

Francis Peter “Butch” Carney Oral History Interview, 01/07/2012
Administrative Information

Narrator: Francis Peter “Butch” Carney

Interviewer: Davida Foy Crabtree

Also Present: Jessica Glass (video recording); David Raymond (audio recording)

Date of Interview: January 7, 2012

Place of Interview: 707 Nevers Road, South Windsor, CT (home of Crabtree and childhood home of Carney)

Length: 39 pages, 108.35 minutes

Biographical Note and Abstract

Francis Peter “Butch” Carney was born February 7, 1924, the second-oldest in a family of five brothers who grew up at 707 Nevers Road in South Windsor, CT, where they grew tobacco and raised livestock. Before Carney’s family, his step-grandmother’s family, the Mulligans, lived in the same house back to the mid-19th century. Carney served in World War II and moved to Ellington, CT after the war. He continues to work as a crane operator in 2013 at 86 years old.

In this interview, Carney discusses his family members and the neighbors that lived near the house on Nevers Road. He also shares memories of his childhood in South Windsor, including farming, the way certain parts of South Windsor looked during his childhood, how the house at 707 Nevers Road was laid out when he lived there, the Hurricane of 1938, and learning of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. At the end of the interview he sings old Irish songs he learned during his childhood.

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Transcript of Oral History Interview

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Francis Peter “Butch” Carney

Oral History Interview

By Davida Foy Crabtree

January 7, 2012

Videography by Jessica Glass and David Raymond

Transcript by Brenda Desmarais

CRABTREE: I am Davida Foy Crabtree and we are at 707 Nevers Road on January 7, 2012, and we are here for conversation with Butch Carney. Butch, why don't you say something about yourself?

CARNEY: Well, I was born in this house, of course, I don't remember that, but I am told I have a good memory. By 1929 I can remember things and started school in 1930, and I have a lot of pleasant memories of the old farm here. And, of course, as life goes some not so pleasant. I could remember very vividly the hurricane of 1938 in this house how it shook. We hoped we'd escape with our lives, you know. And that really stuck in my mind, through all these years having went through the Second World War, I was frightened more in 1938 here than I ever was in the war, but there was a few times then too when it wasn't very pleasant. I was in the medical corps and I didn't see a lot of action but I indicate to people, enough for a lifetime.

CRABTREE: Butch, tell me your birth date.

CARNEY: February 7, 1924. I was born in the house. Old Dr. O'Loughlin, an old Irish doctor, attended my mother [Anne Goldrick Carney], but he was getting kind of elderly at the time so he never recorded my birth. So then initially I managed with the baptism's certificate which was from the Broadbrook Church. But then, after the war—the Army had no problem with that, they readily took me and didn't ask any questions—but after the war when I did travel, what little I did, for my passport they kind of wanted something a little better than that. There's always ways around everything so Charlie Enes, who had been town clerk, here in town for quite a number of years, I mentioned that to him, “Oh, no problem.” He knew the family.

CRABTREE: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

CARNEY: I had no sisters. I often kind of hoped that I had. There were five of us all together: James was one year older than me; me; Tom who was two years younger than me and unfortunately passed away in 1959; Jack, who was born in '31; and Arthur, the youngest one was born in the leap year 1936. So that was the family. I remember one thing vividly. Everyone had chores when we were little. I recalled having to milk a cow when I was six

years old, and other farm duties. And we were so isolated that when I went to school the first day, I didn't like that very well. It took a while to get used to that, and I guess I never would have been a good student anyway. The barn right across the road everyone had their share there. We had never more than half a dozen cows. There used to be a man that came around and picked up the cream on a daily, not daily, but twice a week basis. And then we had a team of horses and a mare for the buggy and then we had two or three pigs as a rule.

CRABTREE: Did your horses have names?

CARNEY: Yes they did, certainly. Dan, and Bill and Bess, those that come to mind, but there were many more through the years and they're laid to rest over there. We were all sad, and that was interesting.

CRABTREE: You told me one time about Dan having gotten away?

CARNEY: Well, yes. Horses are like children. At the beginning of the year, they get kind of restless and I had taken the horses up here to water them at the horse trough, a day like this. The horse just took off. I couldn't hold him. But he just wanted to take a little romp and after awhile he came back.

CRABTREE: How old were you then?

CARNEY: Not over ten, I don't think. No not over ten. The animals were our friends pretty much.

CRABTREE: Yeah, part of the family.

CARNEY: Yeah, that's right. And see there was always sort of a little pond down where the stream ended through the meadow but then there was also a well in the barnyard. There was another well down by the road, which I'll show you about where it was. There was one up here in back for the chicken coop. Now this one up here, at times it would go dry but when it wasn't it saved them quite a few steps and the one in the barnyard too.

CRABTREE: Would those all have been dug wells?

CARNEY: Yes. And the other well, right here, that was drilled before my time, probably about 1920 or so. Possibly, yes I would say about then. I can remember them talking about it.

CRABTREE: And that's the well that still serves this house.

CARNEY: That's right. Yes. I can remember them taking the old well driller, instead of using wire rope cable they used big heavy rope for the drilling tools.

CRABTREE: That's great.

CARNEY: I can remember the road went right on the other side of the road here. The road went right across and we had a bridge over the brook and you could come out up on Abbe Road. And I recall, I don't think I was six years old, maybe a little bit more, catching the trout in the brook and showed my mother the trout.

CRABTREE: Really, that's great.

CARNEY: Six or eight years old.

CRABTREE: So there was actually trout in that stream?

CARNEY: There were a lot of trout, not very big. You could always go there.

CRABTREE: Brookies or rainbow?

CARNEY: Brookies. You could always go there and catch trout. And there were no deer around almost none at all at that period of time but there were a lot of partridge, there were a lot of pheasants and rabbits and squirrels. When we were young, all of us used to hunt small game. And that was something that was always included in our Thanksgiving fare, partridge, pheasant and stuff like that. And the reason the pheasant could winter then, there were so many small farms and everyone had corn. There was always something for them to find to eat.

CRABTREE: Now you told me a story one time about the man that lived in the brick house down here and how some of you played a prank on him with a stuffed bird. Can you tell that story?

CARNEY: I can. Incidentally, did you ever find Barney's [Barney Daley] book yet?

CRABTREE: Not yet.

CARNEY: And it wasn't kids, it was my father [Arthur Carney, Sr.], another man Alec Chickey and Julius Miller, a Jewish man. So they were going hunting and the first day of hunting season and here at home we had an old stuffed pheasant which my mother was going to throw out. So my father decided that they're going to play a trick on Mr. Benjamin. So they took the old pheasant and they put it outside his barn as they knew he was in there milking. And Alec Chickey, who was a cousin to the Mulnite family down here, he was good at mimicking. So he would make a noise just like a pheasant. Mr. Benjamin got his shotgun and he started shooting and of course feathers flying. So then afterwards my father, Alec Chickey and Julius stayed up here. And so realizing that he'd made a fool of himself, they said, "What's all the shooting about around here?" "I don't know." He didn't want to admit it. He felt so foolish afterwards. That story is in Barney's book too.

CRABTREE: I just think it's worth having you tell it. And, you know, your family I realized just recently that your step-grandparents, the Mulligans, lived here at the time of the Civil War.

CARNEY: Yes.

CRABTREE: Which means your family owned this property for about a hundred years.

CARNEY: Yes. That's right, yes.

CRABTREE: Because it was transferred in 1963 from your mother and your brother to another family. So it was just about one hundred years that your family owned this property.

CARNEY: Yes.

CRABTREE: That's really something.

CARNEY: Now, see, I didn't know—the only Mulligan that I knew, and I can remember only, not very well, because I probably wasn't over six years old, when my stepmother [step-grandmother], Roseanna Mulligan, passed on. But she was a lovely person and my mother thought the world of her, because my mother's parents both died very young and my mother was married very young, and when she came here, she admitted in later years that Roseanna Mulligan taught her cooking more involved than she was doing at home by herself, and her brothers had one older sister, but anyway, had a great impact upon her. She would always be saying, "Now, how did Grandma Rose make this? Or how did she make that?" That's interesting.

Now, I was wondering if perhaps my brother, Arthur, might have some old pictures and stuff. When I talked with him this weekend—incidentally, Davida, are you an internet person?

CRABTREE: Yes.

