DORIS PELTON BURGDORF Oral History Interview #4, 8-7-07
Administrative Information

Narrator: Doris Pelton Burgdorf
Interviewer: Maureen Bourn
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Biographical Note and Abstract
Doris Burgdorf is a life-long resident of South Windsor. She is a member of the South Windsor Historical Society. Doris is the designer of our town seal, the illustrator of *Long Hill; The Mary Jeannette Elmore Story*, and the author of *A Country Mile*, a book about the houses in the historic district on Main Street. Doris is currently working on the committee to restore Union School and she is doing the deed searches and research necessary for a new book about the houses on the rest of Main Street.

In this fourth interview of five, Doris speaks about her childhood years on Main Street in South Windsor: activities she participated in, schools she attended, teachers she remembers.

This interview begins with Doris's father who worked primarily with cattle. She describes his cattle "walks" and cattle drives, buying and selling cattle, and his early involvement in the slaughter business. He eventually moved into buying and selling cattle and hay.

Doris then discusses the construction of Route 5, parallel to Main Street, and the impact of the decision to bypass Main Street as a central north-south route. She talks about the tobacco business and its decline due to foreign competition, and the general demise of farming in general as more children of farmers became college educated and opted for other careers.

Other changes Doris notes include: the construction of the Bissell Bridge (through a recognized flood plain) resulted in isolating--and thereby protecting--King Street from further development; the gradual relocation of the town center (the town hall, community center, and library) from Main Street to its current location; the formation of the South Windsor Historic Society in 1970 and, subsequently, the South Windsor Historic District Commission.

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Doris Pelton Burgdorf
Oral History Interview #4
August 7, 2007
Interviewed by Maureen Bourn

Maureen Bourn: Okay. Today is August 7, and we're at Doris' house on Main Street, and we're continuing to talk about Doris' family, and she's going to talk a little bit about her father today. Doris, when you left off last time, you were talking about your father and the horses and the cattle, and you had some stories you wanted to share.

Doris Pelton Burdorf: Yes. [laughs] I thought it was kind of interesting that the cattle drives weren't all out in the west. We had them right here in Connecticut also. In conjunction with the slaughterhouse that the Peltons were running, where Filene's is now on Route 5, they bought cattle for the slaughtering business from an auction out in Putnam, Connecticut. And so on auction day, they would get up early in the morning and ride the train out to Putnam, and then whatever crew they took with them to the auction would walk those cattle back home to South Windsor after—the ones that got bought. And I mention it, because it must have been in the vicinity of 1912, figuring my father was born in 1900, and he used to go on those cattle walks. He only went as far as 7th grade in Union School, because as you can see, it was a little more exciting out in the working world. [laughs] Because a lot of boys the same age played hooky those days so they could go on the cattle drive. One was Howard Deveran. I don't know who else, but we always knew Howard the rest of our lives, so his name came up, so we knew that he had played hooky to go get the cattle when they had the auctions in Putnam.

MB: Well, this would have given your dad some real knowledge about cattle too, because later on he was involved with cattle.

DPB: Yeah.

MB: As a cattle buyer.

DPB: And you learned when you were a kid, and that's what you fell into, I guess. Yeah, he stayed in the cattle business. He had to give up the slaughterhouse during the Depression. Lots of things went during the Depression. And about 1932, he was talking about starting up again, but the grandfather died, so they just dropped it all.

MB: Okay. And then he went into the hay business on the farm.

DPB: And—yes—and buying and selling cattle, you know, not for a slaughterhouse, just for

buying and selling from and to dairies and farmers and whoever needed cattle.

MB: Okay.

DPB: Almost everyone had a cow back then.

MB: Okay. Was you dad—like your mom was—had gotten very involved in things going on on the street. Was your dad involved in anything other than, I guess, farm?

DPB: No. He never paid attention to politics, organizations, clubs, nothing, nothing like that.

MB: Okay. Well, we were up to talking about World War II the last time and about the horses that your dad provided for local farmers during that time. And it was around that time that Route 5 was constructed. How did that have an impact on the street?

DPB: Everyone was very thankful that Route 5 happened, because there were beginning to be hints of gas stations maybe on the street. You see?

MB: Yeah.

DPB: [laughs] If Route 5 had not happened when it did, this street would have been destroyed.

MB: Now did the people on the street have an impact in that decision? I mean—

DPB: No, it was all—

MB: At one point I heard something about they were contemplating changing Main Street into a 4-lane highway.

DPB: They thought about it, because they always think of every option. But it maybe wasn't practical. I don't know. Instead they made a clean, straight swath up through the woods. It was easier than disrupting every home and having to—for the state to have to buy the easements to take a piece off everyone's front yard. It gets kind of—it's long, drawn out, and complicated. It was much easier to zip straight up through the woods and just paid everybody cash for the strip of land they took—the little strip they took crossing everyone's property.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. Now there wasn't any organized opposition on the street to the first plan that caused them to decide to do Route 5?

DPB: No, nothing I ever heard of. People seemed kind of relieved that—well, everyone had a

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home business then—tobacco farmer or whatever—everyone was some kind of farm. And they didn't really want their homesteads disrupted. It would have been—imagine the land that gets chewed and used up with the equipment just making the road. The road may end up only being yeah-wide, but it took 3 times that much width to work on it, and all that time they're doing it is so disruptive, you might get tired and move away.

MB: That's true. Well, happily that happened—

DPB: People were happy about it.

MB: —and protected the—protected the street, so—

DPB: It was funny though. That road—yeah. The hurricane was in '38, but I think Route 5 has a date of '38 on it, but I don't know if that's its finishing date or its beginning date. I'm trying to rack my brain if Route 5 was functioning when the hurricane happened.

MB: I don't think so.

DPB: I don't think it was.

MB: I don't think it was, because it seemed to me—I wrote in my notes 1940, because I found that somewhere when I was preparing to talk about this. But it seemed to me that's when it was completed, when it was opened was 1940. So they could have been working on it maybe during the hurricane.

DPB: On the other hand, it's possible—What I'm thinking about is the people up the street who had to cross Stoughton's Brook which, of course, got washed out, couldn't get home without going some other way around north and then back down. Maybe they drove up the railroad tracks because they often did that in emergencies. Your car will fit between the 2 rails, and you just bounce along on those wooden things.

MB: Oh okay.

DPB: As long as you know the train's not coming for a while. And people generally knew when the train would come. In snowstorms they often did that. The roads wouldn't be plowed, and they'd come home by driving up the railroad track and then cut in one of the side roads.

