



Interview with Edward Eastmond

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

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Names of Interviewers: Douglas Aumack and Flora Higgins

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Birthdates of subjects: Edward Eastmond -- November 26, 1936
Marian Eastmond -- May 4, 1937

Interviewer: How did you happen to come to Monmouth County and be here during the twentieth century?

Mr. Eastmond: Well, my father and mother were both born in Monmouth County. Mom was born in Union Beach, and my father was born in Matawan. We've had family in the County since the 1800s.

Interviewer: Were these farming people? Tell us how they managed to live, and a little bit about your life as you grew up.

Mr. Eastmond: My grandparents were farmers in Matawan and Middletown. My father was a boat builder for C.C. Galbraith in Keyport, and he was a blacksmith. He did a lot of tin knocking and iron work. Mom was a homemaker, and she raised eight children. We were all fortunate enough to go through school and graduate from high school. One brother has graduated from college.



Mr. Eastmond's father



**Mr. Eastmond
(standing) with his
mother**

Interviewer: You say your father was a blacksmith?

Mr. Eastmond: Yes.

Interviewer: Was he one of the last blacksmiths in the County? And did he do horseshoes as well?

Mr. Eastmond: Oh no. No, he was not a farrier. My father used to bend the keels for the boats. This was for the lifeboats for the Coast Guard and the Navy. They heated the keel and then physically bent them, and hit them with sledgehammers to get the proper curve of the steel or iron.

Interviewer: And that was Galbraith Boat Building?

Mr. Eastmond: C.C. Galbraith on Manchester Avenue in Keyport.

Interviewer: How long have they been in business? Tell us about this boat building place.

Mr. Eastmond: I don't know when it started, but they went out of business I guess in the 1950s. I'm not sure, but I think they went out of business somewhere around that time. My father worked there all during Word War II.

Interviewer: Did you go to school and high school in Union Beach? What kind of transportation did you have?

Mr. Eastmond: I went to school at Union Beach Grammar School, and we walked. My mode of transportation was my feet. And it was uphill both ways. (laughter) I don't think there was any bus service or anything like that in Union Beach. There was a train station in Union Beach, and it would take you eventually into New York or down to Seaside, or down that way along the shore. I don't remember any bus service during my early years growing up.

Interviewer: Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Eastmond: In Keyport.



**Ed Eastmond in
grammar school**

Interviewer: You say you were one of eight children. Can you tell me a little bit about your family?

Mr. Eastmond: I have an older sister. Her name is Catherine Joan Fuller now. She married Frank Fuller. He was also born and raised in Union Beach. I have

an older brother, Dave. He now lives in Nacomis, Florida. And then there was me; I was born in 1936 in Union Beach. The house I was born in is still standing. My sister, Virginia, now lives in Nacomis, Florida also. Her last name now is Poling: she married Frank Poling. His father and my father were very good friends growing up, and I believe he was born in Keyport. Then there is my brother, Billy. He now lives in Frenchtown. He is the one who graduated from college. He is an electrical engineer. He married a girl named Catherine Donaruma. They had a farm in Holmdel, the Donaruma Farm.

Interviewer: But your parents were not farmers?

Mr. Eastmond: No, my father grew up on a farm. He just couldn't take his father's ability to keep him in line, I guess.

Interviewer: What did you kids do as teenagers?

Mr. Eastmond: I was busy working. (laughter)

Mrs. Eastmond: Well, we went swimming. Everybody could go swimming because it didn't cost anything. We swam in Maddy's Creek, and also down at the beachfront at the shore. We went roller skating down at Colicchio Roller Rink in Keansburg.

Interviewer: How did you get there?

Mrs. Eastmond: Well, there was a bus that went from Keansburg to Union Beach and Keyport, and it went into Perth Amboy.

Interviewer: You grew up in Union Beach also, Marian?

Mrs. Eastmond: I didn't move there until I was in seventh grade.

Interviewer: And you met Ed then?

Mrs. Eastmond: No, we did not meet until we were seniors in high school.

Interviewer: What was your job while you were a teenager?

Mr. Eastmond: I got a job when I was a sophomore in high school at the Keyport Greenhouses. I worked there after school, beginning at three o'clock. I worked until six o'clock and some nights even later, depending on the holiday season. Saturdays and Sundays, I worked there, also. And I worked there until I joined the Navy.

Interviewer: Was that for your personal money, or was that to give to the family?

Mr. Eastmond: To assist Mom and help feed the family.

Interviewer: Did your other siblings have jobs to help support the family?

Mr. Eastmond: Well, I guess mine was the most steady job in the household, except my Dad's. My brother Dave didn't work...he was in sports. My sister Joan did work, yes she did. And she paid room and board the same as I did once I started working.

