

## **East Brandywine Township's Oral History Project**

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

Interviewee(s): Anne Lucas

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**Anne:** My name is Anne Lucas.

**Carol:** So, where did your parents come from? Had either of them grown up in this area?

**Anne:** My dad, Stephen Lucas, was born in Philadelphia and moved out to the Elverson area around the age of five. His father continued working in Philadelphia at the BUD company but finally got a job at the Hopewell Furnace working on the grounds. They moved within a mile or less from where he worked. My mother was born in Connecticut, and she wound up growing up in Maine. That's where she lived until she got married.

**Carol:** How did they meet?

**Anne:** They met during the war. I think they met in Boston, where she was teaching ballroom dancing then out to California with her sister, who worked out there as a nanny and went to art school. Dad called to ask her to marry him. She tried to get back, but she kept getting bumped off the train because the war was going on and the military men got seats first. So, she ended up meeting him in South Carolina and getting married before she went back up to Maine for a while, and he went overseas. They lived in Orvo, ME when he attended University of Maine where he got a BS in Mechanical Engineering. Because he was from Elverson area, they returned to the Pottstown area before Cornog and then Lyndell.

**Carol:** Where in Cornog?

**Anne:** On the left, it's a stone house on 282, and I think it's about the second house down. That's where I came home from the hospital when I was born. Mom only pointed it out to me one time, so I'm not really sure. Then we moved over to the Mercer farm, outside of Lyndell until I was six. Then we moved to the Bridge Mill Farm. I don't remember what precipitated that move. I can only remember being in the car, very excited, my mom holding a newborn baby in her arms.

**Alexandria:** So, you grew up in the house that's in the picture on the wall here?

**Anne:** Yes! It was a great place to grow up.

**Alexandria:** I'm sure!

**Anne:** There were really not many houses around there then, so we played in the fields and had animals. It was just a cool old place. I have great memories of that house. It had a dumbwaiter in the kitchen and a walk-in fireplace in the original kitchen. Of course, it was freezing cold in the winter but, you know, it was a big old drafty Victorian house.

**Carol:** Anne's father looked like Clark Gable. When we were talking before, that immediately came to mind. He was very handsome. He even had a mustache.

**Alexandria:** Oh, gosh. Really?

**Anne:** My mom was also beautiful.

**Carol:** Yeah! I guess I didn't see as much of your mom. Would your dad maybe have been the one to come to the store or for the mail?

**Anne:** Yes! When we were young, he always went out for the mail. I think it was just to get out of the house, sometimes twice a day.

*Laughter*

**Anne:** I loved that walk down the road to get the mail at the Lyndell Store. It was peaceful with the woods, and you could hear the streams when the water was running high. In a household full of brothers, it was a good way to get away for a little bit. And I never had a bike, so I had to walk. I remember the milk man picking me up a few times and giving me a ride.

**Carol:** You didn't have a bike?

**Anne:** Nope. My parents said it was too dangerous to ride on the road. I had a twin brother, his name was Stephen, and he didn't have a bike, either. So, their three sons, who came six, eight, and ten years later, all had bikes at times. One is still a competitive biker and is sponsored in Chester County.

**Alexandria:** Oh my gosh!

**Anne:** He's raced all over the United States and maybe in Europe.

**Cynette:** What's his name?

**Anne:** Lief Lucas.

**Cynette:** See, he's the brother I remember. Is he my age, or maybe a little older than me? I'm fifty-five.

**Anne:** Yeah, he will be 60 in May. That's cool!

**Cynette:** As soon as my mom said your name, I knew you must be related. I remembered going to school with two of your brothers, and I recalled Leif because it's such a different name. And then Eric, I think?

**Anne:** Yup. And Mark. Eric is in the middle.

**Cynette:** So, Leif does the racing?

**Anne:** And if you saw him, he does not have an ounce of body fat on him; he's still real blonde. He looks great. It makes me sick, I'll tell you!

