

East Brandywine Township Oral History Project

Interviewer(s): Alexandria Proko and Carol Schmidt

Interviewee: Frances Harple Popjoy

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Allie: If you don't mind, please state your name.

Frances: Well, it's Frances Harple Popjoy.

Allie: Thank you very much. Ladies, do you mind stating your names as well, just so that we have it on the record?

Robin: Robin Popjoy Miller.

Ruthann: Ruthann Popjoy Stevenson.

Allie: Thank you! Did you grow up in East Brandywine, or did you move here?

Frances: I was born down here. Do you know where Valley Brook Farm is? Down 322?

Allie: I don't know.

Frances: That's where I was raised. Then I moved to Downingtown and Thorndale, and then I married Allen and I moved here.

Allie: Alright! Now, was he from this area?

Frances: He lived here all his life.

Allie: That's neat. This might be news to all of you, but as it turns out, your family is quite influential in this area. We've heard your name in probably 90% of the interviews that we've done. I'm excited to finally get to talk with you.

Laughter

Allie: You'd mentioned your career a bit. Do you mind elaborating?

Frances: You mean, where I worked?

Allie: Yes, ma'am.

Frances: I worked at Collins and Aikman for thirteen—almost fourteen years. January of 1939 to September of 1952.

Allie: That's neat! Have you driven by there recently? Now that it's a park?

Frances: Oh, yeah. It doesn't look anything now like it did when I worked there.

Allie: You had seen it in all of its glory.

Frances: In all of its glory. It used to be a beautiful place.

Allie: Were the houses there, that are now the parking lot?

Frances: The houses were there. Where that memorial thing is now, there used to be houses there, but they tore them down.

Allie: When you were working there, were those houses just apartments for rent?

Frances: Yeah.

Allie: How many people do you think you worked with in your department? Was it a big group?

Frances: Big group. In my department it was. During the war, there must have been close to fifty girls. I'm not sure.

Allie: What ages? Was everyone the same age?

Frances: Well, anybody worked there then. When I first started, they were very particular about who they hired. There was one Italian man that worked there, and he was the boss.

Carol: When you say particular, what do you mean? What did they look for?

Frances: Did you know John Bateman?

Carol: No.

Frances: He interviewed me when I got my job, and you had to go to church and be a good living person to work there.

Carol: Oh my gosh, no kidding.

Frances: During the war, they had a shortage of help, so they took anybody then.

Carol: Church or non-church, huh?

Laughter

Frances: Yeah. He was a preacher.

Carol: Oh! **Frances:** He would want to know what church you went to and how often you went.

Laughter

Allie: When you say boss, was he a manager?

Frances: He just worked in the office and interviewed the ones that they hired.

Allie: Maybe a human resources position.

Frances: I'm not sure what his title was.

Carol: Allie did her thesis for college on the Bondsville Mill, so she knows a lot.

Allie: That's a new one though, I didn't know that name. Some of those nuances.

Robin: Mom has a magazine that they used to give out and she's in some pictures in there.

Allie: Are you? Do you mind if we look at it?

Frances: These two are Allen's sisters. Now, I'm not sure about Grace, whether she worked... I think she did, but I'm not sure. This is Allen's sister, Katherine. She worked at Collins and Aikman.

Allie: Now, did she work there the same time you did?

Frances: Who? Katherine? Yeah.

Robin: That's actually how she and Daddy...

Allie: Is that how you met? That's how I met my fiance, through his sister.

Laughter

Frances: When I started to work there, she bothered me all the time and I was nervous and wanted to do my work right and she kept interfering with me. Then she wound up being my best friend.

Allie: Aw! Were you the same age when you met?

Frances: She's three years older than I am.

Allie: And was she in your department?

Frances: Yeah.

Allie: Okay, wow.

Frances: That bigger picture has the names on the back.

Carol: Now, Harple. That's a maiden name?

Frances: Uh huh.

Carol: There's a lot of those around here, are they related?

Robin: They're spelled H-A-R-P-E-L.

Allie: And you're L-E?

Robin: Yes, L-E.

Carol: Oh, okay.

Frances: There was a Vernon Harple and he had daughters. Ethel and Katherine, they worked at the mill. But they were cousins. Their father was my dad's first cousin.

Frances: Do you see who they are?

Allie: No, can you tell us?

Robin: On the back.

Allie: So, on the back it says 'Dolly Harple, Isabel Hall, Margaret Love and Clara Shirley, Nurse at Collins and Aikman.' Oh, so there was a nurse there?

Robin: This one's my mother, Dolly. If you're looking at the one in the magazine, it shows her at work.

Allie: Wow! So, what was it that you did in the mending department?

Frances: Well, when I first started I was an ordinary employee and had to mend the cloth. We made plush for cars.

Allie: I did hear that.

Frances: I mended, and as we started to get more people in the mending department, then I was a teacher. I taught the new girls how to mend.

Carol: You were using a machine, right?

Frances: No, it was by hand.

Carol: Oh!

Frances: There used to be pieces in the cloth, and we had to do it with a needle by hand. That's why my eyesight's gone bad, I guess.

Allie: Did you have an understanding of some of the other departments that were there when you were working?

Frances: Yeah, there was a weaving department and something upstairs. I forget. The weaving department was the biggest thing. They wove the cloth.

Allie: So, if there were problems with the cloth that was woven, did it come to mending for you to repair?

Frances: Yes. It came to the mending department, and we had to mend it.

Allie: You were saying that you later wound up being sort of a mentor for the other women?

Frances: Yeah. When they started to get more people in, the younger ones came in and didn't know how to do it, so I had to teach them. I walked around them and as they needed help, I helped them. I also inspected the cloth at times.

Allie: What were you looking for?

Frances: Mends in the cloth, or knots. We used to pull it down over the perch, and there was a light behind it that would show all those mistakes.

Allie: After you mended it, where did it go?

Frances: Well, when it was all done, it was folded up and Mr. Lewis—that was the man that carried the plush to us—he took it off the table and he took it and put it on a certain cart and then brought it out to have it dyed and stuff. They did that at another plant.

Carol: What color was it when you had it?

Frances: A neutral color, but sometimes had stripes on it. Not all of it, some was just plain.

Allie: What would make it have stripes?

Frances: I don't know. Something in the yarn that they put on to weave it.

Carol: So, Collins and Aikman were the people who owned it? Did they live there in that house?

Frances: No, they didn't live there. They had plants down South. They had several plants.

Allie: I'm trying to remember who had the house then.

Carol: Was that the Stone's?

Allie: No, too early. Did you know the Stone's at all?

Frances: No. The people were the Pearson's.

Allie: That's it.

Carol: There was a store also, right? Across, on the other side?

Frances: Yeah, right across. That's where we used to go to get our lunch.

Allie: A luncheonette, right? Was it a post office still at that point?

Frances: No post office. Thomas' had the lunchroom. You know Tucker Thomas?

Carol: Yeah.

Frances: That was his mom and dad that had that.

Carol: Oh! That's one of the people that I'd suggested we interview, Bud Thomas. He was involved with fox hunting. So, she's talking about his parents, Allie.

Allie: Oh, neat. Do you remember some of the things they'd serve to eat there?

Frances: Well, whatever Mrs. Thomas cooked.

Laughter

Frances: Usually things like sandwiches. She would cook a meal, so you could get a cooked meal there too. They had one little room and she sold candy and cookies and stuff like that.

