



Interview with David Engebretson

Under the Auspices of the
Monmouth County Library Headquarters
125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, N.J.
Flora T. Higgins, Project Coordinator

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Name of Interviewer: Douglas Aumack

Premises of Interview: Mr. Engebretson's home, Colts Neck, NJ

Birth date of subject: June 10, 1932

Mr. Aumack: What year did you come to Monmouth County? And did your parents bring you? Just describe how you came here, please.

Mr. Engebretson: Well, when I was about two or three years old, I had scarlet fever and double mastoids. This is a really serious illness: you can die from diseases like that. Where we lived at that time was in Bay Ridge, in Brooklyn. My mother took care of me, and stayed in the hospital with me, because she was a practical nurse. She stayed in the hospital with me day and night. I have a brother, Edward, and she couldn't really take care of him because she was with me. I had tubes all over the place, in my ears and nose, mouth, etc. My brother was sent up to Calicoon Center, to mom's parents' house. They were farmers there. When I got well enough to come back home, my parents heard about a farm here in Monmouth County that they could move to and get fresh air, etc. for me. My father worked as a steelworker in New York City. They moved here, and he still continued doing steelwork and later worked as a rigger in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. They moved up to Beacon Hill. There were 500 apple trees on this farm owned by a family named Valenti. We were the caretakers on the farm, this was now at the start of the Depression. We stayed there rent free, but we had to mow the lawns and take care of the place. We could have the crops from the apple trees. My father learned how to prune and spray the trees, which he had never



**Morganville School
Picture, 1941**

done before in Norway. Things went pretty well, and we started to attend school. My brother was six years older than myself. We went to the Morganville School, and at that time it had five rooms. There was a teacher for every two grades, and I still remember the names of all the teachers. One of the teachers became a college professor, and her name was Susan Partridge. You had kindergarten and first grade together with one teacher. There weren't many children at this school because there weren't that many children in the school district. To give an example of the size of Marlboro Township: when I went to school and graduated in 1947, there were fifteen children graduating from Morganville School. That was half of Marlboro Township, twenty-two square miles. The other half of Marlboro Township school children went to the Marlboro Village School. That was roughly the same size, about fifteen students.

Mr. Aumack: Was this in grammar school?

Mr. Engebretson: Kindergarten through eighth grade. We were a receiving school for the Robertsville School. Robertsville School had one teacher who taught grades K through 5. Once those children reached the sixth grade, they would come to our school. We were a receiving school from that one-room schoolhouse. The children would be bussed in from Robertsville School, which is located on Tennent Road. Our school itself was quite interesting. We had outdoor toilets. There was one for the girls and one for the boys. During the summer it was so smelly, you just wanted to do what you had to do as fast as you could and get back inside. And in the wintertime, it was so cold you didn't hang around; they came back to the class right away. We had one custodian. Our rooms were heated with gratings on the floor. We did not have forced air, but gravity-fed air. The heat would rise from the floor vents. The school had one great, big furnace which heated the entire building. The custodian used to shovel coal into the furnace. His name was Theodore (Dory) Keiler, he was quite a character. He chewed tobacco, and you could always tell when he was ready to bank the fire in the morning. He would open up the door, shake the grates, throw on the coal, and then give a big blob of spit on top of the hot coals. And they would sizzle. Only then it was ready to be banked for the day.

Mr. Aumack: Could you smell the tobacco on the smoke or in the heat?

Mr. Engebretson: No. In the basement we had coal delivered, and he really didn't want to go out in the hot or cold weather, so he would relieve himself on the coal in the coal bin. This created quite an odor in the basement!

Mr. Aumack: Oh! I hope you didn't smell that.

Mr. Engebretson: Whenever anybody was asked to go down to the basement and get the custodian, there were few volunteers. In the morning he had a ritual. He would shake the grates, and that would be just at the time when the principal and the other teachers would be saying The Lord's Prayer and the flag salute. As

he would shake the grates, the principal would just stand there and wait for him to get through, and then we would continue the morning exercises. We walked two miles to school on dirt roads; they weren't really paved until the late 1950s. So during the late spring and autumn, it was fine and we could walk down the dusty roads. In the spring you would sink up to your knees in mud. In the winter, of course they didn't plow these roads. You walked through the snow, and it was up to your knees. Of course in those days, maybe my knees were a little bit shorter than they are today. We would walk down the road to school past one house where they had bad dogs. That always really frightened me because I always wondered if they would come out charging and would bite me. They were Dobermans, and they were bad news. That pretty much took care of school, except during the War. During World War II they would have collections for pots and pans at the school. You would take the tin foil off the gum wrappers, roll it up, and then bring that in, too. They would use it for the War effort.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know what they used those for? Do you have any idea?

Mr. Engebretson: No, I am not sure. About the tin foil, it may have been used at that time for something to do with radar. The aluminum was used to manufacture airplanes. We sold seeds for Victory Gardens, too. They came in green boxes, and they were usually contained vegetable seeds, for Victory Gardens which was part of the War effort. What else did we do? We brought in tin cans, flattened out, and brought them to school. We used to buy War stamps at school. There were so many stamps you would put in a book, and then you would trade them in at the post office for a War Bond. These were called Victory Bonds. As we walked home from school, we would pass by some windows in homes, and there would be a little flag in the window with a star. That represented a family member that was in the Service.

Mr. Aumack: So if you had four stars on a flag, you had four people in the Service.

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. And if there was a gold star, it meant that the serviceman in the home had died in action.

Mr. Aumack: Did they have to pay for these flags?

Mr. Engebretson: No, I think they were given to the parents by the government. At this time, we had rationing. I am sure you have been told about rationing.

Mr. Aumack: Yes, but tell us more about it, please.

Mr. Engebretson: Being a farmer, my father had one type of stamp that he could use which would allow him to buy gasoline for his tractors. There was another type of stamp that was used for cars. Actually there were three, an "A," "B," and "C" stamp. I am doing some research on it right now using the OPA, or the Office

of Price Administration, which regulated all rationing. You had different stamps for different uses, and that was based on how many gallons of gasoline you needed and the type of work you did. Sugar was rationed. Your shoes were rationed, too. Meat was rationed; we would render the fat from our two hogs and bring that to the butcher shop to be used for the War effort, too. They probably made soap or grease out of it. Those are the sort of things that you had during the War. It is foreign to the people today to realize that there was actually rationing. Our family had only one car. The car headlights in those days used bulbs--this was before sealed beam headlights. You had two bulbs for each headlight. One bulb was dim, and the bright lights were when both bulbs were on. In the early Model A Ford, you had no heaters. You had what was called a manifold heater, and that was right along the side of the manifold where it went out to the muffler. If you sat in traffic, you got no heat. But the faster you went, the more heat came through the manifold heater.

Mr. Aumack: And that heated your body.

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. Well, when you were going faster, the air scoop would come through and bring that heat into the cab of the car.

Mr. Aumack: I was lucky enough to drive a Model A. These things had a top speed of maybe sixty or eighty? I got it up to forty mph! (laughter)

Mr. Engebretson: Well, at eighty mph you may as well whistle "I'm Coming Home" (Heaven). The top speed you should have traveled was fifty-five or sixty mph.

Mr. Aumack: What was the speed you could go on the kind of roads back then?

Mr. Engebretson: Usually about forty or forty-five mph in the Model A Ford. Nobody was in a big hurry, and the roads were not that great in those days, especially if you went the back roads. They were all dirt. I don't know if you ever listened to the old radios in those cars, but you turned it on and after a fashion, you would hear a loud crackle or buzz. We only had a few stations back then, but the noise you would hear would be your engine running because there were no noise suppressors on the spark plugs in those days so you could hear all this static in the background. The faster you went, the more static occurred, and you couldn't hear the radio. So if you pulled over at the side of the road when your spark plugs were giving off less static, because the engine would be running slower and you could then finish listening to the program. Now the other interesting thing they had in the cars when you were driving down the road and if it was raining, you would turn on your windshield wipers. They were operated on vacuum from the carburetor. So that meant if you were going uphill or going fast to pass somebody, the vacuum was being taken to draw more gasoline into the carburetor, and your wiper would slow down or stop. Then when you let up on the gas, the wipers would go faster. There was a failsafe-- if for some reason that

vacuum line coming from the carburetor to the wiper broke, you could use a little handle and operate the wiper by hand.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, manually!

