

DORIS PELTON BURGENDORF Oral History Interview #1, 6-12-07
Administrative Information

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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 first 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.

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Doris Pelton Burgdorf
Oral History Interview #1
Interviewed by Maureen Bourn
June 12, 2007

Maureen Bourn: This is Maureen Bourn conducting an interview of Doris Pelton Burgdorf for the Wood Memorial Library Oral History Project. Doris 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.

[Pause]

Doris Pelton Burgdorf: I remember a man in our dad's yard one day saying to my father, "Doesn't it drive you crazy having all these kids around?" And my father said, "I'd rather they were all here so I know where mine are."

MB: Smart man. Now, what kind of things did you do for fun when you were all together with the kids?

DPB: Jump in the hay in the barn. Go get cucumbers out of the garden as I'd say, sneak cucumbers out of the garden, because we felt like eating them. Play house in all the corn cribs and corn houses and odd buildings; load our bicycles; have paper routes—my sister and brother had paper routes. Saturday nights there was square dances and there was always a neighbor who was willing to load up his car full of teenagers and take them to square dances, because we didn't have ready transportation for everything that was going on, but it seems that we got to the most important things. The bus went to Hartford every hour all day long—until midnight. We could go to movies at night and still get home. All the doctors and dentists were in Hartford—we went on a bus.

MB: Did you—in the wintertime, did you have different activities that you did in the winter?

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DPB: Sliding down hill with the sleds. Nothing more than sleds—no toboggans, just sleds, but the neighbor's kids left their sleds in our barn and we left our sleds all out, so there were always enough for everyone, because we had the hills, so all the kids came to our farm to slide down the hills. And ice skating. At the bottom of every hill, there was a pond. Plenty of ice skating in the meadow.

MB: And not on the river, though— in the — ?

DPB: No, we were cautioned to stay away from that river, because there was quicksand and eddies. The river was dangerous and we were taught at an early life to respect it.

MB: Okay. So you— did you fish in it or have canoes or anything like that?

DPB: No.

MB: No. Okay.

DPB: No, our parents weren't too much into water. Once spring pond started and there were swimming lessons over there, we didn't go. Of course, we didn't have any way to get there anyway, so none of us learned to swim.

MB: Well, that would be a good reason to stay away from the river, then. How about— you talked about the bus route for transportation, but did they have buses to take you to school or did you walk?

DPB: We went on that Connecticut company bus that was going— coming and going to Hartford. We had tokens. All the kids had their tokens for the way— they hopped on the bus, put your token in the box, and hopped off at Union School. You had to live at least a mile from school to take a bus. Everyone within a mile had to walk. That was the rule. If their parents had an automobile, they would drive them— make life easier for them, but if not, you walked. That wasn't bad. We even walked home for lunch. Home and back and ate lunch, one mile, within one hour.

MB: Wow. Well, that was good exercise for you, though, to be doing that. Do you want to talk a little bit about Union School? Describe what the school was like when you went there?

DPB: Well, unless it's boring, it's — just was a regular school with eight grades.

MB: Well, I think with it being restored, I think there's probably a lot of local interest in the school and what it was like and I know— you had told me before about some of your favorite teachers that were there, that would be interesting too, to hear about.

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DPB: Well, it might be easier if you referred to— you see, I get [inaudible] three or four page document about reminisces about Union School, which is one chapter in the new book which finishes the street, and so first that will be in writing and readily available. I shouldn't waste a lot of tape time trying to summarize it or—

MB: Okay.

DPB: You know what I mean?

MB: Yeah. Yeah. I just particularly liked the story you told me about the teacher who had you earn the trips. I thought that was—

DPB: Oh, we had an excellent teacher, Mrs. Ruth Spillane Anderson. She lived in Hartford. And she did teach in some of our other schools. In looking up old school records, I think she even taught over in Wapping one year or two. And she taught in the little one-room school on Rye Street until the town closed that school and then she came to Union School starting in 5th grade, but every year she was advanced to 6th grade, to 7th grade, and to 8th grade, and since she arrived when I was in 5th, I ended up having her for a teacher for four years. But, imagine the kids from Rye Street had already had her for their first four years, so they had her all eight years.

MB: Wow. That is really unusual.

