



Interview with Erickson-Hurlbert-Walling

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

Date of Interview: July 27, 2000

Name of Interviewer: Douglas Aumack

**Premises of Interview: Monmouth County Library, Headquarters,
Manalapan, NJ**

Birthdate of Subject: Teresa Erickson - September 23, 1910

Betty Erickson Hurlbert - September 15, 1929

Elizabeth Erickson Walling - August 5, 1931

Mr. Aumack: Teresa, what year did you come to Monmouth County, and why did you come here?

Mrs. Erickson: 1934.

Mr. Aumack: And what town did you settle in?

Mrs. Erickson: Keyport.

Mr. Aumack: Why did you come to Keyport in 1934?

Mrs. Erickson: Because my husband liked the water, and he was a fisherman.

Mr. Aumack: Where did you move from?

Mrs. Erickson: Lawrence Harbor.

Mr. Aumack: Was he always a commercial fisherman?

Mrs. Erickson: No, he was in the Navy for six years; he was a painter and a welder, by trade.

Mr. Aumack: What did he fish for?

Mrs. Erickson: Everything...lobsters, clams, bait, and all kinds of fish.

Mr. Aumack: Was that a lucrative business back then?

Mrs. Erickson: No.

Mr. Aumack: Describe Keyport in 1934.

Mrs. Erickson: It was just like a fisherman's village. It was just a beautiful, beautiful town. There are no words, really, to describe it.

Mr. Aumack: So when you say a fisherman's village, was the main job for everyone fishing?

Mrs. Erickson: Clamming or oystering. There was an oyster house in Keyport, where they sorted oysters by sizes.

Mr. Aumack: Did he make a lot of money as a fisherman?

Mrs. Erickson: Well, just about enough to get along. It was a poor man's job. (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: It was a poor man's job?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes. All work and no pay.

Mr. Aumack: Did he have to pay for his own boat and everything?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes.



Ed Erickson on his boat with bunker, April 1949

Mr. Aumack: Wow. Was he ever discouraged and want to quit the fishing business, or did he love it?

Mrs. Erickson: No, he just loved the water.

Mr. Aumack: So it really was a labor of love.

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, it was. I can remember when the children and I would go and get bait. We would get horseshoe crabs. This one time we were in Cliffwood; my two daughters were very tiny then, and all of a sudden we saw Elizabeth going out toward the water. We went to get her. She thought she had sat on a rock, but she had sat on one of the horseshoe crabs. And it was taking her right out into the water!

Mr. Aumack: Oh no. How old was Elizabeth then?

Mrs. Erickson: About three years old. But that's how big those horseshoe crabs were. Have you ever seen a horseshoe crab?

Mr. Aumack: I have seen them but...

Mrs. Erickson: Well, some of them are immense! And he used to get them for bait.

Mr. Aumack: How long, like a foot long or wide?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, they were that wide! (she obviously is showing him with her hands) Some of them were really big. Well you can imagine how big a child of three is, and she was sitting on it and going out toward the water. And you know, it was so unusual seeing her not minding me because I wanted her to be away from the water. But there she was, and we had to go grab her.

Mr. Aumack: And the crab was moving at a fast pace?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, to go to the water. You see it was high tide when they came in, and in low water they were going out to the bay again. (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: Besides his painting and welding, what did he do in his spare time, if you ever had time?

Mrs. Erickson: There was no fun. Years ago you never thought of fun. There was never a television or anything like that; you just worked and worked and worked.

Mr. Aumack: Did you have a job?

Mrs. Erickson: Never.

Mr. Aumack: What did you do?

Mrs. Erickson: I took care of my house and my children. They never came home without me being there to open the door for them.

Mr. Aumack: Now you lived in one of the oldest houses in Keyport?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, I don't know how old that house is, but it is still standing.

Mr. Aumack: When you got the house in 1934 did it have any modern features?

Mrs. Erickson: No.

Mr. Aumack: Tell me about the lifestyle, like washing clothes and cooking, etc.

Mrs. Erickson: I enjoyed every day. And you know there is a true saying, "What you don't have, you don't miss." And I loved every day of my life, and I still do enjoy life.

Mr. Aumack: That's good. In 1934 you didn't have electric washing machines, right?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, no.

Mr. Aumack: How did you wash your clothes?

Mrs. Erickson: With a scrubbing board.

Mr. Aumack: With a washboard?

Mrs. Erickson: With a washboard, and I still have it. (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: What kind of stove did you cook on?

Mrs. Erickson: An old-fashioned cook stove, a range. And we burned wood most of the time.

Mr. Aumack: So you got the heat from burning wood?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes. And we had one stove, and that was in the kitchen.

Mr. Aumack: For four people...you, your two children, and your husband?

Mrs. Erickson: Right. And later on we got an oil burner for the living room.

Mr. Aumack: When did you get the oil burner for the living room?

Mrs. Erickson: About maybe 1936.

Mr. Aumack: Did that cost a lot of money?

Mrs. Erickson: It did then, I tell you. Everything did.

Mr. Aumack: Was that a luxury?

Mrs. Erickson: That was a lot of money years ago.

Mr. Aumack: Did a lot of other people have oil stoves in their living room?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes. You used to have an oil stove that you could carry around by hand.

Mr. Aumack: A little oil stove?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, it used to be about that high. And it would have a handle on it so you could carry it from room to room. On the top there would be a vent, where you could let the heat come out more. And we used to open it so we could see shadows on the ceiling.

Mr. Aumack: What did you do when you weren't washing and cooking?

Mrs. Erickson: Sewing. I made all the children's clothes.

Mr. Aumack: You made all their clothes? Did you use a machine?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: What kind of machine was it, a Singer or what kind?

Mrs. Erickson: Well, the first one I got was by Strawbridge & Clothier; and it came from Philadelphia. It was a treadle.

Mr. Aumack: So you had to operate it with a pedal?

Mrs. Erickson: With my foot, yes, with a pedal.

Mr. Aumack: I'm sure that gave you a lot of exercise!

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, I loved it. Oh, I made everything for them. I made coats, hats, and little bathrobes. And I would be finishing things like that on Christmas Eve; I wanted to get them all done for Christmas.

Mr. Aumack: So, if you wanted to make a winter coat, what would you make it out of?

Mrs. Erickson: Anything I got. Many times I took an old coat, tore it apart, washed it, pressed it, and made it on the wrong side. And it was just like brand new when I finished.

Mr. Aumack: Did you make any blankets or anything like that?

Mrs. Erickson: No.

Mr. Aumack: Did sewing save you any money?

Mrs. Erickson: I didn't have any money to spend! (laughter) And I have seen the time when I did not have buttons to match the children's clothes. I would crochet the buttons so they would be a matching color.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, that's nice.

Mrs. Erickson: So we never went without, even though we had very little money. There was always something there you could work with.

Mr. Aumack: What happened when the Depression hit? When you moved here in 1934, did it really affect your husband's jobs in terms of fishing, painting, and welding?

Mrs. Erickson: Well, the painting and welding were years before when we first got married. But from 1934 until he passed on, or before he gave up fishing, he always fished. Everything was water.

Mr. Aumack: So it was a pretty steady job, even through the Depression?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, you could always fish. And you always had something to eat, because there were fish.

Mr. Aumack: Where did he sell his fish?