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Now was there one wiper or two?

Mr. Engebretson: One wiper. The passenger side didn't get a wiper.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, I guess that was tough for them, right? And these were on the Model A Ford, right?

Mr. Engebretson: The Ford Model As.

Mr. Aumack: Now did these come out in 1930?

Mr. Engebretson: We had a 1932, and they may have come out a little earlier. They had a Model B, also. But you had your choice of tires, too. You could get sixteen inch tires and seventeen inch tires. For the pickup trucks, they had nineteen inch tires. The reason for this was because the roads were so muddy that the bottom of your truck would scrape if your tires weren't high enough.



Mr. Engebretson's father with his enormous truck

Mr. Aumack: Now when you say sixteen inches, do you mean wide?

Mr. Engebretson: No, sixteen inches would be the measurement of the inside of the tire bead to bead or how it fits on the rim. There was only one church nearby, and that was the Methodist church in Morganville. I went there. My parents are Lutheran, but you either had to go way over into Keyport to get to the closest Lutheran church. In Matawan they had the Baptist church, the Methodist church, and the Episcopalian church. Then going the other way toward Marlboro, about another six miles, there was a Reformed church. Robertsville had a Baptist church. So if you wanted to go to a church nearby, you went to the Methodist church in Morganville. On the farm, everybody really worked for seven days a week, so you didn't really go to church much. Mainly my parents were just trying to make a living, because those were the Depression days. We had a hired man on the farm, and he was paid a dollar a day and room and board.

Mr. Aumack: Was that considered a lot of money for a hired hand?



Mr. Engebretson's father and farm hands working

Mr. Engebretson: That was a good wage, with room and board. Then there was another fellow that lived maybe a mile away, and he used to cut wood and brush for the farmers. That's all he did for a living. His name was Dan Garan. He moved over to Keyport. If you wanted anything cut along the headlands, he would do that. That was pretty much what we had in the way of labor in those days. During the War, we had migrant laborers come up from the South. They usually came in a bus, and there would be around twenty or twenty-five of them on a bus. We picked the

tomatoes that my father planted. There were fifty thousand tomato plants. They would pick the tomatoes, and during the War, a lot of people came from town to help you, because it was part of the War effort. It meant food for the war effort, so they would come and help us. I don't think they even charged us anything but they received food for their help. We had a big table on which we would put out sweet corn, tomatoes and other foods for them to eat. Everybody pitched in during the War, and even Norwegian sailors. They came from Bay Ridge when they were off the merchant ships for a week or two, to help on the farm.

Mr. Aumack: Is Norwegian your family background?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes, both sides of my family. My father came over from Tonsberg, near Oslo, and was here about a year when he was drafted into the Army. He was about seventeen years old and he served for three years.

Mr. Aumack: The American Army?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. Then during World War II, my brother couldn't join the Navy because he had poor eyesight. So he went into the Merchant Marine and sailed across to Poland and other countries in Europe when the Germans had the U-boats going. And then I joined the Korean War, and I was in the Seabees. I just wanted to say a little bit about what went on in the homes. From the 1930s all the way up until the time I graduated, we had a range, a stove range. Actually it used wood for the fuel. It was one of those black ones that you lift up the lid and put the wood in.

Mr. Aumack: So you would add wood to the range.



**Engebretson family
in the apple orchard**

Mr. Engebretson: It had four tops. And then over on the side was a warming area to keep the food warm. And then the other part was where the firing of the wood took place. So that was my job, to fill up the wood box. Remember I said we had orchards? My father would trim all the trees, and sometimes we would have some pretty big limbs. In the fall, we would cut those into wood the size to fit the stove. And OSHA would probably go nuts if they ever saw it, but we had what was called a buzz saw. It was three feet wide, and operated by a pulley from the tractor. My job was to grab the wood as it was being cut and throw it in a pile. My father would push this wood against the saw frame, and it would be pushed against the saw. What was scary about it was that you could hear this thing. It was sharp as a razor. It had to be sharp to cut the wood. And all you could hear was a whirring sound. Picture me standing there, at twelve or thirteen years old, and throwing the wood in a pile.

Mr. Aumack: So you were face to face staring at this three-foot wide, big saw?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: How close did you get to this saw?

Mr. Engebretson: (laughter) Well the wood would come out as an eighteen inch piece, so I would usually grab it at the end. That meant I was eighteen inches away from it.

Mr. Aumack: Whew! You were only a little more than a foot away from a thing that could cut you in half.

Mr. Engebretson: Oh easily, yes. But this is what farm kids did. Now we also had to spray the trees.

Mr. Aumack: Describe that.

Mr. Engebretson: Well my father had a sprayer, and it was called a one-gun sprayer. It developed about 700 pounds of pressure. You had to reach up to the top of the trees, which were maybe forty-five feet high. You sprayed with arsenic of lead, DDT, and lime sulfur. When you sprayed, you didn't use a mask. There were no masks around. The instructions on the spraying material read "Do Not Ingest," which means "don't eat it."



**Mr. Engebretson's father
on tractor spraying trees**

Mr. Aumack: Did it say anything about inhaling it?

Mr. Engebretson: No. We would spray all day long, I would take time off from school to do that. When we were done at the end of the day, we were white with arsenic or lead. It was all over our face, clothes, and everything else. And it was the same thing with the lime sulfur. We would be yellow after spraying that. But it never really effected us.

Mr. Aumack: Now you came to Monmouth County because you were sick, so you came here for fresh air, right?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: And now you are spraying these chemicals, and did your father even think about what it might do to you?

Mr. Engebretson: After the sickness, I was pretty healthy then. I was big and strapping, you know. And it looked like I could eat poison and live! And it never bothered any of the other farmer's kids, because they sprayed also. It was just a fact of life that you went out and helped your father. I helped him go down to Lakewood, and we used to clean out chicken houses, and get the chicken manure. They would pay you to clean the chicken houses, and then you kept the manure. Then you would put the manure on the field, usually in the wintertime, because that was a farmer's downtime. And you would have these big piles of manure, and it looked like Mount Fuji! Smoke would be coming up, and it was really steam from the ammonia in the manure that was cooking. Farther out from the center, if we had a snowfall, the snow would be on the sides, but not at the top of the pile because it was so hot. And it did two things. It killed all of the seeds, because the seeds pass through the chicken's digestive system. By the time spring came, it was pretty good fertilizer. Then we could put it in a spreader and put it over the field. But you know there are a lot of things that we did on a farm that today you would think it was gross. But we did it for a living. You just worked hard and did what you had to do.

Mr. Aumack: Let me ask you a quick question, but I don't want you to lose your place. You mentioned that you took time off from school to work on the farm. Where did you live when you were young?



Eating out on Beacon Hill

Mr. Engebretson: Beacon Hill.

during World War II

Mr. Aumack: Where is that near?

Mr. Engebretson: If you travel Route 79 from Matawan, you will go past Tennent Road on the right-hand side. Go about one and a half miles, and on the left is Beacon Hill Road. Go about two miles and our farm was on the left side. Also on the left side of Route 9 was the Morganville School. They added on to it, and I think Coastal Learning Center is operating out of there now.

Mr. Aumack: So it is near Morganville.

Mr. Engebretson: Everybody took time off from school. You had farm work, and you did it, especially during planting season. The teachers understood it, and they gave you homework. That was just part of life then.

Mr. Aumack: Out of your class, who else was a farmer's daughter or son?

