



Interview with George Moss

Under the Auspices of the
Monmouth County Library Headquarters
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Flora T. Higgins, Project Coordinator

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Name of Interviewer: Douglas Aumack
Premises of Interview: Mr. Moss' home, Rumson, NJ
Birth date of subject: March 2, 1923

Mr. Aumack: Before we start, Mr. Moss, it's an honor to interview you, so thank you very much.

Mr. Moss: Well, thank you for coming here.

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

Mr. Moss: More or less by osmosis, because my great-grandmother summered in Long Branch in the 1870s. Both sets of grandparents summered in Long Branch. Actually on my mother's side, that grandfather ran a hotel in Long Branch. When my parents married they were in New York City and I was born in New York City. We came down and visited my grandparents, and that is the background of why we were here. That's really the background of why I have an interest in this, because conversation was always about what had happened in Long Branch and Sea Bright. From 1870 on, somebody remembered something. We had oral history at the dinner table.

Mr. Aumack: Do you recall some of that oral history?

Mr. Moss: Well, there was so much of it I guess I'm not too good on names anymore at my age, but I remember for example my grandmother, whose husband Gernand Pannaci ran the Pannaci Hotel in Long Branch, talking about the various people that stayed there. There were a lot of prominent people and now I don't remember their names, but it was interesting to hear who was there. I remember they talked about storms that had happened and it was just like



George H. Moss Jr. in
1925

anybody would sit down at the table and say I remember a couple of years ago we did this and that. Well, my grandmothers could remember much further back than that.

Mr. Aumack: When did you begin to permanently live in Monmouth County?

Mr. Moss: When I got married. Of course we had the house since 1944, but it was the summer house. We came down in the summer time and came down on the weekends in the winter. My parents had an apartment in New York City and when Mary Alice and I married, I said, "Hey, we have a house going to waste," so we just stayed here. Then when our first child arrived, my parents decided they weren't going to go back for the week and come down on the weekend. They wanted to be with the new baby, so they moved in too. It was big enough for all of us. So, they got rid of the apartment and stayed with us.

Mr. Aumack: How old were you when you moved to Monmouth County?

Mr. Moss: Well, we have to back up. I was born in New York City and then in 1927, I believe, maybe 1928, my parents rented a house in Silver White Gardens, which is in Little Silver. As a matter of fact, that house they rented was seen a year earlier being moved from the corner of Broad Street and Pinckney Road, the site now where the Gertrude Apartments are. The house was moved from there, and it's still in Silver White Gardens. So we were there, and I went up to the third grade in St. James but I also developed a very severe case of double pneumonia, and when it was all over, they said I had to get out of New Jersey as soon as I was able to get out of bed. We went down to Florida for the winter of 1929 and I went to school there for just that wintertime. Then we came back, and that point, in 1930, we moved back to New York City, and then came down to visit my one grandmother who still had a house in Long Branch. I think the funniest story of all my three years in St. James was one time we were at the playground at the back of St. James, which was just dirt, and I fell down and really banged my head. In retrospect, I probably had a concussion because they sent me home or got my mother and she picked me up. The next day I came back to school and went into class and told the Sister I really couldn't see, everything was still blurry. She said "Don't worry about it, we'll put you in the front seat." That took care of it. That's the only help I got, but it worked. After about four or five days, I got my full sight back but I probably had a concussion. In those days, I don't think they knew a concussion from a bad cold.

Mr. Aumack: Did you tell your parents about it?

Mr. Moss: Well, my mother was there. You got to remember we're talking 1928, you know, and I was walking around...so what more do you want?

Mr. Aumack: There doesn't seem to be any long-term effect, so...

Mr. Moss: So, that was my most interesting bit about St. James. As far as a little bit about New York. I went to a public school in New York. We moved from Amsterdam Avenue to Riverside Drive, and then we finally ended up about twelve years on Park Avenue. When I graduated from public school, I went to Horace Mann School, which was a private prep school at 246th Street. In fact, I'm very proud of my diploma from Horace Mann School, because in those days, it said Horace Mann School for Boys, Columbia University. But it's no longer part of Columbia University.

Mr. Aumack: Prestigious!

Mr. Moss: Yes. It is very prestigious. You have to be brilliant to get through it now. I mean I barely got through it, but what I enjoyed most about it was the study hall periods when you could go to the library. I read every book of fiction in my four years. I started with the As and read every bit of fiction. I felt you could learn more from a good author because he has done his research, and I particularly liked historical novels like medieval and this and that. The point is that if there was a lot of fighting in a particular one, let's say Elizabethan times, you knew the author did his research because he had all the different kind of swords and knives and daggers. Or if there was a lot of eating going on in another venue, there was a lot of detail about what was served in the tavern. I learned more from good fiction than I think learning about the Civil War and who discovered the Mississippi River. Growing up in school, we had chapters on the Revolution, chapters on the Civil War, chapters on World War I and now you look at a history book, what is it? Half a page. You had to know every battle of the Civil War, every battle, so things are condensing. They are important facts, of course, but on the other hand I felt I learned more about history in general from fiction.

Mr. Aumack: It seems that you learned more by teaching yourself.

Mr. Moss: Yes, sure.

Mr. Aumack: Interesting. So, after Horace Mann School, did you go to college?

Mr. Moss: Yes, the University of North Carolina.

