

East Brandywine Township Oral History Project

Interviewer(s): Alexandria Proko, Carol Schmidt and Cynette Schmidt

Interviewee: Ross Mowery

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Ross: My name is Ross T. Mowery. M-O-W-E-R-Y. I'm a lifelong resident of this township.

Allie: Alright! So, you're saying lifetime—did you move here or were you born here?

Ross: Well, kind of yes to both. My family was from here. I was born in Norristown—my parents lived there for a short time. They moved back to East Brandywine. The circumstances, I don't know. It was my knowledge that my grandmother became ill at that time and they had a rather large extended family, and I assume that's why my parents moved back. That's just things I put together over the years.

Allie: Yeah.

Ross: Or made it up, it sounds good this way.

Laughter

Carol: Family stories! Now, your mom and dad are both originally from East Brandywine?

Ross: No, no. My mom grew up on Rock Raymond Farm, which is right next to Hopewell Church. My dad is from Paradise, Lancaster County. Now, how they met? I don't know.

Carol: What was your mom's family name?

Ross: Nichols.

Carol: Nichols, that lived on Rock Raymond Road.

Ross: My grandfather sold the farm and moved to basically what is the intersection of Crawford Road and Creek Road.

Carol: Murder Hollow.

Ross: Yeah, Murder Hollow.

Allie: I just learned about that in our last interview.

Laughter

Cynette: Oh, I know about that!

Carol: What story do you know about that, Ross? Allie hadn't heard about it.

Ross: Somebody was murdered. It's in here (book on East Brandywine). That's basically all that I know. Most of it was just what I heard. Nothing substantiated that I could prove, just that a murder happened. How? I don't know. I was more fascinated with the name than the history.

Allie: Yeah, that was the first that I heard of that. I was like, "Wait, what?"

Carol: I told Allie what I had heard, and I don't know if this was true, but that Boo Boo Hoff—when he was in Milford Mills—would bring people out to get rid of them and would drop the bodies there. I don't know.

Ross: I couldn't tell you. Whatever is in here (book on East Brandywine) is what makes the most sense to me.

Cynette: It came from Pop. He told me—my grandfather—told us about Boo Boo Hoff.

Allie: When you say Nichols as the family last name, is that like the coin or is it O-L-S.

Ross: Yes, N-I-C-H-O-L-S.

Allie: That's good to know.

Ross: My wife's very into genealogy. The Nichols and the Bakers were intertwined. I'm not into it, but she is.

Allie: Was your wife from the area as well?

Ross: No, she was born in Delaware County. In Linwood, PA.

Carol: I think Diane told me, and correct me if I'm wrong, but that one of your ancestors had a forge in Lyndell and did blacksmithing?

Ross: According to her, yes. Across from the store.

Carol: That building is gone now, isn't it?

Ross: Yes, even in my lifetime. There was a garage, I remember a garage there.

Carol: That's what I remember.

Ross: Originally, that was a blacksmith shop and I believe that was done by a guy by the name of Baker who was a wheelwright. So I'm told. Now, that's somewhere in her notes.

Carol: Did you make a copy for us?

Ross: I believe you can have this.

Allie: What part of the township did you end up growing up in once you guys moved here?

Ross: At that corner of Crawford Road and Creek Road. We lived here until I was probably in my early teens, and then we moved up one house on Crawford Road.

Allie: Is that where you were as well, Carol?

Carol: That was Murder Hollow, which was south of Lyndell. Generally, yes.

Allie: Oh, wow look at that (Ross shows a picture in the book).

Ross: That's where I grew up. My grandfather did have a little convenience store that was there for many years.

Carol: Oh, that's the barn.

Ross: That's at the corner of Crawford Road.

Carol: Yeah. So, this was on Creek Road, Ross?

Ross: Yes, but that store is no longer there.

Carol: But the house is.

Ross: Right. Now here (shows another photo) is the blacksmith's shop that was in Lyndell.

Carol: Across the street from the Lyndell store. That's the house that was there, but I never knew there was a store there.

Ross: No, me neither. Now, you're a lot younger than I am, but that might have been gone by the time things would've really been there.

Carol: I don't think I'm a lot younger than you.

Laughter

Allie: Now, was it a family member that you said owned the blacksmith shop?

Ross: Could have been, but I can't really say for sure.

Allie: Okay. What was your childhood like? Your daily life?

Ross: Fortunately, it was pre-television. Now, we did listen to the radio. I had the creek as a playground. At that time, farming was the main industry in East Brandywine, so you had oodles of

open fields to run around in. The roads were less traveled, so if you were on a bicycle, you could go to Downingtown and not pass a car. The main transportation for a child was the bicycle. I was all over the place on my bike. In Murder Hollow, there were kids that I played with and grew up with, one of which was the VanLews. Matt VanLew is the roadmaster for the township. His dad lived a couple of houses down from me. We'd also play at the Manley Farm—people by the name of Buller lived there. I was great friends with the Buller boys. At the time, the houses were never locked, so I could come and go as I pleased. I had chores to do. I was a happy-go-lucky kid. Obviously, I was well fed.

Laughter

Ross: To my knowledge, I had everything I needed. My parents were caring.

Allie: What kind of chores did you do? What were the things that were expected of you?

Ross: Mow the grass. At the time we had chickens, so I'd help to feed them. We did have a cow at one time. I helped raise pigs. I guess a lot of places in those days had farmettes. My mother was really into gardening, which I didn't like.