Allie: Were you living here when you worked there?

Frances: No, I lived at Valley Brook Farm and then Thorndale. I didn't move over here until after I stopped working. How old is Sam, 63? That's how long we've lived here.

Robin: Sixty-three, yeah. Valley Brook Farm is across from the high school, the Lloyd Farm. By the Catholic church?

Allie: Oh, yeah, okay. So you grew up on that farm?

Frances: Yeah.

Allie: Can you tell us a bit about what your childhood was like? I know that's kind of a broad question, but were your parents farmers?

Frances: Yeah, my dad was the manager of the farm. I used to go out in the field with him and pick potatoes.

Allie: I was just about to ask about that. What did they grow there?

Frances: Well, they had hay and they grew potatoes. Of course, they had chickens with eggs. Just a regular farm. They had cattle. Sold the milk.

Allie: So, did you go to Downingtown schools then?

Frances: Yeah. I only went to two schools. Thorndale consolidated and then I went to Downingtown. What do they call that now, STEM?

Robin: Yes, STEM.

Frances: That's where I graduated high school.

Allie: What year did you graduate?

Frances: 1938.

Allie: I wish I had seen it then. I haven't even seen the inside of STEM, but I wish I'd seen the inside before it'd been touched.

Carol: When I went there, it was the last year that junior and senior high were together there.

Allie: Was it junior and senior when you went there?

Frances: Mhm.

Allie: You said that you went to Thorndale before that. I don't know if we talked about Thorndale in-depth. Where in Thorndale did you grow up? Or was it just the school that you went to?

Frances: The houses are all torn down by Valley Brook. Where the overpass goes?

Robin: Bypass.

Frances: Yeah, where the bypass goes before you come to the red light there? The house was torn down that we lived in. Then, when I moved to Thorndale, I lived in the old schoolhouse. There was a

schoolhouse in Thorndale where they had the fifth and sixth grades and they made it into a double house. We lived in the house on one side.

Allie: So you lived next door to the school? Am I misunderstanding?

Robin: No, the original schoolhouse was turned into a double house and she lived on one side of that.

Allie: Oh, I see.

Frances: There were two schools. The first and second grade were a one-room schoolhouse, and I went to that.

Allie: That was in Thorndale?

Frances: Yeah, right at the corner. The intersection.

Allie: Is that by the Giant?

Robin: It's at Bondsville Road and there's a Rite Aid.

Carol: Is that where the new Wawa is?

Frances: Right across from there and that gas station.

Robin: It's the Rite Aid, on the corner of 340 and 30.

Allie: Okay, so that's no longer there.

Frances: Yeah, it was right on the corner though. When I moved in, it was a schoolhouse and it looked like Guthriesville School, but they made it into a double house.

Allie: When you were going to school in Thorndale, where did you go to school?

Frances: I went to the one-room school, and then in 1927 they built the new school that's up the highway there.

Robin: Caln.

Allie: Caln Elementary?

Frances: Yeah. So then I started over there. It was a half of a year of second grade for me. I went there until eighth grade and then I went to Downingtown.

Allie: What were your favorite school subjects?

Frances: I didn't have one.

Laughter

Allie: Did you have any hobbies or things that you liked to do when you were growing up?

Frances: Oh, I did whatever I wanted to do.

Laughter

Frances: I don't know. I can't remember having any favorites. I used to have to work. We all had to work at that time.

Carol: Yeah.

Allie: What kinds of jobs did you do growing up?

Frances: I helped my mother, and I had to wash the walls of the porch and pick potatoes with my dad.

Allie: Did you enjoy being outside? Or did it feel like a chore?

Frances: Sure, I liked it. I had a good childhood. It wasn't like they have today sitting on those phones. We worked.

Carol: Allen didn't work at Collins & Aikman, did he?

Frances: Allen? No.

Carol: I didn't think so.

Robin: His sisters did.

Allie: So, his sister introduced him to you? Tell us about that. Did she tell you that she was going to introduce you, or did it just happen?

Frances: She ended up being my best friend. One day she asked me if I'd go out with her brother, and I said 'Sure, I'll go out with him.' I didn't know him then. I thought maybe it was her younger brother, and now we know it wasn't.

Laughter

Frances: But anyway, Allen came to see me. At that time, he had a girlfriend up in Easton. His mom didn't care for her because she fibbed to her. The girl told her that she didn't smoke, and she did. She had two little boys and Allen was a friend of her first husband, and he died. Anyway, I went out with him and the next night he went up to see the other girl and told her that he wasn't coming back anymore.

Carol: Aw!

Frances: I ended up getting him.

Laughter

Allie: Well, there you go! Where was he working at the time then?

Frances: He was a carpenter for George Wilson.

Allie: That was local?

Frances: Right down the road here.

Allie: On Corner Ketch?

Frances: Yeah.

Allie: How did he learn to do that?

Frances: He learned under him (George Wilson). He was a farmer all his life and then he took up carpentry. He ended up being a carpenter the rest of his life.

Carol: Where did his parents live?

Robin: Up the road, on the right. This property was part of a farm.

Carol: Oh, okay. Now, is that a house that's close to the road?

Robin: It's at a house that's close to the road.

Frances: Has a hedge all around the front.

Carol: Apparently, across the street there's a driveway that goes way back in and there's a house back there that I didn't even know was there.

Robin: Kailer lived there. It's called Corner Ketch Farm, but I don't know who owns it now. Daddy was born in the house, right Mom?

Frances: Yeah.

Robin: On Township Line Road? The house that they are trying to preserve? Boarded up?

Allie: Oh, yeah!

Robin: Daddy was born there. Daddy lived down on North Buck too, right?

Frances: Yeah.

Robin: If you go down North Buck, the house on the right and there's a development all around it? He lived there. In fact, Kim lives down in the woods on property that my grandfather owned.

Carol: Oh!

Robin: Then they moved up here. When did they move up here? We researched all the deeds.

Frances: They lived there before I knew Allen, so I don't know.

Robin: We have all of the deeds, and John (Robin's husband) and I researched it. But anyway, they then moved up here. These houses and part of this property were part of the farm.

Carol: Oh, how about that.

Allie: So then, when you met him he was already living...

Frances: Right up here.

Allie: So it was part of this property? That's how you came to have this house then.

Robin: Daddy built this house.

Allie: Oh, wow! What year did he do that?

Frances: 1954.

Carol: I think he did a lot of building at my house. My dad's house. Didn't he put that addition on the store?

Frances: He did a lot of work for your dad. I don't know what he did, but he did a lot of work for him.

Carol: That's what I thought, yeah.

Robin: He made all of the picnic tables down at Frank's Folly.

Carol: Oh, did he really? How about that!

Frances: He used to make picnic tables on the side.

Carol: We were talking about the addition on the back of the store, from the store part it was a storeroom, but from upstairs it was sort of like a sunroom. I don't know who I was talking to, but they said, 'Allen Popjoy built that.' So, I don't know.

Frances: He did a lot for your dad. He was buddy-buddy. Allen would come home from the store, and he always would tell me a little joke.

Carol: I bet! I can just imagine. Dad always had a lot of jokes.

Frances: He always came home and told me a little joke. He'd say, 'Frank told me this today.'

Carol: Now, what church did you go to?

Frances: Fairview Presbyterian.

Carol: Oh, Fairview in Glenmoore.

Frances: Do you remember Mrs. Peters?