*Laughter*

**Anne:** And he's a cat-lover. He's living in Blue Bell.

**Carol:** He's the perfect man!

*Laughter*

**Alexandria:** So, you grew up in the house. Was that until you graduated and moved away?

**Anne:** Yes.

**Alexandria:** And you came back?

**Anne:** I went to Montgomery County and lived outside Eagleville for almost eight years. I'd gotten married by that time, and when I moved back to Chester County, I was pregnant with my third. I had three kids in three years. I guess I missed the day in school where they taught birth control.

*Laughter*

**Anne:** We moved to Westwood, which is outside of Coatesville. I lived there for twelve years. Then I divorced, remarried, divorced again, and ended up in Pottstown raising a grandson. After that, I moved out to Morgantown, and now I'm in Honey Brook. I never thought I'd wind up just miles from where I grew up, but that's how it's worked out. It's neat. I drive by there sometimes. One of my children was born in that house. Whenever he comes out from Oregon, we go by and look.

**Carol:** So, your mom and dad lived there for years afterward.

**Anne:** My parents didn't move out until December 1981. My mom passed away in April of 1982.

**Carol:** Did your dad pass away first?

**Anne:** No. Dad lived and remarried. You might've known her; she was Dorothy Hyde and had married Jack Irwin of Downingtown.

**Carol:** The name is vaguely familiar, but I don't know.

**Anne:** I do genealogy. Dorothy's first husband who passed away is related to me. I'm adopted, so that was pretty cool to figure out.

**Alexandria:** Oh, okay.

**Anne:** My stepmother Dorothy didn't believe me at first. I sat there and wrote it all out for her.

**Alexandria:** Isn't that funny?

**Anne:** Did you know Forbes?

**Carol:** Yes.

**Anne:** I'm related to them, too. Distantly, but yeah.

**Carol:** Are you really?

**Anne:** It gets you thinking, like, wow. How many other people in the area are related?

**Carol:** Donnie Forbes—did he die in Vietnam?

**Anne:** No, I think he came back but died in Lyndell in an accident, according to his death certificate. I kind of remember when it happened. I think he hit a bridge or something. I'm not one hundred percent sure.

**Carol:** He was such a nice guy, from what I remember.

**Anne:** Yeah, the whole family was nice.

**Carol:** It was a big family. So, you told me something about the basement of your childhood home.

**Anne:** First off, it looks like the front of the house is changed. It used to be latticework across the front of the porch with a big open area with a lattice gate, and a big open area under the porch. There were snakes in there, all kinds of things. It was a pretty interesting place.

**Alexandria:** I'm sure!

**Anne:** You'd go through this huge heavy lumber door. On the other side were those pieces of wood that came up, like a box. I think it was to put a piece of lumber across as a lock, the door only had a latch, you know? It had a teeny tiny window in it, 10" by 10".

**Carol:** Oh!

**Anne:** As you went in, there was a huge old furnace. It would take three of us to get our arms around it, and it was covered in plaster, which was weird, and the plaster was warm when it was running. When they replaced it, it was just a little tiny thing.

*Laughter*

**Anne:** You could put your arms around the old heater in the winter and get warm. Mr. Marshall had a bunch of things sitting around down there. One was an old icebox, a refrigerator.

**Alexandria:** Sorry to interrupt, but Mr. Marshall was the man your parents got the house from?

**Anne:** He owned the place. Helen and Warren Marshall of Lyndell owned this big house. My family rented.

**Alexandria:** Oh, okay.

**Anne:** He had a big icebox we'd sit on. It wasn't safe for little kids to play on it, but we did. If it latched, you would not be able to get out. We did a lot of things without thinking of outcomes.

*Laughter*

**Anne:** If you went to the right, there was a little room there, and it had four water wells. Water came in through a spring and filled these wells. From there, it went through the house. I've never seen that in any other place. If you'd been in the bigger room and stayed straight, some steps led to a creepy dark middle room. It was so old. We had clotheslines strung there for the winter to dry the clothes. Over to the right was another tiny room with stairs that went up into the old kitchen. Off that room were two other smaller rooms that looked like pantries or something.

**Carol:** Root cellars, maybe.

**Anne:** Yes. One of the rooms that was maybe a pantry is where the dumbwaiter came down. You could load things up from the pantry and take things up that way. We never used it, but we did play with it. Mom used to store her canning jars in it.