Interviewer: Did you go down to the shore much? Tell us about the shore.

Mr. Eastmond: Occasionally we would go down to Sea Bright and go swimming. I went to the Fireman's Park down there, do you remember that one? We always had about five or six of us that would get into my friend's convertible, a 1952 Buick Convertible. It was a nice car. The man's name was Eddy Lanquist. We would help chip in for gas to go there and back, and it cost you a quarter to go swimming, I think.

Interviewer: And there was no parking fee or anything...you just paid a quarter and that was it?

Mr. Eastmond: You would pay for the parking, and I don't recall what that was. It was maybe a quarter to park there for a couple hours. And it cost you a quarter to go down to the beach.

Interviewer: Sea Bright was always a beautiful beach.

Mr. Eastmond: Oh yes, that was always fun.

Interviewer: Were there any other hobbies besides going to the beach? Did you watch movies?

Mr. Eastmond: No, not really. Once in awhile as a young child, I guess I was maybe six, my oldest sister would take those old enough to go to the movie in Keyport. My mother would give each of us a quarter...

Interviewer: And that's how much it cost?

Mr. Eastmond: No. It was fifteen cents to go to the movie, and it was ten cents to ride the bus. So you could ride the bus one way. You could either ride the bus to the movie, or you could ride the bus coming home. So we had our choice.

Mrs. Eastmond: Or they could walk both ways and then have money for candy or whatever. (laughter)

Mr. Eastmond: Once in awhile we would do that, maybe once a month.

Interviewer: What were your favorite movies?

Mr. Eastmond: I don't know, it used to be *The Phantom*, and Buster Crabb had that space flight or something like that to Mars.

Interviewer: There was a famous restaurant in Union Beach. Tell us about it.

Mr. Eastmond: Graziano's Italian Restaurant. My brother Dave used to date Esther Graziano, who is the younger of the two sisters. They were both in the same class.

Interviewer: But that's no longer there, is it?

Mr. Eastmond: No, that's gone.

Interviewer: Did you follow the political life in Union Beach?

Mr. Eastmond: Not until I got older and was able to vote. I do recall some of the older, now deceased mayors, like Ed Haug, Tom Hennessey, Mr. Scholer, and Carmine Stoppiello.

Interviewer: What were some of their accomplishments?

Mr. Eastmond: I think primarily just trying to keep the books balanced and running a town with no further debt than what it already had...to keep the debt where it was and keep everything on an even keel. At that time it was very tough when the town had been in debt and receivership, so there wasn't much they could do. Mr. Stoppiello, a more recent mayor, brought about many improvements in the town, especially in the beach front area and the school system. He negotiated with Dr. Nogueira for Red Bank to accept our students to Red Bank High School.

Interviewer: Right. Were you there when they put the roads in? Can you tell us about that?

Mr. Eastmond: I can recall as a child of five or six, or even up to maybe ten years old, the town had a grader. We had dirt roads and at least once a summer, or every couple of months, they would come by and grade the road, so it was fairly smooth. Then they would pack it down again a little bit and go over it with sodium. They would put a layer of that on to keep the dust down.

Mrs. Eastmond: It was that way while I was living there, so even when I was in high school, they were still grading the roads.

Mr. Eastmond: The man that did the grading on the road was a qualified grader, and he was also the Police Chief.

Mrs. Eastmond: That was Richard Trembley.

Mr. Eastmond: Richard Trembley, Sr.

Interviewer: Well, how was crime in Union Beach?

Mr. Eastmond: Crime? I don't know.

Interviewer: If the Police Chief had the time to grade the roads, it couldn't have been too bad. (laughter)

Mrs. Eastmond: It was shocking when anything ever happened.

Mr. Eastmond: Yes, it really was. I don't recall any crime as a child in the town. I really don't. Of course I was a child.

Interviewer: Were you aware, though, of locking the doors and the car?

Mr. Eastmond: No.

Interviewer: You didn't lock your doors?



**Marian Eastmond with
her father**

Mrs. Eastmond: You didn't lock the house. In fact if a neighbor came over and knocked on the door, if you didn't answer, they might open it and say, "Anybody home?" If nobody answered, they would just close the door and went on their way. We didn't lock the doors!

Interviewer: Sounds like a very close knit community.

Mr. Eastmond: A very, very good community to be raised in.

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes it was. My mother was a widow, and it was hard for her. I used to take care of my brothers during the summer. I would put them in a wagon and pull them down to the creek, and we would go swimming. And the dog would come, too. And nobody ever said anything...he was not leashed or anything like that. He would go swimming with us. (laughter) Then I would bring them back home, and wash their clothes and put them on the line. Since I was in charge of the household during the day, I did the wash and everything, too. We had no hot water, so I heated all the hot water on the stove. I filled up the washer--we had the old, wringer type washer--and I'd wash the clothes. You started off with the white wash so that you did not have to change the water. You would wash and rinse that, run it through the wringer, and then put it on the line. And I remember because I had to climb on a chair in order to reach the line to

hang up the sheets. I would have to redo sheets sometimes because they touched the ground...I could not manage. I was thirteen or fourteen years old at the time.