Allie: You weren't a fan of the gardening?

Ross: Well, no.

Carol: Ross, the house further down? If you came to Crawford and Creek and turned right, there's a house that sits further back and I guess was a big farm. Whose farm was that?

Ross: In my lifetime, that belonged to Elizabeth Manley. Her husband died in the late '30s or early '40s. I never knew him, but that farm was hers.

Carol: That's an older building?

Ross: Yes. Her daughter was Mary Manley, who married Pat Buller. They had two boys, George and Preston. Preston's nickname was Thump. I was pals with the Buller boys and also the VanLews.

Carol: Some of those other houses around there were added later, I think. I don't know how many years later. Like Whitely's house?

Ross: That I don't know. It was there in my lifetime.

Carol: Mine too, yeah.

Ross: Just down the street Whitely's son, Ralph, built a house. Across the street. I know that Ralph made a major addition by going up a second floor. During my lifetime, down there.

Carol: Did you go to Hopewell School?

Ross: Yes, and here (Guthriesville School).

Carol: For what? How many classes did they have at Hopewell at that time?

Ross: Just one. It was first grade and second grade there also.

Carol: First grade, yeah. That's what it was for me too.

Ross: Now, my mother went there first through either sixth or seventh.

Carol: It was one room.

Ross: Yes.

Allie: So, it was at one time multiple grades and then it shifted to just first grade, and everyone went here (Guthriesville School) after first grade?

Ross: Yes. There were four grades here (Guthriesville School).

Allie: Do you have any memories of your school days, or anything that stuck with you? Anything you looked forward to?

Ross: More here (Guthriesville School) because of the age. At Hopewell School, the teacher was Miss Hershey, who later became Marian Smith.

Carol: Oh! And Pete? Marian and Pete?

Ross: I guess. I was more interested in recess. Playing outside was more enjoyable than the schoolwork.

Laughter

Allie: I don't blame you. Now, do you remember going down the street to get lunch? We'd heard that the teacher would let everyone out and they'd get lunch down the street.

Ross: You could. It was an option, and I assume we had something like an hour for lunch. You either brown-bagged, or you could go down to the luncheonette for lunch. Some did. I did on occasion, but that was a rare treat. I know that Bob Watt's, who I also grew up and later became friends with, his aunt, owned the store. Flossie Bryant.

Carol: Yeah. Flossie, and Earl?

Ross: Yeah, Earl Bryant. At my time, I don't think he was involved. He had his own thing. Earl Bryant, at one time, had Lyndell Store. He also owned where the monument place is at one time.

Allie: Weaver Memorial.

Ross: Yeah, before Bob Cropper.

Carol: I didn't really know him (Earl). Like you said, he was sort of out of the picture there.

Ross: I mean, I knew who he was. Later, he built a hardware store just down Bondsville Road. It almost backed up to the monument place.

Carol: Where did you go to sixth grade? They were building Brandywine Wallace, and we went to the basement of Hopewell Church and the basement of East Brandywine Baptist Church.

Ross: I went to sixth grade at West Ward School. At the time, it was the original Downingtown High School. That later became condemned and torn down. Right now, there's a church.

Carol: It's where the Lutheran Church is now.

Ross: Messiah Lutheran?

Carol: Yeah.

Allie: I'm trying to think of where that is.

Ross: You know where the funeral home is?

Allie: In the center of Downingtown?

Ross: If you went down 322 and turned right at the traffic light? It's less than an eighth of a mile.

Allie: Okay, I know where it is.

Carol: There's a Priori's.

Allie: Yeah, there's the mattress store and then it's before Rita's Water Ice. I never knew there had been a school there.

Carol: They tore it down completely. Now, that was sixth through what, that you went there?

Ross: Just sixth grade. Then we went up to the high school. At that time, it was a junior and senior high school.

Allie: And that is what is now STEM?

Ross: STEM, yes.

Carol: That's where I went. When I went there, it was a junior and a senior school, but they had built the senior, so it was only for a year that it was both. Then seventh—senior high was over in the other building.

Ross: Back then, it was simpler times.

Carol: Definitely.

Allie: So, that was kind of a hike from your house. Did you take a bus? Was there a bus route?

Ross: Yes. We rode Krapf. The whole time that I was in school, Krapf Bus was the main transportation.

Allie: They've been around a while.

Carol: They started out at the corner down here, where the Hopewell Pharmacy is now? Krapf had a gas station and started out with a couple of buses.

Ross: Yeah. Well, it's Hopewell Pharmacy.

Carol: Yeah, Hopewell Pharmacy!

Ross: I didn't know that Krappy started there until Ray Dennis. Then Krappy started out as a garage. How he got into the bus part, I don't know.

Carol: It was smart thinking, wasn't it?

Ross: Oh, yeah. He and his wife were the drivers. And Raymond and Mrs. Irons. Now, there may have been others, but those were the four main ones that I know of.

Carol: I remember Eleanor picking us up a lot. That was his wife. She'd drive the bus. She'd drive to bible school and pick everybody up. I think even when Cynette was little, she drove for bible school. I could be wrong about that.

Ross: You gave Mrs. Krapf no stuff.

Carol: That's for sure.

Allie: She was tough?

Carol: Strict.

Ross: You didn't give any of the bus drivers grief.

