave Sea Biscuit?

A: These are stories. I don't have any way to verify them. I understand that my Grandfather Raymond Siemens had bought a couple of lots further away from the ocean than Sea Biscuit. Sea Biscuit was just a stone's throw away from the ocean. I think Grandpa bought two lots three streets back because of the 1938 Hurricane. That's my understanding. So, it would be safer. I vaguely remember the cottage on Neptune Avenue being built. It was built by my mother's cousin, Brad Fisher. It was designed, if you want to call it designed—it was just really a railroad car—designed by my Grandfather Raymond Siemens. I vaguely remember it being built. But I do remember starting to come down here on Memorial Day weekend—the three-day weekend—to clean out the cottage. Clean all the bugs out. All the spider webs. Air out the linens, so to speak. Open up the windows and get it ready for summer. I think my memories actively started about age eight, about 1954. The ritual of coming down here on Memorial Day weekend—because it was always chilly, we always had a fire in the fireplace, which was the last time my parents ever used the fireplace. We had a fire in the fireplace to keep us warm. Mom would always make picnic lunches for us to eat on the beach—Table Rock. To me, Memorial Day was the happiest weekend in the whole year, because summer at Quonnie was just beginning. The fun.

Q: So, you had a lot of good memories after you moved to Neptune Avenue?

A: Yes. No doubt. I think about this so often about the gift that my mom and dad gave me and my brother and sister by building this cottage and coming down here for every single summer, and the freedom that we had was idyllic. I think without Quonnie, I might not be the same person that I am today. In fact, I know it. Running around. Our days were as carefree as any child could ever hope for. I marvel at that kind of freedom, which I always wanted to give my own children, but never did. I kind of regret that I didn't, because I reaped so many benefits of the sheer happiness and joy of being barefoot in a bathing suit all summer long, and my only goal was to play. That's it. And I did play.

Q: Describe how you would spend a day.

A: I don't know if I could describe. I think in general, my mother was a very dutiful housewife who vicariously took joy in watching her children be so happy. She herself was as happy as she ever was at Quonnie. The day would start with a full breakfast on the table. I don't remember the usual cereal and bananas that I eat now. I just remember her always having eggs and toast and coffee cake and orange juice—a full breakfast. Then it was into our bathing suits and off to the beach. By the time I was eight years old or so, I was old enough to go down to the beach when I wanted to go. Of course, after breakfast you had to wait an hour before you went down to the beach, because the idea was you had to digest your food for an hour. But I would run off to the beach. I imagine all I did was play in the sand, making sandcastles and such. I don't remember having any friends to play with, although I'm sure I did. Then we would come home for lunch at the scheduled time, which was noonish. Mom would have a great lunch for us. We'd wait an hour. Put on our afternoon bathing suits and rinse out our morning bathing suits and hang them on the line. That might have been my only responsibility the whole summer was to make sure I did that. I'd run down to the beach for the afternoon, and make sure we were back in time for dinner. Let's say dinner was every day at 6:00, then I would have to be back a good half hour earlier than that to help Mom shelling peas, husking corn, setting the table. Those were maybe my other responsibilities. We'd have a great dinner. Fresh fruit. Fresh vegetables. Fresh fish. We'd get out of our afternoon bathing suits, rinse them out, hang them on the line. Then I don't know how the evenings were spent, but there was no TV. I know I was never bored. I don't know what I did as a child. I'm sure I just played with toys or played cards. Very often my grandparents would come over, and I'd probably sit on the porch and talk to them. When I became a teenager, we'd have parties, but not when I was eight or nine. I was still too little for that. So, my day was eat, beach, rinse a bathing suit, eat, beach, rinse a bathing suit, set the table. That's about it. It was a rough childhood. I'll tell you. I can't believe how idyllic it was. It was incredible.

Q: It's as an adult that you realize that.

A: Yes.

Q: What about going in the water? Were you allowed to go in with somebody there?