Interviewer: And also you were keeping track of the two siblings?

Mrs. Eastmond: And I was watching the two boys, yes.

Interviewer: And you did this while going to school, or was this during the summer?

Mrs. Eastmond: During the summer. During school time, I was in charge of my one brother, who was six years old. My other brother was younger. My mother was pregnant when my father died. He had a heart attack. So my brother had to be boarded...there was nobody to take care of him during the wintertime. He would come home on the weekends and then go back.



Marion's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford

Interviewer: Where did your mother work?

Mrs. Eastmond: When we first moved down, she worked for Delco Battery in New Brunswick. She went to work in a carpool, and then she finally got a car and drove. She was a comptometer operator and a bookkeeper. And it was a long day for her. She would leave at six o'clock in the morning, and she would be lucky to come back at six o'clock at night for dinner. When we first moved to Union Beach, we lived in a converted garage. It had a stove that gave us the heat and the cooking. The side of the stove had oil burners, and I had to fill up a can and put it on the side of the stove so it would feed the fire. It was a kerosene stove.

Interviewer: How did you get the oil...was that your responsibility?

Mrs. Eastmond: They would come and fill the oil tank outside. But if we ran out, then I would take a five-gallon can and walk down to Leonard's. I would fill the can and then bring it back home. So that's how we would fill that.

Interviewer: How long was that walk?

Mrs. Eastmond: It wasn't too far, but the can was heavy coming home.

Mr. Eastmond: It would be easier going there.

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes. We had no indoor bathroom. We had a chemical toilet for the winter that had to be emptied into an outhouse. But we managed, you know.

Interviewer: It would seem as though you were cheerful through it. I perceive that in your personality.

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes, it was a wonderful place to grow up when you didn't have a lot. It was all there. I used to walk to the library, and I probably read every book in the library.

Interviewer: Did the bookmobile come to Union Beach?

Mrs. Eastmond: Not that I was aware of, no.

Interviewer: Where did you go to school?

Mrs. Eastmond: I went to St. Joseph's. I transferred from St. Steven's in Arlington, New Jersey, down to St. Joseph's when I came here.

Interviewer: When you ran out of books to read in the library, as avid readers do, was there any way you could ask the librarian to get you some other books?

Mrs. Eastmond: I didn't know of any. Maybe I wasn't aware of it. My grandfather was an avid reader, also. He belonged to the Book-of-the-Month Club, and he used to give me books when he was finished with them. I always read beyond my grade level and everything. I went to Keyport High School. They required tuition to go to a Catholic high school, and we were not able to do that. So I went to a public high school, and then I went to Glassboro State Teacher's College.



Marian and Ed Eastmond

Interviewer: And you became a teacher?

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you remember the Studebaker Place?

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes, in Keyport. It was across the street from the high school. In fact, Ed's father was a friend with Mr. Washington.

Interviewer: His name was Washington?

Mr. Eastmond: He was a very nice person.

Interviewer: He was there a long time in the community.

Mr. Eastmond: Yes, his name was Percy Washington. My father was good friends with him.

Mrs. Eastmond: He was at the house and everything, and he came to visit Ed's father in the hospital before he died. He always would come to the house and visit him.

Interviewer: Was there a large African American community in Union Beach or Keyport?

Mrs. Eastmond: No.

Mr. Eastmond: In Union Beach growing up, as I recall, I was told that they have "no Blacks allowed" in the deeds of the town. I don't know this for a fact, though.

Interviewer: That was not uncommon in Monmouth County.

Mr. Eastmond: No, but I had nothing to do with it. When we went to high school, we did have Black classmates. And we got along well with them.

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes.

Mr. Eastmond: We had a nice class in high school. We really did.

Interviewer: So there really wasn't an environment of racism?

Mrs. Eastmond: No, there weren't that many African Americans in each class, to be perfectly honest. I think in our graduating class, there were maybe two girls and three boys.

Interviewer: How large was your class?

Mrs. Eastmond: Over one hundred.

Interviewer: After you got out of Glassboro, what did you do?

Mrs. Eastmond: I taught my first year in Keyport, down in the Lockport section. It was a small, four-room school. It was pre-primary, and pre-primary went all day long. It was their first year of school, and they went full time. They had one and a half hours for lunch, though. So they walked home, and then they came back.

Interviewer: Was this day-long schedule controversial?