Mrs. Erickson: New York, Fulton Market. He sent it there.

Mr. Aumack: Fulton Market on South Street, Seaport. Wow, interesting! Do you remember when radio came about?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, yes, I do. It was such a thrill because we lived in the country. I can remember we used to go shopping once a week, and this was when I was a kid. We used to have a battery, and then we would get that battery charged once a week. And we thought we were like millionaires since we had a radio!

Mr. Aumack: Was that a luxury as well?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, yes.

Mr. Aumack: Talk about the lamps. When did you get electricity in your house, what year?

Mrs. Erickson: It was there, but I didn't use it.

Mr. Aumack: Why didn't you use it?

Mrs. Erickson: I was afraid I wouldn't be able to pay the bill! (laughter) So I always got kerosene, and that's what I used. And then the first time we had running water and electricity was when we moved in 1942, where I am today.

Mr. Aumack: And that was still in Keyport.

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, that was still in Keyport, and one block away. We moved with a wheelbarrow and an express wagon. And it was during a blackout. Of course you probably don't remember the blackouts during the war. You always had to have your shades down and you were always supposed to be inside. Many a time we were coming down the street, and the siren would blow.

Mr. Aumack: Which siren?

Mrs. Erickson: The siren in Keyport. And that meant there was going to be a blackout. And we had to leave everything where it was and go into the house.

Mr. Aumack: Now why would you have to blackout your house?

Mrs. Erickson: During the war!

Mr. Aumack: World War II?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, World War II.

Mr. Aumack: Now a siren would go off...

Mrs. Erickson: It would alert everyone in town.

Mr. Aumack: And everyone could hear this siren?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, yes.

Mr. Aumack: And how did they black in their windows?

Mrs. Erickson: You had shades.

Mr. Aumack: Now where did you get this black material; did you paint your shades black?

Mrs. Erickson: No, we just pulled the shades down. Oh, we didn't have any light! We had no light.

Mr. Aumack: So you had to sit in this house. Could you light your lamps?

Mrs. Erickson: No, everything was supposed to be dark.

Mr. Aumack: Really! Did you do this to protect yourself in some way?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, yes, everybody did.

Mr. Aumack: Was this to protect yourself from the Germans?

Mrs. Erickson: I imagine it was so; if any airplanes went over, they couldn't see us since we didn't have any light.

Mr. Aumack: Were you scared?

Mrs. Erickson: No.

Mr. Aumack: You weren't scared at all?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, no. You took life as it came.

Mr. Aumack: Your husband was too old to be involved in World War II?

Mrs. Erickson: Well, he had been in the service for six years.

Mr. Aumack: That was before 1934, ok. So he didn't have to serve, and he was still a fisherman.

Mrs. Erickson: Right.

Mr. Aumack: When did he stop being a fisherman?

Mrs. Erickson: He was ninety when he passed on, and he quit about twenty years before he passed on.

Mr. Aumack: So he was a fisherman from 1934 to about what year? Do you know?

Mrs. Erickson: There was a lot of pollution then so it kind of knocked it off. It was in the late 1940s that pollution began to really involve the business he was in. But people didn't want to hear about pollution in those days. He still was a fisherman then, but it began to disintegrate around that time. After he gave up fishing, he worked at the marina. There are several marinas in Keyport, and he worked at one of them.

Mr. Aumack: What did he do at the marina?

Mrs. Erickson: He would tie up boats and so forth. And he also worked in Perth Amboy where he would take tugboats out to the big boats and bring in people from those big boats.

Mr. Aumack: And he would drive or pilot the tugboats?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, he would pilot them. He also did this in New York, too.

Mr. Aumack: Where in New York?

Mrs. Erickson: I don't know what street, but he would do the same thing. He worked on a tugboat.

Mr. Aumack: How did he get to New York?

Mrs. Erickson: By bus.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, by bus, ok.

Mrs. Erickson: You would go so far by bus, and then you would go so far by train.

Mr. Aumack: What was the bus company? Do you remember?

Mrs. Erickson: Well, it was a Marathon Bus from Keyport to South Amboy. From South Amboy you could get a train to take you to New York.

Mr. Aumack: What train was it? Do you remember?

Mrs. Erickson: I imagine the Pennsylvania.

Mr. Aumack: The Pennsylvania Railroad?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes. And that's who he worked for with the tugboats, too. They had tugboats, the company that ran the railroad.

Mr. Aumack: How has Keyport changed?

Mrs. Erickson: It has changed so much.

Mr. Aumack: Can you tell me a few things?

Mrs. Erickson: Well, they have torn down a lot of the old homes.

Mr. Aumack: Which historical homes?

Mrs. Erickson: Those on Beers Street, all those old homes. They tore down old ones, and they put up more modern ones, you know. Well, Keyport changed so much you could hardly describe it unless you had the pictures right in front of you.

Mr. Aumack: When you entered Keyport, do you know how many people were in the town?

Mrs. Erickson: No. You know, I was never interested. All I was interested in was my family. That's all that I cared for. And you know, I am still that way today. I wouldn't care if I never went out of my yard. Of course, you have to go out; but it wouldn't worry me if I had to stay right here. And I know I'll be here the rest of my life! But I just love my home.

Mr. Aumack: So, can you tell us anything else about how Keyport has changed? Maybe one story, how about the grocery stores?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, I used to go with a little cart to the grocery store.

Mr. Aumack: What kind of cart was it?

Mrs. Erickson: A cart, because I never drove. It was a two-wheeled cart.

Mr. Aumack: Was it metal?

Mrs. Erickson: Yes, it was metal. I used to go downtown maybe once a week, and I would get all my groceries in this little cart. And I would come back home with it. I can remember one time, in the winter, it wasn't too bad yet when I went downtown. But when I came back, the sidewalk had frozen. A lot of the people would take one step forward, and then they would slide back. And I had my cart. I was coming down near the Ye Cottage Inn, one of our famous restaurants. As I was coming down the road, I saw my husband coming to meet me because the weather had changed so. And he said, "How are you doing?" And I said, "Oh, I'm doing fine. The cart kept me up!"

Mr. Aumack: What is the name of that restaurant again?

Mrs. Erickson: Ye Cottage Inn. And that's still a very famous restaurant in Keyport.

Mr. Aumack: How much did groceries cost? What did you buy?

Mrs. Erickson: I always bought staple things. Everything was so cheap then. And when you look back and then see what you are paying for things today, it is amazing. I won't even buy a lot of things now because I remember what they used to cost! (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: Let's say instant oatmeal, which costs around two dollars and thirty-nine cents in some places...

Mrs. Erickson: Well, years ago I can remember buying bread for five cents a loaf. I always loved mincemeat, and I would always get that to make mincemeat pie. It used to be about forty-five cents a box. It came in a box, and you added water, sugar, and things like that to it. Now I forget what it costs, but I won't even buy it. I'll make apple pie and put raisins in it. (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: Do you have any advice that you want to give to the younger generation?

Mrs. Erickson: Just be grateful for what you have every day.

Mr. Aumack: Why should we be grateful?

Mrs. Erickson: We are alive! And be happy, too. Be grateful for what you have, even if it's only a little, because it's something.

Mr. Aumack: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Erickson: You're welcome.

Mr. Aumack: Now I am ready to move on to Betty Hurlbert. Betty, when were you born?