Carol: Yes. Lillian Peters?

Frances: Lillian, and then there was her mother too. When I married Allen, I went to church with him on Sunday, and she said to me, 'You took our Allen away from us'. I said, 'I didn't take Allen

away from you.' I said, 'I just married him.' Because he went to Hopewell, and I went to Fairview. When we got married, he left Hopewell and went to Thorndale Methodist.

Carol: Oh! I think Lillian Peters lived in my house that I live in now. I live on 322. I think she had the house before. My dad bought it at auction.

Frances: She lived out where Mauer's did.

Ruthann: Yes, she lived in that house because they bought it from her when she passed away.

Carol: Oh, ok. Then it wasn't! I'm trying to remember the name. I'm in the house across from the farm that sits up high, and the pharmacy.

Ruthann: Laird Farm?

Carol: Laird, yes. I'm on the opposite side and my house is the only one that has the stone exposed and a porch across the front. I've lived there for forty-some years. We had Trade Talk at one time. Well, Hazel Laird lived right next door.

Ruthann: Is that the one that John Inslee owned?

Carol: Yes, yeah. He's my neighbor. I was thinking it was Lillian Peters, but that must not be right. They sold it at auction and it was going at a good price, so dad bought it thinking maybe they would retire, but in the meantime my husband and I had moved up from Virginia because his company was on strike and so we rented from them and ended up staying there. I'm sorry, you're not going to want to take me along anymore!

Allie: It's all good, it's meant to be a conversation!

Laughter

Allie: Where did your husband go to school? Did he go to Guthriesville growing up?

Frances: He went to Hopewell, and then he went to Downingtown. The high school he went to was in West Downingtown, it's torn down now.

Carol: West Ward?

Robin: He went to Guthriesville too, didn't he? The one-room schoolhouse there?

Frances: I don't remember him talking about going to school there. He might have. Might have done Hopewell to Guthriesville, I don't remember. I know that he went to high school in West Downingtown. It was torn down. He went to Hopewell though, I know that.

Allie: Now, is that the high school that was across from the mattress store?

Carol: Yeah, that was West Ward. I thought that was elementary. I didn't know it was a high school, but it probably was.

Frances: It was a high school.

Carol: My sister went there, and at that time, it was a transitional grade and then you went to high school.

Allie: When did he graduate?

Frances: 1931.

Allie: Did he go right to work with George Wilson?

Frances: He farmed with his dad and then started with the carpenter.

Allie: How did you get into mending?

Frances: That was the only job open I guess at the time.

Laughter

Carol: That's a good reason.

Frances: Besides the plush for the cars, we made carpeting too.

Allie: Did you?

Frances: We had carpeting that we mended. During the war we made canvas. For the soldiers. I don't know whether this is true or not, but they told me that they made this canvas to put the boys in, you know, if they died.

Allie: Oh. I mean, it wouldn't be surprising.

Carol: Yeah.

Frances: I worked on the canvas, and then I worked upstairs. At first, I was on the first floor and then I went upstairs and would run the sewing machine to put the pieces of canvas together. They were rolled up in a big roll and I don't know what happened to them when I'd get done with them.

Allie: That's the first I'm hearing of that. I only knew about the lining of the Eisenhower jackets.

Frances: Never heard of that. We made gabardine.

Allie: I don't know what that is.

Frances: A type of cloth that we made. It's a material. I had a suit made out of it one time.

Allie: I know you'd mentioned the various floors. Was there any significance to moving up on floors on the job?

Frances: No, it's just where the sewing machines were. Do you remember Bill Williams? He used to live down the road here on a little farm.

Carol: I'm not sure that I do.

Frances: Well, he ran the sewing machine, but every time he'd get a little ache or pain, he wouldn't come into work. My boss was Tom Cavanaugh. He'd come to me and say, 'Dollie, you've got to go upstairs. Bill didn't come in today.' So, I had to do the sewing machines. It was a big, long machine.

Carol: And I'll bet you didn't get paid as much.

Laughter

Frances: No, I'd get paid the same. Do you know how much I made a week? You want to know how much I made a week?

Allie: I'd love to know that!

Frances: I made sixteen dollars and twenty-eight cents a week if I worked forty hours.

Carol: Wow.

Frances: At that time, if you went into Collins and Aikman to work, you might make a full week, you might only make two days, might make three days. Luckily, I had steady work.

Carol: Must have been because you were a good worker, I'm sure.

Frances: My dad had passed away, and Tom Cavanaugh was my neighbor and he knew that I had to work. My mother lived with me. I had steady work, and a lot of those girls sometimes only made two days a week.

Allie: How did you get down there? Did you have a car at the time?

Frances: That's another story. When I went to high school, there was a man, a boss at Collins and Aikman. He'd go to work, he worked the night shift. He'd get done work and go down 340 and he'd pick up my girlfriend, Miriam McFalls and he'd take her to school. She went to Downingtown. So then, he'd come past my house and I'd just be starting out to go to school and he'd pick me up. So

he took us both to school on his way home. I was talking to him one day and told him that I had to look for a job, and he said, 'I'll get you a job.' So that's how I got into Collins and Aikman. He told me what to do, so I went up and John Bateman interviewed me and he hired me.

Allie: That's interesting.

Frances: I worked up until three weeks before Ruthie was born. After Ruthie was born, they kept asking me to come back to work, and I wanted to go back but I didn't want to leave her.

Carol: Yeah.

Frances: I went back for two weeks. I worked for two weeks, but then said I couldn't do it. I wanted to be home with my baby! I didn't work after that. Allen didn't want me to work after that, but I could have if I'd needed to.

Allie: The closest town to you then was Guthriesville? Or Lyndell? If you needed groceries, did you go to Cropper's, or did you go to Frank's (Lyndell Store)?

Frances: I went to Cropper's when they first opened.

Allie: It was at the memorial place now?

Frances: Yeah. Before I was married, I went to Cropper's.

Allie: What did it look like? Pretty basic?

Frances: Yeah, just a little country store when he first opened it.

Allie: Did you have a garden here? I know that it was a farm, but were you farming when you lived here in this house?

Frances: Allen had a big garden.

Allie: Did you find yourself cooking and doing a lot with the stuff that he was growing?

Frances: Yeah, strawberries. We used to pick strawberries and put them in the freezer. He had a little bit of everything. Tomatoes galore. Allen had the whole backyard as a garden.

Allie: Did you ever do canning with the strawberries?

Frances: I did some.

Allie: Carol doesn't have memories of canning.

Laughter

Carol: We had the store, so my mom never cared to do canning.

Frances: It doesn't pay to can anymore. All that work.

Carol: Now, Pancoasts' were down here behind?

Frances: Yeah.

Carol: It was a horse farm, right? Did they buy and sell horses, or what was the purpose there?

Frances: I don't remember.

Robin: They had a farm for racehorses and they'd bring them back and forth to Florida. Daddy did a lot of work down there, I remember. A lot of the sheds and stuff.

Ruthann: Quite a few horses. They came up, right where our property ends, they'd come up in that field that's all a development now.

Carol: Mhm, yeah. I remember, you could take lessons there or something.

Ruthann: I think there was a ring behind their house, like a riding ring?

Carol: Yeah. That's what they were doing then, training the horses for Florida?

Robin: That's what I understood. There was a farm down in Florida and they'd have racehorses down there and would transport them back and forth.