Mr. Aumack: And you graduated after four years?

Mr. Moss: No way. Uncle Sam stepped in. I was about to be drafted, so I decided to enlist because if you enlisted, you could select the branch of the Service that you wanted. I wanted the Signal Corps, playing it pretty brilliantly that the only two Signal Corps camps were Fort Monmouth and one in California, and I'd never been out west. Obviously, I ended up in Texas. So I enlisted just to pursue that. While I was down in Texas, the outfit I was with was a Signal Operations Battalion. There was an officer that came down from Washington

D.C. from the Office of Strategic Services, the OSS, and they had looked over the records in the Signal Operations Battalion. I think everyone in the Battalion had an IQ of 150 or more, and they were putting this battalion together to service a headquarters. It would be the communication branch of an Army headquarters. So they put it together, I think, depending on the minimum IQ of 150. On that basis, with a relatively high IQ as far the average Army was concerned, our group was checked out and I think there were three of us asked to report. We were given an outline on to see if we met the requirements. You had to volunteer for the OSS. Are you familiar with what the OSS is?

Mr. Aumack: No, please tell me about it.

Mr. Moss: Well, I'm not going to tell you too much, but the OSS, Office of Strategic Services, was the espionage and counter-espionage part of the Federal Government. It was military, but you could be in the Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, or Army and still be in the OSS. You would work with the OSS and not with your own Army unit. So, I won't go into details, but I was chosen and was supposed to go behind the lines in France, but after we were given a week or ten days furlough before we went overseas, they said we were lucky because we would be the first ones they were going to give a pre-jump physical to. The only pre-jump physical we had and then part of our training, which was at the Congressional Country Club, in I think Maryland, was we would tumble out of the back of the pickup truck. That was what it was going to feel like when you land.

Mr. Aumack: Was this while the truck was moving?

Mr. Moss: Oh, yes. Not speeding, but it was moving. Oh sure, and I was going to jump out with about a thirty pound radio on my back. Believe me, a combat jump was a very short jump. You weren't up there 4,000 feet, you were pretty close. Anyway, they gave us a physical and said you can't jump because you had a cartilage removed from your knee. I said, "Yes, I injured it playing intramural football down in Carolina, and came up here on Christmas vacation and had to have it removed." They said, "You can't jump, forget it. You're off this particular team." So a couple of days later, I was calling the Office and they asked what I'd like to do, go overseas or stay in Washington, D.C. during the war. I said I want to go overseas. So they asked where I wanted to go, and I said I didn't know. Just like at the movies...the Office had pressed the button and a curtain parted and there was a map of the world and there were blue buttons and red buttons. He said pick your first, second, and third choice of red buttons because they're headquarters, and you would get sent to the headquarters, but that doesn't mean you wouldn't be sent out on your own to do something. I said ok and started thinking: I had a chance to go any place in the world. I said my first choice is Chungking, China... I'll never get there. My second choice was New Delhi in India...I'll never get there. Then my third one, well, I really always wanted to be an archaeologist, so it was Cairo. Well the point is, I ended up in Cairo and I enjoyed that and then went from Cairo to Italy and just a month before the end of

the war I ended up in the hospital with a very bad case of jaundice and hepatitis. I was a bed patient for about six months I think. I came home and eventually had a stay in a hospital in New York. And that brings us to basically to how I got started in Wall Street.

Mr. Aumack: Ok.

Mr. Moss: Well, it's kind of funny, because I had a resume, you know when you leave the army you have a resume of what you did, and they made it very general, but it said I taught cryptography. I did do this to agents that were going behind the lines in Greece. Cryptography was my specialty.

Mr. Aumack: Can you describe that?

Mr. Moss: Codes and ciphers.

Mr. Aumack: Was that by radio or written?

Mr. Moss: No. It's deciphering. You have a codebook, and by using the codebook, you could write a message in little groups of five letters, which are all garbled up. Unless you have a codebook at the other end, you can't break it down. You know what's at the bottom of a lot of crossword puzzles?

Mr. Aumack: Yes.

Mr. Moss: Alright. That's basically cryptography. It's encoded...I mean that's kind of easy because they just substitute letters. Looking at my resume, I hadn't gotten to any particular subject. I only had like the first couple of months of my sophomore year when I left Carolina. Because I had been ill, I had to be careful when I came back about what I could eat, so I wouldn't want to go down south again. I had spent almost three years in the military, so I figured what the heck, I didn't want to go back to college. I didn't know what I wanted to do, and I was a month or so in New York trying to figure who is going to look at my resume and say, "Oh, we've got a couple of agents and we need you to teach them cryptography." But it just so happened that a friend of the family was a member of the stock exchange and said, "Why don't you get a job down in Wall Street? Get a job with the Stock Exchange." So I went down there and got a job as a pageboy right on the floor of the Exchange, running messages back and forth. Then I moved up and was a recorder, who was the one who would record all the sales as they took place at a certain spot. And then there was an opportunity, if I could acquire a seat (really low in price), that I could become involved as a partner in a firm. So I did, and then I spent the next almost twenty years, I guess, in Wall Street. I was a specialist on the floor of the Exchange. Then I retired in 1971.

Mr. Aumack: When you first visited Monmouth County, describe it.

Mr. Moss: You mean in 1928?

Mr. Aumack: Yes, if you can remember.