**Carol:** Just for some background on the Marshalls—they had a creamery. They would make butter, which would go over to the train station in Lyndell to be transported and get sold. Mr. and Mrs. Marshall rented the house out, and he and Helen moved over near Lyndell Store. Actually, across the bridge would be Uwchlan Township, there.

**Alexandria:** Okay.

**Carol:** I'll tell this story about Halloween because we were talking about the Marshalls. You would go to the door, and they would have you in and you would sign their guestbook.

**Alexandria:** You told me about that! I forget what prompted it and which interview. But I recall you saying you took Cynette there years later and showed her your name in the guestbook.

**Carol:** And you'd sit in the parlor with them and have ginger snap cookies and cider. They'd ask you how you were doing in school. Anne remembered that, too.

**Anne:** Mrs. Marshall was a schoolteacher. She had to travel by horse and buggy into Downingtown. She told me her parents were upset that she'd gotten a job there because they thought it was too far from home. She'd stay there during the week and then drive the horse and buggy home for the weekend.

**Alexandria:** So, she was from here, and she worked in Downingtown, but it was enough of a hike that it was easier for her to stay the whole week there?

**Carol:** It was about five or six miles.

**Anne:** Think about going ten miles an hour, you know?

**Alexandria:** You think about what warrants a weeklong work trip now, though, and it's so different.

**Anne:** It was a different world then. I should tell you what I thought was the most interesting thing about the house! There was an outhouse out back, and it had four seats in it—two big ones and two little ones.

**Alexandria:** Wow!

**Carol:** The Jim Croce house on Highspire Road has a picture on one of his albums of him looking out of the outhouse. And that was a four-seater also.

**Anne:** I've never seen a four-seater since then. Especially divided up with the two bigger seats and two smaller ones.

**Alexandria:** Can you imagine?! Like, "Oh, hey, Dad."

**Anne:** Don't mind me!

*Laughter*

**Alexandria:** I haven't ever had to give that any thought. I didn't realize a four-seater was a thing. I guess if you really had to go, though. It was the solution.

**Carol:** And if you were a mom, I guess you would take the kids out with you.

**Anne:** That's right. You can't leave them in the house!

**Carol:** I wonder if that's still there.

**Anne:** It had a nice stone foundation to it. We used it as a tool shed.

**Carol:** Didn't you say they were working on a patio out back?

**Cynette:** I went over there, and she said her husband was working on the back hill. I've never seen it.

**Carol:** The grange had an outhouse. And I went over there with my mom as a little kid, and I had to go to the bathroom. But I was so scared to go that I had an accident. My mother was so mad at me!

**Alexandria:** And that was probably still more comfortable.

*Laughter*

**Carol:** It's funny how vivid these memories are. My dad walked me home, and he had his arm around me because I was crying. He kept saying, "It's alright."

**Alexandria:** When you went to school here (Guthriesville School), you said it had an outhouse.

**Carol:** No, some other ones did. Not this one. Before that, there were.

**Anne:** I remember there being a bathroom out in the foyer area.

**Carol:** Yeah. That sounds right.

**Anne:** At Eagle, when I went to first grade there, you had to go out on the porch. There were two bathrooms out there. That's what I remember, anyway.

**Alexandria:** So, what schools did you attend?

**Anne:** I went to the Eagle School for first grade with Mrs. Kennedy. Second grade was at Hopewell Methodist Church down in the basement with Mrs. Inslee. Here (Guthriesville School) for third grade with Mrs. Ferguson. They'd built the Brandywine Wallace school by then, so fourth, fifth and sixth grades were spent there.

**Alexandria:** Okay.

**Cynette:** I went there, but it cut off in the fifth grade. Then we went to the Old East Ward in Downingtown for sixth. Seventh, eighth and ninth were Downingtown Junior High.

**Anne:** I had seventh and eighth there, but ninth to twelfth were at the senior high school.

**Cynette:** What's now STEM was the junior high. And the high school was across from St. Joseph's, and it's still there.

**Alexandria:** But the high school is split now. The one you went to is where I went, too—Downingtown West. But then there's Downingtown East in Lionville. There are different middle schools, too.