Mrs. Hurlbert: 1929, the year of the Depression.

Mr. Aumack: Now, how is it that you came to Monmouth County?

Mrs. Hurlbert: My parents moved to Keyport in 1934.

Mr. Aumack: Now describe living in Keyport as a young girl. What did you do?

Mrs. Hurlbert: I began school in 1934, and I wasn't quite five years old then. I just made the entrance date. The school was a two-room schoolhouse. It was the West Keyport School on Washington Street, which has since burned down. It is no longer in existence. Our teacher was Miss Elsie Marshall, and she taught three grades in one room. And, when I began first grade, there were only eight of us. And there were no Black children.



**West Keyport
Schoolhouse, 1954**



**Betty Jane Hurlbert,
1952**



**Miss Marshall, first
grade teacher**

Mr. Aumack: Why not?

Mrs. Hurlbert: There were no Black families in the neighborhood.

Mr. Aumack: Were they allowed in the neighborhood?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Surely. But I didn't know any Black people growing up because there weren't any in our neighborhood. My sister was in first grade when I was in third grade. And I still marvel today at the teacher being able to teach the three grades in one room. But it had no effect on our education because, when we went to the grammar school at fourth grade, we were able to keep up with the other students.



**First, second, and third grade
classes in Keyport, 1934**

Mr. Aumack: When you were in second grade, how many students were there in each class?

Mrs. Hurlbert: That I don't remember. Well, it wouldn't have changed much; and there were eight in our first grade class. There wasn't that much influx in the neighborhood so the number remained approximately the same.

Mr. Aumack: So it would be about eight people all through to the point where you got into the fourth grade.

Mrs. Hurlbert: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: When you got to fourth grade, were these all Keyport students?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Now what school was that?

Mrs. Hurlbert: That was the Keyport Grammar School, which is also no longer there. To this day, I remember my first grade teacher. She always wore navy or black shirtwaist dresses with a white collar. Her hair was snow white and worn in an upsweep, and she wore black oxford shoes and black stockings. Even when I graduated from high school and went back to visit her, she still looked the same! (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: Describe growing up without all the modern conveniences. What was it like before electricity came, was it easy? Tell us about that.

Mrs. Hurlbert: That I don't remember as much. I do remember my mother heating the water for our baths, and so forth. She would heat it in a large tub on the wood stove. And not having inside plumbing, we had to use the tub for our baths. We had an outhouse when we first moved to Keyport, also.

Mr. Aumack: And this was in 1934. Please go on.

Mrs. Hurlbert: Of course, growing up in those years, I didn't like the outhouse because it was an inconvenience going outside. So I remember that very vividly. And I also remember not having central heating. It was very cold going upstairs at night into bed. Mother sometimes would put a hot water bottle or heated bricks in the bed so the sheets would be warmer. I remember, too, the neighborhood. It was a very safe neighborhood. Also, we had no playground equipment at the school. We used jump ropes. The back of the school had beach plums. We would pick those in the spring, and we would pick the wild strawberries. We would just run around in the school yard. We had no organized activities at all.

Mr. Aumack: What other things did you do as a child to pass the time? Can you think of anything else?



Betty Hurlbert

Mrs. Hurlbert: Because my sister and I were only two years apart, we always played together. The children in the neighborhood would come in the summer evenings and play ball in the street, and they allowed the little ones to be the outfielders and catch the balls and throw them in. And the boys that were there, they later went into the service. Some did not come back, unfortunately. But there was no organized recreation for the children. There were no tennis courts to learn tennis. Children did go ice skating in the winter. Because my father was a fisherman, we enjoyed going along with him sometimes. He would row. He didn't always have a motor in the boats until he had bigger ones. It was quiet and peaceful, and you could see the fish

swimming in the water and the birds in the meadows. That part I remember, and I just loved it. My sister and I also had our own rowboat so we learned to row early. In 1942 when we moved to Washington Street we had our own dock on the Matawan Creek. So we had the rowboat, and we could row back and forth. And that I enjoyed doing so much! We could go crabbing in the summer time, and we could catch baby blue fish from the dock. So those activities around the water I remember most fondly.

Mr. Aumack: Now discuss seeing what happened to the town in World War II. You mentioned several friends of yours that died during World War II. What did World War II do to the town?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Well, so many of the young men left for service. For instance, when I graduated from Keyport High School in 1946, eleven of that graduating class were going into service.

Mr. Aumack: How big was the class, do you remember?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Seventy-five students.

Mr. Aumack: So eleven went into the service?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Eleven of our class went into service. And in our neighborhood, too. The police chief lived across the street from us on Broadway; his son never returned. Our next-door neighbor, Johnny Johnson, never returned. We children had been learning in geography classes about foreign places; suddenly people that you knew were in Italy and Africa and sending pictures home of the Sphinx in Egypt and so forth. So the world became much closer to you although the war itself actually seemed far away. And my father was an air raid warden. During the blackouts he would check the neighborhood to make sure all the lights were out at that time. And then, of course, there was the thrill of hearing the war was over; many young men did come home. I would also like to mention that I came across a receipt for my eighth grade graduation dress recently. At that time girls took

home economics in the seventh and eighth grades. In the seventh grade you learned to make an apron and cocoa. In the eighth grade, everyone was required to make her graduation dress. My mother had done all the sewing in our family; until this day, I have never learned to sew very well. So, making the graduation dress was somewhat of a struggle! But, you will be interested in the cost. The teacher bought 112 yards of material at seventy-nine cents a yard. And to be economical she bought fabric with some marks on it. She was allowed a twenty percent discount for that. Her name was Mrs. Ward; I am sure she thought we could work around those marks, and they would never show. And this was in June of 1942 when I graduated. So each girl was charged two dollars and twenty-nine cents for the material. There was one and seven-eighth yards of lace at twenty cents, and that amounted to thirty-seven cents. One spool of thread was five cents, and one pattern was fifteen cents. This was a total of two dollars and eighty-six cents for each girl.

Mr. Aumack: That is what you had to pay?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Yes, two dollars and eighty-six cents for the materials for the eighth grade dress. Each girl looked the same; we wore a flower corsage, which was provided by the school, if I remember correctly. And the ribbon on the corsage was red, white, and blue.

Mr. Aumack: Was it a problem to ask for that money, or did you have enough?

Mrs. Hurlbert: At that time we had enough money for the two dollars and eighty-six cents.

Mr. Aumack: Talk to us about the Keyport School system.

Mrs. Hurlbert: Today, they are criticized for their scores.

Mr. Aumack: What do you mean by "scores"?

Mrs. Hurlbert: The state ratings or rankings. I found the teachers to be wonderful. And I was very fortunate that I was able to be an honors student with the teachers' encouragement through the years. I recall, especially, a teacher named Miss Janet Stark. She is still alive today, and her name is Janet Collins now. When she learned I was not going to be able to go to college for financial reasons, she asked if there was something she could do to help. But at the time I said I didn't think there was anything she could do. A short time thereafter on the bulletin board of the high school was a notice from the Packard School of Business. It said they were offering scholarships. Now at that time there were no guidance counselors in the school system. So the students didn't really learn what was available to them. In our graduating class only eleven went on to higher education at that time. And girls didn't go to college that much then. I asked Mrs. Collins if she thought I should apply, and she said, "Of course." I had an aunt

who said she would take me into New York City. So I took the exam. There were 180 people who took it, and there were only eight scholarships given out. And I ranked fourth when the results came. The teacher was so excited! Years later, she commented in a newspaper article that so many students didn't know what was available to them. So thank goodness today they have the guidance counselors to help them. I became a secretary in the beginning of my career.