Carol: That makes sense that they would do that. Now, how come you went to Fairview Presbyterian instead of Forks of the Brandywine? Wouldn't that have been closer?

Frances: Well, the way we got up to going to Fairview...my brother was drowned in the flood of '42. You don't remember that I guess?

Carol: No.

Frances: That's when Collins and Aikman were flooded out. That dam at Bondsville broke and came down through the mill and it washed all of the front of the mill out and washed out down where Edges Mill is, it washed the road out there. My brother was drowned in that flood.

Carol: Oh.

Frances: That was a hard time.

Carol: Oh, I can imagine.

Allie: Where was he living?

Frances: He lived in Gallagherville, if you know where it is. It's before you get to Thorndale from Downingtown, up past Lloyd Avenue. My brother lived there with his wife and five children.

Carol: Oh, my. He had five children when he drowned?

Frances: Yes. You were wondering how we got up to Fairview. At the time, I was going to the Baptist church in Downingtown, so we had the Baptist minister from Downingtown, and we had Reverend

Stuart from Fairview Presbyterian Church for the funeral. Reverend Stuart was so good to my mom and I that we started to go to church up there.

Allie: Were you married there?

Frances: No.

Allie: Where were you married?

Frances: I've been going there for seventy-seven years.

Robin: I don't think she understood that question. You were married at Fairview.

Frances: I was married at Fairview, yeah. Is that what you asked?

Allie: Yes.

Carol: You remember Norman Piersol?

Frances: I sure do. He was my buddy.

Carol: Yeah, he was one of my dad's best friends too.

Frances: You know, he donated his body to science.

Carol: Did he? **Frances:** He told me one day and I said, 'What are you going to do that for?' and he said, 'I don't want the birds pooping down over my stone.'

Laughter

Frances: That's what he told me. His aunt... Was Margaret his aunt? Well, Margaret Henry that lived next door to me, she was related to him, and I told her about that and she said, 'Oh, that Norman will tell you anything.'

Carol: Well, Vivian is still up at Hickory House?

Frances: Is she doing okay?

Carol: The last time that I saw her there, we'd chatted for a little bit and she seemed to be doing okay. She was a great artist. She did beautiful paintings.

Frances: Norman used to read to her and everything. They sold her house though. I don't know who bought it, but they sold her house.

Robin: The last I saw her was the last Presidential Election day, she went down to vote.

Carol: Oh, really?

Robin: Yes, in Wallace. She had just turned one hundred around then. That was what, the election in 2016?

Carol: I know how she voted. I know that Norman was a strong Democrat.

Laughter

Carol: I remember him actually leaving Fairview over the Civil Rights thing... he went to Central Presbyterian. At his funeral, there was a black minister from Coatesville and he gave a great sermon. You're never going to let me go along again, Allie!

Allie: It's all useful! It's better when it flows organically! Sometimes you say things and it triggers conversation and bounces things off of other memories.

Carol: It was interesting because I was telling Allie that if you lived in Lyndell, you knew people in Lyndell, and if you lived in Bondsville, you knew people in that area. There wasn't as much coming and going as today. They were asking about skating on Bondsville Pond.

Frances: Oh, yeah. That was a big thing for the young people then.

Carol: See, I didn't know anything about that. Frances: The dam broke and that's what caused that flood.

Carol: Was it a hurricane?

Frances: It was storming, and it just broke and went all down through the mill.

Allie: Someone mentioned an island in the middle of it and people hosting bonfires. Do you remember that?

Frances: There were bonfires there, yeah. The young people were all out there skating in the winter.

Allie: Do you remember anyone ever bathing out there?

Frances: Bathing? No.

Laughter

Allie: We've heard that and now we like to ask, just in case there's more to that story.

Frances: I've never heard tell of that.

Allie: Did you ever go skating out there?

Frances: No, I'd be on my bottom.

Allie: When you met your husband, where did you go on dates around here?

Frances: Mostly to the movies.

Allie: Was that in Downingtown?

Frances: No, we mostly went to Coatesville.

Allie: Where was the movie theatre in Coatesville?

Frances: There were, at that time, you used to get in for seventy-five cents.

Allie: Can't even get candy for seventy-five cents now. Twenty-five dollars a ticket.

Frances: We'd go to the movies and we'd stop at some little restaurant and have some treats. Like all young people, we traveled around and then went home.

Carol: You'd asked where the movie theatre was. I think now it's Coatesville Senior Housing? There's a florist.

Frances: Penney's was right across the street.

Allie: What was Penney's?

Robin: The department store.

Allie: Oh! Like, JC Penney's?

Carol: Yes.

Allie: Oh! It sounded like a quaint little country store. There was a JC Penney's in Coatesville? How about that!

Robin: We used to do all of our shopping in Coatesville at one time.

Allie: Really?

Frances: Oh, yeah. We used to park up along Penney's store.

Carol: There was a Mostellers.

Allie: What's that?

Robin: That was in West Chester.

Carol: That's right.

Ruthann: Woolworth's, Newberry's...

Allie: What's Newberry's? Department store?

Robin: A little department store. You either went to Downingtown, or Coatesville, or West Chester.

Frances: At that time, there were three theaters in Coatesville. There was the Auditorium. The other one was The Silver Theatre, I think it was. Then there was one built on Chestnut Street. We always went to the Auditorium.

Carol: That's the one that I remember, vaguely. I don't know when it closed but I have a vague memory of it.

Allie: So, there were two in Coatesville?

Frances: The one was down towards First Avenue, that way. Then there was one on Chestnut Street, later.

Carol: I went to the Ukrainian Church in Coatesville last week. They were having a food sale, selling pirogues and things. That's a hundred-year-old church. They gave us a tour and it was fun to see.

Allie: Where is that?

Carol: Off of Strode Avenue. Where Luken's would be. Strode goes to your left and then you turn right on Charles, I think it was?

Frances: Valley Road?

Carol: No, before Valley Road. Now, there was the hospital there. Did you have your children there?

Frances: No, they were all born in Chester County.

Allie: Where were you born?

Frances: Where was I born? Over by Vincent Baptist Church over by Chester Springs.

Allie: Is that the big one on 113?

Robin: No. Yellow Springs area.

Allie: Oh! I used to work at Yellow Springs.

Frances: The preacher's wife helped my mother when I was born. I lived right above the church.

Allie: Was she sort of like a midwife?

Frances: Well, I don't know about that.

Carol: She helped out.

Frances: She was neighbors to my mom, and when I was born, she was there.

Robin: She's the youngest of nine, and my dad was one of twelve.

Allie: Oh, wow. Were all of your siblings local?

Frances: Yeah. They are all gone now, but they did stay close.

Allie: How about your husband's family? Were they the same way?

Frances: No, his family went all over the country.

Robin: Aunt Kay, she just turned ninety-nine and she's in Surprise, Arizona. Aunt Livvie just turned 99.

Carol: Wow.

Robin: She's the one in Surprise, Arizona. Aunt Anne is in Flagstaff, Arizona, and Aunt Mary is in Glenolden, PA.

Frances: Katherine moved to Texas.

Allie: Is that the one you were best friends with?

Frances: Yeah.

Allie: Now, did you see family frequently back in the day?

Frances: Allen's family?

Allie: Or yours.

Frances: I haven't seen any of my family, only nieces and nephews. Mine is all gone.

Allie: But how about back thirty or forty years ago?

Frances: Oh, yeah.

Allie: Did you all see each other frequently?

Frances: Yeah.