MB: Well, that was probably a good plan. They had plows on the front of the train, so they cleared the tracks.

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DPB: Yeah, the train had one of those things, those pointy things—cow catcher. [laughs]

MB: Well, the next think I wrote down that really maybe effected change along the street was in 1955 when they developed the synthetic tobacco leaf. Now that wouldn't have affected your life as much, because you weren't involved in the tobacco then, but it should—it probably did have an effect on the rest of the street or on the use of—

DPB: Well initially it didn't. It seemed good because suddenly now, you could use all your tobacco. None of it got junked because the leaves had holes, because it was going to be ground up to be homogenized anyway. So initially when it came out with the homogenized tobacco, it helped everybody. What killed tobacco was—[sighs] was other countries started raising it, and although our government stored—Our government got in the policy of storing tobacco up. They'd have 3 or 5 years stored in warehouses. Well when they started using that, and as they used that, they didn't need the new fresh crop. That's how things started deteriorating. And then they started raising the tobacco itself down in Cuba and places like that where they hadn't known how to raise it. I remember at one point when some tobacco organization was going to send my Uncle Enoch [Pelton] to India to help teach the Indians to raise tobacco. So you see, sometimes by teaching everybody else how to do what we're doing, we lose the business ourselves because the newcomer can do it cheaper always.

MB: That's true. That's true. That's happened in other industries too besides—

DPB: That's what really—

MB: —besides tobacco.

DPB: That's what really happened about tobacco. It had nothing to do with people not smoking so much. People always keep their vices.

MB: Well, that was really just the beginning, I think, of people realizing the health impact of tobacco was in the '50s. I don't think prior to that people really—

DPB: Never thought about it.

MB: Yeah. Yeah. Didn't really—so I don't think there was as big a health impact on it as there maybe is today. Now, there are still tobacco farmers here on the street.

DPB: I know. It's just not such a lucrative business anymore, so people don't bother to do it. Well, there isn't a market, I guess.

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MB: Yeah.

DPB: A lot of countries [laughs] must be raising it.

MB: Yeah, well I'd always thought that we did okay with it because we had a perfect climate for it and we had a higher grade tobacco that was sort of in demand.

DPB: We do, but now it's so much easier to just sell your land to somebody and get enough money to live on the rest of your life, so why work?

MB: Well, that's true.

DPB: There's that element.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: Every farmer insisted on sending his kid to college. In college, the kid learned how to do something else. There was no one to come home and keep the tobacco farm going.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. That's true. That's true. Well, who on the street still is involved in tobacco?

DPB: Boy, that's a hard one to answer. [laughs] We have Randy Bordua, our new young tobacco farmer. He's the only one that is young.

MB: Okay. Now the Shepards still aren't—do they have any involvement in tobacco or—?

DPB: They don't work in it themselves. They may have some acres that they may rent to someone, but I don't know for sure. Rusty Levack used to rent land from them, and he raised tobacco. But he quit doing that.

MB: Okay. No how about Jimmy Zagorski. He was—

DPB: He may raise a little bit. Yes, he may have a little crop of tobacco.

MB: Okay. And the Kasheta Farms, do they do anything with tobacco?

DPB: They generally do about 5 acres, just a little piece.

MB: Oh, that's not a lot. Okay.

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DPB: And they always had—their plan was, this is our extra money crop, and so we all work in it ourselves so that there's no expense involved. And then we call it our extra money—our happy money or whatever. And sure enough after supper every night, the whole family's out there doing whatever had to be done for that 5 acres of tobacco. You didn't hire people to do it. That way they had the whole profit. They split it, and they called it their mad money or whatever.

MB: Yeah, that's a good term.

DPB: I don't know if it's still [laughs] that way. I don't know, because even in their family the kids went away to school, learned to be something else.

MB: Now are there other families still here on the street that made their money in tobacco? Maybe they're not in it now, but they were tobacco farms, and that's where the family money and property came from originally?

DPB: Oh my God, I'd have to think of every house and try to think—haven't thought about it in a million years. When I was a kid, every house had tobacco, and they were using chicken coops and anything for a tobacco shed. They used every square inch for tobacco. People had teeny-tiny front yards. They had to leave the land to be for tobacco. Very little lawn mowing. (laughter)

MB: Well, if it was a money crop, I can see where they would—they would choose to do that.

DPB: Everyone had tobacco. I don't know. I guess I'm not—I don't know much about the tobacco today. You'll have to ask another expert. Maybe Timmy Shepard. Maybe Frannie Bordua. Stanley Waldron. I don't know.

MB: Okay. Well, those are good names to mention, because I'm sure then that those are people that would be interviewed for a history of that.

DPB: And Stanley Waldron's grandson may be raising some tobacco in Wapping. His name would be Tommy Fraize. I don't know for sure. I don't know where I've seen tobacco.

MB: We did a program on tobacco—I'm not sure—it was several years ago, but they formed a panel of tobacco farmers. That was part of the program, and they discussed it. And Stanley Waldron and Fran Bordua were both on that—on that panel, and Emil Mulnite and Don Driscoll and some people that aren't with us any more.

DPB: And you notice the tobacco warehouse out here on Governor's Highway is for sale.

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That's all through. It's all emptied out. That's where they sorted tobacco all these years. You know, it's a warehouse where every farmer's tobacco ended up in there and got sorted. Tobacco buyers would buy the crop. (sighs) Then they'd pay to have it sorted in the warehouse. The warehouse is all over. No more tobacco, and I wonder if somebody just bought it, because the other day the doors were all open and there were cars in the driveway. It's that brick building across from the Fleet Bank [on Governor's Highway].

MB: I don't know, but that would be a historic—if we were doing tobacco history, that would be a historic site here in South Windsor.

DPB: I know. I don't know if there's any other warehouse functioning in South Windsor. Frannie sorts his own in his own barn.

MB: Well, I know the—let me think of what her name is. She's Rusty Levack's sister, and she lives in the farmhouse there. I've met her, and right next to the house on the street there, that was used for sorting. She took me in there, and they had a table and things still in there from where they sorted tobacco on her father's farm. That was all a back farm, I guess.

DPB: Yep, and that was a long time ago. That's been empty a long, long time.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. It would be nice to somehow preserve that tobacco history here.

DPB: I don't know—I don't know what Shepards are doing with that lovely little warehouse down the street, but it's tan colored and it's across the street from Kippy's [Shepard's] house. They seem to always be working on it—fixing up the building—like, restoring it. I don't know what their plans are.

