

QUONOCHONTAUG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History

Margaret O'Brien

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Interviewed by Anne S. Doyle

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Q: Today is Thursday, March the seventh in the year 2002. And today I'm talking with Peg O'Brien of Neptune Avenue in Quonochontaug. She will relate her stories and memories of being here at Quonnie. If you could just give me your full name and when and where you were born.

A: My name is Margaret Henry Sans O'Brien. I was born January 25th, 1919. A snowy night. My father was in Chicago. The doctor had to walk up over the hill. My aunt held chloroform for my mother. My older sister, born three years before me, was a breach birth and was very, very difficult. The doctor, when she was finally delivered, slapped her fanny. She was blue when she was born. He slapped her, got her into cold water. It was a great to-do. They kept waking her up making sure she was okay, and she was okay. She was the smartest one in the family. She was my surrogate mother, as I was growing up. When I was born, because I was tired from the exertion, and I wanted to do to sleep, my aunt stayed up all night poking me to make me cry to make sure I was all right. That was my entry into the world.

Q: What brought you to Quonnie?

A: My family had always gone to the ocean, Long Island or New Jersey, for vacations. I loved the ocean. I had a dear friend of the opposite sex who had a house in Watch Hill, Bud O'Brien, who asked me to come and visit him there, which I did willingly when I was about fourteen or fifteen. The ocean here was very nice, so that when we had a family, we both agreed to go someplace to the ocean for our children and our vacations. It was after the war. We didn't have a whole lot of money. We rented a cottage first in Misquamicut right on the beach near the Andrea Hotel. We loved it. We had friends here in Central Beach in Quonochontaug, Pete and Sylvia Davis, who owned Topsy. Pete had been a roommate of Bud's at Brown. They invited us over here. I thought the beach was full of rocks, but then I realized that there was a parking lot and there was a place to swim. Our family increased dramatically from no children to five in about four years. Bud's father had died and left us some money, so we thought the following summer we would look around to buy a cottage. Mr. Carney showed us this house, which we were able to purchase for \$9,500, which was a lot of money in those days. Thank God we had it, and we did it. Our original plan was to come here for maybe a

month and rent it and make it pay for itself, and that quickly went down the drain. But it was wonderful for the children. They could run out into the street without any shoes. I always went to the beach with them in the morning, came home for lunch, they took a nap and we went back to the beach in the afternoon. We had a lot of friends come and visit us. Where they slept, I still don't have any idea. I can't imagine.

Q: What was this place like when you bought it? Can you describe it?

A: Yes. It was a cottage that had horizontal brown shingles—long. They were horizontal. And in several places, you could see daylight through them. There were no ceilings in the two bedrooms. It had two bedrooms that were fairly good size that we put cribs in.

Q: You had five children and the two of you.

A: Yes. And a babysitter. But we had a pull-out couch in the living room, and a little bunk room off of a very small room in the kitchen. We could sleep quite a few. But I have friends in Yonkers that used to come and visit us with their children. All I remember is that we had a very good time. Children in those days, after playing on the beach, were tucked away by about 7:00, so the adults could get out the ice and the cocktails. We enjoyed each other very much. But looking back on it, I can't imagine that, since my life now has become more organized and neat. But we did enjoy that. And quite a few of the people that came to visit us settled here.

Q: Who?

A: Paul and Frances O'Malley. Freddy Young over on Sunset Drive.

Q: Was Freddy a friend of yours—

A: From Park Hill, Yonkers. Park Hill, Yonkers is another 600-page book. That would be another day. The Lannas came to visit us one weekend and didn't like it at all. They said there was no nightlife here. Somehow I think their children convinced them that this was a nice place. I think they're glad to be here.

Q: You said that you first came here in 1953.

A: Yes. The twins had been born then. Merrill didn't come along until 1955.

Q: Is he your youngest?

A: Yes. Between the tennis courts—they all played tennis—and the pond—we had three sailboats at one time. Jonathan was a very good sailor. He loved it, but he was the only one. The name of Christopher's boat was Red Hot. He and Pete Redding would sail in the Weekapaug races. They never won. The ballast in their boat was a case of beer.

Q: How old was he?

A: Fifteen or sixteen.

Q: Did you ever watch him race?

A: Not really. I thought it was quite boring. But I did race with a friend of mine from Shelter Harbor called the Mighty Mamma races with Martha Sherman, a long-time friend.

Q: So, you raced yourself?