Carol: Were you involved in the Lyndell Grange?

Frances: No, I wasn't. What was that group that Joy used to be in?

Robin: The Temperance group?

Carol: Oh, the Temperance League. Joy Tkatchik?

Frances: Yeah, I guess it was that. Yeah. I used to go out to her place when she'd have parties and have the women there. That's where they didn't want their husbands to drink?

Carol: Yes.

Frances: All their husbands drank.

Carol: I just did my last e-blast on the Temperance League. According to the book, the Women's Temperance League was still meeting not too awfully many years ago. I wonder if they still are.

Frances: I would think that it broke up. Most of the women who go out to it are all gone.

Carol: I saw Joy visiting her husband a few years ago at Hickory House, but then I'd heard she died. I was sorry to hear it.

Frances: She was a nice person, she was a kind person. Gary used to take her the paper and do things for her. She didn't want to live in that house by herself. She was a good person at heart when she was herself.

Carol: My mother used to go there and they would do patterning, of the one child.

Allie: What's patterning?

Robin: They moved his arms and legs and muscles and exercised him.

Carol: The theory was at the time that if you did it often enough it would develop mobility in the muscles. I don't know if it was ever really proven to be successful.

Allie: Hm. One thing that I realized I never did—I don't think we discussed your background. What is Popjoy?

Frances: English.

Allie: What was Harple?

Frances: I don't know. I know that my mom must have had a little bit of Dutch in her, because she did a lot of the cooking like they did up in the Dutch country. I don't know what Harple was.

Allie: I know that you said your husband does genealogy, Robin.

Robin: John's been doing some genealogy, yes. We had a distant relative, and his daughter was doing a genealogy project, and it was traced back to William the Conqueror or something. He has a family tree.

Allie: Neat!

Robin: John was just doing some too. We just had a reunion of the first cousins, so we have some of that genealogy that goes back.

Allie: It's always interesting. I unfortunately have more of a mismatch. Harder to figure out.

Robin: Our great-grandfather and his brother came over, and then our great-grandfather was in the Civil War.

Allie: Wow, how about that!

Robin: He's buried over at Oaklands. There's a memorial in West Chester at one of the parks and we were at the dedication a couple of years ago and his name is there.

Allie: So, I know that you're one of nine. How many children did you have?

Robin: There's five of us.

Allie: Did you ever have big family reunions, or what were the holidays like? I know you said most were fairly local when you were growing up.

Ruthann: We had some reunions on my mom's side of the family, at my uncle's farm. At least two that I can remember. Some of my dad's side, but that was more recent.

Robin: Well, we used to meet at my Uncle Bud's house, and then Sarah May had them and then people were kind of going their own ways, so we kind of stopped that for a while. We just had the first one with the first cousins, now that we're all getting up there and most of us are retired.

Ruthann: Just among the first cousins, the oldest one was eighty-five and the youngest was fifty-four or five.

Robin: That was just the local ones. Some are out of state and couldn't make it.

Ruthann: That's spread out among twelve siblings, so there's a gap in when everyone was having kids of their own.

Allie: The gap in age, yeah.

Robin: On my dad's side, the men didn't marry or they married late in life.

Carol: Oh, really?

Ruthann: The Popjoy name will die out.

Robin: Yeah, we're kind of the last generation. My three brothers, none of them are married. They're all in their sixties.

Carol: We only have my brother's one son he has an adopted daughter, and she has his name but there's no males. There's some in the rest of the family, but not many. It'll probably die out as well. Popjoy is such an interesting name.

Ruthann: We're all related. If you meet a Popjoy, we're somehow connected.

Carol: That's how Sinex is. It's such an unusual name.

Robin: There's still some Popjoy's worldwide too, because there was a Popjoy restaurant in Bath, England.

Allie: Oh, wow!

Robin: We went, and unfortunately it was closed the day that we were there, but my brother was there and he has their menu hanging in his dining room. There was also one in Ireland. My son graduated from Exeter in the UK, and we did a trip before he graduated and we went there. It's now a steak place, it's no longer Popjoy's restaurant. There was a Popjoy group that does a music thing, but it's more like a rock or pop music group. So, there still are some people in the UK.

Allie: Now, with that many siblings did you all get together for the holidays? That's just on my mind with it being almost the Christmas holiday.

Frances: My family gets together, my children.

Allie: How about when you were growing up?

Frances: It was a lot different than the holidays are today. I don't remember all of my brothers and sisters coming home at Christmastime. We always had a nice Christmas, but they all had their families. They were all married.

Allie: So, there was a gap between you all? I know you'd mentioned being the youngest, so what was the gap between you and the second youngest?

Frances: She was five years older than me.

Allie: Okay, so then all of the others must have been ten to fifteen years older?

Frances: My oldest sister was twenty years older than me. She was like my second mother.

Allie: My mom's upbringing was similar.

Carol: What do you remember about big things that happened unexpectedly? Were there fires or murders?

Frances: The only thing I remember is the day that my brother died in the flood.

Carol: Yeah. I heard a story about Reeds Road. I keep trying to find out if it's true or not. Do you remember if you came off of Creek Road, there was a little house that had a castle-type thing at the end of the driveway? It must have been a spring or something. Does that mean anything to you?

Frances: No.

Carol: Anyway, the story was that this guy came home from the war and his girlfriend had been dating someone else and he shot and killed her. I haven't been able to find out anything new about that.

Frances: Where was this?

Carol: I think it was down Reeds Road, close to Creek Road. You know Whitely's with the miniature horses?

Frances: Yeah.

Carol: Isn't that Reeds Road?

Robin: Yes.

Carol: As you start to come up Reeds Road, there was a house with a turret or something. They were there in a car and he'd come back from the war and found out she was dating other people and he killed her. That's the story that I'd heard.

Frances: I don't remember that.

Robin: Would this have occurred in the '40s?

Carol: I guess after the war, before me and you. It didn't happen when I was here, it would have been before that. Then there was the story of the woman and the guy put her down the well. Now, that one I do know is true.

Frances: Yeah, Alexander Myers. I remember that because I used to be scared to walk home from school. It was when I was going to high school. He was over in Modena, and she was walking home from school and he hit her and took her out here to...it's not Lyndell, but it's over by Creek Road.

Carol: Lyndell-Eagle Road?

Frances: Yeah. It was a vacant house at the time. He took her up there and molested her and kept her there for two or three days and she died, you know, because he'd hit and hurt her in an old truck. He threw her down the well, and that's where they found her. He's buried up in Fairview too, close to my mom.

Carol: Where did he live?

Frances: What do you call that, going out to Marsh Creek?

Carol: Lyndell-Eagle Road, I think.

Frances: It was at the crossroads when you turn to go to Fairview Church.

Carol: Little Conestoga?

Frances: No. What's the name of that road?

Robin: Marshall? Chalfont?

Frances: Chalfont. He lived in there.

Allie: When was that?

Frances: When I was going to high school, so must have been when I was about sixteen or seventeen. I just had turned eighteen when I graduated.

Robin: '30s.

Frances: Yeah, must have been late '30s.

Carol: I remember Norman Piersol telling me that story.

Frances: Yeah. My uncle had a feed mill in Downingtown and he'd go in there to get feed and he always had a gun with him.

Carol: Oh, really?

Frances: My uncle used to say that he didn't always like him coming in the feed store because he had some kind of a gun with him.

Allie: The guy did, Alexander?

