

East Brandywine Township Oral History Project

Interviewer(s): Alexandria Kochinsky and Carol Sinex-Schmidt

Interviewee(s): Louise Richards Herring

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Louise: Louise Richards Herring.

Alexandria: What is your history with East Brandywine Township?

Louise: I lived on Hopewell Road for sixty-three years. But it wasn't called Hopewell Road when I moved there. It had no name.

Alexandria: Really?

Louise: There was really no name. And Mr. Stutton didn't have a name for it, either. He said he lived on Route 282. Nobody had a name for the road.

Carol: And you went to the post office for your mail, right?

Alexandria: The mail wasn't delivered to the house?

Louise: I think eventually, Mr. Carr delivered the mail on his own. He would be the only car we'd see all day.

Carol: Now, was your mailing address Lyndell or Downingtown?

Louise: Downingtown.

Carol: My dad was the postmaster at Lyndell.

Louise: Oh, was he?

Carol: So, where did you live before moving to East Brandywine?

Louise: Drexel Hill.

Carol: Did you grow up in Drexel Hill?

Louise: No, I grew up in Schuylkill County. In a place called Mahanoy City. Nobody really knows how to pronounce it, not even the people that lived there. But that's where I grew up.

Carol: Were your parents from that area?

Louise: I lived with my grandparents.

Carol: Where were your parents?

Louise: Well, my mother died when I was young. My dad worked in Philadelphia, so he commuted every other weekend home. We lived with my mother's parents.

Alexandria: What did your dad do in Philadelphia for work?

Louise: He worked at the shipyards. He was born in Philadelphia, and my mother was born in Mahanoy City.

Alexandria: And you were born in Schuylkill County, too?

Louise: In Prattville.

Alexandria: What year?

Louise: 1925.

Alexandria: Every now and then we get to chat with someone who was raised in Philadelphia, and it's fun because a lot of folks from this area were born in a farmhouse. On that topic, what was Philadelphia like then compared to now?

Louise: Safe.

Laughter

Fair Herring: She was 17 or 18 when she graduated from high school in Mahanoy City, and then she moved with her father to Philadelphia. And then she started working for the *Bulletin*.

Louise: Yes. *The Evening Bulletin*.

Carol: Oh, really? Interesting! What were you doing there?

Louise: Well, I did a number of things. The one I liked most was working in advertising.

Loretta Herring: Tell them how you would do the fashion part.

Louise: Oh! The job would explain what they wanted of something, and you'd bring it back so our artist or whoever was in charge of it would take care of it, and then it'd be returned. Very often, if I bought a dress, they'd tell me to get it in my size. I got the dress when they were done with it.

Alexandria: Wow!

Loretta: Mom would buy the items, the artist would sketch it, and the sketch would go in the paper. So, Mom would get the shoes or the dress or whatever.

Louise: It depended who went and got it. We had a lot of fun with that.

Carol: I can imagine!

Louise: I went to the classifieds, which I wasn't happy with, but I enjoyed it enough. They had cars and housing. It was an interesting job.

Carol: Is that where you met your husband?

Louise: When my dad and I rented our apartment, there was a real estate agent, and she introduced me to her nephew.

Ann-Louise Herring: Oh, it gets better.

Louise: No, it gets worse. My father married the real estate agent!

Laughter

Loretta: So, now the husband is also a second cousin, I guess.

Louise: It was a small world.

Loretta: The other thing to point out is that back in the time when she was working, if you got married as a woman, you lost your job. You were not allowed to work.

Louise: That's not why I stopped working, I quit.

Loretta: Right, but that time period. Back then, men were the providers and it was a woman's job to raise the family.

Alexandria: Would this have been the 1940's?

Louise: But during the war, women were working. A lot of the time, we had to console the other women we worked with because there were ninety-some women in the room taking ads and that sort of thing. But they'd get the notice that their husbands and brothers had been killed. Sometimes, it'd be a pretty sad day. We all got along well.

Alexandria: And you mentioned that you'd left on your own terms. You weren't terminated?

Louise: No, I wasn't terminated. My husband went down to Avalon to help his father build a house. My in-laws moved down there. I went down and did the cooking because they had a little house to stay in. I quit my job to do that.

Loretta: So, you were married and had your job?

Louise: Yeah.

Carol: Avalon, New Jersey?

Louise: Yes. I didn't like it. Frankly, they could push the shore back into the ocean and I wouldn't miss it.

Fair: She doesn't like the beach.

Laughter

Alexandria: Were you in Avalon long?

Louise: Just part-time when they were working. We had our own little house in Green Ridge. It's down in Chester.

Alexandria: Were you commuting to Avalon?

Louise: We stayed all week and came back to our house on the weekends. Back and forth and back and forth. I didn't like that, either.

Carol: Where did you go to school?

Louise: Mahanoy City.

Carol: You graduated from high school there?

Louise: I moved in with my grandparents around the time I was five because my mother got sick. I lived with them until I graduated at seventeen.

Alexandria: What year did you graduate from high school?

Louise: 1943. Mahanoy City High School.

Alexandria: So, what brought you to East Brandywine? If I'm skipping anything in the middle, let me know!

Louise: Well, my dad and I lived together for about seven years.

Alexandria: After graduation?

Louise: Yeah. Until I married and he married. He had a house, and I had a house.

Alexandria: Why did you decide to leave Philadelphia? Or rather, Chester?

Louise: My husband didn't like living in the city. He originally was born in Phoenixville. One day we were just riding around, and he saw land. We'd been talking about it, more jokingly. But then he wanted to go back and look at the land again, so we did. We could've bought both sides of the road, from the corner to Haas'. We didn't. I wish we had. I had the money, but we didn't buy it. We just purchased one lot. We had two acres, and I guess there was a 13-acre parcel.

Carol: Now, the house down on the corner?

Fair: The white house.

Carol: Yeah. I didn't know who lived there.

Fair: Campbell. That house was built for the paper mill just down the road—Shryock. It was that house, the paper mill, and then right there on the hill was a house, which was one of the brothers who owned the mill. There was a farm, too. Who lived there? Piersol?

Louise: Yes, Piersol.

Carol: Pearson?

Fair: Yes!

Carol: I went to school with Barbara.

Fair: Oh, okay. So, the three brothers who ran Shryock owned those homes.

Carol: Oh! But, when you were living there it was Campbell?

Fair: By the time we moved in, the Campbells were living there.

Carol: It was sort of mysterious to me.

Fair: Well, they were a mysterious couple, really.

Louise: Yeah.

Fair: He worked in Philadelphia.

Louise: He and Harry Simms rode every day on the train.

Carol: Harry Simms, that's a name I haven't heard in a while. We got on the school bus together. So, we all gathered at the grange to get on the bus. He was quite a character.