Mr. Engebretson: Let me see. Tom Smith, who has the florist in Matawan, he worked for Becker's Greenhouses. They are since long gone. There were probably about three of us all together who were farmer's children. Richard Guth and the Ronson children also lived on a farm.

Mr. Aumack: Out of a class of how many?

Mr. Engebretson: Thirteen.

Mr. Aumack: Now this was thirteen students from K through eight?

Mr. Engebretson: No, thirteen students graduating from the eighth grade. You have to figure that Marlboro Township is forty-three square miles, so a graduating class of thirteen students in the eighth grade represented twenty-two square miles. So that is pretty sparse. There was one other fellow who was a farmer, but he came in later on in the year. His name was Bob Niveson, and he is a Transportation Coordinator in the Freehold Regional School District. That was about it in my class, about three farmers altogether. We did trapping, and my brother, Ed, was a really good trapper. Now you may say that is cruel or awful, but they really encouraged trapping in those days for the furs to be used by all the people in the service.

Mr. Aumack: Now what do you mean by "they"?

Mr. Engebretson: The government. The servicemen needed the furs for the cold climate. It was sort of strange the way it all came about. Teenagers like my brother, he would be maybe twelve or thirteen years old, would run a trap line. You would take those animals out of your traps, and you would skin them. Then

you would put them on a stretching board, which would either be made of wood or metal. Then you would scrape all the meat and fat off, and you would let it sit there for about a week. When you got all your pelts together, you could send them to Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward, and they would send you back money for them. You never knew what you were going to get, but they were always pretty fair. Then there was another man who made a living this way, and he came from Englishtown. His name was David Shermal. He had a little Chevy coupe with a rumble seat, and he would drive around to all the high school kid's and teenager's homes and buy their pelts. And he would give them the money right on the spot.

Mr. Aumack: Now what kind of animals did you trap?

Mr. Engebretson: They would buy squirrel furs, but they weren't nearly that valuable. There was raccoon, possum was fairly good, mink, and muskrat. Those were pretty good pelts to sell. Rabbit was ok, but it wasn't that much because it had a very thin skin. The interesting thing about trapping is that you just don't go out and set traps out. You first have to know what you are trapping. My brother used to scope out all the area along the banks of the creeks.



**David Engebretson
with his dogs, Teddy
and Prince**

Mr. Aumack: Which creeks, do you know the name of them?

Mr. Engebretson: His trap line ran in the back of Colliers. It ran all along down there and almost to the creek at The Marlboro State Hospital.

Mr. Aumack: Marlboro State Hospital, the psychiatric center?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Wow!

Mr. Engebretson: Later, when he was eleven, sometimes he would take his bike and park it halfway, and then he would work it both ways. Once you found out what type of animals you were going to trap, you just didn't take a stake and put your trap down. You had to boil the traps.

Mr. Aumack: Boil them?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. You would boil them with tannin log chips, with little chips from tannin bark, and paraffin. Now you might wonder why you had to do that. When you boil it with the chips, it would take away the scent of a human

being. The traps were made of steel, and the paraffin gave it a nice coating and kept it from rusting. Then you would go out and set your traps.

Mr. Aumack: So the tannin took away the human smell that the animals would pick up, and the paraffin kept it from rusting.

Mr. Engebretson: Right. When you laid your trap, you always put a little bit of leaves over it. This way the animal wouldn't see the trap and would step on it. Looking back on it, it was pretty cruel to the animals. Leg-hold traps are cruel.

Mr. Aumack: These were leg-hold traps?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. But that is all they had in those days. Trapping was a source of income, and a lot of the teenagers in Marlboro Township would do this if they were interested in trapping. And that is the way teenagers made their money. There was something else interesting during the War. Remember I told you we only had one car? Gas was limited and rationed. There was a fellow that would come around to all the farms, and he had a big van. In the van was bread, milk, butter, cheeses, and everything you would want for your house. And it was called Dick's Rolling Store, and his name was Dick Schumacher. His garage is still there on Route 34 right across the street from Red Roof Tavern. He would drive up to your driveway and stop and ask if you had anything you wanted to buy. This saved people from having to go to the store, because you just didn't go down these roads with your car to buy a quart of milk or something like that. Of course we had a cow anyway, so we didn't buy milk. But we bought bread, pectin for jelly, salt, spices, and condiments.

Mr. Aumack: So you didn't bake your own bread, you went and bought it?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes, most of the time we bought it. We had chickens, and we used to take the eggs and candle them. Candling would make sure that they didn't have any spots of blood on the inside. Once in awhile you get chickens that when they lay an egg, the yolk would have some blood in it. And of course, nobody wants to buy an egg like that. Then we would gather the eggs, and about once a week we would go down to A & P in Matawan and trade the eggs in for money to buy groceries. So that was sort of like a barter system that we had. A lot of times the egg shells got very weak. If you handled the egg, it would break. So the answer to that was to go buy some oyster shells and feed it to the chickens, and then their shells would be nice and strong.

Mr. Aumack: They would eat the oyster shells?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes, and the calcium from that would be transferred to the egg.

Mr. Aumack: Was this your father's idea, or was he told this?

Mr. Engebretson: No, this was something that all the farmers did. Do you know Englishtown?

Mr. Aumack: Yes.

Mr. Engebretson: Englishtown, during the 1930s when he moved up here, had an auction. You auctioned everything off. They had a livestock portion where you could buy calves and shoats, which are young pigs. My father bought a shoat. Actually there were two of them. One had a hernia, and the nearest veterinarian was like fifteen miles away. We didn't have money for a vet anyway. So he took a razor blade, cut it open, took a needle and thread, and sewed him up, and made a mixture of Lysol, water, and motor oil. And he put that on the outside. This helped them to heal. In order to raise pigs, especially if they are boars, you want to have them castrated, because otherwise they get big, tough, and nasty. So my father flipped the pig over, cut his testicles out, and put on some Lysol/motor oil mixture. And other farmers thought he was pretty damn good at that, and they asked my father if he would do their hogs, too. So he used to go around and cut all the farmer's hogs. (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: Did they give him some money for doing this?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes, they usually paid him for that.

Mr. Aumack: I have another question, because I am so curious about it. What would he do with the non-used body parts?

Mr. Engebretson: He would just throw them away! (laughter) And I have another interesting story. When you butcher a hog, you really have to know what you are doing. You can shoot him through the head or slit his throat, but to cut him up and do it right, you really should have someone who is an expert. Well there was a colored man, and I am old fashioned so I say "colored." His name was Baltimore, and that's all they called him. He lived in Marlboro Township. My father got in touch with him and told him he had two hogs to kill and butcher. So Baltimore had a truck, and he had a scalding and a tri-pod.

Mr. Aumack: What is a scalding?

Mr. Engebretson: It is a great, big cauldron. It is about six feet long and three and a half feet wide. He had cement blocks that he put this cauldron on, fill it with water and build a fire under it. He would sit and talk, and the fire would really be cooking, and the water would start to boil. Before he was all ready, he would take his killing knives out. They were in a wooden box wrapped in white linen. He was really theatrical. Baltimore was like 350 pounds, and he was all muscle. He would sharpen the knives until they could cut a page from a newspaper.

Mr. Aumack: Was he like six feet five or something like that?

Mr. Engebretson: He must have been about six feet tall. He had a tri-pod, a block-and-tackle, and he had what is called spreaders. You would put the spreaders into the Achilles heels once you kill the animal. You just hoisted them up and dropped them into the scald and let them sit there for a minute.

Mr. Aumack: Was that to kill him?

Mr. Engebretson: No, that was to get the hair off. But I jumped ahead there. Well, Baltimore had his killing knives. He opened up the box, and it was all white linen. He unwrapped it, very ceremoniously. Then he got out his steel, which looks like a rod and is roughly shaped. He took his knife and went back and forth over this steel, like you may have seen butchers do. Then he said, "Boy, I think this is sharp enough. Do you have a piece of paper?" So I went and got him a newspaper. And he held up the newspaper and slit it in half just like a razorblade, and my eyeballs almost dropped out of my head!