A: Right. I was her crew. She needed another woman in the boat. She was an excellent sailor. We discussed politics and children and religion. We had a wonderful time.

Q: Is she still living?

A: Yes. She's a year older than I am physically, but she's about 39. She's just all over the place. She's going on another trip with her husband.

Q: Did you meet her here?

A: No. I knew her from college. She was a year ahead of me at college.

Q: Where did you go to college?

A: Wellesley. Bud went to Brown and invited me down to house parties, and I used to stay with Martha's mother, who lived in Providence.

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A: Then my husband bought a business, and for the last ten years, between '70 and '80, we were unable to be here. But by that time, some of the children were out of college. Merrill, the youngest, was still here, and he taught tennis. I was sure everything was fine. We were not able to be here. Just some long weekends.

Q: Were you also involved with the business yourself?

A: Yes. Then in 1980, we were able to sell our house in New Jersey when we got out of the business. With that, we winterized this house. Henry Brightman did it. We landed here, which has been a blessing and a gift that I had no idea that I would be so comfortable here. A perfect place for somebody like me. The neighbors are marvelous. I am a neighbor person. I don't seek to live away from everybody. I want to see lights next door in case I run out of eggs and important things like that. I've seen it growing up. I'm now in my 90s with young Turks buying up properties and putting big-big houses on them. I think they're quite unwise. But it is to do with as they want. As rich as they are, they're very nice too. It just seems to attract the nicest people. Friendly and willing to

give and take with other people. It's a wonderful, wonderful place. I just couldn't be happier here.

Q: What was your business?

A: It was a gourmet cheese and gift shop in Paramus, New Jersey. It was not wise for us to go into that with partners, who were friends. We ended up being bitter enemies. We lost a lot of shirts—our shirts off our backs. It wasn't what we had planned, but thank God the children were educated. I'm very proud that five of them have gone ahead on their own and gotten graduate degrees. Each one of them loves it here. I love to have them come and visit, although they don't raise their children the way they were raised. I can always go down and visit my friends if I want some peace and quiet. One of our visitors during the summer was Barry O'Brien, a cousin of my boys. He's six months younger than my oldest son, Chris, and six months older than the twins. The four boys were very good friends growing up. He ran into an attractive girl from across the street, Suzanne Farrell, and now they have a house here. It's wonderful to have family like that around.

Q: Tell me more about your own family.

A: Bud and I were married for about eight years. He had been in the Army. We were married in 1942. We wanted children from the very beginning. He was stationed at Fort Monroe, Virginia. My friend, Martha Sherman, and her husband were in the Navy and would come in to the Hotel Chamberlin across from Norfolk. Bud taught at the master gunnery school. He had asthma. He passed the OCS exams, but could never pass the OCS physical. When he was supposed to be sent overseas, I ranted and raved to some general—I have forgotten. I didn't want him slugging through the mud with his atomizer, wheezing. They always came back to me and said, "But he's 1A." I said, "I know he's 1A, but he can't even pass the OCS physical." Their reply was, "That's the draft board's mistake. There is nothing we can do."

Q: So, they were going to get him into a battle—

A: Yes. He was a sergeant by that time. I had a few months' experience with the Army and knew that I didn't want him going as an enlisted man anywhere where they expendable. At any rate, I guess because of my persistence as a taxpayer—I kept complaining, "You're supposed to take care of the boys. We're taxpayers. My father is president of the Dictaphone Corporation, and he has the Army and Navy. Doesn't that mean anything?" I just went on, ranted and raved. They finally said, "We will not send him overseas, but he'll always be enlisted." But he stayed and was a teacher at the master gunnery school. He was smart at surveying things. That's what happened, thank God. It was most interesting, and funny in lots of ways. When the war was over, we came home, and he started to work for a binding company. He ended up with Capitol Records for a while. He was always interested in the entertainment business, and worked—what's the name of it? It's an entertainment newspaper. He sold space on it. In the meantime, he came down with a terrible—we had all kinds of tests in fertility back in 1946 or '47. I only had one ovary by the time. We were told that we wouldn't have any children and

we should adopt, so we went to the family hospital where babies seemed to be quite available. I think a lot of women who were left at home made mistakes, and then the husbands came home. Our first infant that we doted on was Gretchen. She was six weeks old when we brought her home. I still have pictures of Gretchen looking up, looking down, looking left, looking right, with which I bored with all of my friends. But Gretchen was getting on in year. She was fifteen months old. She was potty trained and walking and everything. We wanted another one. We went down, and there was Mary, a gorgeous, adorable baby. She joined the family. In the meantime, bud had a terrible attack of bronchitis. He could not smoke for two whole weeks. He just couldn't.