Ann-Louise: Did you know his sister?

Carol: I knew her, but she was younger.

Ann-Louise: I'm 72. And so, she was my age. She might've been a year older than me. We were friends.

Carol: So, where did Harry work? What did he do?

Louise: He lived in Lyndell. He worked for a fabric company somewhere in Philadelphia.

Carol: Did your husband take the train?

Louise: No. Campbell did.

Alexandria: Once you moved here, did your husband stop working in Philadelphia?

Louise: He traveled all over because he was a carpenter. Big housing, that kind of stuff. He enjoyed it. Really, I think my husband should've been born out in the ocean, because he loved to fish.

Fair: He became a cabinet maker in the end. Bookcases, that sort of thing.

Louise: You know the medical center in Guthriesville? Dr. Burgess? Well, my husband did the interior woodwork there.

Alexandria: Is that when it was in the Laird Building?

Carol: Yes.

Alexandria: What year did you get married?

Louise: 1947.

Alexandria: You mentioned your husband was a builder. Did he work on your house when you bought the land out here?

Louise: He built our house!

Carol: Did he build the other houses along there?

Louise: No.

Carol: The houses are of a similar architecture, so I'd wondered.

Fair: I think it was the period—the 1960s and 1970s were popular for split-level homes.

Alexandria: How long did it take to build your house?

Louise: About a year.

Carol: Were you involved with church at all?

Louise: We went to church but didn't really join anywhere. We went to Hopewell and then we went to Valley Forge. My husband did some work at Valley Forge and got involved with the minister and some friends over there. So, we went there on Sundays.

Carol: I ask because so often when we do these interviews, we find that the social life had a lot to do with the church.

Fair: And the grange.

Carol: Yes. Now, were you involved with the grange?

Louise: No. I went to a meeting, but never joined.

Carol: So, you weren't a part of the Women's Christian Temperance League?

Louise: No. Jack McCausland did some work on our house. Well, he did the lawn and the outside grading.

Carol: I thought Jack just had his farm.

Louise: I got milk from Jack all the time. We'd get six gallons a week from Jack.

Fair: We'd go up and he'd pinch our cheeks. He thought it was funny, but it'd hurt. I can still remember.

Louise: My other son isn't here simply because he's in lockdown. Where he works, they have COVID.

Fair: In Elverson somewhere.

Louise: It's a machine shop. But, let's see, everybody else is here.

Alexandria: We'll definitely bounce around. It's not often that we get to sit down with an entire family, which means there's a lot to cover! Before we jump in, who was the first born?

Louise: Well, (Ann) Louise, were you born in '49?

Ann-Louise: 1948.

Louise: December 1948.

Alexandria: Who's second?

Louise: Fair. And then it's Peter. The youngest is Tom. But none of them were born in East Brandywine. Louise and Fair were born in Philadelphia. The boys were born in Drexel Hill.

Alexandria: So, when you moved here, were the kids still young or school-age?

Fair: I was six and in the first grade. At the top of Hopewell Road, a one-room schoolhouse has now been renovated, and someone lives in it. My sister went to the Township Building—they had third grade to twelfth grade in that building.

Ann-Louise: Oh, no. Fourth and fifth. The fourth was downstairs with Mrs. Horner. Fifth was upstairs with Mrs. Souden. When I went into sixth grade, I went to the new school.

Carol: Right, you would've gone to the new school. I went to the basements of the churches for fifth and sixth.

Loretta: Pete was in first grade, and he was the first group of first graders to do all of the elementary grades in one school.

Pete Herring: Brandywine Wallace.

Fair: I was in the one-room school, the Township building (Guthriesville School). Then the Methodist church. And Brandywine Wallace was built.

Alexandria: (Ann) Louise, do you remember it feeling at all jarring to have gone from schools in Drexel Hill to East Brandywine?

Ann-Louise: I went to Garrettford in Drexel Hill. It was very different. I remember the children here were so friendly, and I wasn't used to that. In the city school, kids were more standoffish. So, I was very shy. In some cases, even a little put off. Like, why do you want to know my name or know things about me? But it was a wonderful experience, and I grew to love it very quickly. I loved both of my teachers; I absolutely adored them. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in the world.

Fair: You remember Mrs. Horner, Carol?

Carol: Oh, definitely. I knew Mrs. Horner.

Louise: Everybody knew Hannah.

Fair: She was very kind.

Carol: And Mrs. Inslee. Deke lives next door to me.

Fair: Wait a minute! Is he not living on 282?

Carol: He lives on 282, but he bought the house next to me on 322 and has his antique place there. What a nice guy.

Fair: He always was. I had a crush on him. In the second grade, I chased him all over the playground. I remember one day, Mrs. Inslee just stood there, watching me.

Carol: The other day he and I talked about voting, and I told him how his mother was at every polling place. I so admired her. She was always there.

Fair: I saw him several years ago, and his mother passed away. He sent me something of hers that she had from our class. It was very generous and kind.

Ann-Louise: Mom, you made clothing for Mrs. Inslee. Didn't you?

Louise: She brought things to be repaired when she found out I could sew. She'd bring a coat or something that needed mending. I did make her a couple of things. She was so nice.

Carol: A lovely person.

Alexandria: What was her first name?

Carol: Mrs. Inslee's? I'm not sure! I mean, I knew her as a teacher.

Louise: Marie.

Ann-Louise: The other teacher, Mrs. Benich?

Louise: I don't remember her first name. Did you grow up in Guthriesville?

Alexandria: I did. So, my grandparents lived on North Guthriesville Road. My mom bought a house off of North Bailey Road, where I grew up. I'm more familiar with the Guthriesville-Bondsville area. It's a conversation Carol and I have had—I only ever went to Lyndell to drive through to Marsh Creek. I was born in 1992, but the thing that seems not to have changed much is how you kind of stick to your village. Carol grew up in Lyndell and didn't know much about Bondsville. It really hasn't changed much. I'm in Coatesville now, by the high school. I didn't go too far.

Louise: Carol, did you know Cora Cleeton, and who was the other one, Ginger Dawson?

Carol: The Dawsons I knew. I went to school with Mike and a brother of his, Richard.

Pete: Do you remember Richard Dawson dying, Mom?

Carol: What did he die of?

Louise: I think it was a heart attack or something of that sort.

Pete: That's what I remember.

Carol: The Dawsons lived on Creek Road near Dorlan Mill, where Dead Man's Curve turned.

Louise: There were no houses from their house to the corner where I lived. Not on either side of the road. Seven Springs—there were no houses there. When you turned the corner, there was a house on the corner. When you went up what's now Hopewell Road, you didn't see any houses until you got to Haas'. And, behind Haas' was a farm.