Mr. Aumack: Where was your first job as secretary?

Mrs. Hurlbert: It was in Freehold Borough. I should add that my cousin worked in Freehold at the Lawyers Title Company, and she got me a summer job there. Those were the days before photocopiers and dictaphone machines. I had taken shorthand and typing in high school, and I would recommend taking these to everyone. In those days when they did title searches, they copied in shorthand from the books at the Courthouse. That building is now the Hall of Records. We copied the deeds and wills, if they affected the property, in shorthand. Then we went back to the office, typed on manual typewriters from the notes, and then proofread them with someone. And it was wonderful, because you really could go whenever you wanted to in the Courthouse. When you got tired of typing, you would go back and do more in shorthand. Because the office had no air conditioning, we were allowed to go to the drugstore on Court Street and have a coke or sundae; the supervisor didn't mind if we took time off because it was very hot. And it was wonderful that from Keyport we had bus transportation. That was the Rollo Company. So I didn't need a car, and I didn't have one until 1953 because we had bus transportation.

Mr. Aumack: Did your family ever have a car?

Mrs. Hurlbert: My father drove and had his license, but we never owned a car. We always had a boat. There was bus transportation to Perth Amboy, where the department stores were, to Red Bank, and to Freehold. And we had access to the trains to New York City.

Mr. Aumack: So a lot of families in Keyport, especially you, never really needed a car because the community transportation and mass transit were just so wonderful?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Yes. And we walked to school.

Mr. Aumack: How far did you walk?



Betty Jane and Elizabeth, 1940

Mrs. Hurlbert: The high school was about a mile from our home. I can't recall snow days, but I hated it because we had to wear snowsuits. In those days they were called snowsuits, and today they are called skisuits. And we would have to wear galoshes. We would trudge through the snow, and we'd get there sometimes wet, but we were in classes.

Mr. Aumack: Was school ever cancelled due to snow?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Not that I recall.

Mr. Aumack: Do you ever remember a day when you walked through a foot or more of snow?

Mrs. Hurlbert: You would have to walk in the road then where the cars packed the snow down.

Mr. Aumack: There wasn't a lot of traffic then.

Mrs. Hurlbert: No, there wasn't a lot of traffic in those days.

Mr. Aumack: Did you always work at that law office?

Mrs. Hurlbert: No, that was just for the summer. That was wonderful because I had received a scholarship, which was for full tuition. Graduation presents paid for my books, and my summer job paid for the transportation to New York City.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, that's where the school was?

Mrs. Hurlbert: In New York City. Packard School of Business, which is no longer in existence.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember where it was?

Mrs. Hurlbert: On Madison or Lexington Avenue. And my very first job was in the Keyport Public Library. And it was many years after that I became a special librarian, and then later a public librarian. It was considered an honor to work in the library in those days because Keyport had very few places for people to work. You either worked in Newberry's, the five-and-ten cent store, the two banks, or an insurance company. Employers would call the school, and they would ask for the honor students, mostly, to be interviewed. I didn't take the banking job at that time, but I was interviewed for the Keyport Banking Company.

Mr. Aumack: How long was the Keyport Library in existence before you took the job of librarian? First of all, let me ask you another question to be more clear, and

so you understand me. When did you take a job at the Keyport Library? Which Keyport Library was it, and do you remember the year and your job title?

Mrs. Hurlbert: I was librarian's assistant, and it was during 1945 to 1946. I worked three hours after school, for three dollars a week.

Mr. Aumack: So this was during high school?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Yes, my senior year.

Mr. Aumack: What was the library like?

Mrs. Hurlbert: It hasn't changed. There are two floors. Upstairs there is a large room with the reference desk. Downstairs is the children's department.

Mr. Aumack: Why has it stayed the same?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Space restrictions and costs. It's not a member of the Monmouth County Library system.

Mr. Aumack: Has staying the same been for the better, or would you have liked it to improve?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Having worked for the Monmouth County Library, I would have liked to see them have more books for the students. But they are able to get them from the state library, so they are not suffering. It's a wonderful place for children.

Mr. Aumack: When did you first work at Monmouth County Library? Which library was it, and what was your job title?

Mrs. Hurlbert: The Eastern Branch, in Shrewsbury. I started in November of 1986.

Mr. Aumack: Was that as librarian's assistant or were you a librarian?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Reference librarian.

Mr. Aumack: How long did you hold that job?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Until I retired on February 1, 2000.

Mr. Aumack: Congratulations! Discuss the changes in the Eastern Branch Library in Shrewsbury from 1986 through 2000, both good and bad, please.

Mrs. Hurlbert: Technology certainly changed things. At first we had book catalogs with computer printouts. When a patron would ask if we had a book, we had to look in the book catalog. Plus, there were the supplements. Then, of course, it all became computerized, which was wonderful. Now with the Internet you have access to so much information. So I was happy to see the changes.

Mr. Aumack: So they were changes for the better.

Mrs. Hurlbert: For finding information. But the books will always be used.

Mr. Aumack: Would you like to talk more about the library, anything that you remember?

Mrs. Hurlbert: In the Keyport Public Library?

Mr. Aumack: Yes.

Mrs. Hurlbert: The librarian was Miss Elsie Stout; her father worked for the Public Works Department in Keyport. And with all the snow, I think the town only had one truck, but Mr. Stout kept the roads clear. Her name is now Johnson, and she lives in Florida; we still keep in touch. The librarian was wonderful to me and provided me with a love of the library. I didn't plan to be a librarian at that time. Once a week, when I did book mending, my job was to go to a local drugstore called Hoffman's, which is no longer there, to buy sundaes for all employees, and the librarian paid for those. I thought, as a teenager, that it was wonderful to treat your employees like that. When I left after graduation from high school, my sister took my position.

Mr. Aumack: Hey, that was lucky! Can you discuss the changes that happened in Keyport, both good and bad? And why do you think the changes have occurred in Keyport?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Growing up, the names were Erickson, Hendrickson, Hansen, Peterson, Christoffersen, Olson, Johnson, Wilson, Robinson, Mason. At that time, I didn't think it was strange. Many of these people were connected with the water, either with marinas, fishing, or boat building. As the need for wooden boats declined, people went to other locations for their positions, and different people moved in. As people became older, some of them could no longer afford the beautiful Victorian homes on First Street. Some of these houses became apartments, and they deteriorated. Bus transportation ceased. Only now some young people are moving into Keyport because the homes are affordable. They are restoring these homes, and I am delighted to see them. My mother only allowed me to attend Shirley Temple movies at Saturday matinees. Later on, of course, the motion picture industry declined. And in most towns the theaters ceased being there. Our only one, before it went out of business, showed x-rated movies, which I did not attend. There is no theater in town now.

Mr. Aumack: There is no theater in Keyport?

Mrs. Hurlbert: No.

Mr. Aumack: Who started the restoration project of the homes in Keyport?

Mrs. Hurlbert: Back in the early 1970s, the Keyport Historical Society was formed, and there became a greater interest in the older homes. As I said, because the real estate values are lower, now younger people are appreciating the Victorian homes and restoring them.