Mr. Aumack: You saw this happen?

Mr. Engebretson: Oh yes, sure. Now the next thing he said was, "I got to have you hold the hog." When you kill a hog, you stick them in the jugular vein. And he had a special knife for that one, and that was the one that was so sharp. My brother was not around, so Baltimore said, "Boy, do you want to hold that hog?" My father was working, so it was up to us, and my brother was not around. He looked at me and said, "Ok, boy, how about you? Are you ready?" And I thought, "Sure, why not?" (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: How old were you?

Mr. Engebretson: About twelve years old.

Mr. Aumack: Oh my gosh! How big was the hog?

Mr. Engebretson: About 150 pounds, easily.

Mr. Aumack: Now how big were you?

Mr. Engebretson: I was probably about 100 pounds. I was a good size.

Mr. Aumack: How tall were you, like four feet?

Mr. Engebretson: No, I was probably closer to five feet.

Mr. Aumack: But still, this thing is quite a bit bigger than you, right?

Mr. Engebretson: Oh yes. Of course I fed them, and they were sort of used to me. I was sort of like their friend, you know.

Mr. Aumack: Oh no! (laughter)

Mr. Engebretson: With friends like that, who needs enemies? (laughter) So I straddled his neck, and I pulled back on his ears. And now his throat was cut.

Mr. Aumack: And he was on his back?

Mr. Engebretson: No, he is standing up. When Baltimore stuck his knife in his jugular vein, it really didn't hurt him. And then the pig walked toward the scalding, Baltimore had a pointed stick he was poking the pig with. When the pig got maybe twenty feet away from the scalding, the hog died. Then Baltimore dragged the hog over to the scalding, put the spreader through the Achilles tendons, hoisted him up, then lowered it down into the scalding, soon it would be hoisted up. Then Baltimore took all the hair off with a curry comb. He curry-combed all the hair off because it was loose after being in the scalding. Then he hoisted the hog up again, and he cut him down the middle. And then with all the entrails spilled out, he was ready to cut the hams and other parts. Baltimore got the head and the guts, which they call chitlins when they are cleaned and fried. I have had them, but I really don't care for them.

Mr. Aumack: What do they taste like?

Mr. Engebretson: Truthfully, they taste exactly like what's inside of them.

Mr. Aumack: Ooh!

Mr. Engebretson: Did you ever eat kidneys? Kidney pie?

Mr. Aumack: No, I haven't.

Mr. Engebretson: If you have kidney pie or eat kidneys, it smells like urine. Anyway, Baltimore got the lights, which are the lungs, the kidneys, the guts to make chitlins, he'd take all the entrails and take everything out to cook it. He also got the head. We got the rest in a week or so if you cut the hog down and cut up the hams, you would bring the hams down to one of our neighbors the Ronsons who had a smokehouse, and Mr. Ronson would smoke the hams for us. The rest of it, all the chops and other parts, we brought down to the Keansburg Cold Storage Locker, because nobody had any kind of freezer in their house. We just didn't have them in those days. You brought the food down to a frozen food locker, and usually they had fish down there, too. So that took care of the killing of the hogs. One of the sports we had...maybe three or four of us would get together, and we all had 22-rifles in those days. That's what you had because you were farmers, and if you saw a woodchuck out there, you shot him.

Mr. Aumack: Now before you get into the rifle games, well actually go ahead and tell me about the games, and then you can tell me about hunting stories, if there are any.

Mr. Engebretson: You had a rifle you always took with you, and we had pistols on the farm, too.

Mr. Aumack: What kind of pistol?

Mr. Engebretson: 22s and 32s. We would go down to any store, anywhere, and tell them we wanted boxes of bullets. And they would say sure and sell them to you.

Mr. Aumack: Now this is when you are thirteen years old?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes- actually, the stores were in villages.

Mr. Aumack: So here you are walking into a general store, and you're thirteen, and you ask him for bullets. Now this is in a town where he knows who you are, right?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Now he knows you like, "Oh, you are so and so's son," right? And you say you want these bullets, and he hands them over to you?

Mr. Engebretson: Sure! Well, you buy them.

Mr. Aumack: Of course.

Mr. Engebretson: You could walk down along the road during gunning season with your shotgun cradled in your arm, and nobody would say a word. Today if you do that, you'll have 36,000 police after you! But everybody owned a rifle, everybody. You graduated from a twenty-two, to a 410, to a twenty gauge, or you jumped right into a sixteen or twelve gauge shotgun. They were usually single barrel, because you couldn't afford the double-barreled shotguns. But anyway, you could go on any farm and see all the rifles stacked up. Kids didn't shoot each other. During the 1940s, we would go down to Asbury Park. They had the amusement park there. And they had a shooting gallery, where they had tin ducks attached to a moving endless chain. You had a twenty-two pumpgun, which held seventeen shots. It shot live ammunition, and nobody would even think of turning a gun on a crowd and shooting people.

Mr. Aumack: Why not?

Mr. Engebretson: Because you had a different type of person then than you do now. They had very little exposure to violence. You also had a father and mother to give you guidance and discipline.

Mr. Aumack: Now there is all this school violence. So a young kid twelve years old could buy bullets to a gun, and he could buy a gun, right?

Mr. Engebretson: Sure.

Mr. Aumack: Was it expensive for a gun?

Mr. Engebretson: I think at that time, guns were about ten dollars for a single shot 22 rifle.

Mr. Aumack: Now what would that be like today?

Mr. Engebretson: You would probably pay somewhere around seventy-five dollars for the same type of gun.

Mr. Aumack: Would you have your own gun as a child? And your father would have his guns? Or would it be the family's guns?

Mr. Engebretson: No, you would have your own gun. Actually it was my brother who showed me how to use a gun, because my father was always working. He could shoot, because he was in the Army. But either your father or an older brother showed you how to shoot. Once he thought you were sensible enough, you got your own gun. Twelve or thirteen years old.

Mr. Aumack: See that wouldn't happen today. And there are cases where children use guns against each other. Now why was the personality different then?

Mr. Engebretson: Well, I think there are a couple of things. My feeling is that one, you have TV and all the violent games. It shows violence, and you have all these violent games that the kids play, after awhile they get immune to it. They don't realize that it is killing because it is so easy. On a farm, when you shot an animal, you saw it suffer. You saw the blood come out, and you knew it was serious. If you ever shot something that was eating your crop, you shot it so it would be killed immediately. I had a dog that had distemper. We didn't have the money to take him down to the vet.

Mr. Aumack: To be put to sleep?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. I took my shotgun, patted him on the head, and blew him away.

Mr. Aumack: Did you like your dog?

Mr. Engebretson: Oh, I loved him. And I cried and cried.

Mr. Aumack: Did your father tell you to take the dog out back and shoot him?