Fair: There was an Indian across from Seven Springs. There was an old cabin up on that mountain.

Carol: Really? I didn't know that.

Alexandria: When you say Indian, do you mean a Native American?

Louise: Yes. He came out west somewhere with Mr. Miller. The man who lived on Hopewell Road, with a horse farm.

Carol: Oh, yeah. The big red barn?

Fair: He had a cabin there, and he'd walk into Downingtown. My dad would often pick him up and take him into town. They became friendly. My dad hadn't seen him for a while, so he went up into the woods and found that he'd died. He was pretty old when we first met him.

Carol: So, this would've been across from Seven Springs Farm?

Pete: You could get water and stuff right there. He lived on the hill.

Louise: There was a path that he'd use.

Pete: It almost went behind Dawson's.

Carol: For clarity, if you were coming from Downingtown on Creek Road, you'd go around Dead Man's Curve.

Fair: Around that hollow was Seven Springs. Across from that was a big hill, and his cabin was up there. You couldn't see it from the road, you'd never know it was up there.

Carol: Did he live there?

Louise: He lived there.

Fair: And he pretty much lived off the land. He would go into town for some groceries. I don't think he worked or anything.

Pete: He did odd jobs for Dawson and stuff, fixing barn doors, that sort of thing.

Alexandria: Did he live there alone?

Pete: Yeah.

Carol: What kind of building?

Pete: A cabin. He built it.

Fair: It was small, only one room.

Louise: There's nothing there now. Of course, with the development, I guess they tore down whatever was left. Development is killing us.

Carol: So, were you involved in any other activities outside of the home when you lived in East Brandywine?

Louise: I had too much trouble taking care of everybody's children. If kids got off the school bus, they came to my house. One time my husband came home for dinner, and there were eleven

children sitting at the dinner table. He asked for just the Herring kids to stand up, and every one of the eleven kids stood up. He was out of there!

Laughter

Louise: Everybody had a car, but I didn't drive. So, if people had cars and had to go out, they'd ask me to watch their kids.

Fair: Many of the women worked.

Louise: We never had a bad kid. Not even an onery one that I can remember.

Fair: She would babysit the Haas' two youngest, the four of us, and a cousin of ours would stay with us during the summertime.

Ann-Louise: We didn't mind. We wouldn't have seen other kids otherwise because there were no kids our age.

Alexandria: So, you enjoyed having kids around.

Pete: Yeah. Kids were few and far between.

Fair: And you got sick of your siblings, you know? It kept us from fighting so much, too.

Louise: And we had a lot of animals. We had raccoons, we had dogs.

Alexandria: Like, you had raccoons around the yard or as pets?

Louise: Pets!

Carol: Oh my gosh!

Fair: Well, my dad and Mr. Tipton were coming home from work one night, and they hit the mother raccoon. She was carrying her babies, she had three. So, they saw the babies and didn't want to leave them there. Mr. Tipton took two, and we took the other one. We raised them.

Alexandria: Did it stay outside or inside?

Fair: The first year it was inside until my father could build a pen. It was just like having a cat. It would sleep on my father's chair, and then it went into a sock drawer at night.

Carol: So, it wouldn't attack at all?

Louise: No, no!

Carol: It was used to you.

Fair: It didn't know differently.

Alexandria: You domesticated it quickly.

Louise: I walked around with it in my apron pocket for a long time when I was doing things during the day. We had ducks, chickens, and a goat. What else? Dogs.

Pete: The neighbor's pony every now and then.

Laughter

Carol: So, did you raise chickens to eat?

Louise: No, they were pets.

Fair: When you went to Woolworth's, do you remember that you got those dyed chicks?

Carol: Yes.

Fair: Well, I think Peter had gone shopping with my parents, and they asked how many brothers and sisters he had.

Louise: No, they gave him one, and he turned around and said that he had two sisters and a brother. So, the girl gave him four chicks.

Alexandria: Now, hold on. You went to the store, and they handed you a live chicken?

Carol: Yes, at Easter.

Alexandria: But you're talking about a live chicken. Because when I think of a Peep, I think of the marshmallow sweets.

Laughter

Carol: They were real chickens, and they were all different colors!

Fair: For Easter!

Alexandria: Oh, PETA.

Carol: Exactly. It was pre-PETA.

Alexandria: Did they keep the chickens behind the counter?

Carol: In a box.

Pete: It was Woolworth's, and they'd hand them out to the kids at Easter sometime around the '60s. Sometimes bunnies, too.

Alexandria: That speaks to this area.

Loretta: It's rural.

Alexandria: I mean, they assumed you had land and use for free chickens.

Loretta: Or the means to care for them.

Alexandria: Or the desire.

Laughter

Loretta: In some places, that could be a meal as well.

Carol: I don't think they lived very long.

Alexandria: Like a fair goldfish.

Louise: There were possums, there were skunks. You name it, and it was around us. At night, you could hear them going through the woods and smell the skunks.

Loretta: Hey, mom? Remember, you said you'd figured out how long you've lived without a dog?

Louise: Since Dolly.

Loretta: She's ninety-six, and her entire life, short of a couple of months, maybe, she always had a dog.

Louise: I've always had a dog.

Ann-Louise: Even when you lived with your dad?

Louise: Yeah.

Alexandria: Do you always get the same breed?

Louise: I've had Labradors, I've had Cocker Spaniels, I've had mutts. I've had a Beagle. You name it.

Fair: Back in the day, people let their dogs run, or they'd drop them off places if they didn't want them. Or you'd get a telephone call about puppies.

Louise: Their father never said no to anything. I once told him that I'd be out of there if he came home with an elephant.

Laughter

Alexandria: Do you remember fox hunts?

Louise: Oh, yes!

Ann-Louise: Tell her that story.

Laughter

Louise: They used to go through my yard. Behind my house was nothing but woods, and they'd have fox hunts. You'd see and hear the dogs coming.

Pete: It'd be like forty dogs and a couple of dozen guys on horseback. One time, mom scared them off.

Ann-Louise: They ran through our yard, and she went out there with a shotgun.

Louise: It was a broom! I went out there, yelling at them with a broom, and told them to get out of my yard. The kids were playing in the yard, you know? There were twenty or twenty-five horses. It was dangerous. One time a man was hunting, and he told me to get in the house because there was a wolf under the shed. It was my dog! He was going to shoot it. People came through all the time. Hunters went through. People came and cut laurel, pulled it out, and cut up hunks.

Ann-Louise: The dogwood, too.

Louise: Yeah, they dug up my dogwood trees and took them.

Ann-Louise: We used to pick berries and make pies out of the berries.

Fair: Blueberry, blackberry.