Mrs. Eastmond: No, everybody was in agreement with that, pretty much. I think everybody liked the fact that the children went to school. Toward the end of the year, my class had started to read. So because they had a full-time session,

there was more that could be done. It was wonderful...it was wonderful for me as a teacher, because you had that break in the afternoon. I could prepare art lessons and things like that for them, and they did so many things.

Interviewer: What was your average size class?

Mrs. Eastmond: My first day of school, they just kept coming and coming... (laughter) Many of the parents hadn't enrolled them. Now I was supposed to have a class of thirty-three, and I wound up with a class of fifty-two, my first day of teaching.

Interviewer: Did you have helpers?

Mrs. Eastmond: No.

Interviewer: These were five-year olds?

Mrs. Eastmond: These were five-year old children, and the nurse came for awhile in the morning and took down the names of those students who had not been previously enrolled. And then she left. And when I went out on the play yard with my students, I had them in a circle and we were playing farmer-in-the-dell and typical, classical games. Then two other teachers decided to have their children come out on the playground at the same time. I was young, and when these children saw a teacher out there with an organized game, they joined my children...and I lost three children.

Interviewer: Oh no!

Mrs. Eastmond: Three mothers came walking down the street with their children. But there was never a problem.

Interviewer: The children had gone home?

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes, they went home. (laughter)

Interviewer: This wasn't the lunch hour?

Mrs. Eastmond: No, they went home. Well, that really taught me a lesson about needing to kind of ask the other teachers not to put their children out there at the same time. The school, upon realizing that I had such a large class, started to find another teacher. But by the time they found another teacher, my children were all used to having me as their teacher. And it made it very difficult when some children had to go to another teacher. It was very hard. So they put two pre-primary classes in that school and moved the third grade up to the other school.

Interviewer: Did they have enough schools and enough schoolrooms to accommodate all these students of yours? Did you think they did?

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes, because when they divided the class, I think I wound up with twenty-eight students. This was like heaven after fifty-two! (laughter)

Interviewer: Were these all children from Keyport?

Mrs. Eastmond: Oh yes. They could walk home, and so they were all from the neighborhood. This was very nice. The mothers came and dropped their children off...they walked them to school and walked them back and forth. Mothers were not all working then, as they are today. They were home. It was unusual to have a working mother.

Interviewer: Did Keyport have a large Hispanic population when you began teaching? Or when did that immigration happen?

Mrs. Eastmond: No, I only had three black children in my first class. The rest were all white. And there were no Hispanic children.

Interviewer: Would you care to comment on procedures when you began teaching and as you continued, and as they are now?

Mrs. Eastmond: Well, let's see. At the time, I really loved teaching. I enjoyed teaching. It was never a job, it just was a joy. The children needed an education and the parents backed the teacher, and I never had a problem. I never experienced any problems with teaching until I went back, and I taught middle school, I think.

Interviewer: What year? And how long were you out of teaching?

Mrs. Eastmond: I taught up until I had my first child, which was four and a half years, and then I substituted. After that I had a son who had seizure disorder. So I worked weekends at the hospital. I worked at Bayshore Hospital as a unit secretary in the Emergency Room.

Interviewer: What year did you stop teaching?

Mrs. Eastmond: I taught from September 1959 until 1965, when he was born. When Edward was about two years old, we had a strike in Union Beach. It was a teacher's strike.

Interviewer: That was 1967?

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes.

Interviewer: Please continue commenting on the teachers' organizations and your impressions of the educational process then and later when you resumed teaching.

Mrs. Eastmond: I taught my first year in Keyport. Then I taught my second year in Union Beach. From then on, I taught in Union Beach. I had applied at Union Beach in the beginning, because I felt that it was my town. I felt I was a good teacher, and I wanted to teach my children in my own community. At the time that I started in Union Beach, we were on split-sessions. There was not enough room at Union Beach for the number of children that we had, so they were in the process of building the school. I had thirty-eight children on a split-session in first grade in Union Beach during my first year there. That was difficult, too, because you did not have the access to your classroom all of the time. You taught one session from eight in the morning until noon, and the next session ran from like twelve-thirty to four-thirty in the afternoon. We switched them halfway through the year so that one group would not in any way be discriminated against. I found it difficult because if I needed to work with any child who was having difficulty reading, there was no place in the school to go. What amounted to our school library was in the basement, and it would be used during the school time. I even sat on the stairways with some of my children, in order to try and help them with their reading. And this was fine with the parents. I did this with the children who were having difficulties in order to bring them up to grade level. But that was hard, because my first year I wound up with five reading levels by the end of the year. It was very hard in a classroom trying to get all this accomplished.

Interviewer: Could you tell us a little bit more about Bayshore Community Hospital?