CARNEY: You are, alright. Give me some information, and when I talk with him, this weekend, I'll convey that to him and you'll never be able to get rid of him.

CRABTREE: Oh, good! I'll love that! That's great.

CARNEY: I, myself, as I indicate that I'm too old for the new things. I'm part of what life was in the old times. I don't get involved with anything like that. I'm not going to be around here too much longer so I'm not going to branch out in the new fields, so to speak.

CRABTREE: Well, you say that you don't get involved with any of those new things, but you're 86 years old and you're still a crane operator. So I'm pretty impressed.

CARNEY: Those things haven't changed a lot. The first cranes actually came into being as soon as the railroad came into being. The first crane was patented, I think, in 1832, or something like that. Of course, by virtue of the fact that I've been immersed in that type of work all my life, I kind of looked that up, as I found it interesting, and I have at times

attended some of these shows where they have old equipment and old cranes and bulldozers and all that sort of thing.

CRABTREE: Well, we're kind of skipping around a little bit. I remember I made notes when you and I visited, and so I remember a few stories that you told. One was about Pearl Harbor Day.

CARNEY: Yes.

CRABTREE: And what it was like to get that news.

CARNEY: Yes, well Pearl Harbor Day we were cutting wood, right out here, and my mother came out and told us, my father, and my two older brothers. We used to cut wood and bring it home, and then with the circular saw, we'd pick one weekend and saw it all up. But, because coal was so cheap then we didn't burn the wood exclusively, about half and half. And right in this room here, we had a great big stove right behind you. And almost everything took place in this room. My mother would cook in the kitchen where we had a big table here, play cards or whatever we done. And this room, initially, was built as the sorting room. See everybody who grew broadleaf tobacco, it was a great advantage if you sorted the tobacco yourself. This was a winter job. You probably could get, on an average farm maybe you could get a couple thousand dollars more if you had the tobacco sorted. So that was the reason why most people had done that.

CRABTREE: Were you sorting the quality?

CARNEY: Different textures of the leaves. Different categories, don't ask me to name them, but there are at least a half a dozen basic leaves that have value. It's just like anything else, some have value, some don't, some would have intermediate value. So when you would cut the tobacco and strip it and have it in bundles in the tobacco shed, that's what was referred to as selling it by the bundle. On the other hand, if you sorted it yourself, the man who came to buy it would open up a bundle and see how you sorted it. Naturally, people try to put good stuff where it didn't belong. But if you were known to be honest, you could fetch a good price.

CRABTREE: So your family and hired hands would have a big table here and you would sort the tobacco, is that what you'd do?

CARNEY: The family would do it, most all of it. Maybe old John, the old hired man. He'd help too. But in order to get this much money from the product as you could, you'd done everything yourself that was practical.

See, besides the tobacco, we had corn, enough for the animals and so forth. You had a large sized garden. My mother used to can, almost enough to take you through the winter.

CRABTREE: Through the winter, yeah.

Now I got you off track. We were talking about Pearl Harbor Day and you were saying that you were—your father and Tom were out working with the circular saw?

CARNEY: All of us before my mom come out and told all of us about Pearl Harbor. As I recall, we continued on with our work till we finished. Then, of course, everything changed after that. That was in '41. But I didn't go in until early '43. My brother Jim went in the Air Force. He enlisted. I was drafted in early '43. March of '43. And I got out, actually just about two years. I was overseas for about three years.

On the other hand, my brother Jim who enlisted, he became a gunnery instructor and never did go overseas. It's like a game of chance, the service.

CRABTREE: Yeah it is. That's true.

CARNEY: Where you happen to be, and sometimes inadvertently people become a hero because they, you know the instinct to survive kicks in and either you do or you don't, you're gone.

CRABTREE: Did a lot of people from this town go?

CARNEY: Yes. I don't recall how many, but certainly there were a lot who went. And there was a great patriotic spirit at that period of time, because I recall my father was Chief Air Raid Warden and when you go down Graham Road, just before you get to Sullivan Avenue, there was a building up on the hillside there, there's a house there now, and that was the Air Raid Warden's station. And somebody was there all the time. We used to take turns at night for a few hours. You would go there and if you heard a plane, you'd call in.

CRABTREE: Right.

CARNEY: As it turned out, it didn't amount to a lot, but there was no trouble getting volunteers. It did pose quite a threat. There was the possibility that Germany could have come to this country more so than they did. It was just within their capabilities, and luckily there weren't any incidences, but what I mean to imply, there was—preparations were made. And people thought of nothing of going out in the middle of the night and putting in their time.

CRABTREE: So you made a comment earlier about being kind of isolated here, and how hard it was when you went to school. What do you remember about neighbors? I know you talked about Mr. Benjamin, who lived in the brick house, where Graham and Nevers come together now. But there were other neighbors, there was another one across toward Abbe Road that you talked about one time, I think.

CARNEY: Well, I talked about the Maskel family. Perhaps that's what you were thinking of.

CRABTREE: Yes, that's what I was thinking of.

CARNEY: And Mrs. Benjamin was a lovely lady. She was great friends with my mother and that was a period of time, I don't know why they were financially capable

because that shouldn't have been the case, but it was not unusual for her to come and borrow a cup of sugar, perhaps as much as anything else it was some way of socializing. She was a lovely person.

Old Mrs. Maskel, people of Jewish descent, lovely people. And we used to go there visit and they kind of exchanged farm work, they got along so well. Sometimes one of their men would be working here or our man would be working over there. And old Mrs. Maskel would go there, "Have some matzo, boys." Which we would, you know. We weren't crazy about it but she was such a nice person. They, initially, had come from the garment district in New York. They had a lot of relations there. So occasionally, they used to like to go back there, and my brother Tom was an excellent driver. Why he used to get the job of taking them there. They were more used to going with the horse and buggy and Tom—I can't remember him ever being in an accident, but when they got back in the yard, old Mrs. Maskel, was heard to remark, "Thank God we're here."

CRABTREE: You told me one time a story about how a hired hand got in trouble and Moey Maskel went with him?

CARNEY: That's right. This goes back to when county government was in effect here, and, of course, at that time, people complained about county government favoritism and that sort of thing. But everything considered, I think it was better than it is today. But at any rate, what this incident was, why he was taken to court, I don't remember. Anna Maskel, who told me this story, didn't remember either but she said it was nothing serious. But the man had been drinking, apparently, and got in some mischief, and got arrested and had to go to court. So now he's all excited, so her brother Moses, said, "Don't worry about it, I'll go with you. And when they ask you if you're guilty or not guilty, just say not guilty." So they go to court and finally his case comes up and Mo was sitting in the back of the courtroom, so the judge said, "Now in reference to this incident, were you intoxicated?" Well a great big word like that was beyond his comprehension, "Hey Mo," he said "guilty or not guilty?" That's the way things were done.

CRABTREE: Now, you also told me about the 1929 Hail Storm, the tobacco all getting ruined?

CARNEY: Yes, that's right. That was really a violent hail storm, because a day later on the north side of the tobacco shed, I remember the hail was still like this, this high. And again in reference to exchanging farm work, Moses Maskel mowed the high tobacco down, and we must have done something to reciprocate. At any rate, I was told that I would be following him around as he's mowing with the horses, and I was heard to remark, "That's why they call you Moey because you're always mowing everything."

CRABTREE: And they lived just down the road across toward Abbe Road, is that right?

CARNEY: If you went on Abbe Road, going from south to north a brook crosses the road, and that's the house on the right hand side just beyond where the brook crosses the road, there's Maskel's house. The house is still there, but of course, like this one it's completely different now.

An interesting kind of story, I'm going to tell this story about old Jack Lahey. This is WPA time and the story gets very involved about—I'll tell this part of it and get me back to Jack Lahey. At any rate, in 1936, the town had a screen and sand and gravel operation down on Sand Hill Road on Collins' property. It came about in 1936, so our family and Benjamin's family each sold a certain amount of acreage to them. And the screen and gravel plant was just down the road here, on that side. And then, when there were some poor people and no place for them to go so the town moved two small houses there and that was where Jack Lahey lived in one of these little houses and they dug up a well, put a privy there and that was it.