Alexandria: You had all of that back there?

Fair: Oh, yeah.

Carol: I guess you were a good cook since everybody wanted to be at your house for dinner?

Louise: Oh, yeah.

Alexandria: We always touch on food because many people use what they have around here. So, what sorts of meals or even ingredients do you all remember being staples of your childhood?

Louise: Rocks.

Laughter

Pete: Homemade bread. Mom baked bread every Tuesday. We used to race, getting off the bus to get home.

Ann-Louise: It was warm and so good.

Fair: That loaf of bread would be gone. We made a lot of blackberry jam. Mr. Tipton and my dad used to have a garden together to share vegetables. Mom canned corn, beans, lima beans. You name it.

Louise: Tomatoes and peaches.

Fair: Yep. I hated doing the lima beans because those shells were so hard on my fingers.

Pete: I hated all the string beans.

Ann-Louise: I didn't like the corn.

Loretta: Isn't that funny? You all hated something different.

Ann-Louise: Remember the corn? We'd be out there forever.

Fair: Corn is better today, I have to tell you. When I get corn today, I rarely find a worm when husking the corn. If you were husking corn in the day, you'd have those gray worms in the corn. I used to hate it.

Ann-Louise: She made chicken pot pie a lot—the homemade noodles.

Fair: Yeah, she always hand-rolled her egg noodles.

Carol: Oh, yum.

Fair: Pies. You were a big pie baker. Mr. Tipton and my dad would also raise three pigs. One was for Mr. Tipton, one was ours, and the third was raised to slaughter and sell. It would pay for the raising of the other two. We always had great sausage and scrapple.

Carol: Now, you took it somewhere to be butchered, right?

Pete: Church Farm School. We'd buy the piglets there and then take them back when we wanted them butchered. They had a butcher shop and everything.

Louise: Hasn't Guthriesville changed? Our whole road is changed.

Alexandria: When you were growing up, were there things your grandparents made that you remember? Did you learn to cook from them?

Louise: I lived with my grandparents. My grandfather was great for hiking out in the woods, we spent a lot of time. My mother was ill, so anything to get us out of the house and keep us quiet. He would take us out sometimes in the morning and pick coal only because we wanted to find rock crystals. We played in the slag pile, looking for crystals. We did a lot of berry-picking.

Loretta: How was your grandmother at cooking? What did she cook that you remember?

Ann-Louise: I remember one thing that you always loved that your grandmother made—sand tarts. They were so thin, you could probably read the newspaper through them. Mom still likes sand tarts.

Louise: She was seventy-something years old when she took us in. She rolled them out on flour bags. When she could see the bag's print, she considered them thin enough to bake.

Carol: Wow, isn't that something?

Louise: I wasn't allowed to cook. It was the Depression, and if you ruined or burned something, it was a waste.

Ann-Louise: Plus, you had a big iron cook stove. It had a fire and stuff. It wasn't safe. I remember going there as a child, and I wasn't allowed near that stove. It was so hot.

Loretta: Would that be lit all the time?

Fair: I think they were. To get those coals going, you didn't want to start from scratch. You wanted the ember going, and in the morning, you'd stoke it. Those stoves went pretty much 24/7.

Ann-Louise: It also heated the kitchen.

Carol: Yes.

Fair: The one thing I remember you talking about, mom, is the milk toast. And you used to make sugar bread.

Carol: Oh, yes! My mom did that, too.

Fair: Disgusting to think about now, isn't it?

Carol: I know! But it was so good!

Laughter

Pete: When you're a kid, you'll eat anything.

Carol: Did you ever eat that, Allie?

Alexandria: I've heard of it, but I can't remember eating it.

Carol: It was just a buttered piece of bread with sugar sprinkled on top.

Louise: Sometimes we'd have brown sugar on it.

Carol: Oh, okay. My mother never did that. She always used white sugar. But sometimes I think cinnamon? She'd cut it into little triangles. That's a nice memory.

Pete: I liked the pie crust cookies, too. They were good.

Louise: Shortbread.

Pete: It was leftover pie crust that mom would roll with cinnamon sugar.

Fair: You never wasted, you know? Whatever crust was cut off, you rolled it out, dipped it in cinnamon sugar, and baked it.

Pete: One of my favorites.

Ann-Louise: I still make those.

Fair: Oh, I do too.

Loretta: Back during the Depression, nothing went to waste. Even when you went on those walks with your grandfather, you would find pieces of coal and keep them. That's another thing. You said there was a meter in the basement that you put coins in?

Louise: That was for the gas meter. My grandmother had a gas stove, hers was out on the porch. They only used it in the summer for canning. There was a meter, and you'd put a quarter in to keep the gas going.

Carol: Oh my gosh! I never heard of that.

Ann-Louise: I remember the stove, but I don't remember them using it. That's why I guess.

Loretta: And they used it for canning?

Louise: Only canning. Once in a rare while, she might have cooked a meal out there in the summertime.

Carol: What did she use to cook dinner each night?

Louise: She could take a rock and make dinner. In the summer, maybe the outdoor one. But almost always on the coal stove. And you could bet when you got up in the morning something was lined up to cook all day—if she wanted to make beef stew, that was put out first. Then, as the day progressed, she did her carrots.

Carol: What a vision.

Alexandria: Can you tell us what it was like to grow up during the Depression? Did you carry that into your life post-Depression? Was it ingrained in your mind to live a life that way?

Louise: We didn't waste anything. If you didn't want something for breakfast, you'd eat it for lunch. Or, if you didn't eat your lunch, it would be your dinner. I remember there were many children during the Depression that walked home from school, and they weren't going to get any lunch, there was nothing at home for them to eat. My grandmother would invite the kids for lunch. Kids would ask if she was having chocolate soup, they wanted to go home if she said no. The chocolate soup was

kidney beans put through a sieve, so she got the pulp, not the shells. Then she'd use last night's mashed potatoes or something to thicken it, and we always got a pint of cream because her cousin was the milkman. She made this really rich soup. If she only invited one, the rest of the kids would walk down the street thinking she was mad at them. But she couldn't invite everybody. She fed more kids than I could count.

Loretta: Just like you. You took after your grandmother.

Louise: Yeah. She invented all kinds of meals. You'd ask what you were eating, and she'd say it was from last night's dinner. She reinvented meals to stretch them.

Carol: My dad always had lots of vegetable soup going, it was leftovers. It was wonderful.

Loretta: Mom grew up during the Depression. She took those thoughts with her as she raised her children. And now my husband does all the cooking primarily, and he does some of that. We'll have a meal, and he's already thinking of how he will reinvent it into another meal. Nothing goes to waste.

Carol: That's how I am. My daughter and granddaughter live with me, and the amount of waste drives me crazy.