MB: Hopefully somebody will—

DPB: Some members of their family might like to make a museum there. I don't know if they ever will. It would be a tobacco museum. I don't know if they will or not. But they have done considerable work restoring and repairing that little warehouse.

MB: Well I know a lot of people have given things from South Windsor to the Windsor Museum—tobacco museum that's in Windsor. And it would be—if they were going to do something here in town, it'd be nice to get organized before all those things left town.

DPB: I know Stanley Waldron would be interested in that too. He saved a lot of things—items and things. But I think Shepards have saved a lot of things. They keep them on display in their entrance up at Nuway—little things. Not riggings or horses. [laughs] Yeah.

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MB: Yeah. Okay, well after that period of time, that was a growth period for town. The tobacco industry was all changing, but because of Pratt & Whitney, that was a real growth period. A lot of the schools in town were built during that time because of the population growth during the '50s, and that was also when the Bissell Bridge was built. Now that had to have an impact. Was that the—

DPB: When was that Bissell Bridge built?

MB: Well the date I found was 1958—look at how beautiful that—

DPB: (inaudible) because I had to write—I'd written that part of my book, so I did have to find that date. But I don't know if I got it. Anyway— [laughs]

MB: Okay, what do you mean they misnamed it the bridge?

DPB: Well that bridge goes right through Joseph Fitch's farm.

MB: Oh!

DPB: And here we are with our John Fitch and talking about him all the time, and there's his grandfather's farm with the Bissell Bridge sitting on it. And the Bissells were up in East Windsor Hill. [laughs]

MB: Wow, I always assumed because of the ferry crossing—the bridge crossing—that's where they came up with the Bissell connection, but—

DPB: Yes I know, but they're like 4 miles off.

MB: Yeah. Okay, that would have been nice to have something—

DPB: But there was no one on the job. Nobody—I suppose someone at a state level named the bridge.

MB: All right. Now did that have an impact on the street—the opening of that bridge?

DPB: (sighs) I don't know, but I know that we were all very angry about that bridge, very angry. Went to hearings after hearings arguing against that bridge because it was making a dyke in the meadow.

MB: Oh!

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DPB: Stop and think of it. It's a solid wall from the river to Main Street. Earthen wall—it's dirt.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: Really. We wouldn't let—

MB: I never knew that.

DPB: We wouldn't let any individual man do it, but the state came along and wanted a bridge, and we let them do it. Oh, and they had so many excuses and (sighs) so much engineering talk that this was going to be harmless. It would be all right. And everyone said it was going to back the water up. It was going to back the floodwater up to north of the Bissell Bridge so our meadows would really get inundated, and I don't know actually what real effect it had, because we can't predict the weather anyway. You never even know when a flood is coming. We're always surprised when it does come, so how can you blame some on the bridge and some not? I don't know. Maybe we haven't had a good flood yet.

MB: Well, I hope we have—that that's not going to happen again.

DPB: There's no tunnel under it or anything. It's a solid, solid wall through the floodplain.

MB: Now even after your concerns were voiced, they didn't do anything with drains or trying to avoid a problem?

DPB: How could you avoid it?

MB: I don't know, but engineer wise, I would think they'd call in the Army Engineers or something and come up with a plan.

DPB: No, they knew that they wanted that bridge there, and that's all there was to it. (sighs)

MB: Okay.

DPB: Whenever there's a determined enough organization, it doesn't matter what the people want. It happens in everything in our town, everything.

MB: Well fortunately there's no entrance or exit or something else down here to that highway, to that bridge, that would have disrupted the bottom of the street or brought a lot of traffic onto the street.

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DPB: Yeah, they didn't plan to—they didn't plan to exit onto Main Street at all, because they had Route 5. That's the real artery for traffic.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: And it would have used up too much land. Those big circles they have to make to come off and on take up acres.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. Now it affects—it must have affected somebody's farm were it is.

DPB: On Route 5?

MB: No, on Main Street down here. It split the—what's the name of that street?—King Street.

DPB: King Street. I know.

MB: Now was that somebody's farmland that it disrupted there or—?

DPB: Yeah. Yeah, but they got compensated. If the state takes any land for any road, they pay you. Maybe there's a lot of fights about how much they should pay, but eventually they pay something. One little house down there, I think, got moved onto a new cellar. First the state refused to move it for Mr. Hanson, and he was very close to that overpass. So he sold it, went to the other side of the bridge and built another new house further down away from it. But I think the new owner got the state to pitch in and move the house north a little so it's not right practically under that bridge anymore.

MB: Okay.

DPB: That was the only house that was seriously endangered.

MB: Okay. Now is your book going to cover down that far—your new book?

DPB: Oh yeah.

MB: Okay, it's going to go all the way to the end of—

DPB: Well, King Street that is now severed is Main Street. That was our original road. From King Street south to East Hartford is called the New Street. It didn't get laid till 1785.

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MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: Our street—our Main Street, country road, whatever, took a turn at King and went out, up the hill, and then down and around. [laughs]

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: But you can't do it anymore. It's been cut off by the bridge.

MB: By the bridge.

DPB: Yep. You can't go that way.

MB: Right. Okay, so we would expect then some older homes on King Street that—

DPB: Yes.

MB: Okay.

DPB: Yes, King Street is a lovely little (sighs) community unto itself. It is another one of South Windsor's little secrets. One place where you can get away from the maddening crowd, and everyone has a brook in their backyard.

MB: Oh, nice. The only home I've ever been in on King Street was Rich Nicholson home before he sold it.

MB: Yeah, and that one was moved twice. Once, twice, yep. That house originally stood down on the bend—on the end of King Street. Here's Main Street, go out King, turn the bend and head south, it stood up here on the end. Then they moved it back down here off the road so they could build that new big house—Victorian house—that's sitting there. And then when Richard got the bright idea to resurrect and restore it, he dragged it back up out of the hinterland up onto the street. He gave it a laugh up on King Street.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: And in the process, that's why his front door doesn't face the street—evidently when you're moving a structure, you pick the easiest way to go and you compromise. Instead of having to turn it too much to get the front door around to the street, he must have just brought it like this.

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MB: Okay.

DPB: I don't know how they moved it—with a big tractor trailer or—but— [laughs]

MB: Well it had a lot of nice little features. They had it fixed up very nicely inside.

DPB: Oh yeah, he had the—oh, cause it had gotten dreadfully run down. It was—I mean—[laughs] It was amazing that Richard [laughs] decided to restore it, because it was really like a shambles, but he made it his project. He wanted to do it, he did it. Yeah, he made a lovely house.