Mr. Moss: I remember a couple of things. In Silver White Gardens, I had a cocker spaniel. His name was Abendigo, like in Shadrack, Meshack, and Abendigo. But any way, he was a nice pup, and he liked to be petted. So whenever he did anything nice, I'd pet him. Well, south of us it would be White Road. Do you know where White Road is? We were north of that, you know. Apparently there was a farm there that had chickens. Once a week our cocker spaniel would come up to me with a chicken in his mouth. He would not harm it, it wasn't hurt at all.

Mr. Aumack: It was still alive?

Mr. Moss: It was still alive. I'd pet him and I'd take the chicken out of his mouth. Well, I would return the chickens and that was my earliest recollection of the Red Bank/Sea Bright area. I remember falling down at St. James, and then the other thing is there were sidewalks all around in the development, which is Silver White Gardens. A friend of mine was Howard Alexander, who later became the editor of the *Perth Amboy News*. We each had a wagon and we used to put one knee in the wagon and one knee on the outside, where you would kind of pedal I guess, and we used to have a race all around on the sidewalks. There was nobody walking around there, you know, but that was the excitement of the day. It was Prohibition time, and I think the older members of various families would celebrate when they managed to get hold of a bottle of liquor somewhere. And so I remember that. That's going back pretty far in my memory. I do remember visiting my grandfather and grandmother's hotel. He had died in 1923, so I never knew him. She ran it until 1932. It was on Ocean Avenue in Long Branch. I remember going there a few times and I remember that when you walked in from Ocean Avenue, you walked across the big open hall and you would be facing a grand staircase that went up, turned around, and then went up to the second floor. I had a cousin who was five years older. I was six or seven years old, so he was eleven or twelve. We used to go into the kitchen, or go into the dining room, and each one of us would take one of these big trays that a waiter would carry and then we would toboggan down the grand staircase on these trays. Each of us would be sitting on a tray, and then we'd come down the long staircase. Well, my grandmother never said anything.

Mr. Aumack: And she saw you do it?

Mr. Moss: Oh, sure. Yes. So I remember that. I remember Ocean Avenue as a four-lane boulevard: two lanes north, two lanes south, with a concrete divider in the center. I remember going to the pier in late 1928, 1929 and 1930 and playing with penny arcade stuff that you would get prizes for. I remember going with my uncle one time, and there was one machine that if you won (I guess you'd put a

penny in) you would get some perfume. I thought I'd like to bring some perfume back to my mother, and my uncle said ok. He put me in front of it and I got sprayed with perfume. But I also remember the greyhound races in Long Branch.

Mr. Aumack: Where were those held?

Mr. Moss: Basically the corner of Broadway and Ocean Avenue. There was a park there, and they also had midget auto races. I never did see the wrestling or boxing, but they had that there too. But I did see the automobiles and I did see the greyhound races. That was in the early 1930s.

Mr. Aumack: What was the population of Long Branch like?

Mr. Moss: Well, I think Long Branch, even Rumson up until after World War II, were summer communities to an extent. Yes, there were native people in Long Branch who lived there all year round. Almost two thirds of the houses that are there used to be rented out during the summer. A lot of them in West Park, Rumson were owned by the fishermen of Sea Bright. They had heat and all the winter conveniences in those houses. Then they would go back to Sea Bright where they had very simple, summer cottages with no heat and all of that. So, they would rent them. Well, to some degree there were a lot of homes that were just summer homes still in Long Branch, and of course there were hotels that were "modern", by that I mean there were none of them that were sixty or seventy years old. Some that were built around 1890 were still there, and it was a different kind of hotel life. It wasn't the Victorian day, you know. Take Sea Bright, for example...take the beaches, the beach clubs. I can remember in 1936, '37, '38, '39, the Chapel Beach Club used to be called Elliott's. It was owned a number of times. I worked there and it was "The Sea Bright Bathing Pavilion" owned by the Elliotts. Half of their bathhouses to the north were ones that were rented out for the season. The other half were for transients, because the transients came down from New York and came down right through Sea Bright, ok? If you go over the bridge now and cross Ocean Avenue, you would crash right into where the train station was. Of course, the trains ran parallel with the seawall. You know where Ocean Avenue is, then you've got that little space, and then you have the seawall. That little space is where the train tracks were. So the point is, they would be sold out on the weekend. People would come down just for the day, and for a dollar would get a bathhouse. They made an awful lot of their money on transients, people who came down for the weekend. Then of course you had hotels. You had the Peninsula House, up until it burned a number of years ago. The shore area bloomed in the summer time then, but now there are no hotels. Now there is no train. Now it's an all-year-round affair. The living conditions here are very few summer rentals. Everybody owns a house. All the bathhouses are rented out for the season. There are waiting lists for all these beach clubs. So it has changed...all these shore communities are all-year-round communities now rather than just summer communities. I don't know that much about the people in Long Branch, but I am sure a lot of the cottages closed up for

the winter time. People could afford the homes and the hotels operated pretty much in the summer time. Some of them did stay open in the winter, but that wasn't the thing. It was a summer community.

Mr. Aumack: What did you like to do for fun in Monmouth County?

Mr. Moss: Go to the beach.

Mr. Aumack: Is this when you were a kid and an adult?