Mrs. Eastmond: When I had my first child, I left the school and only substituted. I stayed home to raise my children. When I had my third, I didn't work full-time either, because even though he was in school, he had medical problems. I went to work at Bayshore Hospital around 1977.

Interviewer: Would you comment on the controversies that occasionally surrounded Bayshore's activities?

Mrs. Eastmond: In what way?

Interviewer: Some people said that the Hospital was not appropriately outfitted to do what it had to do with emergencies, and that the doctors were not adequately trained. There was a lot of that in the press at the time. I am looking for substantiation of that, but frankly, I can't find it.

Mrs. Eastmond: When I started to work at Bayshore on the weekends, there were times that we were, I would say, extremely busy. And there were other times when we would go periods of time with no patients, especially on a Sunday

morning. Now on a Sunday morning we had a doctor named Boudreau, who was affiliated with the Army, and he would work there. He would train staff, and he would give them extra training. What a wonderful doctor he was! And he included me in his training on Sunday mornings, if we were slow. Sunday morning usually amounted to some left over Saturday night activity. Then maybe at eleven o'clock in the morning, it would start picking up and we would get very busy.

Mr. Eastmond: The softball leagues broke their ankles.

Mrs. Eastmond: Or people got up and then decided they really didn't feel well, and they didn't think they would make it until Monday. So they thought they would go into the hospital. I think we had a very good staff. We had Dr. Scotti, who was in charge with the Emergency Room. He was excellent. He had quite a background. I would say sometimes, yes, we were short of staff. But I think it was hard to know how to staff a hospital that was starting off, also.

Interviewer: Let's talk about when you got back into teaching. Now you taught from 1959 to 1965. Can we talk about the Teacher's Union or lack of this?

Mrs. Eastmond: I wasn't really aware of a Teacher's Union. We had a teacher's organization or association, and it was a group for ourselves, really. We got together and raised money. I was involved in it, and we put on plays in Union Beach to raise money for different things. I became more aware of conflict in either 1967 or 1968, I am not sure. This is when Union Beach had a teacher's strike. I did a lot of substituting that year because many teachers were taking time off. I think that if they had accrued sick time, they were taking this time off. Teachers were angry...sometimes to the point where they involved the children, which was not right. They maybe would try to get the children on the side of the teaching staff. I am saying this as a precursor to what I did. I crossed the picket line. I had been in the classroom, and I had seen what was going on. They were upset because the contract of one of the teachers, and I guess he was the president of the teacher's association, was not being renewed. So this was one of the reasons that they were going out on strike. It is not my judgment as to whether his contract should have been renewed or not.

Interviewer: So this strike was regarding protecting one teacher, primarily?

Mrs. Eastmond: Yes. Or maybe the rest felt that this was an issue that they had to settle...that was the conflict between a board and the teacher's association.

Interviewer: When you went back to teaching in Red Bank, how did you find education then?

Mrs. Eastmond: Teaching changed. I went back as a basic skills teacher, part-time. I can't even remember what year that was. Maybe it was 1988.

Interviewer: What had changed?

Mrs. Eastmond: There was a big change. There was less respect for the teaching position, I think. Students were outspoken, and there was more disruption in the classroom. We never used to have that years ago. If you had a disruptive child, you could more or less speak to him or her quietly. And I found that was not the case in some instances then. It's hard for me to say. I figured that maybe it was me coming back into the profession, and that I had to make adjustments. As time went on, there was a barrier placed between the teacher and the student. There was no more hugging a student because they did a good job, and you couldn't put a hand on a student to console them or whatever. These things were frowned upon, and we were told not to touch the student because of the way it could be perceived. I think it really was a disservice to both of us, it really was. I had children who needed a hug that I could not give. And these were children who needed it more than any children that I had ever taught. They were children who came from backgrounds where some of them didn't even have their parents. I had one boy when I first started there who, when I put my arm around him, started to cry. And the teacher that I was in the classroom with said, "Mrs. Eastmond, I know it's time for you to leave, but please sit here and stay with him." And I found out later that this was the first breakthrough with the child because his mother had died of AIDS, and the children were not permitted to go see her before she died in the hospital. He had not been able to say goodbye, and they couldn't break through in counseling. And this was the first time...but you see, it was a human touch! And he was now in a family that had combined the children from this family and the children from another family together. They were doing the very best that they could, but there was not a lot of time to go around. And now you were cutting off that other avenue to reach the child, which was the teaching avenue, by the rules and regulations that were being set up.

Interviewer: Why did you join the Navy, Mr. Eastmond?

Mr. Eastmond: I joined in 1955, and I had these grandiose ideas that I could help change the world by serving Uncle Sam. WWII was very vivid in my mind, and then Korea broke out in 1951. I was in the eighth grade and I had always wanted to be a sailor, so I decided I was going to join the Navy. When I turned eighteen, I enlisted.