Q: He was still smoking?

A: He was a big smoker. Sometimes he would smoke before he got out of bed. We never thought anything of it. He just never went back to smoking, because I guess he got over it while he was really, really sick. A year later, I became pregnant. Surprise, surprise. Of course, we were thrilled. I had a little wheezing, and the doctor, with whom I mostly talked politics, asked me if I liked chocolate. I said, "I love chocolate." "Good," he said. "I like a girl that likes chocolate. The sugar is going out of your kidneys. Be sure you eat enough chocolate." It was summertime. He wanted to know if I liked beer. "Well, I love beer." He was glad to know a girl who liked better. And who was I going to vote for? So, I gained 60 pounds of heavy fat. In November, Christopher was born with little blobs of fat on his eyelids. He could hardly open his eyes.

Q: Did you know that you were pregnant?

A: Yes.

Q: And he told you to drink beer and eat chocolate?

A: Yes. He never examined me internally or anything like that. "That causes too many miscarriages," he said. I'm talking back in 1949/1950. But he was a darling baby, except he had cholic. But that was all right. Nobody explained anything to us. Just about the birds and the bees.

Q: Did you nurse him?

A: No. In those days, you didn't nurse. That was too bad. The next year was a busy one for me. My dad died. I had Gretchen, Mary and Christopher. Chris was two years younger than Mary. Gretchen was three. Mary was two. Gretchen was fifteen months older than Mary. I didn't know what was happening. I finally went back to him and discovered I was pregnant again.

Q: Did you know it was twins?

A: No. That was a surprise, because I didn't gain as much weight then. I thought, "This is ridiculous. I'm not going to eat that much." I was trying to lose a few pounds, which I

managed to. And they were born six weeks early. Nobody knew there were twins. They were identical boys.

Q: What are their names?

A: Jeremy and Jonathan. It was touch and go there for a few weeks with Jonathan. He had developed the hyaline membrane syndrome that the Kennedy baby died of. Their lungs aren't quite done. The doctor and I had a few discussions. I was supposed to check his temperature, which, to me, always meant feet. You feel them, and if they're not hot, I thought he was fine. The doctor said, "Don't you realize that when you have a premature baby, the temperature could go down as well as up?" I almost yelled back at him, "Just because I had one doesn't mean I know anything about them." I would warn anybody, who has a premature baby, to check their temperature all the time, because we almost lost John. At any rate, that was not a good year for me.

Q: During summers, were you coming down here?

A: Yes. We brought the twins up here. That year we rented the Richmond cottage on the pond, which I don't know whether it's still there now. Isabelle Wilson built a house a little bit further down.

Q: Do you mean on Sunset?

A: On Quonnie Pond. Howard Thorpe's house was right at the end, and a little bit to the right and down was a darling house. We spent a month there that year. That was in '52.

Q: The twins were tiny then.

A: They were infants. They were six months old. I had a babysitter. We had managed to have a good time, but it was a little hectic. That was the year that we looked around and bought this cottage. And then, they were getting older. Bud and I really love babies, and we wanted Merrill very much, and were thrilled when he came along. Then the doctor was horrified when Merrill was about a year-and-a-half, and I went to see him and he put me right in the hospital and removed everything.

Q: Was that your choice?

A: No. He said it everything had to come out. It was pre-cancerous. I was happy-dumb, I guess. I had to have things explained to me of what's going on. Now I am quite aware and take very good care of myself as best as I can. But that's life. Thank God, everybody is fine. This house has been a haven—wonderful for me.

Q: You said all of your children enjoy coming down here during the summer.

A: Merrill especially. He lives in New Jersey. He loves the pond. He loves to clam. He loves tennis.

Q: Does he have lifelong friends here?

A: Yes. The friends the children made here are their best friends. I regret those ten years that we were tied to the store that I wasn't able to get to know their friends. But there was a group of boys, when the twins and Chris, were a nucleus that attracted other boys. Robert Eaves was one.

Q: Were they down here all by themselves?

A: No. I was with them right up until the others were in college and Merrill was—it was his last year of high school, and then he went to Trinity College. I wish I could have been here with them at the time, but they were sort of on their own. The Kirkpatrick family used to rent here. There are a couple of boys from that family that they're still friendly with. Pete Redding and Christopher were good friends growing up.