Frances: Yeah. He had a nice family, and a sister. She was the nicest person. I forget her name. But it's a shame because he came from a good family.

Carol: Maybe he had some mental illness or something.

Allie: Obviously, Carol had a lot of stories about the Marsh Creek area. Did you ever venture out there before it was a lake?

Carol: When it was Milford Mills?

Frances: Yeah. I used to go through there a lot. I had a friend who lived there, Mary Jane Hass.

Carol: Oh, yeah!

Frances: Do you remember her?

Carol: Yeah.

Allie: Wasn't there a school out there?

Carol: Are you thinking of Boo Boo Hoff's mansion? For a while it was a school or something.

Allie: Do you know anything about that?

Frances: No.

Carol: I know when I was a kid it was some sort of a camp for Jewish children. I know we delivered groceries up there.

Allie: What's the school that I'm thinking of too?

Carol: There was a school by Cropper's but it was further back (in time)?

Frances: What's the school that Dorothy used to teach at?

Robin: I don't know.

Frances: Allen's older sister taught school over there by Milford Mills. I don't know the name of the school.

Ruthann: Was there a schoolhouse?

Carol: I think when you went up...mom and dad had friends called Irey and they put in a swimming pool which was the greatest thing ever at the time, you know? And it was on that road—the schoolhouse was. Now I can't think of what it was called. There's something near it, I can't remember.

Frances: That's a sign of age, Carol.

Carol: Do you remember the fire down here, on Hopewell Road? At the Worley's?

Frances: Oh, yeah.

Carol: That was a whole strange thing, wasn't it?

Ruthann: They made it to the door.

Robin: We went to school with them.

Allie: That whole thing is suspicious to me. Did they ever find out what caused that?

Robin: I don't remember what, but I remember hearing all about that. The family was all together and right by the door and couldn't get out.

Carol: Somehow, the door was blocked or something. It looks strange to go in Hopewell Cemetery and see that whole row. My mom and dad are buried there, at Hopewell. We went to Hopewell.

Allie: So, in East Brandywine, were most of the people that you knew farmers? What kinds of occupations did some of your friends or their parents have?

Frances: We weren't farmers. My father-in-law was a farmer. I know when we first moved here—what was that man's name that had the printing press over here? Burkholder?

Carol: There was a Burkholder.

Frances: He had a printing press or something. There isn't any of the older people around here anymore. From here up to Allen's mother's house, they are all new people.

Carol: Even where I live, the houses next door were made into apartments. It's not the same as when my kids were young or anything. So Ruthie, do you have some stories?

Ruthann: Growing up in this area?

Carol: Yeah!

Ruthann: Well, I went to first grade at the Hopewell School. I went to second grade in the basement of Hopewell Church.

Allie: Didn't you say that you went to school in the basement there too?

Carol: Fourth and fifth grade!

Ruthann: For me it was just second grade, and third and fourth was out at Guthriesville. That was just before they built Brandywine Wallace. Maybe third, fourth, and fifth was at Guthriesville because I know that we had two classes upstairs and we were in third grade. Sixth grade was at the old East Brandywine Baptist Church.

Allie: Do you remember any of your teachers?

Ruthann: I do! Mrs. Bennich, she was my first grade teacher. She was wonderful. She followed all of her classes to graduation. Then Mrs. Hinsley for second grade, Mrs. Ferguson for third grade, and then by fourth grade I was at Brandywine Wallace. That was my first year there.

Carol: Was Mrs. Mertz there then?

Ruthann: She was! She was one of the fifth grade teachers. I had Mrs. Soudon for fifth grade. Loved Mrs. Soudon, she was wonderful. That was when her husband had the Dairy Queen. She would bring us Dilly Bars and it was a big deal when she'd bring in those ice cream treats for her class.

Allie: I just moved to Coatesville this time last year, and I pass that every day. My grandmother was friends with Alice Soudon and lived right off of North Guthriesville Road, and just in the past couple of interviews I learned about them owning that Dairy Queen there, so it was a fun connection.

Frances: Do you know that Allen Jr. has a barber shop?

Carol: No! Where? Wait, at the bottom of the hill!

Robin: Next to what used to be Sanner's. It used to be a little country store before he turned it into a barber shop.

Frances: Tuesday he expects to go up to New York because there's a barber there that he talks to on Facebook. He's a hundred and seven years old, and he still barbers every day. So he and his friend are going up to see him on Tuesday, and he's going to take his picture and hang it in his barber shop.

Allie: Oh, wow!

Frances: I can't imagine working when you're a hundred and seven.

Allie: I sure hope that I'm retired by then. I like to compare my upbringing, which was the '90s, to everyone else's upbringing. So, I always think about needing to get my license at sixteen and learning to drive from my dad. How did you learn?

Frances: My brother taught me.

Allie: What did you first drive?

Frances: A '33 Plymouth. It was my dad's car. My brother taught me to drive, before I was even old enough to drive. He used to let me steer or shift the gears. The night before I took my test, I hadn't even learned to turn around. At that time, we went to take the test in Downingtown, by Jefferson Avenue. He had me pull up to Washington Avenue and I had to stop and there was a car coming and he went, "Steer 'em. Steer 'em, Bridget! (NOTE: Bridget is a nickname!)" He had me over in the middle of the road. I went down the next day to take my test and I passed. I'd learned to turn around the night before. Then I drove my dad's car and he was in the hospital. We had a narrow garage, just big enough for the car to go in. One day I took the car out and I always let my brothers put the car in the garage because I was always afraid I'd hit something, and then this one day I thought I'd be wise

and try it myself, and next thing I knew, I ran into the garage. The car made an awful noise, and I was scared to death. My brother looked at it and said, "You knocked it out of line, that's all that's wrong with it." I went down to the hospital, in Philadelphia, and I said, "Dad, I ran into the garage and I did something to the car." My dad just looked at me and said, "We all have to learn."

Laughter

Carol: Aw!

Frances: I thought he would be mad at me, but he wasn't. He just said, "We all have to learn." That's all he said. My brother fixed it.

Allie: That's good. My dad once said something similar. My parents house sits at the bottom of a hill, and there's rocks along the side of the driveway and shortly after getting my license, I didn't feel it, but I'd slashed my tires along these rocks going down the driveway. The next morning, my dad went up and said, "First of all, there's boulders in the driveway." And then I went to look at my car and the tires on the right side were both flat. That was an expensive lesson that I learned.

Laughter

Allie: Was Krapf Bus how you got to school?

Frances: No, Reeder's Busses. I had to walk from by the bypass in Downingtown and had to walk down to where the roads fork, where you can cross over to Edges Mill. That's where we got on the bus.

Allie: Okay.

Frances: It was Reeder's Bus out in Parkesburg that took us to school. At first, when I first started school, I rode the trolley. I rode it from Downingtown to Thorndale. We had neighbors, their name

was Hilton. The one Hilton boy used to come down and take me by the hand and take me up to the trolley.

Allie: How did the trolley work? Was it like a regular bus?

Frances: Yeah, but it ran on tracks.

Allie: Did you have a pass, or pay per ride?

Frances: I don't remember. All I know is I'd get on.

Allie: I vaguely remember someone mentioning being allowed to leave the school during lunch.

Were you allowed to come and go during the lunch hour? Was there a cafeteria?

Frances: Thorndale I used to take my lunch.

Allie: You'd eat in the classroom?