A: I don't remember that. I just remember having to wait an hour after we ate. I am sure that our mother would probably ask Bill to keep an eye on me, or something like that, when I was at the ocean front. I don't remember anyone ever being anxious about me being near the ocean front, going in, riding the waves in, playing by the rocks, climbing over the rocks. I don't ever remember any anxiety at all about, "You better watch out. You've got to be careful." There was none of that. It was almost as if we had this veneer of safety wrapped around us. Or else the adults were amazingly ignorant about the dangers of being near the ocean front. No one ever conveyed to me an anxiety, therefore, I was never afraid of it. The ocean was my friend. I think a child is naturally cautious when the waves get big and crash. You just don't go in. If my brother was responsible for watching me, I don't remember it. I'm thinking maybe that was a job of his. I don't know. I don't think he did a very good job of that, if that's what he was supposed to do, because he probably was off with his friends. Why would he want to watch his little sister? I don't know.

Q: I think back then the mothers helped each other out.

A: Yes. Maybe so, but I don't remember Mom tag teaming with anybody about that. I don't think that Ann, my sister, ever being told to watch me. What could another child do in case the younger sister gets caught up in the waves? We had no lifeguard at the beach. We were just a bunch of people running around the beach having a good time. The ocean has always been a positive experience where I never felt afraid. In my memory, which is not always so good, I would pretty much be on my own at a very young age. When I wanted to come home, I would come home. I don't remember waiting for Ann or waiting for Bill to come home. I just remember I would go home.

Q: Do you remember crabbing?

A: Absolutely. Crabbing for Mr. King, who lived across the street. I do remember being with you, Ann, crabbing. We would wait for low tide, smoosh the mussel shells with a rock, tie them around a string, lower them in the water and the crabs would come. We'd put the crabs in the bucket. Then after we had a half a bucket, we'd come back and give it to Mr. King, who was a fisherman. Then Mr. King would go out and catch black fish, which is a common fish in this area. Then to say thank you for the crabs, he would give my mother some fish to cook that night for dinner. I loved black fish. It was a delicious fish. I remember crabbing. I remember Quahogging. It wasn't clamming, because Quahogs are different than clams. I think Quahogs are bigger than clams. We had a family clam bake every September on Labor Day. The kid's job was to find the Quahogs so the men could steam them for the clam bake. I remember doing that. I remember picking up endless shells—endless—to the point where I remember bringing home yet another bucketful of shells to my father, and he would always say—with his sarcastic voice, he would say—I'd say, "Dad, look at the shells I found," and I would put them out in front of him, and I would talk about each shell, and he would clap his hands. He'd say,

“Oh, goodie. More shells.” But I missed the irony of what he was saying and the sarcasm. I would dry the shells out. By the end of the summer, between Ann and me—I

don't know about Bill, but between Ann and me, we would have racks of shells drying somewhere on our property—on the rocks outside, on the porch. That's a vivid memory. I remember using—it was a big deal. I had a magnet. I'm sure Ann used the same one. We would pick up black sand. The iron in the sand made it black. The magnet would pick up the iron shavings. We'd deposit them in a glass jar. One of the pastimes is to collect black sand. It makes me smile now, because think of the hours that you need to collect black sand to fill a jar. That's not just five minutes and it's done. It's like over a period of a summer. That was another pastime: collecting black sand. It was rough childhood.

Q: What about earning money by selling gladiolas?

A: I was the last of three. There were prize gladiolas being raised by Carl, who was a carpenter here in Quonnie. Bill sold flowers first. It was \$1 a dozen. Then Ann sold the gladiolas. And then it was my turn. I believe I was about ten when I took over the job. Carl would come at 5:00 in the morning and put the bunch of gladiolas in a bucket of water that I left out on the porch, and then there would be an envelope. I would put the money I earned from that last day into the envelope, and he would give a quarter for every dollar I brought in. He always left me a shiny quarter. I remember as the summer progressed, like I would collect black sand, I was collecting these quarters in a glass jar. One of my happiest, funniest memories is dumping the quarters out on my bedspread, which was a white-and-red-checked bedspread. I would dump the quarters on my bedspread, and with splayed fingers I would push my fingers through all the quarters and hear them jingle as they fell back down to the bedspread. I would say, “I'm rich. I'm rich.” I remember that mantra. I felt like I was the richest person on the face of this earth.