Fair: I think, too, being so rural back in the day, we weren't going to the grocery store often. We get in our car now and decide we're making something for dinner, get in the car and get what we need.

Alexandria: There's a different level of convenience now.

Fair: Absolutely. Back in the day, your meals had to be planned. When you went grocery shopping every week or so, the store wasn't around the corner. You had to make sure you bought enough and then knew how you would use it.

Loretta: And stores back then were small; they didn't have a big row with nine thousand kinds of cereal. There were a few options, less variety.

Carol: My dad had a store, and it was not big. When they put in bigger chain stores, he changed it to a deli. We always joked that we got whatever didn't sell. We did a roast for my dad's retirement and my brother said he never knew roast beef wasn't green.

Laughter

Louise: We never had crackers. Potato chips? I didn't know what they were. My aunt made some special occasions, and we thought we were in heaven. When you're ten years old, Aunt Bertha made potato chips. We were never hungry, there was always food. But manners were essential to her. And she made all our clothes.

Loretta: Mom would say it was unheard of and unacceptable if you came downstairs to the breakfast table in your pajamas. You were washed and dressed before you came down to have breakfast.

Louise: Oh, yes. You did not come downstairs in your pajamas.

Ann-Louise: And we didn't, either. My dad would say, "Go get some clothes on!"

Louise: Even now, I don't like to do that. Here, they dress you before you eat. Something about pajamas and breakfast doesn't mix.

Carol: It's like making the bed.

Ann-Louise: As soon as I get up, I make the bed.

Fair: I just read a book about how the military does it because it teaches you a routine—starting the day right. There's something to begin our day with discipline.

Loretta: Even at night, I can't fall asleep if I know dishes are in the sink.

Laughter

Alexandria: I'm with you. I'll stay up until two o'clock in the morning if it means my kitchen is clean before I go to bed.

Carol: So, did the kids have a lot of chores?

Louise: Yeah. My sister was in charge of upstairs one week, and I'd get downstairs. It would switch. We were told to dust, she'd inspect our work. She wasn't mean or anything, but she was serious. If there were rugs on the chair, I liked pretending I did them, she'd catch me every time.

Loretta: She taught you to sew, right?

Louise: Oh, yeah. She made men's clothing, she was a men's tailor. She taught my sister and me how to sew. And it had to be perfect. She would inspect every inch of it. If she saw something she didn't like, she'd hand it back and tell us to do it over. She'd ask, "If you wore it inside out, would you want other people to see it?"

Loretta: They'd hand-wind bobbins. You know what a bobbin is?

Alexandria: Yes. My grandmother was a seamstress, and I'm sure she's rolling in her grave that I can't even sew a button onto a shirt, but yes.

Laughter

Loretta: Today, you put a bobbin on, push a button, and it winds it for you. It has to be perfect, otherwise, it won't work in the machine. Mom said they hand-wound those bobbins.

Louise: She made buttonholes. She was the buttonhole seamstress for a tailor. One time I made a coat for my daughter and sent it to her and asked her to make the buttonholes, and she sent it back

and told me I knew how. I did but forgot to cut them open. When I mailed it to her, she returned it with a note that said they looked like pig's eyes. She picked them out and redid them. She was going blind, which we didn't know, and she could make a buttonhole so nice you could frame it.

Loretta: Mom lived here in Downingtown, but her grandmother lived in Mahanoy City, they were mailing things. I don't want to hijack this, but it's just reminding me. Growing up, my mom in Downingtown would call her mom in Royersford at a particular hour on Sunday because long-distance phone rates were cheaper.

Alexandria: Downingtown to Royersford was considered long distance?

Loretta: Yeah. And she'd only make those phone calls on Sunday afternoons. To mom's point, she's mailing things back instead of getting in the car and driving the hour or so.

Pete: We had a party line when we were growing up.

Fair: I was just about to bring that up.

Alexandria: I hadn't heard of this until recently. It's so wild.

Carol: So, was your sister older or younger?

Louise: She was older.

Carol: So when you moved with your grandmother, she was older than you?

Louise: There were only two years between us. We were both preening when the other got scolded for not doing something right.

Fair: Your grandmother also made lace.

Louise: Oh, yeah. My grandmother could crochet and knit. If the elbow were coming out of something, she'd rip it out and make linings for our coats. In the wintertime, it was cold, but we

were warm. Sometimes the coats were so hot we couldn't button them. My cousin was a schoolteacher. Louis would give us her clothes, and my grandmother would remake them. A lot of time, she'd make my coats. Let me tell you, I'd ask her not to put two linings. She said, "I don't. I only put on a sweater." But, phew! It was hot.

Ann-Louise: Your grandmother taught you to do beautiful needlework.

Carol: Yeah? Embroidery? So, was it just you and your sister?

Louise: Yeah.

Carol: When your dad remarried...

Louise: We were both married when he met her. I liked her, it was just hard to make introductions.

"Hi, this is my husband's aunt or my stepmother?"

Fair: Mom had a stepbrother. Mom, when your dad and Nana married, Uncle Bob was out of the house?

Louise: He was married, too.

Fair: He was out of the house, right. So, she had a stepbrother, but they never lived together.

Louise: It was a crazy mixed-up family.

Loretta: But they care for each other. Mom's still in contact with Uncle Bob's wife, Lori.

Louise: He had three wives, and I liked all of them, and I stayed friendly with them. Sometimes it was difficult. We all got along, there wasn't tension between us.

Carol: Oh, you're Mary Fair?

Fair: Yes! Mary Fair comes from mom's grandmother. Or actually, your mom?

Louise: That was my mother's name.

Fair: F-A-I-R was the last name.

Louise: Fair was my mother's maiden name.

Carol: What's the origin?

Fair: Welsh-Irish. Robert Fair was from Ireland. But mom also has family from other areas.

Louise: Germany, Ireland, Welsh. I have a little bit of everything. There's even an American Indian.

When I did a genealogy course, I found an American Indian, but I couldn't find him. I think Nesquehoning, but I'm not sure.

Carol: Okay. Now, do you remember the railroad? Could you hear it, next to Shryock?

Fair: You know, there was one, but I'm sure it went through there. I don't remember hearing that. Maybe late at night.

Louise: Yeah, we heard it. I don't know why they closed it off. They used to go to Lyndell. That's where Harry Simms got on the train. Then it changed to Downingtown and went to Philadelphia. I don't know too much about that railroad. I do know we used to walk on it, but I wouldn't go past the paper mill because somebody told me there were big snakes around there, so I didn't wander.

Carol: Interesting.

Fair: I'm not sure when they shut the railroad down.

Carol: We just had a speaker series program on the railroad. It was interesting.