Carol: Right. George Krapf, he was known as Krappy. When he said Krappy, that's who he was talking about.

Allie: Were the teachers that way as well? When I was in school, I think teachers put up with a lot more from students than in the past. Kids would get sent out to the hall, but it just seems like you didn't dare to disrespect someone older than you. A different way of life. Did you find it was the same way at home?

Ross: Well, I'm sure you've heard this story over and over, but if you got in trouble at school you caught holy hell at home. The teachers at my time were Mrs. Ferguson, who taught second and third. Mrs. Harner was fourth and fifth. They were stern, but fair. Very nice ladies. Did we get into trouble with them? I guess we did, but I can't remember them spanking or hitting us. Did they to some other kids? Could have, I can't say if they did. They were nice teachers, and easy to get along with.

Carol: I think a difference too, is that your parents would have supported the teacher. No matter what. I'm not sure it's that way today.

Allie: Uh, no.

Laughter

Allie: I think most of the time, people go in and try to advocate for their child and that's why it always gets to include the principal and the teacher needing backup. It just doesn't seem like it was like that, at all.

Carol: Not at all. There wouldn't have even been a question that you were the one wrong.

Allie: Totally different world.

Ross: Mrs. Harner went to Hopewell Church. I don't know where Mrs. Ferguson went, but they were a part of the community. They knew everybody.

Allie: Do you find that you respected those teachers more, because you knew them?

Ross: It was just expected of you. The teachers said to do this, and that's what you did. I don't think any of us had the nerve to talk back to the teacher. It may have happened sometimes, but pretty much, whatever the teacher said went. It was just not a question. That was a very simple time. The technology wasn't good or bad, but if you want to find things out now, it's very easy. Back then, you had to dig.

Carol: Yeah, go to the library or ask around. That's certainly an improvement.

Cynette: This is my kids, growing up. I mean, my kids are about as young as you. Or, as old as you, Allie.

Carol: Mrs. Harner lived in one of those houses that was torn down. She lived here. I don't know where Mrs. Ferguson lived.

Ross: At the intersection of Bailey Road and 340. Kings Highway. That white house? That's where she lived. Mrs. Harner, she walked. Now, whether she could drive or not, I don't know. I had no reason to know. I'm pretty sure she walked to school. It wasn't that far.

Carol: No uphill. Do you remember the May Poles?

Ross: I didn't do any, but I remember.

Carol: The girls did.

Ross: Yeah. At recess, we played ball. Football. They may have had a couple of swing sets. Some limited playground.

Allie: Do you remember the orientation of this building (Guthriesville School) at the time? It was just the one room for the schoolhouse, then we heard that the parking lot must have been the outhouses.

Ross: And the ball field.

Allie: Oh, okay. We didn't get that from Joan.

Carol: Girls didn't play.

Allie: Right, her perspective.

Ross: Where the backstop was, was almost to where the Moore house was. Very close.

Carol: I was telling Allie that before, if you grew up in Lyndell, that was your area that you knew. When we were talking about Bondsville, I hardly knew anything. Would you agree? Was that sort of your feeling?

Ross: Yeah.

Carol: Murder Hollow was your area.

Ross: Yeah.

Carol: I just didn't have a reason to go there.

Ross: We frequented Lyndell Store a lot, because it was close.

Allie: What did your parents do? Were they working locally?

Ross: Most of the time, my mother was a housewife. My dad worked at Lukens's. He was an estimator at Lukens's. When I was growing up, the extended family lived there and two of his grandchildren lived there. Somewhere in the late '30s and early '40s. I don't believe the father could have raised them, so they lived with their grandparents. When they sold the farm, they all went over to Creek Road. All I know is that one of my cousins, her name was Peggy Asteimer. That was her maiden name. She was born with a dislocated hip and wherever her parents lived she had to go up and down the stairs and she couldn't do it, so she went to live with her grandparents on Rock Raymond Farm. She stayed there until she became an adult and went out on her own. When I say extended family—my grandmother died in 1942—and so my mother had to help to take care of the place with my grandfather and these two kids plus her own two when they came along.

Carol: So, I'm thinking that the role of your mom would have been doing a lot of canning and gardening. My mom didn't do a lot of canning, but Joan Stanford mentioned that canning would take a lot of time.

Allie: She said it deterred her from taking it up because she never wanted to look at another can.

Laughter

Ross: My mother canned a lot of in-season produce and vegetables.

Allie: Did she have anything she made frequently? Recipes that were passed down or something in particular you liked?

Ross: My dad worked shift work, so when he was, we'd have our favorites for us. One of the things he despised was flapjack pie, which was mostly sugar. I don't know what the recipe was. He despised it, but us kids liked it. Also, macaroni and cheese. I don't think he was a fan of that.

Allie: They sound delicious.

Carol: Do you remember the Lyndell Grange?

Ross: I knew of it. When I became old enough to know what was going on, I think it was kind of faded out. I knew it was there, but as far as it being the Grange, I didn't know that much about it.

Carol: I was curious and that's why I'm asking about it because I'm the same way, you know, it had faded out. I was curious about its history and if you'd heard or remembered anything.

Ross: Our life revolved around the church. My mom helped take care of the church. At that time, Hopewell was a family-run church, so the families had to take care of it. They didn't hire out to clean, the families cleaned. Now, of course, somebody took care of the grounds. My mother was one of the cleaning ladies. We would go with her, and we would have the run of the church.