DPB: And when she— you'd have to interview another girl to give you better stories about the Rye Street school. That teacher came out of Hartford, went up to Rye Street, picked up her students, and brought them down to Union School, because South Windsor didn't have buses yet and the parents of the children on Rye Street didn't have automobiles. The town closed the school— how were the kids going to get to Union School? This teacher brought them herself.

MB: Oh, wow.

DPB: Not for pay, she just did it. Well, she also did another thing for all the children. We had extra-curricular activities all year, which we could do at will. She supplied a lot of the materials that we could look at to see if anything interested us to write papers about or research, and at the end of the year she graded all these extra projects. And the kids with the highest grades had a choice of going on a trip with her if their parents would pay the minimal expenses [inaudible], which— I went on one trip down to the Luray Caverns Natural Bridge, Williamsburg and Washington for \$25--all in Mrs. Anderson's

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automobile and the automobile of a friend of hers who agreed to help her take all these kids.

MB: Wow, what a great experience.

DPB: Yeah. That \$25 was to cover motels and some food.

MB: Now, did you earn your \$25 or did your parents?

DPB: No, I remember Father handing it over the morning I left.

MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: We were—these trips were just after school got out in June. We hadn't started working in tobacco yet. That didn't come up—this was a big—this was a big event and our parents were not worried about liability. It never occurred to them that this teacher would have an automobile accident. Those things weren't thought of in our day. This was an opportunity not to be missed.

MB: I'm glad you didn't miss it.

DPB: Life is different. It was different and I think it was better.

MB: Freer. A lot more—fewer constraints than we have now, maybe.

DPB: We had some wealthy people in town whose children were very bright and were entitled to go on these trips, but the parents said, "We are well able to take our own children, so we would rather you use the spots for somebody else."

MB: Well, that was appropriate. Yeah.

DPB: That was kind of them. That was considerate. So two other kids got to go on a trip. Maybe their grades were a little lower than the two wealthy kids, but the wealthy parents sensed enough to know that in the summer we always take a trip and take our children ourselves. We don't—we can let two other kids from school get the opportunity.

MB: What about—what about homework, Doris? Did you have homework?

DPB: There was a lot of homework, because we had a lot of books being lugged back and forth. There was a table in the front hall and it was just filled with books, because you came in

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the front door and put them down on the table and went outdoors to play. A lot of homework, yes.

MB: Okay. And what are you remembering the homework from elementary school?

DPB: Grammar School, yes. Grammar School. Because we had such good teachers in Grammar School that, for us, high school was all repetition. I had very little homework in high school. I got it all done in my study periods.

MB: Wow.

DPB: That's the truth.

MB: Yeah. Now, see, I think it's sort of the other way around now. They have more homework as they get older. So you learned a lot in middle school?

DPB: [Inaudible] and I ended up Valedictorian, so I mean

MB: Wow. Good for you.

DPB: That homework got done or I got some homework done because I chose to sit in the back seat and I did it in another class. Maybe behind English class, I was doing my Algebra homework. It worked.

MB: Obviously. You became Valedictorian, that was so you now, you were Valedictorian at Ellsworth?

DPB: At Ellsworth.

MB: Right. Now, are those the only two schools you went to, Union and Ellsworth or did

DPB: Yep.

MB: Okay. So you went through 8th grade at Union and then went to Ellsworth?

DPB: Yep.

MB: Okay. And what memories do you have of Ellsworth? [Did] you have a special teacher that sticks in your mind there, or some special event?

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DPB: We had some very good teachers. Esther Malone was excellent at English grammar. Excellent, stern, business-like, but pleasant. Nothing mean or grouchy about her; she just towed the mark and things were all different and we weren't. [???] Let's see who else was up there? Of course, there was Hugh Grear; those were the famous years for Ellsworth when their basketball team always won and Hugh Grear went on to UConn, but I was never involved in sports, though. None of that affected me. I went to the games just to sell tickets at the door. I wasn't all that interested in watching the game, but I wanted to go where everyone was going, so I sold the tickets.

MB: And this was in the gym that's at Ellsworth?

DPB: Yep.

MB: Okay. Who was the principal while you were there?

DPB: Oh, Mr. [Henry] Adams. And, actually, he was an excellent principal. He was firm, knew what the rules were, he's one excellent thing he did for Ellsworth was he announced there would never be any booing at any athletic games done by any people from the Ellsworth Memorial High School, no matter what your opposition did or how they behaved, we did not boo and we never did home or away. Excellent behavior.

MB: Yes.