Jack Lahey was working for the WPA and he had no car or anything, sometimes we'd give him a ride or other people would. Late in the afternoon he'd be coming home walking up the road here, and he stopped at some still along the way. He'd be in fine form by the time he got up as far as here, so he'd be talking away at some imaginative friend, with a certain amount of cursing and carrying on, and sometimes we would talk with him a little bit. But we preferred not to because then you had the nuisance of trying to get rid of him. Well, he went down the road here a little ways and he fell down and passed out in the road, and, of course, that was a time we're driving with the blacked out lights and my mother told me and Tom to go over to the local store and get something that we didn't have. So we went down the road a little ways and here lays Jack, he's passed out right in the road. Well, luckily we'd seen him, so we stopped. "Jack," I said, "Oh, my god what's the matter with you?" "Leave me alone," he said, "I'm practicing for the blackout." Well, for the amount of practice he had he should have been perfect.

CRABTREE: So, let's pause for just a minute.

[Pause]

CRABTREE: What do you remember about the 1938 hurricane? I know stories from all over the state, but I'd love to hear what you experienced here.

CARNEY: Of course here, all the big trees went; the big horse chestnut tree, a great big black walnut tree, a giant sized elm tree. The way the wind was blowing the trees must have been this big in circumference. The root system was so good that it wouldn't pull over but it was almost hitting the ground, and then would come back. Later, of course, we had to cut it down because it just stayed at that angle. As I recall, I think it was six weeks or maybe more before all the roads were open and so forth, and it wouldn't have been that soon, except most people took care of their own area.

But luckily, as I say, the old house did fine and the old barn across the road was fine enough. We had a tobacco shed down in the field here and you could see it going rolling like a cardboard box.

CRABTREE: Really. Well every time we get a big storm, and I'm living in this house, I say to myself, well it survived for 249 years, I guess it will survive this one. But I've also experienced the shaking, and I can just imagine in 1938.

CARNEY: Oh something else that I never had mentioned to you, Davida. Right across the other side of Graham Road, that Griffin had shade growing tobacco there through those fields. But interestingly enough, prior to when Griffin bought it, I mean he bought

it from [pause] start to tell you something I got to finish it—Haviland. You've heard of Olivia Haviland?

CRABTREE: Mm-mm.

CARNEY: Well it was her brother and her family that owned and had the tobacco here. But then they sold it to the Griffin family. So even 20 years after this had happened, people always would say, that's Haviland's. But it was the Griffin family that bought it. And I can remember they had all mules for doing farm work. And during a storm it was something, the mules would get away and they'd be racing all over the area. Mules in certain ways are smarter than horses, because the locomotive at Rye Street there, at around 12 o'clock they would blow the whistle. When they'd blow the whistle the mules would work no more. Really, I'm not lying.

CRABTREE: Isn't that something.

CARNEY: They knew it was time to stop and eat. They began braying. They'd have to take them and feed them. It's interesting.

CRABTREE: So your family owned 100 acres here?

CARNEY: Initially, 100 acres. Now, I forget how many acres were sold for the gravel operation. But as it turns out, when my grandfather died, we had a mortgage on the place and then when we sold this property to the town well then we were able to pay that off. And then in later years, my mother sold the property off and nobody objected to that because she had worked so hard in her lifetime, and nobody would ever say anything about what she wanted to do.

CRABTREE: I think you told me one time that she did all the cooking in the big room in the old part of the house.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Is that right? Was that on a wood stove?

CARNEY: Yeah, well coal.

CRABTREE: Coal stove.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: So that kept her busy.

CARNEY: And then, of course, you worked in the fields all the time too, and not only for our fields. She worked on other places too. Now our cousins, when you go up Griffin Road, you turn to the right, do you know where the big potato warehouse is up on the

right up there. In late years, they haven't had potatoes in there. But before you get there the big farmhouse on the left that was the Gedrim Farm, that's been sold now, it belongs to one of the Mitchells, I think. Going way back, Gedrim's we're on my mother's side of the family, we're second cousins, I think.

And this is an interesting story, Jimmy Gedrim, although he was of Lithuanian and Polish descent, somehow when he was younger he worked with a lot of the Irish. And I'll tell you this story. He had to have a tooth pulled by a Dr. Craigo in East Hartford, who was a well-known dentist in this area. So he's describing this to me afterwards. I had gone to this dentist myself and one of the characteristics before an extraction the doctor had to fortify himself. He'd take a good drink, you could smell it when he'd come. So anyway, Jimmy was a big man and he had a history of having teeth that were hard to extract. So he's explaining this to me, "The little guy" he says "he climbs up on me chest, he puts the chair way down. He climbs on me chest," he says, "he's pulling away and pulling away and he's getting nowhere. Here, says I, little fella, let me help you. I put me hands on his hands," he said, "I pulled out me own tooth." I never told you that story.

CRABTREE: No, you didn't tell me that story, that's great.

CARNEY: Oh, God.

CRABTREE: That's good. Do you know how your family ended up here in South Windsor, and when did they immigrate here?

CARNEY: Well, you see, my real grandmother died in 1901, and the Carney family prior to that had lived in Rockville. And then, after my grandmother died, well then, exactly how my grandfather got involved with Roseanna Mulligan, I would say, I would guess through the church. I would imagine. So then, of course, when he sold the place on High Street in Rockville and moved here, and then, of course, later years after he passed on then my father took over the farm until the war. And my father and mother separated, actually before the war, but that's one of the things that accounted for that.

CRABTREE: So your Irish descent, who were your—who were the relatives that came over from Ireland? Do you know?

CARNEY: They came from County Cork, from County Waterford, but none of them ever came here that I can remember. Just what my father used to talk about it, and my grandfather. So when I went to Ireland, I went to both places where they came from and there were some distant relations there but nobody close because so many years had gone by. Strangely enough the areas, particularly County Cork, are very similar to here. You know what I mean, the lay of the land and everything and I often wondered about the horse chestnut tree and the black walnut tree because over in that part of Ireland there were those trees there. So I thought perhaps some Mulligans who came from Waterford right near Cork, I thought perhaps they got those trees to remind them of home. That's what I always thought, but I didn't know that for a fact.

Now my mother's side of the family, because her mother and father died very young, they didn't see their relations as much because they didn't have as many relations as we did.

They must not have been as prolific or something, I don't know. But at times, there was more. My Uncle Peter, who was my mother's brother. And it's an interesting story—

CRABTREE: And his last name would have been?

CARNEY: Goldrick. He separated from his wife in 1936 and that was about the time they were building Boulder Dam [Hoover Dam]. Besides the Boulder Dam there were a lot of projects just like that in that part of the world. He worked at those. And in 1943, when I was taking my basic training at Camp Grant, Illinois, my mother had wrote to him and so then he came to the camp two different weekends. That was really something and I fondly remember. And he took me all around Chicago places in the time that we had, two or three days that I would have off. And then in 1955, he came back here and then he went to Florida and he bought a business near Ocala at that time was an ordinary sized store and you could make a living. So he had a combination grocery store, hardwood store and everything. That was in a small town by the name of Anthony about maybe five miles from Ocala. We used to have a great time when we'd go there to visit him.

CRABTREE: That's great.

CARNEY: He died rather young. He died in 1963, my God. I don't know why I'm still here when I think about it. I guess I'm lucky.

CRABTREE: We're lucky too. We get to hear your stories. It's great.
You know, I was thinking about one other thing. I had asked you whether you knew if it was true that the first Roman Catholic mass in South Windsor was celebrated in this house, and you'd said you heard the same thing, or something.

CARNEY: Yes. I've heard it from enough sources that there had to have been truth towards it. And even Barney Daley when he was writing his book we used to talk about that. And he thought from what he had learned that that must have been the case, that it was really a fact.

CRABTREE: You had said that you had thought that there was a history of a missionary having lived in this house at one time? Do you know anything about that?

CARNEY: I had heard that story.

CRABTREE: Would that have been a Roman Catholic missionary?

CARNEY: I would think, yes.

CRABTREE: I thought that was interesting.

CARNEY: Yes. Yes.

CRABTREE: Well it's hard to establish the difference between story and truth but I like the

stories.

CARNEY: Yeah, yeah. So they went to church. You know probably in some instances that was it. You know what I mean. And almost the same in the other case, you know.

CRABTREE: So how did you get to church? You went to Broadbrook, did you?