Frances: Yeah. Now, down at the high school, I worked in the cafeteria during lunchtime.

Allie: You worked there during lunch? When did you eat?

Frances: Well, when everybody else got done. We got out of class early to go down and get it all ready. I used to make sandwiches. They had a hot lunch, but we would serve the students that came to the cafeteria and would have the different kind of sandwiches and wash the dishes. We were never counted late or anything. Did you know Mary Stringer?

Carol: I don't think so.

Frances: She and I and Ethel Eschelman, we were the three that helped the ladies down in the cafeteria.

Allie: How did you get that job?

Frances: I don't know! They must have just asked me and I said, "Sure!"

Allie: That worked out!

Frances: We'd get out of class early.

Laughter

Frances: We had a certain time to be back.

Allie: Were you in clubs in school?

Frances: Only glee club.

Carol: Did you sing in the choir at church?

Frances: A little while, not too long.

Carol: Krapf Buses—he had a spot which is now Guthriesville Pharmacy on the corner. He had a gas station there and then started doing buses, but it was very small in the beginning. Do you remember that at all?

Allie: So that was what, '50s?

Robin: I only remember Ernie Cozzone having the gas station.

Allie: Did they have the service center?

Carol: No, you're talking about Whitely. Dennis Whitely had it for a while before moving it up by Speakman's pond. Do you remember Speakman's pond?

Frances: Yeah.

Carol: Now, that I remember ice skating there.

Frances: Who lives there now Carol, do you know?

Carol: I don't know. It looks like it's boarded up, which is a shame.

Frances: Oh, that was a real pretty place.

Allie: Where is this?

Carol: You know where the service station is now (Glenmoore)? Just past that, on the left, there's a big house.

Frances: Sort of long.

Allie: Is it right at the corner? Where you can turn onto Swinehart?

Carol: No, that's too far.

Robin: It's on the left and is up a little hill but you can see it from the road.

Carol: Just past the D&B Bank. There was a pond right next to the service center and it was near all of that. Sort of sits up on a knoll.

Robin: Yeah.

Frances: It sort of looks off balance or something. It's not straight. It's just such a pretty place though. Did you ever hear what happened to the Miley place? They tore that down.

Robin: At the end of Bollinger and 322.

Carol: Joan Miley and my sister are best friends. They actually married brothers at one time and then divorced them.

Laughter

Carol: I was talking to her about the house, because I was on my way up to Hickory House and I passed it and I guess they were doing a practice burn there, with the firehouse. No sirens or anything, but the whole place went down.

Ruthann: Did they extend that road? What was the purpose?

Carol: A development, I think.

Robin: That's what I thought, they did a lot of clearing. The house went and I thought, 'Bet they're going to develop this.' Unfortunately.

Allie: Yeah.

Robin: East Brandywine has a tendency to put a lot of developments in.

Carol: Way too many.

Robin: PENNDOT. Nothing changes with them. Even here at Hopewell and 322. When you go out of Hopewell, you don't have a lefthand turn signal. I don't know why they did that, it doesn't make sense.

Carol: It'll be worse when the school comes in.

Robin: Where?

Allie: At the Laird Building. They have the retaining wall up so far.

Robin: That was supposed to be condos or something I thought?

Allie: No, it's going to be a daycare up there on the hill.

Robin: Originally, it was supposed to be 15 homes, within an acre.

Carol: That's going next to the AGWAY. Brandywine Country Living, on 322. That's still going in, as far as I know.

Robin: But 15 on an acre?

Carol: I was beside myself when they gave permission for this daycare. The traffic as it is now is bad.

Robin: When you come out of that complex, where the LabCorp is...

Allie: I go to the dentist in there and it's impossible to get out. You can't see and people fly down the road.

Robin: It's terrible. You have to pull out into the road because they pushed all of that stuff up and didn't move any of it. So, that's going to be a daycare?

Allie: At the time that they were proposing the daycare, we'd just discussed the pharmacy coming in and there didn't end up being a new traffic study for that one corner.

Carol: The way it was explained to me is that the way that PENNDOT looks at it is that if somebody is coming down 322 from Honey Brook to go to work. If they stop there to drop off their child at the daycare, it is still part of that one-trip. In the traffic survey it's not counted as an extra vehicle.

Robin: Will they enter off of 322, or off of Hopewell?

Allie: Off of Hopewell. That awful hill.

Robin: They should really sit here around 3:00. From 3:00PM to 6:00PM. When we were kids, we could ride our bikes and you only saw two or three cars a day. Now, they're just lined up.

Carol: I leave home at quarter of seven to go to work, and I go back this way because 322 is so backed up because of the light by the high school. It still amazes me, even now, but it's nonstop.

The lights at that time in the morning, it's still dark, and it's just lined up. They take Hopewell Rd. and go right on Rock Raymond, left on Dorlan off on 282 and get onto the bypass there. That's what I do. It's non-stop.

Allie: That's not going to be good.

Frances: Where do you work, Carol?

Carol: Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church.

Frances: Bryn Mawr? Oh!

Allie: She has a nice long drive.

Frances: Is that where Steve works?

Robin: I thought that was Wayne. Wayne Presbyterian.

Carol: We do have a big staff. The campus is about a block long, and there's about thirty-five employees. Maybe I'll be able to retire one of these days.

Frances: When you get to be ninety-eight.

Laughter

Carol: I'm only seventy-one.

Allie: Is there anything we didn't discuss that you think would be good or interesting for people to know?

Frances: I can't think of anything right now. I'm like Carol, and I'll remember it later.

Carol: We interviewed Steve Sarmiento, and I'd just assumed that his parents started all the lights. He said he started it.

Allie: We were excited that they've made their appearance when we drove up.

Ruthann: Doesn't he add stuff every year?

Allie: He said he picks things up and fixes them up.

Frances: He turned it on the other night. Thanksgiving Day.

Ruthann: There were cars that pulled off to the side of the road and stopped to watch.

Robin: Sam came back and he said people were in dark clothes and he almost hit them and they stood to look at it and take pictures.

Frances: I think they need to light up Corner Ketch. It's just the darkest place.

Allie: Yeah, they should put a light there at some point. My brother works with the fire company and says there's a lot of accidents right there.

Carol: I bet.

Frances: A lot of cars don't even stop at that stop sign.

Allie: Well, the one too. People keep hitting it and instead of replacing it with a new one, they keep burying it lower and lower into the ground so it's getting kind of easy to miss.

Laughter

Carol: Joan Miley told us their house used to be level with the road.

Frances: Really?

Carol: Yeah, then they built up the road and it was down in the valley.

Frances: I remember when it used to be low.

Carol: Do you really? Where there was a dip there? I didn't know if they did anything like that here?

Frances: We've been having water in the house over there, so they must do something.

Robin: Yeah, they've been doing work over there with the pipes and stuff because I guess years ago, the water didn't come in because it sat higher.

Carol: Ours was kind of the opposite. I guess we were level at one time, and now we're higher than the road. I guess they lowered it and re-paved.

Allie: Carol was saying that—she lives on 322 so this blew my mind—they used to park right out front.

Carol: Oh, yeah. Right in front of the house.

Allie: Well, you said the same. You said you'd ride your bikes and there were what, two or three cars a day?

Robin: Yeah.

Ruthann: When I was in 4-H we used to do our bake sales at the original Cropper's down on the corner, and I would walk down. I would walk to my friends' houses, and we'd walk over to the school. Couldn't do that now.