Mr. Aumack: What would you like to say to the younger generation or anyone who is going to read this, especially Monmouth County residents? Do you have any advice?

Mrs. Hurlbert: My advice to Monmouth County residents would be to preserve the open land.

Mr. Aumack: I do agree with you on that one. In a few sentences or less, tell me about what your life in Monmouth County has been like.

Mrs. Hurlbert: My life in Monmouth County has been wonderful. I have no regrets at all growing up in a small town. The people were wonderful. I also appreciate the fact that, even today, I have a friend from first grade. People tended to stay together more and value their families and friendships then. I liked the feeling of safety and security. Although we didn't have a lot of money in my early years, we had all that we needed. We always had a garden; we had chickens during the war, and fish was abundant. I grew up on lobster, which is a luxury today. So I am very grateful for having had those experiences. My county working experiences in Freehold at the Lawyers Title Company, at the Keyport Public Library, and with Monmouth County Library have been most enjoyable. I have no complaints about my life, and I am grateful for it.

Mr. Aumack: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Hurlbert: You are welcome.

Mr. Aumack: And now we are here with Elizabeth Walling, formerly Elizabeth Erickson. First I would like to start off with your birthdate.

Mrs. Walling: August 5, 1931.

Mr. Aumack: Now where were you born?

Mrs. Walling: In Columbus, New Jersey.

Mr. Aumack: Is that outside Monmouth County?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: When did you come to Monmouth County?

Mrs. Walling: 1934.

Mr. Aumack: With the rest of the family?

Mrs. Walling: Right.

Mr. Aumack: Alright. Now discuss the change in the supermarkets in Keyport.

Mrs. Walling: The big thing was, when I was a little bit older and not when I was really young, my job was to go down with mother once a week to help carry the groceries back. We had an A & P, an Acme, and a lot of stores in the town. The one thing that always fascinated me was that there were no adding machines. If you had a big list of things, the clerk would keep writing on the bag everything that you ordered and bought, and he/she would add it up in a few seconds. And that is what you paid.

Mr. Aumack: So he/she was able to add like twenty things really fast?

Mrs. Walling: Oh, yes.

Mr. Aumack: What year was this, do you remember?

Mrs. Walling: Well, it was before 1948. I just can't remember exactly, but that was part of my job.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember if that was before World War II?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: And were the A & P and Acme the only markets in town?

Mrs. Walling: There were several fish markets, and there was a meat store. The one fish market is still there, it's called Keyport Fishery. The proprietor is Bob Wilson. The son of that owner still has it today. There were dress stores, shoe stores, and several shoe repair shops in Keyport. It is very self-contained. They have a volunteer fire department, they have a volunteer first aid department, and you can walk to the schools, because Keyport is only like a mile square.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, really? Has it gotten bigger since then?

Mrs. Walling: No. It's still the same. The only change is that there isn't as much land available anymore. There isn't as much green space available.

Mr. Aumack: From 1934 to the year 2000, it has stayed one mile square?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Wow!

Mrs. Walling: One side can't change, because it's on the Raritan Bay and the Matawan Creek. And the town is close to it.

Mr. Aumack: Now, discuss your father's fishing business more.



**Ed Erickson
mending a
pound net in
Raritan Bay**

Mrs. Walling: When we were growing up, he had a boat called Kitsu, and he always docked it at a little place in Keyport. Right close to us was a little beach, and it was alongside of the Kofoed Marina. But we considered that to be our beach, for exploring, playing, and picking wild plums. I always loved the water, and I guess I was the tomboy who liked going and working with the lobster pots. And then when he would sell some, I would help. When people wanted them, you would wade them out and take the money for them. I would go with him while he set the pots, and I would take a jar of water and maybe a sandwich, and I would sit in the rowboat. We would sit in the rowboat until the tide changed, because you would have to pick them up at a certain time, or sometimes you would lose the lobsters. He had pound nets out in the Raritan Bay, and you had to get a license for those, to fish there, to have poles in the water.

Mr. Aumack: Was that for fishing of every kind of marine life?

Mrs. Walling: Whatever would be in that area. You would have the pound nets, and they would have like a heart, and the fish would have to go into them. Actually, people weren't allowed to do crabbing or anything off of those poles. But they did, and sometimes they would go and lift the nets. And this was stealing, because you had a right to be there.

Mr. Aumack: Would people come from Keyport and steal?

Mrs. Walling: Well, people with boats would go and try to take out some of the things that would be in our net.

Mr. Aumack: So they would bring like a net on a pole?

Mrs. Walling: Right. Then from there, like if we had the moss bunkers, you would go to Belford down to the Co-op. And my father was part of the Co-op that was started in Belford. They would pay you so much per pound for those.

Mr. Aumack: Now is this for lobsters, crabs, and oysters?

Mrs. Walling: Whatever things you were taking in. Lots of times in later years, there would be a run on bunkers a certain season of the year. And that was used for fertilizer, oil, and different things.

Mr. Aumack: We have heard that your father took fish to the Fulton Street Market in New York City.

Mrs. Walling: Right, that's when I was small, and I don't really remember those things. But we always had plenty of fish at home. And if you didn't like it, that was too bad. We always had different kinds of fish. We had shad fish, and some people would say that is so bony. But it's delicious. Mother would bake the whole shad. Or we would just get a bushel of crabs, boil them, sit at the table with newspaper, and pick out crabmeat. That was our meal, and today that would be quite a luxury.

Mr. Aumack: Yes. So back then you had for free what now people would pay a lot for.

Mrs. Walling: And there were soft-shelled crabs, and you sometimes could get soft-shelled lobsters.

Mr. Aumack: What types of marine life did you feast on, for free, that your father caught?

Mrs. Walling: Weak fish, shad, blue fish, crabs, lobsters, and eels.

Mr. Aumack: What about trout?

Mrs. Walling: No, that would be fresh water. But you saw lots of things besides what you caught, like sea horses. I had dried out several seahorses as a kid, and I still have them today. I glued safety pins onto the back of them, and I still have them today. We would see lots of starfish, too.

Mr. Aumack: How big were the seahorses?

Mrs. Walling: They were just about two inches, they were small ones.

Mr. Aumack: Now you talked about the Kofoed Marina. Is it gone?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, I believe it is. It is Peterson's Boat Basin today.

Mr. Aumack: Alright. You had mentioned that you went eeling with your father. How did you help your father?

Mrs. Walling: I would help row, but I would also help lift the eel cars. You would dump them into another bucket or something that you had in the rowboat. You would rebait them with the horseshoe crabs that would have to be chopped into four pieces. And then you would reset them again.

Mr. Aumack: So you would catch eels with horseshoe crab meat?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, or killies, or spearing. Whatever came in, you would have to divide them up. The killies you would put in one pail, and the eels would go in another place, etc.