Allie: Did you participate in anything particular at the church?

Ross: Sunday school and bible school.

Carol: I remember that being an important part of it.

Ross: It wasn't quite as active as it is now.

Carol: We didn't take the trips. It was more that that's just what you did on Sunday night. That was your social time.

Ross: Sunday was practically an all day thing at church. I did join the Boy Scouts—Cub Scouts. Pack 8 and Troop 8. In fact, my father was the first scout master at Troop 8.

Allie: Oh wow, that's neat.

Ross: That was during WWII, and he worked at Lukens. He was exempt from military service, which he was grateful for.

Carol: Yes, the whole family was!

Laughter

Allie: Going back to him quickly, did he have a car and drive every day to Lukens?

Ross: Yes.

Allie: Do you remember what some of the other big workplaces were? Where your friends parents were working?

Ross: Well, there were all kinds of industry in this township. Bondsville Mill was up and running when I was a kid. There were all kinds of paper mills in Downingtown and the paper mill on 282—Shyrock Brothers—that was very active. A lot of the guys were employed there. People at Bondsville. Farming was the major industry. A lot of work in Coatesville, Thorndale, Downingtown. There was Downingtown Iron Works, Downingtown Manufacturing. Pepperidge and Pillsbury were in Downingtown at that time.

Allie: I didn't know Pillsbury.

Carol: No, I didn't know about Pillsbury either.

Ross: Yes.

Carol: Where were they located?

Ross: I can't tell you specifically, but that closed and moved above Pottstown somewhere.

Allie: Did Lukens ever host family-oriented events that you'd all go to, or were co-workers of his around?

Ross: Well, Lukens would have a picnic at a local amusement park. Like, Lenape? There was one too, Rocky Springs? Somewhere west of Coatesville. Anything that the church held. The church used to have Strawberry Festivals.

Carol: Oh yeah. That was a big deal.

Ross: Oh, yes. A very big deal.

Allie: Sort of what Coatesville does, with the hospital?

Ross: But not that big.

Allie: It's grown quite a bit.

Carol: Then, there was the Passion Play.

Ross: Yeah, that came later. The Passion Play came in the '60s.

Carol: Yes. The minister at Hopewell when you were there, was it Buckwalter?

Ross: The one that I really knew most was Kenneth Buckwalter. There were two other ones that I remember. One was a guy named Davis who became a chaplain, and he had two boys of school-age that I remember going to this school (Guthriesville School) with. Then, an older man by the name of White. I thought he was ancient at the time.

Laughter

Ross: Then, this Reverend Buckwalter came. At the time, the area was starting to grow, and he helped the church grow. In fact, when he was a pastor, he was also a part-time bus driver.

Allie: Oh, wow.

Ross: Early in his ministry, he was a pastor at Hibernia Church.

Allie: I didn't know that Hibernia had one.

Carol: Hibernia Methodist, yeah.

Ross: Largely, our life was kind of centered around the church.

Allie: I'm getting that vibe, that the church was what you had, where people gathered.

Carol: That was the social life. You know, there was the faith-based part, but it was also social.

Ross: Yes. A lot of people went to the Baptist church too. I couldn't tell you if there were any dividing lines there. You basically went wherever your parents told you that you were going.

Allie: Now, how did you and your wife meet? Did you meet through the church?

Ross: No, we met on a blind date. I spoke of Thump Buller—he and I became friends. My wife was a nurse, and a girl behind her in high school also went to nursing school. Well, Preston (Thump) and this lady, Jackie, got married and then introduced us. We married a year later, after them. My wife is from Linwood, across from where the refineries were. After we got serious and decided to marry, I said I wasn't going to live there.

Laughter

Ross: I didn't.

Carol: You're a country boy.

Ross: She had no problem with it.

Allie: What year was that, that you were married?

Ross: '66. The big house that I showed you pictures of, there were apartments there and we lived in one of the apartments. Then, we moved to Lyndell about two or three years later. It's still there.

Cynette: You've been married for fifty-two years. I was born in '66.

Ross: Oh!

Allie: Good for you, that's wonderful.

Cynette: I was going to say, that's a long time!

Ross: It was a great place to grow up, you know? I mean, we had everything we needed. The more I got into school, the more you ventured away from home, to Downingtown.

Allie: Do you have any memories, as you started to get older, of going places like the movie theater in Downingtown?

Ross: Yes, I went there quite a bit. The Roosevelt.

Allie: Okay, is that what it was called? The Roosevelt? What a cool name.

Carol: I know.

Allie: Sure beats the Regal 16.

Laughter

Ross: It was pretty basic though.

Cynette: Where is that at?

Carol: That's where there's now a dance studio.

Cynette: You make that right at Downingtown National Bank, and it sits on your right side?

Allie: Yep.

Carol: Right. Now, Joan Stanford mentioned a social place. What did she call it? The orchard? I'd never heard about it.

Allie: She mentioned that her parents met at an orchard that she said was by Rock Raymond.

Carol: It was a place where they would have dances, she said.

Allie: Yeah, her parents met at a dance.

Ross: You got me.

Carol: You haven't heard of it either?

Ross: No.

Allie: I've never heard of an orchard up there. I'll have to dig a little bit into that.

Carol: Yeah.

Ross: There was an opera house in Downingtown.

Allie: Really?

Ross: Whether that became The Roosevelt, I couldn't tell you.