DPB: South Windsor really had a good reputation state-wide during the [s/l] Adams/Magnason/Woodmancy--and Hugh Grear during that period; the hey-day for Ellsworth.

MB: Now, talking about Ellsworth School, as long as I've been in town, I've heard a story that if Ellsworth isn't used as a school, it reverts to the Wood Family. Is that true, do you know, or is there some documentation for that?

DPB: I don't personally know absolutely what is true. I would have to do a thorough title search, which I've never done. The family has often mentioned that it's true, but I'm not sure they know what the deeds say either. I don't know. I don't know.

MB: It will probably be coming up again with the new school plan to eventually

DPB: Well, I think some town attorney or somebody would be investigating the situation.

MB: Yeah.

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DPB: Whether they ever do, I don't know. I know that for years they never knew they didn't own the Wood Library. When they chopped up the lawn and put asphalt right up to the foundation wall, they were not the owner of the property and had no right to do it. So I don't know and they were planning to sell it to build the new library in Wapping. Now, our town officials don't do their homework. Big surprise. They didn't own it. They couldn't sell it.

MB: No. Gee, I hadn't heard that story. That's why we have that parking on the side with no [inaudible].

DPB: Yes. Yes.

MB: Okay.

DPB: The owners were furious, but they weren't active. They were too polite to say anything and the damage was done.

MB: I don't know if I should ask this, because we worked for years trying to get the kids not to concentrate on this story, but do you know anything about this story about the ghost at Ellsworth? The Screw Lewy story?

DPB: That's Porter Collins. He was entertaining, Porter was. There isn't any ghost.

MB: Okay. And that's not an old story that I mean

DPB: No, it's a Porter Collins story.

MB: Okay. Okay. I just wondered if there was a local story that went with that.

DPB: Where did Porter go? Porter must have gone to that high school. Maybe the story started when he was in high school. I never heard the story until Porter announced it on your wagon ride part of the 3rd grade field day. I had never heard of it before then, but Porter evidently had, because he was the story teller.

MB: Now, did they have dances at the high school?

DPB: No, just your normal high school ones like Junior Prom, Senior Prom, things like that. That's all.

MB: Okay. And did they have fundraisers? Were kids raising funds for different activities or was everything paid for by the school system?

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DPB: I don't know that we had activities that had to be paid for. I don't know.

MB: Well, did you go on trips? Like a Washington trip or ?

DPB: When we graduated. The senior class graduating went to Washington D.C., but every child paid for that trip his or herself. No money was raised to augment it. Your parents paid or you paid.

MB: But teachers went with you as chaperones or ?

DPB: Yes, I think there were two teachers. I could tell better by looking at the big photograph. The bus driver was able to run from one end of the picture to the other end, so that he appears in the photograph at both ends of the line of kids.

MB: Oh, wow.

DPB: That was a tricky maneuver, but a camera that stands he could run behind the crowd and catch up to it and be at the other end when the camera got there. So we all have a picture of our class trip in Washington with twin bus drivers. You think, twin bus drivers! One in the same.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: A teacher. There must have been two teachers, I think, but I don't remember them.

MB: Okay. And did you have a graduation ceremony between Union and Ellsworth? Did you have a ?

DPB: For Union School, our graduation was in the Wood Memorial Library on the second floor and we always in awe of the beautiful building. We were very respectful while we were in it. It was quite a it was quite an event for us to hold our graduation in that lovely room. Of course, we thought that's what everyone did before and after.

MB: And you visited it, what, as a library during ?

DPB: Oh, yes. Once a week, every class was marched over to the library to take out books. And we stood in line at the door until we were all quiet and we walked in quietly and we did not speak in the library.

MB: Oh, my.

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DPB: Excellent behavior monitored by the teacher.

MB: Okay. And who was the librarian at Wood then?

DPB: Mrs. [Edith] Vibert and Pauline King was her assistant.

[Pause]

MB: When you— when you graduated from Ellsworth, they had the graduation in the gym?

DPB: Yes. Yep.

MB: Okay.

DPB: It had to be in the gym.

MB: Well, maybe they had them outside sometimes.

DPB: No, we never sat outside. No.

MB: Okay.

DPB: Yeah, it was in the gym. It was in the gym. I'm thinking of all the plays. The drama clubs would put on plays. They were in the gym. There was a nice stage in that gym. I was in school here in the 1940s and that building was built in 1935, so everything was still very new for us. Beautiful gym, beautiful stage for drama with the back room for props and the dressing rooms and I really— modern for us back then.