Mr. Aumack: Killies are small fish?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, you use them for bait when you are going fishing. Spearing is a small, silvery fish. And the small eels would be used for bait, too, but the big ones you could use for eating. You would have to skin them. Many times he would have a box of sand, and you would cut the heads off them, and keeping them in the sand, you would pull the skin off it. And then you could cut them up. You would put them either in egg or flour, and then you would fry them. Delicious meat! He also did a lot of hunting when we were growing up. He would go out for rabbits, and you would skin them. Rabbit is very delicious meat. And he would go muskrat hunting, and you could sell their pelts. You would have to skin them, stretch them, and let them cure. But then you could sell the pelts. We always had a hound dog, and we always had a couple of other dogs. And I always loved all the pets. One time both our dogs had puppies, and I thought I was the greatest kid in school, because we had thirteen dogs at one time. That included all the puppies, but we didn't keep them all. And my father would go deer hunting, and he really didn't have to go very far. There was so much farm land and everything around then.

Mr. Aumack: Is this late 1930s and early 1940s?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: What was surrounding Keyport at that time? We know that you lived near the water, because Keyport is mostly surrounding by water. Which towns or farmland surround Keyport?

Mrs. Walling: If you were going to go shopping, the big thing was to go to Perth Amboy on the Marathon Bus. And that would be a big trip to go to Perth Amboy on the bus. They had big department stores in Perth Amboy at that time.

Mr. Aumack: What did they have?

Mrs. Walling: They had Reynolds, Woolworth's Five & Ten, and several other five-and-ten stores. They had a big movie theatre, furniture stores, and lots of banks. The train also went through Perth Amboy, and the train also went through Keyport. The train was actually running in Keyport when I was in college. I would take the train some days to college.

Mr. Aumack: How long did it take from Keyport to Perth Amboy?

Mrs. Walling: Probably a good half-hour. And they were very crowded lots of times.

Mr. Aumack: So you used a hound dog to hunt?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Did you hunt by yourself?

Mrs. Walling: No. I didn't even go with my father. I wasn't allowed to do that. He would go with the dog. He would always say you couldn't make a pet out of the hound dog because she wouldn't hunt then. But that didn't get across to me, because I would get right in the doghouse with it. I loved the dogs! And I have had every kind of pet.

Mr. Aumack: So you also ate rabbits; did you eat the muskrat?

Mrs. Walling: I don't think we did. I think at that time, we were mostly keeping them for the pelts.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know what he did with the rest of the muskrat?

Mrs. Walling: I don't know.

Mr. Aumack: What about the deer, was this for the family?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, ok. So the hunting was for sustenance!

Mrs. Walling: It was for our food. It wasn't a sport in those days.

Mr. Aumack: When did he stop hunting?

Mrs. Walling: As the developments and things moved in, you weren't allowed to just go hunting. You had to have a license for hunting then, and you would have to go further. And I think that's what really stopped hunting then. It was the developments around the area.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember a year?

Mrs. Walling: No, but it was probably before the 1940s. I don't think he went deer hunting after we moved to Washington Street.

Mr. Aumack: What about the fishing job he had? Did he stop fishing, and do you remember when and why he stopped?

Mrs. Walling: In later years, like the late 1940s, he would complain to whoever would listen, because there weren't any organizations to complain to. Now and then we would have a lot of rain, and the Matawan Lake would open its dam and let the fresh water out. Well that fresh water would kill the killies, because they were a salt-water fish. Plus, it would do something regarding taking the oxygen out. So he would go down, and there might be thousands of killies dead. And that would have been a lot of labor catching those, plus he had a marina in Perth Amboy he always sold to. The man came over by boat, and he would get boxes and boxes of killies. But nobody wanted to listen to his complaints. People would dump oil and things up around Matawan, and it would come down the Matawan Creek, and then it would kill off the bait.

Mr. Aumack: They just dumped it?

Mrs. Walling: Well, nobody really thought you could harm the water then. They didn't think it was very important. People thought it was just there, it had always been there, and it would always be the same. They didn't realize that dumping things into the water would kill the marine life. In fact, years ago, there were sharks. In some of the information about Matawan, there was a shark that had gone up that Creek and had actually taken somebody's leg off! And we've had a dolphin up in the Creek.

Mr. Aumack: In Matawan Creek?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Now they opened Matawan Dam so it wouldn't flood over?

Mrs. Walling: Well, after a lot of rain, it would be too high. So they would open it, and it would have to flow down the Matawan Creek.

Mr. Aumack: What did these occurrences do to your father's business?

Mrs. Walling: They killed it. So then he was more or less into just renting slips for boats.

Mr. Aumack: So that's what he did. So when did you own that dock?

Mrs. Walling: When we moved to Washington Street. It was really not a dock then, but we would kind of build it up a little each year. And it got to the point where he had probably about twenty-five boats there.

Mr. Aumack: And people paid him to keep their boat there.

Mrs. Walling: He was the only man fighting the pollution. He showed them all the things that were dead, but they said there wasn't anything they could do, because there weren't enough people fighting it. He told them there would be a day when the whole bay would be polluted, and it was.

Mrs. Walling: And then in later years, they just sold off the meadowland, which is where his dock was. And now it is called The Brown's Point Marina. And mother still has a good piece of property. Could I tell you about the ice man?

Mr. Aumack: Yes, please tell me about the ice man.

Mrs. Walling: When we lived over on Broadway, back in the 1930s, you didn't have a refrigerator. We had an icebox. If you needed ice, you had a little card, and you would put it in your front window. This would say how many pounds of ice you wanted when the ice man went around. If you forgot to dump that water pan underneath the icebox, you were in trouble, because it would be spilling all over the floor. But the sink was pretty close to that. Well, we would go and ask him if he had any slivers of ice. And many times, he would give us a big chunk of ice. And we would run home and give it to mother, because it was kind of wasteful for us to eat it. We would take a piece of waxed paper from the bread and wrap up the ice in that, and that was better than any popsicle.

Mr. Aumack: And that was just ice, wow!

Mrs. Walling: Yes, and we didn't worry about dirt or anything. You didn't wash it off, you just ate it right off the ice truck. He would have the ice tongs, and he would bring in the ice to the house and put it in your icebox.

Mr. Aumack: Was that free?

Mrs. Walling: No, you paid by the pound. I don't remember how much it was per pound.

Mr. Aumack: Did he come around every week?

Mrs. Walling: Oh, every day, because that would melt, especially in the summer. We had a great time when we really got a radio, because you had your stories. You had "The Thin Man" and "The Lone Ranger," and you sat there and you didn't move. We had a parrot, and sometimes Polly would get to squawking, just when it was the good part of the story. So we would cover her up so we could

hear the stories. But that was fascinating, because you imagined all these people and all these adventures.

Mr. Aumack: Did you have a favorite story?

Mrs. Walling: All of them.

Mr. Aumack: Who did you listen to, besides "The Lone Ranger"?

Mrs. Walling: "The Thin Man," and there was another one "Saturday Night." We didn't have a television for a long time, but my girlfriend across the street had one. And we would get our baths and everything on Saturday night, and we would run over and see the Sinatra show, and then run back home again.

Mr. Aumack: Did you get a television in the house ever?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, they were black-and-white back in those days. I forget the year we got one, but it wasn't when they first came out. It was quite awhile. But the radio was fascinating! And also in those days, Betty and I had a doll and a doll carriage. At Christmas time, the first thing you would look at was the dolls, because mother would sometimes dress them up. And that was one of our biggest gifts, because we only had a couple of dolls. We still have our baby dolls, and I still have my doll carriage. Today, everyone has lots of toys. We didn't have a lot of stuff, but we had everything we ever needed. And you made up things. We didn't have a pool, but my father would bring a fish box home, and it would hold the water. You would fill it with water, and we would play in that all day long.