Mr. Moss: Oh, yes. I think when I was old enough to know what the ocean was and be careful of it, I was there from about nine or ten years old. We went to the same beach. My first job was raking the beach, and I remember Louise Norton who was one of the women who ran it. I saw her a number of years later and we were reminiscing. I said, "You know my first job was at the beach." She said she remembered. I said I used to get seventy-five cents a day! Well, you weren't working a whole day, you would work for an hour or two. She said, "Yes, I know, and you were paid too much." But she was a good friend, you know. I grew up at the beach. It was funny, at The Sea Bright Bathing Pavilion, you always had the same spot on the beach. You would come down in the morning and even though there was nobody there, you always went to your same spot. Other people would come down, and they would go to their spot. It was funny that "the Rumson group" was off to the right of center and "the Red Bank group" was off to the left. Everybody had claims on the beach, and yet there was nothing official that said where you sat, but you just knew where your friends were going to be. They were going to be there, you know.

Mr. Aumack: What are some of your prominent memories of Monmouth County?

Mr. Moss: Well, some of the storms that we had of course were very impressive. I like the produce that you could get...the vegetables and fruit. You didn't grow it yourself, you just had to go inland a little bit where somebody had a farm, and the food was always good. I liked the climate. If you could survive New Jersey, you could survive anywhere, you know with all the humidity. But it never was like that...the weather is changing now. But the fact is, and you'll recognize this, where we are here we are very fortunate because when wind comes off the ocean, we're ten degrees cooler than Red Bank.

Mr. Aumack: That's true.

Mr. Moss: In the wintertime if the wind comes off the ocean, we're ten degrees warmer because the ocean doesn't freeze. So no matter how bitter cold it is, we're getting some heat from the ocean in the wintertime.

Mr. Aumack: So it seems like it has always been a desirable place to live.

Mr. Moss: Right. People were always friendly. Of course, I spent a number of years commuting in my later years. From 1953 through 1971 I was commuting, so I didn't spend too much time...well I wasn't here during the day obviously. But growing up it was fun. I remember when the circus would come to town.

Mr. Aumack: Which circus? Ringling Brothers or was it local?

Mr. Moss: Oh, no. It was a big circus. I mean we're talking quite some time. It was one at Monmouth Beach. It wasn't Ringling Brothers but there was one at Monmouth Beach. Then there was one in Middletown I think that might have been another circus besides Ringling Brothers, but I can't remember the name. There were things like that, and the King and Queen of England came down Rumson Road.

Mr. Aumack: Oh! Tell me about that.

Mr. Moss: Well, they came down here in 1939. They came from Washington to Red Bank by train and then took a car, came down Rumson Road, made a left turn, went out to Sandy Hook, got on a destroyer, and then made a triumphant entrance into New York. I took a photograph of them as they went by, and at St. George's Episcopal Church by the River they had the whole choir and everything getting ready to sing when they came by, and I don't think they got more than one note out and then "phew" they went by. They had everybody up on Rumson Road, and you know they couldn't stop. Zoom. They went right by. That was unfortunate, but that was probably one of the most important motorcades that came through here, although some of the later presidents have driven through here.

Mr. Aumack: What king passed...was that King George VI? Take your time. So, we're looking at a picture now, a blurred photograph of a car...

Mr. Moss: Of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Mr. Aumack: Wow! And they didn't even stop.

Mr. Moss: No, they didn't stop. And this was a little flyer that St. George's put out. They were going to sing this and have a whole program.

Mr. Aumack: So, here they are...the choir is waiting to sing seven beautiful anthems, they are waiting for the car, they know the King and Queen are coming, and before they sing a note the car just zooms by without even hitting the brakes.

Mr. Moss: Right. And that is a state trooper there hanging on the running board. They had to get the King and Queen out...they couldn't take a chance, you know. I mean that was I think kind of interesting...June 10th.

Mr. Aumack: June 10, 1939 they passed?

Mr. Moss: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know why they came to New York? They came to Red Bank because it was a way to get to New York or....

Mr. Moss: Well, it was the easiest way for them to arrive in New York on a destroyer. They wanted to give them all the prestigious arrival as they could have. Instead of getting on a destroyer down in Washington, they could get up here and it's only a half-hour run to New York. But meanwhile, they would come in on a destroyer and look like the King and Queen of England.

Mr. Aumack: Now, I see the state trooper in the picture. Was there one on each side of the car? Or was there only one?

Mr. Moss: Well, I only saw one side of the car. I'm assuming there was just one.

Mr. Aumack: Is that the only protection that they had?

Mr. Moss: Oh, no. They had motorcycles, too.

Mr. Aumack: Did Wilson ever visit Monmouth County?

Mr. Moss: He was in Long Branch.

Mr. Aumack: What was he doing there?

Mr. Moss: He was the governor. He actually, in the original building that was on the original site of what is now Monmouth University, made his acceptance speech to run for President. There is a very famous photograph of him there. Yes, Wilson was here. I don't get into politics and people. I have written a book called *Steamboat to the Shore* which is the steamboat history of Monmouth County. I have a tremendous list of steamboats that ran from 1848 on up in the Bay Shore, Long Branch and others, but the one thing I don't put in the book is the names of the captains. You are bound to leave some of them out, and then the family comes around saying, "Why didn't you put my grandfather in?" And it's tremendous research. I'm not saying it shouldn't be done, but I don't do that. It's the same way with houses. I don't keep a record of who owned what house or really what families were here ninety or one hundred years ago. It's just too much. No matter how much you put in, you're going to leave some of them out.