Q: Did they meet here?

A: They met here.

Q: When Merrill comes down now, does he try to connect with any of his friends?

A: He's very busy with his own life and three children. They come for 4th of July. John Matthews and he are very good friends. So, when John is here with his family, he's able to connect. But he's busy now with his family in Montclair, New Jersey. He's a lawyer. Gretchen just moved from Montclair to South Orange, New Jersey. She loves to come when she can. She's still working.

Q: As a nurse?

A: No. She got her MHA, and she's administrating in the health field. She has one son, who loved it here, who was married last June. He's off working. He brought his wife here last year.

Q: So, it's gone another generation.

A: Yes. Also, the Jones. Their daughters and Gretchen and Mary are friendly.

Q: The Jones?

A: Edwin Jones, who visited us for dinner one night, rented what is now Jerry Picher's cottage.

Q: On the corner?

A: On the corner. The Jones just loved it here. Ed and Alberta Jones built what became the Alvord's house.

Q: That was on Kenyon?

A: Yes. On Kenyon and West Beach. Then their children got older—they live in Greenwich, and they turned to skiing in the winter, so they sold that house. But before they did, Ed bought a piece of property on West Beach Road that was still on Central Beach. He eventually built a ski-type chalet—not too attractive. But as their children have grown have grown older, they have plenty to do in Greenwich, and they don't come anymore. But Michelle is married and living in North Stonington. She's the oldest girl.

Q: Are you still in touch with them?

A: Yes.

Q: Your friends from Yonkers and New Jersey have become friends up here as well.

A: Yes. And other friends that rent every summer here, now they've been renting the Kulka cottage in August, are Donald and Jean O'Connell.

Q: How did you know them?

A: They were friends of other friends of ours, who came and fell in love with Quonnie, and have rented every summer since then.

Q: I remember babysitting for their children when they were down on the corner here.

A: Yes.

Q: Let's talk about the Seabreeze Inn adventures.

A: I had friends that would come mainly to see us, but our house was overcrowded, and they rented at Seabreeze Inn for a minimal amount a week, where they were fed family-style. It made me think that I was doing the wrong thing; I should just let them have this house and go over there and not have to cook for a while. They had a wonderful time.

Q: What was it like when you went over there for a meal?

A: I just went once. It was family-style. Delicious food. More than enough. It was very relaxed.

Q: Was it the camaraderie?

A: It was wonderful. Really wonderful. One of their children, who lives in Bronxville, New York, comes every summer and rents a cottage on East Beach.

Q: What is their last name?

A: Terrangioli. He is a tennis player who is 94 now. I don't think he does it any more, but for years he would win the Old People's tennis matches. His wife loved tennis too. Their son, that was my son Merrill's good friend, is the tennis coach at Siwanoy Club in Scarsdale. And their children love to come. But they do it on their own. They rent for a couple of weeks in August.

Q: Did you know the Normeys over at Seabreeze?

A: I didn't know the Normeys. When we first came, I was occupied with the children and my friends from Park Hill, Yonkers, New York and other places. I didn't think of this as a community that I would become a member of and love as a community. I just knew I was going home to Park Hill. But it couldn't be better. It reminds me of Park Hill in that Park Hill is also a place where you knew all your neighbors. If you wanted to cut through a street, you could go in somebody's front door and out their back door to the other street, and they'd just say, "Hello," or, "Who was that?"

Q: There aren't too many places like that anymore.

A: No. I'm very pleased for that.

Q: When did it start feeling more like a community? Was it when you retired?

A: Yes. When we came here in 1980, Bud was 62. He took early retirement with Social Security. I was concerned about more income. I spotted an ad in the Westerly Sun for a surveyor for a project that was sponsored by—the government had given it to Brown's sociology department. It was a traffic pattern study in 1980 that we were to go interview people about. We applied and went up to Brown for instruction on how to become interviewers around Rhode Island. I think we got paid so much an hour. We had two cars. It seemed like a wonderful thing to do. It kept my busy and not worry. This was 1980. We were given specific instructions, and we had a signed letter saying somebody from Brown University will be here to interview you. They told us that in the interview we were to tell the people that at the most it would take a half an hour. We had sheets of papers that we knew would take a half an hour, but when you got talking to a person, it was at least a two-hour visit. That's a lot to ask of people who are busy going about their daily lives.

Q: What was the whole idea of it?