CARNEY: Yeah. Well of course we had a car and the first car that we had was an Overland and then a Model T Ford, then the '34 Plymouth, and then a '37 DeSoto, and I forget after that.

CRABTREE: But earlier than that, you used to go in the buggy did you?

CARNEY: That's right, but that's when I went with my grandmother and my grandfather. Sometimes we'd go in the buggy and sometimes we'd go with an old 1926 Buick car that he had. But he didn't like that quite as well. He was more familiar with the horse and buggy. I recall sitting between the two of them and be covered with a blanket like it was cold. My grandfather he was a character, by God, some of the things he used to say. The Irish have a certain kind of humor about them. Somebody he didn't like particularly, the people who would buy the tobacco and this sort of thing. One other man said that that man was a good man. "Oh, fine man he is indeed. He could give you the sleeves right out of his vest, he would," he'd say. "He'll give you a fork for your soup. Steal your eye for a grape he would." And on and on he'd go. A lot of them I remember but most of them I don't.

CRABTREE: When you said that your mother sent you and your brother to the store, that time you came across Jack lying in the road, where would the store have been?

CARNEY: Well probably John Kissel's store. When you go up to Griffin Road, if you turn left and you go across the railroad tracks and then over after a little while there's a building on the left there, it's used for some other purpose now, but that was John Kissel's store. There were a number of small stores around. But that was the main one we would go to, or either that or to Windsorville. And interestingly enough, here on Graham Road, did you know where the Kupchunos family lived on Graham Road?

CRABTREE: No.

CARNEY: Well that initially was the Graham Farm and there was a store there too.

CRABTREE: The stores were kind of scattered around town for convenience.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Now, I was just thinking when you were talking about Graham Road, I remember visiting with a neighbor that lives down diagonally across here,

Sally, who told me that when her family's house burned down, your mother gave her parents the land to build a house.

CARNEY: That's right.

CRABTREE: That was an extraordinarily generous for your family to do.

CARNEY: Things were done like that that period of time. Then of course we went to school with all the Reichle boys and had a good relationship, and they were just good, good people. They deserved to be helped and we didn't expect any payback but in later years they did pay something. But we didn't even ask them to, but, I guess, in later years when they got a little money they did pay something for it. Sally's father, Frannie who I call, he was a colorful guy. He was five or six years older than me. He passed on about a year or so ago, very interesting person.

CRABTREE: I've got a question for you. Down where what used to be called the five corners, down where the Wapping Church is, what would have been there in the years you were growing up?

CARNEY: Well that's where I went to school. See the Congregational Church, that addition on this end, the school was right there. The grammar school was right there.

CRABTREE: So did you walk?

CARNEY: No we had buses but the bus never, because of the way their routes were laid out, was never on Nevers Road. We had to walk across and get the bus on Graham Road.

CRABTREE: What else would have been at that intersection? Was there anything else that you can remember?

CARNEY: Well there were two stores. Harry Snow had a store on the left. So there's a Mexican Restaurant or something there now. You know what I mean?

CRABTREE: The Texas.

CARNEY: Yeah. And then you know where the Community Center building is? Well that little road that goes to there would meet through 30, there's a big house there on the corner that was the other store. That was Billings' Store. Now there's another story that's got to be told.

I was two years older than my brother Tom. When Tom went to school, he somehow had a little change and he went to Billings' store—he had recess at a different time than I had but—going to do something nice for his brother, he bought an ice cream cone and he came back to the school and he came into the room where I was and, “Is my brother here? Well here's his ice cream cone.” Well the teacher said something about we're having class. Well he could eat it

later, my brother said. “Oh Francis you might as well eat your ice cream cone.” But that’s something a child would do. That’s kind of funny.

CRABTREE: And Francis was your name?

CARNEY: Yes, and that indicates an affection between the brothers.

CRABTREE: Absolutely.

CARNEY: So I often think of things like that that happened.

CRABTREE: And the big stone building across from the church, that was a library was it, at one time?

CARNEY: Yes, Wood Memorial Library. Of course when we were going to school we used to use that library.

CRABTREE: Well that’s great.

CARNEY: But now Peter Delaney, he’s an accountant and he has offices there, and then I know somebody else. And Peter Delaney he’s involved with an Irish singing group so we see him, and they even come to the senior center every year. Once or twice a year we get together with him and a nephew of mine.

CRABTREE: That’s great.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Keeps the Irish going.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Were there a lot of Irish people in this town?

CARNEY: Well not a lot. I’d say—let me put it in perspective. Let’s see the old English, Lithuanian, Polish, Irish, well you could split them up there, and of course, you’ve got a few other ethnic groups too. But I’d say like when I was growing up, maybe there were 20 percent Irish. Like here if you went towards Windsorville, there was the Dunnes, O’Neils, Griffins and Malones, Sullivans, Nortons. So you could come up with quite a few if you kept thinking about it.

CRABTREE: They’ve been here a long time. They’ve become really important with a road named after them.

CARNEY: You go back to the time of the telephone party line, and of course old Mrs. Dimlow was the one who was always talking on the telephone. Then

something happened at home and must have been some type of an emergency, nothing too bad, but my grandfather, who was kind of impatient guy would “Pay attention, Mrs. Dimlow, get off of the phone now, this is an emergency.”

CRABTREE: So did you ever pick up and listen in on a party line?

CARNEY: No but that was a popular thing to do.

CRABTREE: I confess that I did when I was growing up. We had party lines even when I was growing up. Every now and then I’d have to listen in, nothing to do in the country.

CARNEY: No. Well that’s why it’s not the type of recreation that people have today. But in effect it instilled a sort of a work ethic in the people of my time that in many instances doesn’t seem to exist today.

CRABTREE: That’s true. Why do you think that is?

CARNEY: Well, I suppose there are a lot of reasons I don’t know. At that time you were almost forced into a position, that’s the way you had to do it. You know what I mean. There was no leisure time like people have today. It’s unheard of when you come home not to have something to do.

CRABTREE: Well if you didn’t tend to the garden you weren’t going to eat in the winter.

CARNEY: That’s right.

CRABTREE: And do the canning and all of that. So it was a hard life. I know. When I grew up my grandparents had a farm out in Western Connecticut and so I know a little bit of that life.

CARNEY: And of course you didn’t have the diversion of television which can be a blessing or can be a curse too. And radio was in its infancy at that time too.

CRABTREE: Well I remember when radio first came in, my grandfather used to talk about how the whole—it would be a standing radio and they’d all gather around the radio and listen to the news, particularly from World War II, but even maybe a little bit earlier than that.

CARNEY: I can remember—this is something I always think of, the one commentator that was well known at that period of time Gabriel Heatter. “Well folks, it’s bad news tonight.” He’d go on to indicate how the war was going. “Well folks, it’s bad news tonight.” That always identified him.

CRABTREE: I wonder if we shouldn’t take a break and take a look at some of these pictures that you’ve brought.

CARNEY: Well there's not very many but that's all I could find. But when you get involved with my brother Arthur he should have more. Now whether he may have discarded them or not?

CRABTREE: Oh I hope not.

CARNEY: I told Jack. Jack's daughter should have more pictures. And I told him that, but so far I've got no response. At such time if he meets you he'll see that it's a lovely lady and that maybe he should do something for her.

[End Part 1]

JESSICA: Tell us the history of your occupying this house to having found it and what appealed to you about it.

CRABTREE: When I was called to my position with the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, I was involved very much with interviews, and so my husband, David Hindegar, did the exploration looking for homes. So he looked at 29 homes in two days. Everywhere from Rocky Hill to Windsor and over here, and he had picked out five houses for me to look at. And one of them was here in South Windsor. I don't even remember where it was now. But we were driving along and a for sale sign was in front of this house and our realtor said we can only do a drive by because they have two very nasty German Shepherds and we can't go near the house. But David and I sat in the car out there and looked at this house and said, oh we're in trouble. We just fell in love with it. At that time, it ended here at the fireplace and we had intended not to do any building to it but to live upstairs in the old part of the house. But we couldn't get—my husband was a big man, a contractor and we couldn't get a bed upstairs, up the little tiny colonial stairs that was big enough for the two of us. So the first two years we had a Queen bed in the summer parlor and you could barely get around the room. And we'd have to go upstairs to the only closets, and it was too dangerous with those little tiny colonial stairs. So we finally decided given David's skill at building that we'd put an addition on. And we hired an architect to be sure that it was in good proportion to the house.