Interviewer: Do you recall any influences that made you want to become a sailor? Your family maybe?

Mr. Eastmond: My uncle served in the Navy during WWII. So maybe I thought I'd get to travel and get to see the world. I did join also so I could get an education in the field of my enslavement later! (laughter)

Interviewer: What was your enslavement?

Mr. Eastmond: The electrical field. I was an electrician in the Navy, and then I went on to work for Jersey Central Power and Light Company, which is now GPU Energy. I retired as an Electrical Test Department Supervisor, working out of Wall Township.

Interviewer: You must have had a lot of business with all the houses going up?

Mr. Eastmond: The Power and Light Company did, but it didn't affect me as much. We were in the process of building and testing equipment going to substations. That's where you would take the high voltage, bring it into a substation, and step it down for usable power.

Interviewer: I can't resist asking you to comment on the services provided by Jersey Central Power and Light and GPU. There has been so much in the papers about GPU lately.

Mr. Eastmond: They can't get me now! Lord strike me dead, but we never lost power at my house with JCPL. Then I retired, and in less than a year we had three outages. It had nothing to do with me, but it had to do with the equipment getting older. Also, people were buying bigger air conditioners, and the transformer outside of our house said goodbye. So in the process of saying goodbye, it took us out of power three times.

Interviewer: Where do you live now?

Mr. Eastmond: The same place since I have been married, 206 West Street in Union Beach.

Interviewer: You still live in Union Beach?

Mr. Eastmond: Yes.

Interviewer: What year did you retire?

Mr. Eastmond: August 1, 1993.

Interviewer: Did you suggest to anyone about the future of these transformers...about what problems might occur?

Mr. Eastmond: When I was working there, the company had a planning department. It was well staffed by people who knew what was going on. They knew the demands for energy were going up all the time. They did plan as best they could for the future. Every year we would have a budget to replace certain transformers, not just the pole-type transformers, but also the substation transformers, which are bigger than this room. They would replace them with bigger, better, and more efficient ones. After awhile they had to cut back on the

manpower. And as they did that, they would buy out people like myself and my brother. They just seemed to cut out the expertise that we had built up over the years. They just sliced it right off the top and got rid of it. Not that the younger people under us weren't qualified to take over, but they didn't have the field experience yet to fully take over. But they just said we were cut out, that was it, and we were gone. And the next guy was put in place to either swim or sink. In a way, and I'm not sure, but the outages that they had last year may have been part of some of that...you know, getting rid of all those people.

Mrs. Eastmond: Too many at one time.

Mr. Eastmond: Yes, too many at once. If you were fifty-five by a certain date, you were gone! They wouldn't guarantee your salary or your position.

Mrs. Eastmond: So you might as well retire. People who didn't really want to retire were not sure if they would have a job, or if they would have the job they were working in at that time. So most people took the retirement.

Interviewer: Were there any training sessions for the younger people who were going to take your jobs?

Mr. Eastmond: They decided that the engineering department they had in Morristown would be eliminated and transferred to Reading, Pennsylvania. That is quite a distance, and it's hard when it's in a different state. Theoretically, it is not that the engineering couldn't be done by another company, but you wouldn't have the pulse of what was going on, that personal touch. I think that they could have maybe kept a skeleton crew of more experienced people, and gradually allowed them to go. But they didn't, they cut them all.

Mrs. Eastmond: There were more people coming in with book learning and degrees, but they didn't have the field experience. You really need a balance.

Interviewer: Before we leave the Navy, where did you serve?

Mr. Eastmond: I was on a destroyer. I went to boot camp in Bainbridge, Maryland and went to school in Great Lakes, Illinois and learned electricity. Then I went aboard ship in Newport, Rhode Island, and then I was on a commissioning crew for a brand new ship out of Weston at that time. Then I was transferred to Mayport, Florida in 1958, and then I got out in 1959.

Interviewer: You were eligible for a lot of benefits, I hope?

Mr. Eastmond: No benefits.

Interviewer: How many ships did you serve on?

Mr. Eastmond: Two.

Interviewer: What were their names?

Mr. Eastmond: *Jonas Ingram*, which was a 938, and the *Harverson*, which is a 316. The Harverson was a DER, Destroyer Escort Radar, and its primary duty was to go up to 300 miles south of the Arctic Circle and go around in a circle. You would do that for thirty days, and then it would bring itself right back again to Newport, Rhode Island. Wonderful duty! The portholes looked like washing machines.

Interviewer: Tell us about Union Beach today.

Mrs. Eastmond: It is beautiful now.