MB: Saved a little bit of history. Let's see, well, now after that was—in 1960-61 is when they built the new high school over Nevers Road. So that would have meant changes on the street too, because—but Ellsworth stayed a school then. It was—

DPB: It stayed 6th grade—6th grade. Everybody thoroughly enjoyed that 6th grade. I hear parents talk about it to this day. That was evidently the nicest thing that ever happened in our educational system in South Windsor.

MB: Right. I've heard that ever since I came to town. The teachers who taught there loved it too.

DPB: That age—it had something to do with that age of a child was perfect to be separated. They were no longer grammar school. They didn't have to contend with the 8th graders. Yeah.

MB: Yeah. And they were old enough—

DPB: Psychologically it was a good setup. [laughs]

MB: Yep. It was, it was. I've heard very good things about that. Okay.

DPB: We try to do that with our middle school now or what? What is middle school? Do we still have middle school?

MB: We have 6th, 7th, and 8th graders are at Timothy Edwards.

DPB: Okay.

MB: And it is a middle school, but the 6th graders are basically in their own wing, and—

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DPB: That's good.

MB: Yeah. They have a good program there. I've heard parents very pleased with the 6th grade program there too. So, and then 7th and 8th graders are separate, and then you go up to the high school.

DPB: Does it bother 8th graders that they have to share with 7th grade?

MB: I don't know.

DPB: You know, in the 8 grades of grammar school, it was really something when you were in 8th grade.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: You were the bosses of that whole school. [laughs]

MB: And you—well—

DPB: You were the grownup ones.

MB: Yeah, yeah. There are some things that hang on from that too. Even when it's just the 5th grades being the oldest in the building, there was like—for instance, riding on the bus—that the 5th graders got the back seats on the bus, and none of the other children were supposed to sit back there.

DPB: Oh my.

MB: And it was sort of a rite of passage that you'd earned those just by being there longer, I guess, or whatever. But—and there are a lot of stories about when the 8th grades were still in the elementary school. I know they were at Pleasant Valley, and they had a basketball team, and they had dances there, and we still have the trophies from the basketball team.

DPB: From 8th grade?

MB: That played the other schools in town, yeah.

DPB: Wow!

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MB: So there's a history there too. But when they were built, I guess they went up to 8th grade, and then as the population kept growing, that changed.

DPB: Yeah, and our schools in our day, all the team sports, et cetera, didn't happen until high school. You just played at recess in grammar school.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. Well, you still do now, but when you get to the middle school, they start having organized school teams.

DPB: Wow.

MB: And then you can continue that with the high school level. Although with budget cuts now, the town is more involved in supporting—the parents are more involved in supporting those than the school system. I guess there's a pay-as-you-go philosophy. But, the other change that happened in the '60s was changing when the town changed from town meetings to the council manager government that we have now. Now, that would have been—the change occurred while it was still here—the town hall was still here on Main Street.

DPB: Hmm. I know I don't remember much about it. I think it was all a change that was inevitable because of population growth. You just couldn't handle a big population with a town meeting type of government.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. Do you remember going to town meetings—

DPB: Oh yes.

MB: —before it changed?

DPB: Yes, and things could drag on forever when you give everyone a chance to talk. You see, as the town got bigger and bigger, you couldn't do that. You'd be all year solving one [laughs] dilemma (laughter) waiting for everyone to speak. [laughs]

MB: That's true. Well even now though they have the public hearing part of the town council meetings.

DPB: Yeah, and they limit you now. They've started limiting all speakers to 3 minutes or something like that, and they do have to discipline the meeting or else you'd be there all night.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative], yeah.

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DPB: Freedom works better in little groups, I think—little groups. (laughter) I wonder if sometimes we're ready to—at some point a town should be ready to split and become 2 towns because it's not—it's not efficient to try to run too big a ship.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. Well it was shortly after that—

DPB: Or else there's another form of government we need that can do the job. It's very difficult for a council of 9 people to make an agreement. At least in the old days with 3 selectmen, only 3 men had to concur for a decision. Now it's got to be 9.

MB: Well, it may be harder to come to agreement, but maybe more people are—

DPB: —represented.

MB: —viewpoints—their viewpoint is represented by having 9. Maybe when they finally do come to an agreement—

DPB: Well, it would be—it would be that way if those 9 councilmen were picked from districts within the town so that you are representing everyone, but they aren't. It's a popularity contest. Our elections are a popularity contest.

MB: So the top vote getter becomes—

DPB: No one has to be prepared educationally for this job. No one needs a background—a specific background to work on any commission. I wonder sometimes if any member of the Inland Wetlands ever took a course in— (sighs) what's the word for water that starts with "H"?

MB: Hydro something?

DPB: [laughs] Hydro something—or how much geography did they ever study? These people are supposed to be understanding the entire movement of water in the town of South Windsor, and I bet none of them know diddly shit about it. But they make decisions.

MB: Well hopefully when you don't know something, you know enough to bring in an expert or someone who can fill you in on the information you need to make a wise decision.

DPB: I wonder if that is available quickly, or is it expensive or whatever?

MB: Yeah.

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DPB: Hydrologists—that's what I'm thinking—the word hydrology, because I remember at one hearing when there was a big argument about drainage, and some of the landowners had to hire a hydrologist to appear at our zoning meetings for them, because they needed some technical talk about water. And we didn't have anyone in this town who understood water running under the ground, on the ground, or wherever it ran. Never were taught—it's not thought of. That's my example of, are any of our commission members educated in the thing they're supposed to be working on? No. We don't require it. It's a popularity contest.

MB: Well, the other option would be if you elected or appointed someone to the position that was an intelligent, competent person, you and the town could pay to have them trained in whatever the—

DPB: Yeah, why doesn't the—

MB: —area was.

DPB: —town send 1 or 2 to some kind of night school course once in a while? Yeah.

MB: Yeah, money they don't have maybe. [laughs] I don't know. I don't know, but it's a good point, so— Now that would have been the period of time 1969-1970 when the street changed from the center of town. That's when I first came to town, and the town hall was here. The police station was in the town hall. The community center was here on Main Street. The library was down where Wood is. I mean, this was the center of—the center of town. And it would have been that period of time when it moved. Now, did that have an impact on the street, or what was the feeling on the street about all that going on?