And so David built the whole addition, cut through here to put on a new entryway and a bedroom and bath and upstairs I have a study. So that's 15 years. We bought in 1996 and have been here 15 years. And I'm looking forward to being here, if it's true that the house was built in 1763, which we think is true, it was somewhere in that time period because there was a period of only five or six years when the center chimney had a vault chamber under it when they built that way and in this house the center chimney has a vault chamber under it. And so we know it is somewhere in the early to mid-1760's that this house was built. So I'm going to assume that 1763 is correct, that's what's on the front of the house, and if that's the case then in 2013 it will be 250 years old. And I want to live here at least a few months of 250 years old.

CARNEY: This is a story that tells how the human mind works. My mother lived in Florida her last few years and when she finally got so bad my wife went down and took care of her for the last year before she passed on and she's laid to rest in Florida. Anyway, prior to her passing when she was getting kind of delirious one day she said to my wife Dorothy, who she knew well, she says, "I'll be right back. I've got to go across the road to the

barn.” You know where we lived, the barn right across the road. It’s funny about that.

And these people who I knew, I still know the husband, the wife having passed away. She contracted cancer and was sick for a year or so. They had a home in Florida too, so they went down there and knowing fair well that it’s going to be the last time. And when they came back, they had the business across from me which is still there and they went to the business and then they’re coming out and they’re going and they waive and all of a sudden they backed up. And then the next day, Stanley said, “Well Lois said she wanted to talk to you.” And that was the last time I talked with her. So it’s funny how that happens sometimes. Lois wanted to talk to you and a day or so later she died. We were real friendly and I always had a big garden and she would come and I’d give her stuff. I loved to talk with her, lovely person.

UNKNOWN: Did your parents grow up here too?

CARNEY: My mother grew up right on Graham Road, and my father, as I say, from Rockville, High Street in Rockville. Then they moved here and, of course, they never went back.

You see, when my real grandmother, Corcoran-Carney died, then my grandfather kept the three boys, my Uncle Norbert, my Father Arthur, and my Uncle Edmond. The two girls Leona and Helen, Leona being the older, one of the Corcorans from Philadelphia took her and my Aunt Helen with Margaret Corcoran her aunt. So then the girls, pretty much, were separated. Aunt Helen could see the boys here, her brothers, all the time, but Aunt Leona, once she moved down there, we would see her like a couple of times a year or something like that.

CRABTREE: What was your mother’s birth name?

CARNEY: Goldrick.

CRABTREE: So Pete was her brother?

CARNEY: Yeah. Yeah.

CRABTREE: Okay.

CARNEY: And then her older sister Kate married an Irishman, Bart Dunne, they lived just out beyond Mulnite Farm just on the left hand side. As a matter of fact, after during the Depression they lost the place and then Mulnite took that farm over too. But old Bart Dunne, my uncle, was an interesting kind of man too.

Right when you go down towards Benjamin’s—the brook that crosses the road there, on the left-hand side of the brook down in the woods there was a quarry hole where we used to swim. So one time I said, “Uncle Bart my God that must have been a long time ago when they were working that quarry.” “Oh God no length of time at all that was back in ’97 it was still going.”

CRABTREE: 1897.

CARNEY: Yeah. But a lot of these things relate to your age, you know.

CRABTREE: Yes.

[Recording turned off then on and singing]

CARNEY: There's a long, long night of waiting until my dreams all come true, until the day that I'll be walking down that long long trail with you.

CRABTREE: That's great.

CARNEY: Did you ever hear that song?

CRABTREE: No. I never heard that song.

CARNEY: I don't remember where I heard it but my mom used to ask me to sing it, "Sing the long long trail song."

CRABTREE: Butch, why don't you tell us about these photos? You just need to hold it in such a way so she can see it with the camera.

CARNEY: This is right in front of the house, and this is Rosy Morawski, and this is a farm laborer. I can't think of his name at the moment, but he worked for the Maskels. And Rosy's husband ran the store here in Windsorville. Zemanski's store. See they're all passed away now.

CRABTREE: And so the room that we're sitting in right now, was right here, was this L, and this was the sorting room?

CARNEY: That's right.

CRABTREE: For the tobacco.

CARNEY: That's right when it was initially built, and my father and his uncles. In other words, I believe that when my grandfather got this farm from the Mulligan's what financial arrangements were made, I don't know, but then that was the time they built this sorting room. That would have been just before World War II. World War I, rather.

CRABTREE: World War I, right.

CARNEY: There are so many different wars. It's easy to get confused isn't it?

CRABTREE: Well, what's interesting to me is to see there was also something like a porch—

CARNEY: Yes, there was.

CRABTREE: —on the back of the keeping room and it was all glass.

CARNEY: That's right.

CRABTREE: It's really quite remarkable.

CARNEY: Yes.

CRABTREE: And it looks like there was a fireplace or chimney here where this one is.

CARNEY: Well that's where the big stove was.

CRABTREE: Oh, okay.

CARNEY: Big stove. And there was more heat in this room than there was in the whole rest of the house.

CRABTREE: And then there's this picture.

CARNEY: Yes. That's Moses Maskel. And, of course, he was involved in the story about in the court.

CRABTREE: Right, and the mowing.

CARNEY: Yes, and the mowing. He died relatively young. I don't know exactly why. He was only 50 years old when he died. And again Rosy. She was friendly with all of us. She was friendly with my mother like during the war when we were gone. She always came around to visit my mother.

CRABTREE: Was that one of your horses?

CARNEY: Yes. No, no. I don't know for sure. I can't say for sure.

CRABTREE: And who was this?

CARNEY: That's my father. And that's Arthur my youngest brother who was born in 1936. So I've got to say that this picture was taken in 1936. And at that point in time, 1936 my father would have been Jack Benny's age, 39 years old. He was a, my father was a colorful kind of a man. He, as I say, my parents separated but he had been in World War I and then when they got arguing and fighting he went back in World War II. He's seen a lot of action in the Pacific theatre in that period of time. And then later years, well finally, the last six years of his life, he lived with us in Ellington.

And another interesting, sad story, my brother Tom died on the 21st of December 1959, and my father came and stayed with us in January, and of course, he'd been roaming all over—I forget where he came in from, California, I think. And of course I had to tell him that Tom had died. Not pleasant, but life has a lot of things that aren't pleasant. We had quite a few good times

until later when his health failed. And by virtue of his lifestyle, he was only 69 years old when he passed on.

CRABTREE: Well, here's a farm picture.

CARNEY: Yes, that's Peter Carney working somewhere around the farm, my grandfather. And this is the old Fordson tractor. And that would have been right up on the hill, it was the highest part of the hill before you begin going the other way. That's where the back of the shed was. And that's the back of the shed that somehow got on fire and burnt down. We never knew exactly why, but that building had been built by the Mulligans. That building was there. These other two tobacco sheds, the one down here and the other one over across the brook, my grandfather had built when he came here.

CRABTREE: So who's on the tractor, can you tell?

CARNEY: Well us three older boys, and I'll guess that this is Jim, and me and Tom, which I can't tell. But as you can see he had the Armstrong starter, as they say. It's a contrary kind of a thing but it got the work done, made it a little easier on the horses.

CRABTREE: And then this was a friend of your family or of yours?

CARNEY: Old Harry Belknap, he lived on Barber Hill Road and he raised goats. He had a kind of a small farm, but he was real old by the time we got to know him. It was not much of an operation he had, but, you know, they had chronic crippling arthritis, he and his wife. We were told that goat's milk is really good for people with that condition, and so it was thought at that period of time. So that accounts for the goats.

CRABTREE: Well, I think that your family must have really enjoyed those goats because there were a lot of pictures in here of the Belknaps and their goats.

CARNEY: Yeah, yeah.

CRABTREE: I don't know if I can find them. Here they are. Here's one and some more. So I think you boys must have really liked the goats.

CARNEY: And this is a picture of Arthur there and Jack. Jack, who was, as I say he just turned 80, and if you come down to the Breakfast Club, you'll meet him.

CRABTREE: Okay.

CARNEY: Jack had a stroke about, maybe it could be almost ten years ago now, it didn't leave him badly impaired but you know how older people tend to shuffle, I'm getting that way myself, but at any rate, that was one aspect of it that he was left. It affected his gait and a few things like that. Jack is an interesting kind of a person.