Mr. Aumack: You mentioned that you commuted in to New York City from 1953 to 1971 because you worked on the Stock Exchange. Please discuss the transportation that was available.

Mr. Moss: Well, I'd have to drive from Rumson to the parking lot in the Red Bank Station. I'd get on a train. When I became a member of the Exchange, I didn't have to go in quite as early. But regardless of what train I took, an earlier one or let's say an 8:00 a.m. one, you would take it and then transfer off the train and take the ferry across to Lower Manhattan. There was a Central Railroad ferry. It would leave you off on the west side of Manhattan in the vicinity of where the World Trade Center is now. You would just walk up the street to Broadway and walk down a couple of blocks and then you were there. And you'd just reverse that in the afternoon. It was kind of fun because you'd walk past a few interesting stores, although you didn't have too much time because you always wanted to catch a train, you know. I got to be friendly, to the extent that he would talk to me, with the captain of one of the ferryboats. I don't know his name. I heard him blast the horn a few times and asked, "What are you doing that for?" He actually let me ride up in the captain's cabin. He said, "Whenever a big steamer goes out, the Queen Mary or whatever, we always salute them." I said, "Oh, my folks are going to Europe Saturday." He asked what ship and I told him. He said "Ok, tell them to be on deck and I'll salute them." And sure enough, my folks were going with another couple and my father said, "When we get opposite the ferry route, let's see what happens because then the big boat salutes back." So sure enough, as the Queen Elizabeth was passing the ferryboat, which was in midstream, the ferryboat saluted and the Queen Elizabeth saluted back. And you know what was interesting about the ferry? If you were up in the wheel house of the ferry, you can't see the bow of your boat. If you were up where the captain was, you couldn't see it. I asked why he didn't crash into the dock, and he said he went in and sort of hit it sideways. If this is the width of the slip, instead of going straight in, you go this way.

Mr. Aumack: So he brings the boat in on a slant.

Mr. Moss: Very slowly and lets it sort of bounce off the side a little bit. I think that was always interesting: you know, he can't see where he is going.

Mr. Aumack: When did you involve yourself with the history of Monmouth County?

Mr. Moss: I would say around 1938, 1939.

Mr. Aumack: Why did you get into it?

Mr. Moss: Well, because the family always had an interest down here. My two uncles and my father used to play on a local baseball team. My grandfather was involved in the hotel business, and his brother was also involved in the hotel business in Sea Bright. I got involved because my grandmother had a scrapbook and my great-grandmother had a scrapbook. There were things in my grandmother's library, like in the *Long Branch Daily Record* the day World War I was over in 1918. I would collect that stuff, and there were things that they had

that related to the area, like a menu or something. And then I got involved in images of the area, woodcuts and engravings, from *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Magazine*, which makes for all the illustrations I use in my books. And here's an old newspaper...this is the worst storm that ever hit Sea Bright.

Mr. Aumack: So in your opinion this is the worst storm that ever hit Sea Bright? Ever?

Mr. Moss: About ten years before my life.

Mr. Aumack: One of the greatest was on December 26, 1913 and the other one was on January 3, 4 and 5, 1914. Do you recall if there were any deaths?

Mr. Moss: I don't think there were any deaths, but you're talking about a loss of half a million dollars. If you convert that into current currency, it's over ten million dollars. The point is, the houses were smaller, and there was the Octagon Hotel that was wiped out. The ocean is in back of that. Then this finally burned. Then of course there's the '92 storm that we had...

Mr. Aumack: The Nor'easter? In your studies, do you think it even compared to the storms that we discussed in 1914?

Mr. Moss: No. I think there was more damage really in the town in 1914.

Mr. Aumack: Tell me what you think is important regarding family, and you living in Monmouth County.

Mr. Moss: I think what's important about a family is that it sticks together. A family has conversations with one another and supports one another. I think the educational facilities in Monmouth County are excellent, and you have your choice of where you can send your children. I think that's important. I just think it's a great place to grow up in for a simple reason: like I enjoyed it, children still like the beach. Now they like other things like hockey, and there's a lot more on-going sports and schools are making available more facilities for the children. And I think the climate is good, too. I think that's important.

Mr. Aumack: What else is great about Monmouth County in your opinion?

Mr. Moss: In many places, Monmouth County has kept its beauty by restricting, to some degree, the amount of building that's going on. Now we're at a point where there are legal battles about whether we can retain certain areas for farmland. I don't know the statistics, but New Jersey was always called The Garden State because it had a high percentage of farmland. Well, that farmland is disappearing. You drive from here out to Freehold and you can see what's there. There are nice homes, but no farmland. I think certain towns have had to be very protective of what they have because they don't want it to change. I think

Rumson certainly is one. It hasn't changed that much. You still can go down Rumson Road and you've got a tremendous view of very nice homes and the trees are still there. You know, for every tree that's taken down, we put another one back up in Rumson. We do have legal restrictions on what you can do in Rumson. Spring Lake is a beautiful town, too, with beautiful homes. There has to be a place for commercialism, but it doesn't have to be, for example, in Spring Lake in the midst of a residential section. I think that's it. A lot of towns have done their best to keep the beauty of what Monmouth County has always had. And that's what Henry Hudson said: this is a pleasant land to fall to, or pleasant land to see. When he first saw it, it was a great spot.