DPB: Well, it was a relief to see all that commotion go, because the town was growing. And this is a small community mileage wise or whatever you want to call it, and you see how much ground had to be taken up to make a town hall, a library, and all the schools that the new population needed. We couldn't do that on this street.

MB: So you—

DPB: It would be time for all that to go somewhere where there was room for it.

MB: Okay. Right. So the people on the street then generally were happy to have that commotion leave?

DPB: Yep, yep.

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MB: There was a huge effort to save Wood—to form that group that reopened Wood. There was no interest in saving the town hall building? I mean, cause that was taken down.

DPB: I know. Well you see, it was an ugly building, and everybody here thought it was ugly. That's why they didn't think about it. They just always thought in their minds it was ugly. Today looking back on it, we see some practical aspects—that big stage and the big auditorium room with the balcony. It could have been used today [laughs] for a lot of things.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: It could have converted to a museum better than Union School for what it was, the little rooms on the first floor, which was up out of the ground, the big auditorium room, the balcony. Simpler in a way. But it was ugly. [laughs]

MB: Yeah. Well, now it's gone.

DPB: It is gone.

MB: And the community center burned to the ground, so that really wasn't a choice—

DPB: That was a church anyway.

MB: —to take it down.

DPB: That was originally a church.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: It just got used as a community center because it was there. We didn't have that many public buildings. Anything would do. (laughter)

MB: Okay.

DPB: A church. [laughs]

MB: Now it was also in that period of time that the historic district was created. That was 1970.

DPB: '70, '75, something like that.

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MB: Now how did that come about?

DPB: Well, it came about because we had that very educated lady at East Windsor Hill named Mrs. Cecilia Lasbury who was up to date on everything going on in the state and always looking out for the welfare of everyone, and she knew that historic districts had been born, and they were happening, and we certainly had the architectural [sighs] advantage over many towns. We had excellent structures, a beautiful long street that was the original street in town, so of course, it had the oldest houses. And she thought that we were a candidate. We certainly ought to be in there raising our hand, "Include us! Include us!" [laughs] She started it. It always takes one—one person that's an activist to get something going.

MB: Okay. Now she formed a committee or a group to work on it, or did she do it through the Historical Society—

DPB: As the town—

MB: —or was this a separate event?

DPB: Oh, she informed the town of what was going on statewide, and the procedure is the town will appoint a study committee to look into it and to come up with a plan, which—and that's what they did. The study committee was formed. They worked on it a couple of years, met all the state criteria, and presented a prospect of an ordinance to the town, and the town put it on the voting machines, but we had to have a special election. It all was regulated by the state. They made the rules, and if you—you had to comply with the rules and then have a vote of the people involved. And you had to have a three-quarters affirmative vote within the area that would become the historic district. So that's the way it happened.

MB: So was the special election for just the people—

DPB: Just for this—

MB: —in the historic district, or for the whole town? Could they all—?

DPB: Just the district.

MB: Oh, okay.

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DPB: Yeah, the whole town didn't vote on it. You see, it only affected the properties that were to be the district, so they're the people you needed the permission from.

MB: Okay, were you part of this study committee?

DPB: Yeah. I was on the study committee. [laughs]

MB: Oh, okay. Now who else would have been on that committee with you?

DPB: Well, (sighs) Mrs. Dolner was the chairman. She's dead. Fred Doocey, who became a state representative. I don't know—I guess I won't comment if people are dead or not. I don't know who's still alive. Sherwood Martin. I believe he's still alive in Florida. His wife was Ginna Martin, who did the stenciling in Gabe Wesson's at her home out on Avery Street.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: That's 1, 2, 3—me, that's 4. [laughs] I can't remember us all. And then we had alternates in case one couldn't make a meeting, an alternate was called. I'm not prepared. I can't remember. There were 5 of us.

MB: Okay. So there's one other person. It wasn't Hildred or—

DPB: Nope.

MB: No? Somebody who lived here on the—

DPB: I was the youngest.

MB: Okay.

DPB: Who else was on that? I don't know. And I forget—a lot of times I forget about Fred Doocey, but I remembered him the other day. I thought, oh my, we've all forgotten Fred Doocey. And he was a state representative just like little Kevin Rennie has got to be a state representative. [laughs]

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: Who else was on that?

MB: Now after you— Since you were part of the historic district, after it was established as

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the historic district, then there are rules that have to be followed for anything that happens within this district, right?

DPB: Yes. We—South Windsor's historic district must follow the state of Connecticut rules, because we adopted the state ordinance as our ordinance. Sometimes I'm afraid our current historic district commissions are unaware of that, because as time goes by, nobody jars their memory or reinstructs new members or whatever. They've been inclined to make a lot of funny little rules that maybe they don't have the right to make. But nobody knows the difference. The public certainly doesn't know. Our council certainly doesn't know. Our town attorney doesn't know, because we had that big hullabaloo about Mrs. Porter's greenhouse, and the town attorney never even read the ordinance. He's the one who recommended to the district commission that they fine her, and by state law, the town has— [laughs]. By state law, only the superior court can fine somebody. The town would have had to sue Mrs. Porter and take her to court if they had an argument with what she had down, but our town attorney was unaware of that when he recommended to the historic district commission that they fine her. Of course, she never had to pay because she went through a lawyer and found out what the real law was.

MB: Oh, okay. Nor would it have been the historic district that would have controlled what happened to the Watson House, it becoming a bed and breakfast?

DPB: No, that's a zoning issue. Historic district commission has no authority over zoning, none at all.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: Only the exterior appearance of structures that can be seen from the street.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: It's pretty limited in a way.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. Now the district only goes down to Strong Road.

DPB: Not quite that far. It only goes to Mrs. Porter.

MB: Oh!

DPB: One house past the old cemetery.

MB: Okay. All right. And now, does it—the rest of the street has—it's not—

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DPB: That's different.

MB: —historic district but it's something else. Do you know anything about that?

DPB: Yes, that's a different kind of historic district. (sighs) I have to think about it in order to carefully explain to you what it is. It's a state designation of this street that has no regulations involved. There are no rules you have to follow. You're not exactly affected by it. But what it does do is, should the town— The town cannot accept federal grants or money— (sighs) Oh, I'm going to get this all screwed up. Federal money can't be spent to destroy any structures in this type of district. For instance, should they decide to widen Main Street, and it takes a few front porches off and destroys maybe a house or 2, they can't have any government help on that road project.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: 'Cause this is a national district. Its determination is to preserve the structures.

MB: That's good to know.