Q: Did you have any ideas of how you wanted to spend that money?

A: I do remember wanting to spend it in Watch Hill—to go to Watch Hill. When I became a young teenager, Ricky Nelson was my favorite singing artist, and I remember wanting to buy his 45s. The 45s were the small records you could buy, and it cost \$1.50 for a 45record. No; it was 75 cents. I remember this, because I remember that my mother gave me a dollar once when I was going to Watch Hill to have some ice cream and enjoy myself. I took the dollar, and I spent 75 cents on a Ricky Nelson album. I heard about that later. It was okay for me to eat ice cream, but it was not okay for me to buy this 75cent record. As I was twelve or so, Ricky Nelson was a heartthrob, so I'd buy his records.

Q: What kinds of things went on as a teenager?

A: It was pretty innocent around here. We had little girlfriend-and-boyfriend relationships going on. We had parties at kids' houses. I wouldn't say every night. It was every once in a while, during the week that somebody would say, "Come on over to my house," and they'd put on these 45s. We would dance. At that time, rock and roll was the dance. Jitterbug-type stuff. It was fun. We would have parties at our cottage too. Kids would must come over, and we'd push the furniture back and put on the records and we would have fun. It's so 50ish. Everything you read about and see about the '50s really did happen. It was bobbysocks and rock-and-roll music and Ricky Nelson albums and others. It was fun. That's what we did at night occasionally. And other nights, we would play games. I remember playing cards all the time. On rainy days, we would play War. Ann and I would play War. Or I'd have a friend over and we'd play War. War is a card game, and it goes on for hours. Or we'd play Monopoly, which is another rainy-day game. And we would do that for hours, because it was raining out. And then my Great Aunt Daisy taught me how to play Canasta. My grandmother taught me how to knit, which I still do to this day. There were board games. There was Carrom. Carrom was a board game where you would flick this little wooden circle around the board. It's sort of like pool trying to get somebody else's Carrom in the side pocket. Very often we'd have relatives down for dessert in the evening. My Great Aunt Edith, her husband, my Great Uncle Arthur, Cousin Susan Fisher, David Fisher, Brad and Betty, who were my mother's cousins. My second cousins—the twins—Marilyn and Carolyn Fisher. Alan Fisher, their brother. Very often we would be circulating with our relatives down here for dessert, coffee and just talking. Just being together. How about that? It was so simple. I just loved it. In many ways, even the person that I am now loves simple things. I don't like fancy things. I'm very content—very content—reading a book by myself, knitting, being quiet, sitting in front of the fire, being in a friend's home, doing nothing more than just being there. So, I think those days were very formative. I don't need to be entertained. In fact, I don't like to be entertained. I'm very happy finding my groove just making a day be something that was worthwhile being alive for that day. I know that came from those days at the beach.

Q: As a teenager, who were some of your friends?

A: I don't remember their names. I know that starting when I was thirteen, I was expected to only sit on the beach with certain kids my age. If you were twelve, thirteen, fourteen, you sat together. If you were fifteen or sixteen, you sat together. If you were seventeen or eighteen, you sat together. Nobody wanted you to sit with the older kids. You were sort of like shooed away if you got too near your sister or too near your brother and their groups. They just ignored you or shooed you away. One friend was Ronnie Henry. He was really my first boyfriend starting in fifth grade, so that means I was ten. He was in my group. I know I should remember other people's names. I remember a boy named Bucky, but I don't remember his last name. There was a girl around the corner up the street. Maybe in time I'm going to remember their names. But it shows you how much time I spent being by myself. To this day, I love having friends, but I don't seek out a friend in order to do something. I invite them. If they want to come, fine. If they don't, that's okay too. Friends were not the center of my life down here. At least I don't think so. I really don't think so. I think that I was what a call a self-starter. I just got my day started. I went through my day, and if there was somebody to enjoy it with, great. And if there wasn't, that was okay too. I have never been a collector of people. I just don't remember these people. I can picture their faces, but that wouldn't do any good for a narrative.