Mr. Aumack: How big was it?

Mrs. Walling: Oh, just a small one. Maybe from where you are across the table to here, not very big. But it was big enough for Betty and me to sit in and play.

Mr. Aumack: Tell me about Shirley Temple.

Mrs. Walling: I still have a Shirley Temple doll. She wasn't brand new, but it was given to me one time. I think that was when my father was working for the W.P.A. There were times, like around holidays, and I never knew how it got there, but sometimes there would be a basket of something on the front porch. It would be around the holidays, and it would be food. But I remember somebody gave me this Shirley Temple doll.

Mr. Aumack: Was it paper?

Mrs. Walling: No, it was a doll with hair. Those days, the dolls had hair. And we used to have paper dolls, and we had a paper doll of Princess Margaret, and Princess Elizabeth, who is now the queen. You would cut them out of magazines,

and you would play with paper dolls. And we played with baby dolls and doll carriages for years! You don't even have little children today playing with doll carriages. They are all into Barbie, and kind of grown-up toys. And we had those dolls for years, I still have them.

Mr. Aumack: Tell us about the chickens.

Mrs. Walling: When we moved over to Washington...in fact when we were over on Broadway, we had a big garden in the back yard. In fact, I have an arrowhead that was found in that area when my father was turning over the land. Because Indians were in that area. But when we moved over on Washington Street, we had ducks and chickens. We used them for eggs, and we used them for food. Then later on, you weren't allowed to have them in the town.

Mr. Aumack: You weren't allowed to have chickens in the town?

Mrs. Walling: I don't know if that's when we stopped having them, but today you couldn't have them.

Mr. Aumack: Why did you stop having the chickens?

Mrs. Walling: It was against the law. As a residential area began to build up, then they made different laws, that you weren't allowed to have certain things. And there was one year, when we had one of the hurricanes. The water was coming up underneath the chicken houses, so my father had to go get them. At that time, he had raincoat on with these buckles. And it got caught in the wiring, and he fell. So he actually had difficulty in his own back yard. With all the years being on the water, he had difficulty in his own back yard.

Mr. Aumack: So you had the chickens just for the family, to provide food?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: He didn't sell the eggs or anything?

Mrs. Walling: I don't think so. We ate them all.

Mr. Aumack: And you ate the chickens as well?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: You didn't have any roosters?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, we did, and I remember sometimes I used to have one as a pet. And I remember the time we finally did kill the rooster. I don't think that I ate him. One time we went to Perth Amboy for chicks, and they all turned out to be

Rhode Island Red, and they were all roosters. We would go to Perth Amboy on the bus, and you would be able to buy the small chicks in the five-and-ten. And then we would bring them back on the bus. Sometimes we would keep them in a box in the kitchen for awhile, until they got a little bit bigger, because it was warmer for them. I mean that is like having real pets in the house! Of course, we did have some neighbors where the chickens did kind of wander in and out of the house. And you could actually watch when they would kill the chicken. In those days, they didn't think much of it when they killed it, slit its throat, hanged it, and took its feathers off. But today, I don't think that would be so great.

Mr. Aumack: When you would buy a chick from the five-and-ten, how much did it cost?

Mrs. Walling: Ten cents each.

Mr. Aumack: Do you recall any chickens that had grown up to a point where your father would say it was time to kill it?

Mrs. Walling: Oh yes. I remember one of my pet ones was a rooster, and I just couldn't eat him.

Mr. Aumack: But he still served it as dinner?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, he was served.

Mr. Aumack: Who ate it?

Mrs. Erickson: Oh, I did.

Mrs. Walling: Well, she didn't get quite as attached to those things as I did.

Mr. Aumack: So you really were attached to a lot of the animals.

Mrs. Walling: Yes. I had pigeons, and I even had a few baby squabs at a time. I would get box turtles from the meadows and keep them for awhile. We always had cats, and we always had at least one hound dog and maybe another dog. Not that you would buy these, they were just strays that would come around and attach themselves, and we would keep them.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, you didn't buy it. It was a stray that you would take in?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, except the hound dog. Sometimes my father would get a hound puppy from somebody.

Mr. Aumack: Talk about seeing the Shirley Temple movies. Which movie theater did you go to?

Mrs. Walling: Keyport had a little theater, and I believe it was like a quarter to get in the movies. One of our friends, Betty's music teacher, originally used to play the piano in the movie theatre. I don't remember that time; it was for silent films. But at that time, and I do remember even when I was in high school, the upstairs balcony was for Black people. And I couldn't imagine why they always had the best place, because it was upstairs. But at that time, they were not allowed to sit downstairs. And they were people that you were going to school with, but they weren't allowed to sit downstairs. But you didn't really understand much about it, you just sort of accepted it. Being small, I got in the movie for a kid's price for quite a few years beyond my time. (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: So after you turned twelve, you could still pay the dime, right?

Mrs. Walling: I guess it was like that, but I'm not sure if it was a dime or a quarter.

Mr. Aumack: You talked about Black people being in the balcony section. So the movie theaters, in the early 1940s, were segregated?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Now were the schools segregated?

Mrs. Walling: No.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, that's interesting.

Mrs. Walling: But we did have sort of like a certain area of town where the majority of the Black people lived. But the school itself, we were all in class together.

Mr. Aumack: Were there any stores that they weren't allowed to go into?

Mrs. Walling: I don't recall that. Today I am a teacher, and when I read about those things, I really can't remember that. I can't even remember it on the bus or anything. I don't think it was in effect when I was riding the bus back and forth to Perth Amboy.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember seeing any Black people on the bus with you to Perth Amboy?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: So you don't remember where they sat?

Mrs. Walling: I think they could sit anyplace.

Mr. Aumack: So from your knowledge, the only place that you could say was really segregated in Keyport, was in the movie theatre.

Mrs. Walling: Yes, that's the only place that I recall.

Mr. Aumack: Talk to me about your Victory Garden a little bit.

Mrs. Walling: I guess my father would have just about everything in there. You kind of took it for granted, you know. A lot of people had gardens. And you would can all the food.

Mr. Aumack: Now where did that all go?

Mrs. Walling: To us for food. Mother would can the food, and then that would be for the winter.

Mr. Aumack: What kind of foods did you have?

Mrs. Walling: Tomatoes, peaches, and some jelly. And if somebody gave you a basket of peaches, you would can those. Or if somebody gave you grapes, you would can those for jelly.

Mr. Aumack: Did you make strawberry jelly?

Mrs. Walling: No. We had the wild strawberries at the school, but I don't remember any big strawberries like you have today.

Mr. Aumack: Now you graduated from high school in 1948?

Mrs. Walling: Yes. After Betty left the library, I went there. And after I graduated, I stayed at the library for another year, because I couldn't get working papers. You couldn't get working papers until you were seventeen. And I just couldn't seem to find a job. And one of Betty's friends called and told me the First Bank & Trust in Perth Amboy was hiring, and wondered if I was interested. And at that time, you went by bus, you wore a hat, and you wore white gloves. I was hired on the spot, and I worked there for eight and a half years. I worked in two different departments, in the transit department and in the note department. While in the note department, I was told that I was going to train a young fellow to be my boss. You see in those days, a female could not hold a higher position. And that was the best thing that ever happened, because I left the bank, but I didn't leave at that spot. I called the college, which was Newark State at that time. It was the first year they were in Union, so I was partly at Newark State in Newark, and partly at the new campus in Union. And I started



**Elizabeth
Walling, 1948**

there as a freshman, and I went for four years to become a teacher. And I went back to the bank every summer.