Mr. Aumack: So you're talking about when Henry Hudson first came here as an explorer? And that's how he described it?

Mr. Moss: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Is it still a pleasant land to see?

Mr. Moss: Well, you have to compare it to something.

Mr. Aumack: That's true. What will change, in your opinion, in Monmouth County that hasn't already?

Mr. Moss: Change is always happening. Change is an ongoing thing. Some of the changes will continue to expand. I do think one of the biggest battles will be to control the population. Now I don't say we should control it, but I'm saying if all of the open land, all the park system, and the acreage which is still forest, if that isn't kept, and all of a sudden becomes a development with a hundred houses in it, then you'll have to eventually build a larger school or build a new one. You'd bring more stores in, etc. So gradually you would lose the suburban feeling, the country atmosphere. When you live in the city, you want to go down into the country. When you come down here and hit some of the towns, you don't think you're in the country, you think you're in the city. So I think Monmouth County should try to retain its historic background of being a beautiful country area or a seaside area. There's nothing wrong with Miami, but how would you like Long Branch and Asbury Park to develop into a double row of high-rise condos by the ocean? It could happen. It has happened on a very small scale. But what made these seaside towns successful is tourism. You don't have tourism in Sea Bright anymore. There's not a hotel where you can stay. At one time, there were seven hotels. There's no place to stay in Monmouth Beach. There's only one place to stay in Long Branch...that's the one that used to be the Hilton. There are some condos that are there for all year-round residents, but tourism was what kept all these towns going. Now that's not to say that Sea Bright doesn't overflow on the weekend, because there are people coming down that go to the Hook, and then they'll drive down, you know. There's a lot of out-of-towners, but at the same time, what keeps the town going now is all the restaurants and the all-year-round

people. Sea Bright's population has increased so much although I can't give you exact figures. It used to drop twenty-five percent in the wintertime. But then in the summertime, the fishermen could rent their small Rumson houses and they would go there, and the hotels were there, and the population would build up. Again, I think the main thing that has changed in the area is the lack of tourism, which is because the trains are not here anymore.

Mr. Aumack: Can you pinpoint the time when the Jersey shore went from a tourism area to an area of permanent residence?

Mr. Moss: Yes. Right after World War II.

Mr. Aumack: Why?

Mr. Moss: Number one, the trains were discontinued.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know why?

Mr. Moss: Yes. There was a storm in 1944 and it ruined the tracks. Central Railroad didn't want to put them back, but the storm also eliminated the boats that used to go back and forth. There used to be Central Railroad steamers that you could get at Atlantic Highlands. Well, they weren't running anymore, obviously, because how do you get there if the trains don't run? That was one thing. The other thing about post World War II era is related to the World War I song called, "How You Gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm After They've Seen Paree?" In 1938-1941, there were high school students who were going to Rumson and Fair Haven who had never been to New York City. Once they went overseas, once they saw there was another world, then people started to move around. People also did not want to go for the jobs of service-type of jobs in the area. A lot of people didn't want to be a chauffeur or gardener or similar things for an estate anymore. So a lot of the estates closed down, too, because the older generation had the money and left the estates to the children. None of the children could afford a big home, so it was sold. A lot of them, certainly some of them, were torn down. If somebody had twenty acres, they sold it so five or six houses, much smaller houses, could go up. So World War II changed Monmouth County. And what definitely changed tourism was the lack of quick, inexpensive transportation to the shore.

Mr. Aumack: Describe how a New Yorker could get down here before that storm in 1944.

Mr. Moss: Well, he could take the Pennsylvania Train, but that would bring him to Red Bank and Long Branch. He could take the Fulton Street Ferry across the Jersey and get on the Central Railroad of New Jersey Train. It would come down the Bay Shore area, down through Sea Bright, Monmouth Beach, and at Long Branch would hook up to the Standard Railroad Track and would go down as far

as Bay Head. But even if the trains were running at the moment, there is now no place where somebody could spend the night. After 1942, more people had automobiles and consequently they drove to Pennsylvania, New England, and the Carolinas by car. That made more of an adventure. Back in 1857, how do you think the people got to the hotels in Long Branch? They took a boat from New York. Sandy Hook was an island, and where that inlet was, the boat would come in and just about where the Twin Lights are, on the Sea Bright side, there was a very small little hotel called The Ocean House. It had a dock, and the people would get off that boat, get to the dock, and get on some carriages and go to Long Branch by carriage. The boat would come this way, and right across the river was this dock. This is Sea Bright, which is a barrier beach with nothing on it. The ocean is here and the river is here. You would need these wide-wheeled carriages to carry the people down to Long Branch. So it was an adventure! It would take you a few hours, but you had a trip on the ocean and the river and a wagon. It was all an adventure!

Mr. Aumack: With so much history being torn down, how can citizens of Monmouth County better preserve their history?

Mr. Moss: Well, we have something like that going on right now in Rumson. There's a house whose property goes back to 1665, and the house was built maybe around 1720. A person has bought it, with the property, and he wants to tear the house down and put up four houses on the property. It has been a big hassle over at the planning board. They've got over 600-700 signatures in favor of keeping the property as it is, and it is still going back and forth. How do you do it? Well, legally, if this fellow fights and fights it, and the opposition can't get any support from the government/county or whatever, he has the right to tear it down and that's it.