CRABTREE: Well, I'm going to look forward to meeting him.

CARNEY: Jack was in the Korean War and the interesting aspect of that, which we were discussing here just a month or so ago, you know it's so cold in Korea that when the troops used to move by truck, they used to have to get in their sleeping bags in the truck, because it was so cold. If you were going you wouldn't be able to stand it.

CRABTREE: Well, Korea has the same climate we do.

CARNEY: It's colder actually.

CRABTREE: Well that's good. Were there any other pictures in here that you think are especially important? These are some later ones.

CARNEY: You probably got the more important ones.

CRABTREE: There's someone fishing.

CARNEY: Oh, that is Billy Baldwin, he was kind of a roustabout guy. He was a hunter and fisher. My father was too so that's how we always would be going. When he was around there was either hunting or fishing involved.

CRABTREE: Do you have any idea where this was taken?

CARNEY: No, I don't.

CRABTREE: Do you think it was here in town?

CARNEY: Yeah, it probably was. It could even have been—this could be the road going over the hill over Graham Road. That could be. You know you have to make allowances because I'm getting almost middle aged.

This is an interesting story. This is the Indian guide, the Penobscot Indian. Some of the townspeople, I think you will know somebody, they went to Maine and they got to know him. So my father he was a hunter so we all went to Maine in 1935 and it was up at Moosehead Lake way, Rangeley Lakes, and of course there were a lot of woodworking men working in the woods, but this area where we were they had buildings which they had previously used but they were pretty much left intact, even though, the big range for cooking was there, bunks were there, we brought all of our own bedding. There was plenty of wood there, and we had the fire going. My mother cooked with a big old stove. And this Indian, who was supposed to be the guide, I think I told you this story about him, he was more an imbiber than a guide. Us kids were, you know as children, we were watching what was going on, he'd have a bottle stashed here, he'd have a bottle stashed there and of course he had all these stories, I suppose similar to me in a way, but I like to think that most of my stories are not exaggerations but at any rate, he had an old cap that was all bloodied and his story was that a bobcat jumped out of a tree and knocked him down and cut his head, oh he was lucky to escape with his life. Well one day somebody came around to the cabin, one of the other men were saying that was kind of a sad incident, the bobcat how he got knocked down and everything. "What?" the guy said, "What's this? Geez that's a new one," he

said. “Well”, the man said, “Isn’t that the truth, of course, not.” he says, “He got drunk and he slipped and he fell down and hit his head on a rock.

Seems this book was Arthur’s.

CRABTREE: Yes.

CARNEY: He could identify this.

CRABTREE: There was another picture in here that I don’t know if the camera can pick this up. I’m going to take this out on the chance that it can, but we thought maybe this was the 1938 hurricane.

CARNEY: It could very well have been.

CRABTREE: This shows the trees across the road.

CARNEY: Yes, yes.

CRABTREE: And here’s the house here.

CARNEY: There should be a whole series of pictures like that, but who might have them or through the years they may have got lost or something. I don’t know.

CRABTREE: It’s not an easy picture to see but.

CARNEY: But that’s probably what it is. So if you talk with Arthur he could put you right on a lot of these things. But Arthur he’s got vertigo now, where it affects your balance.

CRABTREE: That’s hard.

CARNEY: So he’s had it for quite awhile, although I don’t know if something else is involved, who knows, perhaps so. There are quite a few other things that are very similar to that you know. Well he calls me faithfully every Sunday afternoon.

CRABTREE: That’s good. I’m glad you get family time that way.

CARNEY: And he comes once a year. He has a defibrillator and he has had all kinds of problems. He’s had most afflictions known to man at one time or another.

CRABTREE: How about we do a little tour of the house and you can tell us what it was like when you lived here?

CARNEY: Yes. Okay. [Butch sings the following.]

I watched last night the rising moon
Upon a foreign strand
Till mem'ries came like flowers of June
Of home and fatherland

I dreamt I was a child once more
Beside the rippling rill
Where first I saw, in days of yore
The moon behind the hill

It brought me back the visions grand
That purpled boyhood's dreams
Its youthful loves, its happy land
As bright as morning beams

It brought me back my own sweet Nore
The castle and the mill
Until my eyes could see no more
The moon behind the hill

It brought me back a mother's love
Until, in accents wild
I prayed her from her home above
To guard her lonely child

It brought me one across the wave
To live in mem'ry still
It brought me back my Kathleen's grave
The moon behind the hill

CRABTREE: That's great. That is just great.
[Sounds like tape turned off then back on.]

CARNEY: It was the sorting room indeed. I never did participate in the sorting, but it wasn't just a while prior to my time that it was a very active place in the wintertime. That was winter work, and it was family oriented, the family, the more that they could do the sorting the more money could be taken in. It just was the growing of the tobacco was the main, was the livelihood, main livelihood.

CRABTREE: So there would have been a big work table here, that's right?

CARNEY: Yes. And there would have been containers for the tobacco to be put. There aren't any sorting rooms left that I know of. There was a man by the name of Stanley Waldron who died a year or so ago. Stanley still sorted tobacco up until the year before he died. Good friend of mine and a great, great person. Did you ever meet him?

CRABTREE: No. But I knew his sister-in-law Susan. So this would have been heated with a big stove over in the corner?

CARNEY: Well, it wouldn't have been heated much though because too much heat would have dried the tobacco out too much. But it would have been heated towards a certain extent, yes.

CRABTREE: And you would have your meals here as well?

CARNEY: Yeah. Yeah.

CRABTREE: Because you said that your mother cooked in here?

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Why don't we go look in here.

CARNEY: I've been there before, a long time ago.

CRABTREE: Well, I have it set up now like an old keeping room fireplace back from the 1700's and early 1800's maybe as late as the Mulligans were here. But I think you said your mother had a big coal stove here?

CARNEY: Right in that very area that you're indicating, yes.

CRABTREE: And it would have been vented up the chimney.

CARNEY: Yep. Yep.

CRABTREE: And what else do you remember about this room, anything?

CARNEY: There was a little room over here, that's where my grandfather used to sleep. As a matter of fact it would be where he passed on right there. And some people are destined for certain things. I was there the day he passed on. My father gave him a drink of whiskey at the end and that didn't help. But then when my father passed on, I was with him too, so some people are destined for that sort of thing.

CRABTREE: I think the wall was like right under this beam or something like that. Would have been right about here?

CARNEY: I would think so.

CRABTREE: Do you remember where the door was?

CARNEY: Way to the left.

CRABTREE: Over here. That's what I thought probably.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: There would have been a door here going into this small room. And then, did you use this as a parlor?

CARNEY: Yes, pretty much, if I recall correctly, but you know things are changed enough that it confuses me and by virtue of that I'm easily confused these days because father time is taking his toll on me.

CRABTREE: Toll yeah. The fireplace would have been here when you were here.

CARNEY: Yes, I believe so.

CRABTREE: And, I'm told this is called the casket door. So do you remember, was your grandfather taken to a funeral home or was he laid out here?

CARNEY: He was laid out at home.

CRABTREE: At home here?

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Well you had to have a casket door because the front doors you couldn't get the casket in and out. You had to be able to come directly in this way.

CARNEY: I can remember that quite well because a lot of the, quite a few of the relations came. As I say, they lived in Rockville, but prior to that they lived up in North Wilbraham, and prior to that they lived in Hamden. When they first came from Ireland, they lived in Hamden, worked in some mill there and then, if you were to go up past the Wilbraham Academy and you get to Route 20, turn right and you go a little ways and there's a bridge, over the Swift River and then the other side is North Wilbraham. They had a farm up there, you know, a small farm.

CRABTREE: Let me know who are you talking about, your grandparents?

CARNEY: I'm talking about my grandfather's sisters and brothers.

CRABTREE: Okay, that whole family.

CARNEY: In other words my Grandpa Carney had, there was one older brother, but whether he was somehow was estranged from the family but then there was Bidy, Mame, and Nell, three sisters. And then, of course, my Great Grandfather Patrick, but I don't remember him. But they had a small farm and Nell she was the herdsman. She had really cows, a little short woman and she had a bull with a ring in its nose. She used to be leading it

around with a staff—If I can get little off—“Get the hell over here.” Little woman but boy she could handle the bull.