Mr. Aumack: What job did you have, to teach this gentleman?

Mrs. Walling: I would do the window, and the window was called when you took care of a customer. I was in the loan department, and the loan application would have already been filled out by an officer of the bank. But you would have to process it, and then give them a check. If there was collateral, it would have to be recorded, photographed, and stored. So mostly what I was to train him to do was that type of thing. He was not going to use the machine that I was using, the bookkeeping machine. He was going to be more at the window, and more in charge of the department.

Mr. Aumack: Were you seventeen or eighteen when you trained him?

Mrs. Walling: I got the job probably just before I was eighteen, and I worked there eight and a half years. So it was after that eight and a half years that I was training him.

Mr. Aumack: So you trained him when you were twenty-something?

Mrs. Walling: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Was he older than you?

Mrs. Walling: I don't recall if he was older than I was. If he was, he wouldn't have been very much older, or only a couple of years if he was younger.

Mr. Aumack: Was he nice to you?

Mrs. Walling: Yes, it wasn't his problem.

Mr. Aumack: So you weren't mistreated or anything by him?

Mrs. Walling: No. He was told what he had to do, also.

Mr. Aumack: Where did you start teaching?

Mrs. Walling: Because Betty and I went to the two-room schoolhouse on Washington Street, I always wanted to teach in a little schoolhouse...even a one-room schoolhouse with all the grades together. My first job was in a four-room schoolhouse on Second Street in Keyport, and I taught kindergarten my first year. I was considered a floater, I guess you would call it. If the influx was to first grade, there would be two first grade teachers, and I would do first grade. If the next year there were more kindergarten children, there would be two

kindergarten classes, and I would do kindergarten. And one year I had a split first grade and kindergarten.

Mr. Aumack: What was the largest size class you taught?

Mrs. Walling: Twenty-seven.

Mr. Aumack: What was the smallest?

Mrs. Walling: Probably sixteen. I taught in that little schoolhouse for twenty years. It was great because it had originally been a two-room schoolhouse, so there were brick walls between the front two rooms. The front two rooms were added later. And it was great because you saw the children before you got them sometimes, and you saw them several years after you had them. There were four teachers, and there were four grades. That's when you taught everything, you didn't have "specials." You taught art, music, and had them for recess. The only thing you didn't have them for was lunch. And at one time they had an hour for lunch, because it was a local school. They all went home for lunch, and you didn't have both parents working. Then when more parents started working and there was no place to put the children, they went to a half-hour lunch, and they stayed at school. Or they could still go home.

Mr. Aumack: Can you describe any big changes in the school system?

Mrs. Walling: There really isn't a lot of "May I," "Thank you," or "Please" today. There are so many little things gone that we used to take for granted. And you really need to teach those things.

Mr. Aumack: What do you think needs to be taught nowadays?

Mrs. Walling: Well you need to teach "Please," "Thank you," and "May I." It didn't seem like we had as much difficulty with reading years ago. I always had a few children who had difficulty reading, but today it seems like we have more children experiencing difficulty. I don't think we have as many people or parents reading to children, or even having newspapers in the house. That was your biggest thing. You had the radio, but you didn't have the television. And a lot of your information came from newspapers and magazines, and different things.

Mr. Aumack: Do you think one of the reasons children find it harder to learn to read is the lack of parents talking and reading to their kids?

Mrs. Walling: It could be, but then we also have a lot more to do now. Everybody has a car, so you have a lot of other activities. There are a lot of children going to many different things that weren't available years ago. There are all kinds of sports now: Pop Warner, cheerleading, gymnastics, karate, and

piano lessons, etc. There is a lot more money available, and there are a lot more things out there. And education is not "the" thing, in many cases.

Mr. Aumack: What do you think it is?

Mrs. Walling: Well, I have even had people say they didn't do their homework because they had football practice. Now this is Pop Warner, you know. And I would tell them that they now had two sets of homework to do tonight. But the priority at times is that they couldn't do homework because they had to go somewhere. And you don't get the backing quite as much, like Mom asking them if their homework is done.

Mr. Aumack: Talk a bit more about family values. Do you have the feeling that maybe they have declined?

Mrs. Walling: I don't know. But even going back, we never knew we didn't have things. It seemed like all our friends were sort of in the same situation. We never wanted or needed anything. It seemed everything was provided. Today it seems like there are a lot of "wants" out there. And not being satisfied with some of the things that you have. Children have so many toys, and when they go to the store, they want another one, and another one. And they usually get it.

Mr. Aumack: Can you discuss the change in the community of Keyport from the time that you lived there until now?

Mrs. Walling: We had one big schoolhouse, where the current 7 Eleven and a lot of houses are now. It took that whole block. We had a high school, which was several blocks away. That high school is still there. We had the two little schoolhouses. One actually wasn't used for awhile, because of the decline in the number of neighborhood children, and it wasn't needed any more. So they went to the big school. The old grammar school was torn down years ago, when they built the new central school. The old grammar school had three floors. To get from one end of the building to the other, you walked through classrooms. You had to walk through very quietly so you didn't disturb anybody, but you literally walked through classrooms as you changed from place to place.

Mr. Aumack: Is there anything that you would like to add about the school system and your experience with the children?

Mrs. Walling: Oh, I just love it. One part of my school system that has changed: in 1980 I met a person in her eighties who taught me the Orton-Gilligham method of teaching reading. It is considered a multi-sensory method of reading. She taught me more in the few years that I knew here than anybody has ever taught me. And today I find that when using that, you can pretty much get every child to read, maybe not at a very high level, but you can get them reading. Today they will talk about children who are visual or auditory. The Orton-Gilligham method is

multi-sensory, and you teach by using your body. It's like if you see the letter 'A'...you will say 'A', so you are hearing the 'A'. You will also draw the 'A' in the air, so you are putting it in different parts of your body. It's kinesthetic, auditory, and it's visual. And a child who has difficulty in one of those areas, you are bound to meet it by using this method. The child who is bright even gets a lot more.

Mr. Aumack: So you still use this method today?

Mrs. Walling: When I was with Mrs. Reed, the woman who taught me, she had had two books printed back in the 1970s. We got her to get it published by Educators Publishers, in Massachusetts. But the one requirement was that we have the Teachers Manuals completely done over. And I worked with another first grade teacher in doing those over. And when Mrs. Reed left to move down south in Maryland with her daughter, she left me all her material. So in the past couple of years, I have made the phonics books, and I have had them printed. They are called "Phonics for Thought."

Mr. Aumack: What would you like to say to the younger generation, of Keyport or perhaps Monmouth County? Do you have any advice for them?

Mrs. Walling: Look around you, and be grateful for the things you have. Don't be looking for them always some place else. I think even some of our religious values have changed a lot. It seems like a lot more kids were going to Sunday School, or being involved in a lot of different things years ago. Just be aware of what's around you, and be grateful for the good that you already have.

Mr. Aumack: I think that's a great place to stop. Thank you very much.