Mr. Aumack: So it may not matter how many signatures there are, if he wants to do it, he can do it?

Mr. Moss: If it's just a lot of people saying "keep it," then that's not enough. But it's very possible that if whatever is going to be destroyed is significant enough, that it's on a historic preservation list or something like that, that would make a difference.

Mr. Aumack: What do you want to say to future generations and people that live in the next millennium? What do you want to tell them...any advice you want to give to young people? Is there anything that you want to say?

Mr. Moss: The only basic link with history I think the next generation will have, and for that matter almost this generation, is our books. The Arcadia local history books have come out. I don't know if you know them...they're small books...but they've contacted individuals in a number of towns to see if they'd write a little history of the town. And that has created quite an interest in local history, but the

only link that they are going to have with history is by reading more in depth about it. The only other thing I would say is that anybody who would think it interesting to photograph special events like a storm, a fire, or an older house should do it! Photograph your own town! I have been taking pictures since 1939, and they are pretty important pictures at this stage of the game. My book is based on a collection of five thousand glass negatives I acquired from a major photographer, and they are all Monmouth County between 1898 and 1914. So that's why you can see some spectacular photographs of what was going on then.

Mr. Aumack: What was the photographer's name?

Mr. Moss: Gustav Pach. His chief photographer was George W. Morris, and I got these from Morris's son. If you want to see how another generation lived, see these pictures. That's why photographs, even photographs in 1930 and 1940, would mean a lot. Here's the Twin Lights. There's an airplane flying over Asbury Park...this is George Gould, a financier. His home is now a college in Lakewood. This is the inside of it when it was his house...he's having a little costume party. If you look at a photograph, the average person would say, "Wow, there's a lot of vegetables there or fruit." Go over that with a magnifying glass, and you would be amazed at how many different kinds of vegetables and fruit you can identify...or the inside of a store. That's why I think a photograph, which includes the woodcuts and engravings, is a document from the past. You can see all the different kind of foods that were for sale, the date on the champagne, etc. I would say a person should document their town...just a few pictures a year or if something was coming up that was going to change it. In fact today they are putting up a cellular tower that is going to be 155 feet tall. Well they've got 50 feet of it up already, and I'm going to take a picture of that 50 feet and then 75 feet. Everyone can be their own historian, it's just whatever they like. Somebody might just like to photograph boats, or beaches, or trees in bloom, or gardens or whatever. That's the only way they are going to keep history. They are historians if they go out and do something.

Mr. Aumack: What have you enjoyed most about Monmouth County...living here and visiting here all throughout the years? Go into as much detail as needed.

Mr. Moss: Well, I think the area itself...the location...what it has to offer like the beaches, farms, food, and the people. I think it's very, very friendly, even though I know there's some animosity between towns. There are problems with Monmouth County, and the problems are going to get worse if you read the local papers about how the seacoast is going to erode and all the damage that's going to happen there in the next few years. That could happen, and it probably will. We could lose the beaches and the seashore houses.

Mr. Aumack: What would you do for fun when you were ten or twelve years old?

Mr. Moss: I would go to a movie for fifteen cents in Red Bank on a Saturday afternoon and see Tom Mix, cowboy. You'd see a serial, a new chapter in a serial each week. You'd see the main picture, but you'd also always see a chapter of Tom Mix. Then we'd go to a drugstore next door and get a banana split for ten cents. Here is my classic story on how things have changed. Growing up in the city, I always managed to try and end up with at least fifty cents by Saturday, ok? I think I got a dollar a week allowance and I had to shine my father's shoes to earn it. I think I used to sell him cigarettes. I'd buy a carton. A carton used to cost maybe twenty cents a pack in those days, in 1937, 1938, 1939. And I used to sell them to him for twenty-five cents. It cost me twenty cents and he'd buy them from me for twenty-five. Saturday would roll around and I'd meet a buddy of mine, and I had fifty cents in my pocket. I'd spend a nickel on the subway. I lived on 88th and Park, and I'd end up downtown. I'd go to a place near Nedicks, which is place noted for orangeade and hotdogs. Everybody would say they were going to the orange room of Nedicks. So for a nickel you got a hotdog, and for a nickel you got a tall orange juice. There's fifteen cents. I'd put another nickel aside so I could get home...there's twenty cents. I'd have thirty cents left. I'd go to Woolworth Five & Ten and buy a quarter pound of chocolate-covered raisins for a nickel because I wanted something to munch on at the movies. I'd go to the Paramount. Before one o'clock, it was twenty-five cents. You saw the coming attractions, Fox Movietone news, a cartoon, and then another little movie, a short they called it. Then you'd see the main movie, the feature. What you also saw was Tommy Dorsey and his band, Frank Sinatra, the vocalist, or whatever as the live stage presentation. You had a show.

Mr. Aumack: So you saw Frank Sinatra live...while there was a movie?