[Recording turned off then on.]

CRABTREE: That’s great I mean you had a job right here. It’s hard for me to imagine with these houses all sitting here that there was a big hill there. Did you boys like to play on that hill?

CARNEY: Yeah. We used to slide. And then, of course, when you followed out this road across the stream then when you go up the hill, then just up the hill and down a little ways we had two cornfields there and then you could continue on and after you crossed the brook, we had tobacco fields over there. A tobacco shed over there. And the road continued on over to Abbe Road.

CRABTREE: So your family really owned on that side of the road as well as in this triangle here?

CARNEY: Oh, yes.

CRABTREE: I believe you told me that your land started just about where that pine tree is, is that about right?

CARNEY: Yes. See that corner there belonged to Benjamin.

CRABTREE: Right the V, the triangle at the end belonged to the Benjamin house which is the brick one and you can barely see straight up there up the road, just barely see it.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Well, let’s go over here and you can tell us where the ice house was and—

[Recoding turned off and on.]

CRABTREE: Okay. So you were saying where the stone wall is on the neighbor’s property?

CARNEY: Well, it’s awfully hard for me to picture it, because those trees weren’t there, but about where those two larger trees are. Somewhere in that area was where the ice house was.

CRABTREE: And how big would the ice house have been?

CARNEY: I’ll say 30 feet long by 15, 18 feet wide.

CRABTREE: Bigger than I imagined.

CARNEY: But see the cellar was the important part. But it was high enough.

CRABTREE: What do you mean the cellar was the important part?

CARNEY: That's where the ice was kept.

CRABTREE: Down in the ground.

CARNEY: Yeah, down.

CRABTREE: And did they put hay in with it?

CARNEY: Yes.

CRABTREE: I don't know why I remember that. Must be I'm older than my years or something. And so then you said, let's see, there were tobacco sheds. So there was one across the street?

CARNEY: Yes, and one up on the hill, and one down in the field, down there.

CRABTREE: Was there a tobacco shed across the street?

CARNEY: Yes, but way over on the other side of the brook.

CRABTREE: Oh, way over.

CARNEY: Yes. From here we're talking 800 feet maybe, something like that.

CRABTREE: And the barn would have been?

CARNEY: The barn probably started right about, see that tree there with all the branches going that way?

CRABTREE: Mm-hmm.

CARNEY: It would have started there probably about 50 feet further that way at least. But it's awful hard for me to picture, but I'd say that the barn then was probably 50 feet long. Of course there was an addition on this end here, which was for storing the buggies and old plows and farm implements and so forth.

CRABTREE: Now would that barn have been painted?

CARNEY: No.

CRABTREE: No. It would have been the natural wood?

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: Was it two stories, did it have a hayloft?

CARNEY: Oh yes.

CRABTREE: Why don't we walk around this way?

[Recording turned off then on.]

CARNEY: Several different places. One place where we had a garden quite often was just beyond the ice house in the field right there. An interesting sideline, as you went down that way we had an orchard down beyond there a ways. And of course there was stonewalls all the way along the road, and a lot of wild grapes and hazelnuts.

CRABTREE: Oh really?

CARNEY: Yep.

CRABTREE: And what was up on the hill here? A tobacco shed?

CARNEY: Yes. You know I'm confused as to be able to properly locate it.

CRABTREE: Of course.

CARNEY: But right about where the higher part of the land before it begins going down, it sat there.

CRABTREE: You know, when David and I bought this house, right up there beyond that stone wall where the shed is, was a pool, a 20 by 40 swimming pool. And we had it until we both got sick and then we closed it and then it got ruined because we were sick for so long. So this past year, just this year, in 2011 I had it filled in and I've turned it into a vegetable garden.

CARNEY: I see.

CRABTREE: So we're going to turn it back into a farm.

CARNEY: And so, then in that very area up there too occasionally we'd have a garden. And then, of course, there was all kinds of nice fields down here.

Another interesting sideline, my father was very interested in flying. He never did become a flyer, but he had friends who were. A man by the name of Frenchie Descombs had a flying school down at Brainard Field and my father become so friendly with him, lots of times he used to come here and fly over the house and come down low with the plane and he'd holler to

my father, “Come down to the fields.”

CRABTREE: That’s great.

CARNEY: My grandfather, “Jesus Christ, Arthur, tell that damn Frenchman not to come here again. Christ he’ll kill the lot of us.”

JESSICA: If you could repeat that one again, I couldn’t hear you with the truck.

CARNEY: Oh, about the Frenchman?

CRABTREE: Yeah.

CARNEY: “Tell that damn Frenchman not to be coming over here, he’ll kill the lot of us,” He’d say.

CRABTREE: That’s great.

JESSICA: Do you want to talk about what the house was like?

CRABTREE: Sure. From here, this part, this Gambrel roof house is the original part of the house. And it would have been just about where the porch is, just beyond that, was the outside wall of the house there. What’s now the kitchen, would have been the sorting room, where all those glass panes were. That was a very light room.

CARNEY: Yes, and so then it was in that area where my father would stand with my baby brother, right over there.

CRABTREE: Yes, right in this corner, right here.

CARNEY: Yeah.

CRABTREE: And so the porch and the addition were built in 1997 by my husband, with help of course. I don’t know when the garage and the barn and the pool shed were built, because they were here when we came. I would guess that they were probably built in the 70’s, I think.

CARNEY: I’m thinking back see, my brother Tom died in 1959, and it so upset my mother, really she never did get over it, nor did the rest of us either, but it was slightly after that that she got the idea of selling the place, moving away.

CRABTREE: Well, shall we go back in?

CARNEY: Yeah, see everything looks so different to me here.

CRABTREE: Well, that’s because it is different.

CARNEY: Yeah, it sure is.

CRABTREE: Completely different. So where would you have kept the horses? Would they have been in the barn across the street?

CARNEY: Yes.

CRABTREE: Did you have chickens?

CARNEY: Oh, yes. Through the years there were different chicken coops, several different ones.

CRABTREE: Like up here?

CARNEY: Or somewhere in this area. As a matter of fact, another well was somewhere right behind us here.

CRABTREE: Usually chicken coops were fairly near the house because you wanted to be able to get out and get the eggs, right?

CARNEY: Yes. Now whether the back of the shed would have been, probably just to the left of those maple trees and back that way.

CRABTREE: Well it's not very far over this knoll. It's just one house behind that gets to Graham Road, so that was short. Wasn't too bad a walk that you had to get the bus?

CARNEY: No, no. Did you see the article in the paper about the Collins Bus Company?

CRABTREE: No, I missed that.

CARNEY: It should be in the South Windsor news. Collins Bus Company is 100 years old. And they, of course, took us to school.

CRABTREE: Oh, did they? That's great. That's a real connection. Was Nevers Road always here?

CARNEY: Oh, God, yes. Of course both of the roads, Graham and Nevers, were both dirt roads. Graham Road became tarred first. I can't identify just what year, but 1938 this wasn't...

CRABTREE: That was dirt then.

CARNEY: Yeah. No, Graham Road might have been tarred by then. Going back far enough, you know, older people don't retain everything.

CRABTREE: You retain a lot.

CARNEY: I have been told that the lot that I retained doesn't amount to much.

CRABTREE: Did the road that went through to Abbe Road have a name?

CARNEY: Oh, no that was just a farm road.

CRABTREE: Just a farm road.

CARNEY: Yes.

CRABTREE: Well good. This is the way it looks today. It's very different than it looked when you were little.

CARNEY: Quite often, like on a weekend, we'd just go walking through there and to the woods. And, of course, because we had cattle we probably maybe had 75 acres or so which was fenced in. So sometime a cow would get astray and you'd have to locate it.

CRABTREE: Were they any particular kind of cattle?

CARNEY: All Jerseys.

CRABTREE: All Jerseys?

CARNEY: Yes, all Jerseys at that time because the cream, you know. The better quality milk, you know.

CRABTREE: Well, I was always partial to Guernsey, because my father was from the Island of Guernsey.

CARNEY: Is that right?

CRABTREE: Yes. And of course the Jerseys were from the Island of Jersey.

CARNEY: That's right, that's right. And to protect against foot and mouth disease and so forth was the reason that the cattle were so isolated. I'm told.

CRABTREE: Yes. Well thank you so much, Butch, for taking the time to do this.