Alexandria: One thing we skipped over is your school experience. It was a public school, right?

Were there any subjects you liked a lot?

Louise: It was a public school. I don't know, what do you think?

Fair: I think it would've been English. Maybe history.

Louise: I was always fond of history.

Fair: One thing my parents both taught us, and I think it goes back to my mom's grandfather taking her out into the woods, about trees and plant life, animals, etc. Mrs. Inslee was another one. My mom and dad both knew about sassafras and root beer.

Louise: I grew up in the woods. If I had a nickel for every berry I had to pick with my grandfather, I'd be wealthy.

Laughter

Louise: He would take us out. I remember picking berries one time; he told me to stand perfectly still. When he used a specific tone, you knew to listen. All of a sudden, I saw his hand shoot up. I thought, "What's he up to?" Anyway, there was a copperhead hanging in the bush, and I had reached into it. He snapped its head off. He made canes. We brought the snake home, he skinned it and did all that. My grandmother never knew when she'd have a snake hanging in her kitchen.

Carol: Oh my gosh!

Louise: He'd treat the skin, turn it inside out, clean it, turn it right side out, put it on a long cane to dry, and finish it off with shellac or varnish.

Fair: So, the canes had snakeskin on them. It was beautiful. Mom still has one.

Carol: I never heard of that. Wow.

Louise: I have a lot of things he made. My grandfather would sit and whittle all day long and make all kinds of little things. One thing I loved doing with him was going to the blacksmith shop. I was

forbidden to go. My mother would tell him, "Don't you dare take her." But he'd sneak me out. My mom didn't like the language they used at the blacksmith's shop. But I wanted to sit and watch. My grandfather saw something on the side of the wall and asked the guy what it was. It was a thing for painters to clean their brushes—so thick. My grandfather made a tabletop with it and a cross. People don't know what it is.

Fair: I have a tiny basket made out of a walnut shell. He carved it out. It's nice and smooth where you'd put a trinket.

Louise: He was very handy.

Fair: I never knew any of my grandparents. I was three when her father passed away. What I remember are stories and pictures. My sister remembers; I don't.

Louise: My father wanted to play baseball for Connie Mack. He was ready to sign up, but his father told him a good Baptist doesn't play baseball on Sunday. So, he wouldn't let him sign up.

Carol: Oh, yeah. That's right. They would never have allowed a game on Sunday. Nothing happened on Sunday.

Louise: No, no, no.

Carol: No stores were open.

Alexandria: Did you say Connie Mack?

Carol: It was the name of the stadium.

Louise: It was Connie Mack and the A's. My dad wanted to play so badly. When I lived with him, I'd ask what he wanted to do that day, and now and then, he'd say he wanted to go to the ballgame. I didn't understand a ballgame then, and I still don't. We'd go out to the ballpark, and he would talk to

everybody. A couple of times, he brought a couple of players home with us to eat dinner. We enjoyed it.

Alexandria: You mentioned a blacksmith. Where was that?

Louise: Up in Mahanoy City. When I lived in Drexel Hill, I didn't do much except go to work and come home. We did many things that even some of the people who lived there don't remember.

Carol: Was your husband in the military at all?

Louise: Oh, yes. Five years in the Army.

Ann-Louise: South Pacific.

Carol: Back then, you went for the duration. You didn't go for a year like later.

Ann-Louise: He was kind of all over the place. Hiroshima, Philippines, New Guinea.

Carol: Wow. How did he feel when he got home? Was he different?

Louise: He had malaria. He was almost 70 when he died, and he'd have nightmares still.

Carol: Did he? Oh.

Fair: He didn't talk about it.

Louise: No, he wouldn't. He had buddies—two came from Texas to visit him at separate times.

None of them ever talked about anything outside of experiences like the rice paddies, the motorcycles, this and that. But they never talked about the other stuff. I thought to myself, how did we win the war? According to them, it was all fun and games.

Carol: He couldn't talk about the bad stuff.

Ann-Louise: You know, his best friend was a bomber. I found that out later in life, like in recent years. I never knew that growing up. Dad's best friend is a man we called Uncle Bill, and we just adored him. They never talked about their times in the service. They'd grown up together and remained friends lifelong. He was always Uncle Bill. But we never knew what he did in the service until recently. It was very difficult for both of them. I think it impacted their life as far as their longevity. It was hard on their hearts.

Carol: Yeah.

Ann-Louise: I know they say the service members today have nothing, and it hasn't changed a lot, that tells me. But they came home and had nothing and no one in that day and time. There wasn't anyone to talk to. They suffered through it all. I always pray the service members today get the help they need because I lived through that with my dad. He carried the weight around, and I know my Uncle Bill did. I hope and pray it changes because it's horrible. And they were boys—my dad was only in the eleventh grade when he went.

Alexandria: Wow.

Ann-Louise: He was going to get drafted anyway, so he signed up. That's what a lot of young men did at that time. His mother did not want him to sign up. She wanted him to finish school. War is a horrible thing, period. But they took kids right out of school then. They were babies.

Carol: My friend Don Yost was taken out of high school. And he wouldn't ever talk about his experience.

Ann-Louise: I remember him. He rode my school bus.

Fair: Would it have been the Vietnam War?

Carol: No, that's his son, Don. He died of melanoma. His dad was also Don Yost, and he fought in World War II. He was a year late starting school because of malnutrition. So, they took him right out of high school. It was five years. Harry, his brother, fought longer—six years, I think.

Louise: I think about how times change. My grandmother couldn't get over homogenized milk, she wouldn't drink it. But, I mean, it's like that. You're drinking whole milk, the next day it's homogenized.

Carol: I used to get raw milk for a long time.

Ann-Louise: We did, too.

Louise: I used to get six gallons a week from Jack McCausland. The kids didn't like getting the milk, but they drank whole milk.

Fair: Oh, I used to hate when he pinched our cheeks.

Ann-Louise: I don't remember that. I stayed away from him, I guess. I'd hang on the fence and look at the cows. I never really hung around him too much. He scared me a little bit.

Carol: He was intimidating, that's for sure.

Ann-Louise: We had 4-H there one time. Before that, she had what you couldn't even call a kitchen—it was a sink like you'd have in an art room, and I don't remember the stove. But no counters or anything. That poor woman. She was an excellent cook, though.

Carol: Are we talking about Mary McCausland?

Ann-Louise: Yeah. We'd cook in 4-H, and so when she got the kitchen redone, she couldn't wait to have us girls over to cook. We did, and we were so excited. It had all the latest gadgets, it was beautiful. I still remember how proud she was of that kitchen. She was older by that time. I think of

all the years she struggled in the little bitty one she had. But Jack eventually put a nice kitchen in for her.