Robin: We had 4-H down at the Grange and we could walk down or ride our bikes.

Ruthann: Yeah, we didn't have anything.

Robin: We used to ride our bikes from here to Brandywine Wallace, and we'd walk home in nice weather. In the springtime, we'd just walk across the hill because there weren't any houses there.

Frances: What are they doing about the greenhouses down at Lyndell?

Carol: I don't know. They aren't looking to be in good shape. Have you heard?

Ruthann: I thought they were trying to sell it.

Robin: The one time it looked like they were going to fix one up, but it doesn't look like there's been progress. We used to get all our plants from there.

Allie: I remember going a couple of times growing up.

Robin: When I started teaching, we'd always do poinsettias for the staff and I'd go down there and get all the poinsettias there. Home and School would sell them, and I'd go down to order them and they'd use them. Used to get all of our flowers there.

Allie: Where did you teach?

Robin: I taught at East Ward in Downingtown for thirty-six years.

Allie: Good for you.

Carol: Thirty-six years you taught there? My granddaughters go to East Ward now.

Allie: Did you teach a certain grade?

Robin: I started out in fourth grade—I did that for the first ten. Then I went down to second grade, and then kindergarten. I looped, so I did first grade one year then finished up in kindergarten.

Allie: I give you a lot of credit.

Carol: It's funny, we were talking about the immigration here and Downingtown Historical Society did a really great program on immigration in the area. I always thought it was just Italian immigrants, but there were certain periods where there were other nationalities. My granddaughters are at East Ward now, and they are in the minority. It's almost all Indian.

Robin: They are finding that at Pickering too. The development—there's a CVS and a little bypass and I don't remember the development.

Allie: Byers Station?

Robin: Yes, Byers Station. A lot of those homes are owned by Indian families. What they find, is there's an awful lot of the Indian community there.

Allie: I think Applecross too.

Robin: For East Ward, it was Williamsburg in the beginning. What happens is there's these big homes, and often more than one family or multiple generations of families are living there. Sometimes it was the grandparents and two or three sons and their families all living together.

Carol: Oh, yeah.

Robin: Bell Tavern too.

Carol: Someone was telling me if you drive through there during Diwali it's really neat with the lights.

Allie: Yes!

Robin: That's what was really nice about East Ward, we were very diverse. At one point they'd tell us—there was a whole thing when they were doing the separation of schools and splitting the boundaries. But our school's scores were just as high as any other school's scores within the district, but we had a very diverse population so it was neat for the kids.

Allie: Yeah.

Carol: My granddaughters love it there and think their teachers are fantastic.

Allie: I'm pretty sure that my mom went there.

Carol: Did she?

Allie: Yes, so I imagine that Brandywine Wallace wasn't there maybe? Or not for her grade? Why would she go to East Ward if she lived off of North Guthriesville?

Robin: They changed the lines several times. We started at Brandywine Wallace when it first opened, but there were kids who lived in certain parts of East Brandywine who went to Beaver Creek.

Allie: I went to Beaver Creek, and I grew up on North Bailey.

Robin: When they built Shamona and—what's the one above Johnstown?

Carol: Bradford?

Robin: Bradford Heights. When they built those at the same time, they had to redistrict. I live in Glenmoore, right on Fairview Road. Our son, the first year he went to Brandywine Wallace because I took sabbatical and John was still teaching so we took him there. First grade, he went to Shamona, but then in third grade they redistricted and he came to Brandywine Wallace for fourth and fifth grade.

Carol: My oldest daughter Cynette, they did a redistricting where on a certain side of 322 went to East Ward.

Robin: They had the sixth grade center, which was taken down and is now the gymnasium. The old East Ward.

Allie: Do any sixth graders go to Downingtown Middle School, or is that strictly seventh and eighth grades now?

Robin: Now, they go to Marsh Creek for sixth grade.

Allie: Okay, yeah. I didn't have that—I went to the middle school all three years.

Robin: After they did away with the Old East Ward, which was the sixth grade center, they did the two middle schools which were sixth to eighth. One in Downingtown and one in Lionville.

Allie: Right, that's what I had.

Robin: Now, they have this sixth grade center again. So, all the kids go to sixth grade there which is over by Shamona, and the two middle schools are only seventh and eighth.

Allie: So crazy.

Robin: At one point, the building that is STEM now was the ninth grade center. Then you went to high school.

Allie: I went to Downingtown West, but I had it ninth to twelfth.

Robin: My son is thirty, so they did the middle schools.

Frances: Are you a Guthriesville girl too?

Allie: Yep, I grew up off of North Bailey Road and my grandparents lived off of North Guthriesville. They lived in Levittown and moved here in probably the '70s. My mom was young enough to be in elementary school still. That's kind of the conversation that Carol and I have had before, that as separate as things between villages and towns were years ago, they were even when I was young. I knew nothing about Lyndell other than that we drove through it to get to Marsh Creek. I really only knew that we had the mill near us, that we'd go to Cropper's to get groceries, and we really never ventured past Corner Ketch because there was no reason to.

Frances: Did you know that Carol lived down there at the store?

Allie: I only knew about that once we started talking.

Frances: Lyndell was a big place at that time.

Carol: Yep, and Mrs. Bennich lived across the street.

Frances: And Jim Croce.

Carol: Yeah.

Ruthann: You probably don't know who he is.

Allie: I've heard of him recently, with some of these interviews.

Carol: Well, she's an event planner and I'm sure that some of your brides play some of his songs.

Allie: I'll have to look it up.

Ruthann: "Time in a Bottle."

Carol: "Big Bad Leroy Brown?"

Allie: I'll have to check into it. They all dance to the same Ed Sheeran song these days.

Laughter

Frances: Do they still do business down there at Lyndell?

Carol: It's not a store anymore. The post office is there, but it's not a store.

Ruthann: Is it apartments?

Carol: I think it's apartments. I haven't been in there. Makes me sad, but you know.

Frances: Someone was there at one time that used to make hoagies. Allen used to go in there and get hoagies.

Carol: Yeah, I think dad sort of saw...as soon as the big grocery stores were coming about he knew that he needed to make a change and made more of a deli. Plus, with Marsh Creek that was a big thing to be a deli and...

Robin: Stop on the way.

Carol: Yeah. He also built the worm farm. Remember where Marshall's lived?

Frances: Yeah.

Carol: He bought what was a train station at one time. It wasn't much of a train station, it was more of a little...from the creamery there on Marshall Road they would bring butter and things from the train and so then it'd be sold. A few people would ride it, but it was more for transporting goods or something. You remember the train tracks?

Frances: Yeah.

Carol: There was a little building there and he bought it and he decided to make a worm farm. He was always coming up with something. He figured that if people were fishing, they would need the bait.

Allie: How does one farm worms? Is it just having land? Or do you need mud?

Carol: I think the loom soil.

Frances: And the campground. It's staying in business.

Ruthann: It seems like it's always busy.

Carol: He did it at the right time because people were getting into camping and it got popular. At the time, it wasn't so overly regulated that you couldn't do it yourself.

Frances: There was one that started down...

Carol: Yeah, by Brandywine Meadows.

Frances: That didn't seem to last too long.

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Frances Harple Popjoy, known to many as “Dolly,” passed away peacefully at her home on Hopewell Road on May 10, 2019 having reached her 99th birthday on May 7. The Historical Commission is grateful to have interviewed Frances.