**Carol:** I want to go back to the house stories for a second. You described the basement, but what about the rest of the house?

**Anne:** Evidently, the house was built at two different times. The porch wrapped around the house halfway. Inside the front door you face the stairs. That was the newer section. If you went to the left

and up two steps, you entered the older part of the house. I think there was a covered fireplace in the main room. You could go out onto the sun porch from the left side, which was neat.

**Carol:** I never saw that.

**Anne:** When my brother and I fought, my mom made us wash the windows there. There were a gazillion windows. If we made her really mad, she put one of us inside and one outside, and we had to face each other to do it. By that time, you would be laughing.

*Laughter*

**Anne:** If you went to the right, it was the old kitchen. There was old wainscoting on the wall. To the left was an attached back indoor shed with a water pump, that door led to the shed room off the kitchen and had a huge wooden door like in the basement but no window. It had a latch and a sliding bolt to lock the door. I guess that's originally where people got their water. From the kitchen, there were narrow, steep steps to go to the bedrooms. You could tell people were shorter then. I was the only one in the family that didn't get whacked in the head by the doorjamb because I'm short.

*Laughter*

**Anne:** Upstairs was an old large bedroom, and on the other side of the hallway were two additional bedrooms with a closet in between. You could crawl through the top between the rooms. An old bathroom was up there, too, with wainscoting. It was super dark brown wainscoting and bubblegum pink walls above the wainscoting. The floor there was terrible; you could look down and see the kitchen below.

**Carol:** Yeah.

**Anne:** In the hall, you could access the attic and you could access another bedroom. Bedrooms were on the north side of the house, cold in the winter. That was old, too. Downstairs two living rooms are connected to the newer part of the house, and the wraparound banister and steps went upstairs. And there were two big new bedrooms up there and two smaller ones that we could crawl through to get to the first old bedroom. There were so many windows around the house that you could look out in any direction. It was very cool.

**Alexandria:** Wow.

**Cynette:** Was it five bedrooms, then?

**Anne:** Yep.

**Carol:** Tell us about the attic.

**Anne:** The footprint of the rooms matched up there; it was big. I liked it up there. But above the attic was a crawlspace. There were bats up there. It felt like thousands of bats. I thought it was cool because the house had lots of cracks in it under the roof, and you could lay on the lawn at a corner of the house at dusk and count the bats coming out. My mom was scared to death of bats. Some of the babies would get lost in the spring and come down in the hall doorway, and my mom would shove a towel or throw rug under the crack at the bottom of the door so the babies could not get in the main part of the house. It was horrible. She threatened to punish me if I opened it and let them out. I just wanted to put them back up in the attic so they could be with their family again, but she wouldn't have it.

**Carol:** Well, we were told not to touch them. A lot of the old myths were that they had rabies.

**Anne:** It is endemic in bat populations. But I wasn't thinking about that as a kid. I wonder if there are still a lot of bats there now. I imagine people over the years have sealed it off.

**Alexandria:** I'm sure.

**Carol:** The people that bought it after, the Stellwagons, are the ones who did the registration for the national register. The book talked about how that was actually the home of what we'd call a district justice today. But this would've been back in the 1700s, but I might be incorrect. Do you know when the house was built?

**Anne:** When we moved there, I was told one part of the house dated back two hundred years and the other two hundred and fifty years. I'm not sure. I'd love to know, though.

**Carol:** There's a whole chapter in the East Brandywine book. He was like a district justice, and people would go there to vote, and he would also do hearings or that kind of thing there. That was way back.

**Anne:** I don't know how true this is. But I thought the land that went with the house was a Penn grant.

**Carol:** It was. Somewhere in our archives, we must have the application which would tell the whole story.

**Anne:** I wish my mom was around to hear and see all this. She loved that place. She had a horrible time moving. It was awful. And I didn't understand until I had kids and they grew up and moved away.

**Carol:** Where did she move to?

**Anne:** The Black Hawk Apartments in Downingtown.

**Carol:** Oh, that's right.

**Alexandria:** So, she lived in the house for a long time.

**Carol:** I didn't realize she'd lived there that long.

**Anne:** They only paid eighty-one dollars a month the whole time they lived there.

**Alexandria:** Even into the 1980s?

**Anne:** Yes! Until the day they left. That was their rent. I think Warren and Helen just wanted someone there that they knew.