Mr. Eastmond: The State had a lot to do with funding the rebuilding. Town money was used to rebuild and bulkhead the waterfront along Union and Front Streets. They put in a nice, beautiful park and a nice, sloping beach. The sand goes right down into the water. Mayor Stoppiello had a great deal to do with applying for grants and matching funds.

Interviewer: The best kept secret in Monmouth County.

Mrs. Eastmond: Just about, but I think it's becoming better known because I came around there on the weekend, and you couldn't park any place. It's wonderful. There are umbrellas all out on the beach again now. I remember that when I first moved here we had a hurricane. The merry-go-round and stands at the beach were destroyed. And we never had them again after that. But that's where people would spend their time, and that's where they would take their children. You could go down to the beach and sit on the beach in the afternoon, and women would chat with other women and the children would play. The water wasn't real deep, and it was clean. On Pebble Beach you could see to the bottom of the water. It was really beautiful.

Interviewer: But now it has been restored somewhat?

Mrs. Eastmond: Oh yes. There were some older buildings that have been taken away. They had been damaged in more recent hurricanes. They had tried to have a restaurant or something. Jakeabob's Restaurant was previously the Sand Bar. Now they have a Fireman's Park that is down a little bit further. There is a continuation of a walk that goes along the beach and goes down to where the path is that goes over the old railroad tracks that kind of goes around through the beach and everything. The town itself, the houses, and everything, are being refurbished, and property values have been going up. Our oldest son lives two blocks away from us. As far as he is concerned, that is where he wants to live. The children go to the Union Beach School system, and they do very well in

school. I am very pleased with the system and the reading ability and everything of my grandsons. Our other son, Paul, is home, and is looking for a home in Union Beach also. So I might wind up with the children close by. Ed's father was a volunteer fireman.

Mr. Eastmond: He was a volunteer fireman during the War years. He was the Fire Chief in 1943 in Union Beach. He did not serve in the Army or any military branch. At that time he was working building lifeboats for the Coast Guard and the Navy, working at Galbraith's.

Interviewer: Hammering the keels.

Mr. Eastmond: Yes; at that time the boats did not have a motor. They were all hand-powered lifeboats. After they built a boat, the Coast Guard would come in and tell them which boat they wanted. They told the workers to put it in the water, and they would test it. You would have to take that boat, take it out to the Bay, put it in the water and launch it, and then either two or four men would get on it with the rowing mechanism or the power mechanism that would drive the propeller to move the boat. And they had to get it to move at a certain



Ed Eastmond, Sr. served the Boro of Union Beach as Fire Chief in 1943

rate of speed. But that's why my father didn't serve in the military, he was already in a government-type job, and needed at it. He was Fire Chief in 1943, and thirty years later to the day, I became Fire Chief in the same Fire Company. Of course the manpower at the time my father was Fire Chief was maybe twenty-five, because everybody else was in the service. But when I was Fire Chief, we had about 130 firemen, all volunteers. When he was Chief, there were maybe four fire trucks in town, and he couldn't get gas for them. But he had the trucks. When I was Chief, we had seven fire trucks. It was a nice experience.

Interviewer: I would guess your son is going to be a Fire Chief some day?

Mrs. Eastmond: No. Times have changed. Now with him working and everything. He doesn't have a steady eight-hour day. Today a lot of young people are working many more hours per day, and I don't think that leaves them time to do some of the volunteer work that maybe their parents did.

Mr. Eastmond: I used to go to work at eight o'clock in the morning and be home generally every day around five o'clock. My son goes to work now at seven in the morning and doesn't get home sometimes until seven or eight at night. My youngest son, Paul, drives a semi. And you don't know when he is going to be around or where he is driving.

Interviewer: I want to talk to Mrs. Eastmond a little more about the transformation in the environment between the teachers and students from 1965 and to 1988. Do you have any comments about that?

Mrs. Eastmond: The children have a lot of anger, and children don't know how to handle anger. We've tried, and we've tried very hard. We brought different programs into the school system to diffuse children who we know are having problems and everything like that. But I think that so much has changed...there have been so many restrictions put on teachers as to what they can say, and what they can do, and so on and so forth. I don't know if that was such a good move. I could have children come and confide in me before. But when you put that barrier that you are not supposed to cross over in either direction, I think it makes it harder. I have had children come to me and tell me they are pregnant, and they want to talk about things. There are children who maybe aren't being fed at home, and they have come and spoken to me. But they really don't want teachers to handle those things now. It is supposed to go through the nurse.

Interviewer: You have been very gracious in sharing your memories with us. If you were to have this archive read years from now, what would you like to say to the people in the next century? What would you like them to know about Monmouth County in the twentieth century? And is there any advice you would give to them?