A: The whole idea was when gas prices were zooming up in 1980, and traffic patterns would reveal how the people used their cars to get places, and maybe they could substitute buses. I think that was the idea. Or to save gasoline. It sounded like a good idea, but I recognize it now as a real boondoggle. Brown was paid. Bud and I were paid. By the time we finished with our assignments, it took about eight or nine months, the price of

gasoline had started to go down, and we never, never heard the results of it. People adjusted in other ways. It was a disillusionment. But I didn't care, until I got to be 62 and could go on early retirement. I'm always concerned, because I want to pay my bills yesterday. I'm just that way. I can't help it. Our territory at first was Westerly, which was a wonderful way of getting to know areas in Westerly. But if the house had four people in it, we were supposed to talk to the man often, or if it was a man and his wife and a set of grandparents, it would be the grandparent. You had to take the person that was selected on the form. You couldn't just take anybody in the house. The first one I went to was across the street from the old school in Westerly.

Q: Which old school was that?

A: It was near the high school. Near where the high school is now. I think it's Blutton Street—something like that. I knocked on the door, and a woman came to the door. She said, "I got the thing, but I'm not interested." But her husband, a jolly person, said to his wife, "Martha, who is that?" and she said, "She says her name is Margaret O'Brien. She wants to come in and interview us." Well, he went right to the piano and played When Irish Eyes are Smiling. He said, "Ask her in." Well, his name was Sam Terrisi. We got to be very good friends. Sam's hobby was to repair chairs. He has repaired all our dining room chairs. That was a really good thing. The last I heard, Sam was in the Golden Years Retirement Home. I met one of his brothers in my swimming class at the Y. It's a big family. I met his daughter not long ago, because she married a person of Irish heritage who happened to get in touch with Derry O'Brien, and they came and had lunch here, because they thought we might have a common ancestor. But I don't have a drop of Irish blood in me. It's wonderful when a policeman stops you from speeding, "Oh, Margaret O'Brien, take it easy," and I look at his badge and he's got Kennedy. We got to know lots of people from Westerly. Bud asked somebody how to get to an address. They said, "Do you mean you want to go to Guinea Gulf?" Apparently, there is a part of Westerly called Guinea Gulf. That kept us busy for that first nine months. At that time, the interest rate in the banks was beautifully high, and we ran with a check from the sale of our house in New Jersey to what used to be Old Stone Bank. It was the first bank we came to as we got off 78 and turned right. Washington Trust wasn't there yet. A darling young person there named Martha Macken, whose husband is—I didn't know her name at the time. She is a Wheaton graduate. The banks at that time were giving away things if you bought a CD from them. The interest rate at that time was 18%. Martha would tell us, "There is another one that's going up to 19%." We could borrow on this one and put it in that one. She was wonderful. My financial worries were assuaged during those first couple of years. In the meantime, things had become okay for me, and I'm fine, thank God. The children are wonderful.

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A: Bud applied for a job at the Center for the Arts. The theater was his field of expertise. He was a gifted director, and did many, many very good amateur shows at the local club in Park Hill, Yonkers. They had a theater group here. I've forgotten the name of it. They were having a meeting at Christ Church. We both went. They wanted him to be a

director, and he did end up putting on a play, which eh had done before, The Man Who Came to Dinner, at the Stonington COMO. It was beautifully done. A big success. He worked very hard. He loved to do that. We met a lot more interesting people through that. He also put on a show for the Senior Citizen Center in Westerly. A fellow named Robin Driscoll sang in that. It was a review. He put together a show of songs and skits. We met a lot of great people. In 1983 I remember him saying, "I just can't do that anymore." I knew he was beginning to deteriorate mentally. He died eventually in '95 of complications brought on by severe atrophy of the brain. He was always good natured, but it was hard for me when people didn't understand that this was not the person he was. But he eventually died before he became a basket case, which I thank God for.

Q: Was it noticeable to you at that point?

A: Yes. I knew it.

Q: Was he open to talking about it?

A: No. I used to get mad at him. He went the way his brother did. But his brother's wife was an alcoholic, and I thought, "I'm not, and I can handle it." So, I thought I would, but I couldn't prevent him from blurting out the wrong things. Looking back at the pictures at our 50th wedding anniversary, I can see it in his eyes. He was not himself then.

Q: Was he here until—

A: '95.

Q: You cared for him, right?

A: Yes. His neighbor, Bill Schafer, would come for supper. He and Bill would go for walks. They fell down once in front of the Henry's house, which is so wonderful about this place. The phone started ringing right away. You can hardly do anything that everybody doesn't know about, which, to me, is wonderful.