Q: What about Hurricane Carol?



A: Hurricane Carol was 1954. I do remember that. What I remember is we all had jobs to do at the cottage. So, Bill and Dad, being the men, would board up the house. They would board up all the windows. Somebody cracked the windows in an automobile outside in the driveway so that there wouldn't be any suction or air pressure pushing the windows out. A kerosine lamp would be brought down from the attic—the kerosine, the matches, the flashlights, the candles. I seem to remember my job was filling the bathtub with water. I might be wrong with that, but I seem to remember that was my job. The idea was in case we lost water, we would have the bathtub water to flush down the toilets. We could boil the water on our little camp stove. We had a camp stove. Boil it for drinking water. That's what I seem to remember. My biggest memory of Hurricane Carol, which will be with me until the day I die, which is when Dad wanted us to see the ocean that was creeping up the back door of the house across the street—Mr. King's house. If we got over to Mr. King's house and went up on the top floor and looked out the windows, we would see the water coming up to the street right behind us. The waves weren't crashing. The water was just coming up. Dad tied ropes around our waists. I remember Bill being in the back. The rope was looped around Anne's waist and my waist, and Dad was in the front. Mom was not part of that caravan. Dad would lead the way, and he tied the rope to something at our house so we couldn't be blown away. Then he led us to Mr. King's house. The wind was howling. I remember bucking the wind with my head loving the excitement. I remember going up and seeing the water from Mr. King's windows. That's what I remember about Hurricane Carol. To me, it was fun. Of course, I didn't own property and worry about stuff like that. To me, it was fun. Wasn't the hurricane there for me? Of course. It was entertaining me. It was part of my play day. Wasn't life here at the beach just for me? Of course it was. It was just to make me happy.

Q: What about going other places besides Quonnie?

A: That was few and far between. Occasionally Mom would have to go to the laundromat to do sheets. No; I don't know why she did the laundromat. We had no washing machine or dryer. What we couldn't wash out with our hands in the sink with soapy water, rinse and hang on the clothesline, she would take to the laundromat. I would say she went to the laundromat about every other week. I remember going to Watch Hill at maybe fifteen. A big outing was going to Misquamicut, which was really stepping out on the wild side here. To go to Misquamicut meant that you were slumming it. I don't know whether Mom and Dad were aware that I was at Misquamicut, but I went there occasionally. It really was slumming it. It was an amusement park that had bumper cars. It had a Ferris wheel. It had skating. It had those kinds of things. We spent money there. I remember going to Westerly on occasion. Maybe it was to buy groceries. I don't remember where the grocery store was. I remember when my grandparents had moved into Burdickville. I was still a teenager. Maybe sixteen or seventeen. They moved 10 or 15 miles away. Mom would say to me, "It's time to go see your grandmother and grandfather," which meant I had to leave the beach, which meant that I was not happy. My Mom would say, "I'm not asking much from you, but I'm asking you to go see your

grandparents.” I loved these grandparents, but it meant that I had to leave the beach, and then I was in a snit, because I had to leave the beach for two hours.

Q: Would just the two of you go?

A: I remember Mom taking me over there. You were older, so maybe you were off to college or working. By the time I was sixteen, you were nineteen. You were a sophomore in college. You probably were doing something responsible, like working, whereas I was still playing. I hadn't yet earned a decent living. I remember my first job as at age sixteen, but it had to be here at the beach. I was not going to work back in the city in Hartford. I was the salad girl at the local Willows restaurant. The Willows restaurant is an institution here. Anybody that has lived near here knows the Willows. I was salad girl, and my responsibility was to make salads, but also to serve desserts when the waiters or waitresses came in with their orders. The funniest memory of the Willows was somebody who was a customer returned their salad to the kitchen, because they found a bloody Band-Aid in their salad. That was my Band-Aid. Yep. That was my Band-Aid. That was embarrassing. I made whipped cream to put on pie, cake or something, and somebody returned it because I guess some nuts or bolts from the mixer had fallen into the whipped cream and I didn't know it. “How do you not know that, Ruth?” God. How do I not know that the mixer was falling apart, and the nuts and bolts were in the whipped cream? I did not know it. Part of me is 75% dreaming, 25% anchored to reality. The whipped cream dessert was returned. My job was in jeopardy. I was not making it as a salad girl.