Mrs. Eastmond: I hope that as time goes on, maybe people can get back to working a job that is an eight-hour day so that they have more time to spend with their families. Then maybe we won't have to rely on a lot of outside services to provide what the family should. I hope that Union Beach continues to be the type of town that it is today, where you have families and extended families in the same town. I think it's wonderful because my grandsons can come over after school, and if they need homework help or anything else, they are only two blocks away from me. And I know of other families in the Beach that are the same, whose children and grandchildren are still in the same town. We have always helped one another. And I hope that continues. I'd like to see somehow that the town could find maybe more broad-based tax, so that small communities, which don't have industry or whatever, are not burdened with the full load of the tax system for the town. What would you like to add, Ed?

Mr. Eastmond: Thinking back on what I did growing up, joining the Fire Department when I was sixteen and staying in it for close to thirty years, I would like to see the State and County not get so involved in those departments. I think they should be left volunteer departments and not paid workers. Volunteers have always been good people, and you can't get a more dedicated staff than a volunteer because they want to be there. The tax burden in each town now, and I don't care what town you talk about, is too high. In another hundred years, God bless them, I don't know what they'll do. I hope there is a better way. But

volunteers are a good way of maintaining fire, first aid, emergency medical services, etc.

Mrs. Eastmond: And community.

Mr. Eastmond: And community help.

Mrs. Eastmond: Because that pulls the community together. It's your uncle that's on this thing, and it's your neighbor that's on that thing. They look out for the people that they are out to help. It's not somebody who is hired, comes in, and then goes home at the end of the day. I know when Ed would be out in the middle of the night for a fire or whatever, newspapers would be calling me for information and everything else. So when he was out at a fire, the household was pretty much awake because of what was going on. These people always safeguarded everybody. Now you are not allowed to burn leaves and weeds with pollution and all, but every year they used to burn back the weeds so that you wouldn't have a surprise fire maybe during the day, when many of the men were working. And they would safeguard all the houses that were anywhere near the edge of those marshes. Things change, you know, in the name of progress.

Interviewer: What changes in Monmouth County have you seen that you really like?

Mrs. Eastmond: For one thing, the library system. I would have to say absolutely that. Even from the time that my children were maybe four or five we used to go down to Shrewsbury and go to the children's library there. They loved it, and that was their introduction to a big, main library. Everybody is so helpful, and then if I want a book or anything, I just have to ask. If they don't have it, they get it from a branch. So being networked the way they are today is wonderful. And now with the system being on computer, we can go in and access things that way.

Interviewer: I cannot think of a happier note on which to conclude this interview, unless you have something you would like to add?

Mrs. Eastmond: I don't know, I didn't expect to do this today.

Interviewer: Could you just tell us about this bag and about the school blockwatch?

Mr. Eastmond: Well it was very good for the family. My mother made up a grocery bag out of canvas. My father sewed it at Galbraith's. He took it to the sail shop, and sewed this big, canvas bag together. Every morning my mother would give this to one of us children, on our way to school, and tell us to drop it off at Devon's Grocery Store. And in that bag would be a list of groceries we needed. So we would drop the bag off. On the way home, one of us was designated to go and pick the bag up from the grocery store and carry it home. At that time we

were living on Park Avenue, and it's almost a half-mile from Devon's store to Park Avenue. You would carry this big bag, struggling home with the groceries for the day.

Interviewer: And was coal in there, too?

Mr. Eastmond: No. When we were living on Edmonds Avenue during the War, we only had one stove for heat. Of course you had to have a coupon for kerosene. Devon's had the kerosene distribution center. You would give her the coupon, pay for the kerosene, and they would pump out a gallon into the can you held up, and then you had to carry that home.

Interviewer: During the War, how did you handle the blackouts?

Mrs. Eastmond: Sometimes we went to sleep. (laughter) During that time I was in Arlington, New Jersey. The warden would come around and make sure everybody's shades were down and the lights were out. He would come around and check everything. We used to sit in the dark and talk if it was early enough. I remember the adults sitting around and everything. The raids came by surprise, of course, lots of times. So you might be visiting someone, and you couldn't leave then until the "all clear" sound was heard. So we children many times would fall asleep by the time the "all clear" happened. I can remember the adults would sit around, talk, or sometimes they would sing. We had a family that liked music. We would get together and our entertainment was one person playing the piano, somebody else playing another instrument, etc. That was on my grandmother's side. They always had a wonderful time, and she came from a family with thirteen children.

Mr. Eastmond: During blackouts we might be in the living room listening to radio programs. You would have your shades drawn, and we'd all sit there in the dark and listen to *The Inner Sanctum* and *The Green Hornet* and all those old shows. Then you'd hear the "all clear."

Interviewer: Thank you again, Mr. and Mrs. Eastmond.