Q: I will never forget at my father's memorial service Bud getting up and telling this story.

A: I was so anxious at that time. I didn't know what he was going to say, but he was fine, thank God. A real blessing.

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A: The cocktail group: Bill and Frank O'Meara, Sylvia and Pete Davis of Topsy, the Nordings—a wonderful couple at that time—Katie and Jerry Fogherty.

Q: What timeframe was this?

A: The '50 to '60.

Q: The kids were young then?

A: Between '55 and '70. Effie and Colonel Farrell were across the street. They were at Margaret Fogherty's wedding. I remember that.

Q: Did you go to Margaret's wedding?

A: Yes, I did. And Joyce and Herman Vanderwart.

Q: I don't know who they are.

A: They had a house on East Beach. They built a house. Mrs. Gorman was the original owner of—

Q: The little red house?

A: The little red house next to it.

Q: Aquamarine?

A: Yes. Then she built what now is the Piedmont's house. So, the Vanderwarts were part of that group too. Joyce Vanderwart had a daughter, Karen Vanderwart, who was the twins' age, and part of that group. Joyce didn't have any more children until Karen was about fourteen or fifteen. She had a boy. They called him Tadpole. As cute as anything, Tad was about four years old when Joyce became pregnant again. There was a party at the Fogherty's house. It was a private thing, because Katie Fogherty—you could eat off the floor of her garage. Absolutely. Everything completely clean and sterile. Joyce was sitting on Katie Fogherty's couch when her water broke. Her husband put her in the car and drove her back to Hartford to the hospital. In the meantime, what's going to happen to Tadpole and Karen? They came here. We were having a game of charades. It seemed like an exciting night. But worst part about it was—the big thing was, "Have you heard what happened to Katie Fogherty's couch?" That was a happening.

Q: Did you have a cocktail party every weekend?

A: Weekends usually, because that's when the husbands were here. There were other people who would rent houses who were also part of that group. I can't remember their names. We were young and foolish. We had a good time.

Q: Was there a piano here?

A: No.

Q: Was there a lot of singing?

- A: There wasn't a piano here, but there was a piano at Crossen's—a player piano.
- Q: Were the Crossens part of the group?
- A: I'm trying to think. They came a little bit later. They were younger. Ann Crossen was the twins' age. I can remember her here. Alan Frost was here.
- Q: When did you and Kate become really good friends? Was that when you retired?
- A: Yes. Kate moved down here quite early. Kate's about twelve years younger than I am. She and George moved down here twelve years ago. He was still working in Providence. It's wonderful to have her here right down the street. She's such a good neighbor and supporter of Quonnie. I knew her mother-in-law, Helen. Helen Waterman was a good friend of Florence Carter, who was a good friend of mine. Florence's daughter, Joanne, used to babysit our children. Joanne died tragically at about 22 years of Hodgkin's disease. It was a terrible blow. But when Bud and I were doing the traffic pattern study, we spent many nights at Florence's apartment in Providence. Yale Carter, her husband, was head of the School for the Deaf in Providence. Florence was outstanding. She was just a wonderful person. When my son John went to Brown, they were good companions.
- Q: Talk about square dancing.
- A: We wanted something for the children to do here. I think a community needs a clubhouse or a gathering place. It doesn't seem to have been in the works here. But we rented a place on the Normey property.
- Q: It's still there.
- A: Yes, it is.
- Q: I remember going square dancing there on Friday nights. Did you initiate that?
- A: The special events committee, of which I was head for one or two years. We wanted something for our children to do here. They used to go to the Weekapaug Yacht Club dances. You could join the Weekapaug Yacht Club for—it was very minimal--\$50 a year or so. The children were getting to be teenagers, and we wanted them to socialize in the best way. Some of us got together and organized it. I'm trying to remember if that place has a bathroom. To really rent something like that, you have to have certain—you have to have a fire escape, fire alarms.
- Q: Was this in the '50s after you bought the house?
- A: Yes. It was the early '60s. One time we hired a dance floor when the Lowes were renting.

Q: Did you do this just once, or was this on a regular basis?

A: Maybe we did it twice or three times a summer, but then everybody went back home in the fall.

Q: I have a memory on Friday nights going square dancing there. This must have been in the '50s. Maybe other people had done the same thing. I didn't know who started the whole thing.

A: I don't know.