Louise: We belonged to 4-H. I think you went longest. The boys went to Boy Scouts.

Ann-Louise: I went for quite a while. I sewed, cooked. I don't think I did much else. They had it at the grange.

Alexandria: The Lyndell grange?

Fair: Was that grange in Guthriesville or Lyndell?

Carol: Lyndell.

Louise: The grange was in Lyndell, right next to Harry Simm's house.

Fair: Was there one in Guthriesville?

Carol: There was a Temperance Hall. It wasn't a grange. The pink house, across from where Cropper's was at one point? (Now Buddhist Temple)

Ann-Louise: Oh, I remember. The house was pink for years.

Carol: When we moved out, I was three or so. My mother said you had to have lived here for several generations to be accepted. Did you feel that way?

Louise: I never felt accepted, even now. But Bob Cropper, we haven't talked about him and his little store. There was one path. If you were coming one way and I went the other, we would have to back up. The other night I was laying in bed wondering what I'd talk about for this, and Bob Cropper popped into my head.

Fair: There weren't conveyor belts, so if you stood at the register and were the cashier, this wooden thing would sweep items over. It was all manual.

Alexandria: So, it pulled items toward you as the cashier?

Fair: Yes. I was thinking about how many wars a person can live through. The telephone—mom didn't have that when she was a kid. You had the radio.

Louise: And that was it.

Fair: Right. You didn't have a telephone. Space came along in the sixties. Mom remembered when Philadelphia started using gas lights—it was a gentleman with a torch before. He would walk down the alley and light the lamps. Isn't that cool? Mom also remembered when Strohemann came out with their first loaf of bread. And the first time, the milkman or bread delivery showed up at the house. Until then, the bread got made at home.

Carol: What was it like when you got a television? That must've been life changing.

Louise: I didn't mind television, but my grandfather couldn't handle the telephone. We had a phone, and if it rang, he'd run around looking for someone to answer it because he didn't know. Then, we got the radio. At night you had to make sure you put it on a certain station so he'd be able to hear Earl Thomas. He didn't even know how to turn it on. We tried teaching him.

Ann-Louise: It's like us with computers.

Fair: What about records or music?

Louise: Oh, we had records playing all the time. My uncle bought an RCA—the top was a victrola. My grandfather used to say, "I don't understand that thing."

Ann-Louise: How old were you when you got the telephone, or the victrola?

Louise: The telephone was there when I moved in as a little girl. I think my uncle bought the radio about 1930.

Ann-Louise: We didn't have a telephone in Green Ridge.

Alexandria: You said you had the telephone growing up. It wasn't like today's phone. Tell me about that.

Louise: You had to ask for the number; someone was always listening in because they were party lines.

Fair: So, it was on a stand, and the receiver was on the side. You had to get ahold of the operator.

Louise: When you lifted the thing, somebody came on. You might have to wait, but someone eventually said, "Number, please." But it was a party line, and you never knew who was along with you. They'd butt into your conversations. My grandmother had a flower business, and very often, she was trying to take an order, and somebody would try to tell her the latest gossip. She'd get so mixed up she wouldn't know what flowers she said aloud.

Carol: So, what kind of flower business did she have?

Louise: Bouquets. Funerals and that kind of thing.

Carol: Did she grow the flowers?

Louise: No, she didn't grow the flowers. She had a few in the garden.

Carol: From the flower market in Philly, I bet. My grandmother raised asters and sold them at the flower market.

Fair: Wasn't there a greenhouse on your parents' property, Carol?

Carol: McBride lived across and had the greenhouse.

Ann-Louise: Who had it before?

Carol: When I was a child, it was Carl Bauss and his wife.

Fair: Mom, didn't someone have a jewelry store for a while?

Louise: Yeah. My grandmother had a friend, and they never quite figured it out, but they think she was a madam. So, she married a man with a jewelry store. The whole town almost burnt down one time, and my grandmother went down there to help them out because their store had been on fire. She found jewelry in the ashes, and they told her to take it all home. Louise has the one pin, it's called apprentice jewelry. The heart?

Ann-Louise: Oh, okay.

Louise: I loved that thing, and my grandmother gave it to me.

Ann-Louise: It's really pretty.

Louise: My grandmother often would tell me to take things down to Annie Kaiser, maybe a cake or something my grandmother made. She was so dolled up. I always wondered where she was going with all the jewelry.

Ann-Louise: Is that Aunt Louise's mother?

Louise: No, no. Aunt Lina was her mother.

Carol: So, how are the holidays different?

Louise: Well, ours were quiet. With my mother being ill for so long, we did a little celebration in her room and maybe a tree downstairs. Halloween, we didn't celebrate. I hated Halloween—I didn't want any part of Halloween.

Fair: What were some of the gifts? What was the food?

Louise: We always had a turkey. Simple gifts. My grandmother made us something. My dad usually bought stuff—mostly homemade gifts from everyone else.

Fair: Did you get one gift or several gifts under the tree?

Louise: Sometimes we got a lot, and sometimes we didn't. I guess it depended on finances. We never had gifts in the living room, just the bedroom.

Alexandria: Once your mother passed, did traditions change?

Louise: Not much. I think my grandparents were set in their ways and didn't want to rock the boat.

Alexandria: I grew up when Christmas and Santa Claus were a huge deal—it's still that way. Was that the case?

Louise: No. In some homes, maybe. In ours, we knew it was Christmas Eve and went to church with my grandmother. There wasn't a lot of excitement.

Ann-Louise: Did you believe in Santa?

Louise: Oh, yes. I believed in Santa until I was probably 20.

Laughter

Fair: Did you shop? How were the storefronts?

Louise: Storefronts were decorated—very decorated—with toys. I remember a Shirley Temple doll. I wanted one so bad, but I didn't get it. My cousin did.

Ann-Louise: At least it wasn't your sister; that's worse.

Laughter

Carol: Now, how about your ancestry? Any immigrants?

Louise: Oh, yeah. When we were doing genealogy for the DAR, I remembered sitting at the dinner table at night and hearing my grandparents and father talking about relatives, and I'd be so annoyed. Now, of course, I wish I'd listened. We go back to the 1700s.

Fair: Yes. Some fought in the Revolutionary War, and that's how we got into the DAR.

Carol: Do you like being in the DAR?

Fair: Mom was ninety when she joined, and I live in Lancaster. We went to several meetings, but the distance was hard. I want to be more active. I should switch my membership location.

Louise: When I joined in April, I'd already had a broken hip from February, so I never got to go to the meetings.

Fair: It got more complicated. Loretta and I go to the annual luncheon.

Louise: I wanted to be more active. We have so many ancestors on both sides of my grandparents with military people. On my grandfather's side was an Indian that we always wanted to look more up.