Mr. Moss: No. You'd have a stage show. Then when it was all over, that's when you would see the news, cartoons and the movie. It would start off with a presentation of a major bank and a few little acts, almost like vaudeville. The point is, you would stay after the movie was over because then you would sit through the live show again. And it only cost twenty-five cents. So I still had a nickel to come home. And that was fifty cents. With fifty cents you can barely make a phone call now! In a way, times are different. I think somebody said, "Times are a'changin'." I remember when I was in high school, I would double-date with a buddy of mine. I lived down on 88th Street and he was up on 201st Street. I'd take the subway up because we knew two girls up there. I guess we were eighteen because at that point he could drive, so we drove somewhere like the Log Cabin Casino or places like that. I usually would get back from 201st Street on the subway -- although at that point it was above ground -- at maybe two o'clock in the morning. I can wake up without an alarm clock. If I had to wake up at 3:15 a.m. tomorrow I could do that without an alarm clock. So I'd get on the subway with nobody on the train. I'd lie down on the seat at two o'clock in the morning, go to sleep and wake up in time to get off at 96th Street and Broadway. Then I'd change to the local, which would let me off at 86th Street, and then take a bus across town to the apartment. The point is, there were no problems in

those days. You could lie down in the subway and nobody would bother you. So things have changed, and I think things are obviously changing down here too. There's no doubt about that. But that's history.

Mr. Aumack: Is there anything else that you want to add before we stop?

Mr. Moss: No. I just want to say I thank you for the opportunity of allowing me to make a few comments. The thing that has motivated me most is the fact that I have been a collector of a lot of memorabilia, pictorial history, and ephemera for many years. It's fine to collect it all, but I wanted to share it. That's one of the reasons I put my collections between book covers. The pictures are there and the ephemera is there. The research is quoting the original articles. I don't write history, as I've said before. I edit it. I wasn't there when George Washington had the Battle of Monmouth, so I don't write what the battle was about. I'll go to the original documents that exist, diaries, and whatever, put them all together and with a little editorial writing connect the quoted material. And nothing says more about a subject than a photograph or an illustration. There might be a caption or a little paragraph describing what was going on, but it's the pictures that say the words. I enjoy doing that and really what I enjoy most of all is that I can share it with people. You can have the world's biggest collection of anything, but if people don't see it, what good is it? You'd go nuts if you owned all the Picassos in the world; but when you open the door and say, "Take a look at all my Picassos," it makes sense. So I'm happy that I'm able to share what I've put together over sixty years between book covers. I hope someone else will carry the torch, although not close to the paper stuff!

Mr. Aumack: One more thing I'd like to ask you about. What were some other prices?

Mr. Moss: What were prices in those days? Well roast beef might have been twelve cents a pound, bananas could have been six cents a pound. Look at what an automobile costs! I bought my first automobile in 1946 I think. It was a Nash Rambler. It was a convertible and cost \$1935. Now you can just about get a set of tires for that.

Mr. Aumack: Was that price looked upon as being affordable or was it looked upon as a very expensive automobile?

Mr. Moss: No, it was affordable. It wasn't the lowest one and wasn't the highest one. There was a lot more selling for \$8,000 - \$10,000. I don't know what a Rolls cost then, but of course it was very expensive. The point is you got a darn good car for \$1935. Just like when Model A Fords were around. You could get those for \$500-\$600.

Mr. Aumack: Were those affordable?

Mr. Moss: Oh sure. Ford said he wanted to make cars for the masses with the assembly line production and all that. He'd paint it any color, as long as it was black. His cars were very inexpensive and sold like hotcakes. When somebody could afford \$500-\$600, they bought a car. Now you go out and I hate to think what a new car costs.

Mr. Aumack: One more thing. I want to talk about the people. Have they changed or stayed the same?

Mr. Moss: Yes and no. I have to speak for Rumson, but I think it's the same all over. People will stay here for a number of years and then move on for various reasons. Historically, I think most people used to spend the majority of their whole life in one town. Now drive along Rumson Road or anyplace in Fair Haven and see all the For Sale signs. They are continuous because there is always somebody moving out and somebody moving in. So the people change and it's only the people who have been here for some time who have the feeling for the town. Somebody might come in from Syracuse or Birmingham, Alabama and if they see one little thing wrong, they'll go in and raise heck. We explain to them that we don't pick up garbage on Wednesday, and if you read the little bulletin you get every month, then you'd know you're supposed to put your garbage out on Tuesday. You get a lot of criticism, but it's from people who don't understand what's going on. The people who have been here a long time understand what's going on, and a generation ago there were more people like that people living here. I don't say you have to spend your whole life in a town. I've spent plenty of my life in New York, but I wouldn't want to go back to New York. In fact, I haven't been back to The Stock Exchange in twenty-some years. And I spent twenty-some years there. Rumson is a friendly town; you can talk to people and you know people. But, things are changing. Everything is changing: our morals, our politics, the way business is done, and hey, you don't even use tape recorders anymore.

Mr. Aumack: That's right, we're using minidisks today.

Mr. Moss: That's progress. In many instances it is progress and then in other instances it is not progress. I think the answer to your initial question is both yes and no. People are the same, and people are not the same. But I think there is more change going on, obviously. There's more change going on in the year 2000 than there has been in the last ten years.

Mr. Aumack: Interesting. I think that's a good place to stop. Mr. Moss, I thank you very much. It's been an honor.

Mr. Moss: Mr. Moss was my father. I'm George.

Mr. Aumack: All right, George. Thank you very much. It's been an honor.