Q: Did you ever waitress?

A: When I was eighteen, they asked me to waitress for breakfast. The breakfast shift was started at 6:00 AM to about 9:00. I don't remember that being significant. I just remember doing it. They thought it was safe to put me in breakfast. I remember working. I remember my salary was 85 cents an hour. That's a figure that sticks in my mind. That next Christmas, I got my first job in West Hartford, Connecticut during Christmas at a souvenir shop. We sold stuff. My salary was 90 cents an hour. In my salad-girl days, I made 85 cents an hour. That was big stuff. So, between that and selling flowers, I was rich. I didn't have any responsibilities beyond that. The money was for me. I don't remember my parents saying I had to save anything. I know my mother called me a spendthrift, that a fool and her money are soon parted. That was a phrase I learned very early in my life. Someone told me a fool and his money are soon parted, and they were directing it to me. I guess I was the fool buying Ricky Nelson albums and getting something frivolous. Anything in our family was frivolous. If I had a curl in my hair, it was frivolous. Just put that in perspective.

Q: What about black berry picking?

A: A very important part of my life. I have written six different short stories about things at Quonnie. One was the blackberrying. They're on my computer. Some day somebody will find them and read them.

Q: Would you like to share them in our website?

A: Yes. I can do that. The one about blackberrying and selling flowers—I have all that. I'll send them on so I don't have to hope that somebody will find them after I'm gone. They'll actually be part of the record. Each child in the family had a certain way of connecting to the parents. It was very hard connecting with our parents, just being who they were. My father would come down, and he would have a vacation from his insurance company in Hartford. He would have it in July. I think July is when the blackberries got ripe. Dad and I would go out blackberry picking. It seemed like it was all day. I'm sure it was only for a couple of hours. But he would take me to his secret blackberry place. Nobody revealed where they found their blackberries. It was like you would bring shame on the family if you revealed where the blackberries came from.

Q: Do you remember where you went?

A: Yes. We went right behind where our cottage is here, behind Neptune Avenue. At that time, there were no houses. He wound his way through some bushes back a couple of streets, and he would plop down with his bucket. I would plop down with my bucket. We'd get scratched. We would emerge from the bushes scratched with a little bit of bleeding. The bugs loved us then. And we were sweating. But we would have a bucketful of blackberries. We'd give them to my mom. Her joy and pleasure was taking that and making blackberry jelly. What a production line it was. We were the providers, and she was the producer. She made 100 jars of blackberry jelly one summer, because there were so many blackberries. That and blueberry picking was how I related to my father. That's what he loved to do. I remember wanting to be with him. That was the way I could be with him. That meant that I gave up being at the beach, and that was a sacrifice. I was not going to be at the beach all the hours that I was blackberry picking. That shows you how much I loved him. That may be the first time I gave of myself. Here I grumped about going to Grandma and Grandpa's for two hours, and I grumped about going to the laundromat to help Mom. Oh, man, I didn't want anybody taking beach time away from me. Are you kidding me? But I voluntarily went with my father to go blackberry and blueberry picking. He would give me some to sell afterwards. Fifty cents a pint. It was blood money. I would go scratched and bloody and I would sell the blackberries and blueberries. Blueberries are teeny, little round things.

Q: It takes a lot of blueberries to fill a pint.