DPB: It's different. There are no rules to follow. You don't have to say what kind of windows and doors you have or what color anything is or anything. There's nothing—it's different. I think the Connecticut Trust—no. The Connecticut Historic Commission keeps track of it.

MB: Okay.

DPB: And that goes to the Bissell Bridge. It doesn't go the whole length of our street to East Hartford. East Windsor Hill to the Bissell Bridge.

MB: Well then there is no chance then that this would ever be widened at any point.

DPB: Well, it could be if the town had enough money themselves and don't have to ask for government aid or bonding things or something to do this gigantic project.

MB: And that usually doesn't happen.

DPB: They might be able to. I really—I don't know what will happen if they start knocking down a house. I'm not sure. [laughs] Nothing's happened yet, so I don't know, and I've forgotten all about it.

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MB: Well, the other change that's happened in that part of the street since I've been here are the building that's going on behind where the houses are on—

DPB: It's zoning.

MB: —Main Street.

DPB: That's zoning.

MB: Okay, now that changed at some point?

DPB: Oh yeah. We're always changing our zoning. You can change your zoning overnight.

MB: Okay. So they changed the zoning so that people were able to sell—

DPB: To make over your lot.

MB: Okay.

DPB: They're so sure we must make room for more people. I mean, our planning department is so sure we must house America.

MB: Now when—

DPB: I'm exaggerating. I'm being mean, but that's the way—

MB: No, but it does—

DPB: They're not thinking clearly.

MB: It does change the ambience of the street, and it would increase traffic and—

DPB: Well just go over to Windsor, and you'll see exactly what it does. Right behind every house on the main drag in Windsor is a second house, because there's another street, and behind there is another street, and pretty soon it's a checkerboard of streets just jammed up with houses. Then nobody wants to live there anymore. That's what's the real danger is that you— (sighs) you're changing the character of your community, and if people don't want to live here because you have cheapened the area, suddenly you can't assess the properties as high as you used to. And so, the town isn't doing itself a favor. They're getting more people and maybe less income, because what comes will not be as good as was—or desirable—as what was here. So they won't pay so much for it, and then you

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can't tax them. You've got to tax on fair market value.

MB: Now when did the zoning change happen that allowed people to do that?

DPB: The first time somebody had a rear lot they were determined to sell and their— (sighs) and their friends in the planning department put it into effect.

MB: And they probably—it would have been difficult to—

DPB: We had lawsuits about that too, all the neighbors getting together and hiring a lawyer and fighting it. But the die was cast. We were doing a favor for a particular landowner, and that's all there was to it.

MB: Should I ask who the landowner was?

DPB: Nope. You better not. They're all alive and kicking.

MB: Oh, okay. Won't mention it then.

DPB: [laughs]

MB: Okay. Now, I'm thinking I know there is a house you told me the other day further up the street that is going to be lost to development and the land behind it. Are there other houses on the street? Have we lost historic houses because something happened on the back part so the historic house on the street was lost?

DPB: No, nothing has happened yet. We haven't lost anything yet.

MB: Okay, so in most cases it's just they've built behind something and left what was there there.

DPB: Yes. Just crowding things up, making extra driveways to get in there and all that. Just changing it that way.

MB: All right. Now this house up the street that's— Is that going to be demolished, or is it going to be moved?

DPB: Well it's hearsay, so I don't know for sure.

MB: Oh, okay.

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DPB: We never know for sure when things are hearsay.

MB: Okay.

DPB: Don't know. We'll have to watch.

MB: Watch and see what happens there.

DPB: They already tore down the barn.

MB: Yeah, yeah. The barns are something—

DPB: But nobody needs a barn. Oh, that's very interesting. Nobody seems to need a barn anymore, but the Connecticut—the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is doing a Connecticut survey of old barns. And they're asking all the towns to get involved. They want to know where all our old mines are. People are suddenly interested—other people are interested in the barns. South Windsor isn't interested yet. By the time we get interested, most of our parents will be gone. We're never on that track. We're never—

MB: Well, who is the group that should be interested in participating?

DPB: I don't know. I don't know. Maybe as a whole, our population just isn't into any of this preservation business. They're just on the run, on the go. It's me, mine, and my vacation, and my house, and— And they'll move away as fast as they moved in. They don't care. They're just going on to something better. They're not attached to anything. We have a transient society.

MB: I think—

DPB: I think it started after the Second World War when businesses started moving their employees around the country because they almost planned to dislodge their employees from generations of thinking alike. They wanted to get them out, move them to different places. Don't you remember all the people and talking about their promotion and where they were moving and how the company was going to pay the moving expenses? Everyone was moving somewhere. Businesses—American business did that. They really wanted to— (sighs) maybe it enlightened a lot of people to get out and see how someone else lives—try to sell your product to someone else, not just your neighbor that you've known all your life.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

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DPB: It was a thing that happened after the war.

MB: Well, I think now too people—people would expect that there was some town organization or some town commission or someone who would be aware of this recording of all the old barns in town and would organize some sort of effort to save them, and then they might get on board, but I don't know that individuals developed that desire to be the leader, say. I think they expect that somehow there is someone who should be taking on that job.

DPB: The Historical Society is going to do it. We already called the Connecticut Trust. They were delighted. They're going to come out, give us the—they give us a free workshop to show us how to do it all and tell us what they expect, and then we find our volunteers and have them hit the road. It's called a windshield inventory.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: So you can kind of figure what—

MB: You're doing it from your vehicle rather than—

DPB: You're not going to have to contact people. You don't have to go take photographs. The state will do all that after they look at the inventory.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: Yeah. But they need—do need organizations, for instance, "a historical society or such similar group." That's the way they worded it. And so we answered—

MB: Good, I'm glad.

DPB: We answered.

MB: I'm glad you did.

DPB: Yeah.

MB: 'Cause there are a lot of interesting different kinds of barns in South Windsor.

DPB: I know. I know, you've got—

MB: —tobacco and potato barns, and you've got the old Colonial barns, and—you know.

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There are a lot of interesting kinds of barns here.

DPB: I know. Look at that crazy barn of Ben Thrall's up in East Windsor.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. The dance hall?

DPB: Yeah.

MB: Yeah?

DPB: Yeah, that's awesome.

MB: Yep.

DPB: [laughs]

MB: That was interesting to follow in the paper.

DPB: Oh my. Well, we can't save everything, but it's a good idea to save some of your best, like in grammar school. You would save your best term papers. You didn't chuck them in the wastebasket after you got your A. [laughs]

MB: Now, are there any barns right here on the street that you think would be right up there to be saved?