**Carol:** So, I have to ask the question. Any sense of spirits or anything in the house?

**Anne:** No, I never experienced anything. Usually, I can walk into a place and get a sense.

**Alexandria:** You're intuitive, yeah.

**Anne:** Right. But nothing there. And I'm sure there must've been people who'd been born or died there. I asked Warren one time if anyone had been buried there, and he was kind of evasive.

**Carol:** Oh, really?

**Anne:** I don't know. But I did give birth to a child in the upstairs bedroom, so I know one person was born there.

**Carol:** It's funny because I never had a sense of anything at the Lyndell Store, where I grew up. But like you, I'm very in tune with that energy.

**Alexandria:** I think it just depends. So, I have an archaeology background, and I've been to many old places. There are plenty where you know the story and know things happened there, but you don't feel it. Others have a different energy that you feel right away.

**Carol:** I remember my brother and I heard noises once, but my dad downplayed it and said it was the old house settling. I thought, "Two hundred years later, and it's still settling?"

*Laughter*

**Cynette:** Our house has some things.

**Carol:** Yeah!

**Alexandria:** This is random, but I've been super into researching water and the different benefits of various types. It sounds silly, but you mentioned the spring water, and I thought about this. You lived off of spring water because it filled the wells in the basement and distributed to the house.

**Anne:** Yes. The spring was way out in the pasture. There was a pipe that ran in. We used to have sheep, and I couldn't find the ram one day. I went out looking, and it was cold. I saw his head. Where the spring was, he'd gone over and fallen in. He was totally submerged except for his head and front hooves. I had to run home, and my mom called Tom Hughes, who lived down the road, and he had to straddle the ram to hoist it up and out of the water. That's probably the only time that ram was ever subdued when we went back to the barn.

*Laughter*

**Anne:** Every now and then, the pipe would break, and my dad would string a hose through the field and barnyard.

**Alexandria:** Well, that water was probably very good for you. Good drinking water. All those minerals.

**Cynette:** What did you use that water for?

**Anne:** Everything. We never boiled it or anything, and I can't remember anyone getting sick.

**Alexandria:** Nobody has really talked about their water source, so this is interesting.

**Carol:** There was a spring on Creek Road by Whittaker's Farm.

**Anne:** Which one was Whittaker's Farm?

**Carol:** White Acres.

**Anne:** Is that down where the Dawsons lived?

**Carol:** Yes! So, if you passed the Dawsons, the farm on your right. Dorlan Mill Road was there. Just past that was a farm. A spring was down by the road. You could stop with jugs to fill up and go back home.

**Anne:** I remember seeing it. I asked my mom why we didn't get water there, and she said we'd get sick from stuff coming through the dirt. I thought to myself, "It all does." She grew up poor. I think they had to boil their water a lot.

**Carol:** So, you raised sheep?

**Anne:** Sheep and rabbits.

**Carol:** What were they raised for?

**Anne:** Well, we ate the rabbits. The spring lambs, too. I was part of the Lyndell 4-H club and used them for my animal projects. At times, we had ducks and chickens, but they wound up being fox food. It was hard to keep critters away. We raised pigs too.

**Carol:** The sheep. Did you shear them?

**Anne:** Yes. We had someone come out to shear the sheep.

**Carol:** Did you use the wool?

**Anne:** No. My parents always sold it. But since being an adult, my daughter and I both got into it for a while. We didn't do much but wondered what it was about. I'm not into the preliminary work.

**Alexandria:** Can you share more about growing up in the house and East Brandywine?

**Anne:** The good memories happened outside. The fields, the creeks. We played. If there wasn't ice on it, we were at the creek. We didn't have many close neighbors, which was kind of nice. The Wells lived on one side of us. A farm was rented on the other side, further down the road, and we had some friends there. Just being able to walk to Lyndell or Guthriesville was nice. It was a cool area. When they put Marsh Creek in, I'd already moved away but came back to see the progress. All that was within walking distance. Even Downingtown.