Carol: We talked about how you didn't feel you fit in when you moved here. Was that because the people living in this area had been here for generations and you were new?

Louise: We knew nothing when we came here. My husband grew up in Phoenixville. I knew nothing about this area, and I don't think he did. We just wanted to get away from the city. When we showed up, he said it would be King of Prussia all over again—he didn't think it'd last but that we should enjoy it while we were here. He was right. There were so many things that happened.

Fair: When we first moved here, the Haas and Tipton were half a mile away. The Haas' both worked, and Mr. and Mrs. Tipton also worked. Mr. Tipton and Betty were shy. Was Betty from the south?

Louise: No.

Fair: Mr. Tipton was from the south. It's possible they felt as disjointed as we did. Nobody was on our road to get involved.

Ann-Louise: It's pretty amazing how my dad developed a friendship with Mr. Tipton because Mr. Tipton was extremely shy, and nobody knew anything about him.

Louise: Your father was shy, too.

Ann-Louise: I'll never forget being in the car with my dad when he said it was time to meet the neighbors. So, he stopped there and didn't let us out of the car; I think we were all in the car. He went up and knocked on the door to introduce himself, they got into a conversation, and little by little, they developed a lasting friendship.

Carol: Which house was Tipton's?

Fair: It's a little bungalow. It sits back some, but it's not far from the street. Mrs. Tkachick? Before her house.

Carol: Oh, okay. I know exactly where you mean. Is that near the corner of Township Line Road?

Fair: Yes, near there.

Carol: Do you remember that being the dump?

Alexandria: And this was new to me because, in my lifetime, there's always been a garbage truck. So, how did that work?

Louise: You took your trash every week to the dump road. There was a big hole, and you dumped the garbage.

Alexandria: Was it any particular day, or just whenever you needed to go?

Fair: It wasn't scheduled.

Louise: Any day of the week, there was no set time or anything. I'd like to know what's in that dump.

I'll bet there are some nice things.

Ann-Louise: But, remember how we were forbidden to go there as kids?

Carol: I can imagine there were a lot of rodents.

Alexandria: Was it public? Could anyone go at any time of day? Was there a gate?

Louise: You could go at any time of the day. People who lived in the trailer park complained about hearing people dumping trash during the night. And there was no gate.

Ann-Louise: Now it's a baseball field.

Alexandria: Did East Brandywine own it?

Carol: I never knew.

Ann-Louise: It was called the township's dump, and it's Township Line Road, but I don't know.

Fair: When they finally had trash hauling, the company used that dump. So, I don't know if the company owned the property.

Alexandria: Did you pay through your tax or anything?

Louise: No, we didn't pay for it. No fees. You just took your trash.

Alexandria: Since you didn't drive, was that something your husband did?

Louise: Yeah, he did all of that. I didn't drive until I was forty.

Carol: We had a lot less trash then. We fill a trash can a day at home now, mainly packaging.

Fair: Right. We didn't have milk cartons. We got our milk in a five or six-gallon milk can. Canned goods—my mom canned it all herself. You baked your bread—at least she did. We bought store bought bread, don't get me wrong, but it wasn't as frequent. There wasn't the same amount of trash in a household. Pastries? We didn't buy a box of cookies. When we got cookies, it was a big deal.

Carol: Do you remember the movie theater in Downingtown?

Louise: Oh, I never went there. Many people told me about it, but I never went to the theater.

Fair: Do you remember Hoffman's department store? What was the bakery? What's there now, where the store used to be? It's down from Dane Decor.

Ann-Louise: There was a five-and-ten.

Fair: The five-and-ten was across the street, and there was a bakery.

Louise: An Army and Navy store. The hairdresser, I don't know who ran it, but that was there.

Ann-Louise: There was the old A&P where Roberts is now.

Fair: The five-and-ten was where the carpet and flooring place is now, along with Buffington Bakers. That section got divided up to make all those stores.

Alexandria: At one time, that was all one big store?

Fair: I don't know if it was a Woolworth's per se, but it was a five-and-dime.

Louise: Do you remember the dress shop?

Carol: There again, an example of change. You didn't get takeout.

Fair: Right! No hoagie shops. Not tons of restaurants.

Ann-Louise: The Coffee Cup was there.

Alexandria: Were there places to go out to dinner around here? Was that something families did?

Carol: Yeah.

Fair: What was in Downtown, though? I don't recall any real restaurants.

Carol: The diner.

Fair: The Downtown Diner.

Louise: I was thinking of that one. Remember the Swan Hotel?

Carol: Vaguely. It got torn down.

Ann-Louise: Wasn't that across from the bank, though?

Alexandria: Was the Rita's Water Ice building there, across from the diner? Was that something?

Fair: At one time, it was a mechanic. It could've been just sort of a random property.

Louise: Yeah, auto parts.

Carol: So, you had few neighbors.

Louise: We didn't have anyone around for at least five to eight years. Some kids built the one next to us, then it was Lyman and Howard. And then Haas. He was working in Harrisburg.

Ann-Louise: Oh, okay. So, he was visiting on weekends. That's right.

Carol: I never knew Mrs. Simms at all. Did you know her?

Louise: She was nice.

Carol: I'm thinking about Harry Jr.

Ann-Louise: She's thinking about Harry Jr. and Cissy's mother, Lynne. Lynne was very nice. Very close to the earth. A nice woman.

Louise: She lived in a nursing home in Hamburg.

Carol: Young Harry is doing something medical now?

Louise: He's a doctor out in California somewhere.

Carol: I've often thought of him because kids were unmerciful. They teased him terribly. He was different.

Ann-Louise: He was an interesting man and a kind man. But he was different. I didn't know him as a child, but I met him with my mother. My son did some work over there for some time. Harry and his wife came home from California, made a beautiful dinner, and invited myself and my husband and our children because they knew Josh was working there and helping Lynne. And she so adored him—Harry did, too. Young Harry wanted to meet my son. Josh enjoyed working for them.

Carol: Do you remember Seafus, who lived in the house across from the grange?

Louise: Oh, yes! Seafus McClure!

Ann-Louise: I never knew him, but I remember kids saying his house was haunted—all kinds of stuff.

Carol: Yes. He would come out yelling all the time.

Louise: The police went in there to get his mother out once. There were paths because he saved so much stuff.

Alexandria: Is Seafus the one you'd mentioned having a scrapyard, with cars or something?

Carol: No, that was the junkyard on 82 and 282. He was crazy. The story is that Jim Croce's 'Junkyard Dog' was about that guy and his property.

Louise: He drove down 322 in an ambulance, screeching. He was crazy as a bedbug.

Ann-Louise: Back in the day, anyone who owned a junkyard had a reputation.