A: That was an act of love to spend all that time. I remember plopping myself down next to my father, and I remember he wasn't much of a talker when he was picking blackberries. I came to see that it was his way of relaxing. It's like if I want to relax, I knit. If I want to relax, I do my scrapbooking. Dad didn't have hobbies. He wasn't a hobby guy. But blackberry picking and blueberry picking was something that he loved to do. In part of the story that I wrote, he meditated. I didn't think of it as that then, but I think he solved a lot of issues that were on his mind. I remember him telling me not to talk very much, because I love to talk, and that we had to be quiet, because we didn't want anybody to know where we were. Of course, I bought it hook, line and sinker. He really wanted me to be quiet when in fact he was telling me that people would find out where we are. I believed him, and I was quiet. Pick, pick, pick. That was fun. Another story I have is about Dad being an umpire at our local softball games. He even received a plaque at the end of his twenty years of umpiring. That was a hobby of his. That was another pleasure that he engaged in that allowed him to relax. That was a relaxing thing for him. Mom found her relaxation by being a really good mother providing for her family with food. We always remember her being the happiest at Quonnie, as we all were. Mom knitted. She played cards. She was a good card player. Mom and Dad would listen to music in the evening. And I listened to music. Very simple. Since I'm the youngest in the family, I feel as if I had the tail end of those simple days that no longer exist in this world. Our children—Ann's children, Bill's children and my children have all been raised in a world that has changed so rapidly. To have an entire summer at a beach is virtually unheard of. Nobody does it, except maybe the very rich who can afford it. We were very middle class. Dad, on his insurance man's salary, bought two houses. One in West Hartford, Connecticut, and a cottage at the beach. He made \$12,000 a year, and he felt rich. I remember I was not supposed to ask him how much he made, but I had to ask him. I was about sixteen years old when he made \$12,000 a year. Incredible.

Q: He put three kids through college.

A: In cash. And he paid cash for his house, cash for his cars, cash for the cottage and cash for the education. Because our mother was so fragile—and she was—if you look up fragile in the dictionary, you’ll find my mother’s picture right next to it. She is the poster child for frugality. It is a virtue that never escaped me. I always knew. You did not waste a thing in that family, and that’s not such a bad thing. It was good that we learned that. That’s a value that we have carried through our lives. I know that. Even now, I’m trying to find all the yarn that I can find to make hats for the homeless. I don’t want to let this yarn go to waste. But my mother far exceeded that. She would darn socks, which was typical of a woman at that time, with a sock darning. She used to replace elastic in our underwear so she didn’t have to go out and buy new underwear. She would replace the elastic. I was talking about Memorial Day weekend as the weekend that we aired out the house and aired out the linens. I laugh when I say linens, because our linens at the beach were worn sheets usually from a double bed, and my mother had cut them in half, cutting away the worn parts, sewing them back together to make a seam down the middle so that we could use them on our twin beds. Every single thing that we had in that cottage and in our own home in the winter was because my mother pinched pennies. She made all the clothes for Ann and I for our whole lives. She would always buy sale material. She would never buy regular material. She always went to the sale rack. It goes on and on and on. It’s incredible. She could take two eggs and feed a family of five. She used to call it stretching the budget—no; something else. You take a pound of hamburger and you stretch it to make it 2 pounds. That’s because you added bread crumbs, oatmeal and all of this other stuff so that it could feed more people than it was meant for. It was incredible. I learned a lot from her. Even to this day, if I throw away any bit of food, I think of her. Our refrigerator used to be nothing but custard cups with leftover food. There would be sixteen peas in this custard cup, and there would be one-and-a-half baked potatoes in this custard cup, and there would be leftover coffee. We ate it all. She was amazing. For me, Quonnie was my lifeline. I was ecstatically happy and free for eighteen years of my life from the time I was born until the time I left for college. I was virtually protected from responsibility beyond the family in terms of earning money. My biggest responsibility was to go to college and graduate, which I almost didn’t. Eighteen years of that kind of freedom and life at the beach. I’m always indebted to my mother and father for that. And my grandparents, because they helped provide that too. They rented the Sea Biscuit cottage for our family way back when. I’m sure I’ll come up with other memories, but right now that’ll do.