Carol: I think it did, but I'm not sure. That would have been pre-movies I guess, and they had people maybe come and sing or read poetry or whatever.

Allie: That's neat. I'm trying to think if there was anything else in Downingtown. My knowledge of that is so limited.

Carol: Of course, I think The Coffee Cup was in Downingtown.

Ross: That didn't come until the '60s.

Carol: Oh, really? It was the '60s? I thought that it was before then.

Ross: I knew it with a sporting goods there. Dunmoore's, I think? That's what I remember.

Allie: Did you play sports?

Ross: We'd play every sport known to man. Growing up, it was more sandlot stuff. Nothing organized.

Allie: Right.

Ross: We organized ourselves.

Allie: Did you have a preference for anything?

Ross: Baseball probably. Kenny Van Lew and I would go to Sunny Bank Farm to shoot baskets.

Allie: Where was that?

Ross: It's off of Reeds Road. If you go from that corner where the house is and head towards Lyndell? Cross over the bridge. Off to the left was a farm called Sunny Bank Farm.

Carol: That was Kaiser's.

Ross: Yes. In their barn where they stored hay, they had an area where he put a basketball hoop. So, we would go up there and shoot baskets.

Carol: I wouldn't have known about that. Girls didn't do that.

Laughter

Ross: Next to our house there was a cornfield where we set up a baseball diamond and also we played baseball here (East Brandywine book image).

Allie: Was that the field behind the school here?

Ross: No, this was on Creek Road. The Little League didn't come into Downingtown until the early '50s. Now, Kenny VanLew went on to play Little League baseball. I didn't. Should have, but didn't. That's a regret.

Laughter

Allie: While you were busy with Boy Scouts, what kind of things were you doing? What did the troop do? Or, how did your dad decide to get that going? Did he talk to you about that?

Ross: He didn't, but I would imagine the need for boys who had dads who were gone.

Allie: From the war?

Ross: That would be my guess.

Carol: That makes sense.

Allie: That does make sense.

Ross: We met at the church, in the church basement. We did Boy Scout stuff. I don't think we did much volunteer work, that I remember, but I won't say that it didn't happen.

Carol: What was the derby with the cars? Pine Box Derby?

Ross: Pinewood Derby?

Carol: Pinewood Derby!

Ross: That was a Cub thing, and it probably didn't come till later years. I can't say for sure.

Allie: I wouldn't have thought about the correlation there. One of the things we're talking about with people is their health and memory of general medicine. I guess that's the best way to word that?

Carol: Yeah.

Allie: Did you have a doctor? I think Joan said that they had someone who was coming to the house when someone was ill.

Ross: Yes.

Allie: Did you have that as well?

Ross: Yes, to both. Sometimes we did go to the doctor, and sometimes the doctor came to our house. That was infrequent. As far as dental work, we'd go to a clinic over at Chester County Hospital. I forget how we got there, but we were driven. If we needed dental work, it was on an as needed basis.

Carol: Yeah, it wouldn't have been like today. If a person had crooked teeth, you just had crooked teeth.

Allie: You didn't go get braces or orthodontic work.

Ross: Yeah. As far as eyes, we went to Lukens because they had an optometrist. I think he was from Allentown. I think he was at the plant certain days a week, and we would go there for our eye care. No appointments. You'd just have to wait your turn. If a worker would come in, they had the priority.

Allie: Oh!

Ross: I don't recall going to a dentist other than going over to Chester County Hospital though.

Allie: Did you ever have to go to the hospital?

Ross: I fell off a bike.

Allie: That was Chester County that you went to?

Ross: Yeah.

Allie: All of that biking, and you only fell off once, huh?

Laughter

Ross: Yeah.

Carol: Well, you'd get cuts and scrapes, but you didn't rush to the doctors. Unless it was more serious.

Allie: Did you have any siblings?

Ross: I had a sister.

Allie: Was she born here?

Ross: Yes, she was born in Chester County. Growing up, she was a sickly child. Whatever came down the pike, she got it. She had hives and a lot of allergies.

Allie: So the doctor was more so there for her than you?

Ross: Yes.

Allie: I wish the doctor would still come to the house.

Laughter

Ross: Unfortunately, my sister died. One year ago yesterday.

Allie: Oh wow. I'm so sorry.

Ross: She was never in the peak of health.

Allie: That's how it seems to be sometimes.

Carol: Yeah. Were you involved in the fire company at all?

Ross: No.

Carol: I was thinking about the fire on Crawford Road and Hopewell Road. Worley's?

Ross: Yes.

Carol: That was...

Cynette: A mystery.

Carol: How many died in that?

Ross: Quite a few, but I don't know.

Cynette: I saw that at the church cemetery one time. My grandma and grandpop aren't far from that. There must have been at least six or seven. You could tell they were all the same date that they perished.

Ross: The only fire I really remember from growing up was Frazier Feed Store.

Carol: Oh gosh, yeah.

Ross: On Reeds Road. You could see it from our house. Of course, the train ran up.

Allie: That's right. In Lyndell, right?

Ross: Yes.

Carol: It wouldn't have gone far from your place either, right? Across the creek on the other side. It's now Struble Trail. It was the railroad bed.

Cynette: If you walk up there, the tracks by grandpops worm farm are still there.

Carol: I don't think they are there now.

Cynette: Not now, no. This was when I was a little kid. Don't go now.