CARNEY: I've enjoyed myself.

CRABTREE: And big thanks to Jessica and David for your videography and sound skills.

- JESSICA: Behind the camera, it's so much more fun.
- CARNEY: Do tell Peter that Butch said hello.
- DAVID: Well I'd like to get you and Peter together to sing some songs and maybe make a recording and a video.
- CRABTREE: Wouldn't that be fabulous.
- CARNEY: Peter has some recordings from his group, which is, what is the name of it now? Wild Notes.
- DAVID: Right, Wild Notes.
- CRABTREE: Oh, he's Wild Notes. Okay.
- DAVID: I'm sure that it'd be fun to get some of your voice on a recording as well. I could do that. I would love to do that.
- CARNEY: Ask Peter about Carney's Coop.
- DAVID: Carney's Coop? Okay.
- CRABTREE: What's Carney's Coop?
- CARNEY: Exactly that, a coop. Got a fire wood stove in there, and various things, kind of a crude recreation room of a sort.
- CRABTREE: Oh a getaway space. My cousins had a coop, literally a coop that they put a wood stove in and we used to hang out there when we were kids.
- CARNEY: But this actually was at one time in the past a chicken coop.
- CRABTREE: That's great, Carney's coop.
- DAVID: It must have a wood stove, so it's warm in the winter?
- CARNEY: Oh yeah.
- DAVID: Perhaps we could go there and make a recording of your singing.
- CARNEY: So what is this building here, Davida?
- CRABTREE: I don't know who built it. Well, actually I think I do know who built it. I think Leoni built it when he owned the place. He only owned the place for three, four years. And he got in a lot of trouble because he built it without the permit and he built it

right—the back of it is right on the property line, which was not very thoughtful of him, shall we say. It was used to store cars. I keep my lawn and garden equipment in there.

DAVID: I see.

CRABTREE: Of which I have too much.

CARNEY: One time too, when I was just a kid I had a garden up here, my own garden.

CRABTREE: That's good, because now this is an oval garden. I left the pool there and just had it filled in, so that we wouldn't be carting things away to a landfill. It really worked out well.

CARNEY: Oh, the Garden of Eden has vanished they say, but I know the lie of it still, just turn to the left at the bridge of Finea, it's there at the foot of the Hill.

[Recording turned off then on.]

CARNEY: With the curiosity of a child upstairs there was just room for a child to squeeze between the chimney and the wall, you know. You look back there there's this old gun. It's been there for maybe, I don't know, a hundred years.

[Sings)]

“If you ever go to Ireland I'm sure you will agree;
To take the road from Dublin town way down to Doonaree;
Tis there you'll find a wishing well beyond a chestnut tree;
In a shady nook, by a winding brook will you make this wish for
me;

Oh to be in Doonaree with a sweetheart I once knew;
To stroll in the shade of the leafy glade where the rhododendrons
grew;
To walk with my love to the bridge above see the rippling
waterfall;
But to go back home never more to roam is my dearest wish of
all.”

JESSICA: Does that song have a name?

CARNEY: I don't know. Doonaree, I suppose, Doonaree. Don't ask me how to spell it.

CRABTREE: Where did you learn all these songs?

CARNEY: Different Irish people I've known through my life going back to childhood.

JESSICA: Did your family sing a lot together?

CARNEY: Huh?

JESSICA: Did your family sing a lot or your mother or your father?

CARNEY: Well when John Barleycorn gets around, you know there has to be a bit of singing. My grandfather used to sing more than my father did, and different relations.

DAVID: When you sing you're a little louder than you speak.
[Recording turned off then on.]

CARNEY: [singing.]

There was an old woman from Wexford
In Wexford town did dwell
She loved her husband dearly
But another man twice as well
One day she went to the doctor
Some medicine for to find
Saying "Doctor give me something
That'll make me old man blind"
"Oh, feed him eggs and marrow bones
And make him sup them all
And it won't be so very long after
That'll he'll hardly see the wall."
So she fed him eggs and marrow bones
And made him sup them all
And it wasn't so very long after
That he couldn't see the wall
"O," says he "I'd go and drown meself
But that might be a sin"
Said she "I'll go to the water's edge
And I'll help to push you in"
The old lady she got back a bit
To get a running go
The old man blithely stepped aside
And she went in below
Oh, how loudly did she howl
Oh, how loudly did she bawl
"What's that old woman," says he
"I can't see you at all"
She swam and swam and swam and swam
'Till she came to the further brim
The old man got a long, larch pole
And he pushed her further in

O eggs are eggs and marrow bones
Will make your old man blind
But if you want to drown him
You must creep up close behind.

CRABTREE: That's great.

JESSICA: It's a gem. Can you tell us the name, what song that was?

CARNEY: That's "The Old Woman from Wexford." In the County of Wexford, Ireland, they have a lot of funny songs too. You don't ordinarily hear them but that's one that just came to mind, you know.

CRABTREE: Butch, what's your formal name?

CARNEY: My papa christened me as Francis Peter Carney. It's funny a lot of people don't know my first name. A lot of my mail just comes Butch Carney.

JESSICA: How did you get to be called Butch?

CARNEY: My dear mother named me Butch because I was kind of obese, a condition which I seem to be reverting back to.

CRABTREE: I don't think you're obese.

CARNEY: Well, I do. The scale tells a different story.

CRABTREE: You're wonderful.

CARNEY: No, don't tell that to my spouse.

CRABTREE: Well, I'll call her up and tell her, and then I'll get an earful so I'll get the true story.

JESSICA: How did you both meet?

CRABTREE: We met because a tree came down on the back of my neighbor's property onto Sally Reichle's property and she came over to find out who owned the tree. And we got to talking and when I was trying to research the history of the house, I remembered that she had told me that she remembered her mother being a friend of the woman who lived here. And it occurred to me maybe that was Mrs. Carney. So I called Sally and said, "Was it Anna Carney that your mother knew?" and she said, "Yes." And I said, "What can you tell me?" And she said, "Well you can talk to her son Butch," and gave me Butch's phone number and I called him right away that day. And we started getting together.

CARNEY: Incidentally, at times Sally had been coming down to the breakfast club but I

haven't seen her lately. If you see her, ask her how come she doesn't come down.

CRABTREE: I will.

JESSICA: When did this all happen?

CRABTREE: Just this fall.

JESSICA: Oh, really.

CRABTREE: Yep, just this fall. When I retired and got the leisure time to do some research and Doris Burgdorf helped me.

CARNEY: So nobody knows the origin of the Long Long Trail song?

CRABTREE: No.

CARNEY: I don't know where I heard it but I'm kind of fascinated by it.

CRABTREE: We may have to do some research on that.

CARNEY: [recites the following]

O'Driscoll drove with a song
The wild duck and the drake
From the tall and the tufted reeds
Of the drear Hart Lake.

And he saw how the reeds grew dark
With the coming of night-tide,
And he dreamt of the long dim hair
Of Bridget his bride.

As he sang and dreamed
He heard a piper piping away
And never was piping so sad
And never was piping so gay.

He saw young men and young girls
Dance on a level spot,
With Bridget his bride among them,
With a sad and a gay face.

The dancers gathered round him
And many a sweet thing said,

And a young man brought him red wine
And a young girl white bread.

But bread and the wine had a doom,
For these were the host of the air;
But Bridget drew him by the sleeve
Away from the merry band.

The old men playing cards,
With a twinkle of ancient hands,
He sat and he played with the merry old men
And they thought not of evil chance,
Until one of them drew Bridget away,
Away from the merry dance.

He bore her away in his arms,
The handsomest young man there,
And his lips and his neck and his arms
Were drowned in her long dim hair.

O'Driscoll scattered the cards
And out of his dream awoke:
And old men and young men and young girls
Were gone like a puff of smoke.

And then he heard it high up in the air
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
No never was piping so gay.

JESSICA: That's a beauty.

CRABTREE: It is.

JESSICA: Thank you.

CRABTREE: Well, stand up I want to give you a hug. Am I allowed to hug you?

CARNEY: Help me up and hand me my crutches. (Laughter) God bless you, dear.

CRABTREE: Bless you. Bless you. And thank you so much.

CARNEY: I don't know how good my blessing is but, it's got to be some help.

CRABTREE: You've blessed us over and over today so.

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