MB: Now, did you ever participate in any of the plays or— ?

DPB: Yeah, I was always in— I was always in a play every year almost. Yep. I did that too. And Glee Club— singing.

MB: Could you have music when you were in the— at Union? In the Grammar School?

DPB: I don't remember it, per say. [Inaudible] once a week somebody came and taught us a little bit about singing and they had pitch spike, but— it's fading, my mind.

MB: Okay. So there would have been a music teacher then other than the classroom teacher who came and did that?

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DPB: Yeah, it would be someone who moved around to all the schools.

MB: Okay. Didô andô

DPB: This one person who just roamed aroundô like the art teacher was one man who went from school to school so that you got art, maybe, once a week. He was at your school Monday, another school Tuesday, different school Wednesdayô he did the high school, too.

MB: Okay. Would weô do you remember any of the names of people who were music or art teachers then?

DPB: I don't remember about music, but Burt Jonesô Albertus Jones was the travelling art teacher, because he lived right across the street from Union and so the town couldn't ignore his existence, they had to hire him.

MB: Okay.

DPB: He had taught in the Harvard Art School.

MB: And did they do that for gym too? Did you haveô ?

DPB: No gym in Grammar School. Gym wasô no, no gym, except our principal at Union School was very interested in playing ball with all the boys. He was the first one out the door at recess with his neck tie flying and his suit jacket still on and ready to play ball. And the kids were right behind him. They idolized him. The boys, that is.

MB: And do remember his name? The principal?

DPB: Mr. Welsh.

MB: Mr. Welsh. Okay.

DPB: He taught the 7th and 8th grades.

MB: In addition to being the principal?

DPB: Yeah. When I say 7th and 8th, it's because Mrs. Anderson was doing 7th and 8th also. They switchedô some did some different classes. Mr. Welch did Science and Math and Mrs. Anderson did English and Literature and Historyô I don't know. There came a time

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in the day when he went over to the other room and she went over to the 8th grade room and they each taught their different things. The kids didn't move, the teachers moved.

MB: The teachers did. Okay. Well, that works out well.

DPB: [Easier to] move one body than a roomful of kids.

MB: Yeah. It certainly would be. That's true. Now, there's in when you're we're back talking about Union School again there are I've heard people talk about there being a stage in there. Were you ever in plays at Union?

DPB: It wasn't there when we went to school. They had taken that they had put up a dividing wall before I ever entered school and I started in '06, so that big auditorium room that was there from 1906 didn't last long. They needed more classrooms and had to divide it in half. They gave up the auditorium to make two grades.

MB: I could see if they had did they have kindergarten in there or did they just have Grade 1 through 8?

DPB: You never heard of kindergarten. That hadn't been invented. Parents were happy to have their kids home one more year. It was the last they'd see of them.

MB: That's true, I guess. You graduated from Ellsworth, what did you do then?

DPB: Vermont Junior College in Montpelier, Vermont.

MB: And what were you studying?

DPB: Majored in Art. Then I continued at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and that was majoring in Art.

MB: That's a long way away. Is that your first time really away from New England or this area?

DPB: Yeah, I think so. I think so. I think it's a long time ago. Did I go anywhere or didn't I? I don't know. Maybe that is the first time I went far away.

MB: And how did Cedar Rapids compare to South Windsor?

DPB: Well, Cedar Rapids is a city. You'd have to compare it to Hartford.

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MB: Okay.

DPB: Quaker Oats. Quaker Oats factory was there and you could smell Quaker Oats all the time. It hung in the air. But they didn't mind, because that was their economy.

MB: That's what we said we were going to talk about today, was your life on the farm here and Union and Ellsworth, so do you have anything you want to add to that before we stop?

DPB: Oh, I don't know. I could tell you that I got kicked out of school in Grammar School from Union School.

MB: Oh my goodness.

DPB: When I was only in 5th grade.

MB: What did you do?

DPB: Well we did a little something. A bunch of us did a little something that the teachers didn't think too kindly of and they reported it to the principal and the principal was a very angry man and decided to do something about it. He expelled me, sent me walking home.

MB: Wow. Do you want to tell us what it was you did or ?