Laughter

Ross: If you cross over the bridge in Lyndell, heading towards Marsh Creek? Right where the trail is, there's a piece of track sticking out from the macadam.

Carol: Yeah. That ran down behind Ross's house on the side of the creek, right?

Ross: Correct. It would go to Downingtown.

Allie: Was the lake already there?

Carol: No, that wasn't there.

Cynette: I even remember that.

Ross: That would have been in the '70s.

Carol: Early '70s, yeah.

Cynette: I was ten.

Allie: Fairly recent history.

Ross: Oh, yeah.

Cynette: I remember it being filled and I was ten or eleven.

Ross: They used to pick milk up and Lyndell used to be called Brooklyn.

Allie: Really?

Carol: Yeah. Dad always said he owned the 'Brooklyn Bridge'.

Laughter

Ross: When they were building the turnpike, the railroad cars would go up to the quarry to get stone. In my lifetime, it went as far as Cornog.

Allie: I don't know what that is.

Carol: Cornog? If you go on Creek Road, past the Lyndell Store, it curves around and up. There's a crossroad there, and there was a restaurant on the right.

Cynette: And little racetracks.

Allie: Okay, yes.

Carol: On the left, there was a gas station and now it's a coffee place. A neat little coffee place.

Allie: The restaurant, it's vacant now, right?

Carol: Yes, and that was Cornog. You'd make a right, and it's empty now, but at that spot you'd go over the little bridge and up on the right side you could go back into the quarry.

Allie: Oh. That takes you to Eagle?

Carol: Yeah, that direction.

Cynette: At Downingtown High School, that used to be the place to go bag. Bag, did you use that term?

Ross: Yeah, but I never used to be into it.

Cynette: Do you know what bagging means, Allie? It would mean you'd skip school.

Allie: Oh, okay!

Ross: There was a bar on the same side as the gas station you mentioned. It was called Connie & Mac's.

Carol: Right.

Cynette: That's Connie, that we rented from?

Carol: Yes. I lived in the apartment above the bar for a short while.

Ross: Oh, okay.

Carol: They had closed the bar at that time. Just for a short while we lived in the apartment there, upstairs. I guess it had been Connie Quartucci's place.

Ross: Correct. And Al.

Carol: She built Old Maple Inn.

Cynette: That's when I was born. We were just passing it the other day, and she (Carol) said Connie. That's why I remember it. I was a baby.

Allie: What did you do professionally?

Ross: Professionally, I was a draftsman designer in the heavy duty truck and trailer industry. All of my working career.

Allie: How did you get into that?

Ross: As soon as I got out of the service, I went to work at Autocar Trucks as a clerk and then just moved around within the engineering department.

Allie: Can you tell us a little more about your time in the service?

Ross: I was in the Marine Corps. It was pretty much uneventful after boot camp. Then, for two years, I was aboard an aircraft carrier. That was my best time in the service. I got to go all over the place.

Carol: You call that uneventful?

Laughter

Ross: Well, that was eventful. The first couple of years were uneventful. I did things then that I couldn't come close to now. Then, I ended up in Philadelphia for a year, which was great.

Allie: That is nice, that you ended up close to home.

Ross: Yeah. Then we got married in '66. We lived on Creek Road for a couple of years before building our house on Jeffries Farm, and we're still there.

Allie: Does Temperance Hall ring any bells?

Carol: Here in Guthriesville?

Ross: No.

Carol: Pink. It was always pink. The place down the street from me. McCue owns it now, but it's across from the Medicine Shoppe.

Cynette: There's a collision place there.

Carol: That's next door to it. It was called Temperance Hall, and I just saw a reference to it and they called it that. It's up for sale. McCue has all of his places up for sale, and I looked them up out of curiosity and they called that one Temperance Hall.

Cynette: Did they really?

Allie: Is it for sale? We can talk to the realtor.

Carol: Yeah. It's apartments now, but I wondered about what the Temperance Hall meant. Long before me.

Ross: I couldn't tell you.

Allie: How about the Industrial School? Did you know anything about that?

Ross: All I know is that at that time it was for mostly colored boys. The only thing that I know about it is that Elis Brown used to have a farm which is now part of East Brandywine Park. They would blood test the chickens and he would hire boys to come over to help to get the chickens for that.

Carol: I think it started out that it was not for troubled children, but I think that by the time the sixties came along they were getting state funding. They were taking in more troubled kids which is when they started to have problems and go downhill. It seemed mysterious to me, and I didn't know what went on there. I was surprised that Joan Stanford mentioned a black child in her class. I don't remember any black children in my classes growing up. Do you?

Ross: Yes.

Carol: Who?

Ross: Their name is Davis. That is who I remember. If you're in Bondsville, heading towards 340 and pass the firehouse. The road goes off to the right and that farm is there? The foundation is barely there, and you have to look for it. But they had a tenant farmer. The people who owned that farm, in my lifetime, were the Davis'. They had a tenant farm, and that's where the colored family lived. I

don't believe it had much in the way of plumbing. It was very small. The tenant farmer was Smith. That's what my memory says, but I can't say that.

Laughter

Carol: Now, Joan also talked about how wonderful the lake was there, by Bondsville Mill. She remembers that it was just so beautiful, and they'd go skating there and have bonfires and things. I don't really remember that.

Ross: Jack Williams. I'm sure that you've heard of him?