DPB: Oh, lots of them. All the ones up at Mrs. Raymond's farm, fantastic barns. I was thinking of them the other day. [laughs] But you've got to go down the street house by house to try to think of where they are. There are some goodies.

MB: Well, good. Well—

DPB: Shepards have them. They got that huge warehouse behind their house, the warehouse across the street. Their big barn that went with their house burned down, so that's out of the picture. You know, all the Pelton barns would have been a fantastic assortment. They all got torn down. A generation of not caring.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: One generation will do it. [laughs] I thought of those when—I thought of those when I was writing the next book, and I got thinking enough about them to remember every one. So I did write that up in my book, everything that was there, man. That would have been

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a museum complex. Who else has got a big barn? We do have tobacco warehouses—that great big thing down at King Street. Lordy, whatever will become of that? I think Shepards bought that too. It's a big brown, shingled, three-story—

MB: I know which one you mean.

DPB: Yeah. That was a negro barracks in the Second World War.

MB: Oh wow!

DPB: Yeah. Isn't that awesome?

MB: Yeah.

DPB: I never even knew it. I never even knew it. [laughs]

MB: And you've heard—

DPB: I've heard since, you know.

MB: For soldiers, you mean?

DPB: Yeah.

MB: Oh.

DPB: Yeah.

MB: I didn't know that.

DPB: Negro ones.

MB: Yeah. So the Army at that point was either renting it or owned it or—?

DPB: They came around to renting things, yeah. We had Army barracks out on Newberry Road. Little low, one-story buildings, almost looked like chicken coops. No, they were tall enough for people. Temporary stuff they threw up. Yep. That was interesting, because we would invite some of those soldiers for Thanksgiving or something or in the summer for hot dog roasts, because we knew that out there on Newberry Road, there's nothing. They couldn't even get to a drug store. You know, they were out in the boonies. [laughs]

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MB: Yeah.

DPB: And you would go pick them up and bring them over to your house for cookouts, Thanksgiving, or something.

MB: Now why were they staying here? Was there training going on here?

DPB: It's just a place the Army figured they could plop down some barracks and store some men. Yeah, and they didn't seem to do anything in particular. And some of their wives followed along, and they'd get rooms in houses wherever there was—somebody took in boarders—the wealthier ones—I mean, the soldiers that had a wife that had some money of her own so she could follow him. Because she would come with a car too. [laughs]

MB: Well, that was lucky for him if he was on Newberry Road. He had a way to get somewhere.

DPB: I remember all that because I remember one wife hit somebody's dog down the street and how sad that was that day. The damn little dog ran out in the road, so it wasn't entirely her fault, but they can't explain to her because she was this newcomer on our street because she was the wife of a soldier visiting, and in a funny way, she had no right being—driving her convertible on our street. And she hit that little dog. And we all had to take the dog down the meadow and bury it.

MB: And whose dog was it? It must have been a family you knew well?

DPB: Yeah, yeah. That was too bad.

MB: But that's interesting to know that about Army barracks here on the street. I didn't realize they did that, so—

DPB: Yep. I wasn't—I wasn't old enough to know that much about the Army, but I didn't hear anybody else talking about it much either, but they were out there. And then those barracks just got all torn down when it was over.

MB: They didn't reuse them during Korea or—?

DPB: No, they were really prefab, funny, cheap things. You know?

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

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DPB: But you know, another neat thing we have in this town, which I hope gets saved—they deserve preservation—are the Quonset huts that are houses, and the Shepards own 3 of those, and they don't realize what they've got. They own 4 of them.

MB: Now are they here on the street?

DPB: No, they're out Rye Street and other places.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: Those things were the hallmark of after the war. All those Quonset huts that the Army had went places. They went to all our colleges and universities to be the housing for the married students that went to school on the GI Bill. Every college had a place out in the backyard where they had the Quonset huts for the married students. And little by little, they're disappearing because that time has passed, all those people are long grown up. I don't know if you know who's married now at college, and it doesn't matter where they live. They seem to have co— (sighs) co—what do you call it?

MB: Co-ed dorms.

DPB: Co-ed dorms.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: So they also passed those Quonsets out—Quonsets out to farmers who needed them for farm help, and of course, we got into the business of importing tobacco help from Florida, Pennsylvania, and eventually Puerto Rico, and we would have to house those people in the summer. So farmers were good candidates for picking up some Quonset huts. Well, that's probably how the Shepard Tobacco Company got 4 huts. And they got, over the years, converted into little houses, and then a tenant would add something. There's one—

MB: So they must have been fairly well constructed then.

DPB: Well it's just a metal half hoop. It's just a metal half hoop. You put a floor. But then they put in dormer windows on the side so they could— [laughs]

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: They were neat. I was in the ones at school, at college, because I knew married students, and so I got to see the inside of those. And I've been in ones of Shepard's up on

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Windsorville Road. One of them has a little wooden addition. Somebody added 2 bedrooms. They're kind of cute in a way. They have little front porches on them. And I read an article in a magazine within the last 2 years about the Quonset huts and their value now, because they are a historic item. And I wrote the name of the book—it was a whole book about it—and author and everything and gave it to Timmy Shepard, because I thought those people should be aware. I don't know if he ever was interested enough to look up the book. Don't know. Never heard any comment from him about it.

MB: Well hopefully he did. Another part of history—

DPB: It's up to them.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: It's up to them. They're the only one—

MB: But there isn't one along here on Main Street—

DPB: No.

MB: —so you won't be preserving it.

DPB: No, but if I could, I would get this damn book done. I was going to—after I finished Main Street, I was going to branch out to our side roads and just hit the historic structures, because on our side roads, we don't have so many, and there's no point in mentioning a hundred brand new houses or a whole development of 300. You see?

MB: Yeah.

DPB: So what I was doing, I could go across the rest of the town just picking out what's left. We already did Long Hill in a funny way with that little Long Hill book, but Rye Street's pretty interesting. We did the road, Dart Hill. What else have we got?

MB: Foster Farm, over that area.

DPB: Yep, there's that house on Foster Street. Oh, there's a couple on Foster. They're not ancient, but the ones that are there, if you're doing an inventory, you list them. Yeah.

MB: How about Buckland Road? Is there anything left on Buckland? I know you lost some.

DPB: Oh, that's going fast. Buckland is going fast. [laughs] It was a very interesting street.

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Perhaps some long-range planning could have put that highway further over one way or the other and left that street, but whenever we need more streets, we seem to just widen what we have instead of plotting a new by-way. Don't know why. It's always easier to just work on one that's there. So Buckland will be gone—gone.