Mr. Engebretson: No, Dad told me the dog was very sick. Dad told me he didn't know what I wanted to do, but that he would never let any animal suffer. So I shot the dog, buried him, and put up a cross. You knew what suffering was, and you shot it because you needed to put it out of its misery. Today kids get their thrills by going up and taking a gun out and shooting a person. They have no responsibility. The other factor is when you have your mother and father both out of the house working, there is nobody there when you need them to tell you what to do. There is no guidance. I'll tell you my take on things. Today the mother and father have to work. And why do they have to work? Because fifty percent of our income is taxed. When you have income taxed at fifty percent, you have to scale down your living until the children are born. Then the mother goes out to work for that nicer car or whatever. We need to stop taxing people at fifty-percent and let the mother be at home. I also think you can't have five fathers in a family. You have got to have one father, and not five. If you have five, usually none of them are there at all to give you any kind of guidance. And then you look at your mother, and you think what a mess this is, and you wonder if you are ever going to get out of this. I have been in schools where kids have so-called alternative education for high school students, where you have kids that are bad news. There would be five of them in a class, the teacher would read the newspaper, and the kids would be talking with each other. The teacher gets paid sixty thousand dollars a year, and the kids learn nothing. Now they get out of high school and get ready for a job. But they don't have any skills, and they can't read or do any kind of mathematics. And what happens is you get a kid who doesn't even like himself. If you don't like yourself, you're not going to like any other person. If you have no respect, you will walk up to this other person, and tell him to give you his money. And if he looks at you cross-eyed, you have such a low opinion of yourself, that you will blow him away. This whole thing has to change. It has to get back to the point where people have skills, and they are proud of themselves, and they know things. One other thing is we have a President that is a disgrace. We want people to look up to the President and be like him. Reagan was one that you could look at and know he was really an example of what a President should be. When he went into the Oval Office, he had his suit coat on with a tie. When our current President came into the office, the first thing he did was lower his pants and have Monica Lewinsky do a job on him. How can you look up to him or have respect? How can you say that is the type of person I want to be? You can't. Actually, I think it really came in about the 1960s, when I was teaching. We used to read from the Bible. We used to have the flag salute. When I taught in 1961, you came in with a jacket. You came in with a tie. If you wanted a beer, you went to another town so that no parent or child would see you walking out of the bar. You didn't strike because you were a professional.

Today you look at some of the teachers, and the way some of them dress is a disgrace. When you act like a union member and you strike, how can anybody have respect for you? There has to be a big change in America. Our one hope is that we have a lot of people coming in who are immigrants, who are now doing the lousy, dirty work that none of our kids will do. The Mexicans and Asians are a few of those immigrants. They come in not even knowing the language, and they work their butts off to get ahead. They are good citizens. Part of our present population wants reparations for something that happened 300 years ago. It is an "I want something for nothing" mindset. Why not seek reparation from the African chieftains who sold the natives into slavery?

Mr. Aumack: Are you talking about the slaves?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Let's go back to education because there is a very strong contrast between farm kids taking off school to spray the orchards, and buying bullets and guns at twelve years old. You were talking about your education career. Tell me about what you think of the Colts Neck education system, or the system you were involved in, now as opposed to what it is was like then?

Mr. Engebretson: When I went to school, it was rather interesting. You had the three major subjects: reading, writing, and arithmetic. We didn't have much in the way of science but then we were on a farm, and we learned about birth, seeds growing, and protection of the environment.

Mr. Aumack: Well you learned about birth firsthand with the cows, right?

Mr. Engebretson: Sure, they were born right in front of you. It was my job once a year to get the cow serviced (bred). We had one cow, and I would go down to our neighbor's farm, who had a bull. I had to walk my cow about three miles down, get her serviced, and then come back.

Mr. Aumack: Serviced by the bull?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. About seven months later, she had a calf. You would watch her to make sure that the calf came out right. My father usually was there, and my mother was always there. And you learned about those type of things even though you didn't have formal science classes. I can tell you, by the time we got out of eighth grade, we knew math upside down. We were ready for high school math. The advantage of being in a class where you had two grades was that if you were younger and got through with your lesson early, you could listen to the next grade up recite their lesson. The teacher would say you could listen as long as you did your work. By the time you got through graduating from the lower grade to that one class to the upper grade, you were well prepared academically.

Mr. Aumack: So in a way, you could set up your own little schedule. If you were happy at the pace you were going, that was fine, and you weren't discouraged or anything. But if you worked ahead, it was even better. Now what about those that lagged behind, what did they do about those children?

Mr. Engebretson: Usually the kids who were a little slower got a lot of help from the teacher or from other students.

Mr. Aumack: So it was good, personal help that was meaningful.

Mr. Engebretson: Oh yes, definitely. We were all avid readers, and that is one of the things we had. You didn't really read comic books, but we had what was called the *Big Little Books*. They were books that were about two inches thick. You could buy those down in the stationery stores. Everybody used to read, and loved to talk about the stories. Today you don't see a whole lot of that, except for Harry Potter. Now that, to me, is really great where you have an author who can turn the kids on to reading. But in those days, you especially read the newspapers, too, because this was during the War. We read about what was happening in Asia and Europe. We were interested in it.

Mr. Aumack: So you were encouraged by your teachers to read about what was going on in the world?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. And this was pretty much what happened in school. You had your basics, and you didn't have foreign languages, shop, or home economics. You got that in high school.

Mr. Aumack: Did you get history in grammar school?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: What else did you read?

Mr. Engebretson: Geography, biographies, and stories.

Mr. Aumack: What stories?

Mr. Engebretson: One would be *Tarzan*, and there were stories about other persons that you could read. Once in awhile, you would get a comic book. But your parents really didn't want you to read comic books.

Mr. Aumack: Why? Was that looked upon then like some people now think about television?

Mr. Engebretson: It had a lot of pictures. They wanted us to read words and not spend most of our time looking at the pictures.

Mr. Aumack: So you could use your own mind and imagination.

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. Then we had radio. Radio was good because you had programs like "The Inner Sanctum," which were mysteries.

Mr. Aumack: What was it about?

Mr. Engebretson: Usually it was about a murder or other crimes, and they were catching the people who did it. The bad guy always got caught. They had "The Green Hornet," on the radio, and that was the same thing. It was never anybody shooting and gasping for breath. The criminals were always caught.

Mr. Aumack: So there weren't any shootings in the stories?

Mr. Engebretson: Well there was some in "The Lone Ranger." He would ride after the bad guys and shoot them, but usually it was in the leg.

Mr. Aumack: So the criminal would say something like, "Oh no, I have been shot in the leg" or something like that?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes, that's how it went. "Good work, Tonto!" (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: There is a comedy routine by Bill Cosby that says every time the Lone Ranger asked Tonto to go into town, Tonto would always get beat up. Now tell us about that.

Mr. Engebretson: Most of the time he would say, "Tonto, we need some supplies." So Tonto would say, "Ok, Kemo Sabe. I am going to town." And Tonto would come back and you couldn't tell that he was all beat up, but the Lone Ranger would say, "Tonto, what happened to you?" And Tonto would say, "Three men jumped me, Kemo Sabe." (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: Did this occur in every episode, where he got beat up?

Mr. Engebretson: Not every one, they sort of spaced them out or else the poor guy wouldn't be able to ride his horse very much. (laughter) But all of the programs had the same theme. The good guys came out best and you didn't have everybody shot through the head or anything like that. They shot in the arm or leg, and they captured them and tied them up. They never really went into a routine of people being hanged, so there was no death involved. You could use your own imagination though, but the programs all had a moral value, as did your schoolbooks. McGuffey's Readers, which were used from the 1860s to about 1900, all had a moral. It was all patriotic, and the good guys always came out best and the bad guys lost. And we seem to have lost that type of story in the schools today, too.

Mr. Aumack: Why have we, in your opinion?

Mr. Engebretson: Again, I think that the people who write the books have a responsibility, and they haven't lived up to it. They have changed history, some of the books written about World War II. They seem to put us in the place of killers of women and children in Hiroshima. They don't say that we gave them three days notice to leave because we were going to destroy their city. And then when it happened, it was devastating. The authors try to place the blame on us. It seems like if you read the social studies books, it really downplays the Japanese who attacked Pearl Harbor for no reason.

Mr. Aumack: You mean it really gives them a break?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. During the 1930s, the Japanese were buying scrap metal by the tons, by the shiploads. And they weren't making toys out of it. They were building their Army, Navy, and Air Force. Nothing is ever mentioned in the history books about this. When you look at some of the books used in our schools today, the morals are not spelled out. I think that there has to be something done with them instilling patriotism and morals in these school books, and also accurately portraying what has happened with our history.

Mr. Aumack: What in your mind has been inaccurately portrayed?