Carol: The barber?

Ross: He grew up in Bondsville. In fact, that's where they bathed in the summertime. He'd be a good resource.

Carol: Yeah, we could go to him.

Allie: I think your familiarity with the mill out here is not as strong because you didn't grow up right here. Did you know the mill near you better?

Ross: Lyndell Mill?

Carol: No.

Ross: There was a woolen mill.

Carol: There was a woolen mill in Lyndell, but it was fairly small. Compared to other mills.

Ross: It was at the corner of Highspire and 282.

Carol: As a kid there were some walls there and then they tore those walls down.

Ross: There were mills over at Milford Mills.

Allie: That's what it was, yes.

Carol: Oh, Milford Mills.

Allie: Says it right in the name.

Laughter

Cynette: That's Marsh Creek now.

Carol: If you wanted to go to Eagle, you went through Milford Mills.

Ross: Yes.

Allie: You said it was a community? You mentioned it being where you'd get milk.

Ross: There was a small general store. They had two sections of row homes. One of the homes at the very end, a lady by the last name of Finger was there. I don't remember her first name.

Carol: It's funny you say that, because that picture (genealogy) has the Finger's and it sounds funny to say it, but they must have been a relative of yours.

Ross: Yes. That lady's mother-in-law was an Aunt to me.

Carol: I remember.

Ross: Right. Her brother was the husband of the lady that had that store.

Carol: Yes.

Ross: At that time, they lived in Milford Mills. In one of the row homes.

Carol: Yes.

Ross: Now, what they did in Milford Mills? I don't know. There were a couple of ponds over there.

Allie: It's funny, because as much as you're talking about being in Lydell and not knowing anything about Bondsville, I grew up off of North Bailey and until I got involved with the Historic Commission, I didn't know anything about Lydell other than that we would drive through it to Marsh Creek as a kid. That's it.

Carol: Right.

Allie: It's just funny how there's still that separation, even though we're more modern now.

Ross: Well, Milford Mills was kind of in Lydell's backyard. Less than a mile from one to the other. So, it would be more familiar with us.

Carol: I was talking to someone the other day, and I want to tell you about this another time, Allie. But, he was talking about the murder in Lydell, where the guy put the woman down the well. Does that ring any bells with you? He said he was six years old when it took place.

Allie: I remember that it came up in conversation with Joan Stanford too.

Carol: It was before me, but I was curious about it. Norman Piersol, I remember, was the one who originally told me about it. But this guy remembered more about it.

Ross: Oh, okay. Huh, no.

Carol: I don't think parents talked to kids as much about things like that then. If something like that had happened, I think my mother would not have told me. Do you agree? You didn't talk to children about things like that.

Ross: I will say that I was pretty well-sheltered.

Allie: I was going to ask about that. Do you both feel that you had more of an innocent childhood than kids today?

Ross: And sheltered, yes.

Carol: Definitely. You didn't have television to tell you what was going on. Well, we had television. I think there was more of a distinction about what was for children and what was for adults. Even for teens. That wasn't for them. It was an adult thing.

Ross: Another example of being sheltered, my mother's sister lived in the Lockhaven-area after they grew up and a couple of times when they came to visit they saw a black man. They had never seen a black man.

Allie: Oh my gosh, how about that.

Ross: Yeah!

Carol: I remember saying to my mother that I'd found out about a man in the neighborhood was accused of something and I asked her if she knew about it. She said yes, and I asked why she'd never told us and she said there wasn't reason to.

Ross: Yeah!

Carol: Plus, my mother was very strong on not gossiping. It was a sin to her, to gossip. She didn't.

Allie: I'm 26 now, and a lot of my friends and even family are having children of their own. I have nephews now. From the perspective of someone that is my age and of age to be a parent, I think we're sometimes scared because we don't trust the world. I used to work with kids, and there were two-year-olds who couldn't talk yet but knew how to work an iPad, and kids in elementary school are carrying cell phones. Not because they want cell phones, but because their parents want them to have a cell phone so they can know where they are at all times. Do you feel that your parents felt—I don't know if safer is the right word...

Carol: No, because we had WWII. My parents went through the Depression and WWII, so they went through as bad of a time as they could have possibly gone through. Then, after that, we went through watching the President getting assassinated and the Bay of Pigs. I mean, we were going to be annihilated. You knew how to jump under your desk because of the nuclear bombs. So, I don't know that it was a safer time, but maybe it wasn't coming at you like it is today, with the news.

Allie: Media.

Carol: There were still fears.

Ross: I would have to say that we were more sheltered. I was anyway.

Carol: Yeah, sheltered from what was going on out in the world.

Ross: I didn't know nothin' about WWII, or I was just oblivious to it. Now, I started remembering things prior to Korea, because that started to click things together in my memories where we were in peace from '45 to the end of '49 until Korea crept through. By then, I heard more that was going on.

Cynette: It's interesting because you say they were sheltered, and with my kids who are Allie's age, there is so much out there for them to know about and they don't care. I don't see the interest in worrying about things like they should. As a parent, we're not hiding it from them—I bring it up at different times to talk about it and it's kind of whatever to them—and I just can't wrap my head around how serious some of it is and that they aren't worried about what different people are doing. It scares me as far as the generation that'll be after them.