DPB: Oh, yeah. What we did. We wrote there were one, two, three, four of us we wrote a letter to the teacher, she really was a very good teacher, but we wrote a letter to her and told her how grouchy she was, how mean she was. And I was the one who did the writing, so one of the bunch of kids when the teachers were around asking if anyone knew about this letter that was left on the desk, one of the kids was snickering and giggling and so they zeroed in on her and kept asking her questions and she finally said that I had written it. So then they came to me, and I didn't deny writing it, but I didn't squeal on anybody either. So I was the only one. I said, "Yeah, I did it." So I went home and then I had to come back the next day and I had to go to that teacher and say, "I'm very sorry." And that's all.

MB: Did your parents punish you in addition to ?

DPB: No, they thought it was all a little foolish and sending me walking up the street was really not in the best interest of a child.

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MB: Yeah.

DPB: The school nurse was a little worried. I noticed she followed me in her car, because she didn't think that the principal took the right action either. But, she didn't want to rock the boat either, so she stayed behind me.

MB: Yeah. Made sure you got home safely.

DPB: Made sure I'm on the right path to my house. And then my mother just said, "Well, you forget about it now. It wasn't nice to do, but we'd better forget about it and you go to school tomorrow and you go in to see her and tell her you're sorry you wrote the letter." And that's what I did. And at that, the teacher said, "What did your mother say?" and I said, "She told me to come in and apologize." I didn't [inaudible] about it, my mother told me to.

MB: Because you really believed what you wrote in the letter.

DPB: She was a good teacher, no butts about it, she was a good teacher, but she was grouchy and we were just telling her. We thought it was to her benefit to know she maybe could change her ways. That's how we discussed it, the four of us, we think we ought to write a letter to Mrs. Couch, her name was Couch and we called her Grouchy Pouchy. Everybody called her Grouchy Pouchy.

MB: Okay. And did the letter make a difference? I mean, did she change at all or ?

DPB: I don't know. She was nice acting that day. She tried. She was it's a terrible thing to look back on, because I know that she was a nice, decent person. She couldn't help it if she was grouchy. She wasn't pretty, she didn't have any kids, she lived in the city but she faithfully went to school every day and taught those little 4th graders. And maybe she had to be stern and grouchy, I don't know. No, she didn't she wasn't a cheerful person. That's just the way she was. And little kids don't understand that. Little kids don't understand a grouchy adult.

MB: Yeah, they don't understand the reasons for it or why one someone could be in a different mood one day than they are in another.

DPB: It was every day. It was the way she was. It wasn't good or bad, it's just there are some serious faced people that never smile.

MB: Yeah.

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DPB: And she wasn't pretty. The hair was in a bun, she had eyeglasses, she wore big Oxford tie shoes with heels, and she just was bad. Because then there was Mrs. [Arline] Bidwell and Mrs. Vibert and Mrs. Lucas and Mrs. Cavanaugh, who were all neat and pretty with make-up and curled hair and pretty dresses, and then there was just yeah.

MB: I recognized some of the names that you're saying. Was that Arline Bidwell?

DPB: Yeah. She was the prettiest. Yeah.

MB: And did you ever have her for a teacher?

DPB: Yes. I think she was 1st, maybe 2nd grade.

MB: Okay. And was it Edith Vibert?

DPB: Well, because she was the librarian we saw a lot of her. She didn't teach, but she did substitute teach for her sister sometimes.

MB: Okay, and who was her sister?

DPB: Arline. And then Arline had a sister Agnes, who taught school up in East Windsor or Suffield, I'm not sure where, and she would come down to visit Arlene's class and we loved for her to come to visit, because she brought candy and she walked up and down the rows and gave every kid a candy.

MB: Oh, nice. That's where I've heard stories about—is it Bossom or Bossum's Store? How would you pronounce it?

DPB: We had Bossen's.

MB: I've heard stories about the candy counter in there. People's memories.

DPB: He had the penny candy and you remember that the Bossens came to your house and took your grocery list. So you were very careful what you did in Bossen's store and whether or not you bought candy, because Mr. Bossen was going to be in your mother's kitchen and he's going to tell her that he saw you or that you bought candy or whatever. So you were well behaved.

MB: Did the kids stop there after school?

DPB: They went on lunch hour.

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MB: Oh, okay.

DPB: Lunch hour. It's amazing how many children were given pennies by their parents to buy candy at the store.

MB: Well, this was the 1930s, this was after the Depression. So did the Depression have a big effect on South Windsor?