Mr. Engebretson: Well especially Hiroshima. We were pictured as heartless and cruel, like we just dropped the bomb with all the people there, and we just maimed and killed them. That is not right. They should get their facts straight. And they should also mention that we didn't start the War. The Japanese started the War. There was no warning when they came and bombed Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Aumack: That's true.

Mr. Engebretson: And I resent that. Very little is printed on those facts. Do you ever read in your history books about the Bataan Death March?

Mr. Aumack: No.

Mr. Engebretson: No. Thousands of American soldiers, sailors, and nurses died. But you don't read about that. It happened though. And yet you hear about Hiroshima time and time again.

Mr. Aumack: Yes, I remember about Hiroshima but don't know about the Death March.

Mr. Engebretson: The Japanese had a method of torture during the Death March. It was to sharpen a bamboo sapling that was growing in the ground. They would just cut the sapling, and they would set a prisoner on that stake by their

rectum. They would do that to whomever they didn't like. And nobody ever tells about that. Did they ever mention that they would pull out their fingernails?

Mr. Aumack: And where have you learned this?

Mr. Engebretson: During the War in the newspapers.

Mr. Aumack: So people read this in the newspaper?

Mr. Engebretson: Sure. And truthfully, there was hatred. And probably propaganda was meant to create that hatred.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know of any propaganda or anything that was said that was false against the Japanese, that we know now is untrue?

Mr. Engebretson: It is hard to prove.

Mr. Aumack: So not to play Devil's Advocate on purpose, but would this staking people on bamboo be true?

Mr. Engebretson: This is first-hand accounts from the men who came back, so it is true.

Mr. Aumack: So these men were in the Death March and managed to live, and they would tell you what happened to some of the other men.

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. People are cruel to each other. We are cruel today to each other. I inspect schools for safety, and I saw something happen in East Orange. I was parked at a stop sign, and I heard all this shouting and cursing. I looked over, and there was a group of maybe a half-dozen black people. They were cursing at each other, and one guy smacked the other in the mouth. In my day if you smacked somebody in the mouth, they would go down, and you would walk away. Or maybe you would say, "Do you want another one?" But this guy walked over to him and with his feet, he stomped the guy's face. And the other people were cheering. I just looked and thought, "Oh God, what is this world coming to?" In my day, if you acted smart, you got a smack in the mouth, and maybe you got a couple of teeth knocked out. But you probably deserved it, and the other guy took pity on you and would walk away. It's not that way today. When people grow up and watch television and see all this violence, they just become immune to it.

Mr. Aumack: Some people see Vietnam soldiers with their wounded and their cries, and they are immune to it. Is this because they have played video games and think it's like the same thing?

Mr. Engebretson: A good part of it is, yes. They think death is just another event. They see it on television. They see a guy during a war blow somebody's brains out in front of the camera, and they think it's not a big deal. They don't have a good concept about what life and death is, and it's a shame.

Mr. Aumack: Let's get to your Korean War experiences. I have seen numerous memoirs lately, because Korea is having a fifty-year anniversary. So tell me how you got into that War.

Mr. Engebretson: As I said, my father was in World War I, and my brother was in World War II. And the Korean War came along, and I thought this was something that I should do for my country. So I joined.

Mr. Aumack: So you enlisted?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. I was in for four years, but I didn't get over to Korea. I was in the Seebies on the East Coast, and we were attached to the Second Marines. I was in ACB2.

Mr. Aumack: What is a CB and an ACB?

Mr. Engebretson: ACB is an amphibious CB. And a CB is a Construction Battalion. And probably I got into that because I was a farmer and I knew mechanics, etc. I wound up as a mechanic on a jeep and a duck.

Mr. Aumack: What is a duck?

Mr. Engebretson: A duck is the one that goes out into the water, and it can go on land, also. It has a little propeller in the back, and it would go down the beach. It is just a big vehicle with tires and a propeller in the back, and it's shaped like a bathtub. You would go from the beach right into the water, and the propellers started working, and away you would go like a boat. Now that was fun. So I was a mechanic for four years. One of my friends I went to school with, he was just the nicest guy. His name was Henry Bratigaum. I read about it in the paper that he was in one of the landings, and he got it right in the head. He wasn't on the shore any amount of time at all. And I thought, "What a tragedy!" Here was a guy who wouldn't hurt a fly, and he was drafted in the Army, and he got it.

Mr. Aumack: Did he enlist?

Mr. Engebretson: No, he was drafted.

Mr. Aumack: Now what landing was this?

Mr. Engebretson: I am not sure what landing that was in the Korean War. But I read about it, and it was really sad. He was a nice guy, and he had a nice family.

The thing that bothers me the most is that we never learn. We had World War I, and we were going to have a League of Nations that was going to be the answer. We had World War II, and that was the United Nations that was going to be the answer. And that was going to be the end of all wars. And then we had the Korean War. When I was with my wife out in the Elder Hostel for the Church of Latter Day Saints tracing our ancestors, there was one class that was talking about memoirs. I said I would probably do something about my days in the Korean War. And the instructor said that wasn't really a war. And I said, "Let me tell you something." And there were a bunch of people there about my age. I said, "Tell that to the 56,000 people who were killed!" I said, "Tell them it wasn't a war!" He said I was right.

Mr. Aumack: I am not defending them, but people say that because they technically are calling it more of a police action. And that's what I learned. They don't call it a "war" because a war wasn't "officially declared." But I agree with you, sir.

Mr. Engebretson: Any war you have where you kill people, it is a war. I think the people are so tired of unnecessary wars that when the people from Vietnam came back home, people were just fed up with it. They didn't want any war. We haven't learned our lesson. The President is a draft dodger. And what he did was to send our airplanes, not our troops, to Kosovo. There we bombed women and children...for peace. You read the papers today, and tell me if there is any peace there. There is not.

Mr. Aumack: What do you think he should have done, sent troops?

Mr. Engebretson: I think he should have left it to the Europeans because that is in their backyard. Are we going to accept people coming from Europe over to here and tell us how we are going to handle our riots? No, you let those people take care of it. And that is unless the European community asks us to come in. But thank God he is going, so we don't have to have something like that again. But we didn't have any wars with Reagan, did we?

Mr. Aumack: No, not to my knowledge. Let's discuss more about the education system. What else can we get into?

Mr. Engebretson: Well, I can tell you about my education system. My brother was six years older than I. By the time I got into high school, he was a very good student. He was perfect in everything, and I am sort of sloppy. As long as I get by, that's ok with me. Well a couple of teachers at the high school asked me why I wasn't like my brother.

Mr. Aumack: What was your brother's name, by the way?

Mr. Engebretson: Ed. I heard this comment about three or four times, and I was in my junior year when I just decided that was all I could take. And so I quit school. And my Mom persisted in telling me not to quit school, but I wanted to join the Navy. So I joined the Navy. I loved mechanic work at that time, and I still like it. I couldn't go to mechanics school in California. I asked why, they said because I was a high school dropout. Well, when I got out, I got my high school equivalency diploma. I went to Monmouth Junior College, which was meeting in the high school in Long Branch. I took two courses, and I got Bs in both of them. I was working as a planker for Henry Luhrs, who was a boat manufacturer in Morgan. We had a layoff. I thought maybe I would try to go to college. I had taken two courses, and I enrolled. I had the GI Bill. Otherwise, I couldn't really have afforded it. So I took four courses, I think, and got As. I met a girl whose brother was working for Hercules or Dupont where they make film. He was a custodian for that company, and he was going to NYU. I thought if he could go to NYU, why couldn't I go to college? So I went full-time to Monmouth College. I studied, and I studied high school English at the same time I was taking college English. I worked with my father on the farm. I was taking twenty-one credit hours, and I wound up getting my degree a year early. I made the Dean's List five out of six times, and was given the Outstanding Student Award. I had a year left and went to the University of Pennsylvania, and finished there a two-year program in one and a half years. I went on to get a Masters from Newark State College.