Allie: I think that there's so much, that's it hard to even distinguish what to be the most afraid of. It's constant. There's so much. It's interesting. One of the questions I thought of when you were talking about being sheltered and not really having those fears as a child—you were aware of kids' fathers

being in the war. You'd mentioned the fathers of kids in the Boy Scouts. Did you think about why they were gone? No idea?

Ross: No, I didn't. Never even thought about it.

Allie: That's good, that you had that peace.

Ross: All the kids that I knew, their parents were married. A child out of wedlock was unheard of. It happened, but it was really hushed. I didn't know much about other people. I didn't know what a Catholic was until...I didn't know there were other religions other than Methodist and Baptist.

Allie: Wow.

Ross: I was completely sheltered. Never knew what a Jewish person was.

Allie: Do you think it was because of your family, or that this was a small town? Do you think everyone around here lived a similar lifestyle?

Ross: I would say small town. It was kind of isolated, because farming was the major industry. What wasn't related to farming, we just didn't pay much attention to it.

Carol: It might have been slightly different for me, because my dad had the store. People were coming in all the time from all over the neighborhood. Not significantly, but maybe slightly more than you were, on the farm. At that time, we were the only store around. My dad bought it, and then they put the A&P in Downingtown. He converted it into more of a deli. It was a grocery though, people bought all their groceries there. A whole week's worth of groceries.

Allie: In a way, that was also a social hub of sorts.

Carol: It was, yes. Also, the post office. So people came in everyday for their mail.

Ross: That's where I get my mail. At that post office.

Allie: To live in a world where you're not worried. You're just kind of living your own life day to day.

Ross: Yeah.

Allie: It's your own life, and you don't have to worry about anyone else's world. It's interesting.

Carol: I think we're constantly hearing what we're doing wrong now, in a way. Every time that I open my computer, there's things about dieting or exercise. You weren't constantly being told to do those things.

Allie: Was that really a focus? Were your mothers dieting and watching their figure and being concerned about that? From my own perspective as a female, that's just so big right now. Especially for mothers, because I feel like mothers are targeted after giving birth about not letting themselves go.

Ross: If it was, I was oblivious to it. It didn't pertain to me, so I didn't really pay attention to it.

Carol: I think my mother did, a little. She tried to be healthier. I think my mother was maybe a little unusual in that, because of other people I've talked to. I hardly remember desserts. We had salads and things.

Ross: Oh, we had desserts.

Laughter

Allie: A sweet tooth in your family?

Ross: Oh yeah.

Allie: Do you think that it was more acceptable then because you were living pretty healthy already, living off the garden?

Carol: Well, that and you were exercising daily more.

Ross: Yeah, we got outside more. Biking, and you made your own play.

Carol: You played in the creek, and you were on the move all the time compared to sitting in front of a video game or something. You were constantly on the move.

Ross: If I had to go to Scouts, I walked. Or biked.

Allie: That's one heck of a bike ride.

Laughter

Ross: That's the way it was. The traffic wasn't bad, so you didn't mind. You only got one bike, and you didn't get it until—I guess I was nine or ten. You didn't get a starter bike.

Allie: No tricycle?

Ross: Yeah, one bike later.

Carol: Or, if you had brothers or sisters, you passed it on.

Ross: Yeah.

Carol: It just got repainted and that was now your bike. You know? You wouldn't have thought of going out and getting a new bike.

Allie: Did someone teach you to ride? I mean, since you didn't transition from a tricycle or anything.

Ross: A little bit of both. I had bumps and bruises from falling off. It was really more like, there's the bike and go have a good time. Now, swimming? You learned that with other kids. Most of our swimming holes were in the creek. There were only two families that had pools in our area.

Cynette: I used to swim in the Brandywine, right behind the Lyndell Store. It ran through the campground, so me and my cousins used to swim up in there.

Carol: Who had the swimming pools?

Ross: There was one on Crawford Road, where the McCausland's used to live? There was one, as you were heading towards Downingtown on 282, the big place before the paper mill? There was a pool there that's now got a big pond. Other than that, we swam in the creek.

Carol: My memory is there was a hunting cabin down on Murder Hollow.

Ross: Yes.

Carol: Down on the left. If you're going on Creek Road and went through Murder Hollow and then down on the left, there was a hunting cabin.

Ross: I wouldn't call it a hunting cabin. It was more of a fishing type or family retreat. A guy by the name of Petrolla rented it from Mrs. Manley and built a small cabin down there. I think they had swings and picnics and stuff. It was more of a family place. Fishing, yes. But I don't believe that they hunted.

Carol: When you went further down Creek Road, there's a framework. I don't know how much of it is left, but it's stone. Do you know what that was?

Ross: I can't verify this, but where that structure is, is where Ruth Whitely lived.

Carol: Oh! Right next to that, there was a mobile home.

Ross: That was—I can't remember their name.

Carol: She used to come into the store.

Ross: Then there was a nice house where that lane is that goes back. Right next to it, there's a structure there.

Carol: Yeah.

Ross: Somewhere in that general area was an icehouse.

Carol: Okay.

Ross: So I'm told. That was all dammed at the time. When the creek rose, you'd...

Carol: Freeze blocks of ice. Further down would be Shyrock Paper Mill. Not too far past that, for a while, spring water?

Ross: Flowing Springs?

Carol: Yes. They got raided one time for gambling. There was gambling going on there.

Ross: I believe that's correct.

Allie: Well, that was quite the provocative center, wasn't it? Mobs and gambling.