MB: Well, as long as we're talking—

DPB: But King Street will probably get saved, see? That's that little secret. Because it's nestled in one little place, Route 5 on one side, the bridge on another side, the Burnham Brook in the back of them, and the town line on the south. You can't ruin King Street.

MB: Now, your book covers King Street?

DPB: Yes, because that's our street.

MB: Okay, all right. So your book is going to go all the way to the end of Main Street or just to where—what we're calling the New Road.

DPB: I haven't decided which way to go first. If I turn and go out King Street, I've got to abruptly stop and go back and then pick up the tour, go down Main Street, and then back into King Street from the other end, because it's cut off at the bridge. You can't drive it with your little manual reading the house after house, because stone wall. You've got to turn around and come back. [laughs]

MB: Well, are there any other from either one of your books? Are there any other stories that you'd like to record that—I know you have to reduce what you put to fit in the book. Like in the historic district, are there stories that aren't in the book that really should be saved or that you researched and found out?

DPB: Oh, I don't know. No. I think the book is just a beginning for someone else. If someone else is interested in any particular thing, they can start looking into it and expand on it. This kind of is like groundwork.

MB: Important groundwork.

DPB: Well, it became more interesting than I thought, because I found so many national connections. It's kind of awesome because (sighs) I wonder how many other towns have as much.

MB: You mean national connections to national history like the Grant family?

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DPB: Yeah, like a lot of things. Like Ethan Allen—things like that, historic figures that we can connect to. Like that Deerfield business they told you about. Amazing that just on our street we can just keep touching on anything—

MB: Well how are we connected to Ethan Allen?

DPB: Oh, because his old ancestor Sam Allen owned the land on our street.

MB: Oh really?

DPB: Yeah, but he never built here. But he owned here. He probably walked around. [laughs] Like when you go over the England, you say, "Julius Caesar walked here." [laughs]

MB: Yeah, yeah. Well that's like everybody saying George Washington slept here or visited here or whatever. And then listening—

DPB: He did get around.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

DPB: Yeah, he walked around here. He walked around. [laughs]

MB: Well, I know the story about his ordering the—

DPB: —pen knife.

MB: —pen knife. Yeah.

DPB: That he did by mail, but you see, he had to have been here to be familiar with these people to write them a letter and know that they can get him a knife.

MB: And then there's the story about Lafayette was here waiting to meet with him. Did they ever meet here, or is there any documentation that—?

DPB: Oh yes! Oh yeah, they did, yep. That's in the book.

MB: That's in the new book?

DPB: [laughs] Yes indeed. He did come, one day for sure. [laughs] I don't think he stayed overnight.

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MB: Well, that was a very busy time in his life, I'm sure.

DPB: But Lafayette stayed overnight. He boarded here.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: And you know, (sighs) it's hard with history. I tried to double check in a lot of other history books to really chronicle where that Lafayette was from week to week, whatever, because just in case these stories sound fictitious, I wanted to be the first to know before I started printing something as fact when all the time it was hearsay. And it's kind of tricky. It's hard to figure out, but I think he was here. There is a time slot he could have been here.

MB: Okay.

DPB: The troops were harbored or parked or whatever you call them—their ships—over in Rhode Island. So even from Virginia back up through to get to Rhode Island, it's easy to come through East Windsor. I mean, East Windsor— (sighs) it's in the middle of things. The fighting was over in Yorktown in New York. There was fighting down in Virginia. There was in New York City, on Long Island, but we're on the Connecticut River. And then over here is Rhode Island where their ships are parked, where the French Army will go back to France from. That's where Lafayette left from.

MB: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

DPB: It's interesting.

MB: So it would make sense for an—

DPB: There's a lot of interesting things that deserve a lot of study. For instance, our Alexander King—Alexander King's sword was given to the Wadsworth Athenaeum in 1932, and they don't have it, but they have an index card in their file for it, which means they did have it. But today, nobody knows where it went. And that's the danger of museums, and that's why people are always skeptical to give their treasures to a museum, because darn it, they don't take care of things. Well anyway, on the index card it thoroughly describes that sword—the inscriptions on it, the name on it, the maker's name, and that sword came from Virginia. And Lafayette went to Virginia. And by way of here, did he and his men brought that thing back, or did Alexander King get all the way down there and brought it back? He picked it—somebody picked it up in Virginia, but it was in the possession of Alexander King of Main Street, South Windsor. It's so interesting. I could spend hours thinking about it or trying to look up more stuff, but I've got to finish the book, so I have

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to just drop it and move on.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: I tried calling the Athenaeum, and they couldn't help me much. They did find the index card. They don't know the story. They don't know where it is. They don't know if they have it. Then they suggested I write a letter to their new director, and I didn't do that yet because I think it's gone anyway.

MB: Or it's in storage somewhere, and they're not—

DPB: Bill Hosley tried to look for it when he was working for the Athenaeum, when he was curator down there, and he thought there was a corner in the cellar that he was itching to get at, because he thought it might be in there, but he didn't stay on the job long enough to get that far. They don't let the employees waste time looking for things in the cellar. [laughs]

MB: Yeah, then they don't know—

DPB: They got to make the exhibits and meet the public and do the work, you know? They got to—

MB: Well hopefully they will at least confirm whether they have it or not at some point.

DPB: It would have been great if we could have had that thing here. That was ours. That could belong to this town.

MB: Well I remember you talking about that when you did your slide program on Main Street, South Windsor, and the American Revolution. And I went to—I've been to several of your slide programs. The last one, I think, was on the hurricanes and floods and things that happened here in town. Do you have the scripts for those saved somewhere?

DPB: Oh yes. Yep. They're not written out like a story book. You'd have to—but yes, I do—an outline sort of thing.

MB: Oh good. And do you have a plan on what you're going to do with those? Like all your notes from the books and your scripts from the slides? Because that's—you've done so much—

DPB: Well, the thing with the slides, they're all—yeah—they're all in a folder. I keep them with the slides because if you want to do a slide program, you've got to pull the slides by

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number. So you gotta have your script. Yeah.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: They're all in the box with the slides. Every program I ever did.

MB: Okay. Now are you going to give those to the Historical Society or preserve them in some way so that all your work is saved? You know so much.

DPB: Yes, down the road somewhere, somebody— [laughs] Yeah, something's got to be done. Hey, there she is.

MB: Oh okay, we'll stop for today.

DPB: Come on over.

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