Mr. Aumack: In what?

Mr. Engebretson: In education. I have one Masters in Business from Wharton School, and I have a Specialist Degree from Rutgers University in Administration Supervision. So I sort of proved to myself that I could do it. Anybody can do it if you really want to. The story of my education in Matawan, when I finished about two years at Monmouth, I applied for a substitute certificate. And they sent the application to my brother. (laughter) And later I became one of the members of the Board of Education in Matawan.

Mr. Aumack: What year did you become a member of the Board?

Mr. Engebretson: 1967 to 1970.

Mr. Aumack: What was the schooling like in 1967?

Mr. Engebretson: It is interesting. At that period of time, we were going through a change in education.

Mr. Aumack: What kind of change?

Mr. Engebretson: Open classrooms.

Mr. Aumack: What do you mean by that?

Mr. Engebretson: They thought that instead of having individual classrooms, you should open up the whole school. You should build the school to accommodate interaction between the students, and they had the concept of team teaching. So we developed the school into three schools, which had that type of education. And then after we did this, the teachers disliked the concept in Matawan. At first the teachers thought it was great. They went out to Illinois with us, came back and developed a whole plan. And then after it was built, those same teachers decided they didn't like it anymore.

Mr. Aumack: Did they quit?

Mr. Engebretson: No, we built partitions to separate it into individual classrooms again.

Mr. Aumack: Did that ever happen anywhere else in New Jersey that you know of?

Mr. Engebretson: Probably.

Mr. Aumack: But you don't remember any specific places offhand?

Mr. Engebretson: No.

Mr. Aumack: What did you teach when you were a teacher?

Mr. Engebretson: I started to teach in Old Bridge Township in the middle of the year. I had a fifth grade class. After that, I taught fifth grade science and social studies and then later the same subjects in sixth and seventh grades. Then I went on to Farmingdale, where I was the Principal there. I went to Marlboro Township, and I had bigger and better experiences in my life. And they were good experiences.

Mr. Aumack: Were you ever a teacher or administrator in Colts Neck?

Mr. Engebretson: No.

Mr. Aumack: Discuss the Marlboro education system then compared to the way it is now.

Mr. Engebretson: I have been away from it for quite awhile, but the people whom I know are good people. They are current as far as innovations and curriculum go. They have a fellow named Tom Nicola, who is the head of curriculum department. He is excellent. The teachers for the most part are pretty

good. One thing that I don't agree with in the school system is the middle school concept.

Mr. Aumack: Why?

Mr. Engebretson: I don't think they need shop.

Mr. Aumack: Wood shop?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. I think it's a waste of time. If you really want to know something, you can learn it on Saturday, or watch your father, or wait until high school to take shop. But we need to build the educational foundation in middle school. We need more computers, and the kids need to become computer literate. They need to read, write, and understand and do mathematics. I look at some of the kids who work at checkout counters, and they get absolutely fogged out if their electricity goes out or something happens to their cash register. Middle school shop and home economics is not really necessary. Do you really need to have home economics for the children at middle school? They can take that in high school. You should have the middle school as the basis for your high school. We need to build the kids knowledge so that they are proficient in math, science, social studies, and language arts.

Mr. Aumack: Are you saying that home economics is a not bad thing, but if they want to learn about something like that, they should do it in their spare time?

Mr. Engebretson: Sure. If anything, learn foreign languages in the middle school instead of having a semester or quarter in shop or home economics. I don't really see the value.

Mr. Aumack: We are in Colts Neck right now. Do you know about the zoning regulations around here?

Mr. Engebretson: Somewhat.

Mr. Aumack: Tell me about what you think of the zoning regulations?

Mr. Engebretson: I know that the mini farms have five-acre minimums.

Mr. Aumack: Here?

Mr. Engebretson: No, this is like one and a half acres here. In order to preserve the pastoral complexity here, we have five-acre mini farms. They haven't developed any strip malls, which is good. We can go to another town and shop, if we have to. The schools I think are pretty good. One thing that I resent is the voting for new schools. They say it is going to cost you x amount of dollars for the bond. But if you are really going to be truthful, then tell the voters the total

amount which would include the additional teachers, custodians, counselors, and anyone else who is needed. As it is, you are not going to see the additional people hired on until you get your tax bill.

Mr. Aumack: So it will be a lot higher than what they thought they were going to be paying?

Mr. Engebretson: That's right.

Mr. Aumack: So a lot of people in Colts Neck feel cheated?

Mr. Engebretson: Some felt that they were misled.

Mr. Aumack: Was this the bill over Colts Neck High School?

Mr. Engebretson: No.

Mr. Aumack: So this was the vote that built Freehold Regional School then?

Mr. Engebretson: This one I am talking about was the one that was added on to Conover Road School up here and over at Cedar Drive School. And you don't mind paying for something if somebody tells you the full truth; you can accept that. In order to have additions put on schools, like an all-purpose room, you have to have bleachers, cabinets, and everything else associated with it. Just put it all down, and let the people know everything and not just part of the cost. Next time a referendum comes up for a vote, the people will feel like they weren't told everything and will vote against the items. People like my wife and myself, who were in education, realize the importance of schools, but it's just the idea that you are being told half-truths that isn't good public relations.

Mr. Aumack: And some people may not even vote because they know they can't trust them, even if it would be the truth, right?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. Well it's the same thing with the government, you know. Senior citizens cry and moan about the cost of prescription drugs. And the AARP is always saying you have to have this and that. And not one of them will ever ask why we gave six billion to the Palestinians since Camp David every year, and why did we give six billion to Israel, and why did we give hundred of millions of dollars to Africa to fight AIDS? Our people here have cancer. My wife just got through with radiation treatments. She didn't bring it on herself. Africa did -- with fornication. If you are going to help, help us first.

Mr. Aumack: Take care of home before you go out.

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. And how many billions of dollars did it cost to bomb Kosovo? Help our people first, and then be generous to the rest of the world. And

I really get annoyed about that type of thing. You can't do anything about it. Once the politicians decide they are going to do it, they are going to do it.

Mr. Aumack: How can any Colts Neck resident preserve the environment that it has now?

Mr. Engebretson: I think they are doing it. They have a good Mayor and Council. What they are doing is to preserve it as some sort of an agricultural township. So they are limiting the number of houses that are coming in. And they are building a senior citizen's complex for assisted living. They aren't saying you can't have assisted living, but let's have a plan. They don't want house upon house upon house. You notice we don't have sidewalks here. We have our own well for water, and we have our own septic tanks. So we don't have city water, we don't have city sewers, and we don't have sidewalks. There are no streetlights. And you might think this is primitive, but it is not. It is rural, and this is the type of thing we want to have and the type of community in which we want to live.

Mr. Aumack: That's very different from me. I live in a one-square mile town, Fair Haven, and we have streetlights, and my family just took out the huge oil tank from the backyard. So it varies from town to town.

Mr. Engebretson: Well, we do have gas here. And we have electricity. But we don't have to worry about a monthly charge for water or for sewer.

Mr. Aumack: And that's something that other towns would tax on, right?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. You have to pay the water bill to Consolidated Water or whatever it is called, and you have to pay a sewer bill to the utility company. Usually if you have a municipal authority, if you use ten gallons of water, they figure you use a gallon of sewage. So the two are tied together. But here we can use as much water as we want. And that is one of the advantages here. Some people might complain about not having sidewalks, but how often do you use them? If you really want a sidewalk, put it in front of your house. Nobody is stopping you. You just get a permit and build a sidewalk.

Mr. Aumack: What has changed in your life in Monmouth County?