DPB: Oh, yes.

MB: On the farming families?

DPB: Oh, yes, absolutely. And maybe at the candy store is where you saw the difference. There were some kids whose parents were quite wealthy and they had 25¢ to spend on candy and there were other kids who never had any penny to spend on candy.

MB: That's a fact of life, but they wanted to be there where the other kids were.

DPB: Or they thought the other kid that had the 25¢ to spend might give them a candy.

MB: Yeah. That's true.

DPB: A lot of lessons get learned in school that aren't taught by the teachers. It's just lessons in life. They happen anywhere, everywhere.

MB: The Town Hall was down there then too, right?

DPB: Yep.

MB: Okay, and did you ever, as a younger person, go to the Town Hall? I've seen old pictures with the Scouts on the front step.

DPB: Oh, yes. Scouts. Maybe Boy Scouts did. I don't know. We went every Saturday night, because there was square dances in the Town Hall and people came over from Wapping. It was the only thing going in South Windsor.

MB: Is this before the community center was built down there or? I remember when I first came to town, they had the dances in the community center.

DPB: They did? You mean that old church?

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MB: Yeah. Pleasant Valley's PTO had dances in the

DPB: You're kidding? I didn't know that.

MB: Yeah.

DPB: Because that building burned down in '72.

MB: Yeah, I came to town in '68.

DPB: Yeah. No, we never went in that building. I didn't go in that building at all, but Boy Scouts. When I was a little kid, Boy Scouts met in that building, because when they were practicing their musical instruments and their drums and things for the Memorial Day Parade, we could hear them all the way a mile up the street. And that was kind of nice. You'd hear that sound in the air and you'd say, "Oh, that's the Boy Scouts practicing for Memorial Day."

MB: Were the parades on Main Street then?

DPB: Yep. Yep, they were. Oh, the other Town Hall. Town Hall had the square dances Saturday night. Some parents started that, too. They thought it was a thing for teenagers. They wanted teenagers to have a place to go Saturday nights, so they started the square dances. And they sold soda and anyone who could get there went. We went. We walked. It's a mile down the road, a mile back late at night.

MB: You had two brothers and sisters, so maybe neighbors went too, so you weren't walking by yourself.

DPB: Yeah, we were always with somebody.

MB: Yeah. Is there anything else that went on in there besides the Town Hall that the jail was in there, too, I think, wasn't it? Or the police department or ?

DPB: Yes, they had the little overnight. I think we have one now over at our police station. We have a thing. A place, a cell or whatever you call it. I never saw the one down here. Never got old enough to see it, I guess. I don't know. What else was down here? As a growing child, I didn't have any need to go in the Town Hall, I guess, except the entertainment part of that auditorium room with a stage. Oh, we gave some plays in there. Maybe the Girl Scouts gave plays? Somebody gave plays on that nice stage. It had a big curtain that pulled down with a painting on it. Oh, [inaudible] yes, we went. As I got

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older, we were—our parents started dragging us to town meetings and they got to see what's going on in the world. And I remember sitting up in the balcony.

MB: Did they save anything from Town Hall when they took it down? Like that curtain with the painting on it?

DPB: It probably was old and stiff and water stained and whatnot. I don't know. I've never heard of anything getting saved. In a funny kind of way, it was kind of premature to tear it down. It would have been a better museum structure, actually, than the school, because it had that auditorium. A place where you could put a crowd of people.

MB: Well, did the town maybe sell the property to pay for the new—help pay for the new Town Hall?

DPB: No, they tore the building down and they sold the quarter acre for a building lot—which no one else could've done, because we're not allowed to have quarter acre building lots on this street, but the towns can do what—the politicians can always do what they want to do. They sold it and that little house—that little house across from Bossen's store—Cipolla's [Thomas]—put up in that little house on a quarter acre. I shouldn't go into all the politics about that either.

MB: You can go into anything you feel like talking about.

DPB: Well, the Shepards owned all the land around it. They were the persons who should have bought the quarter acre, and they wanted to, but the town had—a little idea they were going to sell the building lot to get more money. Although, they wouldn't allow anyone else to have a building lot, they could do it. They could do it. And there's always the fire. The fire was Cipollas. Those things are—there's too much about junk in this town.

MB: Okay. I think we could probably stop now and next time focus on talking about your family. We were interested in talking about your mom.

[End of Tape]

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