Mr. Engebretson: There have been a lot of changes going on. Marlboro is a good example of a lot of changes. People complain that the farms aren't there any more, and I look back and reminisce. But I can't really feel sorry, because people have to live some place. They want to get out of the cities. So they come out here. That's one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is my parents were farmers. As the years went by, the cost of fertilizer tripled and quadrupled. My father bought a tractor in 1945, and that same tractor would be ten times the cost today. You usually paid people to pick by the basket, but now you have to

pay them by the hour. So the equipment went up, the labor went up, the fertilizer went up, and your taxes went up. The labor supply is not abundant like it used to be. So the farmer looks at his land and thinks some people make fifty thousand dollars a year, and I make maybe twenty thousand dollars a year and more with all my expenses. This same farmer is now sixty-five years old. Shouldn't he be allowed to sell his land? A developer comes along and says he'll give him seventy-five thousand an acre. And the farmer thinks that's not too bad, especially for highway frontage. So the farmer thinks maybe he should sell and enjoy the good life. Or should he put the land in escrow and get someone to farm it for him and get ten thousand dollars a year for the rental? No--let's sell land.

Mr. Aumack: He is going to go for the higher price from the developer.

Mr. Engebretson: Why not? All his life he has paid taxes, has supported the local, state and federal government, and isn't it about time the farmer makes the money he should? If you have a business and decide to sell it because you are tired of working and not making a good profit, who should tell you that you can't sell it? Now if the government offers to give the farmer the same amount of money as the developer, then fine, buy the land. Whoever has the money wins. The problem the farmers have right now is that he should sell and retire or continue farming. You are going to find more and more small farmers going out of business and selling. There is another side to this. Some farmers are going to specialize in crops, they may grow herbs, flowers, or sod, which is not as labor intensive. You'll find that some farmers may have found a niche.

Mr. Aumack: Your father used to be an ironworker in New York City?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Where did he work in New York City?

Mr. Engebretson: They were building high rise apartments and skyscrapers going up in New York City, and on Long Island.

Mr. Aumack: So he was building some of the first skyscrapers you mean?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. And that was dangerous. There were no safety belts, and you walked the beams thirty or forty stories up.

Mr. Aumack: Did he ever tell you anything about anyone ever falling off?

Mr. Engebretson: He told me a couple of people that he knew fell off, yes. He also worked in the Navy yard in Brooklyn, New York. He was one of nine children. When he was twelve years old, they didn't have enough food for the entire family, so he had to go out and work as a baker's helper. He lived at the

bakery and gave his earnings to his father to help support the family. At fifteen years old, he went to sea as a cook on a ship, a coal freighter out of Liverpool.

Mr. Aumack: And he moved down to the farm to help make sure you were well and to make a fresh start?

Mr. Engebretson: Well he was still working, but it was mainly for me with my health problems that we moved to the farm. The things that you learn on a farm are pretty neat. The owners of the farm were really nice people. They used to come up on the weekends, and they always wanted to have two or three dressed chickens. They would make chicken cacciatore, etc. I would have to kill the chickens, pluck and got them.

Mr. Aumack: Now this was when you were twelve or thirteen years old?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. Now my brother was in the Merchant Marines then. So I would chop the head off the chicken, and it would flop all around. Then I would get a bucket of boiling water and stick it in, and then strip all the feathers off. Then I would open it up and take all the entrails out.

Mr. Aumack: The chitlins, right?

Mr. Engebretson: No, those aren't chitlins.

Mr. Aumack: What do you call those?

Mr. Engebretson: Just intestines. Then they have something called a crop, and it grinds up the food using the stones inside. It grinds up all the food before it goes to the intestines.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, the crop was a body part of the chicken.

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. They call it a gizzard. Well, you just don't go out and grab hold of a chicken by the neck and say, "Sorry, this is your day!" (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: Well, how do you do it then?

Mr. Engebretson: When we bought chickens, we bought them from Pennsylvania Hatchery, as day-old chicks. They came in a box. You could order pullets, which are all females, or cockerels, which are the males. They usually came in the wintertime, and you put them under your stove to keep them nice and warm. Then you would put them in the brooder, out in the chicken house. The brooder has a light bulb underneath that keeps them nice and warm. Then they start to grow. They eat all the food that you have given them. Some day you have to look at each one and ask if they are productive. Well, how do you tell since they all look the same? You flip up the chicken so its neck is pointing down,

and there would be like pelvic bone like those on a human being. Now the females lay eggs. If you can put three fingers between their pelvic bones, which is where the egg comes from through, it is a good layer. But two fingers means it is time to go. So that is the one that you grab hold of to kill for food. That is called "culling the chickens." For years and years I never knew how they found out whether a baby chick was a male or a female.

Mr. Aumack: How did they know?

Mr. Engebretson: I inspected a school down in South Jersey. As this custodian and I were talking about farms. He lives on a farm. We started talking about culling the chickens, and I told him how I never understood how they knew the difference between a male and female chick so he told me. He once worked in a hatchery. They had Japanese workers who came from the West Coast, and they lived in South Jersey. They were in west coast concentration camps, and were moved to south Jersey to keep an eye on them during World War II. The hatchery incubators hatch the eggs. They had high school students come in with big boxes of chicks that were just hatched. Two boxes were sitting in front of the Japanese worker. They had thick glasses like they use for gemstones. They would grab hold of a chick and open up its legs. You and I have a navel when we are born. We get our nourishment from the placenta. A chick has almost the same thing, except it is called an egg yolk sack. When it is born, that drops off. But if you spread the legs and it has one dot, it's a pullet. And if it has two dots, it is a cockerel. And they would separate them out from each other into boxes. There is ninety-five percent accuracy in determining sex. I asked what they called these workers, and the custodian said they were called chick sexers. I wondered if he was pulling my leg, so I went down to the library and went to the dictionary of occupational titles, and there it was. A chick sexer is a person who determines the sex of a chick when they are born.

Mr. Aumack: How do you kill a chicken?

Mr. Engebretson: There are a couple of ways, but I didn't like to slit their throat because it would get blood all over. I grabbed the chicken by the legs, and I would tuck one wing on the left side of the leg and take the other wing and tuck it alongside the other leg. Now they are held in one hand. I used a chopping block, and I would rap the chicken's head on the chopping block, just to stun him. I would give him a chop with the hatchet, and I'd have to make sure my hand wasn't in the way. I had a peach basket, and I would put him in there to flop around. They really can't get out of there, so they flopped around and bled.

Mr. Aumack: So you knocked them out to stun them and then you cut its head off?

Mr. Engebretson: Yes. I don't like to look at a chicken's eyes when I'm doing it! He was thinking, "You used to be my friend. You fed me every day!" (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: I have heard stories about them running around. Can they run around?

Mr. Engebretson: They don't have a head anymore, so they can't see where they are going. So the involuntary muscles make them flop around. In about thirty seconds or so, they are all through.

Mr. Aumack: Tell me something that you would tell to the younger generation on how to preserve Monmouth County and any advice you may have for them about anything.

Mr. Engebretson: You can preserve Monmouth County to a certain extent. I think what the State has done by buying farms is a good idea. The County has done quite a bit. If you go around to the County parks, on Route 537, it is still farmed. It is leased to the farmers, and they grow hay and grain on it. You have to balance what you have in the way of nature as opposed to what your needs are. People lose sight of that. In California especially, they have a type of butterfly that is only indigenous to there. It is nice to see it, but some day that butterfly is not going to have a home. What will happen is, he'll probably fly off to the next farm down the road. And you don't have to condemn that land for butterflies. So you have to use common sense. If you have low lands, you don't build on them. Don't fill it in. Let the frogs and birds stay there. But if you have good farmland, you either farm it or sell it for houses. Also you don't build right near the ocean. These people that build near the ocean get federal insurance. They shouldn't receive federal flood insurance. They are building too close. And they are apt to have their homes swept away. We should not have our tax dollars used to support the federal flood insurance in this case.

Mr. Aumack: Well, I think this is a good place to stop. I thank you, and it has been a pleasure and an honor, sir.

Mr. Engebretson: Thank you.